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" I Shouldn't Be in This Class!": Perceptions of Proficient High School Graduates Enrolled in College Developmental English

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“I Shouldn’t Be in This Class!”: Perceptions of
Proficient High School Graduates
Enrolled in College Developmental English

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Seton Hall University

2011

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Doctoral Candidate, **Richard D. Tomko**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the Ph .D. during this **Spring Semester 2011**.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine student perceptions with regard to why they were “placed” in a developmental program upon entering postsecondary institutions. Research obtained through a qualitative research model was analyzed with regard to knowledge attained in secondary education to ensure students were “college ready” pertinent to Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS). The study attempts to provide insight to the reasoning behind the disconnect whereby students who attain a level of basic skills proficiency in high school, as measured by state standardized tests aligned to the state core curriculum, graduation, and other federal progress indicators, do not meet a level of basic skills proficiency upon entrance to a postsecondary institution. Working with a sample of students in developmental English at a community college in New Jersey, the researcher was able to ascertain specific reasons as to why students who were considered above average to elite during high school felt that they had tested poorly on the college entrance examination and had been made to register for noncredit, developmental courses in basic English skills. This study was a qualitative study that spanned the Fall 2010 semester. Data were collected via face-to-face interviews and an essay prompt for a specific student population. Two interviews were scheduled for each member of the sample interviewed. The first interview was scheduled at the beginning of the semester, just a few weeks after students entered community college for the first time. The final interviews were scheduled at midsemester, when each student had experienced both

postsecondary education and the developmental course itself for approximately 8–10 weeks. This research design permitted the researcher to examine factors including but not limited to secondary-school preparation for college; ancillary factors that led to students being placed with a developmental course load; a subject's reflection on his/her aptitude concerning basic English skills, with the subject possibly having one view as he/she entered college and then a different view midsemester into a basic skills curriculum; and an enhanced level of comfort with the researcher from one interview to the next.

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I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues and students at the research site who helped make this possible. Although each of them had trying schedules, I commend them for their dedication to the research. Without their dedication, this study would not have been possible.

To my mother in-law and father in-law: I want to thank you for all of the help you have given me since you came into my life over a decade ago. I know at

times I may not show my gratitude, but please know that I appreciate all you have done for me.

And to my four beautiful children, who continued to grow in my absence when studies, work, and the research took me away more than I could have ever imagined: It is only my hope that one day you will read this and understand that with conviction comes sacrifice and that you must never quit no matter how difficult things may become. I love you all.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife and best friend, Jaimie. Since we began this journey, you have selflessly committed yourself to ensuring that I was afforded the time and opportunity to complete my studies and research. For every countless night you were a single mom to four children; all those evenings, weekends, and endless hours I was away conducting interviews or doing research; every duty you assumed in my absence; all of your encouragement throughout these years; and the times you stood by me when things were rough, I will never be able to repay you. You are the only reason I am where I am today, and for all of this and more I thank you.

I love you more today than the first day I met you.

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Chapter I

Problems and Procedures

It was late September 2010, and I was waiting in the college library to meet Max for the first time. This was our third attempt to meet and discuss his program at Rausch Community College¹ the first two dates postponed on his part due to “unforeseen” circumstances.

Hi professor.

Oh, hey... Max, right? ... How are you?

Sorry I'm a little late.

The young man recognized me as a member of the faculty and from my research solicitation series earlier in the semester, and we immediately began to get the uncomfortable informalities out of the way in the quiet-room on the main floor of the library. Max was 18 years of age and a former athlete and honor student who had attended a local high school. A well-spoken young man with a slender build, he attributed much of his interest in school and success in secondary education to his Asian upbringing and the expectations of his parents and older siblings who attended some of the most prominent universities in the country. Minutes into this, our first interview, the uneasiness subsided, and Max and I began to discuss the main reason why we both were there.

¹ Pseudonym used to represent the research site and all research participants

What about the placement test when you first got here? Did you take the test seriously, or was it like, a rush-through-it kind of thing?

I am not sure if I took it that serious, because I kind of did rush through ... or I didn't rush through it, but I did rush to take it.

Did you know—did you know that if you didn't pass that test, you would be in basic skills class?

I didn't know that, actually.

You didn't know that?

No, right.

What if you knew that going in?

I probably would have tried practicing... writing a little bit just like I did, just like a few days before.

Right, just prepare a little.

Max tells a believable story about an 18-year-old on his way to entering college for the first time. The day he registered at Rausch, he left his girlfriend in the car while he attempted to “quickly” meet with counselors to choose a freshman schedule. He was informed at that meeting, which was held only days before the beginning of the semester, that he would need to take a placement test prior to securing a schedule. He was then immediately escorted to the college testing center to complete his placement test, which would establish his incoming program for the 2010 fall semester. Max had other plans and his waiting girlfriend on his mind more than that placement test, which he thought he would pass without any complications. Instead, Max was enrolled as a developmental student in English due to his score on that one specific assessment, and he was forced to take a noncredit course load as an incoming college freshman. Similar

accounts of students failing placement tests derive from the approximately 1.3 million incoming college students who were forced to enroll in developmental classes across the nation only several semesters earlier. (Strong American Schools, 2008)

In 2010, 72.7% of degree-granting postsecondary institutions offered developmental services to matriculating freshmen (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Many of these students possessed a high school diploma that certified that they had met a certain level of basic skills proficiency as established by their state department of education and backed by the guidelines for Adequate Yearly Progress² (AYP) measured by the No Child Left Behind Act³ (NCLB). The disconnect between the skills of high school graduates and the skills needed for college success has caused many states to work at aligning high-school exit standards with college-entrance standards (Collins, 2008). As proponents of higher education continue to push for universal access in postsecondary

² The measurement defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine how every public school district in the United States is performing academically based on the results from approved standardized tests. In New Jersey, the standardized tests used to measure AYP are the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) and High School Proficiency assessment (HSPA). All K-12 school districts in the nation are required to maintain AYP in language arts literacy and mathematics, as well as appropriate graduation (high school) and attendance rates. Progress must also be attained for specific subgroups of learners (i.e. White, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, special education) at particular benchmarks established by NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

³In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) reauthorized the then-Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), becoming the federal law affecting education on the K-12 level. NCLB emphasizes accountability for results, educational choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and doing what works based on scientific research. Under NCLB, states work to close the achievement gap by ensuring that all students achieve academic proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

institutions, there are still certain “gaps” that lie in the forefront of the American education system as a whole. When increased demand for access to postsecondary education is coupled with the poor preparation many students receive from secondary schools, it is not surprising that colleges and universities are being forced to offer and require developmental courses to large numbers of students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006).

There is enough evidence to support the theory that a divergence exists between proficiency standards in secondary and postsecondary public institutions. Currently, developmental courses are offered at 99% of public 2-year colleges and more than 75% of public 4-year institutions (Boser & Burd, 2009). Approximately one-half of all incoming college freshmen in the United States do not meet their college’s or university’s placement standards and are considered “not prepared” for college-level work (Kirst & Venezia, 2006). Kirst and Venezia (2006) argued that “there is virtually no way to prepare for placement standards because they are not connected to K–12 standards, nor are they communicated to high school students or educators” (p. 2).

Along with these national concerns, evidence from New Jersey supports the idea that nearly half of the students entering 4-year public colleges are required to take developmental courses (Chambers, 2009). When considering the transition of high school seniors to postsecondary education in New Jersey, one perceives a distinct disconnect in analyzing how such high remediation rates are established where students are certified to have the basic skills proficiency required by NCLB

after passing the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) or Alternative High School Assessment (AHSA). The main focus in high schools usually includes preparing students in order to ensure that they pass state tests (Conley, 2007b); however, even though students pass state assessments, their program of study may be out of sequence with what it takes to be college eligible. A secondary program that prepares students for success in postsecondary education requires clear agreement on the high school exit and college entrance standards students are expected to meet (Conley, 2005a). As this does not always occur, many students in public 4 and 2-year institutions are placed in developmental English.

Problem Statement

The expectations gap between secondary and postsecondary education consists of a disconnect between what secondary institutions and institutions of higher education believe is needed to have students considered “college-ready.” According to the 1998 High School Transcript Study and the High School and Beyond longitudinal study, which followed students through high school and college, “the single most important factor in determining college success is the academic challenge of the courses students take in high school” (Conley, 2005b, p. 38). Further, the main subject area indicative of college readiness is mathematics, as the “understanding of mathematics bridges all subject areas, as well as the globalization of today’s society, and provides measures to effectively interpret, critically analyze, and evaluate data in both numeric and visual

presentations” (McCormick & Lucas, 2011. P. 10). As for English, high school English in New Jersey must be taught by teachers who majored in English in college; thus, many secondary English courses do have a college reference point. Conley (2005b) insisted that the “high school curriculum (choice) needs to be simplified so that students cannot make bad choices” (p.23).

The standards that many states developed in the 1990s to ensure that students were adequately prepared after high school did not take into full consideration the idea of postsecondary success (Conley, 2005b). In 2003, Greene and Forster published a national graduation study of students and found that only 32% of senior graduates, who had followed their states’ curriculum standards, had completed 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, and 2 years of natural and social science and a foreign language. This group also only reached a “basic” level of performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Further, many students seem knowledgeable about college admissions requirements, but many are unaware of placement test policies and test content. Placement tests help determine where in the college curricular sequence a student will begin his or her studies (Conley, 2005b). According to Conley (2005b), these findings “suggest that many students do not fully understand what courses they must take and skills they must develop in high school to become college-ready” (p. 19).

What is “college-ready”? Achieve (2009c) defined *college-ready* as “being prepared for any postsecondary education or training experience, including study at 2 and 4-year institutions leading to a postsecondary credential (i.e. a

certificate, license, Associates or Bachelor's degree)." Specifically, a student is considered ready by Achieve for college when, as a high school graduate, he/she has the English and mathematics knowledge and skills necessary to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses without the need for developmental coursework (Achieve, 2009c). In contrast to this paired definition, David Conley has developed a far more well-elaborated set of guidelines that optimize the notion of college readiness.

Knowledge and Skills for University Success

It is important for both secondary and postsecondary educators to articulate a distinct set of definitions of skills and standards that will help a secondary student be "college-ready." David Conley's Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS) represents an established and important set of guidelines for this purpose. The KSUS standards are prominent, as they incorporate an array of distinctive "vehicles" to prepare the necessary guidelines for student achievement. "Success" as defined by the KSUS standards is the ability to do well enough in college entry-level core academic courses to meet general education requirements and to continue on to major in a particular area (Conley, 2003). Although a particular student may not "master" all of the KSUS standards, mastering more of the standards is likely to lead to having more options and greater success during the all-important "initial year" of college (Conley, 2003).

In preparation for KSUS development, academic content standards documents were analyzed by Conley and his team of researchers and used for comparison across the nation. Multiple peer reviews were utilized to ensure the validity of each standard set, and consultants with expertise in standards development contributed suggestions for improvement (Conley, 2003). The resulting statements (KSUS) represent arguably the most comprehensive and thoroughly grounded set of standards for college success developed. The KSUS standards are designed to create a new way to view college preparation by providing a road map of the content knowledge and habits that are valued by leading research universities in the United States. Faculty and staff members who participated in the process of developing these standards represented a wide range of academic viewpoints (Conley, 2003). One of the dominant themes raised by participants was the importance of the habits students develop in high school and what students bring with them to their college studies.

These habits are considered by many faculty members to be more important than specific content knowledge and include critical thinking, analytic thinking and problem solving; an inquisitive nature and interest in taking advantage of what a research university has to offer; the willingness to accept critical feedback and to adjust based on such feedback; openness to possible failures from time to time; and the ability and desire to cope with frustrating and ambiguous learning tasks” (Conley, 2003. p.9).

Other critical skills include the ability to express oneself in writing and orally in a clear and convincing fashion; to discern the relative importance and credibility of

various sources of information; to draw inferences and reach conclusions independently; and to use technology as a tool to assist the learning process rather than as a crutch.

In an effort to pinpoint the expectations for incoming college freshmen, research and analyses conducted by 20 top universities in the United States established the genesis of the KSUS standards (Appendix S). The KSUS standards do not particularly describe what students must do in high school; rather, they are a consensus of what will be expected from secondary students after they enter their first year in college. The KSUS has not been formally proven to be a valid or reliable determining factor in college readiness; however, the KSUS is the result of a 2-year study in which more than 400 faculty and staff members from 20 research universities (all members of the Association of American Universities [AAU]) participated in extensive meetings and reviews designed to identify what students must do to succeed in entry-level courses at their institutions (Conley, 2003). These standards represent a comprehensive view of “prerequisite knowledge” associated with college success. Consequently, the more of these identified, prerequisite competencies a student attains before entering postsecondary education, the greater the chance that he or she will be successful in college (Conley, 2005b). The KSUS defines English as reading, writing, critical thinking, and research skills. Successful students will connect reading with both writing and thinking skills.

Purpose of the Study

If students obtain an appropriate and proficient level of knowledge as evidenced by meeting and even surpassing the requirements for graduation from a New Jersey high school, then a divergence must exist where these students do not meet the necessary, basic skills entrance requirements as established by their college. In other words, students who pass all coursework, are above average students pursuant to grade point average, take accelerated courses in high school, and/or rank proficient on exit examinations in New Jersey should not be placed in developmental courses in college. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of proficient high school graduates with regard to why they were “placed” in a developmental college program, and specific “college knowledge” these students attained in secondary school.

Research and Subsidiary Questions

How do high school graduates considered above average to elite during high school explain their placement in **developmental** English courses in college?

- Did students feel they were prepared for college at the end of high school?
- By the end of high school, what skills do students describe based on the Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS)?

The Study

This study was conducted to examine the divergence of skills and standards contributing to the “expectations gap” by analyzing research obtained through a qualitative research approach with regard to knowledge attained in secondary education to ensure students were “college ready” relative to the KSUS. In this study, *divergence in skills* is defined as a situation in which student proficiency in high school standards leads to placement in developmental courses. By researching students who were considered above average to elite by their secondary schools and analyzing their proficiency in completing the KSUS standards, I examined the phenomena of how these expectations lead to the divergence between New Jersey secondary core standards and those standards established for basic skills assessment by Higher Education (HED). College students who are considered above average to elite by New Jersey secondary education standards (as identified by class ranking, grade point average, enrollment in honors or AP courses, etc.), are deemed not prepared if they are required to enroll in developmental classes. In studying their “college knowledge,” I closely examined where the disconnect was greatest and what curricular adjustments may need to be examined when closing the gap between secondary achievement and college readiness.

Other student behaviors analyzed after data collection were examined with respect to an increase of divergence between systems. In other words, all outlying behaviors discovered through data collection were further examined as influential proponents of what is causing the disconnect between systems and students.

I hosted two in-depth interviews for each member of a 5-subject sample of students at Rausch County Community College who were currently enrolled in a Basic Skills English Course. I solicited students from classes on a voluntary basis, asking each to join the study as a chance to assist in the advancement of student learning. Interviews were used to examine student readiness as it related to college and preparation from sources with respect to secondary education and experiences. Two sets of interview questions were formulated to correspond to identified college-readiness standards, including but not limited to the following:

Prior related knowledge (Language Arts Literacy Preparation Sequences)

College readiness (College Knowledge/Student Readiness to Attend)

Trust between secondary and HED

Administrative support (Academic Counseling, Secondary and HED)

Prior continuous learning experiences (12th - Grade Language Arts

Literacy Content)

Critical thinking

Leadership skills

Feedback loops

Monitoring mechanisms (Standardized Tests)

I also surveyed students who met the specific study criteria in the upper-level basic skills course that I personally taught that semester at Rausch Community College. That current upper-level basic skills class was the only class of students that had subjects who met the criteria whom I could not personally

interview. As every other group of students I was permitted by the college to solicit had the ability to participate in this study, my class, which had a high number of study-eligible students, was also considered when attempting to extract a significant amount of data on my study topic. I solicited these additional student responses through guidelines established within the class curriculum. As in past semesters, students were assigned a process essay assignment to explain why they felt they had been scheduled for a developmental English class. Students were given questions to use as a guide for preparing the body paragraphs of the essay. These questions mirrored those asked by me to study participants during the qualitative interview process. Students in my class completed this assignment for a grade as part of the curriculum and course syllabus. Students were directed to complete the papers using the same protocol for all other assignments. I gave each student with a paper credit for completing the assignment by grading the paper for content pursuant to the writing process (i.e., thesis statement, body paragraphs, conclusion paragraph, grammar, etc.) and not specific content. I then returned the papers to my students within 1 week and explained my research to the class asking for student volunteers to submit their papers to a pile if they met the study criteria and would permit me to utilize their answers in the research as data. This procedure did not involve any type of conflict of interest or coercion, as (a) the papers were graded prior to the solicitation, (b) the papers were graded on process and not content, and (3) only students that meet the criteria had the ability to partake in the study. Therefore, I was not aware of any student who was unwilling to participate, as such students

would have been masked by those students who did not qualify. The essay questions answered by the participants helped enhance the study by providing additional information, allowing me to track patterns, and showing relationships between subjects and their responses.

This study was aimed at understanding how students who achieve above-average to elite status in secondary education, are not considered “college ready” and enroll in developmental courses upon entering postsecondary education. In order to meet this aim, I conducted a descriptive study at one community college using qualitative methods. Interviews were conducted to identify the impact of the research questions and the reasoning behind divergence as it pertained to student knowledge, college readiness, and articulation between secondary and postsecondary institutions in New Jersey. A purposeful sample was obtained of students at Rausch Community College in New Jersey (RCC). Nine personal and in-depth interviews were conducted to provide greater insight into the research with respect to identifying the specific factors leading to the divergence between secondary education and basic skills assessment at the college.

This study greatly adds to the field of research concerning the examination of the expectations gap and the disconnect between the results from secondary education and the needs of higher education institutions. There are numerous studies that examine this disconnect that relate the outcomes of students to theories and perceptions of educators and administrators in secondary education or higher education professors and higher level administration. “Finger-pointing” and dismissal concerning educational designs between systems is as common as

the developmental problem itself, as one system will often blame another for lack of proper articulation. However, as the discipline of education is also based on the needs of the student, it is my feeling that an important missing factor throughout this argument is the perception of the students as to why they are placed in developmental courses. It is very easy for some to believe that students would not take responsibility for placing in these courses. It is my contention that what students perceive to be the reasoning behind their placement in these courses could include their own responsibility for not being prepared, as well as other reasons unknown to or not accepted by secondary or HED professionals.

Further, it is my contention that there is not enough research with regard to student perceptions of placement in developmental courses. There are many studies and much data regarding the need for developmental courses as described by members of both secondary and postsecondary faculty and administrators; however, the research is limited in comparison when drawing from a student's point of view with regard to placement.

Limitations

The strongest limitation of the study was my limited access to students at Rausch Community College. I was permitted to solicit the involvement of professors at semester orientation meetings: one for my adjunct colleagues and the other for full-time faculty members via the department chairperson. At the adjunct conference, many of my colleagues who were teaching the upper level

basic-skills class permitted me to solicit their students for my research; however, after several attempts, not one of the full-time faculty members would permit me access to their student population in classes at the same level. Over the next 8 weeks, I continued to ask permission from professors to no avail.

My inability to solicit a larger sample greatly affected the outcome of the study. A larger sample would have generated greater insight into the problem, and a wide array of student perceptions would have provided a more intensified understand of the disconnect between what students perceive to be the reasons behind developmental course placement and the theories of both secondary and higher education officials.

Definitions and Terms

Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS) Standards: According to Conley (2005b), the standards “present a comprehensive view of the prerequisite knowledge associated with college success” (p. 170).

Expectations gap: According to Act (2004) and the work of Venezia and Kirst (2003), the expectations gap is the disconnect between what the K–12 and postsecondary education sectors each expect from high school graduates.

Educated privileged: A term used in this research project to describe those students with one or both parents who are considered college graduates.

High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA): The High School Proficiency Assessment is used to determine student achievement in reading, writing, and

mathematics as specified in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. First-time 11th grade students who fail the HSPA in March of their junior year will have an opportunity to retest in October and March of their senior year (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009).

Alternate High School Assessment (AHSA): Formerly known as the Special Review Assessment (SRA), the Alternate High School Assessment is an alternative assessment that provides students with the opportunity to exhibit their understanding and mastery of the HSPA skills in contexts that are familiar and related to their experiences. The AHSA content is linked to the HSPA test specifications in order to ensure that students who are certified through the AHSA process have demonstrated the same skills and competencies at comparable levels as students who passed the written HSPA test (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009).

Socioeconomic status (SES): Socioeconomic status is status based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (Demarest et al., 1993).

Knowledge sharing: The means by which an organization obtains access to its own and other organizations' knowledge (Cummings, 2003).

Strands: A *strand* is a consistent thread of a topic running through a curriculum or course irrespective of its subject content (Washington Education Association, 2009).

Higher order thinking skills: Higher order thinking skills involve thinking about thinking, or the ability for "self-awareness, self-inquiry or dialogue, self-monitoring, and self-regulation" (Lambert & McCombs, 1998, p. 507).

Cumulative progress indicators (CPIs): The CPIs break the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) into smaller categories by grade to better guide expectations and judge progress. The CPIs for each subject and grade are used to assess student progress in the curriculum and identify academic strengths and weaknesses (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009).

Feedback loop: The causal path that leads from the initial generation of the feedback signal to the subsequent modification of the event.

College knowledge: The knowledge, skills, and attributes a student should possess to be ready to succeed in entry-level college courses; sufficient mastery of key cognitive strategies, key content knowledge, academic behaviors, and contextual knowledge to assist students when considering college readiness (Conley, 2007a).

Chapter II

Review of Relevant Research Theory and Literature

In 2004, 34% or 1,305,480 students entering a public college enrolled in a developmental course (Strong American Schools, 2008). That number had increased from the year 2000 when 28% of entering freshmen in all institutions were enrolled in a developmental reading, writing, or mathematics class (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2004). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 22% of students took developmental math, while 14% and 11% registered for writing and reading developmental classes, respectively. In New Jersey alone, 77.8% of students entering community college are in need of remediation (New Jersey High School Steering Committee, 2008). These figures represent students who successfully graduated from secondary institutions that establish graduation requirements based upon federal proficiency standards.

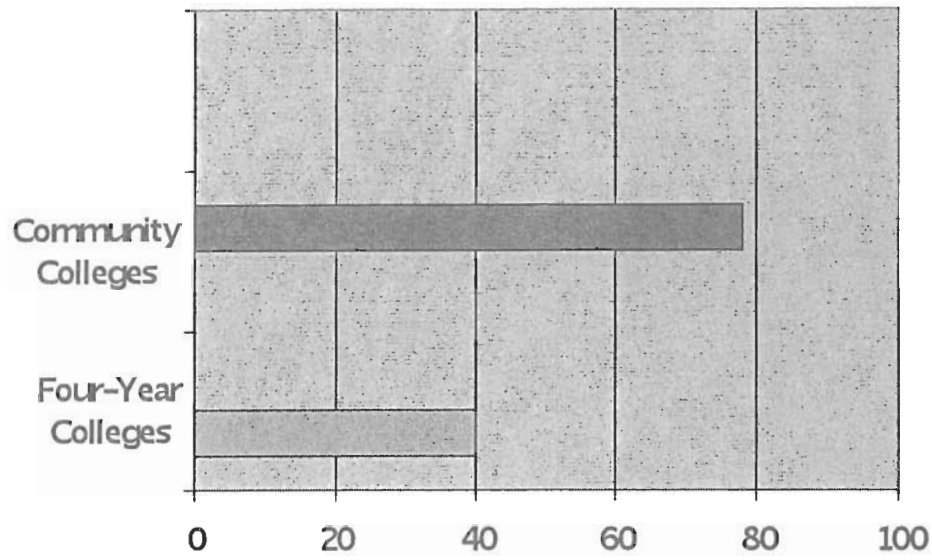
The Need for Remediation

Of 100 freshmen entering high school in 2005, only 32 were prepared for college (National Governors Association [NGA], 2005). The transition from secondary to postsecondary education has been researched through such studies as the *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) High School Transcript Studies*, *High School and Beyond*, and the *National Longitudinal Study* (Williamson, 2008). The question of exactly what knowledge and values

graduates must possess has been debated for years by faculty across the country (Cuban, 1999). To be considered “college ready,” a student must demonstrate basic literacy skills (Greene & Forster, 2003). Weak curricula, vague standards and lack of alignment between high school content and the expectations of colleges result in the need for students to remediate basic skills (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006). Most higher educational curricula include a set of experiences that some educational authorities believe all students should have (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). In terms of basic-skills curricular components, many objectives relate to student achievement as it pertains to student proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics. The curriculum must help students clarify their beliefs and values and thus achieve commitment and dedication to guide their lives. Therefore, curriculum must incorporate a deliberate planning process that focuses on basic skills as an important educational consideration (Stark & Lattuca, 1997).

Figure 1 shows that in 2009, a large percentage of students beginning college took developmental classes after failing placement tests (Carroll, 2009). In 1986, 44,453 entering freshmen took the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test at all public and 11 private New Jersey postsecondary institutions (New Jersey Department of Higher Education, 1987).

Figure 1 – Percentage of students enrolled in developmental classes after failing placement tests, 2009.



Although the percentage of proficient students increased over those years, the percentage change was also affected by increased enrollments. Regardless, the rate shows that nearly 50% of all students were lacking proficiency in verbal and mathematics areas that year. More recently at William Paterson University, 72% of first time students in 2003 were identified as needing remediation (New Jersey High School Steering Committee, 2008). To combat this concern, the prekindergarten (p)–12 system must be aligned with New Jersey’s higher education system. The “State” must define a rigorous college preparatory curriculum for high school graduation that reflects college readiness (NGA, 2005). This would involve aligning high school curriculum and expectations with

the requirements of higher education, creating high school exit assessment instruments that measure student readiness for college, and enhancing the student data system to provide longitudinal data that would follow a student for his/her educational career (Corzine & Ryan, 2007). Few high schools have successfully implemented the “elements” necessary to align their programs for college success (Conley, 2007b).

In New Jersey, more than 60% of students immediately enroll in college after high school (Corzine & Ryan, 2007). In a survey of 100 diverse companies undertaken by the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, 99 employers noted a difference between what their positions required of high school graduates and what those graduates were actually prepared to do (Corzine & Ryan, 2007). These industry requirements are directly related to basic-skills competency levels (reading and writing reports, basic computation skills, etc.). Students are leaving high school underprepared not only in life skills, but also for collegiate-level work; thus, there is a need for them to take noncredit developmental courses. Taking one developmental course makes it 6 times less likely that a student will graduate with a degree (Corzine & Ryan, 2007).

Although there are many vehicles to mark student preparedness, colleges and universities opt to utilize several assessments to ensure that developmental coursework is an appropriate measure. As an example, an incoming freshman at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) who does not meet a threshold score on the SAT, the Advanced Placement English or History tests in high school, or the

college's Writing Exemption and Placement Exam is required to take an entry-level developmental writing course. On the Writing Exemption and Placement Exam, students are scored on a 6-point rubric and placed accordingly. The exam consists of an essay written at a campus computer lab. The essay topic comes from a newspaper article, and students have 1 hour to read the article, plan a response, and write the essay (Achieve, 2007).

A 1990 report of the NAEP⁴ indicated that on average, the writing performance of 11th-grade high school students showed no significant change from 1984–1988. In 1989, 35.3% of 11th graders in New Jersey lacked proficiency in English and 44.7% lacked proficiency in mathematics (New Jersey Basic Skills Council, 1990). In order to address the need to enhance higher order thinking, the need to increase proficiency in language arts literacy and mathematics, and the insignificant change in scores, the New Jersey Department of Education improved its seminal Early Warning Test (EWT) with the inception of the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT). Then, in 2002, the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) took the place of the previous assessments to answer the need for the incorporation of more stringent subject-matter content and open-ended tasks to provide formative information relevant to the NCLB. The HSPA is taken in March of a student's junior year and measures student

⁴ The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Assessments are conducted periodically in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. history. A sample of students in different grade levels from randomly selected schools around the nation completes these assessments which act as our "nation's report card" for analysis of data and score reporting on a national level.

proficiency levels of basic skills in language arts literacy and mathematics. Test passages and items for the HSPA are developed and then reviewed by state-level committees for mathematics, language arts and sensitivity⁵ before and after they are included in the test. New Jersey's secondary teachers participate in the committee review process. All test passages and items for the HSPA are subjected to a rigorous field test before they are included on the test (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006). The class of 2003 was the first graduating class to take the New Jersey HSPA. However, 16% of that class and up to 50% in some New Jersey districts that year utilized alternate assessments to graduate students (Achieve, 2004). The New Jersey alternate assessment, known as the AHSA, challenges students to complete specific developmental assessments (known as *tasks*) so as to provide evidence of mastery of basic skills. The AHSA is mandatory for graduation purposes for those students who do not score in proficient ranges on the HSPA. This means that all students who graduate from a New Jersey high school have mastered the basic-skills component approved under NCLB. When one examines the dilemma of the lack of correlation between New Jersey core standards and postsecondary readiness assessments and attempts to construct research models to analyze the perception of basic skills when comparing secondary to postsecondary levels, major and specific differences come to the forefront. A consistent gap remains between state standardized tests and the requirements of colleges (Achieve, 2004).

⁵ Age appropriateness; meets all standards set forth by Affirmative Action guidelines.

Many students fail to pass college basic-skills placement exams but have scored proficient on the HSPA or passed the AHSA. In 2005, New Jersey attained an 83% graduation rate (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). A study by Achieve, Inc. (2005) the same year reported that 42% of high school graduates were not prepared for college-level classes. Education reformers have been proposing that high school graduation requirements align with the requirements for college entrance to ensure that all graduates are successful in college without remediation (Wilensky, 2007). In fact, it is estimated that 40% of New Jersey public college and university first-time students are in need of developmental coursework (New Jersey High School Steering Committee, 2008), creating an imbalance between high school graduation and developmental rates. This demonstrates a lack of congruence when one compares the level of successful basic-skills attainment established by the department of education with those needs set forth by individual postsecondary institutions.

Inadequate high school preparation is compounded by poor alignment between high schools and colleges, which often creates an “expectations gap” between what colleges require and what high schools produce. The result is a high level of remediation by colleges, a practice that is both costly and inefficient (Spellings Commission, 2006). The transition of students from secondary to postsecondary institutions has always given cause for concern that students are not prepared for collegiate studies by secondary education. Sixty-five percent of college professors do not believe high school standards prepare students for college (ACT, 2007). What exactly constitutes “college-level work” is by no

means clear, as institutions differ and there are different expectations even within single institutions. More 2005 high school graduates completed a range of higher level courses (such as physics and calculus) during their high school years than had done so in previous years. The rigor of graduates' curriculum levels is an important factor associated with the graduates' entry and success in postsecondary education (Horn & Nuñez, 2000); however, a recent report from ACT (2007) found that a majority of high school students took core mathematics and science courses but did not gain college-readiness skills (60% and 74%, respectively). Each college follows its own set of practices, and this leads to considerable variety in terms of remediation and how students are assessed on levels of basic-skills proficiency (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006). In studying the expectations gap, Venezia et al. (2003) evaluated the transition from high school to college:

high school assessments often stress different knowledge and skills than do college entrance and placement requirements. Similarly, the coursework between high school and college is not connected; students graduate from high school under one set of standards and, three months later, are required to meet a whole new set of standards in college. Current data systems are not equipped to address students' need across systems, and no one is held accountable for issues related to student transitions from high school to college. (p. 1)

The basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics are essential for thinking, learning, and succeeding within the context of a college curriculum (New Jersey Basic Skills Council, 1990). Basic skills or developmental education are designed to provide those students entering college with weak academic skills

the opportunity to strengthen those skills enough to become prepared for college-level coursework (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2008). In New Jersey, high schools assess the basic-skills proficiency level of all 11th-grade students through utilization of the HSPA. In preparation for the language arts literacy and mathematics portions of the HSPA, teachers formulate lesson plans based on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and cumulative progress indicators (CPIs) for each specific area of the curriculum. The New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the NJCCCS in 1996 as a framework for educational reform to help improve student achievement by clearly defining what all students should know and be able to do at the end of 13 years (kindergarten included) of public education (New Jersey Department of Education, 2008). The HSPA and subsequent assessments are based on the knowledge obtained from student proficiency in these core curriculum standards. Proficiency in the mathematics and language arts literacy sections of the HSPA signifies that a student has attained a sufficient level of basic-skills preparedness in those areas to be successful in the future. Students who graduate from high school are deemed proficient in the basic-skills areas of mathematics and language arts literacy. Although proficiency is based on the level of basic-skills attainment provided by the department of education, colleges and universities still feel that students are not being prepared to matriculate at specific institutions.

It can be argued that because college is truly different from high school, college readiness is fundamentally different from high school competence (Conley, 2007b). Many students enter college after graduating from a New Jersey

high school and are required to take developmental or basic skills courses because they do not pass the placement exams given to them prior to matriculating, even though they have reached proficiency on the HSPA or AHSA tasks. Between 1995 and 2000, the proportion of institutions overall in the United States that gave reading placement tests to entering students who met various criteria increased from 23% to 29%, and the proportion of institutions that required or encouraged entering students who met various criteria to enroll in developmental mathematics courses increased from 8% to 11%. In Fall 2000, the most common selection approach for developmental coursework was to give placement tests to all entering students. A majority of institutions (57% to 61%) used this approach for developmental reading, writing, and mathematics (NCES, 2000). These placement tests (e.g., Accuplacer) assess what colleges deem the basic skills necessary to be a successful college student. Many students fail to pass these basic-skills placement exams but have scored proficient on the HSPA or passed the AHSA, proving that they have mastered the basic skills set necessary to be considered an educated adult in New Jersey.

The difficulty for secondary educators lies in preparing students for postsecondary institutions' different placement standards (Haycock, Reed, & Thornton, 2006). In fact, secondary teachers and administrators look to the guidelines established by NCLB to ensure that students meet adequate progress each year and are proficient in basic skills. There is no time allotted to "practice" and prepare students for numerous college placement tests given throughout the

United States. These examinations should align with those assessments given to high school students that measure basic-skills proficiency under NCLB.

The vast variety of ways in which colleges and universities admit students reflects the heterogeneity of higher education in the United States (Rigol, 2003). Admissions requirements and placement tests may even vary among colleges within a single state (Olson, 2001). Many decision-making models for admission to programs include an array of measurements used to decide whether a student is suited to matriculate within a particular institution. In establishing these models, some postsecondary institutions utilize secondary school factors to help with student acceptance. These factors include academic achievement, caliber of the secondary institution, personal background, extracurricular activities, and personal attributes (Rigol, 2003). Other colleges and universities make decisions solely based on placement test scores. Although an admissions decision may deem a student eligible and ready to matriculate in a specific college or university, it is argued that placement tests provide postsecondary educators with a greater understanding of student readiness for college. Students who fail to meet proficient levels on college placement tests are likely to be considered for basic-skills (developmental) courses prior to matriculating in a general education program or course load. This occurs even after students have met all the requirements established by the state to meet basic- skills proficiency, certifying graduation from high school.

Relevant Studies

In connection with the divergence of standards and the differences between secondary and postsecondary systems, a review of Adelman's (2006) *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School through College* provides the groundwork for specific future research surrounding this topic. Adelman's study explores the resources and academic "momentum" students build throughout secondary and postsecondary schooling while analyzing the relationships between specific factors for degree completion (Adelman, 2006). The research focuses on high school and college curricula, using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988. This longitudinal study followed a national sample of over 12,000 students (representing 2.9 million students) from the time they were in the eighth grade in 1988 to age 26/27 in December 2000 (Adelman, 2006). The research analyzes college preparation and postmatriculation performance patterns as they relate to student achievement.

According to Adelman

granting that the academic quality and intensity of one's high school curriculum is a key determinant of postsecondary success, there is no assurance that either the standards of secondary school performance, content coverage, or challenge of the material will come close to the threshold demands of either four-year or community colleges. For the vast majority of high school graduates, who will not attend selective institutions, the "disconnect" is considerable. (p. 104)

The study itself calls on colleges and universities to be more "interventionary" in the secondary world and more self-reflective about the paths they offer from high school to HED.

Like this study, *Toolbox Revisited* identifies a disconnect between K–12 and postsecondary systems. To expand the research, this study examined the causes of the disconnect and how the divergence between secondary and postsecondary standards affects both programs and curricula, specifically in New Jersey. Future considerations of this study would show the relationship of the identified divergence to gender and student socioeconomic status (SES).

College Readiness and the “Expectations Gap”

The K–12 system in nearly every state uses various state policies and legislation to construct a definition for expectations of student learning. This definition includes academic standards, curriculum, course requirements and secondary indicators for student accountability (Achieve, 2009b). The disconnect between what the K–12 and postsecondary sectors of education expect from graduates creates a “gap” in student expectations. This disconnect can make the transition from high school to college cumbersome and possibly lessen the chances of secondary school graduates being adequately prepared for the rigor of HED and attaining a college degree (Venezia et al., 2003). As academic standards for secondary students rarely reflect college admissions and placement requirements (Achieve, 2009b), students and educators get “conflicting signals” from secondary and HED about what defines adequate preparation. Under NCLB, proficiency on state secondary assessments provides students with the ability to graduate from high school. In New Jersey, for example, student proficiency (i.e., a score of 200) on both the language arts literacy and

mathematics portions of the HSPA provides evidence that students have reached a level of basic-skills proficiency to exit secondary education and enter HED or the workplace. Postsecondary institutions help “widen” the gap by failing to recognize secondary assessments based on state curriculum standards as appropriate measurements for student readiness for postsecondary life. Although a general standard of the SAT or ACT tests has been utilized throughout HED admissions, assessments backed by NCLB legislation (such as HSPA), which define the true meaning of articulation between the two systems (K–12 and HED), seem to fall short in the eyes of HED sectors when considering college readiness. Thus, the “gap” creates the divergence between K–12 core standards and the measures for college readiness.

It is extremely evident and overwhelmingly crucial that both systems work towards aligning the expectations for what students need to know before they graduate from high school with the skills needed to enter a nondevelopmental course load in HED. This may be easier said than done. “Finger-pointing” occurs on both sides of the argument, with K–12 proponents basing proficiency levels on core standards backed by federal legislation (NCLB) and HED authorities raising instruction by organizing standards to compete with global markets and other institutions. HED expects that students entering postsecondary education have an already established skills set to help advance their study; however, only one-half of students graduating from high school have actually taken a college preparatory curriculum (NCES, 2007). Poor high school

preparation and not developmental course taking lowers the rate of college completion (Adelman, 1999).

In 2004, high school seniors who enrolled immediately in community colleges had a diverse record of academic achievement, including students who were prepared for college in terms of their performance on standardized assessments and coursework (Provasnik & Planty, 2008); however, students who do not meet the standards of college-ready preparation as incoming freshmen take a developmental course load that leaves them “behind” in their studies and much less likely to graduate with a postsecondary credential or degree (Adelman, 2006). Further, only 10% to 15% of HED institutions give credit toward a degree for developmental coursework (NCES, 2003).

History of Basic Skills Readiness, Assessments, and Divergence

One of the nation’s first school-reform commissions, the Committee of Ten,⁶ famously declared in 1893 that high schools “do not exist for the purpose of

⁶ In the late 1800s, the question of the purpose of the American high school was divided between two main philosophies. Traditional educators saw high school as a college preparatory institution. This divided students into academic versus terminal students, often based on their economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Others believed the high school should serve more as a people’s school offering a range of practical courses. The National Education Association addressed this issue by appointing a Committee of Ten in 1892 to establish a standard curriculum. This committee was composed mostly of educators and was chaired by Charles Eliot, the president of Harvard University. Eliot led the committee to two major recommendations. The first was earlier entry of some subjects. The second was the teaching of subjects for both college-bound and terminal students. The committee recommended 8 years of elementary education and 4 years of secondary education. It defined four different curricula as appropriate for high school. The first two followed a classical trend: classical and Latin-scientific. The second two were more contemporary: modern language and English. Courses that are now considered basic, such as foreign languages, mathematics, science, English, and history, were included in each curriculum (Meyer, 1967; Ornstein, 1993).

preparing boys and girls for college.” Secondary schools were designed for the 20th century’s industrial-age economy, when relatively few students needed the higher order knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college. As a result, high schools often represented the weakest link in the education pipeline (NGA, 2005). Nearly a century later (circa 1980), barely half of all those who graduated from high school enrolled in higher education (Strong American Schools, 2008). From the early genesis of higher education, the thought of remediating basic skills was a natural addition to assure students were prepared for and would be successful in the curricular areas in which they were challenged. Merisotis and Phipps (1998, 2000) noted that developmental courses have been a regular part of the curriculum at Ivy League universities and other colleges from the Colonial period to the present. Harvard, the very first college, hired tutors to teach Latin and Greek to unprepared students. Developmental instruction was present from the start in the land-grant institutions. There were only 238,000 students enrolled in all of the nation’s universities in 1894, and 40% of freshmen were enrolled in “college prep” courses (Merisotis & Phipps, 1998). Prior to 1900, each postsecondary institution in the United States that required an entrance examination developed and used its own institution-specific battery of questions and essays to assess the preparation of applicants (Syverson, 2007). These were not particularly structured after secondary examinations.

As access grew and the demands of training skilled workers influenced industry, more importance was placed on postsecondary education and the baccalaureate degree. In the early part of the 19th century, the expansion of study

programs in major cities also led to the acceptance of previously excluded groups (such as women, blacks, and Roman Catholics) to the college or university (Theelin, 2004). The early 19th-century influence of industry and later the industrial revolution of the 1800s sparked an increased need for formal training and education. Since colonial times, basic education had been a central tenet of American democratic thought. By the 1860s, higher education was becoming more accessible, and many politicians and educators wanted to make it possible for all young Americans to receive some sort of advanced education. In 1862, the Morrill Act made it possible for the new western states to establish colleges for their citizens. This increased the need to educate the “unprepared.” To expedite the fulfillment of this need, the Morrill Act gave to every state that had remained in the Union a grant of 30,000 acres of public land for every member of its congressional delegation. The states were to sell this land and use the proceeds to establish colleges in engineering, agriculture and military science. Although originally started as agricultural and technical schools, many of these institutions grew, with additional state aid, into large public universities that over the years have educated millions of American citizens who otherwise might not have been able to afford college or developmental education. The act helped bring the expansion of industrialization to the forefront by providing an opportunity to enhance learning and technology through greater access. Philanthropists also helped drive academic growth and access in both the 19th and 20th centuries. Great industrialists like J. D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie donated millions of dollars to educational reform and the establishment of developmental

programs. These endowments provided a greater means of access to specific learners by establishing definite programs to enhance training, remediate students, or assist students financially. The monies donated in certain instances also helped save particular university needs already established but in monetary distress. The time had come to articulate the needs of learners between secondary and higher education. This plan included developmental education. Postsecondary administrators in the late 19th and early 20th centuries knew that what was taught in elementary and secondary schools and how effectively it was taught affected the intellectual atmosphere of colleges (Toby, 2002).

As scientific research and advancements in technology intensified, people experimented with questioning what once were standards set for all aspects of society. The rise and fall of the economy also had some responsibility for changing the needs of higher education in the United States. These significant markers, along with individuals' ambition to enhance their status in society, have aided in the development of the present HED system. Thus, in the 19th century, colleges began to offer new teaching "methods" and experimental programs to create a shift from the normal routine of memorization and recitation. Thelin (2004) confirmed that this transition was important to the genesis of the "useful arts" that stemmed from the "new national period." Although most occupations had little or no certification or training requirements, new signs of interest in formal training in such fields as science, engineering, and farming caused colleges to develop new programs to satisfy the needs of the changing population of students and to ensure that these students were prepared with the basic skills

necessary to complete requirements. This was enhanced by the need within the economy for workers in skilled positions. Newer technology and a desire to utilize advances made in industry and science **were larger forces that sparked** the new interest in science and engineering. Institutions had a strong desire to remain “current” and were basically dared to transform so as to attract interested students. Curricula continued to expand beyond the liberal arts and included disciplines such as medicine, law, and commerce. What this transition did was pave the way for future generations of students to find relevance in the standard of furthering education at the postsecondary level. By increasing access to education, one also increases the number of students studying at higher education institutions. High growth rates increase the chances for academic innovation (Trow, 1973) and therefore force some egalitarian standard that will be attainable for people at all levels of society, including those students needing developmental courses. No longer did the elite college enjoy the status of being the only formal place of education in America. Rather, underlying factors such as academic standards, size, and governance that helped to broaden and diversify access were the same factors that helped paint a “thick line” between the elite and mass models.

The importance of the academic degree grew tremendously in the 1900s. This need was a determining factor in enhancing the popularity of higher education in America while causing the diversification of academic programs at colleges and universities. One can argue that the desire to obtain a degree for the purpose of job development or social status was a major cause of the emergence of the mass institution (Thelin, 2004). Although the turn of the century brought

an influx in enrollment, little change occurred with regard to policies for the increased number of underprepared students, who now were matriculating in all types of institutions. According to Merisotis & Phipps (1998), “over half of the students enrolled in Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Columbia did not meet entrance requirements and therefore were placed in developmental courses” (p. 12). Further, the mid-20th century saw the establishment of the G.I. Bill of Rights (1944), which provided greater access to higher education for those men and women who served in the military. Greater numbers of “tutors” were needed after the passage of the bill (Merisotis & Phipps, 1998), given that as much as one-third of the population could potentially benefit from the elaborate plan of veterans’ benefits between the 1940 and 1973 draft years.

With the exponential influx of postsecondary institutions and the inclusion of federal and state funding in education, guidelines were established to hold specific factions of both secondary and higher education accountable. Expected outcomes were placed on administration, faculty, and students concerning testing and preparedness. Thus, the remediation of basic skills became a necessary staple in postsecondary education. By the late 1980s, both federal and state officials recognized that education reforms that had taken place were inadequate. While student achievement had improved, it was not “high” or widespread enough to meet the demands of citizenship and an increasingly competitive global economy. These same concerns were echoed several years later, when 41% of 12th-grade students graduating in 1992 took developmental courses in postsecondary institutions (Adelman, 2004). In response, policymakers and educators urged

states and the federal government to set challenging standards for student performance and to require all students to meet those standards. Student performance was considered further with the federal acceptance of *Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994*. This act provided funding for states in order to generate academic standards and related assessments. Still, secondary and tertiary systems did not meet eye-to-eye on what skills students needed to master to be considered well-educated adults, prepared for the workforce. In 1994, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which changed to the Improving America's School Act, had made it a requirement for states to set challenging standards for student performance, create assessments aligned with those standards, and develop systems to measure student performance against the standards (Thompson & Barnes, 2007). However, many of these secondary assessment standards were not aligned to the needs and criteria established by higher education institutions.

Then, on January 8, 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act was passed and made strict provisions for narrowing achievement gaps and improving public schools. **NCLB** requires that all children be assessed each year in order to show adequate yearly progress in reading and mathematics. The law further acknowledges that standards, accountability, teacher quality, and options for students are vital for improving student achievement, and that collaboration among the federal government, states, and school districts (based on results rather than simple compliance) will bring about those improvements (Thompson & Barnes, 2007). Before NCLB, federal funds were distributed through a

competitive grant process. With NCLB, funding distribution was based on populations to ensure that money was distributed to every state for all English language learners in the country (Paige, 2003). This funding is used by secondary institutions to provide instruction to ensure students are deemed proficient on standardized assessments that test basic-skills aptitude and specific higher order thinking skills in preparation for postsecondary plans. NCLB has affected students, classrooms, and school districts more than any other federal education law in our country's history. Almost every aspect of education has been affected by the statute. The law represents a logical progression of nearly two decades of reform that began with *A Nation at Risk* (Thompson & Barnes, 2007), the 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). After those findings, almost every state increased graduation requirements, added tests of student achievement, and ensured teachers were considered highly qualified to help decrease the expectations gap that was widening between secondary and HED. Currently, 25 states have or will have by 2012 secondary school exams with implications for graduation. These specific states enroll approximately 70% of public school students in the nation (Center on Education Policy, 2006). Although most students meet the requirements established in conjunction with NCLB, many need to remediate basic skills upon entering college. This occurs due to below-proficient performance on placement tests and other assessments.

Basic Skills Assessment Reform

In higher education in the 21st century, students need not only to understand the basics, but also to think critically, analyze, and make inferences (Bond, 1994). Helping students develop these skills requires changes in assessment at the institutional level along with new approaches to large-scale, high-stakes assessment. Many specific reform initiatives help give researchers and scholars alike an insight into higher education. These reforms envelop many facets of the higher education community when considering faculty, students, student affairs, and governance. There has been widespread belief that colleges and universities are not articulating with secondary educational systems to help all learners achieve at the levels that are needed. It has been a concern that the way secondary educators teach students, as well as how colleges assess them, does not always give students the knowledge or skills needed to be successful in tertiary settings. Student assessment has been an active reform that has been debated among experts in higher education since the latter half of the 20th century. This reform pressed all colleges and universities to measure the educational progress of students, both prior to and during matriculation, with notable success.

Assessment as a reform movement began in the early 1980s, prompted by calls for greater accountability by governors of several states. States pressed for greater evidence on the outcomes of college study, and some imposed new requirements on colleges, including annual reporting on institutional performance or a revamping of academic programs. College accreditors also took a strong stand, requiring that academic programs be redesigned to link curriculum to the

outcomes that were being assessed (Glidden, 1998). It was soon implied that students entering college were “behind” in basic skills literacy, and college faculty were spending too much time **remediating students to prepare** them for the rigor of postsecondary curriculum. This also caused students to be “delayed” somewhat in their college course plan. Stakeholders of higher education took the assessment reform initiative seriously and, although institutions worked with governmental and accreditation agencies alike, college and university faculties were encouraged to develop assessments and procedures that would measure their own “needs.”

A major tenet of the reform was the standardization of placement assessments for incoming students. *Achieving the Dream (Community Colleges Count)* is a major component of research policy that acts as a primary source, as it is considered a fundamental text that defines the importance of placement assessment reform. Collins (2008) has utilized higher educational policy to enhance standardized testing and help improve student success rates by redesigning placement assessments. Placement tests used as standardized assessments can help increase student success by accurately assessing student skills and placing students in the courses they need. According to this study, assessment reform would help set cut score standards, specify assessment instruments, and articulate the protocols and procedures to be used uniformly across a state’s community college system (Collins, 2008).

Placement assessment policies can also improve the college readiness of incoming students by setting clear expectations. Specific developments and

trends in higher education reflect national standardization as testing reform continues to provide a rationale for policy considerations including specific assessment types, cut scores, and national curriculums. The reform authors also felt both internal and external pressures for change when considering policies within the assessment framework. Internal pressures included low student success rates, inconsistent entrance standards, transfer barriers, inconsistent data, and unclear course sequences. External pressures stemmed from limited alignment K–20, academic quality, and concerns from policymakers (Collins, 2008). Collins insisted in *Dream* that placement assessment reform can be an important lever for increasing student success, especially in the community college. These assessments must better align to secondary education standards in order to truly measure student basic-skills proficiency. The reform strives to ensure a strict level of standardization of all parts in order to establish the effective delivery of education. The literature also insists that further research will be needed to fully understand the impact that assessment reform will have on student outcomes. Regardless, clear standards that are common across colleges make it easier for states to compare the rates at which students progress through programs (Collins, 2008) and are prepared for college.

Student assessment is viewed nationally as the “pivotal piece” around school reform and improvement (Roeber, 1995). There is widespread belief that secondary schools are not helping all students achieve at the levels that are needed. Further concerns have been raised regarding the way teachers and professors teach students as well as the way they assess them. It is also a

perception in some higher education circles that programs and curricula do not always lead students to acquire and apply needed knowledge or skills appropriately. At the national and state levels, content standards containing the types of knowledge, skills, and behaviors now believed to be needed for all students to achieve at high levels continue to be developed (Roeber, 1995). Assessment is important because it is widely believed that what gets assessed is what gets taught, and that the format of assessment influences the format of learning and teaching (O'Day & Smith, 1993). However, outside pressure on testing programs can sometimes be ignored by local educators (Smith & Cohen, 1991), and the lack of articulation between secondary and higher education continues to prove that what is taught in high schools is not assessed in college.

Assessing students in higher educational institutions as a method of measuring readiness is an important protocol with two major considerations. First, assessments in higher education provide faculties and students with a knowledge base to give some insight into the aptitude of students while further examining the articulation between secondary and college programs and the proficiency of curriculum. Standardized assessment will lead to more congruency between programs, especially if said assessments become nationally utilized. As Collins (2008) noted in *Dream*, placement assessment reform includes major similarities and articulation among states to be standardized.

A second consideration involves the need for assessments in an attempt to standardize the higher education system as a whole. As a system, American

higher education proves the uniqueness of the HED community by celebrating differences among colleges and universities. It is commonsense, somewhat, to understand that students choose different institutions of higher education for different and personal reasons. Obviously, one such reason is a strong academic stature, in that students choose to matriculate at an institution based on its programs, majors, and so on. In order to attend a college or university, students are assessed nationally on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, or SAT. This assessment provides colleges with information to help make admissions decisions and place students in proper degree programs. Institutions assess students further with placement or entrance exams to assure that students will be successful in programs and meet the expectations set forth by accreditors and competing universities. Using assessments is important to the validity of a program and the success students have when measuring specific aptitudes and outcomes. Higher education institutions will not utilize secondary standardized tests or high school grades to establish student basic-skills proficiency rates; rather, additional assessments decide the basic-skills proficiency of students, although proficiency has already been established through the completion of high school graduation requirements. The assessment reform attempts to include a national standardized insertion of placement tests that “mesh” the preparation of secondary education with the needs of higher education. Assessment reform should occur along with professional development, instructional development, and other strategies designed to assure that all of the changes are mutually supported (Roerber, 1995).

Developmental course curricula are a direct result of diminished basic-skills attainment. As secondary state assessments, which attempt to test students' aptitude for and beyond basic skills, are approved under NCLB, students who score proficient on an assessment in high school should not be deemed less proficient after taking a college placement examination. When one considers these assessments, what first comes to mind is the "blame game." When the scores are analyzed and are below proficiency in particular basic areas, institutions begin to point fingers, with higher education blaming secondary education and vice versa. Another concern stems from inconsistencies between colleges and universities when considering the placement assessments they are utilizing and methods of scoring to identify proficiencies and deficiencies in reading and mathematics. When considering colleges and universities outside of New Jersey, for example, one must concede that these institutions are not familiar with the proficiency ratings and capabilities of the test established to assess high school skills known as the HSPA. Hence the reasoning for NCLB a national piece of legislation giving local government education agencies the right to declare what is and is not the preferred level of aptitude for high school students in each particular state. A disconnect remains between what a college or university expects of its students and how secondary institutions prepare students for acceptance to colleges and universities. This causes state assessments to be different and customized while negating the argument that a nationally based assessment would be considered fair. Educators should be taken aback by the fact that the administrators and policymakers in higher education and secondary

systems within the same state cannot even articulate with one another. In fact, many higher education institutions do not even take into consideration the high school academic achievements of individual students who may have scored below proficiency on their college entrance assessments. Postsecondary leadership is a critical measure in ensuring that high school graduates are prepared for “postsecondary success” (Achieve, 2009b). “A common vision of a well-integrated educational system extending from birth through postsecondary education is essential” (State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2003). Without serious articulation and standardization between the two facets, a correlation between the core standards and the skill sets measured on college basic skills/placement tests will never become a reality. The onus is placed on faculty to perform and produce results with students not proficient in assessed areas. This current problem in bridging the gap between secondary and higher education is a major reason why reform of assessments became a national movement several decades ago.

Core Curriculum and Standards

There is an obvious and extremely important relationship between curriculum and instruction. Education systems base these areas on sets of standards to be utilized as a guideline or vehicle to advance learning. The purpose of education is to develop not only knowledge and skills, but also the ability to use one’s knowledge and skills effectively (Sternberg, Reznitskaya, &

Jarvin, 2007). According to Achieve (2006), New Jersey is one of only 19 states to report that high school standards are aligned with postsecondary expectations, scoring the highest above average in postsecondary readiness of all 50 states (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2009). However, rates of developmental courses in New Jersey colleges and universities provide evidence that this alignment is still unsettled. In order to analyze the lack of convergence between systems and identify the weaker area of curriculum when considering vertical articulation and student transition as they relate to basic-skills proficiency, I will study students' "college knowledge" as an indicator of student readiness. Analyzing and comparing the curriculum backbone of the New Jersey K–12 and HED systems will permit me to make strict comparisons between systems specific to considerations where postsecondary curricular standards are set to prepare students for college, or lack thereof. The 2009 New Jersey content standards are the framework for reforming teaching, learning, and leadership, and they are built on a foundation of professional standards and teacher development (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009).

The 2009 standards reflect current research, exemplary practices, national and state standards and standards from other countries. They were drafted by taskforces consisting of educators and experts recognized for their content area expertise and for demonstration of excellence as practitioners in their respective fields. (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009, p. 1)

The curriculum standards and progress indicators align with the knowledge and skills needed in each content area for postsecondary education and the workplace.

The New Jersey core standards integrate 21st-century knowledge and skills, emphasizing the integration of technology, interdisciplinary connections, and the

infusion of global perspectives. To meet the needs of the 21st-century learner and achieve the student outcomes prescribed by NCLB, the core standards, as aligned to 21st-century readiness, must blend thinking and innovation skills, information, media and ICT literacy, and life and career skills in the context of core academic subjects and across interdisciplinary themes (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007). Twenty-first century instruction must incorporate innovative, research-“backed” teaching strategies, modern learning technologies, and real-world resources. According to Sternberg and Sobotnik (2006), this approach to designing curriculum is well supported by academic research and is considered a curriculum that centers on “developing student competence in ‘the other 3 R’s.’” In this case, the “R’s” stand for *reasoning* (analytical, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills), *resilience* (life skills such as flexibility, adaptability, and self-reliance) and *responsibility*, which Sternberg and Sobotnik linked to wisdom, defined as “the application of intelligence, creativity and knowledge for a common good” (p. 32). The NJCCCS further develop the skills sets needed in contemporary “real world” situations, promote the use of inquiry- and problem-based approaches and higher order thinking skills, and infuse more in-depth, higher level learning to better prepare students in a “global environment” (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009).

In order to compare New Jersey’s developed core standards to those of what is accepted as a benchmark for college readiness, I have based the analysis on the attempted core initiative by the current federal administration, which has an apparent understanding that the K–12 and postsecondary “gap” is widening.

An alliance of state governors and top education officials has met to develop a template of common academic standards to which all K–12 students would be held (Miners, 2009). Known as *The Common Core State Standards Initiative*, it is received as a conjoined effort by the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) together with Achieve, ACT, and the College Board (CCSSO, 2009). The Core Standards identify essential college and career-ready skills and knowledge in reading, writing, speaking and listening across the disciplines. The standards consist of identified math and English skills students should master before high school graduation, set heightened expectations for students beyond current standards (which vary widely from state to state), and establish effective national consensus on core academic goals to help the United States keep pace with global competitors (Anderson, 2009). According to Anderson, “such agreement has proven elusive in the past because of a long tradition of local control over standards, testing, and curriculum” (p. 1). In language arts literacy, college-ready students would be able to analyze how word choices shape the meaning and tone of a text; develop a style and tone of writing appropriate to a task and audience; and respond constructively to advance a discussion and build on the input of others. In math, the proposal envisions that students would be able to solve systems of equations, find and interpret rates of change, and adapt probability models to solve real-world problems (Anderson, 2009). More specifically, the standards are outlined by strands within the following academic components:

Students who are college- and career- ready exhibit the following capacities in their reading, writing, and speaking and listening when

1. They demonstrate independence as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners.
2. They build strong content knowledge.
3. They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.
4. They comprehend as well as critique.
5. They privilege evidence (cite).
6. They care about precision.
7. They craft and look for structure.
8. They use technology strategically and capably.

Students who are college- and career- ready exhibit the following capacities in their mathematical competency:

1. Mathematical practice
2. Number
3. Quantity
4. Expressions
5. Equations
6. Functions
7. Modeling
8. Shape
9. Coordinates

10. Probability

11. Statistics (CCSSO, 2009)

Although a system of standards is being examined to prepare students for postsecondary education on a national level, states will still be responsible for assuring that instruction is established through curriculum to meet the specific needs of learners under NCLB. As per the document (CCSSO, 2009),

While this core standards document defines the outcomes all students need to reach to be college and career ready, many important decisions about curriculum will necessarily be left to states, districts, schools, teachers, professional organizations, and parents. For example, while the standards require that students read texts of sufficient complexity, quality, and range, this document does not contain a required reading list. If states and districts choose to develop one, they should look at the Reading Exemplars provided here to get a sense of the level of complexity students must be able to handle independently when they read. Educators can also model their efforts on reading lists from around the nation and the world as long as the texts ultimately included meet the range and content standards in this document. Standards today must ready students for competition and collaboration in a global, media-saturated environment. Colleges and universities have become international meeting-houses where people from across the globe learn with and from one another. At the same time, business today is truly a worldwide enterprise. Media-related technology helps shape what goes on in both college and the workplace; indeed, it has in some important ways reshaped the very nature of communication. Students who meet the Core Standards will have the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills to flourish in the diverse, rapidly changing environments of college and careers. (p. i)

Charging states with the autonomous task of setting curriculum standards and assessing student proficiency within these areas of instruction, NCLB has forced rigorous demands on public schools. College-aligned teaching, in conjunction with aligned standards, assessments, and courses, is a major factor in preparing students for college (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007). In New Jersey, the core curriculum content standards include indicator “strands” that are to be incorporated in teacher lessons and “peak” higher order thinking skills.

Content standards refer to the curriculum that students must know and be able to master. In terms of college placement and remediation, content standards can be thought of as what skills or knowledge are considered a requirement for entry into a specific course (Morgan & Michaelides, 2005). Only a few states have adopted their curriculum standards and tests with college success in mind (Olson, 2001). In New Jersey, Cumulative Progress Indicators (CPIs) are also embedded so faculty and administrators can monitor proficiency rates and ensure students remain on task when meeting these standards. In order to graduate from high school, all students must score proficient on the language arts literacy and mathematics sections of the HSPA. This assessment is aligned to the core curriculum standards, and students proficient in both areas have reached a satisfactory competency in basic-skills instruction. Proficiency in both areas fulfills the requirements set forth by NCLB and helps a district attain its AYP. Students who do not pass the assessment (i.e., score proficient) in their junior year may take the test two more times as a senior or complete an alternative assessment. In New Jersey, this alternate assessment of basic skills attainment is the AHSA. Students proficient in the AHSA have completed tasks to signify that they have attained a specific and acceptable level of basic skills competency at the end of high school. Therefore, in New Jersey, all students who graduate with a high school diploma have signified, under the tenets of the NCLB, that they have mastered a certain level of basic-skills proficiency prior to leaving high school. Although these assessments are federally certified, postsecondary institutions have determined that many New Jersey students do not have the basic skills

necessary to be successful in college. The American College Testing (ACT) organization defines preparation as the point at which a student's skills indicate he or she has a 70% chance of earning a C or better in a first-year college course (ACT, 2005). Due to their lack of preparedness in the view of colleges and universities, many of these students must take developmental courses before matriculating at any institution. This is not only a New Jersey-sensitive issue, but also a national concern. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only 17% of high school seniors are considered proficient in mathematics (Braswell et al., 2001) and 36% are proficient in reading (Grigg, Daane, Jin, & Campbell, 2003).

With college developmental rates high, efforts are underway to connect the standards students must meet to finish high school and the skills they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education (Olson, 2001). College readiness can be defined as the level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in a postsecondary setting (Conley, 2007b). The "chain of blame" is a metaphor used in educational circles to describe how "universities blame high schools, high schools blame the middle schools, and middle schools blame the elementary schools for poor student preparation" (Ponessa, 1996, p. 1). Forty-four percent of college faculty members say students are not well prepared for college-level writing, in contrast to the 90% of high school teachers who think students are prepared ("Companion Survey," 2006). Only 32% of all students leave high school qualified to attend 4-year colleges (Greene & Forster, 2003). According to Cox (2009),

faculty members' expectations reflect specific assumptions about what constitutes an acceptable college student performance. Sometimes the assumptions about appropriate social behavior and academic performance are class- or race-based, embodying norms and values that are not universally held or even acknowledged. Students can easily arrive at college without understanding what is expected or how to meet the expectations. Being unprepared to meet certain expectations, however, is not the same as being unable to meet them . . . if a student's style of participation is different from the norm, for example, an instructor may believe that the student is not as capable as the others. (p. 11)

Inadequate high school preparation is compounded by poor alignment between high schools and colleges, which often creates an "expectations gap" between what colleges require and what high schools produce. The result is a high level of remediation by colleges, a practice that is both costly and inefficient (Spellings Commission, 2006). The transition of students from secondary to postsecondary institutions has always given cause for concerns that students are not prepared for collegiate studies by secondary education. Sixty-five percent of college professors do not believe high school standards prepare students for college (ACT, 2007). What exactly constitutes "college-level work" is by no means clear, as institutions differ and there are different expectations even within single institutions. More 2005 high school graduates completed a range of higher level courses (such as physics and calculus) during their high school years than had done so in previous years. The rigor of graduates' curriculum levels is an important factor associated with the graduates' entry and success in postsecondary education (Horn & Nuñez, 2000); however, a recent report from ACT (2007) found that a majority of high school students took core mathematics and science courses but did not gain college readiness skills (60% and 74%, respectively).

Each college follows its own set of practices, and this leads to considerable variety when considering remediation and how **students are assessed on levels** of basic-skills proficiency (Attewell et al., 2006). In studying the gap, Venezia et al. (2003) evaluated the transition from high school to college:

high school assessments often stress different knowledge and skills than do college entrance and placement requirements. Similarly, the coursework between high school and college is not connected; students graduate from high school under one set of standards and, three months later, are required to meet a whole new set of standards in college. Current data systems are not equipped to address students' need across systems, and no one is held accountable for issues related to student transitions from high school to college (p. 1).

It is somewhat difficult to come to the realization that both the secondary and postsecondary systems in New Jersey are so incongruous in articulating the basic skills of individual students, especially in the light of NCLB and state requirements. One may consider some differences between student preparedness in secondary institutions of one state when compared to postsecondary institutions (non-elites) in other states and areas of the country. What is taught and what is expected of a high school student in every state is not always what is expected once the student arrives at college. In other words, a senior attending high school in New Jersey and matriculating at Pennsylvania State University as an incoming freshman has been assessed differently than seniors in Pennsylvania high schools. Regardless, the legislation of NCLB provides that proficiency in state assessments certifies that students have met all basic-skills requirements. While no secondary state exam was developed with the sole intent of aligning specifically with postsecondary education, it is important to understand the connection to basic-skills proficiency when given the wide-ranging use of high school examinations

across the country (Brown & Conley, 2007). In fact, legislators and education officials in New Jersey are only “in process” of administering college readiness tests in secondary institutions and had only begun to align high schools with college expectations in 2009 (Achieve, 2009a) after being faced with the realization that one-third of American college students have to enroll in developmental classes (Pope, 2008). More complex is the notion that students prepared by secondary institutions in a particular state, who then matriculate at a college or university in that same state, do not meet the basic skills levels as identified by the postsecondary institution.

There is a lack of compatibility between high school exit standards and college admission requirements. Experts say that the “gap” has been created because most secondary school tests focus on minimum competency rather than the knowledge and skills identified to be successful in college (Gilroy, 2003). The argument for the proverbial “gap” in student preparedness through this transition seems to revolve around two distinct considerations. First, college faculty feel that secondary educators are not preparing students adequately for the college curriculum, spotlighted by the fact that as many as 1 million students fail placement exams every year upon entering college and over one-third of all college students need developmental courses in order to acquire basic academic skills (Strong American Schools, 2008). Most secondary students believe the high school curriculum is designed to ready students for success in postsecondary education (Conley, 2005a). Six out of 10 developmental students in college said they should have been challenged more in high school (“Not Ready for College,”

2008). The students who enroll in developmental education include some of the nation's most motivated students. A 2008 survey of developmental students, completed by the Strong American Schools project (2008), found that

Four out of five developmental students had a high school grade point average of 3.0 or higher.

More than half described themselves as good students who worked hard and nearly always completed high school assignments.

Few college developmental students found their high school courses to be particularly challenging.

Fifty-nine percent of developmental education students report that their high school classes were easy.

Nearly half would have preferred that their high school classes had been harder so that they would have been better prepared for college.

In secondary education's defense, meeting the expectations set forth by federal and state guidelines should align with the expectations established by college faculty and administration. This must be considered, as secondary curricula reflect curriculum standards set by state departments of education in strict conjunction with the tenets of NCLB. Nearly four out of five developmental students in college have a high school grade point average of B or better ("Not ready for College," 2008). If that average is aligned to the basic-skills standards set forth by NCLB, then why is there remediation for these students in tertiary institutions? Although grades and tests may measure student aptitude in specific curriculum areas, it is again noted that the curriculum defines the set standards outlined in NCLB.

The second consideration is that faculty and administrators in colleges and universities around the country are setting higher standards than those established by state departments of education for graduation purposes as guided by NCLB. Studies show that the overwhelming majority of both college and high school faculty and administrators are unaware of the standards and assessments being used by their counterparts in the other sector (Spellings Commission, 2006). This may be viewed as a positioning of power from both systems; however, the inability to articulate the needs of one system to the next causes a disjunction. A graduating high school senior who is confidently reading (with 75% comprehension) at the average level of 11th and 12th grade texts may enter a university 3 months later where the average text readability results in less than 50% comprehension for that student because there is a substantial gap in text demand between widely used high school textbooks and typical postsecondary textbooks (Williamson, 2008). This is just one example of how important articulation is between higher and secondary education.

In an attempt to monitor secondary-skill proficiency, many colleges and universities use entrance exams (i.e., Accuplacer, ACT) to assess student readiness for college. Only 24% of 2010 high school graduates met all four of ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks (ACT, 2011), compared to fewer than 22% of the 1.2 million students who took the ACT college-entrance examinations in 2004 who were considered ready for college-level work in the core subjects of mathematics, English, and science (ACT, 2005). Governors continue to be encouraged to call for statewide common course agreements that ensure that high

school students' college-level work will one day help them attain credit toward a postsecondary credential (NGA, 2005).

Parental Involvement, College, and Readiness

Parents play a key role in their children's literacy development and school success (Policastro, Mazeski, & McTague, 2010). Students are very influenced by the actions of a parent and the awareness parents place on specific components of responsibility, including education. In terms of secondary education and student decisions to enter higher education, the research provides evidence to support the notion that parental involvement adds to positive student academic preparation for college (Lee, 1993; Muller, 1993; Zick, Bryant, & Osterbacka, 2001) as well as student aspirations for college enrollment (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Horn, 1998; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Perna, 2000).

A recent study on parental influences and college (Rowan–Kenyon, Bell & Perna, 2008) indicated that “parents support and encourage college opportunity through their expectations for their children’s educational and occupational attainment, discussions with their children about college-related activities, efforts to take their children to visit colleges, and ability and willingness to pay college prices” (p. 571). Parents expose their children to college based on their own educational attainment. “College educated” parents in this study (2008) made it clear that their children were expected to follow in their footsteps and go on to college; however, parents who had not attended college were less able to give this same directive to their children. In addition to differences by parents’ educational attainment, variations in involvement are also based on socioeconomic status,

language barriers, and other critical characteristics. Unfortunately, these unavoidable factors help widen the expectations gap, creating different advantages and disadvantages for all students.

In the study of Rowan–Kenyon’s et. al. in 2008, parents at what was considered a “low-resource” school in California reported that each had encouraged his or her children to enroll in college; however, when they were asked more specifically “how they help their students acquire necessary information,” one of the parents responded, “I will say mainly through the high school . . . because I am not familiar with universities and their fields or anything else like major fields, and like what universities have an emphasis in a certain area” (p. 572). Here, we recognize that certain groups of parents, especially those who may not be considered “college-educated,” may realize the importance of postsecondary education for their children but not possess the proverbial “know-how” to direct them to the proper vehicle that will deliver the appropriate information. This finding is consistent with what was found in a study by Lareau (1987), where a sample of first- and second-grade parents and teachers showed that some parents were already more dependent on the school to provide necessary college-related guidance and pertinent information.

Along with some primary schools, secondary schools provide parents with informational materials to ensure that they have the resources needed for students to make a smooth transition to postsecondary education. Minimally, high schools utilize financial aid nights, newsletters, websites, and college fairs to entice parents to become involved in the next step of the educational process. Further,

recruitment materials that colleges mail to high school students may stimulate conversations between parents and children about a variety of topics related to college enrollment. Unfortunately, parental attendance at these events also correlates with student achievement (Rowan–Kenyon et al., 2008), and not all parents are knowledgeable about the characteristics of a state’s higher education system. According to the Rowan–Kenyon et al. study,

some parents, especially immigrants, lack this knowledge (college characteristics). Because many of these parents have not gone to college themselves, “college” is a monolithic concept with no perceived distinctions in rigor or curricular offerings. Consequently, these parents are unable to assist their students in discerning the most appropriate options. (p. 577)

Chapter III

Research Methods

This study was aimed at understanding the perceptions of proficient high school graduates with regard to why they were “placed” in a developmental college program, and the specific “college knowledge” these students attained in secondary school. I conducted a descriptive study at one community college using qualitative methods. Interviews were conducted to identify the impact of the research questions and reasoning behind divergence as it pertained to student knowledge, college readiness, and articulation between secondary and postsecondary institutions in New Jersey. A purposeful sample was obtained of students at Rausch Community College, New Jersey. Nine interviews were conducted by me to provide greater insight into the research with respect to identifying the specific factors leading to the divergence between secondary education and basic-skills assessment at the college.

Using a qualitative model afforded me the opportunity to “capture data” on the perceptions of student subjects, through an “attentive and understanding” process (Wolcott, 1992, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research is conducted through an intense contact with a “life” situation, “reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies, and organizations” (Wolcott, 1992, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). Utilizing this model, I was able to incorporate specific strategies that permitted me to analyze data obtained in the

fieldwork experiences encountered with each subject. Through the analysis of conversations and interview strategies including oral history, I had the ability to observe participants recalling specific data and engaging in dialogue with regard to perceptions about their performance. Qualitative research methods further permitted me to isolate certain themes that needed additional discussion or were not anticipated at the onset of the study.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research assumes that the researcher is an integral part of the research process (Byrne, 2001). As an educator in a local K–12 district and a faculty member at RCC, I find it interesting that I prepare students to leave one venue successfully but have fallen short in preparing them for courses when assessed by the other venue. I have a vested role in the research and data gathered through this study, as I have been a secondary administrator for nearly 16 years and a postsecondary faculty member, teaching both developmental and composition English in community college. With this experience, I was able to better understand the readiness students perceived they received from secondary education as it related to the KSUS standards. Further, when conducting the interviews, I was able to question students' methods and procedures with regard to their initial placement in developmental English, as I was familiar with the protocols.

It was important for this study to ensure that each second interview conducted added to the parameters established from the first interview. This allowed me to recognize certain trends in curricular articulation, where students remembered studying topics in both secondary and postsecondary settings. The research design was such that a second meeting with subjects came almost midsemester. This provided students with an appropriate amount of time to become engaged in the basic-skills curriculum and developmental program, an important consideration when discussing the “gap” and lack of convergence between secondary academic standards and postsecondary readiness.

Student Interviews

Student volunteers were solicited from upper level basic skills classes that I was invited to visit after soliciting professors during orientation meetings at the start of the semester. I explained to the students solicited that the study required two personal interviews designed to obtain information about secondary learning experiences and their perceptions as to why they were enrolled in a developmental English course. Students who sat and completed both interviews were given a \$20 gift card for their time commitment to the study. The first interview was held towards the beginning of the fall semester, and questions were designed to gather data with regard to the subject’s high school experiences and transition to college (Session I). The second set of interviews (Session II) was conducted at the midpoint of the semester, and questions focused on obtaining data about student

experiences in college and a “follow-up” from answers to questions asked during Session I. After a subject sample was established, two separate interviews were scheduled for each of the 5 students, with each individual session lasting approximately 1 hour. Interviews were scheduled with respect to subject schedules and time constraints. Interview locations were in general-public areas of the library, pursuant to the comfort of the subjects, although a degree of privacy was maintained in order to provide a professional and confidential working environment. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service and me. Proper storage of tapes/transcripts has occurred to preserve the rights of the subjects and to enable review for future analysis.

All of the information obtained was held confidential and was only used to complete the study or develop future research questions. Sample subjects who met the study criteria were chosen on a “first-come, first-served” basis. Five in-depth interviews permitted me to concentrate on specific student experiences and level of college-readiness. Overall, nine interviews were conducted by me to gain data with regard to secondary preparation and HED academic readiness.

The initial interview, which took place several weeks into the semester after solicitation and schedules were attenuated, permitted me as the researcher to establish a strong foundation when considering the student subject’s secondary experience and current configuration at RCC. A strong emphasis was placed on family relationships and how these relationships led to the completion of tasks

and whether family influenced the student to matriculate in HED. These initial discussions provided me with an ethnographic view of the relationship of the subjects when considering important people (i.e., parents, friends, counselors) and events in their lives; it truly helped me build confidence with them that led directly to the second, intense interview session.

A few weeks past midsemester, I completed the second interviews with study subjects, dealing more intimately with their studies in secondary education in order to show whether they did or did not possess the college knowledge needed under the KSUS to be successful college freshmen; what they perceived as the reasoning behind their being scheduled for a developmental English course; and what they felt could have contributed to their lack of college readiness as dictated by RCC.

All but one of the students interviewed (Jake) sat for both interviews, which provided me with students' perspectives on the program at the beginning of the semester and then of the course itself after the semester continued, where second interviews reached the mid-semester mark. The final student did not complete the semester.

So that members of my own class could be included in the study, students completed a curriculum assignment and process essay that related to college readiness, college knowledge, and secondary preparation. Students were asked to anonymously resubmit essays at the end of the semester if they met specific study criteria. Twelve essays were collected and analyzed for the study.

During the face-to-face interviews, students were guided by scripted questions relative to the research questions, secondary experiences, and their reactions to their experiences in both secondary and higher education. The “backbone” of the interview consisted of questions for students to comment and elaborate on within an academic dialogue. Each question in the queue directly related to specific knowledge as it pertained to college readiness and standards. The first set (Appendix A) includes questions with regard to specific skills and experiences students recall in secondary education. The second (Appendix B) contains a series of questions to invoke responses with regard to the student’s HED experiences to date. Both sets of questions include similar interrogatory statements in order to identify skills and “college knowledge.” Some of these areas include academic counseling, leadership, and prior relative knowledge with regard to course curriculum and instruction.

Research Site

The site of the study was Rausch Community College (RCC) in New Jersey. I chose this site due to its location and my interest in learning about the disconnect between the college and local high schools with regard to student placement and developmental courses. There are many students who graduated from high school from the communities directly surrounding Rausch who are placed in developmental courses. The disconnect between these high schools and

their neighboring community college was an important consideration when conducting this study.

The county Board of Chosen Freeholders in the mid 1900s established RCC in order to provide affordable, high-quality educational programs to county residents. One of the larger student-base populations of the 19 state community colleges, RCC's enrollment for 2009 was just under 20,000 students spanning 90 academic-degree programs. Rausch serves a large number of students with disabilities in the state, where 99% test into developmental programs. In the Fall 2003 semester, 60% of first-time freshmen tested into developmental English courses, and 74% tested into developmental mathematics courses (Commission on HED, 2006). As recently as 2008, RCC enrolled nearly 69% of its overall approximately 3,000 first-time, full-time students in developmental courses; 59% or approximately 1,700 first-time, full-time students tested into English developmental courses (RCC).

During the fall semester of 2010, RCC scheduled approximately 50 sections of higher level developmental English. My access to RCC students should have been greater due to my relationship to specific programs and college personnel. Further, it was my hope that the analysis of my study and results would impact both the college readiness requirements at RCC and secondary school districts sending students to Rausch College, resulting in a greater convergence of standards between secondary systems and HED.

Writing Responses

As it was important that all eligible students had the ability to participate in this study, I also surveyed students who met the specific study criteria in the upper-level basic skills course that I taught during the study semester at RCC. I solicited these student responses under conditions of strict anonymity and within the guidelines established in the class curriculum. As in past semesters, students were given an essay assignment to explain why they felt they had been scheduled for a developmental English class. Students were provided questions to use as a guide for preparing the body paragraphs of the essay. These questions mirrored those asked by me of study participants during the qualitative interview process. Students in my class must complete this assignment for a grade as part of the curriculum and course syllabus. I then solicited these additional student responses through guidelines established within the class curriculum. Students were directed to complete the papers using the same protocol they employed for all other assignments. I gave each student with a paper credit for completing the assignment by grading the paper for content pursuant to the writing process (i.e., thesis statement, body paragraphs, conclusion paragraph, grammar, etc.) and not specific content. I returned the papers to my students within 1 week. At that time, I explained my research to the class and asked student volunteers to submit their papers into a pile if they met the study criteria and would permit me to utilize their answers in the research as data. This procedure did not present any type of conflict of interest or coercion, as (a) the papers were graded prior to the solicitation; (b) papers were graded on process and not content; and (c) only

students who met the criteria had the ability to partake in the study. Therefore, I would not have been aware of any student unwilling to participate, as he or she would have been masked by those students who did not qualify. To summarize, these essay questions answered by the participants helped to enhance the study by providing additional information, tracking patterns, and showing relationships between subjects and their responses. The data collected helped me confirm some of the perceptions also described by the interview participants, supporting the idea that specific categories of parental involvement and guidance toward college were areas lacking when considering readiness.

Study Participants

A purposeful sample of 5 students meeting specific criteria was chosen as subjects for the interviews. All students in the sample were enrolled in a developmental course at RCC, and 4 had not been removed from secondary education for more than 1 year. Students in the sample had graduated from a New Jersey high school through traditional means (not ASHA) and were enrolled in an upper tier developmental English course at RCC. These students were solicited from colleagues' classes through survey and volunteer participation after meeting specific criteria. I solicited students to participate who (a) believed they performed well in high school academics as evidenced by class rank, grade point average, or enrollment in honors and/or advanced placement courses; (b) achieved proficient scores on assessments, tests, and secondary report cards; and (c)

believed they should not have been scheduled for developmental classes upon matriculating at RCC.

Interview Participants

Max

At the time of this study, Max was a 19-year-old Asian student in his first semester at Rausch College. Originally, Max had decided to attempt to enroll in community college in California, but he had decided to return to his family and friends in New Jersey at the very end of the summer of 2010. He registered for Rausch the week before the semester started. A former high school athlete, Max has an athletic build and exudes a certain confidence when discussing his future plans and goals.

Max's parents are both divorced and he has two siblings who attended Ivy League universities and now hold prominent positions in the business world. A bright student, Max was enrolled in honors courses in his junior and senior years in high school and held a high class rank. He decided to apply to community college because he was unsure of his college plans and future career path. He claims that his family approved of his applying to community college and that his mother is supportive of any path he chooses to follow.

Maya

Maya did not enter college directly from high school, choosing to attend RCC to pursue a lifelong dream of becoming a social worker or psychologist. An African American woman who is somewhat opinionated about race relations and the effects of stereotypes, Maya was raised by her mother after her father passed away when she was a youth. Her mother was college-educated and stressed the importance of education to Maya on a daily basis. **Maya recalls having tutors** for different subjects and going to summer enrichment classes to enhance her education. Maya also attended private schools early in **her education** and became very involved in student life. Her return to education was self-motivated, where community college provided an ideal structure to schedule the classes and program she desired around a hectic work schedule. She feels strongly that she brings a different dynamic to her classes, providing insight from the “real” world to fellow students in her class who are right out of high school.

In considering that Maya had been removed from the school environment for some time but had a successful work career, her testing into developmental English is somewhat welcomed; however, it is an interesting scenario, as Maya has utilized her writing skills throughout every component of her job, never realizing that her ability to write was below any type of proficient level. It seems that her successful employment provides evidence that her writing skills may be acceptable for the workforce but not ready for postsecondary education. Although Maya felt that this course might “refresh” her writing skills and provide

her with some confidence as she returned to school after an absence, she felt that the process that brought her to take the developmental class must be revamped.

Marco

Directly out of high school, Marco was the first in his family to enter college. Not really sure what 4-year college he was interested in attending, Marco chose to matriculate at Rausch to begin college without the “rush” of a commitment to enter university life. He also stated that he lacked the appropriate credits to matriculate at a 4-year college of his choice. Marco was an above-average student in high school, working hard to complete high school in reputable standing. Marco also explained that he was going to apply for 4-year colleges at the end of this semester, prior to receiving his associates degree or any additional credits taken toward a “major.”

Molly

A very confident Latino student who was in her late teens during the fall semester of 2010, Molly told me that her main goal was not to end up like her brothers, who were basically “dropouts.” A female athlete and classroom debater, Molly was the most outspoken of the subjects, especially when she conveyed that she did not belong in the developmental class. Her goal is to be an English teacher, and she had already applied to several universities by the time of our second interview. Molly also claims to have done some amateur writing, including short stories and several biographical pieces. She was successful in upper level English classes in high school and thought she had passed the college

placement examination. Molly stated that she enrolled in the community college because she wasn't sure which 4-year college she was ready to attend, citing that many of her choices wanted her to declare/announce a major prior to matriculating and she was not ready to make that decision. She intimated that RCC was to some degree an extension of high school (*"See the thing is ... I don't really consider Rausch a college.... Like I know it's 'Rausch Community College,' but this is not the ultimate experience that I've envisioned, so..."*) but was a good "stepping stone" before entering a 4-year college.

Jake

When the study was conducted, Jake was a student in his late teens whose ethnicity stemmed from Eastern Europe. Jake came across as an extremely intelligent student, claiming that he even passed the challenge test (given to students during the first week of the semester if the instructor feels he/she does not belong in developmental English) but could not be placed in English I because all the sections that fit his schedule were filled by early semester. Jake also seemed the most resistant of the group, apprehensive about answering several questions but showing an eagerness to "get his story out." He truly felt he did not belong in the course, noting that his performance on the placement test was poor because of his lack of interest in doing well in either the English or mathematics categories.

Unfortunately, I could not locate Jake for a second interview midsemester, and all attempts at contacting him failed. Upon further investigation, it became

apparent that Jake might have dropped out of the semester prior to the midpoint mark.

Transcription, Coding, and Analysis

Each interview was transcribed by an approved transcription service and me and then coded to signify the analysis of the data while keeping the relations between interviews intact (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I utilized thematic analysis as a process for encoding the qualitative data creating an explicit “code” that included a list of themes and related indicators (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis involves three distinct stages:

Stage 1 deciding on sampling and design issues;

Stage 2 developing themes and a code; and

Stage 3 validating and using the code (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 29).

Stage 2 further includes several ways to develop a thematic code including theory- driven, research-driven, or inductive (derived from “raw” data) approaches. As stage 1 was completed when considering sample and study design, the proceeding subsections describe the latter stages of thematic analysis as each relates to this study.

Codebook

According to Boyatzis (1998), “a theme is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations,

and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (p. 4). Using this framework, I created a preliminary list of codes, initially generating several themes deductively (Appendix D) from theory and related research, as well as with respect to my research questions to ensure that the proper linkages for college readiness could be accurately recorded. These codes were defined (Appendix E) to give both the reader and me a better understanding of the possible common threads sought for the analysis. As an example, Basic Skills coding as defined in the deductive code list relates to skills attained in high school, where the coding for Readiness establishes the subject’s ability to leave secondary school and attend college when considering both academic and social maturity. Assessment is also included with the deductive codes, providing the ability to explore the different assessment pieces used to examine subjects’ readiness by both secondary and postsecondary education (e.g., tests, Accuplacer, HSPA, etc.). This preliminary set of codes was further created to help direct my initial questioning for students in the sample, a simple “starting point” to help drive the study. Appendix C includes data to help define specific college readiness patterns and link standards to specific themes surrounding questions found in the first and second series of interviews (Appendices A and B).

After both rounds of student interviews concluded, a final list of themes was inductively generated from the “raw” data (Boyatzis, 1998), where I based my analysis on the most robust themes from the study. These codes (Appendix F) included some specific thematic threads that were observed during both the first and second interviews of students. These included the standards as defined by

KSUS, the Accuplacer and placement test analysis, study skills, and future plans of students.

As I revised both the deductive and inductive portions of the codebook, some major differences were evident when comparing what I hypothesized would be important themes of the study to what actually emerged as major thematic trends. In the deductive set, I originally felt that student responses would provide both gender- and socioeconomic- specific answers that would correlate to student placement in developmental English courses. After the interviews, it was evident that these two themes did not play a major role in the reasoning behind student perceptions of enrolling in these courses. The most interesting part of the coding analysis proved to be where a preliminary code led to the formation of a major theme that I had not realized would become a significant factor in the study. In the deductive set, I established a thematic thread to assist in the analysis of assessment data for the students interviewed in the sample. Originally, I expected these assessments to include how students performed on high school examinations, the HSPA, and so on. Through the utilization of this theme, it became evident that a major perception of students with regard to placing in a developmental course included the placement examination given at the college. Although this placement examination was originally viewed by me to be a minor point of the study, the initial themes established at the onset of the study provided me with the ability to attenuate my questioning and analyze a major finding.

Structuring the Thematic Code

After the interviews were transcribed, I began to review the dialogue and establish a final list of inductive codes (Appendix F). Being very careful so as to ensure that I established themes that were true to the “raw” data collected, I utilized labels that reflected themes recurring throughout the student interviews. Using Boyatzis’ framework (1998), I developed codes in consideration of five major elements:

1. A label (i.e., a name);
2. A definition of what the theme concerns (i.e., the characteristic or issue constituting the theme);
3. A description of how to know when the theme occurs (i.e., indicators on how to “flag” the theme);
4. A description of any qualifications or exclusions to the identification of the theme; and
5. Examples, both positive and negative, to eliminate possible confusion when looking for the theme. (p.31)

When reviewing the transcribed interviews and my interview notes, I was able to identify several major themes that were recurring throughout the interviews.

These themes included

1. KSUS Standards/High School Academics;
-

2. Student Preparedness and Basic Skills;
3. College Guidance (access, preparation, and counseling); and
4. The placement test or Accuplacer.

A final list of thematic codes was created, and each code label was based on the five elements as outlined in the framework. Here, we see the label for the most prominent theme in the study analysis, the placement test or Accuplacer (Appendix F).

Knowledge/skills	Code	Defined	Flags	Qualifications/exclusions	Examples
ACCUPLACER	ACC	Any information pertinent to the placement test taken by students to assess proficiency	ACCU-PLACER; placement test; pretest; basic-skills test; college-readiness test	Any testing instrument that leads to examination of a student's proficiency in English	Test upon entrance into college; not taken after matriculation; not given as a post-developmental course test

The label for each final code helped me establish a formal and unbiased pattern for analyzing the themes throughout the interviews. Each dialogue strand was then coded in conjunction with the identified theme that best defined that specific portion of the interview. Several sections of the interviews included multiple codes. Towards the end of each second interview, the majority of the dialogue consisted of KSUS coding, where students were establishing a relationship between secondary preparedness and KSUS standards through a “rapid-fire” interview sequence.

As I coded each interview, a specific sequence of the **dialogue between** the student and I led to the identification of the themes to be analyzed. As an example, in the following continuous thread of my second interview with Marco, I have coded the first portion of the dialogue for placement test (ACC), as Marco directly answers my question about the Accuplacer; however, when the dialogue continues, we immediately discuss his reasoning behind choosing Rausch, my questions probing him for information with regard to college guidance from counselors and/or his parents. Marco's indirect answer to my question also led me to code that portion of the interview for access to college (ATC), considering his answer did not include parents, counselors, or any other "flags" as represented by the label.

ACC

RT: Oh, Okay. When you sat down and took this ACCUPLACER test, can you take me back to that day, that you took that test? Do you remember taking the placement test?

Marco: Yeah

RT: What was going through your mind?

Marco: I don't know, I wasn't really ready; it was summer still, I was not in "going to school" mode.

RT: Okay, so if you think you had to do it over again, do you think you would pass that test no problem, right? Take it a little more serious?

Marco: Yeah

ATC

RT: Okay, take me back to, you were telling me about your high school now. Okay, the reason why I do two interviews; we have the first interview to get to know each other a little bit, get a little bit more in depth about your high school stuff. Take me back to the process of you coming here.

RT: You could have picked any community college, right? You said you never had enough credits maybe to go to a 4-year or what not. Who helped you come to Rausch, who pushed you here, even though you didn't have enough? Was it a guidance counselor, was it a parent was it...

Marco: Most of the kids at my school where they go to community college, usually go to Rausch.

RT: Okay

Similarly, I found that coding for identification of the KSUS standards during my second interview with Max proved to be beneficial when concluding that students, who took part in this study each possessed the skills sets identified by these standards and necessary as a standard for college readiness. These themes were easily recognized through the utilization of a sequence of questions created using examples as defined by the KSUS standards. For example, when students were asked about types of writing or specific genres of literature (i.e., American, World, etc.), I provided them with specific examples to help identify what was generically outlined by the standards. As provided in the following thread,

RT: Perspective writing? How about like third-person view?

Max: First-person view, yeah, we did that.

RT: Okay. Flashback?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Anything like a flashback? Thinking back?

Max: Yeah, I remember flashback and like foreshadowing and all of those other.

RT: Okay. How about irony and satire? Do you remember going over those?

Max: I definitely remember that. We used that in - what was the play? I forgot which one now. It was a Shakespearean play

RT: When you do something that's ironic or something sometimes satirical?

Max: Slapstick humor?

RT: Slapstick humor. Do you remember going over that senior year? All right, what about American literature? World literature? Do you remember doing those two?

Max: American and world? I'm not exactly sure.

RT: Okay. American like Hemingway?

Max: I remember reading Ernest Hemingway.

RT: Mark Twain?

Max: I remember reading Mark Twain. I used to have his quotes and stuff.

RT: What about world literature? Anything from like Herman Hesse and *Siddhartha*? Do you remember reading that?

Max: We did do world literature because I remember we used short stories and stuff from people from other countries.

RT: So you saw different writings were from different, you know, places of the world?

Max: Yeah. I remember Japanese literature was about living at home or something.

RT: Okay.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay, so you remember doing stuff like that. How about propaganda? Do you know what propaganda is?

Max: I do know it's exploiting. Not exactly. I just know how it works kinda.

RT: Okay, but you remember doing anything with propaganda like with Nazi Germany? With Hitler propaganda?

Max: Yeah.

This entire thread represents the KSUS theme signifying specific standards that Max recalls covering in his high school curriculum.

Coding: Essays

The student essays posed a different pattern of coding in the analysis of the data. Each essay was reviewed with regard to coding specific themes around the curriculum structure. Each essay was anonymous. As students were only given questions to guide their essay outlines (Appendix P), it was imperative that the coding ensure "links" between what was evident in the personal interviews and the written assignments. As an example, the essays contained information

with regard to the Accuplacer exam even though it was not specifically asked as part of an essay prompt. This, along with guidance concerning college and college entrance, was incorporated within the analysis.

Validity

Reliability of qualitative research models depends upon how the researcher resolves both external and internal design problems (Hansen, 1979). Where *reliability* deals with scientific findings throughout a study, *validity* can be defined as the accuracy with which these findings are concluded and reported. Two types of validity categories, external and internal, are utilized in this study to ensure that the data include replicable phenomena and appropriate data. Defined by LeCompte and Goetz (1982), “internal validity refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality. External validity addresses the degree to which such representations may be compared legitimately across groups” (p. 32). Several subcategories, including conformability, reliability, authenticity, and application, as defined by Miles and Huberman (1994), were also used to provide explanation and feasibility as to the appropriateness of this study.

Confirmability

I feel that the conclusions made in this study, with regard to the perceptions of the reasoning behind student enrollment in developmental courses, are directly related to the subjects and conditions of the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Each of the reasons given for students being enrolled in the basic-skills

course was provided by the students who were interviewed. The research methods and procedures have been described in detail, and study data have been retained and secured for future analysis.

Reliability

The questions utilized throughout the interviews were clear and directly related to the research and subsidiary questions. The researcher's role had been explicitly conveyed to all parties, and "checks" in the coding and analyses were made to ensure appropriate data collection and agreement between patterns.

Authenticity

The findings in this study are authentic, coherent, and appropriate in relation to the expectations gap, student readiness, and a lack of articulation between secondary and higher education. Further, I believe this can be considered a convincing study, as the conviction and innocence of the study subjects thoroughly provide insight into the theory behind the larger problem at stake, or the lack of convergence between secondary and postsecondary education. These are true dilemmas being reported from students who have proven themselves in one system but fallen short in the other.

Application

I feel that the research findings will stimulate a greater consciousness for the problem of the expectations gap, leading to a greater understanding of some of the additional problems for both secondary and postsecondary educators. The

researcher's recommendations can greatly help articulation between local high schools and colleges, helping to improve communication and "shrink" the expectations gap between systems. I strongly feel that the research and data analyses provided by this study can serve an active purpose to the secondary education and HED communities when each looks to understand the reasoning behind developmental trends and course offerings.

Validity of Interviews

Qualitative inquirers need to demonstrate that their studies are credible (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In determining the validity of data obtained through each of the interviews, the following methods and findings were identified and incorporated throughout the study:

1. **D**uring the course of the interviews throughout the semester, unexpected outcomes stemmed from dialogue with the students. Many students discussed issues and/or told stories unrelated to major themes that were identified in the final list of codes. Thus, it is apparent throughout the interview transcripts that each student was afforded the ability to voice his/her own opinions and was not stifled in any way.
 2. The research methodology was provided using a transparent process. The data analyses and the procedure utilized to code the interviews were described in detail, and examples were provided to ensure that the validity of the protocol was intact.
-

3. I utilized member checking, from Interview 1 to Interview 2, to “shift” the validity responsibility from me to the active participants in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described this protocol as “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314) in any study. Member checking in this study consisted of taking collected data back to the students so that they could confirm the credibility of the information they previously provided. In the following example, I discussed with Molly her future goals at the onset of our first meeting with regard to a possible career path:

RT: Okay, good for you. Okay. What do you want to study there?

Molly: I'm going to be a teacher.

RT: Okay, good. So you're going to be in ...

Molly: English.

RT: An English teacher? Even better. So you want to do secondary or ...

Molly: I want to be with high school [students].

In discovering this possible career path for Molly, I felt it was important to validate the response, as the future success of her **goal** directly related to her placement in the English developmental course at **RCC**. **In** other words, I felt it was important to validate that Molly seemed dedicated to becoming an English teacher in secondary education but was enrolled in a developmental English course herself. I included the member check in the second interview, as seen in the proceeding thread:

RT: Okay, you still want [to] do that. Okay, then your career path again, do English, like possibly teach, right? So you still want to do that. Good. Okay. So this, this class will help you because it kind of freshened (you) up a little bit? Okay. How about since high school? Has anything changed since high school? Is this always what you wanted to do, (or) like in high school, you wanted to be a doctor?

Molly: No, definitely not one of my goals (laugh). I always liked teaching, and I used to teach dance, and I substituted in class ... because I know I was good at it, I mean. Well, like, I mean there is a lot of things that I want to do.

RT: Okay, high school, [what] was your ultimate goal in high school? Was it to be an English teacher?

Molly: To be a teacher.

4. My utilization of extensive quotations from the interview dialogue, transcripts, and notes helps to provide validity of the “raw” data collected from subjects.
5. I used researcher reflexivity in an attempt to disclose all of my possible biases. Creswell and Miller (2000) defined this as the process whereby researchers report on personal beliefs and biases that may shape their inquiry. This is apparent specifically in the “Role of the Researcher” section and prior to the analysis, findings, and conclusions.

Chapter IV

Findings

Throughout the interview sessions and within the recorded essays, students who were considered above average to elite in high school explained the divergence between their performance in high school and placement in college in different ways. All student subjects identified several factors that they perceived as leading to the “disconnect” between their basic-skills proficiency in secondary education, their performance on the entrance test at RCC, and placement in a developmental English course load. I also examined specific factors from secondary education, which research subjects felt may have contributed to their poor scoring on the basic-skills assessment.

Throughout the interview, coding, and analysis of the study data, several themes were evident that may have contributed to the students’ placement in the courses or their perception as to the reasoning behind their lack of basic-skills proficiency in college as compared to their level of aptitude and proficiency in secondary education. These included student preparedness in secondary education and basic-skills readiness, college guidance in both secondary and HED, and parental influences in secondary education. Throughout the interviews and essays, these factors continued to add to the perceptions of student readiness or lack thereof.

An additional phenomenon I observed while completing the study occurred when I recognized that most students were actually looking for basic-

skills deficiencies they had simply because they had failed the RCC placement test (Accuplacer). Even those students who originally blamed the testing itself or claimed that they “didn’t know” why they were enrolled in the basic-skills course eventually found something they were “lacking” that must have caused their score to be less than proficient. Therefore, even students who were recognized as above average in high school, passed the state-mandated assessment of proficiency as a requirement for graduation, and then graduated from a New Jersey high school felt in some way that this test, graded by a computer program, found a deficiency in their reading and/or writing proficiency.

It is also important to recognize the number the students we are examining when discussing developmental English and the RCC placement test results. In the fall semester of 2010 alone, when this study was conducted, there were approximately 50 total sections of upper level developmental English. These sections are in the third tier of the RCC developmental block not including an additional one-credit research course that students may test into if their placement test score reads a particular percentage. The course includes a second section that brings the total to five noncredit contact hours for students enrolled. During the fall semester, approximately 1,025 students were scheduled for developmental classes. The revenue established for these individual classes alone reached over \$500,000.

Placement in Developmental English

The Test

“I just wasn’t ready for the placement test.” Max defines in his statement what several students interviewed felt was a major reason as to why they were enrolled in a developmental English course at RCC. For Marco, the Accuplacer was an unwelcome end to the summer vacation. “I don’t know, I wasn’t really ready, it was summer still, I was not in ‘going to school’ mode.”

Even though throughout several of the second interviews students felt that they had “sharpened” their writing skills when considering aptitude at the beginning of the semester (“this class really did help my writing a lot” [Max]), the consensus from the data is that they had enough college knowledge to have been placed in a general education course rather than being enrolled in the developmental English section; however, although sharing a common theme, the students’ perceptions of the cause for their enrollment in developmental English ranged from pure readiness to constraints in scheduling.

One of the student essay responses described the RCC English placement examination as “misleading” and as a “primitive test given by colleges.” During the research, the placement test and students’ preparedness for this testing played a major role in why some students perceived that they were scheduled for developmental English. This is further established in the following thread where Max discusses the seriousness of the placement testing given prior to the start of the semester.

RT: The reality is that you feel–

Max: I could have passed it.

RT: Okay, on a scale 1 to 10, how serious did you **take** that test when you sat down? Ten being like I sat down and I **knew** I had to take it seriously.

Max: Well, seriousness? I guess 5 because I did **take** it really seriously that day. I didn't take the **seriousness** of studying for it.

RT: You would definitely study for it, even if it was looking over like what to expect or anything like that?

Max: My high school exams I would have looked over, and like ...

RT: Do you remember taking an Accuplacer on the computer? Did anything distract you when you were taking that? Was there anything like typing it you were trying to get out of there? Did you have to meet your girlfriend like in about 20 minutes? You wanted to get out of there?

Max: I was a little rushed also.

RT: Okay.

Max: I had to go. She wasn't waiting in the car, but I had to go pick her up or something like that.

RT: So you kind of just fit in your schedule?

Max: Yeah. No big deal.

RT: Were you kind of taken aback by when you had to do this?

Max: I didn't know that was going to be on the placement test. I really didn't know what was going to be on it. So right on the essay part, I was like, oh, alright, I guess this is what I'm writing down.

Here, we see Max contradict himself where he claims he took the test seriously but then concedes that he was rushed because he had to “pick up” his girlfriend. It was also prevalent throughout the study that students were not aware

of the format for the testing and could not “brush up” on several topics in preparation for the placement examination. Several students recalled receiving information in the mail about the test from RCC but nothing relevant to the examination’s content or format. For another student interviewed, the test was rushed, as it had to be taken immediately after registration because the student had registered extremely late.

RT: Okay, and when did they tell you about the placement test? The Accuplacer?

Molly: I took the placement test the day I knew I was coming here. That's why I was just like

RT: Okay. So you didn't have time to check out what that test was, or go online.

Molly: The day I had started is the day I took the placement test.

RT: Okay. Let's go over that real quick. You got here, you sat down with the advisor, and the advisor ...

Molly: ///// My classes.

RT: And the advisor told you to go right down to the room ... whatever and take the placement test. Okay. So you didn't have a chance to ...

Molly: When she told me to go take it, I thought she was going to schedule [me] for when they were giving the test, and then she was like, take it right now, and I was like ...

In spite of not being prepared to take the placement test that day, Molly goes on during the interview to say that even if she had been aware of the test date, she still would not have prepared for it.

RT: Right. Okay. So when you sat down for that test, would you say that ... let me start by saying this ... If you had to go back now, let's say we went back right now in time and you applied to Rausch a month before the semester started, and you had time to take the test that went on. Would you prepare, would you look at the test, would you see what's on it?

Molly: For the English portion,

RT: Okay.

Molly: Like, I've never studied for English.

RT: Okay. So, you were the – no matter what, you would have just gone in there and taken the test anyway.

Molly: Yeah.

Although Molly understands that the test results caused her to be enrolled in developmental courses, she can only guess as to the area of the test on which she scored poorly, causing her to be enrolled in developmental English.

Molly: Honestly, it's ..., if there were an exact reason, I wish I knew, because I don't understand why I'm in this class.

RT: Right.

Molly: When I think about the people that are in my class, and they are all pretty brave, I don't see anyone that's like ... don't know anything.

RT: Right.

Molly: I think maybe it was basic things like grammatical errors. That's what I think really it is.

But I don't think that I would have, like, major issues with writing.

Here, we see a prime example of a student receiving a failing proficiency level from a testing rubric (corrected via a computer program) and still being unaware of her deficiencies, pursuant to that specific assessment, nearly 15 weeks later. As noted, Molly still perceives her placement in the program as unwarranted. Therefore, should Molly exit out of this program at the end of the semester, there is no true benchmark assessment of her weaknesses that program directors and instructors could truly compare as pre- and posttest data. It is apparent that Molly did not meet the baseline criteria as set by the placement test during her testing period on the date she was initially tested, but ancillary factors contributed to her performance that afternoon. It is impossible to measure the effectiveness of Molly's developmental course curriculum (as it relates to her) and any prescriptive measures utilized to help Molly be successful because they were never identified for the student and instructors.

With further regard to the placement testing, students made some interesting observations about the distraction of a "countdown" clock on the screen, room orientation, and so on that caused them to feel somewhat rushed and disorganized. Within one of the collected essays, a student wrote, "When I took the placement exam, I was all nerves with sweat dripping down my agitated face. I was thinking on what to write; what should be the topic that will blow-away the professors that graded the test ...". During an interview, Maya describes how she was distracted by the testing center and configuration:

Maya: No, just because you know it was bright that day, I think the room is yellow in one of the test – or it just seemed very very bright and the computer's in front of you, and it's just kind of like, okay, let's just do it, because I knew I could take it again. And then I got down to the essay, and I guess because I haven't had – I write little things for myself, the kind that pops into my head, but to have to write on a particular topic even though it was a really good topic, it was just, I went blank. I just like okay, okay, watching the time go tick, tick, tick.

RT: Actually on there?

Maya: Yeah, it kind of puts more pressure on you.

RT: Is it actually on the screen?

Maya: Yeah, it is actually, you know you are watching the time going down, so it's actually kind of pressurized in the sense that you can't think, you are watching the time go down, and so it just, I think, it just brings your anxiety level up.

But other students such as Max didn't feel that they were affected by these distractions; however, they recognized that they were evident.

RT: Do you remember a clock being on there? Like ticking down like there was a clock on certain sections on the screen?

Max: A clock, right.

RT: Did that bother you at all?

Max: It didn't really bother me, but seeing the time ... I forgot it was timed actually.

Developmental English as a “Refresher”

Marco made the stern correlation of being scheduled in the developmental course and his lack of participation in high school in 12th grade.

RT: Great, so we’ve spoken twice now, right? Okay, pretty in-depth conversations, what do you think, summing it all up, what do you think the main reason is, what’s your statement as to why you’re here, in this class right now?

Marco: Because I didn’t put all of my effort **into wanting** to participate senior year.

He further explains that he would have solicited more help from teachers and friends with regard to college and preparations for college if he had known then what he knows now.

The most interesting and somewhat **puzzling perception was** provided by Jake, who apparently did not pass the placement test but did pass a second “opt-out” test and was not permitted to transfer from his course because the general education sections were filled. When asked why he did better on the second examination, he claimed he was more “focused” during the second sitting.

RT: Right, okay. So why do you think you didn’t just do well on the test?

Jake: I just don’t think I did well on the test, that’s it.

RT: Okay, got you, okay. Did you have the opportunity to opt out of this, did you want to take the retest?

Jake: Yeah, I took the retest, and I actually got into writing one and the EBS...

RT: All three of them, okay.

Jake: But it was all filled up.

RT: Really?

Jake: So I didn't know what to do, so I just decided to stay and ...

RT: Oh, that is interesting, you actually took the retest, and it has...

Jake: And did that ...

RT: Was the retest easier than the regular test, or what did you think of the retest?

Jake: I don't know; I think I just concentrated more than the others. I just paid, I was more focused, I wanted to do better, and I did.

Several other perceptions arose throughout the study with regard to basic skills placement at RCC. One student in his essay explained that his attitude toward preparing for college in high school was what caused him to be placed in the developmental course:

I believe there was a lot I missed throughout my high school years which led me to this basic skills class. Rather than accomplishing what I should have to get myself ready for the next level, I missed out on many of the stepping stones that would have helped me towards my future.

Another student admitted, "During high school, I could have put (in) a lot of extra effort and paid more attention."

Other students claimed that they chose to take the course to act as somewhat of a "refresher," in that they lacked confidence in writing and preparation for college. One such essay excerpt read that the student felt he was "... benefitting

from this class and consider it more of a ‘refresher,’ in order to better myself, as well as my writing skills.” Another classmate claimed she “didn’t score badly on the placement exam and the administrator also recommended I retake the exam. I decided not to retake the exam because I want(ed) to refresh some of my skills.”

High School Academics

For the purpose of this study and to support the research questions, it was extremely important to utilize a specific framework as a control when considering the level of college knowledge of a particular participant. The framework gave me an indication that the subject in question had “college knowledge,” based on Conley’s (2005b) Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS), and was prepared to matriculate in the regular-education program in a higher education setting. With this representative knowledge and other factors, including students’ above-average academic record in high school, receipt of a high school diploma signifying that all basic-skills criteria established by the department of education had been met at a proficient level by the student, and passing of a formative New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment (i.e., HSPA), all student subjects had proven and identified that they reached a proficient level of basic skills and college readiness required by the KSUS standards and secondary education.

Throughout the interviews, all students remembered completing specific tasks and assignments in secondary education, in which teachers engaged them in pertinent college-preparation areas in reading comprehension and literature, including but not limited to:

1. The analytic process to enhance comprehension and create personal meaning when reading text through actions such as annotating, questioning, agreeing or disagreeing, summarizing, critiquing, and formulating a personal response;
2. supporting inferences and drawing conclusions based on textual features, expository structures, and argument;
3. Using reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of types of literature, such as epic pieces;
4. Understanding plot and character development in literature, including character motive, causes for actions, and the credibility of events;
5. Understanding instructions for software, job descriptions, college applications, newspapers, textbooks, etc.;
6. Monitoring themselves and correct themselves, as well as read aloud, in order to ensure comprehension;
7. Understanding vocabulary and content, including subject terminology, connotative and denotative meanings, and idiomatic meanings;
8. Employing a variety of strategies to understand the origins and meanings of new words, including recognition of cognates and contextual clues;
9. Comprehending the characteristics of major types and genres of texts such as novels, short stories, horror stories, science fiction, biographies, autobiographies, poems, and plays;
10. Understanding the formal constraints of different types of texts;

11. Understanding the effects of an author's style and use of literary devices such as imagery, characterization, allusions, symbol, irony, etc. to influence the reader and evoke emotions;
 12. Understanding themes such as initiation, love and duty, heroism, and death and rebirth, which appear in a variety of literary works and genres;
 13. Using aesthetic qualities of style, such as diction or mood, as a basis to evaluate literature that contains ambiguities, subtleties, or contradictions;
 14. Demonstrating familiarity with the major literary periods of English and American literature and their characteristic forms, subjects, and authors;
 15. Demonstrating familiarity with authors from literary traditions outside the English-speaking world;
 16. Demonstrating familiarity with major works of literature produced by American and British authors;
 17. Knowing major historical events that may be encountered in literature;
 18. Demonstrating familiarity with the concept that historical, social, and economic contexts influence form, style, and point of view, and that social influences affect an author's descriptions of character, plot, and setting;
 19. Demonstrating familiarity with the concept of the relativity of all historical perspectives, including their own;
-

20. Understanding the relationships between literature and politics, including the political assumptions underlying an author's work and the impact of literature on political movements and events;
21. Identifying the primary elements of the types of charts, graphs, and visual media that occur most commonly in texts; and
22. Interpreting the content of charts, graphs, and visual media that occur in texts.
 - i. When considering writing and the writing process in high school, all subjects were able to recall practicing and learning components of basic skills including, but not limited to,
23. Identifying and using correctly and consistently parts of speech, including nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, adjectives, and interjections;
24. Using subject-verb agreement and verb tense consistently and correctly;
25. Demonstrating consistent, correct, and appropriate pronoun agreement and use of different types of clauses and phrases, including adverb clauses, adjective clauses, and adverb phrases;
26. Using commas with nonrestrictive clauses and contrasting expressions;
27. Using ellipses, colons, hyphens, semi-colons, apostrophes, and quotation marks correctly;
28. Capitalizing sentences and proper nouns correctly;

29. Avoiding run-on sentences and sentence fragments consistently;
30. Utilizing a dictionary and other resources to see how to spell new, unfamiliar, or difficult words;
31. Differentiating between commonly confused terms, such as *its* and *it's* or *affect* and *effect*;
32. Knowing how to use the spell-check and grammar-check functions in word processing software while understanding the limitations of relying on these tools,
33. Using several prewriting strategies, including developing a focus, determining the purpose, and creating outlines;
34. Analyzing paragraph structure in writing as manifested by the ability to construct coherent paragraphs and arrange paragraphs in logical order;
35. Utilizing a variety of sentence structures appropriately in writing, including compound, complex, compound-complex, parallel, repetitive, and analogous sentence structures;
36. Presenting ideas to achieve overall coherence and logical flow in writing and using appropriate techniques such as transitions and repetition to maximize cohesion;
37. Using words correctly, use words that convey the intended meaning, and use a varied vocabulary;
38. Knowing the difference between a topic and a thesis;

39. Articulating a position through a thesis statement and advancing it using evidence, examples, and counterarguments that are relevant to the audience or issue at hand,
 40. Utilizing a variety of methods to develop arguments, including compare-contrast reasoning, logical arguments (inductive-deductive), and alternation between general and specific (connections between public knowledge and personal observation and experience);
 41. Creating writing to persuade the reader by anticipating and addressing counterarguments, using rhetorical devices, and developing an accurate and expressive style of communication that moves beyond mechanics to add flair and elegance to writing;
 42. Using a variety of strategies to adapt writing to different audiences and purposes, such as including appropriate content and using appropriate language, style, tone, and structure;
 43. Appropriating strategies and formats to write personal and business correspondence, including appropriate organizational patterns, formal language, and tone;
 44. Employing basic editing skills proficiently to identify obvious mechanical errors, clarify and improve the structure of the piece, and sharpen language and meaning,
 45. Reviewing ideas and structure in substantive ways to improve depth of information and logic of organization;
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46. Reassessing the appropriateness of writing for a specific genre, purpose, and audience; and
47. Using feedback from others to revise their written work.

To ensure students were truly ready for the college experience, subjects were asked to recall research projects from high school and specific procedures followed when completing these assignments. Several students' secondary schools were very advanced, utilizing EBSCO host and other software programs to enhance the research of students. Others recalled research methods including but not limited to the following:

1. Formulating research questions, refining topics, developing a plan for research, and organizing what is known about the topic;
2. Using research to support and develop their own opinions, as opposed to simply restating existing information or opinions;
3. Identifying claims in their writing that require outside support or verification;
4. Collecting information to develop a topic and support a thesis;
5. Understanding the difference between primary and secondary sources;
6. Using a variety of print and electronic primary and secondary sources, including books, magazines, newspapers, journals, periodicals, and the Internet;

7. Understanding the concept of plagiarism and how (or why) to avoid it and understanding rules for paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting, as well as conventions for incorporating information from Internet-based sources in particular;
8. Evaluating sources of information located on the Internet in particular to ascertain their credibility, origin, potential bias, and overall quality; and
9. Selecting relevant sources when writing research papers and appropriately including information from such sources, logically introducing and incorporating quotations, synthesizing information in a logical sequence, identifying different perspectives, identifying complexities and discrepancies in information, and offering support for conclusions.

Student Preparedness and Basic Skills

Although students in the sample did not feel that they should be registered in a developmental English section, many looked to find reasoning behind their placement. The initial concern for students was their not passing the placement test. When considering this as an immediate “hurdle,” many look to blame their performance on this test for their being placed in developmental courses. As discussed earlier in preceding sections, the placement test does provide only a single sample of student work and is currently graded via computerized assessment. This may be considered a difficult way to properly assess student writing abilities, especially when the assessment protocol changes to exit students out of the program at the end of the semester. In stating this, however, students

did look further into their readiness to find deficiencies that may have caused them to not be prepared for college English courses.

During the second interview and at the midpoint of the semester, students began to feel more confident and better prepared as writers. This was an expected outcome, in that 8 weeks or so of intensive writing and study should provide this feeling of confidence. In continuing the second interview questions, each student recalled every component of the KSUS, aligning what he or she had learned in secondary education with what he or she needed to be successful in college. It is this readiness, as outlined in writing, reading comprehension, literature, and research sections, along with an assurance of student aptitude via high school graduation and proficiency on a state assessment measuring basic skills attainment, that concludes that there is a disconnect between what secondary education in New Jersey teaches in its core curriculum content standards and basic-skills assessment in colleges.

The students sampled felt ready for college when considering academic maturity, but several felt they were not ready for the move to HED when considering the level of maturity needed for the social changes that were about to occur. The students sampled recalled having tough teachers and assignments in high school relative to literature and all aspects of grammar. However, the differences in recalling aptitude for writing by students changed somewhat from one interview to the next. Let's take Max, for example. Max was a bright student in high school and probably received the most structured secondary education

curriculum of all of the study subjects interviewed. His senior-year teachers incorporated a strong research component in his writing and advanced the literature with differentiated instruction and through the infusion of grammar in readings. His late registration and lack of concern caused him to “rush” the placement test at RCC. Although initially he had felt prepared and definitely showed competency in college preparedness based on KSUS and his high school final standing, after taking developmental English, he felt more prepared.

RT: Got you. Okay, so you’ll be all right from that. So what about what have you learned from when you first came here for the English basic skills to now? How do you feel like you’re a little more prepared? Do you feel?

Max: A little bit more, yeah. We touched up on some more grammar like commas, semicolons, and also, like, transition words and stuff like that.

RT: Okay, so we can catch up on things like that. What were some of the weaknesses again? Do you remember now when we first met we talked about some of the reasons why you were in the class? Now that you’ve been in the class for a month since we’ve met, do you realize that there may be some more weakness that you had in high school or was it, you know?

Max: You know my writing skills did definitely drop a bit.

RT: Okay.

Max: She definitely is retouching up on my writing skills and, you know, I had to write a paragraph, and it’s actually going more in depth and I’m getting more used to writing six sentences rather than five sentences per paragraph and everything like that.

RT: So you’re expanding a little more?

Max: You know, write like a conclusion, pieces, and yeah.

Although there was some realization of weaknesses at the midpoint of the research, initial perceptions and student recollection of secondary preparation for basic skills in writing and reading justified concerns of unnecessary placement. Students recalled being familiar with the MLA style of writing, and each remembered conducting a research assignment or project as a basis for graduation. Further, in recalling assignments and lesson themes as backed by KSUS, students gave a perceived indication that their secondary-school curricula in English matched what would be considered to make a student ready for a successful college experience. Further, the subjects in the sample were above-average to elite students who passed a proficiency assessment and did well in high school. Thus, one can conclude that they attained a level of proficiency that would place them in general studies at the college level.

College Guidance

One of the aspects of this study that may have had an effect on student preparedness or even a student's ability to score **proficient on the RCC** placement test is college guidance. In analyzing the data, college guidance can be defined as "outside" sources utilized to benefit students' preparations for college or college programs. Thus, this can be found in both secondary and HED. Although, in the subject sample, this was not perceived as a major cause for students' placement in basic skills, a periphery analysis shows that with more guidance and consideration

for programs, students in the sample might have had the ability to enroll in general courses upon matriculation at RCC. Throughout the interviews and collected essays, students reported a limited amount of engagement with high school counselors with regard to, not so much college choice or direction, but the importance of doing well and completing work in high school so as to be better prepared for college. The lack of articulation between secondary and HED counselors definitely affects the articulation between secondary counselors and secondary students.

More surprising in the research was the lack of knowledge students in the sample had with regard to the placement test, or their lack of knowledge considering where to find information on the placement test they would be taking at RCC. For Max, high school counselors never explained that a placement test was necessary to enter most postsecondary institutions.

Max: Yeah, he talked about college plans. He brought me a nice note for my recommendation notes and --

RT: Okay. So, you saw him pretty often. How -- how many times do you say you saw him in a month?

Max: A month?

RT: Yeah. Was it --

Max: Every other month.

RT: Every other month, okay, good. Did he talk to you about placement tests and stuff like that? Why you should do well on them, which is --

Max: He didn't really talk too much about those things.

Although one cannot prepare for this type of assessment, in general, a cursory overview of the format may help students better prepare for what to expect on the placement exam. Some students may perform better on this examination having prior related knowledge as to the thematic contents, time constraints, and overall atmosphere of the test environment. As stated earlier, one student was encouraged by an academic counselor to take the test immediately after registering in order to be placed in the correct program.

RT: Okay, and when did they tell you about the placement test ... the Accuplacer?

Molly: I took the placement test the day I knew I was coming here. That's why I was just like ...

RT: Okay. So you didn't have time to check out what that test was, or go online.

Molly: The day I had started is the day I took the placement test.

RT: Okay. Let's go over that real quick. You got here, you sat down with the advisor, and ...

Molly: (to register for) my classes.

RT: And the advisor told you to go right down to the room ... whatever ... and take the placement test?

Molly: (nods yes)

RT: Okay. So you didn't have a chance to ...

Molly: When he told me to go get it, I thought he was going to schedule for when they were giving the test, and then he was like, take it right now, and I was like ...

<Molly's face contorted in confusion>

RT: Right. Okay. So when you sat down for that test, would you say that ... let me start by saying this ... If you had to go back now, let's say we went back right in time and you applied to Rausch a month before the semester started, and you had time to take the test that went on. Would you prepare, would you look at the test, would you see what's on it?

Molly: For the English portion ...

While somewhat practical for scheduling and administrative purposes, no other testing format would give consideration to this immediate assessment. Today's students are expected to know testing format and strategies that go above and beyond the day-to-day basic interdisciplinary studies infused in lessons. If an academic advisor or counselor showed little interest in the importance of this test by having students take it minutes after being scheduled without notice, then how can we expect students to take the placement test seriously? Test preparation and student awareness should be guided, and the missed opportunity for these protocols could lead to students doing poorly or rushing placement assessments.

Set Up to Fail

Students entering RCC must take the Accuplacer placement test in order to schedule classes as incoming freshmen students. Students who score below the college-specified "cut score" in English reading and writing must enroll in a non-credit-bearing developmental course based on their proficiency level on the

placement test. In this study, students scored in the **higher** percentage of the test, causing them to be placed in the upper level developmental program. The Accuplacer is the test used for placement, **when considering** general education versus developmental programs, for students entering RCC. It is a computer-based, timed test, where the program grades test-takers on specific components of writing. The tests are not graded by individuals; rather, the designed program acts as an industry standard for determining which students are prepared for college and which students are in need of remediation.

The purpose of the Accuplacer test is to determine which course placements are appropriate for students and whether or not developmental work is needed (Accuplacer Coordinator's Guide, 2004). The test provides colleges and universities with useful information about student academic skills in math, English, and reading. The Accuplacer is a computerized placement tool designed to provide placement and advising information for students entering college. RCC utilizes the Accuplacer to assist counselors in registering students in classes where they are most likely to succeed. During the interviews, students referenced the written essay portion of the test when considering their overall performance. The written essay test measures a student's ability to write effectively, a critical component of academic success. The computer program, on the basis of how effectively the sample communicates a whole message to readers for the stated purpose, scores each writing sample. The score is based on a student's ability to express, organize, and support opinions and ideas, but not the position taken on the essay topic. Five characteristics of writing are considered when scoring the

sample:

Focus – The clarity with which a student maintains a main idea or point of view.

Organization – The clarity with which a response is structured.

Development and Support – The extent to which a student elaborates on his/her ideas and the extent to which he/she presents supporting details.

Sentence Structure – The effectiveness of sentence structure.

Mechanical Conventions – The extent to which the writing is free of errors in usage and mechanics. (College Board, 2011)

According to the College Board (2011), “scores from Accuplacer tests are intended for use in making placement decisions. To assure fairness, placement decisions made with the aid of Accuplacer scores should be reviewed periodically, and if classroom performance indicates that students are capable of more advanced work or need further preparation, placement assignments should be changed.” It is further interesting that the College Board (2011) suggested that “placement decisions are most accurate when multiple measures are used. When possible, Accuplacer scores should be used in conjunction with other available data on student performance.” The Accuplacer test is the measure used to determine student readiness for the majority of students at Rausch College.

Students who do not pass the writing and reading portion of the Accuplacer at RCC and are assigned developmental English are permitted to retake the test or are afforded a “Challenge Test” opportunity by their

developmental teacher after an initial writing sample is collected. The College Board encourages each college to develop its own retest policy and publish it with other information about placement testing. During my study, it was extremely difficult to find information with regard to the Accuplacer and its testing components, and very little information is provided at all with regard to “Challenge Testing.” The College Board recommends that students be allowed to retest only after they have done a thorough review of the subject matter being tested; however, this seems to be a “hidden” measure at RCC.

The interpretation of test scores is one of several factors to consider in placing students into regular or developmental courses. As placement criteria are specific to individual institutions, it is not possible for the College Board to provide a college or university with exact protocols to utilize when interpreting the scores and developmental placement of students (Accuplacer Online Coordinator’s Guide, 2004). A committee of college faculty and other educators provide the basis for defining writing skills needed for entry-level college students. These skills are then reviewed and validated by hundreds of college faculty members. Writing prompts are developed and field-tested with a sample of entry-level students at several colleges and universities. The prompts are evaluated based on the field-test results, and a final set of prompts is selected; however, there is no input for these prompts from secondary educators, associations, or professionals in the field. Therefore, articulation does not exist between secondary education and the designers of the Accuplacer examination. One could argue that there

shouldn't be any articulation, basing this plea on the fact that colleges know the extent to which a student should be prepared; however, the counterargument could exist where secondary educators cannot be scrutinized for preparing students inefficiently if they are unaware of what postsecondary institutions are looking to assess. An additional problem includes the Accuplacer itself not being standardized among colleges across the state – or country, for that matter. As different colleges and universities utilize this test with different assessment categories, scores, and outcomes, it becomes even harder for individual secondary schools and curriculums to create a standard for preparation when considering the placement tests of specific colleges and universities.

In considering comprehension proficiency ratings, the following score ranges and descriptions are used by the College Board as a guideline for colleges and universities.

Total Right Score of about 51–77

Students at this level are able to comprehend short passages that are characterized by uncomplicated ideas, straightforward presentation, and, for the most part, subject matter that reflects everyday experience. These students are able to:

- recognize the main idea and less central ideas;
 - recognize the tone of the passage when questions do not require fine distinctions; and
 - recognize relationships between sentences, such as the use of one sentence to illustrate another
-

Total Right Score of about 78–98

Students at this level are able to comprehend short passages that are characterized by moderately uncomplicated ideas and organization and to employ moderately sophisticated vocabulary. These students are able to:

- answer questions that require them to synthesize information, including gauging point of view and intended audience;
- recognize organizing principles in a paragraph or passage; and
- identify contradictory or contrasting statements

Total Right Score of about 99–120

Students at this level are able to comprehend passages that, although short, are somewhat complex in terms of the ideas conveyed, and that deal with academic subject matter, often in a theoretical framework. These students are able to:

- extract points that are merely implied;
- follow moderately complex arguments or speculation
- recognize tone; and
- analyze the logic employed by the author in making an argument

The College Board also provides information for administrators with regard to suitable testing environments. The Accuplacer Online Coordinator's Guide (2004) stated that "the scores of all students tested are comparable only if

all test administrators follow the same testing procedures” (p.30). One can argue that although the testing center and program had been uniform and utilized correctly, the method of student testing was different when considering test scheduling and student readiness to take the test. In other words, some students had scheduled the placement test weeks in advance, with time between registration and a test date, while others had registered for the college and then were “shuffled” immediately to the testing center without any break or time following physical registration.

Entering and Exiting Developmental English

In analyzing the student interviews, I was able to better ascertain the process of students entering and exiting developmental English at RCC. After coding the data and reviewing transcript notes, I was extremely perplexed at the program protocols, where developmental courses play such an important role in student success as assessed by HED educators but are inconsistent with regard to program parameters and assessments. First, students receive college placement based on their performance on the Accuplacer assessment. Although it is recommended that this test not be the only means of placement when considering incoming freshmen and programs of general studies, at RCC it is the main basis for course selection, and can sometimes be a “rushed” process when considering student timelines and registration. Further, even though students can not actually “study” for the placement examination, understanding the concepts, questions, and testing parameters of the assessment prior to sitting for the exam can allow

students to “brush up” on certain areas. This test is not meant to be a “sneak attack” on students; rather, it should be a fair gauge of prior knowledge as it relates to student readiness and college.

Students who first are placed in developmental English have the ability to take a “challenge test” during the first several days of the semester. Professors can give a student an admittance slip to sit for the challenge if the professor feels that the student’s writing and aptitude are greater than **the considered outcome** of the placement examination. As the challenge test must occur in an immediate fashion, professors usually assess students on the basis of one writing sample. Further, as semesters may be delayed due to weather or other obligations, the challenge test period may expire prior to students receiving permission to “sit” for a challenge test. It can be argued that a single writing sample gives professors enough feedback to permit students to attempt to opt-out of a class through successful completion of the challenge test. Consequently, why would a professor go to the trouble of “rushing” to have students leave his/her developmental section when they were formally placed in the class by the college? Does the professor assume some liability should that student not be successful in general English?

If the challenge test is not an option, students remain in developmental English classes based upon their computer-graded reading and writing Accuplacer assessments. Students spend 5 hours a week in two sections of basic skills/developmental courses. Over the next 15 weeks, these students follow a

curricular scope-and-sequence that includes nearly every form of writing, from persuasive essays to cause and effect. There is also a research requirement for students to complete prior to the last class meeting. The textbook aligned to the program looks to enhance grammar and writing skills by providing sample essays, writing tips, and general rules to define and outline the **different writing styles** to help students be successful writers. The reading comprehension piece “attacks” student awareness of the different parts of speech by helping them better identify nouns, verbs, etc., as well as subjects and predicates of sentences. The curriculum also looks to assist students in identifying themes and characterization over a 15-week period.

After approximately 12 weeks, students take what is known as a mastery test to exit out of developmental English at **RCC**. **The mastery** test is a two-part process. The first is a reading comprehension **section where** students read a passage and then answer short, essay-type questions based on theme, etc. Although this test is given as part of the exit “strategy” for the basic-skills program, the individual professor grades the examination and the score is used as a class grade for average purposes. Professors are not provided with a departmentalized, standard rubric to grade this section of the mastery exam, and the outcome truly does not affect a student’s movement to general English composition should he/she score poorly on the section.

The writing section of the mastery examination is the determining factor in whether students are permitted to exit the developmental English program and

enter general composition the following semester. Midsemester, faculty members submit writing prompts to be utilized for this portion of the assessment. The prompts to be utilized and tested are then chosen by full-time faculty delegates and administrators. Students taking the mastery test are given several prompts to choose from directly prior to the examination. After the writing portion is completed, professors return completed essays to department administrators, who, in turn, establish a protocol for full-time faculty to sit as readers of the assessments. Two readers score each assessment, rating each paper on a scale of 1–12, 1 being the lowest possible score. The two scores are added, and students who receive a 7 or higher combined score are permitted to exit the program. Students who score a 6 need to have their professor's approval and a 3.0 (scale of 4.0) or better in class to exit out of the developmental program. Students who score a 5 can retake the mastery test one more time prior to the end of the semester.

In considering the outline of this procedure, there is extreme inconsistency and fervent disconnect between how students are scored to enter the program and how students are scored to exit the program. Further, it seems that any data collected with regard to program effectiveness, developmental exit rates, and competent curriculum are easily skewed due to the fact that the established pre and posttesting are assessed using completely opposite methods. The placement tests students complete to enter the program are assessed based on computerized scoring, while exit criteria include a writing sample scrutinized by faculty members following some hidden rubric either unrelated to or loosely based on the

Accuplacer standards. The concept is interesting, in that a large percentage of students fail the Accuplacer and enter developmental English, receive 12 weeks of developmental instruction, and then become proficient based on college standards established by the basic-skills department and administration. The exit standards do not seemingly match the entrance protocol. It is virtually impossible to compare the consistent scoring of a computerized program with that of two objective human scorers. Further, what about considering even the objectivity of different scorers? In other words, Max has two faculty scorers and Molly has two different scorers. What if faculty at RCC, based on college department standards, scored student placement tests as well? I hypothesize that the developmental rates for incoming freshmen would be somewhat different.

A Three-Step Process: Denial, Anger, and Acceptance

In studying the data, I recognized a three-step process that students exhibited throughout the semester: denial, anger, and acceptance. At the onset of the interviews, students could not believe that they were placed in developmental English and didn't pass the placement examination.

So when I found out that I was in EBS, I was just like ... Are you serious?... Like I couldn't believe it. (Molly)

For Molly, these feelings represent a sense of *denial*, where she believed she possessed the appropriate knowledge from secondary education to be considered proficient in the basic skills of reading and writing. When they do poorly on the Accuplacer, students are being told by the college that they are unprepared to

excel in entry-level courses. This all occurs prior to the student even “setting foot” in any classroom at RCC.

Progressing in the process, students show some resistance and *anger* when being forced to schedule a developmental course load, affecting their proposed program of studies, their inability to schedule major classes outside the general education cores, and paying tuition costs for non-credit bearing subjects. Maya cringed when we discussed the possibility of her failing the mastery (exit) test and returning to EBS for a second semester. Her tone had risen, cutting my question “off” before it was completed:

RT: So now, when you do the mastery test at the end of the semester ... do you think you will do well, do you think you will ...

Maya: I hope so; I mean, we have been, we haven't done any preparations ... as of yet, so I hope so, I can't see myself spending another \$300 or \$400.

The final part of the process created an extremely interesting phenomenon. Meeting students for a second interview, I discussed their current developmental program and how their experience in college had changed since our first meeting one and one-half to two months earlier. Each student described his or her developmental class as successful, citing that the intensity of the practical theories of writing and grammar introduced throughout the lessons was somewhat helpful, causing them to feel that they had improved in their ability to read and write English during the previous 8 to 10 weeks. Students who first felt that the course

was an unnecessary addition to their schedules began to *accept* that they benefitted from additional, developmental instruction. Max was quick to admit that, although he was not assessed fairly presemester, the developmental course did make him a better writer.

RT: You've been taking basic skills now for, let's say, when you finish here it will be 15 weeks, right? You missed a couple classes, no big deal, right? Okay, do you think you became a better writer in 15 weeks?

Max: I believe I did become a better writer. Not to put down my, like my writing, like my papers and everything but I did get better, yeah ...

For Maya, there was a sense of confidence that she would be successful on the mastery test to *exit* the program, as she knew more about both the process and the subject material since entering the class approximately 8 to 10 weeks earlier.

RT: **Right. Okay.** Do you feel competent about the mastery test coming up?

Maya: Yeah, I'm going to go in there and do the best that I can. I **feel, like**, at least I know what to expect. You know, it's different than when I came here the first time (Maya).

RT: Right.

Maya: I really didn't know what to expect.

Is this truly a remarkable distinction? **Students** who intensively practice writing and developmental skills over a full 15-**week period** should feel more confident and more proficient when it comes to these **tasks**; however, this feeling in no **way**

provides evidence that they actually lacked this proficiency at the start of the semester. Rather, I argue that for students like Maya and Max, their decision not to practice writing via prompts and other differentiated assignments in their everyday lives and prior to taking the placement test at RCC caused them to feel during the second interview or past the midpoint of the semester that this intense practice, over a 15-week period, automatically means that they weren't ready for college English. This is not the case.

A Perfect Passing Rate for the Sample: Mastery Test results

The mastery test is given at RCC to ensure that students who placed into developmental English based on nonproficient scores on the Accuplacer placement examination have reached a specific level of basic-skills reading and writing competency in order to be successful in English I, a general education course. All students in the sample were enrolled in the upper level basic skills courses as defined by their scores on their placement tests and department protocols. The mastery test is taken in two parts: a reading comprehension piece that is graded by the individual instructor, and a writing prompt that is scored by two readers who are full-time members of the RCC basic-skills faculty. At the conclusion of the semester, 17 students had contributed data to the study, and only one student was not attainable for a second interview after midpoint in the semester. It is remarkable that after 15 weeks of developmental instruction, each of the 16 subjects who completed the study had passed the mastery test, and only

one was made to retake the writing component because of a score of 5, where 6 is passing.

Maya was relieved of her concerns about repeating the course:

I did fine on the mastery test and got a B+ out of the class (Maya).

Molly, the most vocal and animated student in the sample, knew that English was her strong subject, noting that the rushed placement test created an unfair assessment of her skills.

It was no problem ... I passed (Molly).

The articulation between placement testing considerations (pretest) and mastery testing (posttest) when considering grading and related subjects within a rubric to be analyzed is inconsistent. It is not probable that these two different testing venues are somehow correlated to student achievement and enhanced proficiency in similar areas of English basic-skills readiness.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Analysis

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether students who were enrolled in a developmental English class in college obtained the knowledge necessary from secondary education to be successful in college and, if so, what their perceptions were behind the reasoning as to why they were scheduled for a developmental English course. It was the goal of this study to research student perspectives as to why student subjects did well in secondary school but then scored less than proficient on a basic-skills college entrance test, causing them to enroll in a developmental class. By analyzing student interviews and responses to an essay prompt, specific questioning and coding showed that each student in the sample had attained a proficient level of college knowledge to be successful in college; however, other perceived factors caused the students to do poorly on the entrance test and basic-skills proficiency on the whole. This study was not intended to align the concerns of HED professors and teachers of secondary education with the performance of students enrolled in developmental courses. Those concerns may be examined in future research projects and have been the crux of debates between HED and secondary systems when considering who is at “fault” for student incompetency and when considering the widening of the “gap.” Rather, this study focused fully on students, who performed above average to elite when considering secondary standards and progress indicators, and their own

individual perspectives as to why they were forced to take a developmental English course load.

Students identified a “fear of the unknown” when considering the entrance-test configuration as the primary reason for their enrollment in the developmental English course. Very little information was provided to students with regard to the Accuplacer test that they would be completing prior to matriculation at RCC to score their basic-skills readiness. Information with regard to test format, times, and concepts tested was extremely limited or not provided. Although one can argue that for this type of standardized proficiency test one does not need to study, I can make the argument that in secondary education, test-taking strategies are a major component of the curriculum as one prepares to take his or her SATs and high school proficiency examination. Knowing what is expected on the test and its format provides not only a sense of confidence for the student, but also further preparation for the assessment through a review of proper protocols and rubrics. This can once again be identified as important as we examine students who complete the developmental course and exit out some 15 weeks later, who had been studying the format provided by their professors with regard to the RCC mastery test and program rubrics. Those students, preparing to exit the developmental program, are prepared not only in theory, but also in what is expected of them to obtain a passing or exiting score.

As stated earlier in the analysis, an additional phenomenon I observed while completing the study occurred when I recognized that most students were

actually looking for basic-skills deficiencies they had simply because they failed the RCC placement test (Accuplacer). Even those students who originally blamed the testing itself or claimed that they “didn’t know” why they were enrolled in the basic-skills course eventually found something they were “lacking” that must have caused their score to be less than proficient. Therefore, even students who were recognized as above average in high school, passed the state-mandated assessment of proficiency as a requirement for graduation, and then graduated from a New Jersey high school, felt in some way that this test, graded by a computer program, found a deficiency in their reading and/or writing proficiency.

I do not believe I have experienced an epiphany of any sort in recognizing from the data that students felt more proficient in writing after the second interview was conducted in comparison to my first meeting with each individual student subject. As RCC incorporates an intense basic-skills curriculum over a 15-week period, it would suffice to say that students should feel, and even test, more proficient at the midpoint in the semester when compared to their actual placement scores. If these data were skewed the other way, one would have cause for future research to look into the RCC basic-skills curriculum, in that student perceptions of preparedness midsemester would then not have advanced in a positive manner since week 1. However, it is important to note that even though readiness and levels of basic-skills proficiency may have been perceived to increase from early to mid-semester, this does not mean that students were not prepared as they entered RCC from secondary education. Through this study and collected data, students in the study, who maintained a high level of proficiency

based on their preparation and standing in secondary education and skills set as outlined on the KSUS, were ready to matriculate into college courses and be successful. I would continue to argue that any student who has been absent from the writing process over the summer or longer and begins to write on an intensified and regular basis, would greatly improve in his/her writing, grammar, diction, and paragraph compilation. In other words, even students who pass the placement test and enter college English in lieu of developmental courses improve their writing at mid-semester when compared to their first week of matriculation in the course. To become a better writer, one must write.

An interesting comment made by one of the students via essay memorialized the need to connect a common core curriculum throughout all secondary schools in order to ensure essential, relevant, and similar curricular scopes and sequences are being infused in all student lessons throughout New Jersey. In college, this student “realized that the pace was a lot faster than high school and there was no mom there to keep me in check. I also noticed that a lot of my friends that were from other towns in N.J. knew a lot more academically than I did.” In dissecting this statement, it is obvious that there is an exorbitant number of factors to consider, which include both district and student factors. One can argue that socioeconomic status, college-educated parents, district per-pupil expenditures, class sizes, etc. all factor in the readiness of students. Even a student’s intellect and his or her ability to retain and regurgitate facts, innermost drive to study and succeed, etc. are all variables that lead to student proficiency. Aligning the curriculum so that all secondary students are expected to reach an exiting

proficiency on the same dedicated topics allows colleges and universities to understand and measure the skills needed to be successful in college. Right now, to make a fair assessment, just in Rausch County, New Jersey alone, RCC would need to provide over 60 different placement examinations to ensure proper articulation. Now, factor in other colleges from around the country and what they are expecting of their matriculating freshmen, and the lack of proper articulation multiplies dramatically. It is impossible to prepare all students for all colleges and universities; it becomes even more difficult then when consideration for readiness is based on basic-skills attainment in writing and mathematics and both secondary and HED cannot agree on what is necessary for students. Thus, the widening of the gap continues.

The conclusions drawn from this study affirm the previous research related to developmental education and standards established for a successful transition from secondary to postsecondary education. As lack of preparation for the placement test was the major finding of this analysis, the data support the pattern that a large percentage of students who enroll in developmental classes do so after failing placement tests (Carroll, 2009). Studies by Achieve and ACT along with educational statistics show that developmental course placement is on the rise, and students are entering postsecondary schools not “college-ready.” The sample of students in this study, who were considered above average to elite in high school, consistently met the KSUS standards (Conley, 2005b), which signified that they mastered a particular skill set to ensure their success in the first year of college. Their own placement into a college developmental English

course proves that, although their secondary curricular path included standards for university success, they still placed in developmental courses to help remediate their weaknesses. There will always be a need for remediation and developmental courses to help students prepare for undergraduate studies. The intensity of placement into these courses seems to be the basis for argument in the secondary and postsecondary arenas.

Limitations

As a general limitation, this study was completely qualitative and as such is subject to interpretation of the questions asked by the students and the answers provided (from the students) by me as the researcher. The student responses are further subjected to interpretation by me when considering coding and transcription analysis.

More specific to this study as an initial limitation, my research site and subjects were limited to Rausch Community College. Although this limited participation to a single community college population, the study itself was constructed to greatly benefit both the secondary and potential higher education students in New Jersey. Although this is a limitation, I feel that this study can be used as a pilot to construct additional research to include several colleges and universities on a larger scale.

A second limitation of the research included the inconsistency of the research subjects when considering college students who had volunteered to be study participants. During my original solicitation meetings, I had numerous

students who met the study criteria provide me with their contact information in order to schedule interview sessions in the near future. After all contacts were made, only five students agreed to meet and be interviewed, and only four of that initial sample completed both interviews. On more than several occasions, scheduled interviews with students were either cancelled by the student at the last minute or a rescheduling attempt was made after students did not arrive at our scheduled location and meeting time without prior notice. These limitations in securing continuous meetings caused me to grow nervous when considering the 1- to 2-month hiatus taken in between interviews as part of the research design. One of the positive mentions regarding this limitation includes the use of smart phones in today's technology. Student subjects and I did communicate very frequently with regard to interview scheduling, due to their ability to email and message me almost instantaneously. This allowed me to formulate creative scheduling and ensure that proper notice was given to library personnel who permitted me to interview subjects within the media center when available.

In stating these two uncontrollable limitations, I would say that the strongest opposition my study faced included my limited access to students at Rausch Community College. I was permitted to solicit professors at our semester orientation meetings: one for my adjunct colleagues and the other for full-time faculty members at an upcoming department meeting via the department chairperson. At the adjunct conference, many of my colleagues teaching the upper level basic-skills class permitted me to solicit their students for my research; however, after several attempts, not one of the full-time faculty

members would permit me access to the student population in classes of the same level. Over the next 8 weeks, I continued to ask permission from professors, but to no avail. The only full-time professor to finally respond in the affirmative had a class that did not meet my study criteria, in that students were on the lower tier of the developmental block.

Relationship to Previous Relevant Studies

Adelman and Conley

The findings of this study support the work of Adelman (2006) in *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College* and Conley's (2003) *Knowledge and Standards for University Success*. *Toolbox Revisited* explores the resources and academic "momentum" students build throughout secondary and postsecondary schooling while analyzing the relationships between specific factors for degree completion. The research focuses on high school and college curricula using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988. Adelman concludes that there is no assurance that the standards of secondary school performance, content coverage, or challenge of the material will come close to the threshold demands of community colleges (p. 104). Adelman's research does, however, describe an identified rigorous course sequence that secondary students should master in preparation for college. Conley's research and development of the KSUS reflect an insistence that high school graduates, who master the standards as outlined in the KSUS, have obtained the knowledge necessary to be considered "college

ready” for matriculation in postsecondary education. These standards define moreover what the course curriculum design should include in order for students to be “college-ready.”

In this study, student participants each graduated from a New Jersey high school that signified their successful completion of a mandated course study including 4 full years of English. Further, each student had identified the utilization of the standards as outlined in the KSUS while in high school. Their mastery of these skills was evidenced by their above-average to elite status in secondary education and their passing of the state formative assessment utilized to gauge proficiency in the area of English. The data and analysis prove that there are other outliers that lead to students placing in developmental courses in postsecondary education. Therefore, curriculum alignments and other academic drivers are only several factors that may lead to students enrolling in non-credit-bearing course loads.

Venezia, Bracco, and Nodine (WestEd)

A recent WestEd study by Venezia, Bracco, and Nodine (2010) also examined perceptions of community-college students with regard to their assessment and placement experiences in the California Higher Education system. Several parallels between the WestEd study and my research at RCC include students’ perspectives on preparations for placement assessments; whether students knew they would be tested upon entrance into college; and how students explained the course placement process. As in the findings of this study, WestEd

reported that students were not informed about community-college readiness requirements or placement assessments (pp. 12–13). Many students did not understand that their performance on the placement examination would determine which classes they would be permitted to take (Venezia et al., 2010). Further, with regard to counseling, students in the WestEd study were “frustrated” that they could not speak to counselors between receiving their placement scores and registering for classes (p. 16). In this study, some counselors encouraged students to take the placement exam immediately after attempting to register for classes, and students were then scheduled based on the outcome of **their** assessment. There was also no articulation between students and counselors during the period that stemmed from placement test to placement in classes.

Another example of relevance between studies includes the lack of clarity for students about challenging course placements or “retaking” placement tests. If you recall, Jake in this study claimed that he passed the challenge test but could not be placed in English I because all the **sections that fit his schedule** were already filled early in the semester. His lack of guidance in this situation caused him to remain in his original schedule.

RT: Right, okay. So why do you think you didn’t just do well on the test?

Jake: I just don’t think I did well on the test, that’s it.

RT: Okay, got you, okay. Did you have the opportunity to opt out of this, did you want to retest?

Jake: Yeah, I took the retest, and I actually got into writing one.

RT: Oh, okay.

Jake: But it was all filled up.

RT: Really?

Jake: So I didn't know what to do, so I just decided to stay.

In the WestEd study, students were not sure whether or not they could retake the placement examination, how they would go about doing so, or whether studying or not would make any difference (p. 18).

A final comparison between studies includes students' overall frustration about placement into developmental courses. Venezia et al. (2010) found that students reported feeling frustrated as they began to understand that they would have to "make up" credits and were essentially paying for high school classes "all over again." Further, many students felt that they would be too far behind and considered dropping out. Although reasons are unconfirmed, I lost one student during this study (Jake) who originally tested out of the developmental program. The other interviews act as evidence that students were in denial of their placement in the program and grew angry at the prospect of taking remedial courses after doing so well in high school.

Recommendations

There will always be a need for developmental courses in American education and specifically community college based on the aptitude of the students enrolled. Although many community colleges are beginning to limit

acceptances based on extremely poor writing skills, the essence of the community college is to provide an opportunity for the advancement of learning for all citizens. Community college developmental courses exist to help a population of learners who may have been below the proficiency ranges in secondary education, are English language learners, or have been removed from school for a large number of years. It is important, however, that the need for remediation is brought about through a fair measure of the assessments students complete in secondary education. As New Jersey public school districts move towards a common core curriculum by 2013, schools will be measured under a specific standard of achievement and goals, as established by the department of education in conjunction with university and college professionals. With this, the argument of proper alignment between K–12 and HED will slowly diminish, provided that the vertical articulation between systems matches, or even surpasses, the horizontal articulation already taking place within individual institutions. I feel it is extremely important that students be assessed on several records, and not just an entrance test, before being scheduled in a developmental program at RCC. Rausch's basic-skills professors are permitted to have students "test-out" of developmental English upon entry after they receive and assess a writing sample. There is absolutely no consistency when considering this procedure. There is no rubric and no formal assessment – just a teacher's apparent knowledge of a student's aptitude and writing after only one brief assessment. Writing is a process; should that not also be considered when placing students in developmental English? Further, to insist that students will become proficient

writers after 13 or 15 weeks of basic-skills remediation is somewhat misleading. Any student who writes consistently over a 15-week period must have the proficiency necessary to exit basic skills. However, students do not exit out of RCC developmental English using the same placement test that scheduled them for developmental English in the first place. Therefore, how is this considered a true pre- and postassessment measure? It is not. The exit test has two readers grading the test for a certain score. Why not use this same procedure to place students as they enter college? It is interesting how the number of students entering basic skills English (deemed nonproficient) nearly equals the same number as those students exiting (deemed proficient) 15 weeks later and while utilizing two different tests (one company-assessed and the other “in-house”) to formulate the data.

In order to fairly assess students entering college, a combination of criteria should be established to identify those students truly in need of developmental education. Those students who do not pass the placement test would place in general English courses and exclude developmental courses should they meet one the following expectations:

1. A student from a school that has an identified curriculum that meets or exceeds the KSUS has a score that includes a GPA or English grade considered above average to elite in high school (3.5 or 95%, respectively),
 2. A student passes the HSPA (or state assessment of knowledge) on the first attempt in English, especially if he or she scores over 275 on the English area,
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3. A student scores above average on the verbal and writing sections of the SAT (not at a particular cut-score that the college may utilize to waive placement test requirements),
4. A student who meets criterion 1, 2, or 3 could submit a writing portfolio to members of an RCC faculty committee for further review.

A second recommendation would be to enhance the articulation to include adjunct professors in the basic-skills department. Realistically, adjuncts make up the majority of instructors teaching these classes. Keeping this population informed of changes and necessary mandates in curriculum and testing is extremely important. Adjuncts have no meetings, limited administrative involvement, and minimal recorded assessments from their department. Enhancing the communication and receiving input from this faculty population will **only** benefit the program.

A final recommendation would involve the **HED** department chairs, professors, and stakeholders meeting with administrators and teachers in secondary school districts to articulate expectations of HED departments in comparison to high school curricula. This caucus could open a dialogue between institutions and help limit the number of students entering developmental English from specific high schools. I believe this type of articulation between systems would greatly **benefit both** HED and secondary education. First, secondary educators will be able to establish set criteria for specific students looking to matriculate at RCC. This information can further be **disseminated to counselors**

and parents to help students prepare for the experience of college. Second, this communication can only benefit RCC in that HED systems continuously complain that students are not prepared for the work outlined in their college classrooms. By giving prospective students and sending institutions its expectations, RCC allows for a more dedicated transition, negating other factors that may be considered “in the way” when placing students into these developmental courses (i.e. placement test format).

Responsibility of the Student

The ultimate responsible for success in both secondary and HED lies with the individual student. Although many factors contribute to how a student prepares to be successful in school, a necessary drive, sense of management and determination to succeed are specific traits a student attains in order to reach a level of competency in preparation for his or her future. In this study, students recognized that, although they felt prepared for college, each could have devoted more time to his or her high school work ethic, coursework, and homework. Even when considering the recorded perceptions of the students involved in the research, a lack of knowledge with regard to the placement-test format should have caused them to question the testing parameters and even request further information and an alternate testing time. Each understood that they could have performed better both on the placement examination and throughout secondary education.

Responsibility of Secondary Education

The articulation between secondary education and HED must increase in order to enhance student preparedness and the relationship between secondary and HED as a whole. This advancement will be the only way to ensure and strengthen our standing in the global education arena and help close the expectations gap when considering achievement of students and differences in secondary and HED. Secondary educators and public school districts must continue to work together to align standards so that a common core of elements can be prescribed throughout curricula as the first step in aligning K–12 expectations with the needs of higher education. Better articulation must occur between K–12 administrators and counselors and those professors, chairpersons, and administrators in HED. As in this study, specific consideration should be given to those secondary and HED officials who represent the same constituency within county lines but seem to be “way off” in providing a unified front for what is defined as being prepared for college.

Responsibility of Higher Education

Along with the articulation concerns of secondary-school teachers and administrators, HED itself must continue to articulate so as to establish a common core of expectations for its incoming freshmen. As different schools utilize different assessments for placement purposes, expectations with regard to the readiness of students for college become more varied and lost to secondary education. Articulation is pertinent; however, HED also has the distinct

responsibility of maintaining an individual mission for each college or university. More or less, the consideration for what one needs to be a general education and not a developmental student can be an easy component, like that of the KSUS. Further, other factors, such as the monetary prowess of developmental courses, must not factor into discussions of providing a more streamlined approach to identifying students who truly are in need of developmental courses. State-mandated and approved assessments by secondary systems provide ample data on a student's readiness for college, including basic skills. If colleges are not aligning their decision-making processes to these assessments, then the assessments are futile, causing a break in the progression of education. Higher education proponents must continue to use responsible measures in attempting to mend ties between themselves and secondary education. This can easily start with those individuals who are unknowingly aligned to this study – county secondary districts with their county community college.

Improving This Study

Methodologically, this study could be improved by incorporating interviews from several other major stakeholder groups in order to add different perspectives on the dilemma and assist in furthering the examination of the divergence between secondary and HED. Although this study was intended to examine and further the understanding of students' perspectives with regard to their showing proficiency in secondary education and scoring below proficiency

levels on college placement tests, input and perspectives from college professors, secondary teachers, and administrators in both systems could enhance the research and expand the parameters of the study. Although it would prove to be a difficult task, the parents of sample subjects could also be interviewed to examine the parental influence factor as it relates to college readiness. Further, if I could revisit the tenets of the study, going back with the knowledge already gained from this research project, I would focus more attention on the major perception of students with regard to developmental course assignment and specifically the placement test.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research in the field of basic-skills readiness and the expectations gap between secondary and HED could be considered vast in a general sense. In examining the perceptions of students with regard to their placement in developmental courses, I feel that additional studies could be directed toward other cultural and societal factors that may lead to a divergence among different groups within a particular student body. As an example, one can continue to examine the parental and family influence with regard to student preparations and how individual family “make-up” caused decreased readiness. Research with regard to the correlation between socioeconomic status and placement could also be attached as a way of considering student preparations for college and outside, uncontrollable factors. Other research may be conducted with regard to the articulation between the college and local secondary institutions and how

professors and students view readiness from different towns, cities, and states. For example, can professors pinpoint which students graduated high school from northern versus southern parts of the county versus outside the county? What are some of these differences and what are students' perceptions of these differences?

Additional research with regard to the importance of developmental tuition could be incorporated as well. The tuition revenue generated by developmental courses at RCC alone during the fall semester is extremely significant. If the college justifies the need for remediation based on one initial placement test, then additional measures to prevent or limit developmental rates may not be utilized. Further, if this tuition helps pay the salaries and program needs of the basic-skills department, one could understand why research in this area would not be invited. What would be the incentive for these particular professors/administrators to decrease developmental enrollments?

Another consideration for a future research project related to the parameters of this study would consist of an examination of student perceptions of entrance to developmental programs in mathematics. It would be interesting to analyze both the similarities and differences when considering why students achieve proficiency and above-standard grades in high school and place into developmental courses, reviewing two parallel studies in the categories of mathematics and English.

A final suggestion for future studies would be to research the actual placement examination. This study did not address whether the actual instrument

(Accuplacer) used or the “cut” scores established to determine developmental placement are reasonable or reliable. A further look at the effectiveness of the assessment and protocols surrounding scores and student placement should be considered.

Appendices

Appendix A – Student Interview Questions (Session I)

Informal – Name; high school attended; age; gender

1. Tell me about your family. Did your parents go to college? Did they graduate?
2. At the end of your senior year in high school, did you feel that you were prepared for college? Academically and when considering maturity. Why?
3. What was high school like? Were you a good student? Rank? GPA? Honors/AP?
4. Can you reflect on your senior language arts classes (prompt: courses taken; literature; projects)? Do you recall writing requirements (writing folders; senior thesis; MLA)?
5. How often did you meet with your counselors in high school to discuss college/future plans?
6. Do you remember passing the HSPA? What about your SAT scores (if taken)? How did you do on your HS exams?
7. How were your grades? (average/Above Average/Honors)
8. Did you complete your assignments and homework **when** assigned?
9. Did you study grammar in high school? What do you remember? Was it infused in/separate class?
10. How involved were your parents in your academics in high school?
11. Were you in any clubs? The captain of any academic teams (i.e. Debate, etc.)
12. Are you familiar with any titles/authors in World Literature? Relationship between historical events and literature?

Appendix B – Student Interview Questions (Session II)

1. How has your college experience been thus far?
2. What made you choose to attend RCCC?
3. Tell me about the admission process/path to admission at RCCC? Who helped you?
4. Do you feel that your high school prepared you for RCCC?
5. What have you taught yourself to do in college that you were never taught in high school to help you better prepare yourself for classes, tests, etc.?
6. What are your future plans?
7. Have your career or education goals changed since high school?
8. Why did you choose your current course load?
9. What do you wish you knew in HS about college?
10. What have you used throughout your RCCC classes that you've learned from HS English?
11. Have your parents influenced your studies in college?

(KSUS Questions 12–15)

12. Do you recall these academic vehicles/procedures in high school? In other words, did you ...

A1. Engage in an analytic process to enhance comprehension and create personal meaning when reading text. This includes the ability to annotate, question, agree or disagree, summarize, critique, and formulate a personal response.

A2. Make supported inferences and draw conclusions based on textual features, seeking such evidence in text, format, language use, expository structures, and arguments used.

A3. Use reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of types of literature, such as epic pieces.

A4. Understand plot and character development in literature, including character motive, causes for actions, and the credibility of events.

B.1. Understand instructions for software, job descriptions, college applications, newspapers, textbooks, etc.

B.2. Monitor themselves and correct themselves, as well as read aloud, in order to ensure comprehension.

B.3. Understand vocabulary and content, including subject terminology, connotative and denotative meanings, and idiomatic meanings.

B.4. Employ a variety of strategies to understand the origins and meanings of new words, including recognition of cognates and contextual clues.

C.1. Comprehend the salient characteristics of major types and genres of texts such as novels, short stories, horror stories, science fiction, biographies, autobiographies, poems, and plays.

C.2. Understand the formal constraints of different types of texts and can distinguish between, for example, a Shakespearean sonnet and a poem written in free verse.

C.3. Can discuss with understanding the effects of an author's style and use of literary devices to influence the reader and evoke emotions. This includes devices such as imagery, characterization, choice of narrator, use of sound, formal and

informal language, allusions, symbol, irony, voice, flashbacks, foreshadowing, time, sequence, and mood.

C.4. Can identify archetypes, such as universal destruction, journeys and tests, and banishment, which appear in many types of literature, including American literature, world literature, myths, propaganda, and religious texts.

C.5. Can discuss with understanding themes such as initiation, love and duty, heroism, and death and rebirth, which appear in a variety of literary works and genres.

C.6. Can use aesthetic qualities of style, such as diction or mood, as a basis to evaluate literature that contains ambiguities, subtleties, or contradictions.

D.1. Demonstrate familiarity with the major literary periods of English and American literature and their characteristic forms, subjects, and authors.

D.2. Demonstrate familiarity with authors from literary traditions outside the English-speaking world.

D.3. Demonstrate familiarity with major works of literature produced by American and British authors.

E.1. Know major historical events that may be encountered in literature.

E.2. Demonstrate familiarity with the concept that historical, social, and economic contexts influence form, style, and point of view, and that social influences affect an author's descriptions of character, plot, and setting.

- E.3. Demonstrate familiarity with the concept of the relativity of all historical perspectives, including their own.
- E.4. Can discuss with understanding the relationships between literature and politics, including the political assumptions underlying an author's work and the impact of literature on political movements and events.
- F.1. Identify the primary elements of the types of charts, graphs, and visual media that occur most commonly in texts.
- F.2. Interpret accurately the content of charts, graphs, and visual media that occur in texts.
13. When considering writing and the writing process in high school, did you.....
- A.1. Identify and use correctly and consistently parts of speech, including nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, adjectives, and interjections.
- A.2. Use subject-verb agreement and verb tense consistently and correctly.
- A.3. Demonstrate consistent, correct, and appropriate pronoun agreement and use of different types of clauses and phrases, including adverb clauses, adjective clauses, and adverb phrases.
- B.1. Use commas with nonrestrictive clauses and contrasting expressions.
- B.2. Use ellipses, colons, hyphens, semi-colons, apostrophes, and quotation marks correctly.

B.3. Capitalize sentences and proper nouns correctly.

B.4. Consistently avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

C.1. Use a dictionary and other resources to see how to spell new, unfamiliar, or difficult words.

C.2. Differentiate between commonly confused terms, such as “its” and “it’s” or “affect” and “effect.”

C.3. Know how to use the spell-check and grammar-check functions in word processing software while understanding the limitations of relying on these tools.

D.1. Know and use several prewriting strategies, including developing a focus, determining the purpose, and creating outlines.

D.2. Use paragraph structure in writing as manifested by the ability to construct coherent paragraphs and arrange paragraphs in logical order.

D.3. Use a variety of sentence structures appropriately in writing, including compound, complex, compound-complex, parallel, **repetitive, and analogous** sentence structures.

D.4. Present ideas to achieve overall coherence and logical flow in writing and use appropriate techniques such as transitions and repetition to maximize cohesion.

D.5. Use words correctly, use words that convey the intended meaning, and use a varied vocabulary.

E.1. Know the difference between a topic and a thesis.

E.2. Articulate a position through a thesis statement and advance it using evidence, examples, and counterarguments that are relevant to the audience or issue at hand.

E.3. Use a variety of methods to develop arguments, including compare-contrast reasoning, logical arguments (inductive-deductive), and alternation between general and specific (connections between public knowledge and personal observation and experience).

E.4. Write to persuade the reader by anticipating and addressing counterarguments, using rhetorical devices, and developing an accurate and expressive style of communication that moves beyond mechanics to add flair and elegance to writing.

E.5. Use a variety of strategies to adapt writing to different audiences and purposes, such as including appropriate content and using appropriate language, style, tone, and structure.

E.6. Distinguish between formal and informal styles (i.e. academic essays vs. personal memos).

E.7. Use appropriate strategies and formats to write personal and business correspondence, including appropriate organizational patterns, formal language, and tone.

F.1. Employ basic editing skills proficiently to identify obvious mechanical errors, clarify and improve the structure of the piece, and sharpen language and meaning.

F.2. Review ideas and structure in substantive ways to improve depth of information and logic of organization.

F.3. Reassess appropriateness of writing in light of genre, purpose, and audience.

F.4. Use feedback from others to revise their written work.

14. When recalling research projects from high school, did you.....

A.1. Formulate research questions, refine topics, develop a plan for research, and organize what is known about the topic.

A.2. Use research to support and develop their own opinions, as opposed to simply restating existing information or opinions.

A.3. Identify claims in their writing that require outside support or verification.

B.1. Collect information to develop a topic and support a thesis.

B.2. Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources.

B.3. Use a variety of print and electronic primary and secondary sources, including books, magazines, newspapers, journals, periodicals, and the Internet.

B.4. Understand the concept of plagiarism and how (or why) to avoid it and understand rules for paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting, as well as

conventions for incorporating information from Internet-based sources in particular.

B.5. Evaluate sources of information located on the Internet in particular to ascertain their credibility, origin, potential bias, and overall quality.

B.6. Select relevant sources when writing research papers and appropriately include information from such sources, logically introduce and incorporate quotations, synthesize information in a logical sequence, identify different perspectives, identify complexities and discrepancies in information, and offer support for conclusions.

15. In high school, did you.....

A.1. Discuss with understanding how personal experiences and values affect reading comprehension and interpretation.

B.1. feel comfortable formulating and expressing your own ideas.

B.2. Support your arguments with logic and evidence relevant to their audience and explicate their position as fully as possible.

B.3. Understand fully the scope of your arguments and the claims underlying them.

B.4. Reflect on and assess the strengths and weaknesses of your ideas and the expression of those ideas.

Appendix C – Codebook Questions

- Prior related knowledge (Language Arts Literacy Preparation Sequences Reading, Comprehension and Writing)
 - What was high school like? Were you a good student?
 - Can you reflect on your senior language arts classes (prompt: courses taken; literature; projects)? Do you recall writing requirements (writing folders; senior thesis; MLA)?
 - How often did you meet with your counselors in high school to discuss college/future plans?
 - How were your grades? (average/Above Average/Honors)
 - Did you study grammar in high school? Was it **infused** in/separate class?
 - Do you feel that your high school prepared you **for RCC**?
 - What have you taught yourself to do in college that you were never taught in high school to help you better prepare yourself for classes, tests, etc.?
 - How are the **RCC** courses different from your HS courses?
 - What do you wish you knew in HS about college?
 - What have you used throughout your RCC classes that you've learned from HS English?
 - Are you familiar with any titles/authors in **World Literature? Relationship** between historical events and literature?

- Readiness to change
 - At the end of your senior year in high school, did you ~~feel~~ that you were prepared for college? Academically and when considering maturity.
 - How have your classes ~~at RCC~~ been thus far? Is the content hard/easy? How are your grades?

- What made you choose to attend RCC?
- What are your future plans? Do you feel you are prepared for the future?

- Preparedness
 - At the end of your senior year in high school, did you feel that you were prepared for college? Academically and when considering maturity.
 - How involved were your parents in your academics in high school?
 - Do you feel that your high school prepared you for RCC?
 - What have you taught yourself to do in college that you were never taught in high school to help you better prepare yourself for classes, tests, etc.?
 - Have your career or education goals changed since high school?
 - How are the RCC courses different from your HS courses?
 - What do you wish you knew in HS about college?
 - What are some of the obstacles you face now? Did you face any of the same obstacles in HS?

- Administrative Support (Academic Counseling secondary and HED)
 - How often did you meet with your counselors in high school to discuss college/future plans?
 - Tell me about the admission process/path to admission at RCC? Who helped you?
 - How often do you meet with counselors at RCC? What do you discuss?
 - Why did you choose your current course load?

- 12th grade Language Arts Literacy Content – College readiness
 - Can you reflect on your senior language arts classes (prompt: courses taken; literature; projects)? Do you recall writing requirements (writing folders; senior thesis; MLA)?

- Did you study grammar in high school? Was it infused in/separate class?
- How are the RCC courses different from your HS courses?
- What have you used throughout your RCC classes that you've learned from HS English?
- What are some of the obstacles you face now? Did you face any of the same obstacles in HS?
- Were your English courses in high school harder than your courses at RCC?
- Are you familiar with any titles/authors in World Literature? Relationship between historical events and literature?

- Critical thinking
 - Were you in any clubs? The captain of any academic teams (i.e. Debate, etc.)
 - What have you taught yourself to do in college that you were never taught in high school to help you better prepare yourself for classes, tests, etc.?
 - What are your future plans? Do you feel you are prepared for the future?
 - What do you wish you knew in HS about college?

- Leadership skills
 - Were you in any clubs? The captain of any academic teams (i.e. Debate, etc.)
 - What have you taught yourself to do in college that you were never taught in high school to help you better prepare yourself for classes, tests, etc.?
 - Have your career or education goals changed since high school?
 - What are some of the obstacles you face now? Did you face any of the same obstacles in HS?

- Inclusion of Feedback Loops

- How often did you meet with your counselors in high school to discuss college/future plans?
- Did you complete your assignments and homework when assigned?
- How involved were your parents in your academics in high school?
- How often do you meet with counselors at RCC? What do you discuss?
- Why did you choose your current course load?
- What do you wish you knew in HS about college?
- What have you used throughout your RCC classes that you've learned from HS English?
- Have your parents influenced your studies in college?

- **Monitoring Mechanisms (Standardized Tests/Assessments)**
 - Do you remember passing the HSPA? What about your SAT scores (if taken)? How did you do on your HS exams?
 - How were your grades? (average/Above Average/Honors)
 - Did you complete your assignments and homework when assigned?
 - Tell me about the admission process/path to admission at RCC? Who helped you?

Appendix D -- Deductive Code List

Knowledge/Skills	Code
Basic Skills	SB- BSK
Readiness	SB-R
Academic Counseling	SB- AC
LAL Content Knowledge (Specific)	SB- LAL
Academic Standing	SB- AS
Leadership Skills	SB- LS
Assessment Data	SB- AD
Feedback Loops	SB- FL
Prior Related Knowledge	HED- PRK
Gender Specific Responses	Code
GSR: Male	GSR- M
GSR: Female	GSR- F
Socio-Economic Status	Code
SES: Specific Responses	SES- \$\$
Queries	Code
QU: Any Surprises?	QU- !!
QU: Puzzling Comments?	QU- ??

Appendix E – Definition of Codes

Basic Skills	Basic skills attainment in secondary courses or attained by the individual through components of secondary education (i.e. teacher knowledge)
Readiness	Students' readiness to attend college and leave secondary education; students' preparedness for college from secondary education (academic and maturity level)
Academic Counseling	Student interactions with academic counselors in secondary education; meetings between student and counselor to discuss college, grades, assessments and future plans
LAL Content Knowledge (Specific)	Student aptitude in LAL in high school; specific curriculum and measurement in LAL from high school
Academic Standing	Response with regard to grading and assessments
Leadership Skills	Resp. with regard to student's ability to lead others in any secondary setting
Assessment Data	Relative to any data that is used to assess student aptitude (i.e. tests, HSPA, AHSA)
Feedback Loops	Any time a student response relates to information, criticism, suggestions and/or "feedback" from other outside or internal group/person
Prior Related Knowledge	Reported knowledge that was obtained from secondary education or another viable academic source
GSR: Male	Responses specific to male gender
GSR: Female	Responses specific to female gender
SES: Specific Responses	Responses specific to socioeconomic status
QU: Any Surprises?	This coding refers to any response that is of interest to the study or future research in noting that it is a "surprise" answer to an interview question or an important fact to consider from a tangent
QU: Puzzling Comments?	Any response that is confusing and needs to be revisited or researched

Appendix F – Final Inductive Codes

Knowledge/Skills	Code	Defined	Flags	Qualifications Exclusions	Examples
Basic Skills Readiness	BSK	Student possesses proficiency in the basic skills of writing or reading	Proficiency HSPA; HS graduation	ASHA	Proficiency; poor grades; failed placement test
Academic Counseling	AC	Student receives counseling while enrolled and prior to college	Counselors; guidance; registrar; advisor	Parental guidance; teachers	Counselor assistance with courses
Academic Standing	AS	Student status when in HS	Graduation; honors; proficiency on HSPA	A – B grade point average	I was an A/B student; I passed the HSPA
Assessment Data	AD	Any assessment taken by student	HSPA; ACCUPLACER; Exams; Tests	Any assessment	Test scores; Standardized test scores
Access to College	ATC	Student's ability to know about a college and procedures	Application process; guidance; fairs; parents; counselors	Prior knowledge of the college	Assistance from guidance counselors or advisors
KSUS Standards	KSUS	Student recalls secondary curriculum relative to standards of KSUS for mastery	(as defined by the KSUS standards)	Student unable to recall specific information	Works of literature; research methods retained
ACCUPLACER	ACC	Any information pertinent to the placement test taken by students to assess proficiency	ACCUPLACER; placement test; pre-test; basic skills test; college readiness test	Any testing instrument that leads to examination of a student's proficiency in English	Test upon entrance into college; not taken after matriculation; not given as a post-developmental course test
Queries	Code				
QU: Any Surprises?	QU-!!				

QU: Puzzling Comments?	QU-??				
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Appendix G – Interview - Max

RT: -- we are sitting with Max. All right. What town are you from, Max?

Max: I'm actually from **** moved to ***** and then back to ***** and then back –

RT: Holy Cow!

Max: Yeah.

RT: All right. So, where did you go to high school?

Max: I went to – first, you know, I went to ***** then I went to **** High school.

RT: **** High, that's okay.

Max: Yes.

RT: Okay. Now, again I gave you that sheet, you signed it?

Max: Yes.

RT: Okay, this is the chart here. That has three different levels, the black, the gray, the white. Where do you see yourself in here? We are talking about your senior year in high school, okay. So, were you up in this kind of area with – you passed honor courses or somewhat here, around the black?

Max: Oh, I passed high school and I was – I guess B plus it was.

RT: Okay. So you don't know?

Max: Okay.

RT: How about in English?

Max: In English?

RT: Specifically.

Max: B plus.

RT: Okay. Perfect. All right. I want to start – can you tell me about your family, like what your dynamic is made up of? Do you have any brother or sister?

Max: Yeah, my brother. He is 28. He graduated from *** University.

RT: Oh okay.

Max: My sister, she is 32. She's retired now actually because her husband makes so much money. She lives in Florida, she graduated from *****.

RT: Oh! Okay. All right. What about your parents?

Max: They – well, my mom she moved into the U.S. when she was like 18 or 20s. I forgot when.

RT: Okay.

Max: And she only has like high school experience in *** and my dad, he was actually in culture. He – **** or something. I forgot what it was.

RT: Okay. So, he graduated college?

Max: I am not sure. [Indiscernible] [0:01:51].

RT: And you stayed with your mom [Indiscernible] [0:01:53].

Max: Yeah.

RT: How important is college to your mom and dad, your parents?

Max: It's pretty important. This – yeah, well, she just wants to me to be successful because she says I don't pretty much need to go to college. I don't – if I really don't think it's necessary but I do think it is and I think it's pretty –

RT: So she thinks it's important?

Max: Yes.

RT: Okay. What if – if for some reasons you didn't want to go to college and would they be okay with it?

Max: I would have to go – gone to like a specialized school for something.

RT: Okay.

Max: Actually some kind of training, some type of school.

RT: Okay. Okay. Let's talk about your senior year in high school? Okay. When you left senior year, did you feel you were prepared for college?

Max: I had a pretty good English teacher. Yes, I did feel prepared.

RT: Okay. So you were definitely prepared academically. How about maturity? Where you mature enough to get into high school?

Max: I would say so. I started taking care of myself because mom would – she was always at the restaurant and I am always working there also.

RT: Do you – do you have a restaurant?

Max: Yeah, there is one. *****.

RT: What's it called?

Max: *****.

RT: *****. Yeah. Okay. Nice. Okay.

Max: Yeah, and I have been helping out. I – and –

RT: Okay. All right. She – she was working for long time there I would guess?

Max: Yes. Ever since – not too long because – I think like sophomore year.

RT: Okay. Okay. So couple of years. All right. You are definitely prepared English wise. You have tough English teacher.

Max: She is pretty tough.

RT: Okay. Did you choose to come to Rausch?

Max: Yeah, I did. Actually because I – I was originally in a city college, basically a Community College *****.

RT: Okay.

Max: So, then when I came here, I just went to a – to save money, I just went to a community college.

RT: Okay. What are your plans after three years here? What do you think you are going to do?

Max: Originally, I was thinking of physical therapy, then I wasn't so sure after that when I was in *** but then actually going towards physical therapy again.

RT: Okay.

Max: So, I am not sure where I want to go afterwards.

RT: Was there a big difference in the California Community college system as opposed to this one? Would you say -?

Max: Differences, I think stick out. Although I didn't like course selection like in California, when you register – register for a class, you go to the class and then they give you a number to see if you are accepting it. So – because the only – California, economics are really bad. So, there are so many people trying to get classes. So, you have to get the number and get to go back online, get that number and then you are registered for a class. Not like over here.

RT: Really? Okay. So, it's easier to register here.

Max: Yes. It's easier.

RT: Yeah. It's easier to register. Okay. Did you – little bit of your backgrounds. Okay. All right. So, what was your – what was high school senior year like? What was like – did you have fun? Did –

Max: Oh, I had fun. I didn't take as many courses. I took more study halls, I remember that. I mean, particularly classes –

RT: Okay. What is that? Do you mean the credits or –

Max: I already had my credits and everything and – I just took some – like a business management class or something. I – just killed some fun.

RT: Okay. Did you see yourself as student?

Max: Pretty, it's - I usually don't get in trouble up too much.

RT: Okay.

Max: Not in classes.

RT: What about your homework? Did you have homework?

Max: Most of the time I forget to do my homework, every now and then.

RT: Okay. So out of five days week, you would say, how many out of five - if you had - if you had homework five days a week, one week.

Max: I try to -- miss like one or two.

RT: One or two?

Max: Yeah.

RT: How about your class rank? Do you remember what your rank was?

Max: Oh, I don't remember -

RT: How about GPA. Your GPA?

Max: It was -- it was 3.3.

RT: Okay. Any arts classes? AP classes?

Max: I was in a -- I was in Honors in English and I just went back down.

RT: Okay. So, your Honors in English, at senior year.

Max: That's before senior year.

RT: Okay.

Max: Senior year, I was just in regular classes but, I was -- before I was in Honors like US History, okay, I just went back to --

RT: All right. So what do you think happened? Why did you wind up with basic skills?

Max: I am a -- I just got over the summer and like -- over - in Sacramento, I guess I registered late.

RT: Right.

Max: I didn't get any English classes. So -

RT: Okay.

Max: So, that whole year, I didn't really have much -- like specifically, English practicing classes or any thing. So, I was getting little rusty on my - just like writing and stuff.

RT: Okay. So, did you take the test here seriously? The placement test or -

Max: I took it in a rush.

RT: Took it in a rush. Okay.

Max: Okay. But I did take it seriously.

RT: Okay. Did you -- did you take the [Indiscernible] [0:06:59]. Did your professor [Indiscernible] [0:07:01] to get out of the class?

Max: No.

RT: Did not. Okay. But you kind of rushed through that?

Max: Yeah. I took that on the last day and then [Indiscernible] [0:07:13] assigned to class.

RT: Got you. Okay. All right. Your senior language arts classes, your senior English classes. Do you remember doing things really? A prompt and persuasive essays and stuff like that? What do you remember?

Max: Yeah. Persuasive essays.

RT: Okay.

Max: There is something – we had journals. Also, I remember doing projects on [Indiscernible] [0:07:34] or something.

RT: Okay. [Indiscernible] [0:07:35] How about writing folders? Do you have writing folder?

Max: Oh we have a folder in senior year.

RT: What was it like?

Max: It was filled.

RT: You put everything in there?

Max: Yeah. We put all our old work in that and everything.

RT: Okay.

Max: But, we kept it to ourselves. So some people, they lost lot of things and stuff.

RT: Alright. How about - did you do the senior thesis? Do you remember doing like research or something?

Max: I am..... a senior project -.

RT: Okay. But you had to do something to graduate. You know, it's like a project – was like – like some of the schools have a research paper or graduate –

Max: Of course, we have like a research paper, some sort of -

RT: Okay. Do you remember doing it in a MLA format?

Max: Oh, I actually think – I only use MLA format. So, I think they haven't asked for anything else.

RT: So you probably learned it –

Max: Yeah, during high school.

RT: Got you. All right. Okay. How about your counselors in high school.

Max: Oh mine was really nice.

RT: Was it he or she?

Max: Is a he.

RT: Okay. Did you meet with him a lot?

Max: I think – I didn't meet up with him but when I really did need, he was a very nice guy.

RT: Probably talking about college plans and -

Max: Yeah, he talked about college plans. He brought me a nice note for my recommendation notes and -

RT: Okay. So, you saw him pretty often. How – how many times would you say you saw him in a month?

Max: A month?

RT: Yeah. Was it -

Max: Every other month.

RT: Every other month, okay, good. Did he talk to you about placement tests and stuff like that? The way you should do well on them, which is –

Max: He didn't really talk too much about those things so

RT: Okay. What was mostly the conversation about?

Max: Future plans and course selections and -

RT: How did you feel about your coming to Rausch or going to your other -

Max: Sacramento?

RT: Yeah.

Max: Actually parents – there was one other guy [Indiscernible] [0:09:23] I think. He went to *** actually. So, I was the one who actually did go all the way across country -

RT: Okay. All right. Do you remember taking the high school proficiency test?

Max: I actually really don't remember taking it but, you know, I remember passing it.

RT: Okay. All right. Do you remember preparing for the high school proficiency test?

RT: Oh yeah. In - in our classes, there is always a – we always sit practicing where at semesters, I suppose there is some worksheets -

RT: Okay. So you used to do worksheets and stuff like that.

Max: Yeah.

RT: And writing it too.

Max: Yeah, writing options and – yeah.

RT: All right. Okay. And did you think those worksheets were pretty easy? How did they come to you? You know, struggle with them or do you have....

Max: Not really struggled. It's just time consuming.

RT: Okay. Well, how - what if I told you that those – those worksheets, they were also same thing as the placement tests that you took.

Max: I didn't know, sir.

RT: What about the placement test when you first got here? Did you take the test seriously, or was it like, a rush through it kind of thing?

Max: I am not sure if it was that serious, because I kind of did rush through – or I didn't rush through it, but I did rush to take it.

RT: Did you know – did you know that if you didn't pass that test, you would be in basic skills class?

Max: I didn't know that actually.

RT: You didn't know that?

Max: No, right. Okay, I think so.

RT: What if you knew that going in?

Max: I probably would have tried practicing - writing a little bit just like I did, just like a few days before.

RT: Right, just prepare for the one.

Max: Yeah, because I have been taking a lot and I have been ready to do it and you know - I am just writing a letter anything like that.

RT: So, let me ask you a quick question. So you come here, you - you are going to get in class, you – you decided you are back here, you are going to go to your - what's the time frame when you got - you got to register, you got to take this test, like it was – all in the same the day or two, like you come here -

Max: Oh, I was here the whole summer.

RT: Okay, all right.

Max: But staying here for like the whole summer, I realized how – because I – it is pretty bad in California, finding job and everything.

RT: Right.

Max: And I already have jobs here and all my friends are here, so I was like it's more worth it to stay here. I did a trial, I did a three day trial to coming right here.

RT: Oh did you really.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay. Actually you come back and then you decided to go to Rausch or you – you should -.

Max: I kind of last minute decided –.

RT: Okay.

Max: Last week like, I was supposed to drive back and then I couldn't because I was kind of satisfied when I was parked.

RT: Oh okay.

Max: So then I had to get better prepared and I couldn't go back to those classes and I'm like I'm definitely staying.

RT: Okay. All right. So then you -- you registered and then you have taken this -- this big test, this placement test, Math and [Indiscernible] [0:12:11].

Max: I thought - originally I thought my placement test from --

RT: Would transfer over.

Max: Would transfer over. They did. So, then kind of -- and I did take the placement test.

RT: Okay. So you took it like right before classes started kind of thing?

Max: It seems like two days before.

RT: Really, okay.

Max: So, I was really trapped in that. That's pretty good.

RT: All right. So, your grades in high school, you said they were above average?

Max: Yeah, above the average.

RT: All right. And you have the one honors course you were talking about, that was the junior year?

Max: Yeah, junior year.

RT: All right. How about honors and anything else?

Max: Oh, I did take like - as I had something like science class.

RT: Okay. So what would you say your best subject and your worst subject is when you were in high school?

Max: In high school, worst subject is history like US history and -

RT: History, okay and the best was?

Max: My best was science, actually science.

RT: Okay, where does -- where does English fit in there? Right in the middle?

Max: Oh, right below science and then math was -

RT: Okay, I got you. Okay. So, it will be Science - it will be science, English, math and history.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay. What about your -- your assignments? Talked about homework a little bit but did you always finish your assignments? Did you have a problem finishing your assignments?

Max: I do usually - sometimes I -- the big things towards the end, I do rush it up but I always get those done.

RT: But it's not because you can't finish it, it's just because you are -

Max: It just kind of go way back [Indiscernible] [0:13:42].

RT: Yeah. Okay. All right. You were studying grammar in high school?

Max: Grammar.

RT: Nouns, pronouns, periods, commas?

Max: In high school, let me think. We were probably doing noun, basic skills. Not so much.

RT: Not so much, a little bit right?

Max: A little, but we were doing like the stuff above that. We are not going back to like nouns, adjectives, adverbs or that, but for those, I guess we did talk about adjectives sometimes. We don't – we never really talked about nouns or anything.

RT: All right. So not really - so it would be – you would say it's more infused in what you were learning? It was like separate bridge of grammar nowadays, since [Indiscernible] [0:14:32].

Max: It wasn't like oh, we are going to work on nouns and -

RT: How do you think – you think you are pretty good with that stuff -

Max: Nouns, yeah, like my own thing – I am worried about, it's like – because I was – my - the grammar. I forgot what it's called but just like where commas go and quotations like periods after or before and stuff like that.

RT: Right, okay. Like quotes are outside the period and actually – all right. Okay. We talked about your – your parents being involved. How involved were they in your - in your high school? You said they were mostly -

Max: My mom, you know, it was always my mom actually.

RT: Okay

Max: But, she wasn't really impulsive.

RT: Not that involved? Didn't say, did you finish your homework –

Max: No.

RT: Didn't check your homework ever?

Max: Not really.

RT: Okay. Did she – did she ask you or did she encourage you to do on these placement tests or when you came here, did she even know about that?

Max: I did tell her about it and she was like - she really didn't say anything about the --

RT: She supports like a lot for such a kind of thing, but not now, nothing – nothing like, you know, like makes you, take your time and –

Max: Not really.

RT: Okay. How about your brother and sister?

Max: They are all away. My brother is in ****, my sister is in ****.

RT: Okay. So never get on the phone, like how's your school, how are you doing?

Max: Not really much. Of course, when we do – when we are on phones like we do in school [Indiscernible] [0:16:05].

RT: So it's very rare.

Max: It's pretty rare.

RT: Do you feel any pressure to really go to school and do well because they went to pretty good schools?

Max: I don't feel pressure because my mom says I don't want you to be like my brother and my sister.

RT: Okay.

Max: Because – I don't know. I am different. The way I grew up was different from them.

RT: Okay.

Max: Because they grew up with my dad -

RT: Okay.

Max: So they were much more disciplined and strict.

RT: Okay.

Max: But with me I was pretty laid back I have to say.

RT: Okay. So did you – would you say – did your dad push them to go to college and do well and -

Max: I am actually not sure. They just seemed – I don't know – I didn't really see.

RT: Let me ask you a question if anything you have to answer, so I want to make you feel comfortable with. If your dad was still living with you, do you think that you would be in a different position right now? Again your dad's not gonna know, don't worry about, [Laughing] ,you know, I mean, would you feel more pressure to may be at Rausch or *** Community college. Maybe it was – would be like **** or

Max: Oh, I think he would be fine with it.

RT: Okay.

Max: He actually talked to my mom – I mean, to do what I – I don't know. She had some like – I don't know how to explain, like she changed -

RT: Okay.

Max: When I was born, like taking care of me was much different for my brother and sister.

RT: Okay.

Max: Like he - he told my mom like let him do what he wants to do, don't pull him back, so [Indiscernible] [0:17:45].

RT: Okay, okay. All right. How about clubs? Any clubs right there? You got your fitness guide here.

Max: You know, I work out a lot. I did football back then in middle school at the freshman year, then when I went to -

[Indiscernible] [Distant Chatter] [0:18:03]

RT: That's alright, what position.

Max: [Indiscernible] [0:18:05]

RT: Is it really?

Max: So I didn't tackle.

RT: Okay.

Max: And also with special teams.

RT: Okay.

[Indiscernible] [Distant Noises] [0:18:14]

Max: I was never in any of those types of academic stuff. I am not really academic, I was more in sports, I was in tracks, I did cross country a little bit.

RT: Okay.

Max: Because that was my main thing.

RT: Okay. So, more – so more physical stuff then.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay. Were you captain of any of those teams?

Max: Captain – I forgot what I was - senior year I was – I wasn't exactly the captain. My friend – my other friend was captain.

RT: Right. So, like the senior year you kind of //.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay, did you – did you – you took like a leadership role on that team, you would say or did you help out with the younger kids?

Max: Oh yeah, I like – taught them like starts //

RT: Okay. Okay. All right. Last question back to the literature part, do you remember any titles or authors, something that you did in high school? I always bring life and today's everybody like Shakespeare for example -

Max: Of course Shakespeare.

RT: What else? Anything else that you remember?

Max: Oh, I can't – I forgot the author's name.

RT: Okay.

Max: [Indiscernible] [0:19:31].

RT: How about high school literature? Did you do like world literature? Do you remember any of that or

Max: We did – let's see. I never read individual reading, I did my own book on something about Rucker, Nicky Sixx

RT: So, the biographies.

Max: Yeah, I did biographies and then we also learned -

RT: Did those – did those readings help with your writing at all? Like do you remember like reading some of that stuffs and -

Max: That book not too much because that was more of diary done like it's freehand, literary.

RT: Okay. Okay. Got you. What about historical and that stuff?

Max: Historical. We did - you know, together civil-

RT: Okay. Do you remember reading a lot – I mean, doing a lot of reading -

Max: I was doing like three four books. I can't remember what books.

RT: How much would you write in college a week? Do you remember? Was it every day?

Max: In college I –

RT: I'm sorry in high school.

Max: High school, it was, yeah, basically most of the time. Everyday, I would be happy if we didn't have any.

RT: All right, okay. Yes. Right. Good. Okay. And you felt that your high school prepared you for here?

Max: I believe so, is that gap between high school and then placements tests over here and I still -

RT: Yeah. Well, why do you think that gap existed?

Max: Well, I think it - I didn't have an English class during my **** experience.

RT: Okay. So, it's okay. So is it that you have there, okay. Got you, alright, and what do you wish in your high school, what do you wish you were trained for at high school that can help you in college?

Max: I like to go back.

RT: Yeah, go back.

Max: How about taking some AP courses

RT: Okay. So you are taking some more advanced courses.

Max: Yeah, and I would have taken more math courses instead-

RT: Okay. Do you have any questions for me?

Max: Not really. I don't have much to say.

Appendix H – Interview II - Max

RT: This is Max interview two, our second and last interview with you. Max is compensated now. I really appreciate it. Thank you very much. Okay, so, we met a few a weeks, about a month or so ago now, right?

Max: Yeah.

RT: How's college been so far? What's going on? You were telling me before the interview started it's been crazy.

Max: Yeah, actually it's getting even crazier because I had to miss a few days of classes so it's been a little harder. Just trying to catch up a little bit for now and sneak off for some--

RT: Okay, now this week you have the chemistry test.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Did you take one part all ready?

Max: Actually it's right after this.

RT: What time is that?

Max: It's at 4:45.

RT: Got you. Okay, so you'll be all right for that. So what about what have you learned from when you first came here for the English basic skills to now? How do you feel like you're a little more prepared? Do you feel?

Max: A little bit more, yeah. We touched up on some more grammar like commas, semicolons, and also, like transition words and stuff like that.

RT: Okay, so we can catch up on things like that. What were some of the weaknesses again? Do you remember now when we first met we talked about some of the reasons why you were in the class? Now that you've been in the class for a month since we've met, do you realize that there may be some more weaknesses that you had in high school or was it....you know?

Max: You know my writing skills did definitely drop a bit.

RT: Okay.

Max: She definitely is retouching up on my writing skills and, you know, I had to write a paragraph, and it's actually going more in depth and I'm getting more use to writing six sentences rather than five sentences per paragraph and everything like that.

RT: So you're expanding a little more?

Max: You know write like a conclusion, pieces, and yeah.

RT: Okay, good. So are you having fun here? What's going on?

Max: I'm having fun here.

RT: So what are your plans now since last time we talked? What do you think you're going to be doing now?

Max: I'm probably going to be continuing next semester but I may possible transfer to **** and **** around here. So I'll see how that goes.

RT: Okay, so you might wanna -- what are you going to do at **** or *****?

Max: Physical therapy.

RT: Physical therapy there?

Max: I'm supposed to be doing physical therapy.

RT: Is there a physical therapy program here?

Max: No.

RT: There isn't at all? Nothing? Okay, so let's go back a little bit again. Now, why did you choose to come here for community college again? Can you tell me what all of your choices were?

Max: Yeah, I actually was going to go to community colleges in California but... so I came back here and this community college is a lot better than the California one. It is more expensive by four times.

RT: Really?

Max: Four or five times. That's painful. Four hundred a semester.

RT: Really?

Max: It's dirt cheap over there. That's why everyone is going back to community colleges. It's a really hectic schedule and everything and over here it's actually the campus is a lot better and this place seems a lot better.

RT: Okay.

Max: Just in general.

RT: Okay, so I'm going to bring you back to when you realized you had to take basic skills, okay? So you get a letter in the mail or get notified somehow, do you remember how that happened?

Max: I checked online I think.

RT: You checked online and it says there you are --

Max: Actually, right after I took it, it gave me the score and told me I needed to. It told me right up front that I needed to take the basic skills class.

RT: Okay, let me go back a second. When you first applied to the college, they told you...you had to take an entrance test called the accuplacer.

Max: Yeah, a placement test.

RT: Did you know where to get the information from about that test? Did you look at the test? Did they tell you could check this link out or anything like that?

Max: They did tell me the link and then I went to the testing area in that hallway. I went there, I got some review kit thing. Actually, I'm not even sure I got that for this one because this was really last minute, so.

RT: So you just went in there and took the test?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay. So do you think now if you had to go back, if you had to go back now to that moment you went to the testing center what would you have done differently? Answered things differently?

Max: If I'd had the time I probably would have one thing I would reread and touch up.

RT: Okay, reviewing and studying? What was going on?

Max: Yeah, actually what was going on the test.

RT: Okay, so you never actually checked out that website or?

Max: Not really no.

RT: Okay, all right, good. Then you found out from the computer that you didn't pass the test and you were automatically enrolled in the -- well, you had to choose a day right?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Did you talk to any counselors since that?

Max: I did talk to one counselor but he didn't really help me much. He kind of was just like, "Here's your courses, 4GE, you can choose among them." You know which isn't.....

RT: Okay. Did anybody explain why you were in the writing class? What your score meant?

Max: Yeah, the person right after I finished did. He printed out the score and he did explain it a little bit.

RT: Okay, because you're in the upper tier of--

Max: Yeah, I'm only one tier away from regular classes. I almost passed it.

RT: So, exactly, you just missed it. Okay.

Max: He explained it a little bit and all the courses and moved on to the next.....

RT: All right, so you know, just a quick question. Not on script, I'm just curious. You've been taking basic skills now for let's say when you finish here it will be 15 weeks, right? You missed a couple classes, no big deal right? Okay, do you think you became a better writer in 15 weeks?

Max: I believe I did become a better writer. Not to cut out my like my writing like my papers and everything but I did get better, yeah.

RT: Okay, good that worked for you. Okay, all right, let's go back to high school and how you got into community college. Okay, your high school guidance counselors tell you how to get into college, how long you're in college?

Max: Yeah, my guidance counselor was really helpful. He wrote me a letter of recommendation and just some parts where I was weak he made it look better than it really was and he was really helpful. He helped me choose my classes and everything.

RT: Okay, all right. Did you have to seek the guidance counselors out or did they come and get you? Did they say, "Andy, come on?"

Max: Every now and then they did come and get us, but when I need help I just set up an appointment for it in advance.

RT: So they're readily available?

Max: They're available quite often.

RT: Okay, good. How many guidance counselors were there? Do you remember?

Max: Let me see, in high school there were at least six, four or five.

RT: All right. So, why do you think you're in this class?

Max: Well, this class?

RT: Yeah, why do you think you wound up here?

Max: Like from a high school perspective, you probably should have been writing.

RT: What happened? Did you just kind of blow it off?

Max: Actually, my writing in skills in the beginning weren't the best. I guess wasn't at college level so.

RT: Is that what you thought coming in to here though? I mean--

Max: I always knew my writing wasn't the best, top notch. I can write really well when I have a good topic or something but just writing regular papers and stuff and like essays, I'm not the best at it and I guess this class did help out.

RT: Okay, they gave you a prompt and you knew you weren't into the prompt?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Would you say if you really want to write about like something you really liked?

Max: I probably would have brainstormed into finding a specific topics, I mean specific details.

RT: Do you think you not finding out the information before and being rushed really hurt you? I mean, what I'm trying to get at is, not to put words into your mouth, but what I'm trying to get at is do you think that--

Max: Not getting it right the first test.

RT: Yeah, do you think it was the test or do you think you weren't ready? We focus so much on tests you know what I mean?

Max: I believe the reason was because how I was rushed and I hadn't had time to prepare or anything, so.

RT: //////////////// I mean you decided to come here.

Max: Yeah.

Max: How many days before you knew you had to take that test? I mean was it like you applied and the next day you had to take the test or?

Max: Somewhat like that.

RT: Really? Did you apply late or enter later like in August and you had to take the entrance exam immediately?

Max: I was supposed to drive back to California August 7th or something like that and then my car got cited so I took it to like the pawnshop for about a week and then I couldn't make it back. I think they started on the 15th of August. So I kind of missed the starting date for everything so I decided I was just going to stay here and after that--

RT: You applied and it was like right away, you have to go take it?

Max: Yeah, say I went back and applied here in like May or June for the fall, I would have had plenty of time to prepare.

RT: So, that definitely was a factor you think?

Max: Yeah. I felt like I was rushed. That is one of the factors.

RT: All right, good. Do you feel high school prepared you for Rausch?

Max: I believe high school did definitely help out.

RT: What was something you wished you knew in high school that would have helped you out more here? Was there something somebody said to you in high school something like, "Listen, you know, make sure you don't eat the cafeteria food?" Was there something somebody could have said?

Max: Let's see in high school something I wish I would have known. I definitely should've read the books more thoroughly. So I could like write like--

RT: Excuse me, what do you mean when you talk about books?

Max: Just like I mean novels not text books. Just like books in general. If I read through them more thoroughly I could've probably done better. I mean come up with ideas and stuff so. I kind of just skimmed through books when I was in high school.

RT: Okay, so novels weren't your thing?

Max: Some were, some weren't,

Max: What was your favorite novel? Do you remember?

Max: What was my other choice? I was really into Michael Crichton. Okay, so I read a lot of his books. Also, I read -- not Diane Stevens. I actually read the Da Vinci Code.

RT: Okay, so when you got to pick what you were going to read it was a lot different than what it was like?

Max: Yeah. One they did give us was Digital Fortress. That was a good book.

RT: What was it?

Max: Digital Fortress.

RT: Digital Fortress?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Do you remember who wrote that?

Max: Michael Crichton.

RT: That's a great thought, I really appreciate.... Interesting.... so what have you taught yourself to do in college that you were never taught in high school? I mean did you teach yourself to do that? Well, you're not really doing novels now.

Max: I'm kind of reading novels right now but like for research papers and stuff. I'm doing more in depth reading and not so mucho highlighting but just like typing out points and stuff like that.

RT: Okay, so you're doing more now, obviously, than you did in high school?

Max: Yeah.

RT: You learned from high school. That's good. Okay, good. So where do you see yourself in the future? Where do you see yourself five years from now?

Max: I'll still be in school.

RT: That's good. Be in school for a long time.

Max: Yeah, I think I'm gonna be in some school.

RT: What about a career?

Max: Well, physical therapy is what I'm aiming for unless something changes my mind and then I'm really good at something else which I might be. I can't really figure out what I'm really good at. I haven't focused on it yet.

RT: So, what do you think? What's the number two thing? What's the second thing you think you really want to do?

Max: I'm really into computers and I'm really good with them but I'm not sure like what type of computer.

RT: Is it software programming or?

Max: I'm more into hardware play.

RT: Really?

Max: Yeah, so I'm still not sure.

RT: It's a good back up plan though right? There's nothing wrong with that. All right, now have those goals changed like you're talking about now physical therapy and maybe computers. Have they changed since high school? If I had talked to you as a senior in high school and you were about to leave senior year, what would you be doing? What would you tell me in five years what you'd be doing?

Max: Like architecture.

RT: Okay. Like blue prints?

Max: I worked with a few like blue prints like auto cads and stuff in high school.

RT: Okay.

Max: Then for career today I also went to architectural.

RT: Okay Well, that's a huge difference from there to physical therapy. What happened? Did you injure yourself?

Max: I have plenty of injuries. I worked with my physical therapist ***** and he taught me a lot.

RT: That was for playing football right?

Max: That actually was for football and track.

RT: You did track too right?

Max: Yeah for my track seasons.

RT: Really? So you had that experience that you were exposed to that in high school. So you started liking it a little bit. Maybe you got here and you started finding your own way.

Max: Yeah. It's all motor skills and stuff like those seemed more interesting to me than how muscles work and how to work out muscles and stuff.

RT: Like kinesiology?

Max: Yeah.

RT: What was your other, if you don't mind me asking, what are your other classes now?

Max: Right now? Just GETs. It's like sociology. Except I'm taking one class that I thought was supposed tobut it turned out to be a general elective. It's post video production.

RT: Okay.

Max: I'm also taking intermediate college algebra and English and I have the two EBS classes.

RT: Do you have a math EBS too?

Max: No.

RT: You have the EBS all year long too?

Max: Yeah, I took two English. It's a two part thing because it's Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursday and Friday. So...

RT: Wait a second. You have English twice a week I mean? Same teacher or?

Max: Same teacher twice a week.

RT: Do you have two credits or three credits?

Max: Yeah, I got 2 actually.

RT: But nothing for the physical therapy? What about next semester for your?

Max: Next semester?

RT: Any chemistry? Any kind of that stuff?

Max: I'm planning on taking some of that stuff. I already took -- I have credits for biology I believe.

RT: Right.

Max: Then I'm just going to take chemistry.

RT: Okay, so you're current load right now, you've chosen because you really had to.

Max: Yeah, I really didn't have any options when I was choosing courses. A lot of them were all filled up.

RT: All filled up because you were late?

Max: Yes, so I basically chose whatever I could get.

RT: Let's go back. Let's say you were a little early. What would you take? What would you have wanted to take? Would you have taken another language maybe or?

Max: I would have wanted to take psychology and a science course. Some type of science course would have been nice.

RT: Okay, I'll put those down there. What's something you could tell me you used throughout Rausch so far that you learned in high school? What was something like your teacher taught you in high school or something that the curriculum taught you in high school or a book that you read about Rausch? Yeah, we used to do this in high school all the time, the MLA format. Did you learn the MLA format?

Max: Yeah, I learned MLA format and it's just kept with me ever since. I don't really have to use it, APA the other one? I really didn't have to use that much except for I think it was science?

RT: Yeah, that's more for psychology or upper level kind of stuff.

Max: Works cited page or bibliography you could say. All those things I kept MLA format.

RT: Okay, so that's something that's stuck with you. Anything else come to mind from high school that you really think about..... I'm so glad I learned that in high school?

Max: Just like headers and then--

RT: What do you mean by that? Headers?

Max: Oh, for like the page. Where it says return and then just a small thing. Databases, those helped out a lot.

RT: Okay, so you learned that in high school?

Max: No, no, no we actually we just retouched on that in the EBS class.

RT: What did you learn in high school? Do you remember? Like paragraph or EBSCO...

Max: We went over EBSCO also.

RT: That's really helpful. So your English teacher taught you that or?

Max: It was in our English class but we were brought to the computer room or something to learn it because it was the library and--

RT: Right, and you used that in high school English?

Max: To research.

RT: To do your research paper? Did you have a research paper requirement to get out of high school?

Max: Like in English you had to--

RT: Was it a research paper?

Max: Yeah, I think it was research.

RT: So they showed how to use EBSCO to do research by doing that. So now, would you use EBSCO when you do a research paper now? Yes, okay, so are you using?

Max: Yeah, I'm using the community college one right now.

RT: It has everything in it.

Max: It has a lot. I don't know ...like perspective on social issues and stuff that helps out a lot.

RT: Okay, so your actually using -- do you come to the library to do it?

Max: I just use it online.

RT: What did you do in high school? Did you go to the library or did you do that in the computer lab?

Max: I actually did in the computer lab. They had a computer lab there and the library.

RT: Back in the older days you had to go to the library and do stuff.

Max: At home I think they gave us a log in. We always made our own logins and stuff. So I also use to do that.

RT: So that was in high school?

Max: Yeah, high school.

RT: So, high school you could actually do it from to? So it's sort of like what we're doing here.

Max: Yeah.

RT: That was pretty advanced for high school. Okay, good, that's excellent. Let's go over your parents again if that's okay? We talked a little bit about that. Now, I know we talked a little bit about it but how they influenced your studies here if at all?

Max: Like my mom and like my brother and sister, they always push me to take more classes than I needed per semester because one day they were in colleges like **** or ****; they were maxing out on credits per semester.

RT: Okay.

Max: They weren't just doing like full time students. Full time is 12 credits they were like doing--

RT: Doing way over?

Max: Yeah, 18 plus minimum.

RT: Okay.

Max: So they're pushing me to do more courses and stuff.

RT: How does that make you feel because your siblings went to -- you have three siblings, no two, I'm sorry? They went to really good schools.

Max: Yeah.

RT: How does that make you -- feel pressure to go to like **** is a good school or maybe an Ivy League? Do you feel pressure?

Max: No, it was never really pressured because my mom she lets me do things my way because my dad when he left.... she still talks to him every now and then but he tells her to let me choose my own path for instance so she doesn't really expect me to go to Ivy League but to become successful.

RT: Right, right, did your brother and sister ever to say you, "Listen, I never had time to enjoy college because I took 18 or 21 credits. You should enjoy college a little bit and have some fun?" If I went to Columbia taking 21 credits a semester, I don't know how I'm going to enjoy the entire college experience.

Max: My brother still enjoyed college but he did study harder I think.

RT: What did he say to you when you said you were in basic skills or he found out?

Max: Oh, they don't know.

RT: No, no, no you didn't tell them?

Max: I didn't tell them.

RT: Did you not tell them for a reason? Did you not tell them for a reason or it just didn't come up?

Max: Kind of a need to know basis.

RT: Okay, what did you think they would say?

Max: Gosh, I'm not sure. They'd probably be like why are you in them or study harder or something.

RT: Right because they would think you would have the ability to not be in this class, right?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay.

Max: They would say I don't really belong in this class. They would probably say you didn't study or what's a matter? Did you blow the test off?

RT: Did you really try on that test?

Max: Yeah, I tried on that test. Except I just didn't have all my writing skills in my mind.

RT: Like now you know the process. The thesis, you know, the supporting paragraphs, the conclusion, you know all that grammar and all that other stuff. Then you were just writing.

Max: Yeah, I was just putting as many words I could.

RT: Okay, got you. Okay, I want to ask you a series of questions real quick. Quick answers okay? I want you to think back to your senior year okay? Try to remember if what I'm asking, you recall doing your senior year, okay? So, if I ask you did you have lunch; say yeah I had lunch or something like that. Okay? All right, so do you remember talking about -- do you remember writing summaries, critiques?

Max: Yes, I remember critiquing.

RT: Did you critique any novels?

Max: Yes, I believe so.

RT: Or any newspaper magazines?

Max: We did newspaper articles and stuff like that.

RT: Did you ever do like a personal response? This is how I feel about this topic? The teacher brings up reactions? Roe vs. Wade or a political thing or we just read a poem, what do you think?

Max: Like our reactions also. With articles also I think. Newspaper articles, we reacted to those also. Also, what else did we react to? She also gave handouts from something. I don't remember what.

RT: But you remember doing those journal critiques stuff like that? Okay. How about like drawing conclusions? Did you ever have a situation where you read something and you and the class would say this is definitely what happens or foreshadow what would happen or if the character did this differently this would happen?

Max: I definitely remember that but that was, I believe, sophomore year.

RT: So it wasn't senior year?

Max: I believe we did touch up on it in senior but I mainly remember it from sophomore year.

RT: Okay, do you remember doing epics like Beowulf and Grendel? Do you remember those?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Was that your senior year?

Max: That was my senior year and previous years also.

RT: Okay. What about characters? Did you talk about characters at all? Character analysis?

Max: Yeah.

Max: What do you remember about them?

Max: We did a few plays. We did, I can't remember what plays though, it was definitely Shakespeare. I know we did Romeo and Juliet. We had a chart, we had the characters name, like how their personality was and then all these other like what they wore and stuff like that.

RT: Okay, good. Okay, all right. This should be right up your ally; we just basically talked about it. Do you remember talking about instructions for software? They taught you how to use programs?

Max: Yeah.

RT: What else besides that? The EBSCO host you were talking about. Any other software that you remember?

Max: Software? Not specifically.

RT: Something like Study Island or any of those things?

Max: No.

RT: No, nothing like that? Okay. How about things for job descriptions or college applications? Did you use software to fill out a college application when you applied?

Max: No one does that.

RT: How about text books online? Did you ever use those?

Max: Text book online? I believe I used that in math class in high school.

RT: Really? Okay, good. How about checking your own work? Monitoring yourself? Not peer editing, self editing? Did your teacher ever say, "Okay, I want you to reread this?" Did you do like second drafts? Third drafts?

Max: I know we did second drafts. We also edited other peoples work in class.

RT: Okay. Cool. Vocabulary and context? How was the vocabulary structure there? Was it like a separate book? Did you do vocabulary words? Was it infused in the reading?

Max: In senior year I don't remember doing much vocabulary like extending our vocabulary.

RT: Was it just like part of what you read basically?

Max: Just part of what we read and then that's about all I guess.

RT: Good. Okay. How about like the origins of words? Did your teacher go over Latin?

Max: Latin? No. Not specifically senior year...but I remember teachers like explaining some words every now and then like it means so and so.

RT: Okay. How about like all the formats of things like novels? Do you remember doing novels? Pre-novels and how a novel -- what's the difference between a novel and a short story?

Max: I forgot what the difference was but I remember we did read novels and short stories.

RT: Right, okay. So hopefully you know there's a difference. From there you learn there's a difference between a novella versus like a smaller novel.

Max: Short stories. I forgot the differences actually.

RT: But you do remember going over it at least?

Max: Yeah, we did go over it.

RT: How about horror stories?

Max: Horror stories? Like as a genre you mean?

RT: Yeah, kind of like a genre like--

Max: Yeah, we changed up the genres every now and again.

RT: Okay, you did it. Do you remember doing Poe?

Max: A little bit. We did a few like the Raven, stuff like that.

RT: Science fiction? Do you remember doing that?

Max: Yeah, I remember doing that.

RT: How about biographies and autobiographies?

Max: We did definitely do that. I forgot who it was on but I remember doing biographies.

RT: Did you have to do a paper on it?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Do you remember reading any autobiographies or?

Max: Yeah, we read one or two on -- I forgot.

RT: So you read about it and did a report kind of thing?

Max: Right.

RT: Do you remember poetry in high school?

Max: Yeah, we went over poetry. Yeah, I believe we did go over poetry more actual poems.

RT: Actual poems, right. Poems that kind of thing. Then you said plays before too right?

Max: Yeah, we already did that.

RT: Okay. All right. So can you then, not to put you on the spot because nobody's going to know who you are and what, but can you depict between a Shakespearean sonnet and a regular sonnet? Like what the difference is?

Max: A Shakespearean uses really old fashioned English and text is--

RT: What about the couplet at the end there? A Shakespearean sonnet has a rhyming couplet at the end. Do you remember?

Max: I don't remember that.

RT: Okay. Do you remember doing Shakespeare and all his poems? Some of his poems in school or just his plays?

Max: We did some plays and poems. I think we did read over a few or so but only did a few of those.

RT: Okay. What about free verse poetry? Did you ever write free verse? Did you write poetry at all?

Max: I might have during elementary school.

RT: Nothing senior year?

Max: Nothing.

RT: How about style and different things like that? Did you talk about imagery, characterization, narrator? Do you remember talking about things like that?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Perspective writing? How about like third person view?

Max: First person view, yeah, we did that.

RT: Okay. Flash back?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Anything like a flashback? Thinking back?

Max: Yeah, I remember flash black and like foreshadowing and all of those other....

RT: Okay. How about irony and satire? Do you remember going over those?

Max: I definitely remember that. We used that in -- what was the play? I forgot which one now. It was a Shakespearean play

RT: Would you do something that's ironic or something sometimes satirical?

Max: Slap-stick humor?

RT: Slap Stick Humor. Do you remember going over that senior year? All right, what about American literature? World literature? Do you remember doing those two?

Max: American and world? I'm not exactly sure.

RT: Okay. American like Hemmingway?

Max: I remember reading Ernest Hemmingway.

RT: Mark Twain?

Max: I remember reading Mark Twain. I used to know his quotes and stuff.

RT: What about world literature? Anything from like Herman Hesse and Siddhartha? Do you remember reading that?

Max: We did do world literature because I remember we used short stories and stuff from people from other countries.

RT: So you saw different writings were from different, you know, places of the world?

Max: Yeah. I remember Japanese literature was about living at home or something.

RT: Okay.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay, so you remember doing stuff like that. How about propaganda? Do you know what propaganda is?

Max: I do know its exploiting. Not exactly. I just know how it works kinda

RT: Okay, but you remember doing anything with propaganda like with Nazi Germany? With Hitler propaganda?

Max: Yeah.

RT: You talked about that maybe? Do you remember doing that in high school?

Max: I believe we did go over it. I'm not sure exactly.

RT: That's all right. You did a whole bunch of stuff so. How about religious excerpts? You ever go over anything religious in high school?

Max: Religious? Yeah.

RT: Not so much they wanted to change your religion but they talked about how the Bible is the greatest story ever told or, you know, the Koran, different stuff like that.

Max: I really don't remember much religious stuff.

Max: Okay, so English never touched on any religious text or anything like that that you remember?

Max: We never really touched on anything.

RT: Okay. All right. Good. How about different themes? Do you remember your teacher talking about you having to write a theme like love? Other themes? What were some of the themes that you used? That you liked to do when you were in high school?

Max: Themes that I liked? Chemistry I guess.

RT: Okay. What's your favorite genre?

Max: Favorite genre is--

RT: Give me your favorite genre to read if you had to read something and your favorite genre to write if you had to write something like a paper.

Max: My favorite genre to read is like crime. I like mystery. Writing wise? Writing wise doesn't really matter to me.

RT: Okay.

Max: It's just whatever I'm told it is.

RT: When we first started you said you feel like you probably wrote better if you were given your own topic, if you picked the topic.

Max: Yeah.

RT: So what would that be? If you had to write something like a contest or something and it had to be the best form writing ever, you know. Would it be a play? Would it be a crime novel?

Max: Not a crime. I'm not going to write one because I'm reading one of those novels. Let's see here.

RT: You have biography.

Max: Instructional wise maybe.

RT: Like what? Like how you move your legs or something like that?

Max: Yeah, or like how to build something or something like that.

RT: Okay, build something like a physical thing or build like muscle or something?

Max: Physical or muscle or--

RT: Okay, so like a how to book.

Max: Yeah, like how to.

RT: Something for "dummies" book.

Max: Yeah. Something like that.

RT: So you could see yourself doing something like that?

Max: That would be easier for me.

RT: Do you remember writing anything like that in high school?

Max: No.

RT: No? Okay. All right. Looks good. That's right you would be a millionaire right? All right. How about diction and mood? Do you remember talking about diction meaning different word choice? Did your teacher ever say listen this is a good word - now choose a harder word?

Max: I remember diction and there was a vocabulary like a time period we were working on vocabulary and like diction and other things. I remember that.

RT: Okay. So you remember doing stuff like that?

Max: Yeah, a week or two that we worked on specifically that.

RT: Okay. All right. How about contradictions? Like one thing is black the other is white?

Max: Contradictions? I don't remember going over that. No.

RT: That's fine. Okay. All right. How about -- we talked about English literature and -- we talked about American literature. How about English literature? You obviously remembering doing Shakespeare.

Max: Yeah, Shakespeare.

RT: Anyone else?

Max: I really didn't read anything except Shakespeare.

RT: Anyone else in English literature you can think of?

Max: Edgar Allen Poe. I remember doing OI sen. Is this just specifically senior year or just throughout?

RT: Well, I'm looking at senior year.

Max: Senior year?

RT: Who do you remember?

Max: I can't remember any one specifically.

RT: Do you remember what play you read from Shakespeare your senior year?

Max: It was a comedy. I forgot which one though.

RT: Do you remember what it was about?

Max: It was -- there was -- what was it about? I have to think about it. I barely remember the characters. I remember doing that chart and then--

RT: Okay.

Max: Characters just like -- I can't really remember.

RT: Okay, that's fine.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Nope, just asking. You're remembering a lot already so that's good. How about authors that are outside of the English speaking world? Authors that maybe write--

Max: No, we really didn't focus too much on that. We really didn't dip into authors.

RT: How about you yourself? Have you ever read anything that's outside of English?

Max: You mean like a second language? Yeah, I can speak ***** but I can't read or write.

RT: Okay, you can't read or write?

Max: Yeah. I can speak it.

RT: Well, that's interesting.

Max: Yeah. Authors? Not really unless like anime or something like that.

RT: Okay, so right. Anime.

Max: Japanese art and like writers.

RT: Well, I guess it is a form of illustration so. Okay. All right. So, any British authors besides who we talked about -- that come to mind? Let me know as we go on if you think of any of them. All right? Okay. How about major historical events? Did you read about any of those things like the assassination of Kennedy? Coming down of the Berlin Wall?

Max: No.

RT: Do you remember going over that?

Max: Historical events. I'm trying to think which one we did though. I actually don't remember any historical events in English class senior year.

RT: Do you remember going -- how about in your social studies class or whatever? Did you take social studies your senior year?

Max: Not senior year. I finished that early.

RT: Right, okay, so. The last time you took social studies you remember writing papers in social studies? Stuff like that?

Max: Yeah.

RT: So you did a little of that? Okay. How about anything economics? Did you talk about economics or politics in English at all?

Max: Economics and politics?

RT: Like you see now-a-days there are a lot of political like guys on TV, Comedy Central, you know, anything that you read in English like political things?

Max: I believe we did go over political things. The democrats and the republicans.

Max: Some of the writings and the speeches?

Max: Yeah.

RT: The Martin Luther King speech and things like that?

Max: Yeah.

RT: So speech writing you did. Are you familiar with plot and setting?

Max: Yeah, plot and setting.

RT: Do you remember that... like...triangle? The apex, climax, setting, the rising action? Do you remember doing that in high school? I know there's like the main -- the apex or the climax of the novel.

Max: I remember the climax. I remember going over those things but I don't think we used the triangle for it.

RT: But you do remember going over that plot?

Max: Yeah, the plot.

RT: Who the characters are? Setting and things like that? Okay, you remember doing that. Did you do that a lot? Do you remember doing that like every story?

Max: Probably for -- after we started reading novels we usually pointed those out.

RT: Okay, so it was part of the whole lesson?

Max: Yeah, it was part of every lesson.

RT: Okay. Do you yourself...do you know from there and now what you've been doing yourself....Do you know the relationship between literature and politics? Do you know if there is a relationship there?

Max: Literature and politics?

RT: Yeah.

Max: Politics is like how to // words or something.

RT: Right, like Obama those kinds of politics. Like, you know, how politicians are speech writers and, you know, how important some type of political literature is?

Max: I don't think we really went over to much of that. Political speech writing work and things like that.

RT: Okay. Do you remember doing visual aids? Charts? Graphs? Visual media?

Max: We definitely did charts. Visual media? I remember I did presentations with visual media and Power Point. That's about all. We didn't use many pictures I guess. Some were on handouts.

RT: Okay.

Max: But that's about all. We really didn't draw anything.

RT: No drawing?

Max: Not that I remember.

RT: Okay, so you did some of those. How about grammar? Were you pretty good in grammar? Did you do a lot of grammar?

Max: On GUMS.

RT: What's that?

Max: On grammar, it's basically grammar.

RT: What is it?

Max: It's an acronym.

RT: Was it like a program? Was it a software program?

Max: Oh no, it was just assessing grammar it was called GUMS.

RT: Oh, it was just called GUMS.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Interesting. Okay, can you identify the different parts of speech like nouns? You know what a noun is?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay, pronouns? Verbs? Adverb? Does that help what you did there now? When you got that basis foundation do you find yourself now like needing to go back or do you think you're very strong with that?

Max: I know what they are but I forgot how they go with each other.

RT: Right, okay. So that's something to work on. How about your subject and verb agreement?

Max: Like plural and singular? We're working on that right now.... I'm still just working on it.

RT: Do you remember doing stuff like that in high school?

Max: Actually I don't remember doing--

RT: You don't remember that? Okay, so you're doing it now. How about different types of clauses? Adverb clause, action clause, you know, do you remember doing any of those? Not now, then. We're doing this now but do you remember doing it then?

Max: Then? That was a like a two week thing working on sentences and stuff. I think that was part of it.

RT: Okay. How about like colons, hyphens, ellipses, semi colons, apostrophes, quotation marks?

Max: Yeah worked on those.

RT: So you remember working on that? How would you rate yourself? Would you put yourself at a B, B+, A level? What would you consider yourself?

Max: [Indiscernible] [0:40:21]

RT: Did it just come to you or did you have to work at it?

Max: Speak it out.

RT: Okay, got you. Capitalization? You're pretty good at capitalizing things?

Max: I'm pretty good at capitalization.

RT: How about run-ons and fragments? Is that a problem for you?

Max: That might be a problem for.... but--

RT: Which one?

Max: Run-ons. I've been trying to learn like semi colons.

RT: Okay, is that a problem you're just noticing now or is it a problem you had in high school that you noticed?

Max: I think I'm just noticing it now.

RT: Okay, so it may have been a problem then?

Max: Yeah, it most likely was.

RT: What about spelling?

Max: Spelling I'm usually fine because of SpellCheck.

RT: SpellCheck? You don't use a dictionary if you need something?

Max: I use an online dictionary.

RT: An online dictionary?

Max: Where I right click on the word and I get synonyms and stuff.

RT: So if you're not really sure how to use a word you can go right to SpellCheck versus going to a dictionary?

Max: Well, I usually spell the word correctly but I still have to look it up in the dictionary online to make sure it's a noun or a verb.

RT: Right.

Max: Or something like that.

RT: Right, so okay. What about some differences in things like 'its'? I-T-S versus 'it' apostrophe 's'?

Max: I'm pretty good.

RT: Affect versus effect? Things like that?

Max: Effect, yeah.

RT: Assure versus ensure?

Max: Sure. Which one was that?

RT: ensure.

Max: Actually--

RT: Like if I assure something.

Max: Versus like I will insure you?

RT: Do you remember doing those things? Do you remember talking about differences in words that are spelled the same but they have different meanings? You know how to spell check and grammar check right?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Did you know how to do that in senior year?

Max: Yup.

RT: Did you do that a lot?

Max: Whenever I saw the squiggly red line. Yeah.

RT: So that's what you did. You didn't go to the dictionary once and spell check?

Max: If it wasn't like a larger word. I always just check it online and see if it was right. Okay, we're almost done...give me a couple more minutes.

RT: How about prewriting? You do a little prewriting now? They teach you how to prewrite. Do a web and whatever?

Max: Brainstorming?

RT: Yeah.

Max: Start out with one topic and then narrow it down.

RT: Okay, did you do that in senior year when you wrote? Did you sit down and brainstorm or did you just sit down and start writing?

Max: I usually started writing. I didn't really brainstorm much and really write down much during like -- actually I did sometimes.

RT: Okay. You know what different types of prewriting? Like you know the Venn diagram?

Max: The Venn diagram, the spider web.

RT: The web. So you know a couple of them. Okay, and that was in high school you remember doing that? Do you use the Venn diagram and spider web now or do just kind of jot down notes?

Max: I just use notes now.

RT: Good, okay. Do you ever use outlines for prewriting? Do you do like formal outlines like a, a1, b?

Max: Sometimes. I'll just go online and check out the correct format and I'll just follow that template.

RT: Okay, so you've done that before?

Max: Yeah.

RT: How about in the high school? Do you remember doing that as well?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay, good. All right, what about paragraph structure? One of the things you said that maybe you didn't know when you took that accuplacer [Phonetic] [0:43:57] was paragraphs. Thesis was first, body, you know, don't go off on a tangent. Would you say you were pretty good at that in high school and then lost it a little bit?

Max: Yeah, I believe so like in high school learned to structure my paragraphs more accordingly but then I kind of lost it while I was doing the placement test.

RT: Right, okay.

Max: I didn't brainstorm or anything so I could have kept this before that or something.

RT: Right, so that basically comes from you just not remembering that stuff?

Max: I just got rusty.

RT: Okay, again if we did this right before the test it may have jogged your memory and came back? Did you take the, just off topic, did you take the makeup placement test like the second one?

Max: No.

RT: No? Okay. How about the different sentence structures? Compound, complex? Do you remember doing those?

Max: I remember doing those. I just forgot.

RT: No, no, okay but you remember doing like compound is like an 'and'? Conjunctions? Some thing's are repetitive over and over, right? You remember how to do that? Have you ever talked about flow and how the paragraphs flow? That they make sense?

Max: I do remember flow in senior year. Yeah.

RT: All right. Do you know what the difference between or did you know then the difference between a topic and a thesis?

Max: Yeah. The fact that I didn't--

RT: Okay, do you know what it is now?

Max: Yes, it's some topic and a thesis is like -- it's just -- trying to explain it.

RT: Can you define what a topic is?

Max: A topic is the subject I guess like what you're going to be talking about.

RT: A thesis is?

Max: A thesis is like you use different types of thesis like anecdotes and stuff.

RT: Right.

Max: It's a hook I guess.

RT: Okay a hook. Okay, good. So you know then or did you know at the time that a thesis basically tells the reader what they're going to be reading?

Max: Right.

RT: Then you knew that the paragraphs after that have to be supporting? Okay. So do you remember doing that in high school?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Okay. How about have you done arguments before? Did you ever debate anybody?

Max: Yeah, we did some debates. I can't remember what though.

RT: How about comparing and contrasting? Did you compare something good to something bad or like that?

Max: Actually, I don't remember but I know we've done it recently.

RT: Okay. How about persuasion? You've probably done that recently too. Do you remember doing that in high school?

Max: Yeah, we did do persuasion.

RT: Okay. Different strategies? How about formal and informal style? Like you talked about an academic essay like this is my research paper versus like Dear John, you know? Do you remember doing the differences between those?

Max: Letter writing and like--

RT: How about a resume? Did you ever do your resume?

Max: We didn't do a resume. I had to learn to do my own resumes.

RT: How about your college application? The essays?

Max: We did touch up on that. Yeah.

RT: That was in your high school?

Max: That was in the senior year.

RT: Okay, good. Let's see. You know how to edit? Did you go over editing, reviewing in high school? How to edit for run-on sentences or fragments or capitalization?

Max: Yeah, like the line under the word and adding words.

RT: Yes, you know how to do that?

Max: Partially.

RT: Do you remember indentation?

Max: Like general and the start of a paragraph.

RT: The funny little space thing. How about -- did you have peer editing? Did your other classmates ever edit your stuff and you edit their stuff?

Max: Yeah.

RT: How often did you do that? Often?

Max: Not too often. It just happened every now and then.

RT: Okay. How about feedback? Did you do feedback?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Did you use it though? When the teacher said listen you really need to do this? Did you take it or just go yeah whatever?

Max: I used it for when I was critiqued on certain parts.

RT: Would you say you use feedback now better than you did then?

Max: Just a second. What do you mean by that?

RT: The feedback from a teacher then like you should add another paragraph.

Max: Yeah.

RT: Is it easier to accept now than it was then?

Max: Easier to accept now.

RT: Why do you think that is?

Max: Something's wrong with it than something's wrong with it.

RT: Now you just know it right?

Max: Yeah.

RT: You said you'd done research before right? So you did a research paper. You know how to do the research using EBSCO?

Max: Citations and stuff like that.

RT: Citations right. Okay. So you know how to verify your sources?

Max: Yeah. The .govs, .coms.

RT: Okay and you've done reaction papers on books, magazines, newspapers? Did you do any journal writing? Did you ever do journal writing at all?

Max: Journal writing?

RT: Like this is what I did today or keep a journal?

Max: I remember possibly. I think so, yeah.

RT: Hopefully you didn't plagiarize. Did you know what plagiarizing was then?

Max: Yeah.

RT: You know what it is now, obviously right?

Max: Yeah.

RT: So you can borrow people's work but you have to give them credit for it.

Max: Cite it.

RT: Cite it right. If you don't it's plagiarizing. Okay, how about sources on the internet? You were able then to say this is a credible source? Wikipedia is not a credible source for a research paper. So you know how to cite for that?

Max: Yeah.

RT: You also know when you do a research paper did you know that you shouldn't use all internet sources?

Max: All internet sources?

RT: I mean like when you did your paper in high school did you use all internet sources?

Max: It was all internet sources but it was like articles.

RT: That's fine but it wasn't just an internet web page?

Max: It wasn't all web pages.

RT: Okay, because a lot of people just use web pages.

Max: No.

RT: Okay, how about can you -- were you able then senior year to discuss how some of your experience affected your reading comprehension and stuff like that? Like your family dynamic. Were you able to understand then like you're explaining to me now? Do you think in your senior year you realized that, you know, education was important in your family but your parents were also like kind of they weren't pushing you as much to be your own person? Did you realize that at the time or is it something that you're realizing now as you look back?

Max: I've actually always realized it a little bit.

RT: Do you think that hurt you in studying and getting ready for tests like the accuplacer?

Max: I think it hurt a little bit but also testing how well I can take care of myself and my interests. My parents //.

RT: Okay, so basically in a nut shell if you had to talk about your perception of why you're in this class this year, what would it come down to? If you had one final statement to make if like if I said to you, "Max, the only question I have for you is why are you in this class this year?" You had to make a statement on camera or something, what would it be?

Max: I just wasn't ready for the placement test.

RT: You weren't ready for it?

Max: Yeah.

RT: You mean that day or like if I gave it to you again a week later after that you think you could have....

Max: I think I could have passed it or done better. I possibly didn't need to take this class but this class really did help out my writing a lot.

RT: This class did, obviously, help you out because it really did probably sharpen your skills a little bit.

Max: My writing skills, yeah.

RT: The reality is that you feel--

Max: I could have passed it.

RT: Okay, on a scale one to ten, how serious did you take that test when you sat down? Ten being like I sat down and I knew I had to take it seriously.

Max: Well, seriousness? I guess five because I did take it really seriously that day. I didn't take the seriousness of studying for it.

RT: You would definitely study for it even if it was looking over like what to expect or anything like that?

Max: My high school exams I would have looked over and like.

RT: Do you remember taking an accuplacer on the computer? Did anything distract you when you were taking that? Was there anything like typing it you were trying to get out of there? Did you have to meet your girlfriend like in about 20 minutes? You wanted to get out of there?

Max: I was a little rushed also.

RT: Okay.

Max: I had to go. She wasn't waiting in the car but I had to go pick her up or something like that.

RT: So you kind of just fit it in your schedule?

Max: Yeah. No big deal.

RT: Were you kind of taken aback by when you had to do this?

Max: I didn't know what was going to be on the placement test. I really didn't know what was going to be on it. So right on the essay part, I was like, oh, all right, I guess this is what I'm writing down.

RT: Right, okay. So, but when you got your score back were you surprised at the score?

Max: I wasn't too surprised. I was like the writing part like I'm not sure I did great at that but I was like I was pretty sure I was going to pass though because in California I had passed that one.

RT: Okay. So you thought you had passed it but you didn't?

Max: Yeah.

RT: Do you remember a clock being on there? Like ticking down like there was a clock on certain sections on the screen?

Max: A clock right.

RT: Did that bother you at all?

Max: It didn't really bother me but seeing the time. I forget it was timed actually.

RT: So do you prefer to see what time it was and you could figure out you had a countdown clock? All right, do you have any questions for me?

Max: No.

RT: All right, it's been great. I'm going to shut this off.

[00:53:55]

Appendix I – Interview - Maya

RT: [inaudible] [0:00:00]

Maya: Yes.

RT: Okay so you went to high school in the **** area.

Maya: Yes.

RT: Okay so we are talking about senior year, all right and mainly I will ask you some different questions mainly focusing on English classes, okay?

Maya: Okay.

RT: First I am going to show you this chart and in your senior year, where did you fit in here? Were you somewhere in...

Maya: I guess it would be...

RT: Would it be somewhere here? Do you remember taking the **HSPA**, the high school, tests? Yeah you had a few years.

Maya: But it hasn't been going on for ///?

RT: Any honor classes or – nothing okay so right here. Okay so B is good. Okay can you tell me about your family dynamic? Like brother and sister...

Maya: I am an only child.

RT: Okay an only child. Did your parents go to college?

Maya: No, my mother went to college for three years unfortunately she couldn't afford to finish.

RT: Okay. Where did she go to school?

Maya: She actually went to **** College in **** [inaudible] [0:01:08]

RT: How about your father?

Maya: He died when I was nine, he was a laborer.

RT: Okay, so your mom didn't graduate she had to finish – she had to work basically and no siblings, an only child. Okay interesting. Okay at the end of senior year in high school, did you feel you were ready to go to college, did you feel you were ready to...?

Maya: No, not ready.

RT: Both academically and maturity wise or...?

Maya: Probably just maturity wise.

RT: Okay so you weren't ready to go to college. How about academically?

Maya: Yeah I think I was because when I look back in my transcripts, I didn't have to take any developmental classes.

RT: Okay, all right. So you were definitely academically but mature wise you were not ready to do that, okay. What do you think caused that to happen? What do you think your maturity level [inaudible] [0:02:03]

Maya: It could just have something to do with being an only child kind of like that parent-child separation.

RT: Were you thinking about going away to school or...?

Maya: I think briefly I think it was just like a brief start. I actually visited a college in 11th grade in ****. So it was just a thought leading.

RT: Did you not want to leave home? If you [indiscernible] [0:02:29]

Maya: Probably not, you know I mean it was fun for the weekend even then I realized I missed my mother.

RT: Right, okay. So you were homesick kind of.

Maya: Yeah.

RT: But academically you think you were ready?

Maya: No academically that wasn't the issue.

RT: So how was high school like particularly all high school particularly senior year – were you a good student, were you popular?

Maya: I guess I was an okay student, I probably could have been better

RT: [inaudible] [0:02:59]

Maya: If I applied myself more.

RT: Okay, how about your rank, do you know what your rank would have been around? Like if there were a thousand kids in your class, would you be the upper 500 hundred or lower 500?

Maya: I guess probably the lower 500.

RT: Okay how about GPA, the average you said?

Maya: Yeah for the most part except for Math, that would [indiscernible] [0:03:25]

RT: All right so that's what we want – your favorite subject and your least favorite subject.

Maya: I guess favorite subject would have been English because we did a lot of reading and writing papers and least favorite subject would definitely be Math.

RT: [inaudible] [0:03:43]

Maya: But I haven't taken it yet.

RT: But you have to take it in a bit. Any art courses or [inaudible] [0:03:49] courses when you were in high school?

Maya: No, I really didn't even think about those things to be honest with you.

RT: Okay, all right. Senior year English class, anything you remember regarding literature, like Shakespeare do you remember doing [inaudible] [0:04:06] wow alright. How about types of writing, like do you remember writing essays or reports or research papers, when you were doing a research paper?

Maya: To be honest with you, it's funny when I think about those things not really. I mean I am sure we did but it couldn't have been in abundance. I know we did a lot of reading and for some reason the Bell Jar stands out because I wasn't going to write the paper but its kind of like you have to and so I did write it and I got the best grade in class.

RT: Good, okay.

Maya: And it's like you know why we had such a struggle when, look how well you did or something like that.

RT: So you like to write?

Maya: I think so; I used to write things when I was in like 5th and 6th grade

RT: Right, like poems and stuff like that?

Maya: I mean I have always read because in the beginning my mother didn't work. So I had been told that I had a rather high vocabulary for such, for a young person because my mother was always—I had Highlights and all the [indiscernible] [0:05:10] Dr. Doolittle and then its like when PBS came out -- because she wanted to be a teacher so...

RT: So you were like the guinea pig?

Maya: Kind of in a sense and because English I had no problems with, that was easier for the focus on.

RT: Right, okay, that's interesting. So English was always your strong point and something that you always liked to do?

Maya: For the most part, yeah I enjoyed reading and I seemed to comprehend and understand with many issues. Maybe not now because I am older but anyway...

RT: Okay, how about MLA format stuff like that, do you remember that? Have you done it yet in the EBS class now?

Maya: You know our class isn't the best, I like the teacher don't get me wrong but I probably [indiscernible] [0:05:59] you know but I guess -- and I am not even going to say is because I have been in the school for so long because I had gone back to do other things and usually the format is from A to Z. she kind of works you from A to G to Z and to be honest with you if I had to pass the class... but I am finding that I am not enjoying it, like I enjoy the college experience class.

RT: Okay right.

Maya: And I totally enjoy that gentleman Dr. **** and you know like your syllabus, he is doing everything from the syllabus panel.

RT: Right that should be great.

Maya: Yes and so I thoroughly enjoy that.

RT: She jumps around a little bit.

Maya: She jumps around and I find myself really not doing the work because I am really dissatisfied although I have to because I have to pass the course. So I think she did bring up MLA but she doesn't expound upon things, you know she just, she says something, then she is jumping over here and then she is jumping over there and you find yourself getting discouraged but if you pay attention, it kind of all starts to come together but it shouldn't be that difficult though. And I am sure at some point in time – she has got the makings of I think a good professor but I think its going to take time and maybe not for adults maybe for kids who don't know any better its fine but for adults who are kind of used to, its kind of like if you read a manual, you start from the beginning and you get the end and I think that's how a lot of us learn not from being kind of scattered.

RT: So what you are saying, you probably touched on MLA now. MLA is basically how you do a research paper, how you lay it out.

Maya: Okay well that's what we [indiscernible] [0:07:47]

RT: So you remember using that in high school?

Maya: Not really

RT: Because [inaudible] [07:53] right now, stuff that you really don't even remember.

Maya: It doesn't really seem brand new. She makes it more difficult than what it is.

RT: So you probably did it, it was something different?

Maya: It was called something different, right you understand the basic format, it's just that...

RT: The citations, are you doing a research paper now?

Maya: Well we started with, we had this topic in class called aesthetic appeal from our book and so that has been – we've been doing that almost from the beginning. So we haven't really started, I mean that is a research paper in a sense but most of the stuff you can get off the internet. It is like you know magazines, or like nothing really deep. Actually I think at this point most of us are kind of sick of this. So it's really no offense to her...

RT: No and listen she is not going to know about this, this is confidential.

Maya: I mean I don't dislike her; I am just not used to her style of teaching.

RT: Right it's different styles. So one of the reasons why I am doing this, not so much for the college aspect but from the high school aspect of it. Okay was guidance in high school? Do you remember your guidance and counselors?

Maya: Yeah I do.

RT: Did you ever meet them often or hardly?

Maya: Yeah I don't really believe that they were – I mean it's difficult because I didn't start off with these kids. Most of these kids had gone to school with each other from kindergarten all the way through and I came to the school in 11th grade. So to some extent that does make a difference and I didn't really feel like they were there to guide everyone maybe just a certain segment.

RT: Meaning the kids that are going to college?

Maya: No, not necessarily, I mean to be honest with you, and to be totally honest, even though the neighborhood itself is primarily white because the school itself wasn't white, it actually had a fairly decent

mix. I didn't really feel for the most part, it may had a teacher or two but I really didn't feel like the guidance aspect of it was really interested in all the students has to do.

RT: Really?

Maya: No I did, and I am just being honest.

RT: Of course yeah, sure, okay. So you are saying that they didn't cater to the minority students I guess?

Maya: I just don't think they catered to – see I feel like because I am here for, I am here to start a social work degree but I really want to go into therapy. So I just feel like if I did go into guidance which I would, but I feel like I should try to help everyone and not just look at a few and not – because everyone needs help. I mean luckily did I really need their guidance? Not particularly because I already I had a great mother and so there were options for me. So that's probably why it wasn't such a big deal for me. But these guidance and counselors on a whole, I didn't think they were that great.

RT: All right, okay interesting.

Maya: But we are talking ****.

RT: Right, right.

Maya: So time was a little different than right now.

RT: All right let me skip to this number, not to //// but let's skip [inaudible] [0:10:57]

Maya: That's okay.

RT: So your mom and you just talked about how you really didn't need your counselors because you had your mom, so how involved was your mom in your academics?

Maya: Oh very much so. If I needed additional help, there was a private school in **** called ****; I would go there in the summer for English and Math.

RT: All right so she would send you for additional help. How about you with your homework, did you do your homework? If homework was given five times a week, how would you do? Would you do the whole five times?

Maya: Yeah, I would pretty much.

RT: Would she check it?

Maya: She didn't really need to because the only thing I really had problems with to be honest with was Math. So her checking it or not checking it, it didn't matter because it just wasn't [indiscernible] [0:11:42] it just wasn't so as far as anything else...

RT: Okay do you think you did well with English? Again I am not saying that you [inaudible] [0:11:49] but your level of that as a subject out of all the subjects that came from her wanting to be a teacher and probably that being your stronger point...

Maya: I think it may have come, that could have been part of it but she also when she went reading and learning for herself and I could see from her high school report card, it was all As and Bs. I mean she took Latin, I don't know other people that have taken Latin especially like my mother would have been like 82. So she took Latin [0:12:19] [inaudible]

RT: Did you ever take SATs?

Maya: Yeah I did?

RT: How did you do?

Maya: I guess I did okay, I don't remember my scores, I guess they were okay.

RT: How about high school exams?

Maya: Oh you mean those...

RT: Your actual exams, like you English exam in senior year?

Maya: I think for the most part, you know I think I was like a B student, yeah.

RT: Okay, so here is a B and you said you completed – you never had problems completing your assignments or...?

Maya: Except for math.

RT: Math is different. All right do you remember studying grammar?

Maya: Yeah I went through it, well [inaudible] [0:13:05] I went to an all girls school. It was really [indiscernible] [0:13:09]. By the time I got to 9th grade again it was there but a lot of it was still because we went there with expectations, I mean doing a project.

RT: So you would say that the grammar was in high school was infused like in different readings.

Maya: Yeah like in 7th and 8th grade it was there. It was practically shoved down our throats.

RT: Right it was part of the...

Maya: 9th grade, I think it was a combination of both, 10th grade it was probably more because I went to a Catholic school in 7th, 8th and 10th grade so naturally the curriculum is somewhat different and so I think it was a lot of you know again out of English grammar there and then by 11th and 12th grade I think it was just more infused in literature as well.

RT: Okay so it was infused there, okay. Were you in any clubs, teams when you were in high school? Sports or debate club or...?

Maya: No because actually I didn't really like high school, I mean I can just be honest, I really...

RT: You didn't like it?

Maya: I guess it was really, it was my own doing, its really difficult when you skip school a lot trying to find where you belong because that doesn't really work sometimes you just have to stay at a place and just make it work for yourself but I didn't do that, I would go to this school and if I wasn't happy, I would go to another school, I mean granted I wound up staying at the last school because I had to, not always skip around a lot – so I think that just makes it more difficult because it is hard to find cohesiveness when you were kind of jumping around looking for something because at that age you really don't even know what you are looking for.

RT: True, that's true and that time definitely it wasn't /// to that time?

Maya: What do you mean?

RT: Did you want to attend college right out of high school?

Maya: I guess yes and no because I wanted to be a fashion designer, so it really wasn't about going and getting a college degree like as a social worker or a teacher. When I was very young, I wanted to be a social worker. I actually have three cousins that have social work degrees and Masters Degrees may even have doctorate at this point but it wasn't because of them. I just wanted to be a social worker but I guess as I got a little older, it became fashion. So that was really like my focal point. So it wasn't really like a traditional college to be honest with you.

RT: Okay, got you. So why do you want to be a social worker?

Maya: Because I think what happens is when you start off with an idea and it's really something that you really want to do but somehow it gets lost in translation. I think at some point in time that's really where you are supposed to be, you come full circle. So I think I just came full circle back to where I was supposed to be but I don't think for all of those years I was mature enough to really be an effective social worker, it's only because of where I am now and my growth of all these years that I know I can be effective.

RT: Well, excellent, that's excellent. You really know – what kind of social work? You said you want to be in the schools.

Maya: No but I do want to work with children because I have found that a lot of the, my father died when I was nine and my mother died when I was 25 and I just met other people along the way who had parents that had died either at their young ages like nine or teenager or in their 20s, I guess very young adults and I have just seen the extreme damage that its done and how those people are still living in the past. Like I have a friend whose mother died when he was 15 he is 42, he is still living there.

RT: Really?

Maya: Yeah and I have a friend who is in her early 40s, her mother died when she was like 21 or 22. Unfortunately we are not friends anymore but when we were she was still living there. So I have been finding that is the case and having being there somewhat myself, I understood them, I guess that's why we were able to be friends and so if I can touch like one person to get them to see that even though it is a tragic event, but I guess because no one really explains death to us.

RT: True.

Maya: So when it happens and because again usually there is a mother or father still left, their lives go on and they don't necessarily think of what they are doing, having any adverse effects on their children but it does and I have seen it.

RT: Wow so your whole point sank in that is good.

Maya: Well I don't know whether it will turn out that way but that is how I how I would like to go.

RT: Let's hope so, I hope so. Sounds like you are going to do good in the early youth, just draw a lot – I have seen a lot of tragic happen, everybody else goes on in their various way and the kids left...

Maya: Left there, yeah.

RT: Left that school. All right so you decided to go to come to Rausch to start this career path, you sit down for the placement test and what happens with that?

Maya: I totally freak out.

RT: Because it is a test or because...?

Maya: No, just because you know it was bright that day, I think the room is yellow in one of the test – or it just seemed very very bright and the computers in front of you and its just kind of like, okay lets just do it

because I knew I could take it again. And then I got down to the essay and I guess because I haven't had – I write little things for myself the kind that pops into my head but to have to write on a particular topic even though it was a really good topic, it was just, I went blank. I just like okay, okay watching the time go tick, tick, tick.

RT: Actually on there?

Maya: Yeah, it kind of puts more pressure on you.

RT: Is it actually on the screen?

Maya: Yeah it is actually, you know you are watching the time going down so it's actually kind of pressurized in the sense that you can't think, you are watching the time go down and so it just I think, it just brings your anxiety level up.

RT: So now when you do the mastery test at the end of the semester, you get out of BBS and it's your own classroom, there is not really a time limit on it, do you think you will do well, do you think you will...

Maya: I hope so I mean we have been, we haven't done any preparations correct as of yet, so I hope so, I can't see myself spending another 3 or \$400...

RT: No, no

Maya: It's taking it again...

RT: No maybe like if you were to retake that original test, if I could just put you in a classroom, take your time, no pressure

Maya: I think I would do better at it because if I was going to retake... because I wasn't that many points under.

RT: Right you were not higher.

Maya: But I was like you know what maybe I need to just go ahead and take this developmental class since it has been...

RT: Awhile, right?

Maya: Well for this type of schooling, I have gone back to school for other things, but this is different. So that's primarily how I didn't go ahead and like try and take it like a second time.

RT: Okay, can we focus on the room quickly, you talked about yellow and bright, that really distracted you?

Maya: For me it did, I mean I love bright colors but for me to be in the class, for me to be like in a testing center, especially the first time, it was for me it was kind of like overwhelming.

RT: Okay that is interesting, okay. And the time was – there anything distract you while you were in there? Were people talking?

Maya: No, no, it was very quiet, it was more just, I guess if the lights were like just glaring and then because of the – it was just like the whole kind of aesthetics out there. I found it just, it was overwhelming, it was like I am sitting there and I am like – I started getting really anxious and for the most part I don't get anxious and there like I said after doing the essay, and watching the time tick out, that just kind of – I was just like okay, I am just going to write whatever, yeah.

RT: All right, okay. So why did you choose Rausch? Was there a reason or...

Maya: Well I have been thinking of going back to school for quite a while. You know when you are hemming and // I guess because math is something that I am just not so good at, that's probably what has kept me from making the decisions and one of the two friends I told you about who lost their mother, that friend has – because for the last three years, I can say I was going to go back, go to nursing school and then I realized that that really wasn't because I work in a nursing home, that wasn't my passion. You know just giving out meds and writing out charts because there really is not the – I am a hands on person, I am a people person and unfortunately that profession has changed and its just not there. Maybe in a hospital it is different but in nursing home, it is not and so I think over time I just recognize that and so he just kept back, he really was badgering me because his father was a doctor and badgered him so he was badgering me and I actually started the application like three years ago. So I went on and said oh my goodness I forgot I had started this and so at that point because financially I had not really prepared for and once I saw I could pay for every month, I was like you know what this is good place to start and I have known other people that have come here and they gave it like kind of high marks so I was like okay.

RT: Excellent, okay. Was she really upset that you were in basic skills for a second?

Maya: No, no [indiscernible] [0:23:06] I tell people I am not embarrassed by it because I don't think there is anything to be embarrassed about.

RT: No, no I agree.

Maya: I would be more embarrassed if I just graduated from high school and that was it.

RT: You would be?

Maya: Yeah I would be.

RT: Why is that?

Maya: Well because I would feel like what did I do or what was I doing in high school to at least pass that test.

RT: Right, exactly.

Maya: I mean that isn't a put down because if you are right out of high school, it's like what have you been doing for the last four years.

RT: Right, exactly, good answer. All right, I have one more question for this round here and I appreciate again your coming to meet with me. What do you wish that you knew in high school that you didn't know then that would help you here in college?

Maya: To really just be who I am supposed to be, to not – I had this thing to not allow anyone including myself make me feel less than who I am supposed to be. So if I had been I guess I guess stronger, I have never been a weak person, I am not a follower, I am really my own person, but I guess if I had really a better sense of myself or just owned it, I didn't really own it, I probably would have done a lot better.

RT: Okay, excellent. Do you have any questions for me? All right so we will...

[0:24:48]

Appendix J – Interview II - Maya

RT: Ok, so we're with Maya, and this whatever, November, twenty whatever

Maya: 22nd.

RT: 22nd. So, what, how's everything since the last time we spoke? How's your experience here? And

Maya: Well, better. I mean, you know, the English class, I don't know whether it necessarily gotten better

RT: Right. 'Cause the last time we spoke, if I recall, you, ///, nothing to say about the teacher, or...

Maya: No, no, no.

RT: or like that.

Maya: She's a nice young woman.

RT: Right. There's just certain things that you expected from the course.

Maya: Right.

RT: That maybe you didn't get to yet.

Maya: Right. And we're not going to, 'cause we only have, like, two more weeks.

RT: Right. Ok.

Maya: It is what it is.

RT: And the mastery test is coming up soon.

Maya: Right.

RT: So how do you feel about that?

Maya: Well, I guess I feel ok about it. We only did, like, one test, and she gave us two questions to choose from.

RT: Ok.

Maya: And, she actually gave me good, you know, like she went through everybody's and she actually gave me good marks on it.

RT: Ok.

Maya: A word, or good comments, so I felt 'ok, well, if I can do that.' And, you know, I found that I'm like an independent. Maybe that's being an only child, like. Like, a lot of people will work on their papers in my groups, or with another person.

RT: Right.

Maya: I'm just, like, I'm not good with that. 'Cause I know what, I know, I know, I know what I know.

RT: Right

Maya: And I'm just much better. You know, maybe, like, in a science group or something like that.

RT: Right.

Maya: As far as this is concerned, I just feel better working, like, independently. It seems to work better for me.

RT: So she had you working in groups to try to work on some of these?

Maya: Well, we've had groups, like...

RT: Oh, ok.

Maya: Like when we go back next week, we have a project, where is the project? Everyone's different, so our project happens to be condoms vs. no condoms.

RT: Ok.

Maya: And then we had to come up with a scenario, like there is a party...

RT: Right, ok.

Maya: There's a man and a woman and how they choose to handle that situation.

RT: Ok.

Maya: So, when we go back, we actually have a paper.

RT: Ok.

Maya: And we actually have a group, kind of like skit that we're going to do. So we've been working on it independently, but group wise...

RT: Right.

Maya: And I just find for myself, because usually when I walk in that classroom with a computer, I kind of sit by myself, and, like, two people in the group sit next to each other.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, they're always bouncing ideas off each other...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...but, there like there's another young woman, she's independent, and there's a young woman who is away, she's independent. You know, we may talk about things, but

RT: Right.

Maya: ...but pretty much we feel, we seem to feel more confident in what we're, in what the topic is to kind of write on it.

RT: Right.

Maya: Whereas the other two, kind of it seems, like, they need to - and that's fine, that's fine.

RT: Right. It's a different learning style.

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Do you, do you remember back in high school, when you used to do group work like that? Is that a feeling that, maybe, you got from high school, or is that...

Maya: I don't really remember doing that much group work in high school, to be honest with you. I mean...

RT: It was more independent stuff, right?

Maya: It was more, like, if you had a book report or something, it was pretty much, everybody was independent.

RT: Right. Ok. Do you feel competent about the mastery test coming up?

Maya: Yeah, I'm going to go in there and do the best that I can. I feel, like, at least I know what to expect. You know, it's different than when I came here the first time.

RT: Right.

Maya: I really didn't know what to expect.

RT: Right. Ok, good.

Maya: So, it's pretty much, like, ok, just think of the topic.

RT: Right.

Maya: And think of how you'd handle it.

RT: Right. What are the strategies do you think you're going to use now, that you didn't have before?

Maya: Again, when I came here to take the test, I, I didn't know what to expect.

RT: Right.

Maya: So at least this way I know that. [Sneeze]

RT: Bless you. I don't know what just happened. I'm like, oh, it's going to be ok.

Maya: I know that it's a writing test, and so it's basically just being my fault, not getting upset, and just, you know, think of it as when I go to her class, and she gives us some, you know, like a topic, I choose it, and I'm writing on it just for her to correct it, and not even really thinking of it like, 'Ok, this is kind of, this is it.' I'm not going to think of it that way.

RT: Right. Just this is another assignment?

Maya: Right. Exactly.

RT: And did you go over certain things with her that maybe---and I'm, I just want to help you because you helped me, so now that might help you, but---did the teachers or the professors that will be grading you, did she go over how it's graded, and stuff like that?

Maya: Not really. Actually, one of, one of the young women in the class kind of went over that.

RT: She knew how it was graded?

Maya: Yeah, I don't know how.

RT: Right.

Maya: But she actually took, she actually took something over, like, she took things over in summertime...

RT: Oh, ok, so.

Maya: And I guess it was explained to her about how the mastery test was graded.

RT: Right. Well, you need, there's three graders, and they each give you a grade from like one to, I guess, /////
/////

Maya: Yeah, something like that.

RT: And you need, you need to score ///// in order to move on.

Maya: Ok.

RT: So, together, you need to score /////
/////.

Maya: Oh.

RT: So, the reality is...

Maya: Oh, ok.

RT:...they're looking for, I think it's together. I'm pretty sure. But the reality is they're looking for certain things, and what they call, like, a rubric. Have you gone over rubrics before?

Maya: We have, but not really. Like, she gave it to us, so I guess, and I have it, so I guess, maybe...

RT: Right

Maya: ...I need to go over that.

RT: Look at it before, yeah. They're looking for a thesis statement. And you've worked on that.

Maya: Mm-hmmm.

RT: Looking, like you said, that you stay focused, and you're not out of focus.

Maya: Mm-hmm

RT: Looking for a conclusion.

Maya: Mm-hmm. Ok.

RT: And once you have those things

Maya: I don't get

RT: Exactly. So that's their rubric...

Maya: Ok.

RT: ...they're going to base it on, and you can put fake facts in there...

Maya: Right.

RT: ...they just want to make sure you have the components of writing.

Maya: Ok. All right.

RT: So, so those are some of the things you're going to look for.

Maya: Ok.

RT: I'm sure you've gone over most of those.

Maya: Yeah, well, basically yeah. She, she's definitely done them, and she's probably beat it with a horse.

RT: Right. Ok, so, now those, let's say those three or four things that we've talked about, that's more than you would say you've known before you came in here, correct?

Maya: Definite, yeah, I mean, in that sense.

RT: In that sense. You probably did that at some point.

Maya: Right, but, you don't really pay that much. You take..

RT: Right.

Maya: Like, you know there's a start, there's, you know, there's an end to tie everything together, but when it's put like that, you understand it.

RT: Right. Ok. All right, good. How about the rest of the experience of college? Everything else...

Maya: Yeah, no, I mean I only have the college experience course, you know, and I like Dr. ****. I actually went away on Diversity Weekend.

RT: Oh, you did go?

Maya: Yeah, so that was, that was...

RT: Interesting?

Maya: Interesting experience. Yeah, it got a little, little heavy. And I guess because, like, you're dealing with young people and their experiences have been so unlike your own, because you're older and you've been through a lot more..

RT: Right.

Maya: ...say, adding another /// years on to life. But, you know, I could appreciate where they were coming from, and then I just think once you get older, it's very easy to get stuck, and to be like, 'Ok, Like I just can't understand anything that they're saying. And I guess since my ultimate goal is to be a therapist, and is to work with...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...children, and teenagers or young people, I don't feel like I can allow myself to get stuck. I need to, I may not necessarily agree with what they're saying, but I at least need to be able to hear it, and have some understanding as to why they feel the way they do.

RT: Correct.

Maya: And, so, Diversity Weekend kind of, kind of gave me more insight into that.

RT: Right. So you didn't agree with everything that was said there, but...

Maya: Well, you know, it's like, it's like the use of the N-Word came up..

RT: Ok.

Maya: And, you know, it has this new meaning, like, 'That's my homey.'

RT: Right.

Maya: And I don't really agree with that, but I try to look at it that it's no different when black people, when, like, in the 70s, when like the Black Panthers were around, and it's, 'cause initially calling black people 'black,' that was close to calling them the N-Word.

RT: Right.

Maya: it wasn't a positive.

RT: Right, exactly.

Maya: But, you know, then when the Panthers came out, and James Brown came out with 'Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud.'

RT: Right.

Maya: All of a sudden, black became beautiful.

RT: Right.

Maya: And it became a positive statement.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, I'm trying to somewhat look at the, the N-Word in a sense of people trying to take it away from a negative connotation...

RT: Right

Maya: ...and try to somewhat make it, not really positive, but just kind of, not have it be so ugly.

RT: Right.

Maya: You know, I don't really get it...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...but I'm trying to have a better understanding of it.

RT: Well...

Maya: Because, you know what? It's a totally different generation.

RT: Absolutely. Right. No, I know...

Maya: It's really easy for someone /// to be, like...

RT: Yes.

Maya:...because initially I was just, like, "Oh, no. No no no no no."

RT: Yeah, exactly.

Maya: But then by the end of it, you know what? They're trying to make it different for themselves. People my age are probably not going to understand that ///

RT: Right.

Maya: ...and all of a sudden 'black' became, like, the new word to use for black people. Whereas older people...

RT: Forget it.

Maya: ...were probably like, 'Oh, I'm not black. Call me a negro, call me whatever, but don't call me black.'

RT: That's interesting. That, that seems like a very interesting take.\

Maya: That's the only way that I could kind of

RT: Yeah

Maya: ...understand it, was looking at it from that perspective.

RT: Wow. That's very interesting.

Maya: And I don't know if all the people can even, can even see that, but, like I said, 'black' was not a positive word. People did not want to be called..

RT: Yeah, no, no. I know exactly what you're talking about.

Maya:... 'black,' because it was used in a negative connotation, you know, but it was changed, it was turned around to mean something positive.

RT: Positive, right.

Maya: You know, granted it's a little different than the N-Word...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...but I have to try to liken it to that, because that's what they're trying to do.

RT: That's important if, like you say, if you want to counsel students.

Maya: Yeah, exactly. I can't, I can't, I can't have this idea, like, oh, because I'm fifty or sixty at that point..

RT: Right.

Maya: ...that I have all the answers.

RT: Right

Maya: No, I have to try and understand where they're coming from...

RT: Mm-hmm.

Maya: In order for us to come to some kind of conclusion.

RT: Right.

Maya: You know on how, maybe, we can change it, or, you know, maybe it tone it down or something. But nothing happens overnight.

RT: That's very interesting. Sounds like you're very interested.

Maya: It was. It definitely, and they're actually having 'Diversity II.'

RT: There you go. You gotta go back now.

Maya: So...

RT: You have to go back.

Maya: Oh, God, definitely. You know, if I can go back. No, I definitely have to go back.

RT: Wow, that sounds interesting. Ok, let me go back to this.

Maya: Ok.

RT: That sounds very interesting, though. All right, you've talked about why you came to Rausch Community College. So, again, you came here, basically, to better yourself, but why did you choose this community college over some of the other ones that you could have chosen, even if you lived in the county or not?

Maya: Well, I live here, and I think, I knew the person that I'm, that I live with, we used to date, we don't date anymore, but we still live together, his niece actually went here, and she actually, you know, gave it high marks. And I know, for the most part, that community colleges are good.

RT: Right.

Maya: I mean, this one happens, sounds like it's exceptional...

RT: mm-hmm.

Maya: ...over a lot of community colleges...

RT: But?

Maya: But I think, for the most part, you can get a good education, I mean I knew someone that went to, he lived in F*****, so, so I guess it was ***** County

RT: There's *****

Maya: And he went on to *****, was Phi Beta Kappa and then went on to ***** University for a law degree. So, it just shows you that it's what you put into it.

RT: Absolutely.

Maya: You know, you can go to Princeton and flunk out.

RT: True, that's true.

Maya: If that's, if you don't put anything into it.

RT: Right.

Maya: So I don't look, I know a lot of people tend to look at, like, community colleges, like, 'Oh, I'm going to high school,' it's like 'I'm hanging out in high school.'

RT: Right.

Maya: You know what? That might be true. But, again, and this young man actually brought this point up at Diversity Weekend, he was, like, when he first came here, I guess, this might be his first semester, in the beginning, I guess it was like, this is like high school. But then he got involved in some of the committees that are going on, he's playing basketball, so I guess that changed his whole perspective.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, it's really about us changing us. So, when I, so when I decided to come here, there was nothing negative about it. It was like, you know what, you have to start at A to get to Z, so this is A, so then you'll just go on from there.

RT: Right. How did you feel when you found out that you had to take the developmental course?

Maya: Oh, it wasn't like...

RT: It was ok?

Maya: Oh, my. Because you know what, when I, when I did it right from high school and did it, I didn't have to take anything developmental.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, it was just the idea that, obviously, I'd learned something..

RT: Right.

Maya: ...'cause I didn't have to take any developmental.

RT: Right.

Maya: We're talking what? That was ****

RT: Right.

Maya: We're talking this is 2010.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, that's a big difference. I have gone to school for other things, but it hasn't been like an English course, or anything like that. So, I didn't really look at, and I could have taken it again.

RT: Right.

Maya: I wasn't that far away, where I probably couldn't have pulled my score up. But I was like, 'You know what? I haven't been in school in a long, in a very long time this way. In a college situation.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, maybe, it's to my benefit, to go ahead and just take that developmental English course.

RT: Right, ok. So you see, you saw the developmental as a positive?

Maya: Yeah, I did see it as...

RT: You know, to turn it into a positive, you know, most students that maybe come right out think, 'Oh, I've got to do this again.' And then they say, well...

Maya: But, you know what, if you come out of high school and you have to take developmental, that tells me, 'What were you doing in high school?'

RT: Right. Well, you said that last time we spoke, I believe. You were talking...

Maya: So, it just says that obviously you weren't paying a whole lot of attention. Either that or maybe, you know, it was the school system, the teachers, whatever, but somewhere along those last four years, especially, something was lacking.

RT: Right. So, basically, your view on it is some of these students that are in class with you probably shouldn't be there?

Maya: I don't think they should be there, if they're right out of high school, because that tells me they weren't doing what they needed to do.

RT: Right. Ok.

Maya: Because, out of high school, I didn't have to take developmental. And it wasn't like, I mean I did ok in high school, I could have done better, but I had my own stuff going on. But obviously I did well enough that when I took that, that test to get into the college...

RT: Right.

Maya: I didn't have to do developmental stuff.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, doing it this time around wasn't even an issue for me.

RT: Ok, good. All right. This one's good. So, so, let me go back to your high school, now, real quick. You feel that high school prepared you for college?

Maya: I think so, for the most part.

RT: Nothing you were, you've seen that you were...

Maya: As well as high school, as well as high school can prepare you

RT: Ok, right.

Maya: I think a lot of it is, like, your own, you know, again, you know I've been reading since I was five, six, seven years old, and I think that really had a lot to with it, even when I didn't do well in math, in fifth and sixth grade, I don't know what they called it, but it was, I guess, you know, comparable to Sylvan, to Kumon...

RT: Ok.

Maya: I used to go every Monday for math and reading. I didn't need the reading, but it was like a package deal.

RT: Right. Sure.

Maya: When I didn't do well in geometry and algebra, my mother sent me to, there's a private school in **** called ****, and they had summer classes, because the public schools didn't have them. And it cost her five hundred dollars to send me there for the summer.

RT: Wow.

Maya: So, you know, I think along with having a mother that paid attention to things, and didn't mind putting out the money, or found the money, I think that was also a plus. So, I don't think it's necessarily all of high school, I think a lot of it has to, it has to come from home. It has to come from your parents wanting the best for you.

RT: Right. Good, good answer. So, so do you think your parent involvement when you were in high school was what kept you driven, or do you think that would have happened anyway?

Maya: I think, for the most part, it would have, kind of, happened anyway. I mean, I'm not really...I know who I am. I always have, because I made decisions at a very young age that most kids don't even think about, like not drinking and smoking and doing drugs and stuff like that. So, I think for the most part I know who I am, so I need to be pushed...

RT: Mm-hmm.

Maya:...but I also know where I want to go. And, granted, it's taken me a long time, but everybody doesn't get to the same place at the same time.

RT: Right, exactly. Ok. Good. What have you, what have you taught yourself here so far, in this short period of time, that you, maybe, is so important that you wish you would had it in high school? Something that may stand out? Like something you taught yourself now, that you wish you would have been taught?

Maya: I think it's just not to own other people's nonsense.

RT: Ok, can you elaborate on that?

Maya: Well, I think it's very easy to get involved in other people's negativity.

RT: Ok.

Maya: Because people can be extremely negative.

RT: Mm-hmm.

Maya: People can have their own things going on, and they start dumping it on you. They don't realize they're dumping, and you don't realize that you're owning it.

RT: Ok.

Maya: But as time goes on, it's almost like you become encased in Saran Wrap, and they kind of stops you from moving forward, and some of that, you know, is just like myself, just like, I guess for me the basic thing was, when I was nine, my father died.

RT: Ok.

Maya: He died quickly.

RT: Ok.

Maya: And one day we walked out the door to do something. Came back several hours later, he was dead. I never saw him again.

RT: Really?

Maya: And I wasn't able to go to the funeral. And then a few weeks or a few months later, I found out my parents weren't married to each other, and that was, and, for me, that was, I guess I must have come out this weird child. Like I always had these high ideals. Like, there were just certain things that...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...or certain ways in which adults were supposed to behave, because when I was growing up it was always like, 'Do as I say, not as I do,' all these crazy things...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...///, and luckily, I didn't grow up with a mother who had that kind of thinking, but I grew up with that, in hearing other people...

RT: Sure.

Maya:...say it, and so, you know, having this idea that parents are supposed to be married to each other, and my mother not really, I guess, she figured at nine, how do you talked to a nine year old about such a dramatic situation. And I had to admit it really stifled my growth, 'cause I was angry about it ////.

RT: Wow.

Maya: You know, because I just felt like, 'How could you guys do this to me? Like, if you could have just talked to me, this would have all been blown over. But, again, you know, my mother didn't expect to come home, and find the man that she had been living with for nine years dropped dead.

RT: Right.

Maya: You know, it was kind of like she did the best she could with the situation.

RT: Right.

Maya: And I realize that now. You know, I think, I think, at that point, I had put adults on these pedestals, and over the years I realized that people make mistakes. You don't wake up one day and say, 'I want to hurt my child,' it's just, at that moment, they have to make a decision.

RT: Right.

Maya: And that decision, for the long haul, is not always the best decision, but it's the right decision for that moment. And, so, I think what I've learned, again, is not to take things personally, because most things are not personal. You know, we tend to take things, like, 'That person was trying to hurt me personally.' No, that person is suffering in their own stuff..

RT: Right.

Maya:...and I don't need to make it my stuff. You know, if I can help, that's one thing, but it doesn't have to become me.

RT: So, you think if that Diversity Weekend happened when you were in high school, do you think you would have taken that whole situation a little differently?

Maya: Probably not, because I wasn't a talker back then. I was one of these people that, kind of, kept things...

RT: Ok.

Maya: ...to myself. You know, even my mother, even when I got to the age when I could talk, I wouldn't talk. I would just act out. I'd break something, I'd become extremely angry. And, so, over the years, I realized that that doesn't get you any place. First of all, people start looking at you like you're crazy...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...even though you know you're not crazy, and you know what the issues are. But if you don't learn to expel that stuff from you, then, you know, it just kind of encases you in Saran Wrap...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...and you can't move any place.

RT: That, That's very interesting. Ok. How did, we may have touched on again, I'm just trying to get a little deeper now, we may each other's first time out, your education in high school, and now, what you've learned thus far, where do you think you're headed? How has that changed or impacted on your career goals at all? I mean, we talked about you wanting to counsel, is that what you always wanted to do? I know we talked about that a little bit.

Maya: Yeah, because as a child I wanted to be, in the beginning I wanted to be a social worker. I actually have three, two cousins and an aunt, are a social worker. The aunt is deceased, and the two cousins I'm not sure, because they're probably in their, probably like late 50's, early 60's, so I don't even know if they're social workers any more, they could be doing something else. But I wanted to be a psychiatrist. So I always had this idea of...

RT: Right

Maya: ...wanting to help people. But, again, because I was so encased in my own Saran Wrap, I couldn't, I couldn't involve myself in studying enough to get to that point, so I think I've always wanted to, because I guess what my own issues have been, and I recognize a lot of people in a sense have as kids, teenagers, young people, have maybe not the exact same issue, but the issue of if they can't talk about something, they become angry and they start acting out, and they start doing things that really aren't them, but this is their way of kind of dealing with that hurt and pain.

RT: Ok. Very good. Now, your current course load is just basically to get your feet wet here a little bit...

Maya: Oh, yeah.

RT: ...to get the college experience which everybody has to take, right, am I right? And then you have to take the developmental class, right? Ok. Where are you going after this? What, what, did you schedule yourself?

Maya: I have, I am scheduled. I am actually scheduled for a Comp I, Biology and Sociology class.

RT: Ok. Wow. There you go.

Maya: And I'm rethinking the sociology class, 'cause I'm thinking, 'Ok, you got your feet wet'...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...'and you haven't had to really do any studying'...

RT: Right.

Maya: 'So, do you really want to take three classes, and be like, Oh, my Goodness, what have I?' And a friend of mine actually got me to see that, because I wasn't really seeing that.

RT: Right. Ok.

Maya: So, I think I'm just going to do the biology and the English course, and then take the sociology over the summertime.

RT: Sure.

Maya: And then probably in September, then I'll start loading myself down with a little more, because I've already had, like, ok, I've gotten myself structured to study, and just how I need to do things to keep going, and to kind of like add one more course on.

RT: I think you're right. I think jumping into it, just be careful. You don't want to...

Maya: Right.

RT: ...overdo it, now you're get your feet wet. Let's go. Now, you haven't taken any winter sessions at all?

Maya: No, I said to myself, I'm just going to

RT: Relax.

Maya: Relax.

RT: [laughter]

Maya: Take those two courses, take a class over the summer, and then probably start taking, like, the winter and summer courses more, so that I can get out, you know, within like the next three years.

RT: Right, exactly. Right, good move. Your parents, your mother influenced you in college to go to college, that first time, you said she was an influence?

Maya: Not really. I don't think she really pushed, because you know what, because I was so angry.

RT: Mm-hmm

Maya: I think she realized pushing me into something just wasn't, she really let me be my own person. Other parents wouldn't have done that.

RT: Right.

Maya: I did see a lot of people who, from high school, went to college, after one semester, they were back home again.

RT: They were out. Ok.

Maya: So, she...

RT: How about this time? Any influence to get you back this, this, this round?

Maya: I actually have a friend, someone that I've kind of, I've known for four years. We tried dating, didn't really work. But, you know, I guess we would talk about, like, 'Oh, I'm going to go back to school to be a LPN or a nurse, and you know, I've been saying it for three years now, and I guess, like, after February of this

year, he just kept saying like, he just kept getting on me about it, and one day I just said, 'Ok,' you know. And so I went on, and I'm like, 'Wow, do you know I sent this application three years ago?'

RT: Wow.

Maya: And, so, I guess I have to say, he was probably, I mean he's been to college, his father was a doctor. Unfortunately, he's not doing much now, but that's a whole other...

RT: ...story.

Maya: But anyway. So, I have to say he really was my biggest influence. He made me really realize, you know what, you've been saying the same thing for three years.

RT: How about now? Does he ask how you're doing? You doing your work? You guys talk about it? Is that how...

Maya: Yeah, kind of, I mean, unfortunately, because he's going through his own struggles, we're not, we don't, we're not really talking, but, you know, he's still interested in, you know, what I'm doing, because I think he's just, he's happy to, because a lot of people have said to me, like, 'Oh, you should be back in college,' or 'You shouldn't be,' or like, 'You're too good to be,' not too good, but you could, should be doing so much more with yourself.

RT: More..

Maya: And so, I have to admit, yeah, he's definitely been, I mean I've heard it along the way, but I guess when you're kind of dating someone, and I guess they can really see who you are, and know that you should be doing more with yourself.

RT: Right.

Maya: And so he just kept, you know, some night his nudging would get on my nerves, but it got me to where I'm at.

RT: See, so good thing he did that, then?

Maya: He did.

RT: [laughter] That's good. Ok. All right. I want...do you have any questions for me so far? Ok. I want to ask you some questions, and very - kind of like quick responses.

Maya: Ok.

RT: I mean, you have to go back to high school now a little bit, and when I ask you to remember doing some of these things. If you don't that's fine, and if you do, if you could elaborate real quickly on some of the things. Like, for example, Do you remember reading Shakespeare in high school?

Maya: Not really. Well, Romco and Juliet.

RT: Romeo and Juliet, or something like that.

Maya: Yeah.

RT: It's going to be a quick, rapid-fire of a whole bunch of stuff.

Maya: Ok.

RT: So, if you don't understand something, you can ask me or whatever. But basically do you remember in high school doing stuff with, like, writing, the writing process, ok, things you may be doing now, but do you remember doing it in high school? Like summarizing, taking something you write and doing a summary on it? Or how about arguing? Do you remember arguing or debating things?

Maya: Not really.

RT: Nothing? Ok. How about making, like, conclusions from something that you read? Did you ever read a typical story, whatever it is, and the teacher says something like, 'All right let's talk about what's going to happen or what did happen here?' Do you remember doing stuff like that?

Maya: Sure. I can't, you know, /////

RT: I don't need specifics. Just..

Maya: I would imagine that we probably did, because I was always in either A or B English classes.

RT: Do you remember ever reading any epic poems? With like Beowulf? Grendel?

Maya: You know what I went to private school in seventh and eighth grade and we used to read and we used to read, like, Edgar Allen Poe, and some other people who I can't think of right now.

RT: Right.

Maya: I feel like I probably did more of that in probably, like, seventh and eighth grade.

RT: Good. How about a plot, and character, and do you remember doing any of those with the triangle, and rising action, and conclusion? Talk about what a plot is or some character analysis?

Maya: It sounds vaguely familiar. I can't think of the book, maybe Great Expectations, because we read that in ninth grade.

RT: Ok.

Maya: A lot of the stuff I've read on my own...

RT: Sure.

Maya: ...that I didn't even read in high school.

RT: Right. Ok, so some, some of these things may be coming back to you, as, in your memory, while you're in classes now?

Maya: Not really, it seems like it's new actually.

RT: Ok, that's good. That's fine. How about, well, you're doing it in college applications, newspaper journalism when you were in high school? That type of writing like that?

Maya: Sounds...

RT: Did you ever write for the school newspaper?

Maya: No, I was pretty much like, let me just go to school and then go home.

RT: Ok. How about reading aloud? Do you remember reading aloud in class?

Maya: Yes, that's never been...

RT: How about vocabulary? Things that, were any of your teachers very big on vocabulary, vocabulary words, dictionary?

Maya: I don't know whether they were or not, again, because I was reading for, I had a large vocabulary. It sucks now because, talking to people, you know you don't want to sound like they don't understand what you're saying.

RT: Right. You've to talk to your audience, right. But you do remember, I'm sure, some vocabulary was introduced, but you may have been familiar with it already.

Maya: But again, it was probably more...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...the school I went to in seventh and eighth grade, they really, I can remember all the grammar, the vocabulary words constantly. It seemed like by the time I got in ninth grade, I know, I was more like reading stories and other things, but seventh and eighth grade really set the tone.

RT: All right, good. How about novels, short stories, things that, horror stories, science fiction, reading any?

Maya: I would say more dramas.

RT: How about biographies, autobiographies? Like, the biography, autobiography of Abraham Lincoln, or Thomas Jefferson? Stuff..

Maya: I think Edgar Allen Poe's

RT: Edgar Allen Poe's stuff...

Maya:..Sylvia Plath.

RT: Ok, that's poems. Any of the plays, remember any? A Streetcar Named Desire, any of those things.

Maya: It doesn't sound familiar.

RT: Ok.

Maya: I don't remember doing that either, believe it or not.

RT: Ok, Shakespeare we talked a little bit about, do remember his sonnets, studying his sonnets, his poems? Shall I compare thee to a summers day? No?

Maya: It's not really ringing a bell.

RT: Ok, that's fine. What about, we talked about, let's try and tweak this a little bit. How about things like foreshadowing, and sequence? Do you remember learning that in high school? To foreshadow, what, when you're reading here, you could say in a story, this is definitely going to happen.

Maya: It sounds familiar, like, probably, like, ninth grade.

RT: How about different types of literature? American literature? Did you ever study American Literature? Like Mark Twain? Edgar Allen Poe, obviously?

Maya: Yes, definitely.

RT: World literature? Do you remember doing world literature?

Maya: Like who would that be?

RT: Good question. [indiscernible] [0:29:12.8] You know, like, Asian writers?

Maya: No.

RT: Do you remember reading Siddhartha?

Maya: No.

RT: Hermann Hesse?

Maya: No.

RT: Ok. How about propaganda? You talked about the Black Panthers before, that's a type of propaganda, the fist and things like that, are things?

Maya: Yeah, but I don't remember talking about those things.

RT: Never talked about propaganda, though?

Maya: You have to realize I went to a high school, that even though there were a lot of black people there...

RT: Right.

Maya:....it was still a predominantly, you know, white high school...

RT: Right, ok.

Maya:... so the structure is somewhat different...I

RT: Ok.

Maya:...in what they talk about.

RT: Right, ok. That, that's...

Maya: It's not being racist.

RT: No, no, no, not even that. Propaganda meaning like did you go over some the stuff that maybe Hitler used when he was trying to the Germans involved against the Jews, and stuff like that.

Maya: Probably, because I remember, I mean, I, I read Anne Frank. I'm not sure...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...if I read it on my own, or I read it for school.

RT: Ok.

Maya: But that probably would have been more in seventh and eighth grade.

RT: Right, ok. That's fine. Ok, how about different themes like death, and beauty. Do you remember talking about some of those things? Like...

Maya: Maybe eleventh grade.

RT: All right, ok.

Maya: Because that's when I, eleventh and twelfth grade is when I read Sylvia Plath.

RT: Ok, so some of those things really jumped out of you, and the teacher really kind of put the, the discussion, and do you remember discussion going back and forth in the classroom?

Maya: You know, it's really funny when I think back, I really had more of that, really, in seventh and eighth grade.

RT: Really?

Maya: than I actually really did in the upper grades.

RT: The upper grades..Ok.

Maya:I mean, it wasn't a bad high school.

RT: Right, you just remember

Maya: I just remember seventh and eighth grade, we just...

RT: So you went from a private school to a public high school?

Maya: Right.

RT: How about, we talked about Edgar Allen Poe, and things like that. How about historical events? You remember historical events ever taking place in your literature class, like the assassination of President Kennedy? Any other type of social or economic event, like the Berlin Wall, stuff like that. Do you ever remember talking about that in English class? Coming down, or Communism?

Maya: Again, seventh and eighth grade.

RT: Really?

Maya: Because we used to watch TV, we used to watch, I think //// was around...

RT: Right, ok.

Maya:...we used to watch, like, ////.

RT: Right, ok. But nothing in high school that you recall?

Maya: Not, to be honest with you, no. I mean, I'm sure we may have done it on a small scale, but in seventh and eighth grade, again, it was.

RT: Ok, if you still remember it from seventh and eighth grade, and you don't remember it from high school, it just shows me how much more effective it was in seventh and eighth grade for you...

Maya: Yeah, it was.

RT:...than it was in high school. It's not that you're just forgetting...

Maya: Right, no I remember from – I already been through in seventh or eighth grade, sure I remember like ////

RT: Oh, wow.

Maya: You know, it, seventh and eighth grade were definitely intense.

RT: That's very interesting. So, then again I go back into high school. Did you learn about politics at high school at all? Did you talk about some politics, about writings, and certain things that presidents wrote, or the governing bodies wrote, or legislation, the Constitution, any, anything you could kind of mesh history together?

Maya: Maybe more or less ninth grade. I don't really, it's funny, I don't remember history in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade to be honest with you.

RT: So you don't think those teachers got together, and kind of meshed things together?

Maya: Meaning?

RT: You know, you could basically talk about the Constitution and history, you know, you could talk about the Constitution, but how it was actually written. Like how it has a focus, how it follows...

Maya: Oh, you mean in the English class?

RT: In English, yeah.

Maya: No.

RT: Ok.

Maya: No.

RT: Ok, how about learning how to listen? It doesn't seem like it has to do with English, but it does. Learning how to read conceptual things, like charts, graphs. Would you say that was any part of your literature class, or was that a different class?

Maya: That would have been like, maybe, more of a business class.

RT: Right. Ok. So nothing, nothing in there at all. And even interpreting visual medias, like watching TV, you said you did that in grammar school.

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Do you remember any type of media at all. Were there film strips? Were there VCR tapes that you were aware of?

Maya: Probably in, probably in twelfth grade, I just don't remember...

RT: Right.

Maya:...exactly what it was. I guess, I guess in seventh and eighth grade there were so many things going on politically...

RT: Right

Maya: ...and we focused on them on a regular basis, like every day, whereas in high school, it probably wasn't as consistent, so that's probably why I don't remember it as much.

RT: Right. In seventh and eighth grade, let's go back for a second, after you focused on those things, did you write a response paper to it?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Something. It wasn't just your watching, that was – it was something that was unusual about it, so –

Maya: Right. I mean we would have to get up, you know, like Edgar, you know a lot of Edgar Allen Poe stuff. We'd have to remember it...

RT: Right.

Maya: and then we'd have to get up there and we would have to present it. Like, like Walt Whitman. I can remember there's a Walt Whitman...

RT: Right.

Maya:...poem, but I can't remember it, but we would have to get up there and we would have to recite these things.

RT: Right. Ok. But you don't remember doing that as much in high school?

Maya: I don't remember, no.

RT: It should be the other way around. [laughter] You know what I'm saying...

Maya: Yeah, I think that going to a private school...

RT: Right.

Maya:...you're getting things that you don't really get in public...

RT: Correct.

Maya: I mean, maybe now it's different?

RT: Well...Hopefully, of all those things in private school, you're supposed to be getting in public school as well.

Maya: You're supposed to.

RT: [laughter] How about grammar? Do you remember grammar? I mean, your vocabulary is great. Your grammar is excellent. But is that, did you get that basis in high school.

Maya: Seventh and eighth grade.

RT: Seventh and eighth grade.

Maya: I'm telling you, infinitives, gerunds, run-ons.

RT: All of that.

Maya: But still in high school, because I remember going to summer school one year.

RT: Right, ok.

Maya: An added English class.

RT: Ok, do you remember the grammar? Was it infused in lessons, or was it like, 'Ok, today we're going to learn about nouns?' Even if you guys knew that, it was which one?

Maya: Today we're going to learn about nouns...

RT: Ok.

Maya: or infinitives or gerunds or run-ons or adverbs.

RT: Ok. Ok, so it wasn't infused, like you're reading a story, and they'd say, 'What kind of word is 'running'? You know?

Maya: Not really, it was kind of separate.

RT: Do you remember how often that it was, was it once a week or?

Maya: No, again, because you'd think when I was in seventh and eighth grade we didn't change class...

RT: Right.

Maya: We were in the same class all day long, so like from eight to three, or eight to four, or whatever it was, that was our curriculum. It was like math, English, history, um...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...that's just how it was.

RT: That you don't get into the high school at some point?

Maya: I was in ninth grade, you know, like the classes change. So, I think because they change, something kind of gets lost in the translation.

RT: Right.

Maya: you know, seventh and eighth grade was like being back in grammar school, you're in the same class, and it's just more consistent.

RT: Right. Now, would you say that there was more or less grammar from ninth grade to twelfth grade? In twelfth grade do you remember going over nouns still and stuff like that? Or was it...

Maya: Probably, probably, you know, I'm sure we did...

RT: Mm-hmm.

Maya: ...but it wasn't like when I was in seventh and eighth grade

RT: Right. It was sort of like a recap. 'Who remembers what a noun is?' 'I do.' That sort of thing.

Maya: Exactly.

RT: Ok, good. All right. I'm just going to go through the whole list of pronouns, verbs, conjunctions, do you remember all of that?

Maya: Yes, seventh and eighth...

RT: But nothing in high school?

Maya: Probably, again, not like, we just focused on those things in seventh and eighth grade.

RT: High school just basic knowledge.

Maya: I guess they figure that at that point, you should know it.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, it shows in your writing, you go over it, as, like, like developmental in a sense, but it's not like you have, like, an English class and that's what you're going over, like, constantly.

RT: Right. Do you remember writing in high school? Did you guys have a portfolio? Did you put your stuff in there? Did you pull it out, and check it with you, correct it?

Maya: No.

RT: So, who corrected your work? The teacher?

Maya: We did.

RT: And she'd just give it back to you?

Maya: Right.

RT: And then you made changes, or just went on to other things...

Maya: Yeah, it was like when I did the paper on *The Bell Jar*. I wrote it, I gave it to him, he gave it back to me, I got a 'A' and that was it.

RT: Ok, it was, like, just don't make a mistake again?

Maya: Actually, I don't even remember the paper. He wrote on it, like, 'How come you didn't do this earlier?' I don't really remember getting the paper back with, like, corrections on it.

RT: Oh, ok. Right. Ok.

Maya: And so, you know, next time you know what not to do. I don't...

RT: Right. Ok.

Maya: ...remember that at all.

RT: And there was no rubric? Or it was..

Maya: No.

RT: It was just A, B, C, D. Ok. How about phrases, articles, ad, adverbs, clauses?

Maya: Again, seventh and eighth grade.

RT: Ok. Commas, right? Do you remember, again, it's the same thing, it's sticking in your mind that you remember seventh and eighth grade because there was such a heavy emphasis on it. But in high school, in twelfth grade, eleventh grade.

Maya: I guess we did it, but again, I don't..

RT: You don't really remember it?

Maya: I don't think the emphasis was as much...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...I guess, at that point, they figured we've learned this stuff in grammar school.

RT: Like, I remember a teacher, like I remember grammar school, I remember one of my teachers was very big into adverbs and things like that. But I also remember in high school which teachers were more in vocabulary and whatnot than other teachers were. So do you have a teacher that sticks out, anyone that was more than the other ones? Or are you saying that seventh and eighth grade were just totally overpowering you?

Maya: That seventh and eighth grade just totally overpowered it.

RT: Ok. So, nothing really sticks out. So basically what you're saying is, if I could just be general for a minute, is that all of your grammar and everything that you learned for how you are today, even in today's class, comes from seventh and eighth grade basically?

Maya: I would say for the most part, and then, you know, taking again, like a summer class, I mean like taking like a summer school class...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...and maybe tenth grade, because tenth grade I went to a Catholic high school for a year, and then I went to public school for eleventh and twelfth, but I really don't remember these things being like they were when I was in seventh and eighth grade.

RT: Wow, that's interesting. Capitalizing, you remember doing stuff like that?

Maya: Mm-hmm.

RT: Ok. Ok, how about using a dictionary? Do you remember using a dictionary in high school? Do you remember a teacher saying, 'Let's go back and define these words,' 'You don't know what a word is, go use the dictionary' ?

Maya: I imagine they did, but, again, it was something probably more in, like, seventh and eighth grade, because, again, you figure by high school, most kids know if you don't know a word, you know, you look it up in your dictionary...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...or you go to the library, or you had encyclopedias.

RT: Ok. How about, like, differences in words like 'it's' versus 'it is', like 'its' versus 'its', 'affect' vs. 'effect'. You know, some of those words.

Maya: I don't really remember, I'm sure we probably learned that in high school.

RT: Ok, 'in short' vs. 'a short' do you remember some of that? Ok. Spell check? Spell check, there was no spell check, right. How about pre-writing? Do you do pre-writing now, in your developmental course right now?

Maya: Well, I do it. I type everything up on the computer and then I print it out, and then I go back over and correct it.

RT: Ok, that's a rough draft. What I mean by pre-writing is, like, brainstorming, like, five minutes in the beginning. She didn't go over that with you?

Maya: Ut-uh.

RT: Ok. It's a strategy. What I do is I tell students once they, once they get a topic, take five minutes before you start writing, any word that comes to your head, any thought, you put that on a piece of paper...

Maya: No.

RT: And then you, kind of...ok, so do you remember doing that in high school. So you remember never doing that?

Maya: Well, I do it for myself.

RT: Right. Right. Right.

Maya: Because I have to write it down.

RT: Because that helps you focus...

Maya: Right. And it helps you expand on that one brainstorm sometimes.

RT: What's the one thing now in your developmental class that you're focusing on all the time? Like what's something that, like, when I teach, my students will tell you 'he talks about thesis statement like he's going to knock me off my chair,' all right. What's the one thing you talk about all the time?

Maya: I think thesis statement.

RT: Ok.

Maya: Part of - you know, what is it, thesis statement, more like your intro...

RT: Introduction, purpose, things like that.

Maya: Exactly.

RT: Do you remember, really, the way she is talking about it now, how she's really getting you into it, do you remember doing that in high school?

Maya: No.

RT: [indiscernible] [0:41:17.5] support. How about things that, how to construct in a logical order, like the stuff she's probably going over now, like the focus part, like you put this before you put this. And you don't want to put the conclusion before the body part.

Maya: Right.

RT: Do you remember doing that in high school?

Maya: We probably did. I don't really remember it.

RT: Mm-hmm. How about using, what I like to call, see you have a very high vocabulary, so, but different types of diction, like for example, here's a word that's suits on paper, and I'll say 'try a different word' something to maybe intensify the topic...

Maya: mm-hmm. She does that.

RT: Ok, how about when you were in high school?

Maya: No, because pretty much in high school, I probably, out of a lot of kids, I probably had the like the highest vocabulary.

RT: [Laughter]

Maya: But, again, that was just from going, it was from, again, you know, having a mother where I was constantly reading. And even if I didn't understand a word then, I'd get the dictionary

RT: Right. Ok.

Maya: ...out and I'd look it up.

RT: So you were sort like a self a self-initiator?

Maya: In a sense, I guess, from having a mother who initiated that.

RT: Ok. All right. A couple more here. The thesis statement we talked about. How about, in your thesis statement now do you use examples or statistics, like I tried to tell you once since you do a research paper, your thesis statement should have a statistic in there, like, 72 percent of all Americans do this.

Maya: I don't know if my necessarily has, I guess it has statistics in a sense, but they're not necessarily number statistics.

RT: Ok.

Maya: It's kind of like information that you know is out there, that when most people read it they know that...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...this isn't just, it's something that it's coming from you, but it's coming from your knowledge, having read it or heard it.

RT: Right.

Maya: ...you know, the media or reading or so on.

RT: Right, ok. And how about when you were in high school, do you remember doing any of that at all?

Maya: I just remember writing, to be honest with you, I don't really remember all of, you know, the strategies.

RT: The strategy stuff. How about different types of writing? Argument? Do you remember arguments, debates in high school? Do you remember any specific debating that you did.

Maya: Maybe eleventh and twelfth grades.

RT: Did you persuade a reader that to go to your side, that you should think this way because of these reasons?

Maya: Probably, but I don't know if it was necessarily phrased that way.

RT: Do you think in high school or even now you could tell me the difference between academic writing and just a basic fun writing?

Maya: Based on what?

RT: Based on the writing itself. Do you think you could pinpoint what an academic is? Like, for example, MLA format?

Maya: No, because I've never heard of that before.

RT: Are you doing a research paper now? Is it required for you?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Ok. So, you're doing a MLA format?

Maya: I guess. The only other place I'm doing it is Dr. **** [Phonetic] [0:44:12.8] class.

RT: Right. Ok. You should be using the MLA. But you don't remember doing that in high school at all.

Maya: No, that's why I think when you said it to me in the beginning, I wasn't -

RT: Did she go over the Owl with you? Did you do Owl....did we talk about that already?

Maya: The who?

RT: Ok, we'll talk about that. How about business stuff? I mean, business memos, when you were in high school do you remember learning how to do a resume, a memo?

Maya: Yeah, in my secretarial class.

RT: It wasn't in English, though.

Maya: No, because that would have been more in a business class, because they had business courses.

RT: Ok, so that wouldn't have trickled over into...

Maya: No, not really.

RT: Ok. How about editing? Do you remember editing in high school? Like take your paper, reread it, make some changes.

Maya: Mm-hmm.

RT: Even editing other people's work?

Maya: No, it was like read something, write about it, and then you got a grade on it.

RT: Interesting. I don't know if you do it now, but maybe do you remember in high school, did you ever reassess what you were writing? You looked at it and you said, 'Well, this isn't really what I'm supposed to be writing, like they said we want you to write a tragedy, and you're writing it and I don't think this is a tragedy.' Do you ever go back and look at your writing and reassess its appropriateness?

Maya: I do that now, and I don't think then, and I think pretty much when I was writing things, because I enjoyed writing, I would write a lot of things, actually.

RT: Ok, so you do that now, but how about feedback from others? Did you ever get feedback from high school, ask your mom, 'What do you think about this?'

Maya: No, 'cause I'm a such, I guess being an only child I'm an independent person, so it was kind of like now, I might let somebody read something, like another student. I'm not really interested in their feedback. I hate to say that, but I'm older...but I hate to say that, but maybe I'm older, but once I write it and read it, I'm comfortable with what it is.

RT: Can you take constructive criticism?

Maya: Yeah, no, because you know...

RT: How about high school?

Maya: You know, I mean, if it's constructive, but if you're being mean and ugly, that's another thing.

RT: Different story.

Maya: But if a person is truly being constructive, yeah, I can accept that, because then I know where to make my changes.

RT: Good. Ok. Let's go at the research route. No research. You don't remember doing any research in high school.

Maya: I'm sure I did, I don't, you know, I'm sure we did go to the library for a research paper, but you think they had encyclopedias back then.

RT: Right.

Maya: We had encyclopedias at home, so I probably didn't really use the library.

RT: MLA

Maya: Or, like, you know, my aunt had a whole bunch of books.

RT: So, ok, this basically a brand new experience for you with the MLA?

Maya: Yeah, it is, because that's what I was saying, like, when you first said it, I was like.

RT: Ok. That's fun

Maya: and not knowing any kids in high school, to know what they're doing now.

RT: What the MLA is, right? Do you have, did you buy the MLA handbook?

Maya: No.

RT: It's probably for your next class. Ok. Collecting information for a thesis, do you remember doing that before you wrote something? Did you think about, like, maybe, doing some research on a topic before you even write something? Like, let's say, in your high school, they said, 'We want you guys to write a paper on the school.' Did you like ask people questions first before you write it, or did you just started writing? Are you the type of person back then who just started writing once they got a topic?

Maya: No, because I was reading all the time, so I probably would have read something in regard to it, so I had more knowledge of it.

RT: Ok. So you...

Maya: ...because you can't really write about something that you don't have the knowledge.

RT: Correct. People do though. Don't you try it.

Maya: I think you can only take the fog so far.

RT: Exactly. Exactly. How about primary vs. secondary sources? You know what that is? Then you probably didn't do that. Like, one source vs. the secondary source, like a newspaper, vs. someone actually....no? Ok. Are you familiar with using books, magazines, newspapers, journals, those are things that you can get research out of.

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Ok. Like scholarly journals vs. just journals like you can get now on the web.

Maya: What's a scholarly journal?

RT: Like something like Time Magazine, or Educational News or something like that?

Maya: Oh, ok.

RT: How about plagiarism? Did you understand what plagiarism was?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: I can understand that because the ***** community talks about it every five seconds.

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Great. So, I mean, how about back when you were in high school?

Maya: Yeah, I still understood, you know, copying something

RT: Ok, so you knew that was wrong, right?

Maya: Yes.

RT: So, did you know how to avoid that back then?

Maya: I think that if you can read something and you can comprehend it

RT: Right.

Maya:...then you can put it in your own words.

RT: Correct. Ok, good. So you knew that, ok. How about personal experiences? Did that affect your writing when you were in high school? Some of the things you went through personally?

Maya: I don't think so. And I think I would, I don't really think so, because I wouldn't talk about those things.

RT: Ok.

Maya: So, they weren't really.

RT: Did you use any of your writing as an outlet? You know some people write poems, sometimes they write poems, or they write music.

Maya: I think that only happens now, to be honest with you.

RT: Ok.

Maya: No.

RT: So then it wasn't an outlet for you?

Maya: No.

RT: So, you didn't use your experience to write a novel or?

Maya: No, I think it's only now that, you know, I come up with these sayings...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...and things like that, I think, because of everything I've gone through,

RT: Ok.

Maya: ...so, I think it was just kind of built up, and, I guess now, because I can understand it. Back then, I wouldn't have understood it.

RT: Ok. It's understandable. How about when you were in high school, and you were arguing with somebody about a point, ok, did you have stuff to support your argument? Like did you have research these things that you, or did you just say, 'I know it's that way, because it's that way' ?

Maya: ///// I didn't do well because, again, my head was all filled with junk.

RT: Right.

Maya: But I did have a speech class, I actually got an A on it, and I do remember us having a debate, and I do remember being able to, I don't remember what the debate was on, but I backed up my debate.

RT: Ok, ok. So you remember doing that?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Ok. You ok so far?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: What do you think a strength and a weakness you had in high school was?

Maya: A weakness was definitely math.

RT: Ok. How about your strength. Let's stick with English. What was your strength in English, and a weakness in English?

Maya: I guess was being able to read something and comprehend it. A weakness probably would have been more grammatical.

RT: Really? Even though you had all that seventh and eighth...

Maya: Really. Even though I had it, yeah, I just don't use it. I just write.

RT: Ok, so what about writing? Do you remember generating different types of content and how do you do it now? Do you feel you could come up with a topic now easier than you could when you were in high school?

Maya: Oh, yeah, because of all the years of experience.

RT: Ok. //// Was it easier to generate content while in college vs. high school? Do you have more...

Maya: No.

RT: ...knowledge in high school?

Maya: No, again, just being, when you're encased in Saran Wrap, it doesn't allow you to grow, so I was just very immature. I just happened to get through that speech class with an A, I don't know how.

RT: Right.

Maya: But I guess when you're strong opinioned about whatever the topic is, or something you've chosen.

RT: Ok. I talked about proof reading and things like that. How about basically just when you're in high school communicating? Your speech was, your vocabulary was high, you said? Ok. Did you know then, and I know you know now so it's a little difficult, but did you know then about like writing to an audience? Did you know like if you were writing something to a bunch of grammar school kids that you'd use a certain word, as opposed to if you were writing to a bunch of doctors, you'd want to use a harder word. Did you think you knew that in senior year?

Maya: No, but I think I may have been able to figure that out.

RT: Ok.

Maya: You know, like, you have to be able to capture your audience's attention, so what you're writing about has to be something that they can understand.

RT: Ok, so that's something you probably would have figured out.

Maya: Yeah, I think so.

RT: Ok. And, again, you don't remember any type of media that you used then, that would help you, like newspapers, or when you were writing, like, yeah, there wasn't an internet, but was there magazines and things like that, you said you were an avid reader, but...

Maya: In one of the grades, I remember, we had to read The New York Times.

RT: Right. Ok.

Maya: I don't remember, it might have been between, say, seventh and twelfth grade. I don't really remember.

RT: Ok. Ok. I see. And basically, the last question I have, is there is one thing, if you can go back in time and there was one thing you can change, what would it be?

Maya: I guess to just have uncased myself a lot sooner. Not to have been so mewed about things that were bothering me.

RT: Right.

Maya: So, that would have allowed me to move forward the way most people move forward.

RT: Right. And, basically you find yourself in this place now just for the simple fact for being out of the loop for a long time?

Maya: Out of the loop and just wanting, you know, again, learning about, you know, the thesis, the intro, and your paragraphs, and your conclusion.

RT: Right.

Maya: If I just started, if I just jumped into an English class, I wouldn't realize any of that.

RT: How were your counselors here, when you came here?

Maya: I'm sorry.

RT: Your counselors here? Do you know who your counselors? Have you met with a counselor?

Maya: No.

RT: What about when you first, not first time you applied, the real time you applied, the second time you came back? You put the paper in, you sent your little tuition thing in, and all of a sudden it's you know, you get something in the mail saying you have to take the accuplacer test, and you just show up to the accu placer test, nobody told you what the test was about?

Maya: Well, I looked myself. I looked...

RT: Ok.

Maya: I looked because they have the different websites, and you can look and see what the different questions are for math and for English.

RT: And you got that from ***** told you about the websites, or did they actually send you something and said these are the websites.

Maya: They didn't send it to me, it's actually there.

RT: On the website.

Maya: When you go there to look for whatever date you want to take the test...

RT: Oh, ok.

Maya:...it actually tells you these are websites where you can get examples from.

RT: Oh, ok.

Maya: So you don't go in blind.

RT: Oh, ok, I see. Did you do that?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: And what happened when you saw that? You were...

Maya: I was ok with it.

RT: Ok.

Maya: I mean, granted, when you're sitting in a classroom, when you're sitting in a room, and there are bright lights, and you're looking at the screen, and you're getting all flustered, it all kind of flies out the window.

RT: Right. Ok.

Maya: But, that did allow me to understand what the actual test was about. I don't think it talks about the writing, though. That's the problem.

RT: It only talks about the reading part of it?

Maya: Exactly.

RT: So, you weren't expecting that you need a thesis statement, this, that?

Maya: Right, exactly.

RT: Because my thing would be if you knew that, I would think that you be able to at least read that...

Maya: Right, exactly. As much stuff as there was to print out, I was printing everything out. But, again, you don't really know about that you're going to have to take a topic, and you're going to have to write about it, and you only have, what did I say?

RT: Ah, you remember the time?

Maya: Fifteen minutes, or forty two minutes, whatever, and the clock is sitting right in front of you,

RT: Right. That's not why you're doing it.

Maya: Right. Exactly.

RT: So, what about now, now? So, now, you're taking the master test again to get out of the program, ok, you're going to have eighty minutes, which is more time than you had the first time.

Maya: Right. Exactly.

RT: And it's after now, fifteen weeks, of two classes a week, or whatever it is, how is that now a fair assessment to someone who, maybe if you knew some of this information prior to going in, you probably could have passed. How's your feeling on that now, that you're at the end of the class. Forget about the money, and forget about the time, because you, you know, you could have used the refresher course.

Maya: Right. It got me in the loop.

RT: Yes, exactly.

Maya: It got me used to dealing with someone that's younger than me and I am and not necessarily being able to appreciate their style of teaching, but knowing that I have to pass this course, so I need to make the best of it.

RT: Right.

Maya: I guess she isn't a bad teacher. It's not anything...

RT: No, no.

Maya: ...I guess all of that expectations about what this course was really about, they weren't met, but then maybe this is basically the way the course is structured, so it's not explained to you that this what you basically going to learn. I think most of us went in thinking we were going to learn, like, grammar and sentence structure, and you don't really learn any of that.

RT: Right. If you had to analyze what you're learning, what would it be?

Maya: Basically we're learning how to write.

RT: Ok.

Maya: Bottom line.

RT: Right.

Maya: All the other stuff seems to be somewhat secondary, it's basically you're learning how to have a beginning...

RT: Right.

Maya: ...having your intro, having your thesis statement that's basically giving everyone what you're actually going to be talking about...

RT: Right

Maya: ...then talking about it, then tying it all together.

RT: So you thought going into this, you thought you'd be doing that, plus additional?

Maya: Yeah. I thought it would be, you know, like going over, like some, because a lot of us seem to just write, you know, where to put commas, and quotation marks and all that stuff, you know you forget those things.

RT: Yeah.

Maya: And so, but you don't touch on that at all, so I think we just all had this different idea of what we would actually be learning, and then over time we realized, ok, we're here to learn how to write. That's basically it.

RT: Right.

Maya: Right, so that we can take this mastery test to move on to Comp I.

RT: So that's, that's how you feel?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: You go through this course to see if you can pass that test?

Maya: Yeah, basically.

RT: So, that goes back to my original, where if you knew, when you first came in here, that you were going need to know a thesis, do you think you could have sat down and figured that out before you had a test?

Maya: Yeah, I would've, if I had to have bought a book, I think I would have done that, and then I wouldn't have wasted, like, three hundred dollars, because it wasn't what I thought it was. But that's ok.

RT: Do you have any questions for me?

Maya: No.

RT: Ok, And you do have the card I gave you for the gift cards?

Maya: Yeah.

RT: Thank you very much.

Maya: You're very welcome. ///

RT: I'm going to shut this off.

End Audio: [0:58:44]

Appendix K – Interview - Marco

RT: We are here with Marco. We will just leave it at that. I do not even know how to pronounce your last name. I have given Marco a copy of the Consent Form that he just signed. I appreciate you coming in. Thank you very much. I want to show you this chart first, okay, real quick? This has to do with you as a high school student. All right. Which one of these three categories... there is basically the upper category where your average is A or A+. Another category is B+ or A – B average – passing high school. Do you fit any of these – not specific categories – but did you pass HSPA?

Marco: Yes.

RT: Okay, you did. Were you in any honors classes?

Marco: No.

RT: How about your average? Was it in here?

Marco: English.

RT: Senior year?

Marco: Yes. B.

RT: B? Okay. So you did pass HSPA?

Marco: Yes.

RT: I am just going to ask you a couple questions. Is there anything you feel uncomfortable with?

Marco: I feel uncomfortable – that's all.

RT: No one is going to know about this. It is just between us. Again, it is basically to help high school teachers, high school administrators, help their students better so they do not wind up in a Basic Skills Class like you are in. You are in the Upper Level Basic Skills Class. Okay, and you passed and the HSPA shows that you met some kind of proficiency. Can you tell me about your family a little bit? Did your parents go to college? Are you the first person to go to college? Do you have brothers and sisters?

Marco: My brother, no – my dad he got his – they were born in Europe and never went to school there. My mom went to college. But my father, he did not graduate high school there. When he came over here, he got a job within the family so he really did not go to college. Then he waited around and got his GED. He took a few courses for the ***** industry.

RT: Okay.

Marco: He took some specific courses at **** and ****.

RT: Okay. Did they encourage you to go to college at all?

Marco: Yes.

RT: They did? Okay. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Marco: Yes. A brother and a sister. One at [indiscernible 0:02:00] College.

RT: Are they older?

Marco: Yes. Half brother; half sister.

RT: Okay.

Marco: My sister graduated high school. My brother – he got a GED.

RT: All right. I know it hasn't been too long ago, but can you bring yourself back to your senior year and how much fun you had there? Right? At the end of your senior year, did you feel you were prepared for college at all? Do you think you were prepared academically for English – let's just take English, for example? Do you think the classes prepared you academically? What about your maturity level? Do you think the school you went to – what high school did you go to?

Marco: *****

RT: *****, okay. Do you think they prepared you both academically and maturity wise?

Marco: Maturity wise, yes. Academically – I mean, I was ready to slack off so I wasn't putting my all into it. But if I did, yes, I am sure that they did well. I think I was a little unprepared, especially like writing essays and English.

RT: Do you think that was more on your end than their end?

Marco: Yes.

RT: So the work was definitely there.

Marco: Yes. Absolutely.

RT: So what do you think kept you from being motivated?

Marco: I am always that kind of guy. I'm never really fully into it. But English was just my weak subject. I just don't find interest in it that much.

RT: Do you remember a time when you were interested in English – like back in grammar school – or you just never liked it? Never liked writing?

Marco: Yes. It was always my weak subject. I always got the low grades.

RT: So if you had to pick two subjects – one your weakest, one your strongest, what would they be? Would English be your weakest?

Marco: Yes, and Math the strongest.

RT: That's interesting. Mostly it's the other way around. So Math is strong. What was your high school like? It seems like you got along with a lot of people there and probably had a good time?

Marco: Yes.

RT: What about your rank in class? Do you know what your rank was? How many kids were in your class would you say? Approximately?

Marco: I would say around 320.

RT: So would you say you were the upper part of the class, upper half?

Marco: Right around the middle.

RT: Right in the middle?

Marco: Yes.

RT: So about 3.20. Okay. Would you consider yourself a good student though overall?

Marco: Yes, overall.

RT: Okay. Were you ever in any honors classes?

Marco: No.

RT: Do you remember what your GPA was?

Marco: No.

RT: Think about . . .

Marco: It was junior year was 3.28. The senior year, I don't know.

RT: That's out of four?

Marco: Yes.

RT: So that's the junior year. Okay. If you go back to your actual classes in English in your senior year, do you recall anything like your picture prompts or any courses taken, projects you did? Do you remember any of those? Is there anything that sticks out?

Marco: Before that – actually I was a junior – well, in the senior year, there was . . . my teacher, like for the first half of the year, picture prompts. I think we did that every week, maybe twice a week. Then, we had one project where we had to read a book and do a project on that.

RT: Do you remember what the book was?

Marco: No, that was in my junior year.

RT: Any books you read in your senior year you remember?

Marco: No.

RT: What about writing requirements? Did you have to do a research paper?

Marco: No. I was in the basic level English class and we did not do a research paper. We had five paragraph essays and we did journals and we did everything in class.

RT: What do you mean by "basic level English"?

Marco: It's just normal. It's not honors English. There was honors English and then there was basic.

RT: I would say the normal kid or the regular, the average student was in basic.

Marco: You had honors and then there was regular. I was in basic.

RT: Okay. So you were below – I got it. So it's basic. Were you always in basic English?

Marco: Junior and senior year I was.

RT: So the first two years you were in regular?

Marco: Regular English.

RT: Regular English -- okay. You passed the HSPA.

Marco: Yes.

RT: Let's switch a little bit. Actually, let me go on with what's on the script here. You say you remember passing HSPA. Do you remember was HSPA difficult for you?

Marco: No.

RT: Do you remember? Did you feel prepared for it?

Marco: Yes.

RT: What do you think you were more prepared for -- like what part of that were you really prepared for? You said all your teachers had gone over this site?

Marco: In English specifically?

RT: Yes.

Marco: I would say the five paragraph essays, how to write and the structure.

RT: You did enough of those . . .

Marco: Yes. They were a constant thing.

RT: So, it means being beaten into you and then when you got to the HSPA and you had to write those essays, you were all prepared?

Marco: Yes.

RT: What part of the essay that they taught do you remember the most? The introductory paragraph? What did your teachers in high school say the most?

Marco: The introductory, the three main topics and the thesis.

RT: You seem to remember a lot. That's good. When you were in high school, how often did you meet with your counselors to talk about college, to talk about your future, to talk about how important English was or Math was? Did you meet with them all the time?

Marco: I met once in the beginning of the year and I met another time towards the end of the year. We had big assemblies and stuff. We also had -- well, three times a month you could choose -- colleges would come in and you could choose what colleges you wanted to listen to, what they had to say.

RT: College Fairs?

Marco: Yes.

RT: Did the College Fairs help you?

Marco: They helped me decide upon a community college at first.

RT: Did you go to these College Fairs with these counselors and say, "I really have to work real hard now."

Marco: Yes.

RT: So they made you think that it was time to . . .

Marco: Step it up.

RT: Yes, step it up. Did you take the SATs?

Marco: Yes.

RT: How did you do on those?

Marco: Math – I don't know exactly – I would have to look at the placement over here. I scored high.

RT: High on Math?

Marco: Yes. English – I don't really remember, but not very high.

RT: Not high in English.

Marco: I think I was in the normal, average category.

RT: Did you think the SAT was harder than IISPA?

Marco: Yes.

RT: SAT was harder?

Marco: The English section – yes. Math I did . . .

RT: I am more concerned with the English. You obviously do well in Math. So you are saying that your grades were average?

Marco: Yes.

RT: What were you above average in? Were you above average in any courses?

Marco: Anything in general? Yes, Math.

RT: Okay. You were above average in Math.

Marco: Science – well, not biology, but in ecology I was above average.

RT: What do you want to get into?

Marco: Engineering.

RT: Engineering – good.

Marco: Structural Engineer

RT: So you say your English grades are average though.

Marco: Yes. When I was first out of high school, I would say below average.

RT: So in your junior and senior year, you think you improved?

Marco: Yes.

RT: Because you were in a different place then with structure?

Marco: Yes.

RT: You never did a research paper?

Marco: Yes, I did. In the junior year, I think we did.

RT: But for your senior year, there was no requirement? Do you recall?

Marco: The project – you know, we had to read a book and then do a project.

RT: Right.

Marco: That was the choice. You could either do a research paper on something else or you could do that.

RT: Okay. So you could do the project. Do you remember what the book was?

Marco: I am trying to remember.

RT: All right. Was it like a short story or was it about a person or was it a fiction story?

Marco: Fiction.

RT: Okay. Fiction. And it was a basic book report you had to write an essay on?

Marco: No, not an essay. I did a board game manual.

RT: Okay. It was a different type of project. So you did the project instead of the research paper?

Marco: Yes.

RT: When you had homework in high school, did you complete it all the time?

Marco: No. That was my weakest.

[Laughter]

Marco: In junior and senior high, I worked full time so homework – that was what I was lacking on most. That's probably why my grades were low.

RT: You think that is really why you probably didn't do too well? How about your Math homework. Did you do your Math homework?

Marco: My Math teacher was not really that strict. He really did not go one by one to check it. I would just do it while he was going around the class.

RT: But the English teachers were – you didn't do reports?

Marco: I didn't.

RT: How often would you say did you miss an assignment? If you missed an assignment, if you had three assignments a week, how many would you miss?

Marco: One.

RT: Okay. Do you think if you had to go back now and you did those assignments, would you have done better?

Marco: Yes, especially when it was counted with the grade on the report card.

RT: Right. There was a specific category on your report card?

Marco: 20% was homework, 20% . . .

RT: Oh, right – the breakdown. I understand.

Marco: That shows the teacher that you're more – that you're working harder.

RT: Do you remember studying grammar in high school? Like nouns, verbs – do you remember your teacher going over that specifically?

Marco: Yes.

RT: Like run-on sentences, like some of the stuff you are doing now?

Marco: That was more in my sophomore year, freshman year.

RT: Not in your senior year?

Marco: No. It was more – junior and senior was more like reading a story and answering questions on it – like how to write an essay. We did do some vocabulary.

RT: That was like infused in the lesson. You would read a story and there would be a vocabulary word in the story?

Marco: Yes.

RT: It was more infused in the junior and senior year in the stories, but earlier, in the freshman and sophomore . . .

Marco: We would have specific vocabulary words.

RT: Okay. We talked about your parents earlier. How involved would you say they were in your high school?

Marco: Not involved.

RT: Why do you think that was? Do you think it was because they . . . do they speak . . . is English their first language or . . .

Marco: Second.

RT: Did they understand the homework situation? Did they understand all that?

Marco: Yes, but they never pushed me to do homework, especially because in my junior year, I would go to school until 2:30 and then I would go to work until 9:00. In my senior year, I did a half day and then I went to work from 12:30 to 9:00. After that, I would go home, eat a little bit and go to sleep. It wasn't like we had much time to talk about that stuff.

RT: Okay.

Marco: They weren't too pushy on homework.

RT: Did they ever check it?

Marco: No.

RT: Could you go to them for help? Or they wouldn't know . . .

Marco: No, my dad . . . no, not really.

RT: Do you think if they had checked it, you would have done it more?

Marco: Yes.

RT: Not to blame your mom and dad. I understand what you are saying.

Marco: Actually, if they would have pushed more, probably, yes.

RT: How about your teachers in high school? Do you remember them ever calling your parents and saying, "Listen, he's missing all his homework?"

Marco: Maybe in my sophomore year -- I think once.

RT: After that . . . later on.

Marco: Not really.

RT: Were you in any clubs in school? Did you play sports or anything?

Marco: I played sports until eighth grade, but then, I had a heart condition and I had to stop playing.

RT: How about any clubs? No clubs or anything like Debate Team, the Chess Club, the Swim Club, anything like that?

Marco: No, just school work.

RT: Where did you work? Do you will work?

Marco: Yes, with my father [indiscernible 0:13:21] ///// a meat manufacturer.

RT: That's his business?

Marco: He was the supervisor there.

RT: You say that in school, you were more of a student and then you went to work. That's it.

Marco: Yes.

RT: What would you do for fun? What did you do -- hang out with the boys or something?

Marco: Yes, with my friends.

RT: This is the interesting one here. Are you familiar with any titles or authors? Do you remember anything you did in World Literature back then, like Shakespeare? I mean, it was a while ago.

Marco: Shakespeare -- sophomore year.

RT: Okay, in your sophomore year you did that. What about in your senior year?

Marco: No.

RT: Did anything stand out at all?

Marco: If you were to go over the names, I would be able to tell you.

RT: Nothing really stands out?

Marco: No.

RT: This was supposed to be the second, and I'll have to ask you this now. This is the last question and obviously then I'll ask if you have any questions. What do you think you wish you would have known in high school about college? If you had to go back, if you had to take one thing you know now – not about the community itself – but about college itself? If you could go back now and say, "I wish I knew that," what would it be?

Marco: Like having good grades, better grades, I'd say, and doing homework. I was in such a habit of not doing homework and doing everything the last minute and rushing things before class. You come here and it is totally different.

RT: Right. Did you take notes in high school?

Marco: No, but I have to take them here.

RT: So you are not prepared for that.

Marco: Note taking I'm not good at, not at all. Essay writing I feel uncomfortable with. That's why I am glad I am only taking Basic English Skills.

RT: You are starting out the right way. What about your – not about the note taking so much – but what about – if you were to again go back and think about it, what exactly do you think you would have done differently? Would you have done your homework a little better, taken notes a little better?

Marco: I would have gotten more involved in clubs and stuff so I would have some fun in college.

RT: Why do you think you didn't pass the placement test? Do you remember that day taking the test?

Marco: Yes.

RT: When you sat down, were you just like you didn't care or was it really that you did not know the answers?

Marco: I think a little of both. I am just not good at – the essay one – I really wasn't comfortable with it. Comprehending stories – I just wasn't interested in it at all. It was just hard.

RT: You think it's because you really didn't like it in high school and had to work. It wasn't fun? What if I brought your teacher in here right now from high school – whoever – he or she – it doesn't matter? If I brought your teacher in here right now and they said, "Listen, I really need you to tell me one thing I could have done to really make you enjoy this class a little better," what could it have been?

Marco: More interesting stories. I know once you grow up and you're a senior, it's not really that they - that much really pushing you to do homework. I know they don't do it as much and we're supposed to be learning responsibility, but I didn't really feel like – you know, you go into eighth grade and they're on top of you, "Where's your homework? You didn't do it? I'm going to call your parents right away."

RT: That's interesting. So you are saying they were trying to treat you more like an adult, but maybe some people aren't ready for that yet? You know, like, "I have to work." So if they were on top of it a little more and called your parents, maybe . . .

Marco: Definitely.

RT: You say you were penalized for your homework, but nothing to help you do your homework . . .

Marco: Yes.

RT: Do you have any questions for me or anything like that?

Marco: No.

RT: Nothing?

End of Audio [0:17:45]

Appendix L – Interview II - Marco

RT: Okay, so Marco for a second interview, final, second and final interview. Giving Marco a gift card for helping us out. Right Marco? I got it on tape. Alright, so what's been going on? I think we talked probably like a month or so ago.

Marco: Yeah, yeah.

RT: Anything different, anything new going on?

Marco: No, not really.

RT: So, no change of thoughts?

Marco: No.

RT: That's cool.

Marco: It's going good.

RT: Yeah, how's English?

Marco: English is really good.

RT: Yeah, you Okay now?

Marco: Yeah.

RT: Remind me what your, your what, your –

Marco: (class number)

RT: Okay, so you're still there. You are also in ****?

Marco: No

RT: [indiscernible] [0:00:39.1] so, how are you doing with those classes?

Marco: Good, I got a [95] on my mid-term.

RT: Good, Okay. That's good. That's out of 100.

Marco: Yeah

RT: Oh, Okay. I was hoping. Okay, what about college, itself? Rausch, how's Rausch been?

Marco: It's good, I like it.

RT: Yeah, what about afterwards? I know we probably talked about that a little bit.

Marco: I registered for winter and today, I just registered for spring also.

RT: Good, Okay. What are you taking in spring?

Marco: Spring; art, communications, algebra, but I'm going to take the test to try to...

RT: Test out?

Marco: Yeah, and art.

RT: What about English 1? Did you take Lang. Comp. 1?

Marco: Lang. Comp. 1 I am doing in the winter then...

RT: Oh, you're doing it in the winter? Okay, good.

Marco: Then, Lang. Comp 2 in spring.

RT: Good, Okay, good to see you catch up, hopefully. Good, good for you, cause you taking another winter session. How many times a week does that mean in winter session

Marco: Every day.

RT: It's every day? For like what, like two hours or something?

Marco: No, it's like four hours.

RT: Is it really?

Marco: Three hours is good.

RT: Well, you get it all done in one shot, right?

Marco: That's what I think so...

RT: Good, Okay. So, again you came here we talked about that a little bit. Let's refresh our memory, is there a reason why you wanted to come to Rausch again?

Marco: I mean, in high school, I didn't have enough credits to go four year, so I'm trying to catch up a little bit here.

RT: Oh, Okay. When you sat down and took the Accuplacer test, can you take me back to that day, that you took that test? Do you remember taking the placement test?

Marco: Yeah

RT: What was going through your mind?

Marco: I don't know, I wasn't really ready, it was summer still, I was not in "going to school" mode.

RT: Okay, so if you think you had to do it over again, do you think you would pass that test no problem, right? Take it a little more serious?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, take me back to, you were telling me about your high school now. Okay, the reason why I do two interviews; we have the first interview to get to know each other a little bit, get a little bit more in depth about your high school stuff. Take me back to the process of you coming here.

RT: You could have picked any community college, right? You said you never had enough credits maybe to go to a four year or what not. Who helped you come to Rausch, who pushed you here, even though you didn't have enough. Was it a guidance counselor, was it a parent was it...

- Marco: Most of the kids at my school where they go to community college, usually go to Rausch.
- RT: Okay
- Marco: They went to a state college; they just usually go to ***** but for the most part its here.
- RT: Right so you chose Rausch over ***** because...what were your reasons?
- Marco: One, it's in ***** , I hate driving through it.
- RT: Right, Okay
- Marco: Two, I heard like overall it's just a better school.
- RT: Right, Okay. Now you were from *****?
- Marco: Yeah
- RT: Right, but you don't want to go to school in *****?
- Marco: Yeah, I work right off the highway.
- RT: Okay, that's right, we'll get you through there.
- Marco: Not a problem
- RT: Okay, so who helped you with the admission process? Knowing that you had to get extra points? Was it the guidance counselor, was it...
- Marco: No, I just went online and I applied to the school.
- RT: That was it, so you never really talked to anybody about going here? How about your parents, stuff like that?
- Marco: Not really.
- RT: [Indiscernible][Overlapping Conversation] [0:03:41.9] did they ever say, why are you going there versus somewhere else, no guidance counselor at all at the school?
- Marco: No, I mean I told my guidance counselor.
- RT: What about your experience here, who was the first person from here to contact you? Not specific names, but was it like...
- Marco: Well, I took the application and then I called to find out about the Accuplacer.
- RT: Okay
- Marco: After that I just registered.
- RT: Did you get like a letter saying that you had to take the Accuplacer, or you actually called?
- Marco: Yeah a letter.
- RT: Okay, so you got a letter and it said; you have to show up at this point, at that point, were you just like I better get ready for this? You were just like yeah, I'll be there?
-

Marco: Yeah

RT: Oh, alright. Okay

Marco: I also have a bunch of friends that go here, you know so, they told me, yeah, I have to take a placement test.

RT: Okay, what about friends that you had in the past; that went here, that took that test, did they say it was a joke or anything?

Marco: No, I didn't really know anybody.

RT: No, you didn't know anybody.

Marco: No.

RT: Okay

Marco: I know people that went here, but I never asked about the test.

RT: Right, were you aware of what would happen to you if you didn't pass the test?

Marco: No.

RT: You had no clue?

Marco: No, I still didn't think it was a joke; I didn't really not plan; on not passing it.

RT: Okay, so you thought it would be like a cake walk? What if you did know the consequences?

Marco: If I did?

RT: Yeah

Marco: Than I probably would have taken it a little more seriously.

RT: Okay, alright good. Alright, so now, say ****, do you feel that the say **** prepared for college?

Marco: Somewhat, I mean like I said before, you're always in the basic classes and now really putting everything into it so. You know, it's kind of my fault, but they tried doing their part.

RT: What else could they have done, because you know looking back now at Monday morning, quarter back, we're talking in the past now, but what do you think they could have done? If I could go back to say to **** right now, and tell them listen, you know if you just had a kid like Marco and you did this, it would be a little more motivating. What's something they could have done, anything you could think of?

Marco: Maybe, like explain more detail, like what really goes on in the whole college process. Because I was lost, you know, applying to college and stuff. Maybe if they would have like an assembly or something, like explaining it in detail.

RT: Okay, like what you have to do and stuff like that.

Marco: There was none of that, they had a like, colleges would come in like half hour sessions, you could choose like two a month, that you wanted to go to, but Rausch didn't go out to the state kind of community college. They just over basic stuff they don't really go over, maybe they do go over the placement test, but you they don't really go over like taking classes, and like that kind of stuff.

RT: Okay, so you get to sign up for two a month? When the college came in?

Marco: Yeah, allowed up to two.

RT: Okay

Marco: Out of like twenty a month.

RT: Really?

Marco: Maybe fifteen.

RT: So, they would set these up and say it's ***** or wherever and you had a sheet, and they would circuit through and would bring it up to the guys, interesting.

Marco: Like half of the teachers, they don't tell you about the sheet. So, if you see it in the back of the room you take one.

RT: Right Okay, so it wasn't really put out there, you know this is the thing, do you think that was because it's maybe you weren't into college, or do you think it was more the kids that really wanted to go to college that the guidance counselors talked to and stuff?

Marco: Yeah, I think so.

RT: So, you were kind of known as the kid that probably didn't want to go to college?

Marco: Yeah, or didn't take it seriously enough.

RT: Okay, right, Okay. Good, and if you went back now you would take it a little more seriously?

RT: Okay Good answer. Alright what were you taught yourself to do here now at Rausch community college, Okay, that you were never taught in high school and is now helping you in your classes?

Marco: What I was never taught? Or what I never did?

RT: That you don't remember being taught, but you never did because obviously if they taught you something you didn't do here, than obviously it's your mistake, but what's something that you maybe, say now, maybe if they would have taught me this in high school.

Marco: Better ways to keep like plan our schedule.

RT: Okay, like more study skills and stuff like that? You didn't think you learned that in **** that would help you here?

Marco: Yeah, I think so.

RT: Okay, so it would help you basically get a little bit more with your homework and stuff like that.

Marco: Yeah

RT: You didn't do your homework all the time in high school right?

Marco: No

RT: That did it for you; I think you said; like three to five days or something like that?

Marco: Yeah

RT: That helped you more, you think, in the high school?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, good. So where are we now, what are your future plans? Tell me what you think, where do you see yourself in five years from now?

Marco: Five years from now, well, after here, I want to either go to ***** or ***** , I don't know, I'm still looking into different schools and stuff.

RT: Okay

Marco: Then I want to go for industrial engineering.

RT: Okay, good. So you have a career planned, and where do you see yourself? In a firm or do you see yourself... What is your back up plan, do you have a backup plan?

Marco: Business, probably, for experience.

RT: Okay, what type of business?

Marco: Or, I don't know...

RT: General business.

Marco: My other back up plan would be to go to the police academy after this. Because I know a lot of cops in town and I'm on the first aide squad.

RT: Okay, so a lot of friends there, right, but you need at least an Associates right?

Marco: I know it used to be, like technically it is, but they usually want a Bachelors.

RT: So, would you think about going criminal justice then or?

Marco: I was thinking right now, probably that would be my major, but I was talking to a bunch of cops in town and none of them went for criminal justice, they all went for something else. Because the town where I live, they don't really require criminal justice, they just want a college degree to get in.

RT: So, do you think it would be better for you, to think of something that would help you think of going to college, for something that would help you after you got off the force? Maybe if you were in...

Marco: That's something too, also one week you work like three days and another week you work four days. Until those days are Saturday and Sunday, there's a lot of time between. That's where I'm going.

RT: Right, sure. Alright so you have some plans out there, that's real cool, okay, alright, now why did current course load that you're taking after the spring, Communications, right? Why did you choose those courses?

Marco: Online, I looked at the engineering signs, and which course you need, so I just went by that.

RT: Okay, so you weren't sure of the major you wanted?

Marco: No

RT: Said, these are the courses? Did you talk to a counselor, here, or...

Marco: No, I tried emailing one, but I didn't really get a straight answer, like I was having trouble, talking about saying my account was suspended so, I felt like I really didn't know about how to go about classes, but my cousin went here so I went and I talked to her and she would explain a little bit more to me, she showed me online.

RT: Okay, well obviously your account wasn't suspended if you registered.

Marco: No, it's square.

RT: Right, Okay

Marco: I don't really know how academic counseling works here. Thought I made an appointment and walk in, I didn't know my counselors.

RT: Right, so you know where the actual counseling center is?

Marco: No.

RT: Okay, you probably should find out where that is. Alright, so you just basically just went online and read what was there and took it that way, without talking to anyone, right?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, Okay, that's good, and you have now your English and your communications kind of go together, which is good. You know, so you have a pretty firm grip, you probably should talk to somebody in here, a counselor. Alright, so your whole process to pick your current course load was to go online, put in your pin number, or your student id number, look at what you need to take for your Associates degree which was in Engineering Science, and I take this yet, it fits in my schedule, I take this...

Marco: Yes

RT: Okay, Okay. What is something that you wish in high school, you wish you knew about college? Anything, what's something that when you were in high school, you knew about college, you came here be more prepared?

Marco: That if you, you know like step in anything like honors [Indiscernible] [0:11:22.6] actually, get a lot farther here and it probably takes a lot of your adjustment to start college.

RT: Okay, you know going to community college, there's nothing to look down upon, you know there are a lot of students now that come here for, well whatever reasons, there's a lot of good programs here, things like that. Do you think that when you were first thinking of colleges, was this always a choice for you, Rausch?

Marco: Yeah.

RT: Was it always in the back of your mind or...

Marco: Once again, my cousin, you know she graduated from **** and she went two years at Rausch and she is really smart, she could have got in to begin with, but yeah she was talking to me and always tell her, because when you graduate, you know your diploma comes from whatever school you went to.

RT: Right, good so you're just using this as a stepping stone right?

Marco: Uh-huh

RT: Okay, let's talk about your parents again, we talked about them in high school with your high school a little bit and maybe if they pushed you a little more at your homework and stuff like that, remember we talked about that?

Marco: Yeah

RT: What about the college then...how involved are they in your college studies?

Marco: Not really. No.

RT: Less or more than high school class? Even less, Okay, so they don't know what you're taking next semester?

Marco: No. I tell them my grades sometimes, but that's about it.

RT: Have you talked to them or have they asked you about how you're doing in the basic skills course.

Marco: No, I don't even think they know what it really is, basic skills...

RT: Did you ever sit down with them and explain why you're in that course? Do they ever ask you?

Marco: No.

RT: Okay, how about anybody? Did you ever explain to anybody why you're in that course? Oh, why are you in basic skills? I mean, like friends. You are so smart, you were so smart in high school, what are you doing in that course? If you could have blown off that test?

Marco: No, not really.

RT: Okay

Marco: I had a lot of friends that go here, but some involved in some basic skills, I don't really explain and all.

RT: Okay, so do they go to school with you?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Alright, the same classes?

Marco: Somewhat.

RT: Do you think they blew the test off like you did or are you guys actually missing something?

Marco: Some of them probably blew the test and some of them probably take it more seriously.

RT: Alright, Okay.

Marco: As you most know apply [indiscernible] [0:13:14.4]

RT: Okay [Laughter], that's something that you'll probably remember when you go to your next school right? Okay, I'm going to ask you a bunch of questions now about what you, if you can remember it's not too long ago, when you were in high school. Can you remember some of these things, Okay and it will be a yes or no answer and then if you can elaborate on it by giving me an example.

Marco: Alright.

RT: Okay, so like for example, do you remember doing essays or do you remember doing the writing, things they talked about summarizing, critiquing things, taking a magazine article read it and then critique it, stuff like that?

Marco: No, not at all.

RT: Okay, how about, did you ever make, like inferences or draw conclusions from reading something? You read something, you say oh, after you read this, or you write about this character by reading this I think this character is a bad or good character.

Marco: Yeah, I remember doing that.

RT: Okay, how about epic pieces, have you ever hear of an epic poem or something like...

Marco: Yeah, we did that and it was like Shakespeare.

RT: Okay, so now you were doing, Beowulf and Grendel?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Right Okay, how about Plots, do you remember going over Plots?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Sequences and stuff like that? Okay, you remember doing that. Alright now let me ask you this, when you were in high school did you, did you get any instruction as to how to like, answer, I'm sorry, how to do well on software, stuff like that, like did anybody ever program with you on a computer and show you how to use Microsoft Word and stuff like that?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, they've done that? How about like college applications and stuff like that did anybody help you with the college applications?

Marco: No, not really. They, other kids got them, but I never really... there was a presentation that I did go to at night. Yeah, I work and stuff so...

RT: Okay, how about editing yourself? Like correcting papers; like your own papers?

Marco: Yeah, not a lot, but we went over it.

RT: Okay, did you ever let anybody else read your papers while you were doing it? Like your friends or peers?

Marco: Maybe, once or twice.

RT: Okay, but you do remember doing that though?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, how about vocabulary pages, stuff like that is there a lot.

Marco: Yeah, senior year.

RT: Senior year, yeah, what do you remember doing?

Marco: Workshops.

RT: Workshops?

Marco: Work book, every week.

RT: Okay and you would learn a different chapter; learn vocabulary words, every couple of weeks, like that? Okay, how about hard words or like new words, like words that you didn't understand, that you would had question the teacher, did the teacher ever say; what's this word mean? Like what does that word mean? You know there are like hard words out there that...

Marco: Sometimes

RT: That's just something you wouldn't say every day. You read it and you're like oh, oh my God...

Marco: No, I never really questioned it.

RT: No, how about the teachers did the teacher, do you remember the teacher stopping at some point and saying, so is that what this word is?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, so you had that too, Okay good. Just say yes if you remember doing some of these things, novels, do you remember reading novels?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Short stories?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Horror stories?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, Science Fiction, like space, outer space stuff?

Marco: Yeah

RT: How about a Biography?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, Autobiography, somebody wrote something about themselves?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Poems, plays?

Marco: Yeah

RT: A lot of Poems? You did poems the most?

Marco: Poems and plays.

RT: Poems and plays the most, is that because, did you see that throughout Jr. and Sr. year?

Marco: It might have been because that was the most recent, like Sr. year we did a lot and Jr. Year we did a lot of poems.

RT: Okay

Marco: That's the most that comes to mind.

RT: Okay, what kind of poems did you do? Do you remember?

Marco: I don't know.

RT: Do you remember like any types of poems like Shakespeare verses A-B-C-A-A-A.

Marco: I think we went over all of them.

RT: Okay, so did you write your own poetry?

Marco: Once, yeah

RT: Okay, so you wrote a song or a rap? Or something like that? Do you remember?

Marco: No

RT: How about Shakespeare, you like Shakespeare right? How about Shakespeare sonnets, do you remember doing those? The way he wrote a poem, was sort of ride scheme A-B-A-B-C-D-C-D.

Marco: Yeah, I remember that.

RT: Okay, did you ever hear of a rhyming couplet at the end?

Marco: I don't remember, but...

RT: Yeah, it was a while ago so. How about authors and stuff like that? You talked a lot about authors, different authors, like did you talk when you had a story, did the teacher say, "alright this is John Smith who is your author, John Smith was born in ***** and he did this," - things like that?

Marco: I'd say two out of four teachers did that.

RT: Okay, how about the one Sr. year?

Marco: No, Sr. year, no not really.

RT: Okay

Marco: Actually no, yeah she -- all four of them kind of did it, I think like -- I don't know exactly which year, is it a freshman junior or sophomore junior, we did a lot more.

RT: Okay, so you remember those?

Marco: Yeah.

RT: That's good though, okay how about stuff like narrator, you know what a narrator is? Did you learn that, Okay, Illusion, you know what illusion is?

Marco: Yeah, freshman year.

RT: Okay, symbol?

Marco: Yeah.

RT: Irony?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, fore-shadowing, do you remember learning of some of that stuff?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, Okay, how about, different types of literature? Can you, can you, can you remember studying American Literature? Do you remember anything American Literature at all? You know what American Literature would be...Like Mark Twain, like Huckleberry Finn, stuff like that? – okay how about World Literature, you know from different countries that you remember?

Marco: No, not really.

RT: You remember doing them though? World Literature, like you do anything from India, something called Nectar in a Sieve - some of these - Siddhartha, you never heard of any of those?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, how about, you know what propaganda is?

Marco: Promoting something, some way.

RT: Good, Okay. So you did learn something like that?

Marco: Yeah

RT: How about anything like religious texts? Like, did you ever study world religions? Like did they teach you the difference between Hinduism and Buddhism, and Judaism and Christianity?

Marco: Not really in English, that was in History when I learned all that.

RT: In World History, Okay, good. How about different themes? Love, heroism, death, okay, you did a lot of that? Do you remember, some teachers have like a, a certain theme, you remember you Sr. teacher, did they do anything specific?

Marco: She did tragedy.

RT: Like all tragedies?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay

Marco: Oh, I'm trying to think.

RT: So like Shakespeare tragedies and stuff like that?

Marco: She didn't do Shakespeare, I forgot what kind she did but...she was crazy about the tragedies.

RT: Okay, so many tragedies, [Laughter] that sounds like a lot of fun. Okay, how about, we talked about different authors, but you don't remember any roles of the authors outside of America? Okay, British stuff with Shakespeare, we talked about. How about historical events in Literature, do you remember, did your teacher in English talk with you about anything happening historically? Like President Kennedy getting

shot, this is /// of the country and what the writing that came about after, stuff like that happened, how an event in society can change the whole type of writing and stuff like that, nothing like that?

Marco: No.

RT: Okay, anything from like economics stuff or social stuff anything with business writing? Did you have anything with business writing in it?

Marco: No, not really.

RT: Did you ever do like a resume, in English?

Marco: In computer class, never in English.

RT: In computer class, you did a resume, oh that's interesting. How about your class now, your 023-024, did you ever do a resume?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, how about political movements, anything, political, anything; Dr. Martin Luther King for example.

Marco: Yeah, we went over Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Yeah.

RT: Okay, anything else with a political movement, like..

Marco: [indiscernible] [0:20:58.1]

RT: Oh Okay, so you did some stuff on her too?

Marco: Yeah, yeah actually.

RT: Okay, Okay let's talk about visual stuff. Do you remember doing any types of charts or graphs or things like that for English? Like do you remember making a pyramid, the teacher; talking about you know plot in apex and turning point.

Marco: Yeah

RT: Do you remember any of this, the climax and all?

Marco: I don't know, for imagining actually climax or action or conclusion.

RT: Okay, do you remember going over the parts of writing, like introduction, thesis statement? Okay

Marco: Not, thesis, I know like introduction, body paragraph, conclusion, thesis I just learned this year.

RT: Okay, so you didn't learn thesis.

Marco: Thesis, I did one time, but it was in history class.

RT: Okay, so you're saying that in your Sr. year, you don't recall doing a thesis at all?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, but here you definitely do that, it's a major part of learning, Okay that's good. You probably spent a lot of time on it right?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, good, Okay. How about going over, I'm just guessing what you may have done this year, did your teacher show you any pictures, it's like a pictures worth a thousand words. You know like certain graphs and try to write like something off of a graph?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, do you remember doing that in high school? Can you give me an example?

Marco: Like a picture poem.

RT: Okay

Marco: We did those Jr. Year, that was part of preparing for high school, we did that a lot.

RT: Okay, so you did a prompt on a picture.

Marco: We did, I think two a week.

RT: Okay, how about a chart, do you remember seeing a chart, like a bar graph or pie graph and having to explain it?

Marco: No

RT: Nothing like that.

Marco: Maybe history class.

RT: Okay, how about journalism, like newspaper writing or stuff like that. Did you ever write in a newspaper, a foreigner's paper or a pretend newspaper, like an article?

Marco: Maybe once or twice.

RT: Did you write for the school newspaper at all?

Marco: No

RT: Are you into sports writing at all?

Marco: No, not really.

RT: No Okay, so you did some kind of journalism though?

Marco: Yeah, kind of world topic.

RT: Did you ever interview anybody, when you were in high school?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Can you give me an idea what that was?

Marco: I don't know the exact titles, but we had to interview people at home...

RT: Like on a specific topic? The teacher gave you a topic and then you interviewed them? Do you remember how that...?

Marco: That was like freshman year though.

RT: Sort of like what we're doing now kind of?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, and then would you write up after that, do you know what they were saying or did you just take some of the things they were saying?

Marco: I think it was more question and answer, yeah, it was question and answer and we wrote and discussed it and then we had to write an essay. After that, I don't remember what the topic was, it was a while ago.

RT: Okay, Okay how about grammar, anyone go over grammar in high school that you remember what types of grammar, nouns, verbs that kind of stuff, punctuation?

Marco: That was my first two years.

RT: Okay now what about last year, was it like confused in.

Marco: I think you kind of expect it, that you should know by now, we did go over, over college and stuff, a little more complex, not really like periods and ...

RT: Right, do you find what you did in Sr. year helps you now with your writing? In this class; 023.

Marco: I feel like I learned a lot more in this class.

RT: About the grammar and stuff like that?

Marco: It may just be because I didn't pay attention before.

RT: Right, do you remember when you're in this class now and the teacher says commas go here.

Marco: Yeah, I remember that.

RT: Okay, so it's definitely there then. So, let me list off a couple of things and tell me if you remember your teacher talking about this at some point Okay. Nouns?

Marco: Senior year

RT: Senior year

Marco: Yeah.

RT: Senior year if you recall, maybe for some part though. Nouns, pronouns...

Marco: Yeah

RT: Verbs, adverbs, conjunctions...

Marco: Yeah

RT: Prepositions?

Marco: No

RT: No, prepositions? How about adjectives and interjections?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, how about subject verb agreement and stuff like that? Like singular, subject is singular, do you remember doing that your last year? Would you say **you did that last year**?

Marco: No, I don't think I did it last year, Jr. year, I know we did it.

RT: Okay, you did it preparing for the test, would you say that after the test was over you guys stopped doing a lot of those little, those things?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay and I guess after that it was just like alright you past the test, kind of thing?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, gotcha that's interesting, how about adverb clauses, adjective clauses?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, alright almost there; how about commas we talked about, you know an ellipse is, do you know what that is?

Marco: Like two commas, something, like that.

RT: Colons, hyphens, semi-colons?

Marco: This year.

RT: So you're learning all that now, but never did that before? Well you mentioned it before, but you're really getting into it now?

Marco: Why do you think you're getting into it more now, because you think your more mature now or you think...?

Marco: I think that's a big part of it, and you need to know now, so...

RT: Right, Okay so now got kind of in you to see a little more vision?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Right, Okay the teachers now stress how important this is in writing to you?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, alright good. How about fragments and stuff like that, how about run-ons?

Marco: Yeah

RT: How do you think you do, do you think you do well...

Marco: I know [indiscernible] [0:26.22.2]

RT: How about awkward sentences, when you think awkward does it make any sense?

Marco: Somewhat, I didn't learn much about it.

RT: Did, Sr. year. Did you talk about - you probably talk about a lot now, going off on a tangent. Meaning, like especially talking about like this, when you talk about...

Marco: Not seeing it, at all.

RT: Now you are.

Marco: Yeah

RT: You remember talking about that, at all with your writing?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, capitalization? Stuff like that, you remember doing that?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, So did you use a dictionary your Sr. year at all, do you remember opening up a dictionary.

Marco: Yeah

RT: In class?

Marco: Yeah, mostly for definitions, like when we would do Vocabulary and stuff.

RT: So you would have to find the word?

Marco: Yeah

RT: So you would do something, they would give you a list of words, you would open up a dictionary...

Marco: There were twenty words in it, there was complete sentence part, matching definitions, telling sentences apart and then like, there would be like a little story and you've got to circle the meaning of the word in the story.

RT: Circle the meaning? Okay, so if the word was in the story, you would then have to circle...

Marco: Yeah circle the meaning of the word, circle the, circle the synonym for the word.

RT: Oh, Okay, Okay so it would be a different word in the story, but it's the same and you would just circle it.

Marco: Yeah, circle which one of the vocabulary words that it is.

RT: I'm very interested in this picture [indiscernible] [0:27:35.8] So you would get a list of words and then, is it during class?

Marco: Yeah

RT: You would...

Marco: It would be homework, but if you get it done in class...

RT: Okay, so there's ten minutes left in class, you don't have to do what teacher says, you just start your homework?

Marco: Yeah

RT: So the teacher already gave you a list of words or was it out of the book?

Marco: No, just the words.

RT: Okay

Marco: In previous years it was out of the book, but my Sr. year it was a list.

RT: Okay, and did that list have to do with, was it based on SATs, was it based on the reading?

Marco: There was sometimes where it would be, before we read a story.

RT: Okay

Marco: There was, other times in Sr. year, we actually - she did that a lot, when we read a story before we had the vocabulary words and stuff.

RT: Okay

Marco: Or sometimes we would have to circle words we don't know and then get the definitions.

RT: Okay, and then you would go into the closet and have a dictionary or no dictionary?

Marco: No, she had them in the back of the room.

RT: Okay, so she had a bunch of dictionaries in the back of the room, like a bunch of them or one big one, like everybody shares one?

Marco: No, a whole bunch of them.

RT: You take a dictionary and basically find the definition and write the definition out on a piece of paper?

Marco: Yeah

RT: The next day, you would hand them in?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Would you go over the definitions with the teacher?

Marco: Sr. year, no not really.

RT: For the right sentence for them? Okay so you write sentence, synonym after that?

Marco: That wasn't really my Sr. year, Sr. year, sometimes she would just write words on the board and we would have to write the words down and if we finish in class or want to go home and write the definition and think of a sentence for the word and it had to be in by then, but a lot more of the time, she would, before we would read stories, she would be like, she would be like this word on this paragraph and she would just keep going through the whole story and we would do that like a day before we would read the story and then we would start with the story. We would write the definition in a sentence.

RT: Okay

Marco: Sometimes she would go over it, but it wasn't like lot often.

RT: Not often, did you finish that all the time?

Marco: Yeah, [indiscernible][Overlapping Conversation] [0:29:34.6]

RT: Okay, good. What about tough words, like commonly confused words; like affect and effect, did you ever go over that stuff? Than and then?

Marco: Sort of, not in Sr. year, no.

RT: Okay, so that was like younger stuff, so again, in your school, is it expected that you knew all of this stuff?

Marco: Yeah

RT: By the time you were a Sr. Okay, but you do remember doing that though?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, you know how to spell check and grammar check, using Microsoft word right? Did anybody teach you that, or you just kind of learned it?

Marco: Nobody else would.

RT: Alright, did you do any pre-writing, Sr. year, you know how to do pre-writing now, you take five minutes and you brain storm. You remember doing that?

Marco: Jr. Year, I do. Sr. year, some class we did a little pre-writing. She would just tell us to write it, she wouldn't actually check pre-writing though.

RT: Now it's like, they probably tell you to do it all the time.

Marco: Yeah

RT: So now you're doing pre-writing a lot more now, but the [indiscernible] sucks, you know how to do it, you do it. Did you have pre-writer?

Marco: Senior year [indiscernible][Overlapping Conversation] [0:30:37.6]

RT: essays on this five, ten minutes get your thoughts together, you just start writing. What you learned now about pre-writing. [Indiscernible][Overlapping Conversation] [0:30:51.4]

RT: So, if you were to go back to high school, knowing what you know, that would be something you take pretty seriously, right?

Marco: It's pretty important.

RT: You seem to remember that, how about outlining, none of that stuff either? Did you outline? A-1

Marco: For essays, yeah.

RT: In high school you did?

Marco: I remember doing that sometimes.

RT: As pre-writing or...

Marco: I didn't do it as pre-writing; I don't know if she actually wants us to do it as pre-writing.

RT: You're saying as an essay, you do outlining.

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, I gotcha, alright...

Marco: Actually you know what, that was history too, that wasn't really English.

RT: You never did outlines?

Marco: I think we went over it and we did it a few times, but it wasn't really...

RT: It sounds like history did...

Marco: History did a lot, yeah.

RT: Okay, good. How about different types of sentences; compound, complex...

Marco: Yeah

RT: You remember all of that? Skip through that. Alright, how about transitions, did your teacher ever talk about transitions at all.

Marco: No..

RT: Going from one context to the next, like different things, like how you move from one topic to the next in the paragraphs?

Marco: Yeah I know what you're talking about.

RT: Okay, so nobody really went over that with you?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, do think you have a, that you were given the opportunity your Sr. year to use like higher vocabulary? Words that meant, like harder words, like if you took a word and it was and was an easy word and you had a synonym that was a harder word, would you use that, instead of, or would you take the easy way out?

Marco: No, I would use the harder word.

RT: You would choose the harder word, would, did your teacher encourage you to do that?

Marco: No, not really, no.

RT: Okay, Okay so you're saying that Sr. year then, you really didn't know the difference between a topic and a thesis, like you really didn't know...

Marco: No

RT: No, right? Your topic was your thesis?

Marco: Yeah

RT: So you didn't really know that until this year?

Marco: On the introduction, we were just told, apply your best essays, you know.

RT: Right.

Marco: You know when we start it off, we usually we would get a persuasive for instance. Start off, state whether you believe it or not, then write it out like a thesis you know.

RT: Okay

Marco: Then give her three reasons and start there.

RT: Okay, so you don't remember really talking about thesis per say until this year?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Oh, that's interesting, Okay. So you have to learn about it. Did anybody every talk to you Sr. year about writing to your audience, like knowing who you're writing to?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Can you give me an idea, what you learned about?

Marco: Mostly persuasive essays, you know, some of them would even be letter to the board of education.

RT: Right Okay

Marco: You know, seeing who, if it's appealing to them you know?

RT: Right, like writing to kids, young kids, you're going to write like a story to kids in second grade verses the board of education, would be a different way of writing right? Okay, so do you remember doing that Sr. year?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Alright you've talked about persuasive essays, so you wrote persuasive essays, correct? Okay, one of the types of essays, you remember doing academic essays or personal memos, you know writing a memo. Did they ever teach you how to write a memo?

Marco: No

RT: Did they get you ready for working at all, like writing a resume, you said; no, you did that in computer class. You didn't learn how to write a memo?

Marco: No

RT: How about a letter to your boss?

Marco: We wrote letters in general.

RT: Just like the actual format on letters, that's it? Okay, but nobody ever told you about different correspondence and how you should write the things in there appropriately in there like that, Okay. Alright, let's get back to editing real quick, basic editing, you did that, with errors, you remember doing that, you ever edit anybody else's stuff?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Switch papers? They do that now?

Marco: Yeah, now they do it a lot.

RT: So you benefit from seeing other people's mistakes, you remember Sr. year, did you benefit from other people's mistakes?

Marco: Not really and other people see your mistakes.

RT: Well, Okay. So did you do a research, did you do a research paper, in high school?

Marco: I think we did, one I think sophomore year, it was like one page.

RT: Okay, what time do you have class?

Marco: 6:20, actually, I might be a little late.

RT: You have class at 6:20?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, just a couple more questions.

Marco: No, it's fine.

RT: No, that's Okay, so do you remember using MLA format?

Marco: Yeah

RT: You do? Okay do you know the difference between primary and secondary sources?

Marco: No

RT: Okay, do you know what plagiarism is?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Do you know how to avoid plagiarism?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, Okay. Let's see, trying to snoop around here. Alright, what about citations and stuff like that? Did you know how to do citations Sr. year?

Marco: Yeah, where it's cited, yeah.

RT: Okay so you learned how to do that, that's going to help you now too. What about presenting text for your presentation? Like you know how to format it, you know double spacing; you know how to do the margins.

Marco: Yes

RT: Stuff like that? Okay, do you ever argue with anybody, like in a debate type of thing?

Marco: Yeah, but not English.

RT: Not English though?

Marco: No

RT: You never did like a one to one, or did you ever do like a play? Back and forth, with somebody in your English class.

Marco: Oh, you mean like reading?

RT: Yeah, you're reading, your one part and they're the other part, have you ever did that?

Marco: Yeah

RT: Okay, how about you ever read something and see how an audience responds to what you're reading and then adapt, you know they're not laughing at you. Your reading, they call it public speaking, that kind of thing, you did that Sr. year too?

Marco: No, not really.

RT: Okay

Marco: Maybe once or twice.

RT: Alright, alright. So what's the one thing that stands out in your Sr. year English class? Is there something that that teacher drilled into your head to do, to continue to do, you've got to do this, you've got to do that, I mean most teachers; I taught English for awhile, there's always one thing that we say to kids to remember. Or every week you did the same thing. What was something that was so monotonous that you were like here we go again?

Marco: The Vocab. was, you mean like writing wise?

RT: Yeah, something, like that.

Marco: I don't know, there wasn't really... like we would read tragedies and tragic, we would watch plays or movies.

RT: Great, so we've spoken twice now, right? Okay, pretty in depth conversations, what do you think, summing it all up, what do you think the main reason is, what's your statement as to why you're here, in this class right now?

Marco: Because I didn't put all of my effort into wanting to participate Sr. year.

RT: If you could go back and have two or three different things that could happen to you, where somebody or something could have helped you kind of wake up a little bit and not slack as much, even on the placement test. What do you think or who do you think could have helped you?

Marco: My guys, I could seek their help.

RT: Okay

Marco: Other family, older and other teachers, there's a lot of helpful teachers in high school in Sr. year.

RT: So do think they didn't go to you or you didn't go to them or... but they were definitely there if you needed them.

Marco: Absolutely.

RT: Okay, alright do you have any questions for me at all, or anything like that?

Marco: No

RT: That's it, alright thanks a lot.

Marco: Alright, no problem.

RT: Good to meet you.

Marco: Thank you.

[End of Audio][0:38:55]

Appendix M – Interview - Molly

RT: OK. So through with the cold, leave it at that, right? All right? OK. Let me show this real quick. Show you this chart right here, OK. We have three different areas. One has A A plus average in English courses, passed the test honors course, the other has little lower average passed the HSPA, you think you fit into any of the categories there?

Molly: The middle one.

RT: That's the middle one? OK. Did you pass HSPA [Phonetic] [0:00:28]?

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. Good. All right. OK. Any question I asked you that you're not comfortable with, You don't have to answer. I appreciate your coming, but this should be painless.

Molly: OK.

RT: Which school did you attend with high school?

Molly: **** High School?

RT: ****, OK. That's.

Molly: Right.

RT: OK. Can you tell me about your family brothers sisters, parents?

Molly: What do you want to know about them?

RT: You, whatever, I want to know what your family's made up of, you know, how many siblings you may have, but also college, did anyone go to college stuff like that?

Molly: Well, I live with my parents and I my brothers kind of live there.

RT: OK.

Molly: They're both like high school dropouts and haven't been to college.

RT: OK.

Molly: So it's kinda like I'm the only one left.

RT: OK. They're older than you?

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK.

Molly: We're all four years apart.

RT: OK.

Molly: So it's like all hope for me.

RT: OK. How were your parents? Did they go to college?

Molly: Well, they we're born in a different country. When they came here, you know, they started working.

RT: Sure. OK. So would you say a lot of pressure on you?

Molly: Definitely.

RT: Really?

Molly: Yes.

RT: That's interesting. So let's talk about the pressure for a second? So like did you go to class today? Do they ask questions like that?

Molly: Constant, constant.

RT: Really?

Molly: It's horrible. It's like the ridicule is so badly. I've been up like 24/7 and it's like, I might, like I make mistakes and I've made a lot of mistakes, you know, but I feel like I get over-riddin'...

RT: OK.

Molly: Because I feel like, since my brothers have done so much bad.

RT: OK.

Molly: I mean, any little thing I do. It's like exaggerated./////.

RT: OK. That's interesting. OK. Do your brothers get on you too for doing?

Molly: We're definitely trying like teach me to not follow in their footsteps, but- mean, if you're not like someone that I'll look up to you. I'm not going to listen to you, you know, so I don't listen to them at all. I barely speak to them.

RT: OK, all right. Especially, when it comes to educational behavior.

Molly: [Inaudible] [0:02:39] you know.

RT: OK. All right. You understand your parents had to do what they had to do when they come over here, but your brothers had the opportunity?

Molly: Yes, I mean.

RT: OK.

Molly: There's no reason.

RT: Right. OK. That would be good for you. I mean, it seems like you did the right thing. Why did you choose to Rausch?

Molly: Well, I just came to Rausch ... It's like a stepping stone. For the moments that I had in summer.

RT: OK

Molly: And I've been looking to go to my dream school in the fall.

RT: Which is?

Molly: *****

RT: OK. Good for you. Wow. So you're going to do one year here?

Molly: Yes.

RT: And then transfer. Are you already accepted there?

Molly: No, I have got [Inaudible] [0:03:08] in January, but I know in December.

RT: OK, good for you. OK. What do you want to study there?

Molly: I'm going to be a teacher.

RT: OK, good. So you're going to be in.....

Molly: English.

RT: An English teacher? Even better. So you want to do secondary or

Molly: I want to be with high school.

RT: High school, good for you. This is right up your alley then ... all these questions. That's good. OK. So you're, you, did your parents graduate high school?

Molly: No, uh my dad did, I don't know if my mom did.

RT: OK. So you're mother just worked or was a homemaker?

Molly: Yes.

RT: To take care of you guys? OK, good. All right, the questions I'm asking you are basically geared towards English, not that I don't want to know about your Math and Science, but this is more for where we are with your basic skills class. So, when you left your senior year in ****, OK, if you either seen did you think you were prepared to come here at Rausch?

Molly: I mean I didn't even think of coming here.

RT: OK.

Molly: But, yes, I kinda got a 90 final grade.

RT: OK.

Molly: In my English class, so then.

RT: So you're definitely academically ready?

Molly: With English? Yes, English has been always my favorite.

RT: OK. What about maturity? Do you think you're mature enough for college?

Molly: Yes.

RT: You're ready? Ok, good. That's good. What happened with the testing, what do you think?

Molly: Honestly, like I didn't even know I was going to take it that day.

RT: Really?

Molly: But I didn't think I did that.

RT: OK.

Molly: I'm really confident in English, I mean, that's why I wanted to be an English teacher.

RT: Right.

Molly: So when I found out that I was on EBS, I was just like.

RT: Right.

Molly: Are you serious?

RT: OK.

Molly: Like I couldn't believe it.

RT: Did your professor let you take the opt-out?

Molly: No.

RT: Alright.....

Molly: I was just like really, really surprised.

RT: So you're surprised that you did not pass?

Molly: Absolutely.

RT: Did any //, you weren't aware the test was that day?

Molly: No, like I came in 'coz I registered like really late 20 to 4. So they were like, you have to do everything today.

RT: You think that, maybe that's the reason why?

Molly: Maybe if not, yes.

RT: English is...

Molly: But, English is like completely was a shock to me.

RT: Really? OK. Now, that you're here for about four or five weeks now, do you see the mistakes that you made on that test or is it like?

Molly: I think punctuation.

RT: All right.

Molly: But nothing major. I don't feel like I've learned anything that I haven't heard before.

RT: That's interesting. Alright, so you we're a
good student in high school?

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. English, was right?

Molly: English [Inaudible] [0:05:32]

RT: What about your overall GPA? What do you think that was?

Molly: I don't even.

RT: No.

Molly: Remember.

RT: So you say you're a B student.

Molly: Yes.

RT: With a 3.0, right?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Where you in honors classes?

Molly: Yes, with English. Yes.

RT: You were English honors. Ok. Were they, is that senior year?

Molly: Yes, like most years.

RT: Really? It's just and what was it called, regular English honors?

Molly: Yes, it was all English honors.

RT: OK. How hard is it in **** to get into an honor's class?

Molly: Not that hard. Well, I don't know.

RT: all right. Did you remember what the pre-requisite was generally 90s or something like that?

Molly: Well, you have to, like I got ... the teacher has to like...

RT: Recommend you?

Molly: Yes. That kind of thing and I've always been good in English.

RT: OK.

Molly: So, it was really.

RT: So you had English honors or you just had English?

Molly: Must have years.

RT: Really? OK. Did you remember what your class rank was?

Molly: No.

RT: No?

Molly: I don't know.

RT: [Indiscernible] [0:06:24] 300.

Molly: Oh, my God. Really the craziest.

RT: [Indiscernible] [0:06:29]. If you had your class in front of you, would you say you're on the upper part of your class or the...

Molly: I'm not that big on all that.

RT: OK. All right. So you're saying that definitely your favorite subject or your best subject was English? What's your worst subject?

Molly: Math.

RT: Math, OK. It's common. Put some initial in there. OK. So what's high school like for you then? Like, what were you like? You seem very outgoing....friends, right?

Molly: Yes, I play sports. I played lacrosse.

RT: Really?

Molly: Yes. Freshmen year I went to ***** [Inaudible] [0:07:10].

RT: OK.

Molly: and I didn't like that school at all.

RT: OK.

Molly: So, I came to ***** and [Indiscernible] [0:07:18] and barely went to class.

RT: OK.

Molly: But then I got my act together during junior year.

RT: OK. So junior year I really kind of turned it on.

Molly: Yes.

RT: What made you do that?

Molly: Well, I didn't want to be like a super senior. That's embarrassing, you know.

RT: All right.

Molly: I didn't want to be another one added to the list for my parents.

RT: Right. OK. That's interesting. Ok. If we go back to your language art classes, this is your passion now on English. What did you remember in high school, do you remember doing a picture prompt, persuasive essays?

Molly: Yes, we did.....

RT: Who do you think you remember?what sticks out..... I want to see something that stuck with you that now //////////////persuasive essays.

Molly: Yes.

RT: Right. So you remember, you were like doing this in senior year. I'm trying to give you a relationship between what you did already and what you're doing now?

Molly: I don't feel there's a big difference.

RT: OK, but yea.

Molly: I got /////// in high school, you read a lot of books, you know. You do a lot of papers on books. I don't know if we're going to do that.

RT: Right.

Molly: In this class or maybe read a book.

RT: Right.

Molly: But the year was a lot of writing, teaching us how to write which is obviously what we're doing, I think now is more concentrated.

RT: OK. Did you remember doing MLA format for senior year

Molly: Yes.

RT: So you did that. How about writing folders you have writing folders?

Molly: Yes.

RT: You did?

Molly: In Junior, we had writing folder.

RT: What was that? Did you look at it?

Molly: Yes. My teacher showed it to me but she would keep it.

RT: OK.

Molly: Like, you know, every piece of writing that you ever did.

RT: How about your senior teacher? Did you actually sit down with...is it a he or she?

Molly: It's a she.

RT: You sit down with her and go over all your mistakes on paper.

Molly: I think we had a really close relationship.

RT: OK.

Molly: I mean, we spoke a lot about my writing and I don't know.

RT: What kind of writing do you think you are best at?

Molly: I want to be a writer too, but I don't know, fiction.

RT: Fiction? Are you going to write poetry and stuff?

Molly: No.

RT: No? OK, good. Alright. So you had writing folders, MLA. Did you do a senior thesis or research paper?

Molly: Yes, I did.

RT: You did. Do you remember what it was on?

Molly: Barrack Obama.

RT: Really? OK. How did you do on that?

Molly: I.

RT: Right.

Molly: It was really easy.

RT: OK, good. So what about, what do you remember as a research paper? Did you do anything like, you basically just pulled...

Molly: I read letters for my father, that book.

RT: OK.

Molly: Yes, so I wrote on that

RT: OK.

Molly: how I felt about the book.

RT: OK. Excellent. OK. Back in high school, how often did you meet your guidance counselors regarding that you know what your dreams are, what you want to do?

Molly: Guidance counselors in schools, in high schools don't help.

RT: Ok.

Molly: Don't help. They really don't.

RT: OK.

Molly: I don't think I've ever had a guidance counselor that's actually helped me like guiding me.

RT: OK. You're talking academically or [Indiscernible][0:10:19] or whatever?

Molly: In general.

RT: Right. Were you called down to Guidance at all?

Molly: I mean, yes. When...

RT: Right.

Molly: When, you know, like you're not passing this class, you need this percentile.

RT: Right.

Molly: Yes.

RT: What did they talk to you about? Like, you know, your writing or anything like that?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Or no, like...

Molly: Definitely not. Guidance counselors at **** High School, it's such an overpopulated school...

RT: Yes.

Molly: that the chance for you to actually speak to your counselor is because there's something wrong, you know?

RT: Right.

Molly: That's the only reason.

RT: Got you. OK. So, it's more reactive than pro-active.

Molly: Yes.

RT: Right. OK.

Molly: It's negative.

RT: Yes. OK. So, if you felt that you're called down, there's something going on.

Molly: You know for a second.

RT: Right. OK. Do you have any friends that always bother the guidance counselor, "I need help. I need help." or were you that type of person?

Molly: No. I like... if I feel like someone's not going to help me, why would I go to them?

RT: Right. Well, how'd you find out about this college [Indiscernible][0:11:11]?

Molly: My sister.

RT: Oh, your sister.

Molly: Well, my cousin.

RT: OK. Your sister. She goes here? [Indiscernible][0:11:16]

Molly: Well, she used to go here last year. She transferred to a technical school now.

RT: OK,

Molly: Yes.

RT: So, you're trying to say something about Rausch [Phonetic][0:11:22]?

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. How did you find out about the college you want to go to next year?

Molly: Oh.

RT: Yes.

Molly: Well there was a college fair.

RT: Oh, OK. Did

Rausch [Phonetic][0:11:29]?

Molly: No.

RT: Oh.

Molly: Like **** [Phonetic][0:11:31] high school had.

RT: Oh, OK. Oh, I'm sorry. So you knew about that school in **** [Phonetic][0:11:31]?

Molly: Like I've known about the school for awhile.

RT: OK. So you figured you do have... you're here... get some [Indiscernible][0:11:42]

Molly: [Indiscernible][0:11:42] I went to open houses, by the way.

RT: Nice. OK.

Molly: It's amazing.

RT: Yes. Pretty excited?

Molly: Very excited.

RT: Is it expensive?

Molly: ///// [Phonetic][0:11:49].

RT: Nice.

Molly: Real [Indiscernible][0:11:52].

RT: Right. Does that concern you at all?

Molly: Of course.

RT: Yes.

Molly: But, I mean if you really want to do something, I don't think money should be a factor.

RT: Absolutely right. That's the best answer you've given so far. You're right. Al right. You remember passing the HSPA [Phonetic][0:12:05]?

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. Good. What about SATs?

Molly: I didn't take my SATs.

RT: You didn't take SATs. Do you have to for this college or because you're...

Molly: For ****, you have to take them so I'm going to take them.

RT: OK. So, you're [Indiscernible][0:12:14].

Molly: Yes.

RT: Do you think high school helped you prepare for the HSPA [Phonetic][0:12:18]?

Molly: I mean if you take an SAT course, I mean, that will help you but I don't think high school in general...

RT: OK.

Molly: takes [Indiscernible][0:12:28] the SATs.

RT: OK. So, how are you going to prepare for you SATs?

Molly: Well, I bought an SAT book.

RT: OK.

Molly: So...

RT: OK. How about the HSPA [Phonetic][0:12:40]? Did you think your... did you guys do any prep for [Indiscernible][0:12:43]?

Molly: Yes. Like a month before, they're like... by the way, this is what it's going to be on the HSPA.

RT: All right. So, you [Indiscernible][0:12:48]

Molly: No.

RT: OK. That's interesting, too. [Indiscernible][0:12:54] your... you said you did... you got a 90 on your exam, your English exams [Indiscernible][0:12:58]?

Molly: My final... that was my final grade.

RT: OK. So, what you said, it's probably all your exam grades in English [Indiscernible][0:13:03]?

Molly: English, yes.

RT: OK. So, English is definitely your strongest subject then. And your [Indiscernible][0:13:10] are average you're saying...

Molly: Yes.

RT: But definitely above average or honors in...

Molly: In English, yes.

RT: OK. All right. OK. Let's talk about homework. Did you complete your homework?

Molly: When?

RT: Whenever.

Molly: Today?

RT: No, not today. No, from high school... from high school. If you have 5 homework assignments a week, how many would you do?

Molly: I mean, they don't really give me that much homework.

RT: Yes.

Molly: But...

RT: Or trying to gauge what type of person you were in high school. If they give you 5, would you do 5?

Molly: No, [Indiscernible][0:13:39]

RT: You wouldn't.

Molly: No.

RT: [Indiscernible][0:13:41], right?

Molly: Yes.

RT: So you do 3 out of 5.

Molly: Yes.

RT: Your parents... well, not your brothers. Your parents, they push you with your homework?

Molly: No.

RT: In high school?

Molly: [Indiscernible][0:13:52] Dad's like that but, you know, he'll be like, "Oh, are you keeping up with your grades?"

RT: OK.

Molly: Like they would... they would want to do and they would come in to talk to my teachers and stuff.

RT: They would.

Molly: They were really into it.

RT: Really? Your parents were involved.

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. They spoke English?

Molly: Yes. They speak English.

RT: They do. They do. OK.

Molly: Yes.

RT: That's your second language.

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. So they went into the school...

Molly: Yes.

RT: All right. Good. So they got on you when you...

Molly: Yes.

RT: Oh, OK. So that's good. OK. Why do you think you wouldn't do the 5 out of 5 homework?

Molly: I don't know. Like, I get distracted easily, very easily. So...

RT: How did you do your homework? Did you do it with the iPod on [Phonetic][0:14:30] or with the phone?

Molly: No, I don't do that.

RT: OK. Do you do it...

Molly: If I do decide to use it, I would just...

RT: You could do like your own...

Molly: Yes, or I do it like beforehand and that's all good.

RT: OK. Yes. All right. [Indiscernible][0:14:42]

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. How about grammar? You know, you're talking about punctuations and stuff like that.

Molly: Yes.

RT: You know, there's 2 different ways that grammar's done in high schools. One is that, you know, [Indiscernible][0:14:55] every Friday, and the other one is like it's infused like in the lesson. Like if you read a story, they talk about the vocabulary or something like that. Which did you do?

Molly: I mean, like I said, they didn't concentrate that much on grammar unless you were taking a writing class. I took a writing class.

RT: OK.

Molly: And, you know, of course, they concentrate on that until you... Oh, here it goes here. [Indiscernible][0:15:14] goes there.

RT: Right.

Molly: But here, it's like she's actually showing you.

RT: Right.

Molly: This is exactly where everything goes, you know.

RT: Right. So, in high school, in 12th grade, there were some students that they would take a writing class?

Molly: No.

RT: OK. And all students... some of those students are in Rausch [Phonetic][0:15:31]?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Or, we say, [Indiscernible][0:15:34] or...

Molly: I mean, if you're going to take a writing class, I mean, maybe like... because you... like I took a writing class because, you know, I was above average in English so I just took a writing class.

RT: OK. So, you'd say that the grammar was a thing like what you were learning.

Molly: Yes.

RT: [Indiscernible][0:15:48] different than here now.

Molly: Yes.

RT: Right. OK. We have... how long did your parents [Indiscernible][0:15:55] obviously? Did they get on you for your Math, too?

Molly: Well, Mom knows I have difficulty with Math.

RT: OK.

Molly: She always helps me like to just keep trying that... to get help.

RT: Right. And even that, you focused more on English because that's your strong point.

Molly: Yes.

RT: All right. You know, you mentioned the question is basically regarding clubs [Indiscernible][0:16:12] and stuff like that. You mentioned Lacrosse [Phonetic][0:16:15].

Molly: Yes.

RT: How about any clubs like debate or something like that?

Molly: I always wanted like... I'm really into political science and I worked on Obama's campaign.

RT: You did. OK.

Molly: I did.

RT: OK. How was that?

Molly: It was... I mean, I love him.

RT: Did you write anything for the campaign?

Molly: No, not really. Like I just made calls, you know.

RT: Oh, OK.

Molly: Lobbyin'.

RT: Really? Good for the.....did he give you a letter thanking you?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Nice. OK. So you did that. That must have taken up a lot of that year already.

Molly: I was really interested in it like, you know, I'm really into politics.

RT: That's great. OK. So no debate team then, huh?

Molly: No.

RT: You may want to think about it. Yes.

Molly: I really didn't get into clubs in high school. I was like...

RT: OK. You played Lacrosse [Phonetic][0:16:55].

Molly: Yes.

RT: What did you do sport-wise, I mean off season for Lacrosse [Phonetic][0:16:55]? Did you work out with the team or...

Molly: Like, my dad played baseball [Phonetic][0:17:02] so...

RT: Right.

Molly: So, and he really likes sports [Indiscernible][0:17:04] so he's always working out.

RT: All right. Cool. OK. That's good. You miss Lacrosse [Phonetic][0:17:08]?

Molly: Of course.

RT: Yes. Do you think about going back and coaching?

Molly: I don't really want to coach. I just really want to play. I don't know about coaching.

RT: Right.

Molly: I think I'd missed it too much watching these kids play everyday.

RT: Right. OK. Well, how long will you... how long did you play Lacrosse [Phonetic][0:17:22] for?

Molly: For like 4 years.

RT: OK. Did you play before that?

Molly: Well, I managed the boys' team like freshman and sophomore year.

RT: OK.

Molly: And then like I really liked it so I was like, "Why not?" and then I don't know [Indiscernible][0:17:34].

RT: So, you were a manager of the team as well.

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. Good. How about world literature, historical events and literature, stuff like that? What do you know about literature from high school?

Molly: Yes.

RT: I mean, you seem to be really into it. So, what do you remember studying? Do you remember studying anything... the [Indiscernible][0:17:54] of Shakespeare? You got to remember some of that, right?

Molly: Yes, but that was more earlier years. I feel like during the junior year, it was like American Literature.

RT: OK.

Molly: And like, all the books that they gave you weren't really interesting so it's only like... you've been like, "Oh, can't wait to go home and [Indiscernible][0:18:09]".

RT: OK. Just do any summary reading?

Molly: No.

RT: Like that made you manage to write summary readings?

Molly: Yes. I was like [Indiscernible][0:18:17].

RT: OK.

Molly: I can't remember. Bad books.

RT: Yes.

Molly: Yes. Everything you want to go home like...

RT: All right. So, what stands out as good from your senior year? Like, what stands out as good?

Molly: [Indiscernible][0:18:31]

RT: Well, I mean, like book-wise or literature-wise or writing-wise. Did you have a writing assignment that you remember that was great?

Molly: Well, yes. My Obama...

RT: Obama thing, right? OK. So that research paper was good.

Molly: Yes. Because it was something I was interested in.

RT: You got to pick, right? Did you do that in MLA [Phonetic][0:18:48] format?

Molly: Yes.

RT: You did. OK. How were you prepared for that? So, did they train you for that or is that what you wanted on your own?

Molly: Well, I took my writing class. It was...

RT: So, the writing class [Indiscernible][0:18:58]. OK, good. All right. Why did you choose here? You said your sister...

Molly: Well, my cousin... she used to come here.

RT: OK.

Molly: So, I didn't want to go to a ****.

RT: Right. OK.

Molly: That's way too close to...

RT: Right.

Molly: I don't know. I just came here and I heard it's a really good school like...

RT: Yes.

Molly: They're trying to convert it into a university or something.

RT: Yes.

Molly: So...

RT: If it did, would you stay here?

Molly: No.

RT: You really want to go?

Molly: No, I don't like New Jersey at all. So...

RT: You want to live in the city?

Molly: Yes.

RT: That's what you want to do. OK. Do you think high school prepared you for here?

Molly: I guess... I think my certain teachers prepared me. I don't want to say high school in general here.

RT: OK. So certain teachers really got the...

Molly: Yes.

RT: OK. I have one last question for you. If you had to go back and you could add 1 thing to what you've learned there help you at this point right now, what would it be?

Molly: I guess like how to balance a social life with an academic life.

RT: OK.

Molly: I think the only most important thing [Indiscernible][0:20:02] teach in high school.

RT: OK.

Molly: Because, in high school, they're on top of you 24/7. Listen, they call you down. If you're not doing good in this class, you're going to fail.

RT: Right.

Molly: In college, you don't know where you're at unless you know yourself.

RT: Right.

Molly: And...

RT: Yes, absolutely.

Molly: And you could fail and then all that money goes down the drain.

RT: Your guidance counselors never tell you that.

Molly: No.

RT: OK. What about... anything else that you would... that you would have done differently so you wouldn't be in this basic skills [Phonetic][0:20:30] class? I mean, what do you think? You think you could've said to them like, "Listen, I'm not ready to take this test. I just found out now."

Molly: I did say that. I was like, "Now?" and they're like, "Yes" and I was like...

RT: Really?

Molly: OK, I guess but I really didn't think...

RT: Right.

Molly: English... like Math I knew I [Indiscernible][0:20:47].

RT: Right. But not the English part.

Molly: No.

RT: Did you have any idea what was...

Molly: No, and it's like here's a number. Go wait on line and then you walk into the room. No speaking.

RT: Really?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Interesting. What was the hardest part of that test? Do you remember? Was there a hard part?

Molly: on the English?

RT: Yes.

Molly: No, it was pretty... it's like an SAT or HSPA test.

RT: Right.

Molly: Questions ...

RT: Right.

Molly: [Indiscernible][0:21:11]

RT: Right and you did all of that stuff before so...

Molly: Yes, so I didn't think anything [Indiscernible][0:21:15]

RT: Right. OK. I understand. All right. Have you any other questions to add?

Molly: No.

RT: OK. Good. All right.

Appendix N – Interview II - Molly

RT: Alright. So we can start an interview with Molly, just so that I could, you know, make sure we record. First, as promised, here's your \$20 gift card, thank you very much. I appreciate your help. Okay. So what has been going on, since we spoke last, how is, it's been about a month, maybe little bit, five weeks or so, so what's been going, anything different in school or how is level of transition here, how is everything else?

Molly: Fine and I will just save it for the next semester here.

RT: Okay, and why is that?

Molly: Because I had some problems with my payment like I sent my payment in and they messed something up with my payments so I went to go register and the deadline was on Tuesday, so once you go register and that's when they informed me that they sent back the check.

RT: So you have hold of, okay, but barring that hold, do you want to come back for the semester.

Molly: Yeah, I have to.

RT: Right. Okay. How did you do ////////// have you taken the mastery test now.

Molly: No, I am taking it today.

RT: You are taking it today. Okay. What tough [indiscernible] [0:01:05] for this. Okay, so you think you are set for that?

Molly: Yeah, I mean. I [indiscernible] got angry. So I had a problem with that. I don't like she gave us kind of a review and we wrote the class essay and she gave us on Rausch, so I'm relaxed.

RT: Okay, so good luck [indiscernible]. So far, how would you say your college experience has been at Rausch?

Molly: See the thing is, I don't really consider Rausch a college. Like I know it's Rausch Community College, but this is not the ultimate experience that I've envisioned so.

RT: Okay. So can you elaborate on that a little more for me?

Molly: Well, it's like you do go through the same things that a lot of our students go through, I mean, they [indiscernible] [0:01:43], not away from your family kind of, it's like I only did High School.

RT: So you think it's a good extension of High School right now, because like a stepping stone for you to get into. Okay. Let's go back to why you chose to come here again, what all the reasons were?

Molly: Well, I wasn't sure about what I wanted to do, but I have like a lot of things I am really passionate about, and I don't think you are going to pay the \$35000 to be unsure where you are.

RT: Alright. Okay.

Molly: So that's why.

RT: Okay, so you made a decision to come here. Alright. So barring that you don't really consider "the ultimate college experience" when you moved from here, you are going to hopefully

get that experience. You decided to go to where ever school, but Rausch in and of itself, do you like the campus, do you like.

Molly: Well, it's not bad. I chose here instead of ****, because I have a couple of my goals.

RT: Sure.

Molly: But, it's not bad.

RT: Okay, so from when you first got here English wise, okay, to now, that's not a good question, but do you feel little more confident in English or do you feel.

Molly: I have a really good teacher and she like taught me lot of things that I honestly really didn't know. She like wrote down things a lot, and I hope we can [indiscernible] [0:03:03] it in English, but she is a really good teacher.

RT: Good. And so you are still more comfortable there. That's good. Okay. Let's go back to your senior year, right, and when you decided to come here or enroll here, how did that happen. Did you know you were late or did you know what ...

Molly: No, no. I actually did it like 3 days. It was when I started.

RT: Okay, so [indiscernible] [0:03:30] when first semester started, you just figured out ... I am not sure I want you to, just can go to Rausch and get a couple of classes under my [Indiscernible] [0:03:37] and you pick up the phone or do you do it online ...?

Molly: I just came.

RT: Did you come or ...

Molly: Me and mom.

RT: Okay, so you and your mom came here.

Molly: And got them all in one day.

RT: Sat with counselor. How did that go, you sat with a counselor, they...

Molly: Oh, the advisor. I mean the advisor was just there to – like where is my class and she told me like after my major, they told me what classes I needed to take.

RT: Okay.

Molly: That's really as far as the advising went.

RT: Okay, and when did they tell you about the placement test. The Accuplacer.

Molly: I took the placement test the day I knew I was coming here. That's why I was just like...

RT: Okay. So you didn't have time to check out what that test was, or go online.

Molly: The day I had started is the day I took the placement test.

RT: Okay. Let's go over that real quick. You got here, you sat down with the advisor, and.....

Molly: My classes.

RT: And the advisor told you to go right down to the room whatever and take the placement test. Okay. So you didn't have a chance to ...

Molly: When he told me to go take it, I thought he was going to schedule it for when they were giving the test, and then he was like, take it right now, and I was like ...

RT: Right. Okay. So when you sat down for that test, would you say that let me start by saying this... If you had to go back now, let's say we went back right, in time and you applied to Rausch a month before the semester started, and you had time to take the test that went on. Would you prepare, would you look at the test, would you see what's on it? [0:05:05]

Molly: For the English portion,

RT: Okay.

Molly: Like, I've never studied for English.

RT: Okay. So, you were the – no matter what, you would have just gone in there and taken the test anyway.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: So, when you did that test then, when you actually sat down and took that test, was there anything on it that popped out at you like, I didn't expect this.

Molly: No. It was really – it's like taking SAT's or taking like, the high school HSPA's. It wasn't very different. So that's why I was very surprised when I was placed in this class.

RT: Anything distract you while you were in there? Was it distracting, was it the room or-?

Molly: No, it's kind of like, I was caught off-guard taking the test. So I was just like, okay I am going to wing it, I didn't think I would ...

RT: Okay. Then what about after taking these 15, well less than 15 weeks now, but all these weeks for these classes, for a BSI... you learned some different things now. Is there anything that you remembered not doing, that you would incorporate now.

Molly: In my semester?

RT: Yeah. You know, you think, if you could say... if you could go back and say something like you maybe missed on taking that test, that would have helped you not take this, because right there, you think it would still be the same?

Molly: I think maybe, she really taught us how to, like, write essays perfectly, you know. I mean in high school, yeah, they teach the full math that you have to do. And, I mean you did it so many times here. It's like impossible to not know in the future.

RT: Right, because you practiced a lot of [Indiscernible] [00:06:26].

Molly: So much.

RT: Right. Okay, good. So you want to – some of the things you want to hear over like thesis. [Indiscernible][Overlapping Conversation] [0:06:33] support in paragraphs, conclusions, are those some of the things that you also never did in high school.

Molly: Well, yeah, but I don't think we went into that that much we didn't take as much time.

RT: Okay, and it is all about other stuff in high school.

Molly: And meaningless stuff.

RT: Alright. So we are going to get into some of that, for a couple of minutes sort of, okay good. How did you - This is an interesting question I think. What did you teach yourself to do in college, right, that you wish you would have known in high school, that you wish that high school had taught you. What is it ... something that you had to teach yourself now that you say why, I really wish I knew this stuff, you know when I was in high school?

Molly: I don't know you feel different because like in college you have to like it's all well, you know, like if you want to succeed, you have to show up in classes, and it's so hard when you don't need to show up, someone is forcing you. In high school everyone, they are babying you so. I mean, you know all this stuff with the life, but it is hard just like, it is what it is.

RT: So you are saying that, you know when you are in high school, maybe there is more independence now to make up your own mind.

Molly: In college, right.

RT: In college. I mean in high school it is less of that. Okay. So basically something now that you wish that you had that would help you prepare for classes. So maybe like study skills is the right thing. Homework, that is something the way it is kind of laid out in college versus how it is in high school. What do you think that sticks out?

Molly: I wish I really would have focused more. I mean, more in tune of what I wanted to do. I was, I already had been here.

RT: Okay. So what are our future plans changed and stuff.

Molly: no I still have the same thing I want to be married and that [Indiscernible] [0:08:26].

RT: Okay, you still want to do that. Okay, then your career path again, do English like possibly teach right? So you still want to do that. Good. Okay. So this, all this class will help you because it kind of freshened up a little bit. Okay. How about since high school. Has anything changed since high school [indiscernible] [0:08:43]. Is this always what you wanted to do like in high school, you wanted to be a doctor?

Molly: No, definitely not one of my goals. I always liked teaching and I used to teach dance, and I substituted in //.... So the kind of one more thing because I know I was good at it, I mean. Well like, I mean there is a lot of things that I want to.

RT: okay high school, was your ultimate goal in high school. Was it to be an English teacher.

Molly: to be a teacher.

RT: You always wanted to be a teacher. Okay. Are you still on that same [indiscernible] [0:09:19]. So we talked about what you wish you knew from high school, you know that would have helped you out, but what did you. In high school, what is it something that you wish you would, someone told you about college. Is there something that you, I wish someone would have told me that.

Molly: I guess I went into it thinking that I wouldn't be, you know [indiscernible] [0:09:38], you know, I was occasionally I would pass some work, I guess, but it's different, you know, like, you

come here and it's so hard to not like just not [indiscernible] of and just go home, like. There are so many times a day you watch something like, I don't want to go to class.

RT: So what makes you go to class?

Molly: My mom.

RT: Oh, yeah. Really?

Molly: Oh, I don't like hearing that now, she was be a nag.

RT: So she asked you to [indiscernible] [0:10:06] class.

Molly: Well she asked me, she was really into it like. If it wasn't my mom, I swear I would not be in school.

RT: Right.

Molly: Because she is like lays it down on me. My mom hopes.

RT: So now, we talked about that too last time, and we talked about how with your homework and stuff like that when you were in high school. Can you recap that a little bit like how strict she was on that and did she check it all the time, and did she.

Molly: It's not that she checked it all time. She would just ask me about it constantly like, as soon as I got home, are you doing your homework like, what's the homework like. She was really interested in my studies.

RT: Okay. She like went to the parent teacher conferences like that or PTO.

Molly: Not so much in high school, but she would like, whenever there was an issue, like she would go to my school. She was part of it.

RT: Okay. So you are saying she was an involved parent in your studies. Okay. Alright. She took a vested interest in what you did during the day and she, you know when you get your report cards or something, your report card and things like that. Okay. What about you going to Community College versus the 4 year college, like when you said that both of you came which is great that she actually basically drove here, you know, with you here those last couple of days, what about the process before that, I mean you are talking about you had some time to make a decision where you wanted to go, so what was that, was she kind of letting you make your own decision. Was she pushing you a little bit?

Molly: There was lot of pushing.

RT: Okay.

Molly: Because I was really unsure about what I want to do and this is definitely not my school of choice, so I was kind of apprehensive about everything, and I kind of just like I got fed up hearing about it, so I just went and signed up.

RT: Okay, I want to ask you a question and go into the Accuplacer that day, did you learn something prior, or it was just get Rausch, you know a couple of classes, I don't want to do it, my money, there was my time, but I want to do something. So you come here and think Accuplacer was that you kind of like blow that off that day to a little bit, like oh, it's a big deal?

Molly: From that point, that's never been my strongest.

RT: Right.

Molly: I am not going to lie, I am not going to lie about it, about the English I did it and like I didn't focus completely but, I didn't think I kind of issue with it -

RT: Right.

RT: Okay. I don't want you to tell me, but do you remember the prompt for this?

Molly: Not all.

RT: Do you remember was there a prompt that you were like interested in, or was it something like that oh my God, you know, what was that prompt?

Molly: Oh no, no.

RT: No.

Molly: I can't remember.

RT: Okay. Yeah I don't want to know what it is?

Molly: No no.

RT: But I mean it was, what was that something was it boring do you remember?

Molly: No, I don't think, it had ended up boring.

RT: Okay. So that was so you are saying you didn't bore because English part, you just you kind of said I have to get down to get to that okay. Did you find out even afterwards, or before that like Rausch gives information to on Website, check out what the Accuplacer was about, do you know there was a Website for that?

Molly: Yeah I mean my sister went here so she told me about it.

RT: Okay.

Molly: And she said she hadn't passed it either, she was surprised, because when she told me she really [indiscernible] [0:13:05] too, right, I have asked her how come you passed it she is like, it's not as easy as you think it is some like were you good at English, I am good at English.

RT: Right okay, right interesting. Okay, how is your mom in for if she studies here, because she talked to you about classes take, do you talk to her about that of?

Molly: Yeah well like I said my mom's really involved and she was always asking me about things but I don't know, I wanted to be here for the shortest time.

RT: What about your mom, she likes that choice?

Molly: You know, yeah she likes and [indiscernible] [0:13:43].

RT: Oh nice okay.

Molly: And its really nice.

RT: Okay, so this is your ground work here move on to that college?

Molly: cause she routed me staying in Jersey

RT: Right.

Molly: I don't like New Jersey.

RT: That's all parents, they want you to stay close.

Molly: I don't like New Jersey at all. I never have

RT: Why is it important for you to go way?

Molly: Well because I have been [indiscernible] hold there so I just think that like I should start my life there, and like she's - [Indiscernible] [0:14:07] pretentious and I am doing it be cool and I guess so cool and.

RT: Okay, you want some independence basically.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Right okay, and I have a couple of different like questions I want to ask you about your senior when you were in High School, but the last question I have to this part of it is, is there anything that you learned in High School English that you can remember now that you have used so far in your English class or in any class time your any of your important classes like I will give you a quick example like MLA format, are you doing that for the research paper so did you remember that from High School?

Molly: Yeah absolutely.

RT: Okay well , you know, right exactly, so what else?

Molly: Lot like grammar and stuff like that.

RT: Okay.

Molly: You learned and authorized it when you used it in everyday...

RT: Right.

Molly: Everyday life so I mean I guess my English classes get prepared me for college.

RT: Okay good as you said that those English classes you were saying it was the actual class in High School or was it the teacher?

Molly: Teachers, I think teachers influenced me more than classes.

RT: Okay, anything stand out that a certain teacher, don't give any name, but specific teachers stand out?

Molly: Yeah I mean there is a couple of teachers I would say like two or three teachers that like really stuck with me.

RT: Were they English teachers?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay.

- Molly: And then one Social Studies teacher.
- RT: Which is favorite part, you're really like passionate about English, which is your favorite part of English?
- Molly: I like writing, calligraphy writing so.
- RT: What kind of writer, a journalist or - ?
- Molly: Yeah.
- RT: Authors?
- Molly: I wanna be a journalist but sometimes I kind of wanna write a book.
- RT: Right.
- Molly: But actually like that I wanna live so I can write a book.
- RT: Okay about your experiences you more like a fiction, like a novel?
- Molly: Well I have like I have written a couple of things like short stories, like a novel, like a fiction novel.
- RT: Good okay good, is this during being a teacher, you know, at night you can write, so that's good.
- Molly: Yes.
- RT: Okay let me ask you a couple of questions, see if you remember stuff from High school so roll up the High school map.
- Molly: That I know.
- RT: Okay. Just basically like do you remember doing certain things like for example, do you remember doing critiques ... journal critiques like that, okay do you remember critiquing like magazines or?
- Molly: Yeah I do that a lot and I do like summarize it and you critique how they wrote that.
- RT: Okay, did you.
- Molly: We do that here too.
- RT: Right, okay in the question now, like that so what you did there is basically some of the stuff you are doing here now okay. What about like books, did you critique any books or?
- Molly: I mean only when they gave you assignments pertaining to the book which you critique upon, but not like they would get back here..... know like a senior.
- RT: But not in senior year, you do that, okay alright how much did you do summaries and stuff like in Journals, your own journals, your own personal ...
- Molly: Yes that was a big part.
- RT: You didn't like do the summary, you like just did journals?

Molly: I don't like, like and all my classes we like that's a big thing in English writing a journal, I don't know why but I ...

RT: Right, read a journal in the correct way, okay. Arguments something like that, like argue a debate ... you argue a topic.

Molly: Yes I love that.

RT: Did you do that in High School?

Molly: No.

RT: Did you ever join like a debate club or debate team or-?

Molly: There was no debate team in my School.

RT: No.

Molly: Surprisingly, I will be really good at that.

RT: Right okay, so do you remember writing about like an argument kind of, you know, and we do not hear them, I mean do persuasive writings?

Molly: Oh no, yeah that's.

RT: Right.

Molly: That's mostly when we do persuasive writing.

RT: Right okay, so that's fantastic okay. How about Epic literature, do you remember doing epic stuff like Beowulf, Grendel in High School, do you remember reading that?

Molly: No.

RT: Okay. How about character development what about character?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, do you remember.

Molly: Shakespeare and stuff like that.

RT: Okay. Do you remember dissecting characters, like the teacher kept talking about?

Molly: Yeah, that we would have to do the characters and write a novel, a qucen to be and stuff like that.

RT: Okay, so did you did things like that. Okay alright how about software things like that, did you ever use in High School certain kinds of media...any Microsoft Word stuff like that?

Molly: Yeah Microsoft Word is like a, that's what I.

RT: Right okay, how about like when you do a research paper now?

Molly: I have the knack so I use it.

RT: Okay, did you do that in High School?

Molly: No.

RT: Okay when you were in high school, did you research, how did you find research?

Molly: Well, you know, well our English class it's like a [Indiscernible] [0:18:46] and we get specialists to show us how to do everything and show like ... the basics.

RT: Okay, so you use the computer there, right? Okay, so you are familiar with having to use software if you kind of think of with software you would be able to handle it, right?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, how are you doing with the college applications there? College applications, there's a short time line ...just wanna make sure you know ...

Molly: You know, I was sure about everything and I really loved it up in there.

RT: Okay, how about like newspaper r...like working on the school newspaper ever or you know

Molly: I want to hear now.

RT: Oh you want to hear them, beyond and now oh that's interesting, okay good for you. Okay how about do you edit yourself, or did you edit yourself like now what you used to write did you edit yourself.

Molly: Well I have a journal like I kept all the journals that I have in High School.

RT: Okay.

Molly: Because I feel like one day it is like grab on my [Indiscernible] [0:19:41].

RT: Sure.

Molly: It is up and then.

RT: Good ... right, did you ever... do you remember you re-reading did you do that a lot, do you bother people to read your stuff?

Molly: I had a couple of teachers read my journals like my personal journals and ...

RT: Okay, so you do that too, you have to get that [phone rings]?

Molly: No it's okay.

RT: Okay, how about correcting yourself, it is difficult to correct yourself back in High School I would you say.

Molly: It's no reading but it's useful I mean.

RT: Right. Do you yourself take constructive criticism better now than you did when you were there using a year, like someone had said this is wrong and someone says now this is wrong, you should write this, but your teacher now versus teacher then, is it easier now, you accept because you are older.

Molly: Well I'm a very [Indiscernible] [0:20:29] person like if you are critiquing me and its all //// I would not have a problem with it.

RT: Okay, do you utilize that critique or ...

Molly: Yes of course.

RT: Okay good. Vocabulary and stuff like that, can you tell me you did stuff like vocabulary?

Molly: Vocabulary its feels ... like games.

RT: Was it like a list?

Molly: Yes, it was like a list and that, but it like ... and they would give us sheets and sheets of vocabulary we were using this we are not going to remember this like, I probably think it was loads of things that I would not use after that.

RT: Okay, was vocabulary part of it?

Molly: I'd get it from reading a book.

RT: Right.

Molly: And she would choose a bunch of words that she assumed we didn't know and yeah.

RT: Okay, so it would actually come out of the actual reading, some of it more or less?

Molly: No it is not like that ...

RT: Okay, did you use a dictionary a lot?

Molly: Not really.

RT: No.

Molly: No.

RT: What would you do then if you didn't know the words, you can't skip over; if you were reading and a word came up ...

Molly: I will find it on Google and ...

RT: Even when you...

Molly: I do not know that ...

RT: So you look it up, so I would consider that a dictionary ... that I mean you.

Molly: I always had to learn new things.

RT: Okay good so you are familiar with how to look at some of that stuff, what about like the meanings, words, or where words came from ...if you are going over any of that like group words, like this group means this.

Molly: That would be like cool though.

RT: Okay.

Molly: Sometimes you did things like that.

RT: Okay, so nothing happened towards the end of your high school career?

Molly: Not really.

RT: Okay, we did do the high school okay. How about different all the major journals and text like for example novels, do you remember reading novels?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Do you remember any specific ones?

Molly: One book that really annoyed me, have you read [Junior Year's] the Pearl?

RT: The Pearl, yes

Molly: So annoying.

RT: Okay.

Molly: I hated the book, I don't know I really like reading books and I am interested in something that will consume me and then when they gave me one of those books and just like. You think I am going to like it more and ...

RT: Right.

Molly: And there is [Indiscernible] [0:22:44] right there and /// something and I am going to choose this book over this.

RT: Okay, so you remember the Pearl, how much short story, how many short stories?

Molly: A lot Edgar Allen Poe and stuff like that.

RT: Okay good, then horror stories, like science fiction, you remember doing science fiction?

Molly: I don't really like science fiction.

RT: Star Trek, anything like that

Molly: Not at all...

RT: What about biographies, autobiographies, I mean which, you know, the life of Benjamin Franklin.

Molly: Biographies, I guess that's only when you read like when they told you or we're gonna do a report on someone, you are gonna do a piece on someone.

RT: Right. Okay how about, you know, autobiographies somebody writing about themselves okay poems and plays?

Molly: I mean it's not my favorite thing.

RT: Do you remember doing it high school level?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Do you remember any plays, did you do the Shakespeare plays?

Molly: Oh my God so many.

RT: Which, what was your favorite one?

Molly: You know somewhat interesting.

RT: Okay good the comedies?

Molly: Yeah like that that was pretty cool.

RT: What about poems, do you read poetry have you read poetry?

Molly: I mean I am not a poet, I am not a poet.

RT: Right, right.

Molly: But yeah I really read alot ... I would say that's more like sophomore and junior year, not so much in senior year.

RT: Okay, so did you remember doing that? Okay. Do you know what a Shakespearean sonnet is?

Molly: Yeah, I remember what a sonnet is.

RT: Shakespearean sonnet versus the regular sonnet.

Molly: Yeah, there's like different criteria.

RT: Right, okay.

Molly: I still remember.

RT: Right, you remember going over that.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, how about free verse poetry, free verses, what is that, do you remember?

Molly: This is like, I was in junior year.

RT: Okay, it was junior year. But you don't like really writing poetry?

Molly: No.

RT: You do it but it's not your thing.

Molly: Like I wouldn't want to be a poet.

RT: Right, okay, I got you okay. What about like different things like narrator, do you remember writing that, pretending you're the narrator or third person?

Molly: Yeah, I have written short stories like that.

RT: Okay, so you are the narrator, use the sound like different like, you know, different types of images and things like that.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Irony.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: It's ironic.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: You know, ////.

Molly: I mean, it comes I don't focus on one thing personally.

RT: Right.

Molly: I mean, it just goes and it ///

RT: Okay, have a [Indiscernible] [0:25:07] you remember some of those, okay, your propagandas in school I mean, then.

Molly: What do you mean?

RT: Like used it like different writings that basically sell something or do something.

Molly: Okay.

RT: Like to advertise something, you know, doing that in a senior year.

Molly: Not so much.

RT: We are talking about it, how about famous like historical things and [Indiscernible] [0:25:33] [Martin Luther King] junior speech, right speeches and things like that okay. How about religious, anything with religions, bible?

Molly: Yeah, on public school they are done with religion so.

RT: Right. So you never even talk about them as literature ... you work so.

Molly: No, I can't even remember one time.

RT: Well, that's fine, it doesn't mean it's wrong. Did you remember doing, you said, Poe, so American literature you recall, do you remember doing anything else in senior year just literature like stuff from [Indiscernible] [0:26:04]

Molly: Because I remember my senior year class that was American literature class.

RT: That was your senior year.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, so the American literature senior year.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, good, so you remember all the American writers and not all of them but you did look [Indiscernible] [0:26:22] Hemingway, Mark Twain, those kind of people.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, how about themes love and death, do you remember getting or actually, reading about love themes that ...

Molly: Yeah, I mean, we get some of these assignments, so many going with assignments.

RT: Right. What was one /// something, do you recall something that was so important, you can't believe you did it, not actually like an assignment, something like that you did like all the time like, you got the dictionaries, come back to your seat, write the words out, anything in particular?

Molly: [Indiscernible] [0:26:57] was like three pages of vocabulary words and you sit there like in a group and make sentences and...

RT: So you had to do that, remember at some point.

Molly: All the group work in high school.

RT: Did you get papers back to correct like you had the paper and you write on it?

Molly: Yeah, I mean, you know, like you give to your teacher the paper a week before, she can correct and give you her opinion on it.

RT: Okay, now let's, what happens after she gives her opinion back to you, you rewrite it?

Molly: Like you can write out the points and she can correct it.

RT: Okay, when you were in high school did you have any portfolio?

Molly: Yeah, folders.

RT: Okay.

Molly: We had folders in class we kept all our work in there.

RT: Okay, how was the grading, was the grading like rubric, you remember rubrics?

Molly: Yes we had a rubric

RT: Okay, did you have the portfolio in the classroom?

Molly: And it had the first page and everything

RT: Okay, did you all take the portfolio home, each and every one?

Molly: Lot of time...

RT: Okay.

Molly: But I mean, I wouldn't really show them my work.

RT: Okay, how often did you write you remember?

Molly: Well in my senior class we had like journal entries, we do it like three times a week so.

RT: Okay, guess a lot basically.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, would you almost every day?

Molly: Yeah, I can say that, I write a lot so.

RT: Okay, do you have any theme, what was your favorite theme in high school? If you could write anything you wanted, what theme would you pick love, death, hate whatever?

Molly: Maybe love I guess, yeah.

RT: Okay, so what would you least want to write about?

Molly: Autobiographies.

RT: Yeah.

Molly: I hate autobiographies, I don't like talking about people and I liked talking about myself.

RT: Okay, so that's easy right?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, how about diction, diction meaning word choice, when you were in high school you said hey its a great word but why not try to use a stronger word or ...

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Do you remember the teacher pushing you to do that?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, all right, good. How about different things that you wrote, can you name some authors that you remember from high school, you said Shakespeare already anyone else?

Molly: [Indiscernible] [0:29:11]

RT: [Indiscernible] [0:29:13] Shakespeare anyone else?

Molly: [Indiscernible] [0:29:17]

RT: I just remember I mean, who is – do you have a favorite author? It's alright okay.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: It's okay. Would you say that if you had to like rate your teacher in high school on how many different authors you were exposed to, not expecting to remember those but were there a lot like say almost every week you had so many different you were learning about?

Molly: I don't know.

RT: No.

Molly: I mean, I only think about people going a different pace, you know.

RT: Right.

Molly: So, you maybe were done with a book in a week because you were interested in it, but someone else can take like a month you know.

RT: Okay.

Molly: So like we would get books like once a month.

RT: Did you read aloud in class?

Molly: Yeah, I was chosen a lot for that.

RT: Okay. And so were there like assignments like read chapter 3, you guys are coming to read chapter 3 and aloud ... why do you think that was done?

Molly: I mean, obviously she didn't think everyone in class would do the assignment, so she would just /// in class?

RT: Right, how often would you do that, the assignment?

Molly: It really depended on how much I enjoyed the book, if I enjoyed the book and I would read the book and I can read the book in a day you know.

RT: Right.

Molly: But if I didn't like the book it was a lot for me.

RT: Okay, so taking that scenario real quick like people come in, they read a book, you know, the teachers like lets read chapter 1, 3 like that or whatever, and whether we are going to tomorrow in class anyway, sorry so people come in and so what else happened, you guys would read loud /// she stop during- you know.

Molly: Yeah, then she described it and she asked your opinion on things and

RT: Okay.

Molly: What do you see happening?

RT: Okay, you remember talking about themes?

Molly: Yeah, that was more junior year then

RT: Right, okay. So, you had the foundations junior and senior year ... you should automatically know that so coming into college now you know what a theme is right, you should pick a theme out or like you writing now that you write in time for your test, you can have some kind of theme and behind there is some kind of thesis.

Molly: It's gonna be persuasive essay.

RT: Persuasive writing, okay. All right, any other British authors, you know, just, what's your favorite Shakespearean play, you know, you just said that was your least favorite you said [Indiscernible] [0:31:51] what's your least favorite?

Molly: My least favorite, I don't have a problem with any of.

RT: You know, which one, did you remember?

Molly: Macbeth, Othello.

RT: Okay.

Molly: Romeo and Juliet.

RT: Okay, Hamlet.

Molly: Yes.

RT: Right, okay, some of the main ones but Othello was interesting.

Molly: Okay.

RT: I mean, not everybody does the one that's interesting. How about historical events in literature or reading about the [Indiscernible] [0:32:22] read anything that Presidents or.

Molly: I am really not brilliant in politics.

RT: Right.

Molly: But I don't exactly tie it all with my English classes because they were more focused on literary things more than political things.

RT: Right, okay. So would you say yeah your English class was more concerned on like content than the concept of this?

Molly: Yeah, it was kind of like, doing for many years.

RT: Right, how did it make you feel?

Molly: I got bored really, so I just had no interest in the class but I did what I had to do

RT: Okay. How about economics and stuff like that you talk about any other?

Molly: No.

RT: Okay, never. Okay, how about [Indiscernible] [0:33:16] you never talked about like the president at the time or -

Molly: I mean, that was come like you have ever [Indiscernible] [0:33:24] you cannot write something about politics.

RT: Okay, writing across the curriculum for example you are in a history class and you are talking about the election or something and do you write for the history class about that topic

Molly: Well it's not as precise as in English class but I mean, assignment and things.

RT: Okay. So you did write in any other classes too.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay. Do you know the primary elements of your chart, graph, do you know how to read a chart, have you read a chart?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Some people have other visual media stuff I mean, you know, anything else like, you know, things on the Internet or you feel pretty computer savvy.

Molly: Yeah [Indiscernible] [0:34:08]

RT: Okay. So can you go to the Rausch Library website now EBSCO host and find a bunch of stuff

Molly: Yeah, were actually were in the library like last week.

RT: Okay, good.

Molly: through the media specialist and made sure it's all databases and stuff.

RT: Good great, that's excellent. Okay, how were your, you think you're pretty strong in grammar?

Molly: Yeah, I think so.

RT: Okay, on a scale of one to ten, ten being the best.

Molly: Nine.

RT: You are a nine?

Molly: Yeah, I like English so.

RT: Okay, so if I said to you now would you know what a noun is, pronoun?

Molly: //// [Yes.]

RT: Yeah, I did this right, okay. What do you think is something that is a weakness of grammar for you. Do you feel like, you know, including all parts of grammar punctuation all that stuff. What's the weakness? What is something like, you are like [Indiscernible] [0:35:08]

Molly: [Indiscernible] [0:35:12]

RT: Okay.

Molly: I feel like sometimes when I am writing like [Indiscernible] [0:35:17] I write something and then like, you know, [Indiscernible] [0:35:19] paragraph after, I don't put in order but I saved in a piece of the statement.

RT: Okay.

Molly: I do that often and just like, keep erasing and stuff.

RT: Okay. What about like specific grammar things like commas or you get commas?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Okay, so you would say that, you know, you're not weak in grammar in English?

Molly: No.

RT: What's your strongest, what's something that you can teach me right now that I wouldn't know, like you know because the quotations, nouns, subject, verb, you know, conjunctions.

Molly: Well I would not try to teach you.

RT: No, I am fine, just give me an idea what's something you really feel strong and you can snap in teach a class.

Molly: Teach a class, what teach grammatical things?

RT: Yeah just grammar. What's something you think you would be able to pass, so you never make mistake //////////

Molly: What did you say?

RT: Yeah with a specific line.

Molly: Like comma.

RT: Comma, so you are really good at that then.

Molly: I mean well that that's part of writing, I mean, if you take a grammar pause.

RT: Right. No I agree. So you are saying that you, that's since you went to high school to that your grammar is really strong?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Okay. Do you think it's stronger after this, this tense two weeks, you think you are...

Molly: In grammar?

RT: Yea, or no.

Molly: I mean currently it's pretty basic I mean if you hear what...

RT: All right I agree to that. Great answer okay.

Molly: Okay how about, I forgot that, capitalizations and with run-on and the fragments, how about that [Indiscernible][Overlapping Conversations] [0:36:49] with them.

RT: Yeah pretty well.

RT: Okay.

Molly: ...like repeating myself [Indiscernible] [0:36:53].

RT: Okay and you say you got a pretty good basis for that before college in high school, right okay? And you thought about using a dictionary and how the things that are different like its versus its. I T S versus I T ' S...

Molly: Yeah I think I speak very...

RT:yes okay. How about spell check, grammar check, do you use that in your papers or?

Molly: Well I mean my computer is...

RT: Okay. Prewriting little bit, you know, you remember doing prewriting, I'm sure you can prewrite now.

Molly: Like brain storming or something. Who told you about that?

RT: Did you do prewriting in your senior year?

Molly: Yeah a lot there in high school.

RT: What you remember doing, was it a sheet of paper and you saw it like a Venn diagram?

Molly: Venn.

RT: You did a Venn okay. So you remember doing all that stuff. Okay good and it's obvious you still do that now. Okay and you talked about one of your weaknesses is [organization]. Okay so do you remember working on that or being taught that in high school.

Molly: Yeah I mean, I have learned it back then ... it's been a year or so.

RT: Right okay. So it's something that still needs work on. Okay. So do you know the difference between what a topic is and what thesis is?

Molly: Well I talked, I mean I don't know how I can say that, for the thesis I'm looking for a new topic and then giving key points.

RT: Okay. Did you, you think to do that in a high school too?

Molly: I don't think we focused on it as much as we do here.

RT: Right. And that's a major point, writing your thesis statement, right?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: /// Okay and we talked about argument support you are doing that. How about the formal styles of writing versus academic, like an academic essay like verses like a personal essay...

Molly: Yeah well, I mean you can speak more clearly in personal essay.

RT: Right be great to your audience.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Right okay. All right. We move on to research, you did a research paper at your high school?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: Did you...

[Indiscernible][Overlapping Conversation] [0:38:47]

Molly:...evel.

RT: Sorry sorry sorry, you did that gradually?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: So it was like a requirement?

Molly: Yeah that was like a big...../////, we took those really on time so like we were kind of do it and...

RT: Okay how did you do the research, did you go to library or use computer or...

Molly: I was like, I used a lot of the databases and stuff.

RT: Okay.

Molly: Okay so you don't, didn't really want to use this google because, you know...

RT: Right.

Molly: ...anybody could put anything on the Internet.

RT: Sure right.

Molly: So it was more like try to go to a book for like really good references.

RT: Right. Like previously reviewed sources stuff like that. Okay, so someone /// taught you how to do all that. You wrote a thesis obviously for that. Citations, MLA, do you remember doing that in high school?

Molly: MLA format?

RT: Yeah.

Molly: Maybe it was like sophomore year I think.

RT: Okay.

Molly: Yeah.

RT: So you had it sophomore year, junior year, probably the senior year you used his for this paper and now you are using the internet and very-very comfortable with that right now?

Molly: Yeah I think so. I mean most computers do with word...

[Indiscernible] [0:39:44]

Molly: ...they have to meet this.

RT: Right. Great, how about going to research president Obama, did you formulate any opinions like in high school and like, I mean, know that about him more.

Molly: I have read the book. So kind of and you know everything you need to know.

RT: Right. Okay so by reading the book first do you formulates any...

Molly: But I'm going to look on my own I did a reading for the main points.

RT: Right good comments okay. So the paper came after the book honestly, okay. So are you familiar with primarily secondary sources of things or primary sources, do you remember doing that in high school as well? That you, so you obviously cited the book?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: In high school and probably other things you cited the Internet a lot?

Molly: Maybe articles like...

RT: Right.

Molly: ...like in my class I'll do a lot of like the same articles and stuff.

RT: Right okay. So that's okay. How about plagiarism then, Did you know about plagiarism in high school?

Molly: Yes.

RT: Okay so you knew not to plagiarize.

Molly: Yeah. But it's like sometimes we are seeing that, I mean, they're gonna kick you out of school.

RT: Yeah it is like all over here right? Exactly okay. How about, how did you know something that was irrelevant in source? You just kind of figured...

Molly: Well I mean like, you know, like the work that's pretty much, you know, and that's legit.

RT: Right. Okay so you use relevant sources for your paper. Did you remember getting very many sources like not this ... this isn't right?

Molly: Yeah.

RT: You had stuff like that?

Molly: [Indiscernible] [0:41:07].

RT: Okay so let me ask you, if you had to sum it all up, why you are here in this class? Take a second to think about it then the question is what is your feeling or that your reason behind why you are in this class. You are very bright, you definitely know your English. You shouldn't be in this class we both know that. So why do you think you are here. You have to sit down think about it so ... I got some score back a little low, you got some score ////

Molly: I got it great I have to...

[Indiscernible][Overlapping Conversation] [0:41:36]

Molly: you know, that was like what?

RT: Right.

Molly: Honestly if there was an exact reason, I wish I knew because I don't understand why I'm in this class.

RT: Right.

Molly: When I think about the people that are in my class and they are all pretty brave I don't see anyone that's like, they don't know anything.

RT: Right.

Molly: I think maybe it was basic things like grammatical errors. That's what I think really it is. But I don't think that I would have like major issues with writing.

RT: Right. So you think that the paper you are going to write tonight is almost the same paper type of thing you are [Indiscernible] [0:42:15].

Molly: I worked 3 years on this.

RT: Great. But just now, you know, it's only not in the grammar, little bit more. You know, some tricks that's Rausch is looking for?

Molly: I don't think anything huge.

RT: Right. So you are saying that you are under the impression like you don't have this big like, there is no deficiency in your writing?

Molly: No definitely not.

RT: Right okay. How many, how many among out there, no names. I'm going to have, let's see there are 20 kids in your class.

Molly: Okay.

RT: How many of those kids do you think really, definitely should be in this class?

Molly: That's what I'm saying, I don't feel like there is, like there are smart kids in my class. And I told this girl like she was a straight A student and she was in my high school and she is in my class.

RT: Right.

Molly: And she said I can't believe I'm in this class, which is like, I have never gotten like low grades, and I'm just like neither have I.

RT: Right.

RT: Like I just really, they don't quiz on the right things or something or I have been just going with what they believe.

RT: Right.

Molly: Great teaching.

RT: Do you think so that, with that test, where these kids are from all over, I mean, you are not even in Rausch County. So these kids from different counties and these kids are bright. So like this one test how does it, you know generate the scores for all of these different good writers.

Molly: Exactly, I mean everyone teaches the same, you don't teach the same thing in every class. It really depends on the teacher. So how can you judge that a teacher is going to teach the right thing or do assuming, you know.

RT: So, you and your classmates talk about, like you shouldn't be in here.

Molly: Like the first two days we are a little upset, what are we doing in here.

RT: Right.

Molly: I didn't want to get started with my class here, you know.

RT: Right. Did you opt to retest?

Molly: No.

RT: Not even an opportunity to do that.

Molly: I think if you are tested like weeks before you can do that, and they are given a chance but I did it like two days prior.

RT: Right so when you are in actual class that first week your teacher didn't say there is a test now. Did you give a writing sample?

Molly: Yeah the second the day we did write a sample.

RT: Okay. So your perception of this program ////?

Molly: I think that there is something wrong with that test honestly I read [Indiscernible] [0:44:43] so you can do that's, do that test which is like, I don't honestly, I'm lying here. And they are not like dumping people...

RT: Right.

Molly: They are great students

RT: Can you go over how the -- what the test was like to - you came in, you sat down ...

Molly: Yeah it was like, multiple choice in the beginning and then like grammar things and vocabulary. It was like a baby essay. And then we had to think of an essay, you know, it wasn't at the top there was an essay.

RT: Right so you typed the essay and then you hit enter?

Molly: That's it ... was like you must, you send in your essay and then they grade everything and you get up and then go to your scores.

RT: You even get your grades right there?

Molly: Yeah. That's what I thought really puzzling because I mean who created this...

RT: Right.

Molly: ...for all these kids here.

RT: Right.

Molly: in a matter of seconds

RT: Its interesting. So now if you had one, if you can, this is my last question. If you can go back now, so you are right before coming here and what is the strategy that you would use in the school, right out of school and high school to make sure you are not in this class, something different than what you have done. If anything I mean.

Molly: Well I guess something would be to prepare to not be prepared. I mean to be prepared for the non-expected because I didn't think I would be in this class, but I guess you have to really try hard...

RT: Right.

Molly: that they think they would have to ... I guess people just blow it off, you know, because they don't think that it's a big deal but, you know, it just takes your future.

RT: Right. So now you think that you have such a foundation that ...

Molly: Absolutely. You know, [it's] just another great lesson...

RT: Basically, right.

Molly: Probably like I was taking a quiz or something like or whatever it's going to blow this off and, you know, [Indiscernible] [0:46:40].

RT: Do you have any questions for me?

Molly: No.

RT: Okay. **End of Audio [0:46:51]**

Appendix O – Interview - Jake

RT: Right, so we are here with Jake [0:00:02] [inaudible] and we are going to talk about basic skills. So again he signed the paper and first I want to show you this chart, okay. So when you were in high school, where do you think you fit in this chart? So for example if you are in A, average or you passed the HSPA [Phonetic] [0:00:22] you got honors courses you are up here. B+ average there, average pass the HSPA somewhere here, B average - where do you think you would fit from there?

Jake: Probably in here.

RT: Okay so B+, A- average kind of. Did you pass the HSPA?

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Were you in any honors courses?

Jake: Just in science but not so much English.

RT: Okay but in...

Jake: Regular English.

RT: Well let's start, before I even ask you about your family stuff what about favorite subject, worst subject.

Jake: Favorite subject history, worst subject Math.

RT: Okay where does English fit in your web?

Jake: I am more like, I like English, I enjoy writing, its just I don't know I have been really getting honors in my high school.

RT: Okay so let me ask you about your family. No names, only just you know about your brothers and sisters, your parents, did your parents go to college?

Jake: My father did.

RT: Okay.

Jake: He went for about I think a year and I think it wasn't for me so he became ***** police.

RT: Oh nice, okay. Did he [inaudible] [0:01:31]

Jake: Well he is a detective.

RT: Oh sorry [inaudible] [0:01:33] okay so your dad went to college for a year. Then about mom.

Jake: Mom never went to college. She just isn't working.

RT: Okay good, any brother or sister?

Jake: I have a brother and a sister.

RT: Older or younger?

Jake: Younger, my brother is eight and my sister is like 13.

RT: Oh okay all right, that's all right. So basically your dad, you are the first, you are the first to go, to be on track to go to college?

Jake: Right.

RT: Good for you, okay that is good. Okay so you talked about history and math a little bit, history being your favorite and math being your would you say your least favorite or your worst subject?

Jake: Probably both, my least favorite, my worse.

RT: Really, okay good. Okay let's go back to your senior year now, right. When you left here do you think you were ready for college? When you left academically and maturity wise. So do you think like maturity you were ready to come to Rausch **[Phonetic] [0:02:30]** or and also do you think you were prepared for classes.

Jake: Maturity definitely, I knew I was mature enough to go to college but academically in some fields yes, in some fields no like I want to take a history class this year, but that didn't work out with my schedule I already had and I had, with the class I have now, I like them, I like them a lot but there is – I don't think I was academically ready for math but that's, I think that's my you know **[inaudible] [0:03:05]**

RT: So are you basic math too?

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Okay, how about in English, how do you feel about the end senior year English?

Jake: I felt pretty good, I did and I was surprised that I didn't do as well on...

RT: On the test.

Jake: On the test right.

RT: Okay so if we went back to your senior English class, if you kind of go back there for a second, you would say that what part of class you were probably middle range of class or a higher part of class?

Jake: About middle range.

RT: About middle range, okay. Do you think you had a pretty good grasp though of writing and stuff like that...

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Formulate like a paragraph, right.

Jake: Yeah the stuff that we are doing in my class right now is kind of old, like old to me.

RT: Really?

Jake: I kind of know how to do this already like she is going over like how to wrap your choice of essay and I have been doing that since freshman year.

RT: Right, okay. So why do you think you didn't just do well on the test.

Jake: I just don't think I did well on the test, that's it.

RT: Okay got you, okay. Did you have the opportunity to opt out of this, did you want to retest?

Jake: Yeah I took the retest and I actually got into writing one

RT: Oh, okay.

Jake: But it was all filled up.

RT: Really.

Jake: So I didn't know what to do so I just decided to stay

RT: Oh that is interesting, you actually took the retest and passed

Jake: And did that

RT: Was the retest easier than the regular test or what did you think of the retest?

Jake: I don't know I think I just concentrated more than the others. I just paid, I was more focused, I wanted to do better and I did.

RT: But you said that you were mature, like you definitely were ready to come to college? You also said you wanted to get out of high school...

Jake: Yeah I was down in high school.

RT: Did you know you were coming here?

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Okay and how did you know that?

Jake: Probably half way through senior year, I decided. I was looking at some other colleges, I was looking at **[inaudible] [0:05:01]** I was looking at Roland, **[inaudible] [0:05:04]** but financially right now me personally, not my family, I felt like this would be a better course out of the four so...

RT: Okay so if you are planning to stay here for two years...

Jake: Two years and then go somewhere else.

RT: Good for you, sounds like you've got your head on straight that is good. Okay you definitely were prepared mature wise but the school wise what do you think you could have done better in high school prepare you here?

Jake: I think -- prepare us better in high school?

RT: Yeah get ready, I mean. How about -- I am just going to give you an idea what I am talking about, having homework. How did you do with your homework? Did you do your homework?

Jake: Most of the time.

RT: Most of the time.

Jake: Right not so much towards the end of the year but...

RT: All right seniorities, out of five days lets say you got homework five days straight, how many days do you think you would have done it?

Jake: Probably three or four.

RT: Three or four, okay. Okay what high school did you go again?

Jake: ****.

RT: ****, okay. All right so homework you kind of consistent with that. Did you study for tests?

Jake: If I needed to.

RT: Okay.

Jake: If I felt like I could do good, and usually I did anyway but if I needed to study for test, I would take like an hour, like a school night just look over what I needed to do and look over the things before the actual tests in school if I take it.

RT: Okay, cool. How about note taking, did you take notes?

Jake: Yes, that's a big thing for me, like I really need to take notes if I am going to do good in class. Every other teacher says oh you don't have to write this down, I write it down **[inaudible] [0:06:40]** just in case.

RT: What about English, what kind of notes did you take in English when you were back in high school, kind of those.

Jake: In my class, we mostly did a lot of reading. We did like a lot of reading like throughout books, text books. So we would go over like -- oh yeah I forget what it was like British literature.

RT: Okay

Jake: Shakespeare.

RT: Shakespeare.

Jake: I am trying to think about one like Gaelic literature.

RT: Okay sure.

Jake: I think that's what it's called.

RT: Irish literature.

Jake: Yeah right and we would just really go over that like how they perceive everything like how they wrote it and why they wrote about certain things like bare wolfs and that kind of thing.

RT: What about writing did you -- you said you do a lot of reading but if you remember talking like general research.

Jake: Yeah, yeah I had a research paper.

RT: What was that on?

Jake: That was on poet that we cut.

RT: Okay.

Jake: It was six to ten pages long and it was just basically about his life and...

RT: MLA format?

Jake: MLA format.

RT: So you are familiar with that right? Okay, good. So you know all the concepts of writing in high school, you knew this statement, all the professionals know now, okay. So what was your high school like? What was it like? What was your experience like, weed of student, put that a GPA aware [inaudible] [0:08:08] kind in there so...

Jake: I was more or less 3.0. high school was fun, I kind of miss it a little bit and seeing my friends really [inaudible] [0:08:19] is there, everywhere now but I think it was about time I got out of there, I wanted to move on from high school because it was like the same thing every year after year and now this is completely different and I like it more.

RT: Okay good. Who would you talk to in your high school?

Jake: Probably my freshman year because I'm just getting into high school, I moved from Dammar to Emerson so I was in a totally new school and everything so that was probably my toughest year.

RT: All right. Do you remember talking about writing and stuff like that to get you ready for that like in your freshman year? What you said you English – this has nothing, this has nothing to do with your high school, but this is just me trying to get a feel of your writing expertise like did you start at freshman year, do you remember talking about writing in freshman year and sophomore year and...

Jake: Yeah, we touched base like a little bit not like as heavy as junior and senior.

RT: So junior and senior was pretty heavy?

Jake: Yes.

RT: What about from the past do you remember [inaudible] [0:09:20] in junior year?

Jake: Junior year we took the, I was in sophomore we took the practice.

RT: The process with the sophomore

Jake: Yeah practice with sophomore.

RT: Oh okay.

Jake: Junior year, I really just, I was confident in English I really didn't so much study for English. In math I just kind of went over some of the things that would be seen on the math section.

RT: Okay good, do you remember [inaudible] [0:09:45] like if there was 200 kids in class where would you be?

Jake: Probably the double digits 70 maybe I would say. I did all right.

RT: Good. You said you were an [inaudible] [0:10:04] class too...

Jake: In science.

RT: For science and senior year you had science?

Jake: No junior, senior had chemistry.

RT: No art classes senior year?

Jake: No.

RT: Okay.

Jake: I didn't take a science in senior year and...

RT: What was your science track? Freshman was bio?

Jake: Freshman was bio.

RT: So honors bio or that was considered as honors because you were bio?

Jake: No it was just bio, I am sorry sophomore year was chemistry that was...

RT: Okay, okay so sophomore year.

Jake: Sophomore it was chemistry.

RT: Did you take physics?

Jake: I took physics junior year and then senior I took contemporary topics and science which was just like...

RT: Like elective.

Jake: Yeah like.

RT: How much writing do you do in sites, because I remember you doing like lab reports

Jake: Yeah lab reports.

RT: Just in physics or math but in like current events and science that type of writing across like different types of scientific writing at all like papers on **[inaudible] [0:11:08]**

Jake: No, no nothing like that.

RT: That's okay, trying to get a feel for that. All right so let's go back to your senior language art class, the senior English right. Do you remember like picture prompt, do you remember the courses you took, do you remember the literature what he said Shakespeare writing the Gaelic literature, projects besides your research paper?

Jake: Throughout high school or just senior year?

RT: Senior year to get you ready for this experience.

Jake: Couple of persuasive essays here and there.

RT: Do you have writing folders in high school? Did you have a writing folder to throw your writing in?

Jake: Yeah, but I didn't really look at it.

RT: Never looked at it, now?

Jake: No.

RT: Would the teacher look at it?

Jake: Yeah she would grade it and put it in there. Like she would show it to us, and then take it back put it for [inaudible] [0:12:01]

RT: Did he go over your papers with you a lot? Like here is [inaudible] [0:12:05] must come here. So did that senior part.

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Okay, do you find that helpful?

Jake: In some cases yes. Sometimes I was just like maybe just typing too fast I would miss it, oh yeah I forgot about.

RT: Right.

Jake: But in other cases they would tell me like you didn't do that homework, oh can you explain.

RT: All right, okay good, all right. You said you did MLA, you remember MLA right?

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Okay, is that helping you now when you are doing some research paper? You are doing research paper now, right?

Jake: Not really much. In my class right now when I was doing a research paper, I am doing like – she gave us a topic, I think it's persuasive, that's right.

RT: Okay [0:12:48] [inaudible]

Jake: She really says like this is persuasive essay you should write about how marriages can be like used for not only like [inaudible] [0:12:59] financial security stuff like that so I going to write a persuasive essay because that is how I feel that I would best be able to talk about it.

RT: Okay great. Okay back in high school how often did you meet with your guidance and counselors?

Jake: Not very often. I, well it's not just me, my [inaudible] [0:13:20] relationship with our guidance and counselor.

RT: Really?

Jake: The senior, the senior clerk here. We like for example someone in the school asked her, can I get into this class? "Oh sure sure." Come senior year, this was last year. Come senior year she put him in a class that the person didn't want to be. I didn't ask to be in this class. "Oh I feel like this would help you." But I don't want to be in this class, I don't want to take this, this is more towards what I am interested in. Like for seniors we have like I guess more of a privilege, I guess we get to choose...

RT: You pick a time, pick and choose.

Jake: Right and we didn't get that so we really didn't [inaudible] [0:14:20]

RT: So bad taste in that. So they ever called in and say listen what are you doing in college or have one like this. Would you sit out talking – well have you out talking to your guidance and counselors?

Jake: That's off.

RT: Really.

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Wow. Did you realize how you are doing with writing or how you are doing at **Hasper**, remember...?

Jake: Just how I am doing class, every now and then really just like a five minute conversation.

RT: Would they call you down or would you go visit?

Jake: If I needed them I go down. If they wanted, if they needed me they would call me there.

RT: Okay, that one works. Do you remember passing **[inaudible] [0:14:36]**. Right, okay. How about SATs, did you take the SATs?

Jake: Yeah.

RT: How did you do?

Jake: I, okay I had a really weird thing with the SAT. I went to go take it at **[inaudible] [0:14:51]** and I had anxiety attack that morning...

RT: Sure, because of the test?

Jake: Because of the test, so I didn't take it. I went out with my dad lives in Long Island. I went out with him and he took me to a school in Long Island to go take the SAT exams within that weekend. I took it, the scores came in online but I never really like looked at them, my dad did but honestly I can't remember the score.

RT: Were you upset about the score?

Jake: My dad was like I think you could have done better.

RT: Were you so...

Jake: I am thinking it was like...

RT: You don't have to tell me the exact score, how do you think you did there?

Jake: How I think I did it? I thought I did really good on the English and I thought I did kind of crappy on the math.

RT: Okay.

Jake: But I can't remember what the scores were like.

RT: How about your high school exams, did your final exams...

Jake: Final exams – those were piece of cake.

RT: Good, you did okay that was a piece of cake. How about the English part ones?

Jake: Very easy.

RT: Did they have a waiting propped on it?

Jake: Yeah.

RT: It did, you don't remember it, do you?

Jake: It was just write like a five paragraph essay about a certain topic that we talked about through the half layer.

RT: Good okay. all right when you said your grades when you first came here, you talked about your grades being B+, A somewhere in there, B, B+, A, right? And that was even English.

Jake: Yeah, that was English.

RT: Okay, all right okay we talked a little bit about homework, all right. You said if you have homework over five days, you will take three or four days you complete, all right, okay. How seriously did you take your homework? Did you watch TV or listen to your iPod while you were doing it? Getting ready for late for class, you are running into the classroom?

Jake: Sometimes.

RT: Sometimes like that, okay.

Jake: It depended on homework I guess, like if it was like a big thing I would do it. If it was like a little, like a worksheet like five props on it, I would wait till go in early before class start just do it really quick.

RT: Good, okay. What about all your parents, did your parents push you to do homework, did they check your homework or stuff like that?

Jake: When I was younger, early high school like freshman, sophomore they did and then they kind of just like you are basically an adult that means you do what you need to do.

RT: All right so that was – so you are saying your senior year they never checked it, your parents, did they ask you about it?

Jake: No.

RT: Have you done your homework, stuff like that? Do you ever ask them for help?

Jake: Again when I was younger.

RT: Younger, right.

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Okay, do you think that if I [0:17:30] [inaudible]

Jake: Yeah.

RT: I guess where we are going [inaudible] [0:17:33] doing your homework. Do you think that if they said to you Greg do your homework; do you think you would have done it more? Your senior year you would be like I will get to it, you are mad at them or whatever which one do you think?

Jake: Probably just yeah I will get it.

RT: Whatever.

Jake: I got tongue.

RT: All right, good. Almost there we can cut more [inaudible] [0:17:51] appreciate again. Do you remember studying grammar in high school? Nouns, pronouns, commas, periods, stuff like that?

Jake: Yeah.

RT: Where do you think you are on a scale of one to ten, ten [inaudible] [0:18:04] how do you think you are when you do your papers now?

Jake: Right now probably like an eight.

RT: Good, okay.

Jake: So I am pretty good with it.

RT: Okay so even in senior year which has been you know around an eight?

Jake: Senior year, I was probably like a six or seven because like in English like a noun or an adjective I knew what was all that but like I didn't really like take it in so much and I didn't really pay attention to it because I was, oh I learnt this a long time ago, I know its really obvious now and then now I am like you need to know it to like write good papers.

RT: Sure, right. So you are more now keen on how important it is?

Jake: Right.

RT: Okay. In your senior class, was the grammar infused or was it like separate? Like for example was it like lets read this story and then we will talk about in that story how many nouns there were or was it today we are going to do grammar, you know finally we do grammar, do you remember which one it was? Was it like second grammar book?

Jake: It was pretty much just tied in to what we were doing I guess. It was like infused right.

RT: Okay good. All right so were your parents – forget the homework part. How involved were they in your academics? You talked about your father with the SATs that seems like he was pretty involved.

Jake: He is how can I put this, he is – he wants me to succeed in college very very badly. Like he wants me to pass college and just get like a good job like I know he wants to see me succeed. My mother is the same way it's just I guess not as passionate about it but in high school, my high school my dad just [inaudible] [0:19:52] classes he is in Long Island just as long as I am passing my test there is not problem. My mother she wouldn't really get on my case unless a teacher would email her or call her about like something like why he didn't hand this in or whatever.

RT: Okay.

Jake: Then she would get on my case but besides that not really.

RT: Okay. Would you accept anytime you had to take this course, devious course?

Jake: A little bit.

RT: How about your parents? Do they know you are in this course?

Jake: Yeah they know I am in this course. My mom she didn't really, she didn't really care, she was just like you got to do what you've got to do. My dad is like you could have done better than this.

RT: Right.

Jake: And he pushed me into take the challenge test, so I took it and he was happy about that but he is not so happy that I am not in there right now.

RT: Now when you took the challenge test, it was still on the testing center or what not. Was it - do you think that because it was the 2nd time taking it or - it is almost the same test.

Jake: Right, yes it was pretty much the same test

RT: So you knew what to expect...

Jake: I guess yeah I kind of knew what to expect and I think it was 8th grade a had a tutor came to my house and helped me study for like you know I think it was the GEPA [**Phonetic**] [0:21:07]

RT: Right, yeah.

Jake: And whatever it was [**inaudible**] [0:21:12] and she would tell me now read the like the answers first, like the question to the answer and then read it so that you know what to look for. So I would use that strategy and it worked so...

RT: Okay so that was something you didn't do the first time?

Jake: I did.

RT: But you were more...

Jake: I was just nervous.

RT: Okay.

Jake: I don't know it was like my really first time doing anything involved with college.

RT: Let me ask you this then, this is pretty interesting. The first time you took - you were in Rausch [**Phonetic**] [0:21:47] yet it was before you were in Rausch so you didn't know Rausch this is the library, you know correct and then afterwards you had already met some friends, your class or - so you think that maybe that helped a little bit too that you are more, that you weren't as nervous as you know familiar with this place?

Jake: Yeah I think so because I was more familiar and I kind of knew what to expect, so yeah I think, I think that helped me.

RT: All right good, all right. How about joining clubs, sports, anything like that?

Jake: I played sports but not with the high school. My freshman year I did baseball.

RT: You could go to the gym work out a little bit.

Jake: I used to go to the gym not so much now.

RT: Okay. So debate team, anything like that?

Jake: No. I played hockey just not with the school and I played baseball for my freshman year, my freshman year, then to high school then I gave up baseball, I am not really a baseball person.

RT: Good, all right. What were your titles, are you familiar with any of those? Like how about any relationship between historical figures and do you remember any of that and high school and literature like different things like who did you study in high school senior year? Like you said you experienced - know anybody else? What was the most prominent thing in high school literature that sticks out in your head? Like a project, or something you read, or a novel you read, like a summer reading novel or...

Jake: What's the name of that book? I can't remember it. It was the last think we did telling you I enjoyed it so much.

RT: What was the story like?

Jake: It was about this guy, I think in Germany and like he was conjuring up like devils and stuff.

RT: Really?

Jake: What is the name of that book?

RT: Vampire **[inaudible] [0:23:42]**. So we've talked about a little bit about why you chose to be here, your financial situation and do you feel ***** as a high school prepared you for here?

Jake: Well last year.

RT: What do you think they could have done better now that you are here for a little bit? I am going to ask you **[inaudible] [0:24:05]** just to see how you are doing now and give you the **[inaudible] [0:24:11]** but...

Jake: I think they could have done more things oriented towards college. It was kind of just like the same thing every single year like you know read this book, write a paper on it. They said you know we are trying to help you get ready for college but in my opinion no.

RT: If you had, your siblings come up so if you were, would be older than them lets say your sister, she is going to be graduating in a couple of years. What sound advice would you give her to maybe not wind up in a basic **[0:24:46] [inaudible]** class...

Jake: I would just tell her study very hard and...

RT: During high school?

Jake: During high school and I am sure it is different in other colleges to write the test but I just give her a heads up be like in ***** this is what I had to do, be prepared to do this.

RT: That is the same place you would take out when lets say you go into ***** or ***** **[Phonetic] [0:25:05]** or whatever after two years here. I know they take a placement test right. You are going to...

Jake: Pretty much say the same thing, yeah.

RT: Do you have any questions for me at this point or...?

Jake: No, no after I meet with you in a couple of weeks right.

RT: Yeah, yeah I am going to shut this off.

[0:25:25] End of Audio

Appendix P - Curriculum Assignment

Using the outline of a process essay, please answer the following questions in essay form. The topic of the essay is What I Achieved in High School and How it led me to Take This Basic Skills Class. Please answer each question as a paragraph to your process essay. Be careful to incorporate what we learned about essay writing in your answers.

1. Tell about your family. Did your parents go to college? Did they graduate?
2. At the end of your senior year in high school, did you feel that you were prepared for college? Academically and when considering maturity. Why?
3. What was high school like? Were you a good student? Rank? GPA? Honors/AP?
4. Can you reflect on your senior language arts classes (prompt: courses taken; literature; projects)? Do you recall writing requirements (writing folders; senior thesis; MLA)?
5. How often did you meet with your counselors in high school to discuss college/future plans?
6. Do you remember passing the HSPA? What about your SAT scores (if taken)? How did you do on your HS exams?
7. Did you complete your assignments and homework when assigned?
8. Did you study grammar in high school? What do you remember? Was it infused in/separate class?
9. How involved were your parents in your academics in high school?
10. Were you in any clubs? The captain of any academic teams (i.e. Debate, etc.)
11. Are you familiar with any titles/authors in World Literature? Relationship between historical events and literature?

Appendix Q – Proficiency Chart

High School Proficiency Chart

A/A+ Average in English Courses HSPA	AP/Honors Course	Passed
B+/A- Average in English Courses HSPA	Honors Courses	Passed
B Average in English Courses		

Appendix R – Non-Disclosure Agreement**MUTUAL CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT**

This Agreement is dated the Nov 11, 2010 and effective upon the date of first disclosure or the date of this Agreement, whichever occurs first, between and among **Richard D. Tomko** (hereinafter "Client") and TranscriptionStar - iSource Solutions Inc, a California corporation with office located at 23441 Golden Springs Drive, #346 Diamond Bar, California, Zip-91765 (hereinafter "Company") (iSource and Company each are referred to herein as a "Party" and are collectively referred to herein as the "Parties").

WHEREAS, Company has agreed to provide transcription services to **Richard D. Tomko**, during the course of which the Parties to this Agreement may wish to disclose to each other in oral and written form or in other medium, certain non-public confidential and proprietary information.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein and intending to be legally bound, the parties hereby agree as follows:

1. In connection with the Services, it may be necessary or desirable for a Party to disclose to the other certain non-public Confidential Information. For purposes of this Agreement, "Confidential Information" shall mean all non-public, confidential and proprietary information relating to the Parties, their respective clients and the Services, which has been or will be disclosed by a Party orally or as set forth in writing, or contained in some other tangible form.
2. The receiving Party hereby agrees to hold in strict confidence and to use all reasonable efforts to maintain the secrecy of any and all Confidential Information disclosed by the disclosing Party under the terms of this Agreement and may not

disclose Confidential Information without the express, written prior consent of the disclosing Party, with the exception of the following:

- (a) Information that, at the time of disclosure, is available to the public, or thereafter becomes available to the public by publication or otherwise, other than by breach of this Agreement by the receiving Party;
- (b) Information that the receiving Party can establish by prior record was already known to them or was in their possession at the time of disclosure and was not acquired, directly or indirectly, from the disclosing Party;
- (c) Information that the receiving Party obtains from a third party; provided however, that such information was not obtained by said third party, directly or indirectly, from the disclosing Party under an obligation of confidentiality toward the disclosing Party;
- (d) Information that the receiving Party can establish was independently developed by their employees or contractors who had no contact with and were not aware of the content of the Confidential Information.

3. The receiving Party may disclose Confidential Information if compelled to do so by a court, administrative agency or other tribunal of competent jurisdiction, provided however, that in such case the receiving Party shall, immediately upon receiving notice that disclosure may be required, give written notice by facsimile and overnight mail to the providing Party so that the providing Party may seek a protective order or other remedy from said court or tribunal. In any event, the receiving Party shall disclose only that portion of the Confidential Information which, in the opinion of their legal counsel, is legally required to be disclosed and will exercise reasonable efforts to ensure that any such information so disclosed will be accorded confidential treatment by said court or tribunal through protective orders, filings under seal and other appropriate means.

4. The receiving Party shall not use the Confidential Information for any purpose other than in connection with the Services. The receiving Party will only disclose

Confidential Information to their directors, officers, employees or agents, as applicable.

5. The receiving Party shall take all reasonable steps, including, but not limited to, those steps taken to protect their own information, data or other tangible or intangible property that they regard as proprietary or confidential, to ensure that the Confidential Information is not disclosed or duplicated for the use of any third party, and shall take all reasonable steps to prevent their directors, officers, employees and agents (as applicable) who have access to the Confidential Information from disclosing or making unauthorized use of any Confidential Information, or from committing any acts or omissions that may result in a violation of this Agreement.

6. Title to, and all rights emanating from the ownership of, all Confidential Information disclosed under this Agreement, or any material created with or derived from the Confidential Information, shall remain vested in the disclosing Party. Nothing herein shall be construed as granting any license or other right to use the Confidential Information other than as specifically agreed upon by the Parties.

7. Upon written request of the disclosing Party, the receiving Party shall return promptly to the disclosing Party all materials and documents, as well as any data or other media (including computer data and electronic information), together with any copies thereof, or destroy same and, upon request of the disclosing Party, provide a certificate of destruction.

All obligations established hereunder shall expire six (6) months from the date of disclosure.

9. The receiving Party agrees that the disclosure of Confidential Information without the express consent of the disclosing Party will cause irreparable harm to the disclosing Party, and that any breach or threatened breach of this Agreement by the

receiving Party will entitle the disclosing Party to injunctive relief, in addition to any other legal remedies available, in any court of competent jurisdiction.

10. This Agreement shall be construed under and governed by the substantive laws of California, without giving effect to the conflicts of laws provision thereof. Any disputes arising between the Parties relating to this Agreement shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue of the federal and state courts located in the City and State of California, and the Parties hereby waive any objection that they may have now or hereafter to the laying of venue of any proceedings in said courts and to any claim that such proceedings have been brought in an inconvenient forum, and further irrevocably agree that a judgment or order in any such proceedings shall be conclusive and binding upon each of them and may be enforced in the courts of any other jurisdiction.

11. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement among the Parties as to the subject matter contained herein, shall supersede any other prior or contemporaneous arrangements as to the Confidential Information, whether written or oral, and may be modified in writing only.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the day and year first above written.

TranscriptionStar - iSource Solutions Inc. _____

S. 

By: _____
Shiva Kumar
Designation: CEO

By: _____
Name:
Designation:

Appendix S – Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS)

- I. Reading and Comprehension
 - A. Successful students employ reading skills and strategies to understand literature.
They:
 - A1. Engage in an analytic process to enhance comprehension and create personal meaning when reading text. This includes the ability to annotate, question, agree or disagree, summarize, critique, and formulate a personal response.
 - A2. Make supported inferences and draw conclusions based on textual features, seeking such evidence in text, format, language use, expository structures, and arguments used.
 - A3. Use reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of types of literature, such as epic pieces.
 - A4. Understand plot and character development in literature, including character motive, causes for actions, and the credibility of events.
 - B. Successful students use reading skills and strategies to understand informational texts. They:
 - B.1. Understand instructions for software, job descriptions, college applications, newspapers, textbooks, etc.
 - B.2. Monitor themselves and correct themselves, as well as read aloud, in order to ensure comprehension.

B.3. Understand vocabulary and content, including subject terminology, connotative and denotative meanings, and idiomatic meanings.

B.4. Employ a variety of strategies to understand the origins and meanings of new words, including recognition of cognates and contextual clues.

C. Successful students are able to understand the defining characteristics of texts and recognize a variety of literary forms and genres. They:

C.1. Comprehend the salient characteristics of major types and genres of texts such as novels, short stories, horror stories, science fiction, biographies, autobiographies, poems, and plays.

C.2. Understand the formal constraints of different types of texts and can distinguish between, for example, a Shakespearean sonnet and a poem written in free verse.

C.3. Can discuss with understanding the effects of an author's style and use of literary devices to influence the reader and evoke emotions. This includes devices such as imagery, characterization, choice of narrator, use of sound, formal and informal language, allusions, symbol, irony, voice, flashbacks, foreshadowing, time, sequence, and mood.

C.4. Can identify archetypes, such as universal destruction, journeys and tests, and banishment, which appear in many types of literature, including American literature, world literature, myths, propaganda, and religious texts.

C.5. Can discuss with understanding themes such as initiation, love and duty, heroism, and death and rebirth, which appear in a variety of literary works and genres.

C.6. Can use aesthetic qualities of style, such as diction or mood, as a basis to evaluate literature that contains ambiguities, subtleties, or contradictions.

D. Successful students are familiar with a range of world literature. They:

D.1. Demonstrate familiarity with the major literary periods of English and American literature and their characteristic forms, subjects, and authors.

D.2. Demonstrate familiarity with authors from literary traditions **outside** the English-speaking world.

D.3. Demonstrate familiarity with major works of literature produced by American and British authors.

E. Successful students are able to discuss with understanding the relationships between literature and its historical and social contexts. They:

E.1. Know major historical events that may be encountered in literature.

E.2. Demonstrate familiarity with the concept that historical, social, and economic

contexts influence form, style, and point of view, and that social influences affect an author's descriptions of character, plot, and setting.

E.3. Demonstrate familiarity with the concept of the relativity of all historical perspectives, including their own.

E.4. Can discuss with understanding the relationships between literature and politics, including the political assumptions underlying an author's work and the impact of literature on political movements and events.

F. Successful students are able to read and interpret visual images, including charts and graphs. They:

F.1. Identify the primary elements of the types of charts, graphs, and visual media that occur most commonly in texts.

F.2. Interpret accurately the content of charts, graphs, and visual media that occur in texts.

II. Writing

A. Successful students apply basic grammar conventions in an effort to write clearly. They:

A.1. Identify and use correctly and consistently parts of speech, including nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, adjectives, and interjections.

A.2. Use subject-verb agreement and verb tense consistently and correctly.

A.3. Demonstrate consistent, correct, and appropriate pronoun agreement and use of different types of clauses and phrases, including adverb clauses, adjective clauses, and adverb phrases.

B. Successful students know the conventions of punctuation and capitalization.

They:

B.1. Use commas with nonrestrictive clauses and contrasting expressions.

B.2. Use ellipses, colons, hyphens, semi-colons, apostrophes, and quotation marks correctly.

B.3. Capitalize sentences and proper nouns correctly.

B.4. Consistently avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

C. Successful students know conventions of spelling. They:

C.1. Use a dictionary and other resources to see how to spell new, unfamiliar, or difficult words.

C.2. Differentiate between commonly confused terms, such as “its” and “it’s” or “affect” and “effect.”

C.3. Know how to use the spell-check and grammar-check functions in word processing software while understanding the limitations of relying on these tools.

D. Successful students use writing conventions to write clearly and coherently.

They:

D.1. Know and use several prewriting strategies, including developing a focus, determining the purpose, and creating outlines.

D.2. Use paragraph structure in writing as manifested by the ability to construct coherent paragraphs and arrange paragraphs in logical order.

D.3. Use a variety of sentence structures appropriately in writing, including compound, complex, compound-complex, parallel, repetitive, and analogous sentence structures.

D.4. Present ideas to achieve overall coherence and logical flow in writing and use appropriate techniques such as transitions and repetition to maximize cohesion.

D.5. Use words correctly, use words that convey the intended meaning, and use a varied vocabulary.

E. Successful students use writing to communicate ideas, concepts, emotions, and descriptions to the reader. They:

E.1. Know the difference between a topic and a thesis.

E.2. Articulate a position through a thesis statement and advance it using evidence, examples, and counterarguments that are relevant to the audience or issue at hand.

E.3. Use a variety of methods to develop arguments, including compare-contrast reasoning, logical arguments (inductive-~~deductive~~), and alternation between general and specific (connections between public knowledge and personal observation and experience).

E.4. Write to persuade the reader by anticipating and addressing counterarguments, using rhetorical devices, and developing an accurate and expressive style of communication that moves beyond mechanics to add flair and elegance to writing.

E.5. Use a variety of strategies to adapt writing to different audiences and purposes, such as including appropriate content and using appropriate language, style, tone, and structure.

E.6. Distinguish between formal and informal styles (i.e. academic essays vs. personal memos).

E.7. Use appropriate strategies and formats to write personal and business correspondence, including appropriate organizational patterns, formal language, and tone.

F. Successful students both use and prioritize a variety of strategies to revise and edit their written work to achieve the greatest improvement in the time available.

They:

F.1. Employ basic editing skills proficiently to identify obvious mechanical errors, clarify and improve the structure of the piece, and sharpen language and meaning.

F.2. Review ideas and structure in substantive ways to improve depth of information and logic of organization.

F.3. Reassess appropriateness of writing in light of genre, purpose, and audience.

F.4. Use feedback from others to revise their written work.

III. Research Skills

A. Successful students understand and use research methodologies. They:

A.1. Formulate research questions, refine topics, develop a plan for research, and organize what is known about the topic.

A.2. Use research to support and develop their own opinions, as opposed to simply restating existing information or opinions.

A.3. Identify claims in their writing that require outside support or verification.

B. Successful students know how to find a variety of sources and use them properly. They:

B.1. Collect information to develop a topic and support a thesis.

B.2. Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources.

B.3. Use a variety of print and electronic primary and secondary sources, including books, magazines, newspapers, journals, periodicals, and the Internet.

B.4. Understand the concept of plagiarism and how (or why) to avoid it and understand rules for paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting, as well as conventions for incorporating information from Internet-based sources in particular.

B.5. Evaluate sources of information located on the Internet in particular to ascertain their credibility, origin, potential bias, and overall quality.

B.6. Select relevant sources when writing research papers and appropriately include information from such sources, logically introduce and incorporate quotations, synthesize information in a logical sequence, identify different perspectives, identify complexities and discrepancies in information, and offer support for conclusions.

IV. Critical Thinking Skills

A. Successful students demonstrate connective intelligence. They:

A.1. Can discuss with understanding how personal experiences and values affect reading comprehension and interpretation.

B. Successful students demonstrate the ability to think independently. They:

B.1. Are comfortable formulating and expressing their own ideas.

B.2. Support their arguments with logic and evidence relevant to their audience and explicate their position as fully as possible.

B.3. Understand fully the scope of their arguments and the claims underlying them.

B.4. Reflect on and assess the strengths and weaknesses of their ideas and the expression of those ideas (Conley, 2005b).

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