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# An Examination of Relationships of Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Standardized Placement Test Scores, and Diverse Community College Students' Perceptions of Those Relationships

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**AN EXAMINATION OF RELATIONSHIPS OF READING AND WRITING  
SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS, STANDARDIZED PLACEMENT TEST  
SCORES, AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF THOSE RELATIONSHIPS**

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**Approved by: -**

**Robert Lucking (Chair)**

**Raymond E. Morgan (Member)**

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## Abstract

# AN EXAMINATION OF RELATIONSHIPS OF READING AND WRITING SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS, STANDARDIZED PLACEMENT TEST SCORES, AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THOSE RELATIONSHIPS

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Old Dominion University, 2004  
Director: Dr. Robert Lucking

Social cognitive theory explains the role that one's level of confidence plays in the accomplishment of a specific task. According to Bandura (1982, 1995), self-efficacy beliefs should align with performance. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshmen. Additionally, this study sought to understand the sources of these students' reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs through the descriptions of experiences they feel have influenced those beliefs.

There were three major research questions:

1. What is the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers?
2. Is there a difference in the strength of relationships among the scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on standardized

reading/writing placement tests of diverse community college freshman writers?

3. How do diverse community college freshman writers describe the experiences they think explain the relationships among their writing self-efficacy beliefs and their standardized writing placement test scores?

The study was conducted in two phases, with quantitative data obtained in the first phase and qualitative data in the second. Variables included race, age, sex, and placement in freshman composition. Among the findings of this study was that African American students in the research sample overestimated their reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs to a greater degree than Caucasian students. Moreover, for Caucasian students, a positive statistically significant relationship existed among their standardized reading/writing placement test scores and their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs scores. A similar statistical relationship did not exist for African American students. Even for both groups placed into freshman composition without a prerequisite reading or writing course, the dissimilarity in statistical significance was found.

Qualitative data obtained from 19 interviewees suggest that a strong difference existed in the relationship of language at home and at school for Caucasian and African American students. For the African Americans in the sample group interviewed, monolingual or bidialectal functioning suggested experiences of identity conflict and stress. Caucasian students, on the other hand, did not share similar experiences of conflict and stress.

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This dissertation is humbly dedicated  
to my mother, Millicent Gwendoline Woolford  
and my three sons, Karan, Swaran, and Zail Singh.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### *Freshman Composition*

Faculty members in community college English departments undertake a thankless, difficult, and ambiguous task when they teach freshman composition classes (Tate, 1993). Traditionally, the low-status, overworked faculty are expected to teach academic discourse to prepare students for writing in college classes. The underlying assumption is that the course will introduce novice writers to the genre of essay writing and, thus, prepare them for any college course in which academic writing is expected. College curricula traditionally distinguish “composition” from “writing,” with the former labeling the unique creation of English departments (Bloom, 2002) and the latter naming nonacademic written communication or writing by choice rather than compulsion (Elbow, 2002).

Colleges and universities expect the freshman composition class to fulfill the gate-keeping role of providing the basics and passing only those students who can be described as competent in academic writing at the end of the course. The main goal of freshman composition classes has been perceived as induction into the educated class and a vital opportunity for the one-way transmission of a dominant culture (Roemer, Schultz, & Durst, 1999). Consequently, in almost every college and university, the freshman composition course is one of few required courses for all college students pursuing an academic degree. The problem is that students and the instructors who teach them often dread this course. Students find the production of texts on demand unfulfilling, both in their dissatisfaction with content and in the arduous tasks of meeting

expected standards. Sometimes the assessment of writing remains a mystery to students. McLeod (1987) observes, "Many students come to us with the belief, sometimes well grounded in their previous experience that writing teachers are capricious individuals, and that, therefore, success in the writing class will have little to do with ability or effort" (430). Faculty, on the other hand, feel overworked in evaluating substandard texts and underappreciated by the departments they serve.

Another difficulty with freshman composition is that the writing often appears distant and disconnected from the lives and experiences of students. Elbow (2002) summarizes the conflicts inherent in the dissatisfaction with freshman composition as follows:

But the very appeal of academic discourse . . . tends to rest on the assumption that we can separate the ideas and reasons and arguments from the person who holds them; that there are such things as unheld opinions - assertions that exist uninfluenced by who says them and who hears them - positions not influenced by who says them and who hears them - positions not influenced by one's feelings, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, historical position, etc.- thinking that "stands on its own two feet." (p. 102)

The value of separating speaker from content of discourse has influenced also the climate of many freshman composition classes. The discipline remains entrenched in writing as process theory that emphasizes heuristics and composition guidelines, and thus formulas. Writing process theory had evolved in opposition to the traditional and superficial emphasis on writing for surface correctness. What inexperienced student writers need more than formulas, however, are engaged readers of student texts (Harris,



1997). Unfortunately, most composition classes do not have engaged faculty readers or engaged student writers. They encourage distance in perspectives, discourage the integration of personal experiences in such admonitions as writing only in third person, and insist on absolute rules for what constitutes “good” academic writing.

Classes often become bogged down in academic writing as formula, overwhelmed by the rules of grammar, punctuation, and usage together with the student perceived arbitrariness of style guide minutia. Composition teachers know that many of their students dread this required course, but they feel compelled to preserve the same curriculum they were taught and have used for decades. Lavelle and Zuercher (1999) comment on this misplaced emphasis: “Although writing is a qualitative phenomenon, emphasis is often placed largely on the acquisition of skills as critical to improvement, as though ‘more’ is better” (p. 15). Moreover, academic writing was once the domain of colleges and universities, but since the national focus on academic standards increased with the onset of remedial writing classes, attention was focused on high school instruction. Students at increasingly lower grade levels are now taught academic writing as opposed to writing, and they enter colleges with impressions already formed about freshman composition classes.

Negative attitudes toward freshman composition are sometimes compounded for students of color, who may feel that their social realities remain unexpressed and, therefore, unheard. In *Naming silenced lives*, McLaughlin and Tierney (1993) discuss the conditions in education that work towards maintaining objectivity and disengagement while at the same time creating conditions that strip students of their meaningful identities. Added to the constraints of freshman composition courses that

students of all backgrounds encounter, issues of differing home cultures and dialects may influence student attitudes and expectations.

As composition theorists continue to debate varied perspectives on the focus of freshman composition courses, students and faculty press on with immediate concerns, addressing the needs of diverse students who must meet standard requirements of competence and maintaining supportive environments in which such instruction can take place. Faculty in community colleges have the added challenge of teaching diverse students, some of whom are preparing for college transfer while others are preparing for the workplace as soon as they graduate. Faculty have consistently heavy teaching loads, and many seldom engage in thinking critically about their discipline (Tinberg, 1997).

#### *Statement of the Problem*

All students entering freshman composition at the study location must obtain satisfactory scores on the reading/writing components of a standardized placement test, or they must complete the required developmental courses successfully. Although students have met the criteria for placement in freshman composition classes, these students' experiences and levels of confidence differ. Some students, for example, may be unable to articulate their levels of confidence in relation to their performance. According to Bandura (1982, 1986, 1993, 1995), self-efficacy beliefs and performance should be aligned, or self-efficacy beliefs should only slightly overestimate performance. Some students, on the other hand, may have overly high self-confidence beliefs that are unaligned with their reading/writing performance. Conversely, some students may have overly low self-confidence in relation to their reading/writing performance. Unaligned self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing performance will influence negatively the

quality of students' work, persistence levels, stress levels, and emotional engagement in the subject (Bandura, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995).

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores of diverse community college freshmen. Additionally, this study sought to understand the sources of these students' reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs through the descriptions of experiences they feel have influenced those beliefs.

Using the theoretical framework of Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995) to understand writing self-efficacy beliefs, the study explored the roles of mastery in reading/writing skills, vicarious experiences in which self-efficacy beliefs are strengthened by observations of successful performance by models similar to one's self, social persuasion in which external environments operate to encourage success rather than failure, and physiological and emotional states in which low stress, high energy, and positive moods can prevail.

The results of this study will aid English faculty in recognizing that the teaching of English is a cultural activity. Moreover, the results will provide faculty useful information regarding students' self-efficacy beliefs and their relationships to the complex backgrounds diverse students bring to the classroom.

### *Research Questions*

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers?
2. Is there a difference in the strength of relationships among the scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on standardized reading/writing placement tests of diverse community college freshman writers?
3. How do diverse community college freshman writers describe the experiences they think explain the relationships among their writing self-efficacy beliefs and their standardized writing placement test scores?

### *Urban Significance*

The demographics of Hampton Roads and the city of Virginia Beach in particular illustrate the high level of diversity within the area schools and communities. According to the 2000 Census Report, the city's racial demographics are as follows: 71% Caucasian; 19% African American; 5% Asian; 1% American Indian; and 4% Hispanic. Ethnic diversity is seen at the local community college where the current study was conducted. On average, 59% of the student population were Caucasian, 29% African American, and 12% were students of other races. Although the student population in the age range of 18-21 is the fastest growing age range, the average age of students was 29 at the time of the study. Overall, the college states that its enrollment has increased

steadily parallel to the area's growth, with an associate's degree worth on average \$40,000 annual income.

The community college, often described as the "people's college," enrolls a microcosm of the area's diversity beyond the characteristics of ethnicity, age, and sex. The student population includes diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, different academic backgrounds, and different levels of academic abilities. Moreover, students enroll for many reasons, including college transfer, workforce development, and lifelong learning. Increasingly, the community college is becoming the college of choice for the first two years of undergraduate study because students in urban environments can conveniently maintain jobs and families while they further their education.

#### *Pilot Study*

Research data indicate a strong correlation between students' belief in their abilities to perform a task and their actual performance (Campillo & Pool, 1998; Schunk, 1983; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). This researcher previously conducted a pilot study on students' self-efficacy beliefs and writing apprehension. The idea for the pilot study was conceived after informal interviews with faculty colleagues about their perceptions of student attitudes in freshman and developmental writing classes. Several faculty gave anecdotal evidence that many of their students did not like composition classes. Some faculty stated that sometimes their African American students more than students of other races appeared to blame their instructors when they (the students) failed to write satisfactorily. These faculty members, both African American and Caucasian, reported also that students sometimes developed hostility towards them, and this behavior seriously undermined these students'

engagement in the classroom, their relationship with instructors, and their ability to succeed.

Additionally, the interest in a pilot study came from a desire to explore the role that race may play in composition classes, not from a linguistic orientation but from a psychological one. For example, what makes some students perform well in composition classes while others flounder even when writing ability appears to be similar? Do African American students have unmet expectations that may prevent some from succeeding? Do African American students have higher levels of writing anxiety than students of other races? Are there differences in writing self-efficacy beliefs between African American and other race students?

To explore the answers to these questions, the researcher conducted a pilot study in summer 2002. Participants were 39 diverse community college students in the researcher's freshman composition class and her two developmental writing classes. In the freshman study group of 16 students, 13 were female, 3 male; 5 African American and 11 of other races, majority Caucasian. The two developmental classes of 23 students, included 12 female, 11 male, 13 African American, and 10 of other races, majority Caucasian.

The timing of the study (two weeks before the end of the summer session) resulted in a serious threat to the findings. Of the original class enrollments, 26% had already withdrawn officially or had stopped attending class. The researcher administered the following instruments: the Daly Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension and the Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement as designed by Shell, Murphy, and Bruning (1989). From a statistical analysis with t-tests, no significant difference was found

between African American and other race students in writing anxiety at either the freshman or developmental levels. These findings were consistent with research findings that writing apprehension was dispositional, not situational, and, thus, should not be affected by race or circumstances to any significant degree (Gilliam-Scott, 1984).

Additionally, no significant difference was found between the scores of African American students and those students of other races in writing tasks beliefs at either the freshman or the developmental level. The Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement as designed by Shell, Murphy, and Bruning (1989) has two sub scores, one for writing tasks and the other for writing skills self-efficacy beliefs. The tasks measurement determines how confident students are in performing specific writing tasks, such as completing a letter to the editor or an essay in answer to a test question. The Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement determines how confident students are in applying writing skills, such as punctuating a passage correctly or organizing sentences in a paragraph. Although no difference was found in the writing task scores of African Americans and that of students of other races, a statistically significant difference was found in Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores between African American and those students of other races at the freshman composition level. African American freshman mean was 474 and Caucasian mean was 602. There was no difference in course grades. Notably, this difference in self-efficacy beliefs between the racial groups did not result at the developmental level. One explanation for the sameness of the developmental group could be that at the time of the study, as the semester was about to end, the developmental group that remained engaged in the courses had already

mastered the minimum skill requirement for freshman level composition and, thus, had relatively high self-efficacy beliefs, regardless of race.

Students' writing skills beliefs predict their writing performance (Murphy & Shell, 1989). Consequently, one outcome of the study that warranted further research was the statistically significant difference in writing skills beliefs between African Americans and students of other races in freshman composition classes, although there was no difference in the groups' final course grades.

This research study was partly based on the results of the pilot study. The current study examined more closely the role of beliefs in students' preparation for success in freshman composition classes. Because reading/writing are related activities, this study examined the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and students' performance on standardized reading/writing placement tests as students began their study of freshman composition. Furthermore, students must meet the prerequisite score ranges in both reading and writing placement before they can enroll in freshman composition at the college location of the current study.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Writing self-efficacy beliefs refer to the level of confidence that one has in one's ability to accomplish a writing task and apply appropriate writing skills. Similarly, reading self-efficacy beliefs is the level of confidence one has in one's ability to read a particular genre of writing and apply appropriate skills to the task. According to Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995, 1995), self-efficacy beliefs influence performance, persistence, choice of careers, reaction to failure, level of engagement, coping strategies, and effort. Sources of self-efficacy beliefs include mastery of skills, physiological and



emotional states, social persuasion (supportive environment), and vicarious experiences, which are defined as role models, visible people like one's self, who are seen in successful communities. Self-efficacy beliefs are not simply superficial recitations of capability. Self-efficacy beliefs are based on complex cognitive processing of multiple factors, including cognitive, motivational, affective in terms of handling of stressors as challenges, and selection of activities and environments.

### *Assumptions*

This study was based on the assumption that writing is not a mere “process” but is an activity consisting of acts and operations, in which writers' cultural experiences interact. Writing involves learning to be a member of a culture and is much more than learning formulas and perfecting surface features of texts. Purves and Purves (1986) conclude, “ Research in the activity of writing must therefore take into account the individual writer's needs, beliefs systems, knowledge structures, and vocational, professional, and social identities – all of which form the writer's cultural experiences” (p. 195). Additionally, this study recognized that reading/writing, although separate disciplines, are closely related cognitive activities.

Much of this research study depended on self-disclosed information of voluntary participants. This researcher assumed that the data collected would be honest representations of students' experiences. The quantitative data expanded the qualitative to achieve a balance of perspectives. Chapter III provides details of the study's design and methodology.

### *Limitations of the Study*

The following qualifications apply to this study:

- A. Because reading/writing are closely related activities, information regarding reading self-efficacy beliefs was included as a point of contrast and a significant cognitive ability related to writing, but examination of reading instruction or reading self-efficacy beliefs was not a major focus of this research study.
- B. Although the college location of the study has several racial/ethnic categories listed in its demographic data, this study focused on the two largest groups, Caucasians and African Americans.
- C. Some students may have been unwilling to articulate their experiences, so that voluntary participation may have biased the study inherently. A representative sample of students was invited for Phase 2, but participants received no prior details regarding the content of the interviews.
- D. The validity of the placement tests used may be questionable in terms of biases inherent in standardized testing, but the purpose of this study was not to examine validity of these tests. These tests are used for reading, writing, and math placement at the college location of the study, as they are used in hundreds of colleges and universities.
- E. Participants in this study were volunteers. However, intact classes were used for quantitative data in the first phase of the study, and a representative sample was used for the qualitative data in the second phase of the study.
- F. Students' completion of the standardized placement tests in this study did not take place at the same time that the measurements for reading/writing

self-efficacy beliefs were conducted. Placement tests may have been completed as long as nine months before students enrolled in freshman composition classes or as early as a few weeks before enrollment; however, it is unlikely that the students' reading/writing performance changed significantly during any lapses between placement testing and completion of self-efficacy measurements. Students who took developmental classes before placement in freshman composition were the only ones likely to have significant changes in skills and self-efficacy beliefs because of direct reading/writing instruction they received. The study analyzed the developmental and nondevelopmental group separately.

#### *Definition of Terms*

A number of terms need to be defined for the purpose of this study.

*Bicultural* was defined as the ability to adapt to and function effectively in two distinctly different cultures.

*Biculturalism* was defined according to Darder (1991): "a process wherein individuals learn to function in two distinct sociocultural environments: their primary culture, and that of the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live" (p. 48).

*Bidialectal* was defined as being functional in two distinctly different dialects.

*Culture* was defined according to Hofstede (1980), "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (p. 25).

*Diverse* was defined as the racial categories used by the study location to include black or African American, white or Caucasian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and “other,” which includes all other identified or unidentified racial groups attending the community college location of this study. These racial categories are consistent with those used in the college’s reporting data. *Diverse* also includes differences in age, sex, and educational backgrounds. Since African Americans and Caucasians represent the two largest racial groups, the study compares them and references the other groups as “other.”

*Fictive kinship* was defined as relationship rooted in African tradition that many African Americans hold, in which individuals unrelated by blood are considered members of one’s extended family.

*Racelessness* was defined as the absence of distinguishing racial/cultural markers through conscious effort.

*Reading self-efficacy beliefs* was defined as the level of confidence one has in one’s behavior to complete specific reading tasks, such as a 400-page novel or the daily newspaper, as well as the level of confidence one has in one’s ability to apply specific reading skills, such as recognize letters or use previous knowledge to understand new reading material (Shell, Murphy, and Bruning, 1989).

*Reading skills* was defined as the ability to apply standard behaviors, such as recognize letters, understand compound and complex sentences, or use previous knowledge to understand new reading materials. Specific reading skills may vary because they can be adapted for relevance (Shell, Murphy, and Bruning, 1989).

*Reading tasks* was defined as specific reading genres, such as reading newspapers, novels, or new reading material. Specific reading tasks may vary because they can be adjusted for relevance.

*Self-efficacy beliefs* was defined as the confidence one has in one's ability to perform a specific task (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995).

*Writing self-efficacy beliefs* was defined as the confidence one has in one's ability to perform different writing tasks, such as compose a letter to the editor or an essay in answer to a test question, as well as the confidence one has in one's ability to apply relevant writing skills, such as punctuate a text or organize sentences in a paragraph to accomplish a writing task (Pajares and Johnson, 1993).

*Writing skills* was defined as the ability to apply standard rules of composing, grammar, and mechanics, including organization, development, sentence structure, punctuation, usage, and spelling (Shell, Murphy, and Bruning, 1989). Specific writing skills may vary because they can be adjusted for relevance in any appropriate environment.

*Writing tasks* was defined as specific genres of writing, such as a letter to the editor, an essay in response to a test question, class notes, or a term paper. Specific writing tasks may vary because they can be adjusted for relevance.

*Vicarious experiences* was defined as recollections of people like one's self who exhibit success in a particular accomplishment of interest.

### *Summary*

Chapter I introduced the challenges surrounding the teaching of freshman composition, one of few required courses that most college students are required to take.

It outlined the purpose of the current study, which was to examine the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and the scores students received on a standardized placement test. Moreover, this study explored the perceptions that African American and Caucasian students had regarding the sources of their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs. Chapter 1 presented an overview of the study's theoretical framework, limitations of the study, and definition of key terms. Chapter II will examine other related research, which provides a necessary context for the current research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### *Introduction*

This chapter presents a review of related literature that provided the theoretical framework for this study and the context in which the study was located. The chapter is divided into eight sections: the well publicized “Black/White Education Gap”; culture as an added dimension to the examination of race; assumptions about composition instruction; writing self-efficacy beliefs; writing apprehension or anxiety; cultural implications and the study of writing self-efficacy beliefs; the concept of “error” in composition classes; and research gaps.

Section 1 provides a context for a study of racial differences in writing self-efficacy beliefs by tracing the historical tone and content of the national discussion of race and its impact on American education. Section 2 reviews theories of culture and its relationship to race. Designating students only by race omits more complex factors that a study of culture can provide to the analysis. Section 3 addresses varying assumptions of what the study of writing encompasses. This section outlines the views that academic writing in Standard American English is a cultural activity, the reality of which writing instructors often ignore. Section 4 explains the theory of self-efficacy and how it applies to the study of reading/writing and ultimately performance. Section 5 provides an overview of the theory of writing anxiety or apprehension and its role in writing self-efficacy beliefs. Section 6 analyzes instructional and social attitudes toward error in student writing. Section 7 outlines several gaps in the research studies of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs.

### *The Black/White Education Gap*

The educational achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students has received much publicity (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Bankston & Caldas, 1997). The gap is shown to exist in every level of education from elementary school, high school, through SAT scores, and the Praxis exam for prospective teachers (Walzer and Warchol, 2001; Warchol & Walzer, 2001). Caucasian students consistently outperform African American students on standardized tests, in grade point averages, and academics in general.

Researchers have offered many explanations for the Black/White academic gap. One of the most popular books on this subject, *The bell curve* (Hernstein & Murray, 1994), suggests that the gap results from cognitive differences that stem from genetic inequality between African Americans and Caucasians. The cognitive inequality explanation is far from new and appears to have intermittent periods of attention and controversy. According to Jencks and Phillips (1998), the U.S. Army in 1917 conducted the first extensive mental testing in the United States, and since the results showed that Caucasians surpassed African Americans substantially in mental testing, the argument between biological determinism and cultural determinism dominated the nation's conversation. Following desegregation's legal victory in 1954 in the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that separate but equal education was unconstitutional, biological disparity and school performance lost its popularity in favor of environmental disparity and school performance. Jensen (1969) then challenged the environment argument with his statistical data about genetic differences, consequently refanning interest in the



genetics theory, which continues in spite of overwhelming criticism and charges of racism (Jencks & Phillips, 1998).

In addition to explanations of genetics, The Brookings Institution published several studies that suggest large class size, funding inequity, tracking measurement flaws, and school vouchers may be more compelling explanations for the differences in test scores between African Americans and Caucasians. Furthermore, socioeconomic differences exacerbated by segregated schools may have contributed significantly to the gap (*Closing the gap*, 2001).

One of the most compelling arguments for desegregation as a way to close the gap is a study by Bankston and Caldas (1997) in which these researchers found that the gap between African Americans and Caucasians was least significant in schools with majority Caucasian students. These researchers found that African American students in Caucasian schools performed better than African American students in racially mixed or predominantly African American schools. Controlling for several factors, including family socioeconomics, parental education, family structure, and student time spent watching television, these researchers used data from a Graduate Exit Examination administered in Louisiana public high schools. Specifically, they used data for all tenth grade students tested in 1990 and found that “race remains the most powerful predictor of test outcomes.” Furthermore, African American students in predominantly Caucasian schools performed better for reasons unclear to the researchers. Their only explanation is a suspicion that these mainly suburban students did not experience the high degree of racial and social isolation from other races that urban students usually experience. This conclusion is similar to the implications of a study of 130 African American or

interracial students by Scarr and Weinberg (1976), which found that these children, adopted by “advantaged” Caucasian parents, scored above the mean of Caucasian students. Thus, race alone did not account for the students’ high scores.

African American researchers have offered other explanations as well. Allen and Jewell (1996) blame desegregation of schools because African American children were deprived of their cultural identity and thrust into a system that appears to perpetuate racial inequalities. Morgan (1995) traces the painful steps taken in the 1960s and 70s to desegregate schools, which were mostly unwilling participants in a system that developed mainly because of deliberate interventions:

The effects on Black families from the national resistance to the Supreme Court’s desegregation decision, the continuous battles Black parents waged to get equity in education, the dilapidated buildings and underpaid Black teachers in their neighborhood schools, and the pilfering of school supplies to assist White “academies” over a period of years, should be factored into the Black-White disparities in school performance in the 1960s and 1970s. (p. 144)

Giving a wider sociological and historical explanation for the poorer academic performance of African American students, Ogbu (1990) attributes low achievement of African American youth to their caste-like state in the United States. Observing low-caste students in Britain, New Zealand, Japan, India, and Australia, Ogbu (1990) found similarities between these students and African American students in their attitudes toward school. He notes that minority groups differ in their cultural frame of reference from the majority culture. He calls African Americans “involuntary minority” because most of their ancestors arrived in the United States during the period of African

enslavement. Voluntary minorities may choose to participate in the dominant culture without fear of loss of their primary culture. On the other hand, involuntary or caste-like minority groups, including African Americans, who were not immigrants to the U.S., do not share this willingness to adopt mainstream culture because of a strong fear that they will surrender their own identities. “Cultural and language differences,” states Ogbu (1990), “become boundary-maintaining mechanisms between themselves and the dominant group” (p. 48).

At the heart of this conflict for involuntary minority groups is the use of Standard American English in a school curriculum that has traditionally upheld White American culture and associated it with the use of Standard American English. African American students very often adopt negative attitudes to school as a defense mechanism, “affective dissonance,” according to Devos (as cited in Ogbu, 1990). African Americans, whose culture was strongly shaped by hundreds of years of institutional racism, segregation, and a “caste” system, resorted to fighting for educational equality during the Civil Rights era and won a landmark victory for desegregation of schools in 1954. Furthermore, several states, such as Virginia, opposed the federal government’s ruling and took additional years to comply, thus making African Americans in integrated public education a still recent phenomenon.

Expanding his theory of caste, Ogbu (1990) suggests that when involuntary minority groups do resolve to succeed academically, they often internalize their success as group betrayal and succumb to self-defeating fears of group ostracism. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) characterize this conflict as “the burden of ‘acting white.’” These researchers conducted a study in a Washington, D.C., high school where fictive kinship,

extensive feelings of strong group identity in people unrelated by blood, prevailed among students. The researchers give historical reasons for the development of this strong collective identity among African Americans: economic and other forms of exploitation during and after slavery and a transformation of Caucasian perception of African American homogeneity into a system to preserve collective identity. Forced group identification, punishing the whole group for the actions of a few, was a strategy used by the dominant white power structure in response to threats by African Americans such as Nat Turner (Fordham, 1988).

Collective punishment became a reason for solidifying relationships among African Americans. Fictive kinship, rooted in African traditions, continues to influence the African American community in its value of the welfare of the group higher than the welfare of the individual. Hence, the affectionate terms among strangers: “brother” and “sister.” African American group identification requires scrutiny of individuals for rejection or acceptance into the group. Appropriate skin color or physical features do not guarantee acceptance either, so one’s behavior will determine if one passes the test for group acceptance, the criteria for which are set by the African American community (Williams, 1981).

In addition, comparative studies of black and white value orientations suggest significant differences between these two groups, which may account for differences in the competence beliefs of students but which are not discussed widely in mainstream academic studies. In a study of 799 college students, Carter (1990) used a Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) model and, consequently, found four distinct differences between value orientations of African American and Caucasian students. These differences Carter

(1990) notes are based not on individual values, but on a theoretical model of group differences. Students were tested in a questionnaire of 150 items to determine how they differed in their views of human nature (1) whether or not humans were inherently evil: person/nature relationships, (2) what is the ideal form of coexistence with nature, subjugation, harmony, or mastery: time value concepts, (3) how important is the present, past, or future to the respondent's life: meaningful activity, (4) what is the ideal way to spend one's time in expressive/emotional pursuits: self satisfaction goals or direct action, (5) which type of interaction of individual to group is valued, individualistic, authoritative, or collective, (6) social relationships.

The research findings by Carter (1990) indicate a set of similarities for generally accepted American values, but several differences in other areas. Among the findings of significant group differences, one is that African American more than Caucasian respondents believed that humans are basically evil. Another difference is African Americans' choice of "subjugation to nature," meaning that they expressed a greater awareness of being helpless to control external factors. A third area of difference is African American preference for a past time orientation, meaning a greater group value for customs and traditions. A fourth area of difference is in the African American selection of expressive individualism, which suggests to the researchers that African Americans value opportunities to develop personal style and place one's uniqueness on each activity.

The fifth distinction in the research findings by Carter (1990) is in the African American preference for lineal social relations, meaning that African Americans value a hierarchy of authority. Carter (1990) interprets the study results as indication that

African American and Caucasian students do not perceive their environment in the same way and, therefore, may experience their classroom and community environments differently. Carter's (1990) study also demonstrates that group culture can explain students' world view and provide possible explanations for the perceived disparities in academic performance between African American and Caucasian students.

Another explanation for the disparities that may be informed by cultural differences is that contrary to the group collective values in the African American communities, American schools, influenced by the dominant white culture, elevate individual performance (Darder, 1991). Thus, African American students who excel while their peers fail become ostracized rather than admired by their communities. If the group does not succeed, the few outstanding individuals are seen as anomalies, "acting white" or "sell outs." Furthermore, when African Americans excel, the isolation and spotlighting that occur in their public and professional lives result from both the African American and Caucasian communities' inherent reaction – African Americans become suspect, potentially isolated and stigmatized by the African American community – while the Caucasian community spotlights them as examples of "unAfrican American" success (Fordham, 1988; Morgan, 1995).

The theory of "acting white" has its detractors, however. The National Educational Longitudinal Study done by the U.S. Department of Education in 1988, 1990, and 1992, refutes the belief espoused by Fordham and Ogbu (1986) that "acting white" is a phenomenon that accounts for the Black/White educational achievement gap. Examples of African American student success, no matter how statistically low, become the main reason for discounting the "acting white" theory. Jencks and Phillips (1998)

state, “Policymakers, therefore, should not allow concern about the so called oppositional culture to distract them from more fundamental issues, such as improving schools and providing adequate motivation, support, and guidance for students weighed down by the burdens of poverty” (p. 392). Nonetheless, studies by Steele (1990, 2000) suggest that African-American students perform less well when they focus on negative stereotypes of themselves. African American students often internalize negative stereotypes that, when recognized, demand energy to overcome, and when unrecognized, produce anxiety (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001). Steele (1997) and Fries-Britt and Turner (2001) dispute any assumption that African-American students’ internalized fear of negative stereotypes or negative perception of their culture is irrelevant to their academic performance.

Related, but not identical to the theory of “acting white,” is the phenomenon of racelessness. Fordham (1988) explains *racelessness* as follows:

The practice of becoming raceless appears to have emerged as a strategy both to circumvent the stigma attached to being Black, and to achieve vertical mobility . . . . Out of their desire to secure jobs and positions that are above the ceiling typically placed on Blacks, they have adopted personae that indicate a lack of identification with, or a strong relationship to, the Black community in response to an implicit institutional mandate: Become “un-Black” (p. 58).

In “Racelessness as a factor in African American students’ school success: Pragmatic strategy or Pyrrhic victory?” Fordham (1988) discusses her ethnographic study of 33 African American 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students in the District of Columbia Public Schools, 22 of whom were underachievers and 12 high achievers. Her findings include

that a raceless persona, whether conscious or unconscious, was encouraged and valued in American schools either as a way to fit in with teachers and administrators' expectations or as a survival mechanism among African American peers.

African American students in this study expressed little awareness of being bicultural and felt strongly that race rejection was a necessary means for academic success. Students repeatedly stated that to be successful they disassociated themselves from African Americans. One academically successful student rejected her family's invitations to attend concerts with African American performers and preferred to go alone to hear the Washington Philharmonic. This same student expressed outrage that a recruiting college sent her a pamphlet advertising a club for African American students because she would not participate, preferring to identify with *all* people. Another female student made deliberate attempts to hide her academic abilities from her peers while another refused to classify herself as African American, Negro, Colored, or Afro American and preferred "other." Furthermore, Fordham (1988) found that African American females showed a stronger tendency to be disassociated from race than did African American males.

Male students in the Fordham (1988) study made a greater attempt than females to associate with the African American community, but they expressed ambivalence about African American identity and academic success. One male student used classroom humor as a shield against peer rejection while another male student committed himself to scholastic achievement in order to dispel negative stereotypes of African American men. Fordham (1988) notes that for many students, developing a racelessness persona brings emotional conflict, but students often feel a strong desire for



upward mobility even if they must alienate themselves from the African American community in order to achieve it.

Race rejection has a long history in the African American community (Ford et al., 1994), and nowhere more startling than in the influential study by Clark during the trial of *Brown v. the Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas*. Black elementary school children overwhelmingly stated a preference for the white dolls in the study rather than the black ones used because the children attributed positive characteristics with the Caucasian dolls and negative characteristics with the black dolls. More recently, African Americans in the media, such as McCain and Winfrey or politicians such as Wilder, have displayed public images of racelessness, which has contributed to their success (Klose, 1984). As long as schools continue to elevate the dominant culture and discourage biculturalism, African Americans must continue to address for themselves the issue of racial and cultural identification.

“Perhaps one of the most difficult beliefs to interrogate, to examine from another’s angry gaze, is the construct of race,” observes Goodburn (1999). The discomfort in examining race constructs in writing classrooms, however, has been endured by Delpit, (1995); Gilyard, (1999); and McLaren (1993). Ford (1995b), in her research of majority Caucasian public school teachers, found that most denied race as a factor in their instruction, describing themselves as “color-blind” and part of an unnamed but universal culture. According to Gilyard (1999), “race,” a subject of the “other” and seldom the topic that includes examination of “Whiteness,” is “at least partly a social and rhetorical construction” (p. 47). Refusal to engage in “Whiteness” as a social and rhetorical construction continues to result in superficial discourse and crosscultural

relationships. Goodburn (1999) states, “The consequences of white teachers not examining their notions of ‘raceless subjectivity’ are far reaching, particularly with respect to how they view (and judge) the experiences of students of color in relation to such an invisible white norm” (p. 70-71). Denial of race or racism is a practice of perpetuating racism itself.

Similarly, issues of class and culture often are not acknowledged in the classroom in spite of the reality of student diversity and the pervasive racial distinctions between students and teachers. To illustrate the unspoken differences in race and power, Delpit (1995) analyzes the speech directives of Caucasian middle-class teachers, whom she says come from the “culture of power” and are oblivious to the need for direct instruction rather than indirect speech for students of dissimilar backgrounds. When these teachers interact with African American students and parents, miscommunication occurs because the Caucasian teachers resort to reducing their location of power through indirect speech. Delpit (1995) states, “Hence the power she [teacher] actually holds may be veiled in such questions/commands as ‘Would you like to sit down now?’ . . . Her indirectness and soft-spokenness may indeed be . . . an attempt to reduce the implication of overt power in order to establish a more egalitarian and non-authoritarian classroom atmosphere” (p. 36). Meanwhile, some African American students miss these masked linguistic codes and end up becoming labeled as uncooperative.

Coping strategies with school culture include the sometimes rebellious use of “Black English,” which ultimately insures failure (McLeod, 1987). Educators generally accept the cultural hegemony that elevates Standard American English as the language

of American schools (Darder, 1991). Consequently, any attempt to bring one's home language into schools is perceived by educators as negative and self-defeating. "Speakers of African American English are often perceived to be slow learners or uneducable" (Ball & Lardner, 1997). These researchers discuss the court case in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1979, in which a judge ruled that treating African American students the same as any other racial group and failing to address the pedagogical implications of their home language actually created a "barrier to learning." The "Commentary" by the African American Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English (as cited in Ball and Lardner, 1997) states, "The African American language system in and of itself is not a barrier to learning. The barrier is negative attitudes toward that language system . . . in an unwillingness to adapt teaching styles to students' needs" (p. 483). In "Fighting back by writing Black: Beyond racially reductive composition theory," Holmes (1995) outlines the struggles for African American voices starting with the African American Arts Movement of the 1960s and 70s through The New African American Aesthetic and "The students' right to their own language," published by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Based on this 1972 resolution, CCCC adopted a position statement in 1974 and drafted a resolution in 2004 to reaffirm it ("NCTE members approve resolutions," 2004, March). Holmes (1995) asserts that race is rhetorical and that "writing Black" is a way for African American writers to build a rhetorical community. He states, "Race and voice are important because they can be used to map territory, create community, and ensure an ongoing sense of self-and group-affirmation" (p. 65). Unfortunately, he concludes, composition theory has not progressed in issues of race much beyond its condition in the 1960s.

Prevailing negative attitudes toward African American English result in educators silencing the authentic voices of African American student writers (Balester, 1993), or what Delpit (1995) calls “The silenced dialogue.” In a discussion of education as acculturation or accommodation, Lu (1999) asserts that traditional education systems have shown no sympathy for the inherent conflicts in the biculturalism of students or the complex interaction of linguistic, cognitive, and social factors involved in designating error in students’ writing. African American student writers are evaluated in the same way that Caucasian middle-class students are in writing classrooms and standardized tests.

Conscious or unconscious use of African American English in the classroom is a necessary form of resistance to a dominant culture, however, according to Darder (1991). “Often the refusal to be literate has constituted an act of resistance rather than an act of ignorance . . . as a protective mechanism” (p. 44). At the heart of this resistance is the students’ perception that schools often ignore their lived experiences. Educators must begin to see their students’ home language as an asset while they attend to the role of affect, “the emotional tone of classroom interactions” (Ball & Lardner, 1997, p. 478).

The extent to which African Americans face conflicts between their home language and culture and the dominant school language and culture depends on how much they identify with the African American race. Helms (1990) distinguishes between “racial categorization” and “racial identity.” “Categorization” involves the superficial act of checking boxes, but “racial identity” involves racial identity theories and the degree to which one uses race to identify oneself. Based on three components with complex interactions, racial identity according to Helms (1990) includes personal identity, which

may be negative or positive, ascribed identity which describes how relevant issues of race are to one's identity, and reference group orientation, which describes the values by which one lives. She gives a clarifying illustration of an African American person who wants to be a "nondistinguishable member of White society." This person may feel good about himself or herself, consider his or her race to be irrelevant to identity or experiences, but live according to dominant Caucasian value orientation. Racial and cultural identity, consequently, may explain students' motivation for studying Standard American English in English composition classes.

### *Race and Culture*

Although researchers often examine differences based on race, Helms (1992) states that using race alone to explain disparities in standardized test performance, for example, may be misguided since this notion assumes that all races are homogenous. A more useful basis for examination is cultural differences. Goodenough (1971) describes *culture* as "a product of human learning" (7-22). Helms (1992) defines culture as "learned or acquired behaviors or traits attributable to the socialization experiences resulting from membership in particular systems or institutions within a society" (1091). Hofstede (1980), however, defines "culture" as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (p. 25). Although cultural differences may be undeniable, American education seems to prefer deemphasizing these differences. Helms (1992) attributes the denial of cultural differences to the assimilation/melting pot belief that falsely suggests that white American culture is universal.

### *Assumptions About Writing*

Educators' critical assumption of what writing is can accentuate the need for pedagogical attention to the whole student. Not perceiving writing as mere "process," Purves and Purves (1986) define writing as an activity, consisting of acts and operations, in which writers' cultural experiences interact. Learning to write, according to these researchers, involves learning to be a member of a culture, whether narrowly defined as academic or broadly defined to encompass national or ethnic culture, and much more than learning to perfect surface features of a text. Indeed, the importance of culture in composition pedagogy underlies the text *Composition as a cultural practice* (France, 1994). Similarly, Harkin and Schilb (1991) describe the study of composition as "an inquiry into cultural values" (p. 1). In light of African American experiences with hundreds of years of enslavement and institutional racism in the United States, for educators to ignore the role of race and culture is to ignore the wholeness of African American students' experiences.

Although faculty are diligent about finding innovative teaching strategies to engage their students cognitively, they must seek also to understand and address their students' affective behaviors (McCleod, 1987). Such understanding will benefit both teaching and learning since writing involves both cognitive and emotional influences (Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989). Wolcott and Buhr (1987) conducted a study of 100 developmental writers at the University of Florida, 92% of whom were African American. Among the findings, students who had the most positive writing attitudes and who felt writing was an important activity scored highest on a posttest essay than those students who were neutral or had negative attitudes about writing. When English

teachers view writing as an activity of cultural engagement rather than a mere process, they are more likely to address the whole student.

### *Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs*

Self-efficacy theory explains the role that one's level of confidence plays in the accomplishment of a specific task. Although self-efficacy beliefs are integral to success in any academic course, these beliefs are particularly significant to the study of writing. Zimmerman (1995) states, "This is because writing activities are usually self scheduled, performed alone, require creative effort sustained over long periods with all too frequent stretches of barren results, and what is eventually produced must be repeatedly revised to fulfill personal standards of quality" (p. 221).

Pajares and Johnson (1993) define writing self-efficacy beliefs as an individual's judgment of his or her own competence in writing, specifically judgment of the individual's ability to perform different writing tasks and possess various related composition, usage, and mechanical skills. Rooted in the social cognitive theory by Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995), which posits that individuals' confidence in a task is strongly related to their success or failure at that task, writing beliefs show a strong relationship to writing performance (Pajares & Johnson, 1993; McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985).

Moreover, apart from influencing performance, self-efficacy beliefs, according to Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995), affect how positively or negatively students may react to failure, level of interest in a particular subject, coping strategies, career choices, and level of emotional engagement in a subject. Moreover, students are more detached when their self-efficacy beliefs are low. In studies of students solving math

problems, Schunk, Hanson, and Cox (1987) concluded that self-efficacy beliefs influence students' effort, persistence levels, and rate of solving problems.

In addition to influencing effort, writing self-efficacy beliefs are found to be a predictor of writing performance beyond "ability, previous attainments, knowledge and skill alone" (Klassen, 2001, p. 4). Context specific and task specific, self-efficacy is a necessity for self-regulated learning (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995). Self-efficacy is not to be confused with ability. According to (Klassen, 2001), researchers often confuse the concept of self-efficacy with competence beliefs, so the key words he suggests they use in their research are "How confident are you . . . [that you can perform a specific task, for example, in writing?]" (p. 5).

Bandura (1995) describes four sources of self-efficacy beliefs: (1) mastery experiences in which successful experiences build belief in self-efficacy and increase perseverance (2) vicarious experiences in which beliefs are strengthened by observations of successful performance by models similar to one's self (3) social persuasion in which external environments operate to encourage success rather than failure (4) physiological and emotional states in which low stress, high energy, and positive moods can prevail.

Self-efficacy beliefs are not mere recitations of capability, so merely saying one is capable is insufficient. Confidence in one's ability to perform a task is based on complex cognitive processing of multiple factors. Bandura (1995) outlines four processes of self-efficacy beliefs (1) cognitive, in which thought controls goal setting and required effort; (2) motivational, in which high self-efficacy beliefs are attributed to effort whereas low beliefs are attributed to low ability and thus influence how motivated



someone will be to perform a task; (3) affective, in which handling of stressors as challenges determines success; (4) selection processes, in which success requires suitable choices of activities and supportive environments.

#### *Studies in Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs*

Several researchers have tested Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and its implications for student writing. A search of *Dissertation Abstracts International*, for example, reveals at least a dozen recent doctoral studies investigating writing self-efficacy beliefs and variables such as gender orientation (Valiante, 2001; Greene, 1999); revision (Wiltse, 2000; deKruif, 2000; Wey, 1998); individual/group dynamics (Porrás-Hernandez, 1998); retention (Beard, 1998; Anderson, 1997); affect (Ariail, 1996); goals setting (McGee, 1996); use of a Writer Center (Crumbo, 1999); and motivation (Hayward, 1991). Of these studies, only three investigated populations of color, one of Mexicans, one of Taiwanese, and one of African Americans. None of the dissertations did a comparative study based on race or culture.

#### *Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Cognition*

Bandura (1995) stated that the level of cognitive ability that students have is related positively to their self-efficacy beliefs. In their research, Sommers (1980) and Flower and Hayes (1980) found that deep, abstract thinkers have the required ability to process ideas in writing much better than shallow thinkers. Horn, Shell, and Benkofske (1988), examining the effects of cognitive developmental level on the relationships among beliefs and reading/writing performance, obtained similar findings of abstract thinking when they studied 150 undergraduate college students. Using the Test of Logical Thinking (TOLT) to determine cognitive levels of concrete operations,

transition, or formal operations, these researchers found that “specific cognitive skills represented by formal operational thinking influence both the magnitude of performance and beliefs and the structure of reading, writing, and belief relationships” (pp. 4-5).

### *Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Attribution*

How students attribute their successes and failures will influence their expectations for future performance. In a study of 90 diverse middle-school students, researchers found that if students believe that they failed because of poor effort, they will be motivated to work harder in future; however, if students believe that their failure resulted from poor ability, they are less likely to be motivated to perform better (Schunk, 1981; Schunk & Cox, 1985). The influential role of ability is borne out further by a study of 44 third-grade students (Schunk, 1983). In this study, the researcher found that students’ belief in their capability is more influential to self-efficacy beliefs than their belief in their having worked hard.

McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer (1985) investigated the relationship of self-efficacy beliefs to quality of student writing and three psychological variables: cognitive style, locus of control, and anxiety in a study of 137 freshmen writers. Using stepwise regression analyses, they determined that among the possible predictors of writing performance – self-efficacy beliefs, locus of control, anxiety, and cognitive level - only beliefs were found to be related to writing performance.

Unlike McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer (1985), Horn, Shell, and Benkofske (1988) obtained data that confirmed Bandura’s (1995) theory that locus of control beliefs do influence self-efficacy beliefs and, therefore, performance. Similarly, in a rare study of Hispanic and African American students (no class indicators stated) compared to

Caucasian, middle-class students, Murphy and Shell (1989) found significant differences in the causal attributions of the students of color and Caucasian students:

White, middle-class students appear to differentiate causality for both success and failure by an internal/external dimension . . . attribute to luck negatively from an internal controllable dimension of effort and ability [as defined in this study] . . . and relate enjoyment to effort but not to intelligence or ability.

Ethnic students, however, appear to differentiate causality by success or failure dimensions . . . rather than an internal/external dimension, do not have a negative linkage between luck attribution and effort or intelligence . . . and relate enjoyment to all other internal attributions . . . . (p. 7)

These researchers conclude that since students of color in their study did not discriminate consistently between “internal-external, stable-unstable, or controllable-uncontrollable dimensions” (p. 7), these results could explain their relatively poor performance in reading/writing. Moreover, these research findings led the researchers to conclude that self-efficacy beliefs predict writing performance to a greater degree when writing skill increases. Murphy and Shell (1989) state, “The relatively poor performance of all ethnic students would suggest that subskill abilities are not fully developed; therefore, skill differences rather than efficacy differences would most likely influence performance variance for these students” (p. 8). These researchers did not anticipate any value to their study to separate the students of color by class in the same way they noticeably described the Caucasian students. This oversight could be interpreted to mean that the researchers assume that students of color in the study all came from the same

class because the conclusions made in the study about the ethnic students' attributions did not differentiate along class lines.

#### *Alignment of Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Performance*

Campillo and Pool (1999) conducted an intervention study, using training to help a group of 20 prefreshmen students enrolled in a remedial summer writing course, meeting four mornings each week for five weeks. The study group of African American and Hispanic students, average age 19, consisted of 8 females and 12 males, described as "educationally and economically disadvantaged" (p. 5). The researchers required students to record their "self-efficacy estimates" (p. 4) before each test or homework assignment along with each writing assignment score, the goal being that students would become more accurate in predicting their writing performance. The researchers used a self-efficacy assessment procedure by Zimmerman, Bonner, and Kovach (1996) that used a predicted score with a confidence estimate. Methodology included scheduled weekly meetings with instructional coordinators, who helped students with time management, thematic organization, grammar, and revisions. Self-efficacy scores were collected before each writing assignment or test and later compared with the actual performance score. At the beginning of the study, the students overestimated their performance, a common occurrence (Klassen, 2001), but over the study's five weeks, the students' predictions became more accurately aligned with their performance.

Bandura (1986) stressed that self-efficacy beliefs ideally should only slightly over estimate performance. Results of the Campillo and Pool (1999) study, based on mean differences of paired samples, show that the project students scored at an 80% passing rate on the writing proficiency exit examination while students outside the

project scored at a 60% pass rate. As these researchers admit, their study was not an experimental design, and no control of confounding variables was employed; thus, it is not clear to what degree an increase in students' writing skills ability contributed to the students' increased writing beliefs and/or improved writing performance.

### *Self-Efficacy Beliefs as Predictor of Performance*

At the public school level, Klassen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 16 research studies of self-efficacy beliefs of students in grades 6 through 10. He observed that in several instances, the outcome of the studies was consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory in that writing self-efficacy beliefs was a strong predictor of writing performance.

Wachholz and Etheridge (1996) studied 43 developmental writers in three second- semester freshman composition classes in two mid-South junior colleges. The purpose of this study was to determine differences in writing self-efficacy beliefs among low- and high-apprehensive writers, perceptions of students' own writing ability, and the sources of those perceptions. The study also investigated the relationships among writing self-efficacy beliefs and the writing behaviors of high and low apprehensive writers. Their findings indicated marked differences in the past writing experiences of these two groups of students and that writing self-efficacy beliefs do influence writing performance. The researchers used the Daly and Miller (1975) Writing Apprehension Test, a questionnaire to determine self-efficacy beliefs, a self-composed writing profile, and 30-minute interviews of five high- and five low-apprehensive writers to determine the sources of their self-efficacy beliefs. They concluded: "The sources most frequently mentioned included (a) previous success or failure in writing; (b) previous preparation,

that is, previous opportunities for writing; (c) prior writing assessment experiences; (d) current level of writing skills” (p. 7).

### *Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Writing Anxiety*

Researchers consider Daly and Miller pioneers in the research of writing apprehension or anxiety, a term coined for the debilitating fear of writing and measured by their 26- item questionnaire (Daly, 1979; Hillocks, 1986). Writers with high writing apprehension, a condition which is dispositional, not situational, according to Gilliam-Scott (1984), often write fewer words and perform with lower aptitude as seen in the results of a variety of measures (Daly, 1979; Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981). All basic writers, however, do not have writing apprehension (Minot & Gamble, 1991). What is clear is that students with high writing apprehension perform less well than students with low or medium writing apprehension (Wolcott & Buhr, 1987). Furthermore, these students report avoiding writing situations (Daly & Miller, 1975; Warters as cited in Selfe, 1984).

What is unclear is whether writing apprehension is the cause or effect of cognitive difficulties (Rose, 1981). In a review of the research, Hillocks (1986) states, “the entire body of research is not clear about the cause of apprehension” (p. 50). Since writing apprehension was found to be cognitive and, therefore, resistant to changes in environment, it is not surprising that Pajares and Johnson (1993) report that writing apprehension is not predictive of writing performance. Researchers, nevertheless, offer solutions to reducing writing apprehension, which include teaching strategies designed to lower student anxiety, but which have not improved writing ability necessarily (Hillocks, 1986).

Results of a study by Pajares and Johnson (1993) were consistent with those of Smith (1984), who reported that high apprehensive writers avoid risk taking, and they procrastinate (Bloom, 1980). High apprehensive writers also appear to be teacher dependent (Moxley, 1987; Wachholz & Etheridge, 1996), believing that good writing comes from innate ability and previous success in writing. Another outcome of this study by Wachholz and Etheridge (1996) is that the most cited source of students' self-efficacy beliefs was previous success or failure in writing. Low apprehensive writers attributed their success in writing to positive teacher responses, and high-apprehensive writers attributed their failure to negative teacher responses. High apprehensive writers, according to Wachholz and Etheridge (1996), "did not feel responsible for the quality of their work, which they viewed as a responsibility of the teacher and sometimes even expressed resentment toward teachers for their perceived lack of writing abilities" (p. 15). Furthermore, high apprehensive writers associated correct grammar, spelling, and neatness with good writing while low apprehensive writers associated imagination, clarity, variety, and skilled development with good writing.

#### *Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Outcome Expectancy*

With a research population of 153 Caucasian, middle-class undergraduates in a midwestern state university teacher preparation program, Shell, Murphy, and Bruning (1989) studied the interactions among self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, and reading/writing achievement. Outcome expectancy was defined as the importance with which students held the study of writing in their personal lives and career goals. Among the results of this study is an indication that self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs

are related to reading/writing achievement, and the beliefs are independent of actual performance skills.

### *Controversy Over Teaching Writing Skills*

The difficulty that African American students have with the use of Standard American English grammar is well documented (Campillo & Pool, 1999; Murphy & Shell, 1989). Much debate has centered on how best to help these students. In “Skills and other dilemmas of a progressive African American educator,” Delpit (1986) addresses the controversy associated with how much Standard American English skills teachers should teach their African American students in order to improve their writing. Denying that her argument is framed in skills versus writing process pedagogy, Delpit (1986, 1995) finds that teachers line up on each side of the issue according to their race. African American teachers place greater importance on the teaching of writing skills as an advantageous way of improving African American students’ writing especially since most teachers and successful African American writers attribute their success to teachers employing a skills approach; Caucasian teachers, on the other hand, claim that the writing process serves all students well regardless of their race and that over-emphasis on the teaching of skills is dull and ineffective. Delpit (1986, 1995), nonetheless, advocates that teachers must teach African American students extensive grammar.

Delpit (1986, 1995) states that that middle-class Caucasian students come to school already participating in the culture of power, and they have already internalized its codes. Caucasian, middle-class children have the advantage of familiarity with the language of power as well as its culture, which Delpit (1995) categorizes as “communicative strategies” and “presentation of self; that is, ways of talking, ways of



writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting” (p. 25). She asserts that African American and poor students, however, often need direct instruction in skills, more than they need writing process instruction because they come to school from highly expressive cultural experiences, already competent in the development of ideas.

At issue also are differences in cultural communication in the classroom. Delpit (1995) outlines the nonauthoritarian speech and behavior of Caucasian middle-class teachers already familiar to Caucasian middle-class children but unfamiliar to many poor and African American students. Delpit (1995) advocates teaching what the child needs and empowering students with knowledge of their own language and “additional codes of power” (p. 40).

Many educators question the importance of the “errors” that teachers excoriate in their students’ writing. “I am often puzzled by what we call errors of grammar and usage,” states Williams (1981), author of *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace*. In “The phenomenology of error,” Williams (1981) demonstrates the irony of “error” by referencing writing handbook authors and grammarians such as Zinsser or Orwell, who use inadvertently and often the very errors in their work that they expound as undesirable. Furthermore, according to Williams (1981), many readers fail to notice the irony because they are not reading these works with the intent to scrutinize these authors’ writing for grammar and usage errors; however, they would notice these same errors in students’ writing because they expect to find them there. The concept of error, then, resides in the reader as much as it does on the page.

Contemporary scholarship on error in student writing is traced usually to the brief but seminal influence of Shaughnessy (1977). Her *Errors and expectations: A*

*guide for the teacher of basic writing*, although well intentioned to help students in newly created Open Admissions programs, breaks down into a “primer on teaching for correctness, pure and simple” (Harris, 1997). Moreover, it is perceived as the start of reactive urgency to the critics of Open Admissions that the new, nontraditional students can be brought into linguistic compliance with the standards of the academy (Horner, 1999). Taking an opposing view to Shaughnessy is Smitherman (1977), whose *Talkin and testifyin* urges teachers of African American students to pay more attention to what students say than on strict adherence to Standard American English codes. One of the creators of the controversial 1974 Conference on College Composition and Communication resolution, “Students’ right to their own language,” Smitherman calls for emphasis on rhetoric and critical thinking and making a way for students to have a meaningful message is echoed in Rouse (1979). The teaching of grammar at the expense of rhetoric is shown repeatedly to be an ineffective approach to the teaching of writing (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones & Schoer, 1963; Hartwell 1985).

What do composition teachers teach as “academic discourse”? Perhaps, as Harris (1997) suggests, they are “simply teaching a professional jargon” (p. 89) or worse “the hegemonic denial of the location of the academy in material, political, social, and historical contexts” (Horner, 1999, p. 4). Perhaps, as Delpit (1995) suggests, academic discourse should teach students to engage with multiple voices in multiple discourses.

### *Research Gaps*

In the plethora of studies on self-efficacy beliefs in writing, none examines ethnic students’ perceptions of their writing ability in relationship to the results of a standardized writing placement test. None of the studies compares writing self-efficacy

beliefs between African American middle-class students and Caucasian middle-class students or compares the sources of those beliefs. None of the studies compares self-efficacy beliefs based on African American students' cultural identification (as opposed to race or class) with the beliefs of Caucasian students based on their cultural identification. Moreover, none of the studies investigates if a relationship exists between African American students' writing self-efficacy beliefs and these same students' perceived cultural attitudes to the study of writing in Standard American English, the use of prescriptive Standard American English grammar, or being corrected by their teachers, who for the most part, are Caucasian. Additionally, none of the studies examines the relationships between writing self-efficacy beliefs and the roles that Standard American English plays in these students' homes or communities. For African American students as for all students, Bandura's (1995) "selection" processes and "affective" processes involve the important influences of the communities that students choose and the activities in which they engage.

Furthermore, none of the published studies examines the ethnic students' perceptions of the high schools they attended and how those perceptions may or may not have influenced self-efficacy beliefs. The schools that students attend may have influenced these students' writing self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1995) asserts:

The higher the proportion of students from lower socioeconomic levels and of minority status, the lower the staff's collective beliefs in their efficacy to achieve academic progress, and the worse the schools fare academically. Student absenteeism, low achievement, and high turnover also take a toll on collective school efficacy.

The schools' collective sense of efficacy at the beginning of the academic year, according to Bandura (1995), predicts the schools' level of academic achievement at the end of the year when the effects of the characteristics of the student bodies, their prior level of academic achievement, and the staff's experiential level are factored out. With staffs firmly believing that students are motivatable and teachable, schools heavily populated with poor and minority students achieve high levels on standardized measures of academic competencies. (p. 21)

Gibson and Dembo (1984) indicate that teachers' instructional self-efficacy beliefs directly influence their students' performance. Additionally, Ashton and Webb (1986) state that teachers' instructional self-efficacy beliefs provide a strong prediction of students' level of academic achievement. Teachers' low instructional self-efficacy, often exacerbated by low student performance, usually results in poor instruction and inevitable teacher burnout (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Such research leads Bandura (1995) to conclude:

Another common mistake is to assume that if people's lives are hampered by a low sense of efficacy the problem is exclusively an individual one and that the solution lies solely in personal change. People make causal contribution to their lives but they are not the sole determiners of their own destiny. Many other influences also contribute to the courses their lives take. Within this multicausality, people can improve their lives by exercising influence in areas over which they have some control. (p. 34)

None of the published writing self-efficacy beliefs studies examines the cultural context within which students of color live and how culture may affect writing self-efficacy

beliefs. Researchers do not reference in their studies any of the cultural conflicts that some African American students experience in learning Standard American English (talkin' white), or their frequent fear of rejection by their peers. Steele (1990) describes this dilemma in one student who expressed his ambivalence in mastering Standard American English because he "wouldn't be Black more" (70).

In Bandura's (1995), *Self-efficacy in changing societies*, one chapter is devoted to the relationship of culture and sources of self-efficacy beliefs. In a study of cross-cultural differences in self-efficacy between East and West Berlin students, Oettingen (1995) in Bandura (1995) concludes that the differences in sources of self-efficacy beliefs are based on cultural differences, but that the effects of self-efficacy beliefs are universal. Using four value systems theorized by Hofstede (1980) as a matrix, Oettingen (1995) examines the differences between cultures that are individualist/collectivist; power distance; uncertainty avoidance; and masculine/feminine. These differences in value systems can account for the differences in the sources of self-efficacy beliefs of cultural groups in schools as well as the differences between students' home culture and that of their school. Oettingen (1995) tested the hypothesis that students at schools in historically socialist East Berlin would have "a lower sense of personal efficacy and be more congruent in their judgments with their teachers' evaluations" (p. 160).

In a study of 313 East Berlin students, ages 8 to 12, and 527 children of similar ages from West Berlin before the countries unified, (Oettingen, 1995) discovered that the East Berlin children of high intelligence had a similar high level of academic self-efficacy as the highly intelligent children of West Berlin; however, the children of medium or low intelligence of East Berlin had much lower self-efficacy beliefs than

those of similar intelligence in West Berlin. Evidently, according to the researcher, the less intelligent children accepted the negative appraisals they received whereas the more intelligent children did not. Oettingen (1995) concludes that in the acculturation process of unification, the East Berlin students would be at a disadvantage with their lower levels of motivation and affect in comparison to the West Berlin students. Although children of low and medium intelligence ironically need highly positive self-efficacy beliefs to succeed, they appear instead to succumb more easily to the negative expectations of teachers or peers.

In another instructive study of the West Berlin study group and 600 children from Los Angeles with a more individualistic system of appraisal, Oettingen (1995) found that self-efficacy beliefs had a greater correlation with course grades in West Berlin than in Los Angeles. He explains, "This suggests that individualistic, weak uncertainty-avoidant cultures might promote more optimistic beliefs of personal efficacy and less conformity with performance evaluations by teachers than in collectivist, strong uncertainty avoidant cultures" (p. 168).

Additionally, none of the writing self-efficacy beliefs studies examines the role of "vicarious experiences," which Bandura (1995) states influence the strength of beliefs. "Seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities" (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 1987; Bandura, 1995). Although American schools and societies have progressed relatively well since the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Topeka, Kansas, in 1954, African American students continue to experience a dearth of people similar to themselves in their schools. The current statistics of African

American students, for example, at the community college study location is 27% while African American instructors number about 3%. Among composition faculty, African American faculty members represent even fewer than 3%. These numbers are consistent with the average racial breakdown of faculty across the country. Representation of teachers of African American descent remains disproportionate to the number of African American students in public schools as well. In college, if not among faculty, where might African American students find *vicarious experiences*, defined as role models successful in a particular subject area? The value of multicultural images in textbooks or the inclusion of multicultural scholars, literature, and scholarship in school and college curricula, although improving, still battles opposition from traditionalists in education.

Regardless of the sources of self-efficacy beliefs or whether they are individually or collectively determined, the benefits of high self-efficacy beliefs, according to Oettingen (1995), are universal. High self-efficacy beliefs lead to greater effort and perseverance in the face of challenges, better problem solving, higher goals, and lower anxiety (Bandura, 1993).

### *Summary*

The chapter reviewed eight relevant topics discussed in the work of other researchers: the well publicized “Black/White Education Gap”; culture as an added dimension to the examination of race; assumptions about composition instruction; writing self-efficacy beliefs; writing apprehension or anxiety; cultural implications and the study of writing self-efficacy beliefs; the concept of “error” in composition classes; and research gaps. These issues helped to frame the context for the current research. Chapter III presents details regarding the research design and methods of analyses.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

#### *Introduction*

Chapter III describes the research design of the study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) purpose of the study, (b) research questions, (c) overall design of the study, (d) location of the study, (e) selection of participants, (f) data collection procedures, (g) variables, (h) instrumentation, (i) analysis of data, (j) internal and external validity threats.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and the reading/writing placement test scores of diverse community college freshmen. Additionally, this study sought to understand the sources of these students' writing self-efficacy beliefs through the descriptions of experiences they feel have influenced those beliefs.

All students entering freshman composition at the study location must have obtained satisfactory scores on the reading/writing components of a standardized placement test, or they must have completed successfully the prerequisite developmental course or courses. Although students may have met the criteria for placement in freshman composition classes, these students' experiences and levels of confidence may differ. According to Bandura (1982, 1993, 1995), self-efficacy beliefs and performance should be aligned, or self-efficacy beliefs should only slightly overestimate performance. Misaligned self-efficacy beliefs and performance will negatively influence the quality of student writing, persistence levels, stress levels, and emotional engagement in the subject (Bandura, 1982, 1995). This study explored students' perceptions of experiences



that explain how their levels of reading/writing confidence developed. Using the theoretical framework of Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995) to understand writing self-efficacy beliefs, the study explored the roles of mastery or related skills, experiences in which self-efficacy beliefs were strengthened by observations of successful performance by models similar to students in the study group, social persuasion in which external environments operated to encourage success rather than failure, and physiological and emotional states in which low stress, high energy, and positive moods could prevail.

### *Research Questions*

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the strength of the relationships among the reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and the reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers?
2. Is there a difference in the strength of the relationships among the scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and the scores on standardized reading/writing placement tests of diverse community college freshman writers?
3. How do diverse community college freshman writers describe the experiences they think explain the relationships among their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and their standardized reading/writing placement test scores?

### *Overall Study Design*

Because reading/writing are closely related activities, information regarding reading self-efficacy beliefs was included as a point of contrast to writing as well a significant cognitive ability related to writing development. Readers and writers

construct meaning, influenced by their prior knowledge and world view, and both processes impact each other (Lewis, 1985). Gold (1981) describes reading comprehension as a meaning receiving process and writing as a meaning communicating process. Teaching developmental reading and writing as separate courses or as one combined course has become common practice in community colleges. The blending of reading and writing benefits students' cultural literacy and involves the parallel mental processes of decoding and encoding, according to Malinowski, (1986). Even beyond the developmental level, reading and writing are taught together as a way of facilitating learning in a course of study. Culp and Spann (1984) state, "Reading and writing are considered part of a total language process with reciprocal interrelationships" (p. 4). In this current study, however, reading and writing are distinctively separate disciplines, and writing is the major focus of this study.

This study was conducted with a balanced design of measurements of both quantitative and qualitative data. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) define quantitative research as "research based on observations that are converted into discrete units that can be compared to other units by using statistical analysis" (p. 2). Its inherent value is its ability to use numbers to eliminate uniqueness of situations and extrapolate conclusions that can apply to large numbers of subjects. It relies on deductive inquiry and statistical relationships.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, focuses on what participants say and do in order to capture a close representation of their experiences. It values context and seeks to find patterns of meaning that emerge from inductive inquiry. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) state, "Qualitative research looks to understanding a situation as it is constructed

by the participants” (p. 18). Similarly, Merriam (1988) states, “Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities – that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception” (p. 17). Opportunities for participants to share their self-knowledge and experiences add depth to the quantitative analyses based mainly on statistical evidence.

This research study sought to find the strength of the statistical relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and standardized reading/writing placement tests. Moreover, this research sought to understand student participants’ experiences by eliciting and analyzing their responses to structured questions, informed by the quantitative data received and designed to probe the perceptions of students’ own learning experiences. The one on one interviews based on a combination of open-ended and closed questions sought to illuminate the statistical data received.

Some researchers of writing self-efficacy beliefs have found this mixed design useful. For example, Wachholz and Etheridge (1996), in a study of writing self-efficacy beliefs and writing apprehension of 43 developmental writers, obtained quantitative data from the Daly Miller Writing Apprehension Test and followed up with interviews of five high and five low apprehensive writers to understand the differences in perceptions of these students as writers.

Stage and Maple (1996) used a narrative approach entirely to analyze the self-efficacy beliefs and reasons why seven women switched from degrees in mathematics to doctoral studies in education. From the responses they received, the researchers determined that in spite of a strong interest in and aptitude for math, these women had

prevailing negative graduate school experiences that contributed to their decision to change fields.

Similarly, Zeldin and Pajares (2000) conducted a primarily qualitative study in their analysis of 15 participants' explanations for their choice of and success in careers of mathematics, science, and technology. Noting this attention to qualitative data, Zeldin and Pajares (2000) state, "Traditionally, self-efficacy research has been overwhelmingly quantitative . . . . However, quantitative methods do not provide the opportunity for rich description available through narrative" (p. 219). These researchers, wanting to understand how their subjects selected and succeeded in male dominated professions, found two emergent themes: family role models and verbal encouragement.

Phase 1 of this research study was conducted to obtain the following information:

1. Reported scores from the reading/writing components of the COMPASS standardized reading/writing placement test. These scores were available from the college, for freshman students must obtain appropriate scores in reading and writing for placement in English classes.
2. Student scores on the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement, administered during a class period. These measurements were administered within the third week of the spring 2003 semester. This period was after the Drop/Add period for class registration and before the students received composition grades. Participation in the study was voluntary. The researcher administered the instruments in the classrooms of faculty who agreed to participate.

Phase 2 of the study was conducted to obtain from a representative sample the perceptions that accounted for the determined relationships among students' scores on the standardized reading/writing placement tests and their scores on the instrument to measure reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs. This information was obtained through in-depth interviews of 19 students conducted one on one approximately four weeks after data collection in Phase 1 of the study. These 30-minute interviews consisted of closed and open-ended questions. The interviews were taped with students' permission, and the researcher took notes during the interviews.

#### *Location of the Study*

This study took place at a local four-campus comprehensive community college in Hampton Roads, Virginia. This college is the second largest community college of 23 in the statewide community college system. It is also the 37<sup>th</sup> largest community college in the United States. Its service area includes four cities, and its largest campus enrolls approximately 20% of the area's high school graduates. The campus's annual FTEs in 2000-2001 were reported to be 7,039. The average student age at the study campus was 28, but the number of recent high school graduates, ages 18-21, was 33%. Most students, 86%, attended classes in the daytime, and 63% attended classes part time. Females made up 59% of the student body, Caucasian students 66%, African American 19%, and American Indian or Alaskan Natives, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanics and "other" 15%. Forty-two percent of the college's 1,792 graduates in 2000 transferred to four-year institutions. In fall 2002, the study campus enrolled 1,222 students in freshman composition, 73% of whom were recommended primarily by the standardized placement tests for placement in freshman composition without a developmental prerequisite. The

remaining 27% were enrolled in freshman composition after successful completion of one or more developmental courses in reading or writing. Fifty percent of the student body was enrolled in college transfer programs, 30 % in occupational/technical programs, and 20% in lifelong learning. The college recognizes that its faculty and staff are aging and places professional development as an operating priority.

### *Selection of Participants*

Composition classes are usually representative of the sex ratio, racial, economic, age, and education backgrounds of students on the campus at large. Most college programs require students to complete a freshman composition class successfully, and most students complete the course within their first year of study.

Participants in Phase 1 of the study were 199 diverse students enrolled in 15 community college freshman composition classes, during the first three weeks of the spring semester, 2003. All freshman composition faculty on the study campus were invited to participate in the study; however, 15 faculty agreed voluntarily to have their classes participate. This number represented approximately 16% of the total semester campus enrollment in freshman composition classes. Although intact classes were used for the first part of the study, individual student participation within a class was voluntary. Ninety percent of the students agreed to participate in Phase 1 of the study. Each was asked to sign an informed consent form.

Participants in Phase 2 of the study were selected based on the quantitative data received in Phase 1. Subject to the constraints developed for the study – race, sex, age, developmental placement or not, aligned placement and self-efficacy scores or not –

subsets were generated, and a representative sample of 60 students was invited for the second phase of the study. Of those students, nineteen diverse subjects were interviewed.

### *Data Collection*

Data for this study was collected in two phases.

#### *Phase 1.*

The researcher received permission from thirteen intact classes of freshman composition to administer the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements. Of the initial participants, a sample of 199 students was used for data collection because they met all the variables needed, included completion of the COMPASS placement tests instead of another form of placement.

Since participating students were administered the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements in one class period, the class instructors' role in volunteering instruction time for the research was critical. Although previous research found no difference in the results if students responded to these instruments outside of a classroom environment (Shell, 1989), the advantage in using regular class time was immediate return.

During the last week of the fall 2002 semester, the researcher had sent a memo to each full- and part-time faculty teaching freshman composition classes. This letter explained the upcoming study and requested consideration of participation (Appendix A). Additionally, during the first week of the spring 2003 semester, each faculty member teaching freshman composition received a memo of understanding, explaining the purpose of the study; data collection procedures; average amount of time needed for student completion of the instruments; and a request to indicate the best day and time for

the study during the third week of the semester (Appendix B). The researcher made a telephone follow-up to answer instructor questions, request participation, and set a date and time for the instruments to be administered. In order to encourage maximum participation, specific steps were taken as recommended by Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) and Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1996). First, students' participation in the study was voluntary, and the first phase of the quantitative data collection was conducted during a regular class period to facilitate immediate return of data. Prior to the assigned day to administer the self-efficacy instruments, each student received a letter of invitation to participate, and the researcher expressed assurance that all information from participants would be presented anonymously and kept confidential. This letter explained the purpose of the study, benefits of the study, and data collection procedures for Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Appendix C). Attached to that letter was an informed consent form for each student's signature (Appendix D). On the day the measurements were administered, the researcher collected all signed consent forms as well as completed self-efficacy measurements.

For collection of available college data, the researcher obtained from the college the participants' scores on their reading/writing COMPASS standardized placement tests. Scores indicated the recommended placement either directly into freshman level composition or into one or more of the levels of developmental reading or writing classes. Students are not enrolled in freshman composition unless they acquire the appropriate score ranges on the writing and reading placement tests, or they successfully complete the required developmental classes. Additionally, the researcher obtained from



the college basic demographic data of sex and age of each participant. Participants' names were subsequently removed from the records and replaced with code numbers.

### *Phase 2.*

Following the procedures in Phase 1 of the study, the researcher collected and computed scores on the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements. Analyses were conducted to create a descriptive profile of each participant and prepare subsets according to the relevant variables for each research question. Subsets included sex, age, race, aligned and misaligned skills and self-efficacy beliefs, and developmental course placement or not.

Based on the analyses outcomes, a representative sample of 60 students was selected from those subsets to be invited for interview in Phase 2 to determine how diverse students accounted for the relationships between their scores on the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements and their scores on the COMPASS Reading/Writing Standardized Placement Tests.

The selected 60 students received letters of invitation for 30-minute interviews (Appendix E). To encourage participation, the researcher sent memos to the appropriate faculty members advising them of the students selected from their classes (Appendix F). Of those invited, 19 students participated in the interviews conducted approximately four weeks after data collection in Phase 1 of the study. The researcher taped the interviews and transcribed them for analyses.

### *Type of Study*

This study used a balanced design of quantitative and qualitative data. For the quantitative data, the independent variable was race as defined by the college's reporting

categories: Caucasian, African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and other. This study compared the two major racial/ethnic groups at the college, Caucasian and African American. Data about the other racial/ethnic groups were collected and reported to enrich the study, but this information was not a major part of the study. Other independent variables were age, sex, and placement in developmental classes. The dependent variables were scores on the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Tests and the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements.

The qualitative design for part of the study facilitated the understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions through responses from a representative sample of 19 participants, whose selection was based on the quantitative results. This mixed design is advantageous in its inclusion of qualitative data as noted by Creswell (1998): "Objective understanding is mediated by subjective experience, and that human experience is an inherent structural property of the experience itself, not constructed by an outside observer" (p. 86). Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and included open-ended and closed questions.

### *Instrumentation*

Several instruments were used in this study to achieve a balance between quantitative and qualitative data collection. The Reading/Writing COMPASS Placement Tests were used by the community college location of the study to determine placement levels in reading, writing, and mathematics for all incoming first year college students. The college provided a report of students' placements scores for use in the current study.

The Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements were administered during the study.

*COMPASS reading/writing placement tests.*

Computerized Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support Services (COMPASS), developed by American College Testing (ACT), offers a placement instrument widely adopted by colleges and universities, including the community college where this study was conducted. This program offers assessment in writing, reading, mathematics, and English as a second language.

In reading, the program provides a pool of 27 passages to measure comprehension and general knowledge of natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and fiction. The average length of each passage is 190-225 words, and the reading level is equivalent to first year college level course content. Questions typically cover recognizing main ideas and responding to direct questions about content, relationships, evidence, and implied meanings. The program uses adaptive technology to select passages according to the level of difficulty that each student appears to handle successfully. Testers may highlight sections as needed or answer multiple-choice questions based on these passages.

Similarly, in writing assessment, students are asked to find and correct errors in passages provided. The program is described as a simulation of a text-editing task, in which students are given passages and asked to find and correct errors in grammar, usage, organization, and style. The passages do not indicate where errors are, but five alternatives are provided for testers each time they indicate a desire to edit.

In all test areas, the testing institution may determine cut off scores and score ranges. Testing is self-paced, but the average time spent is one hour each for math, reading, and writing. The *COMPASS reference manual* outlines the procedures that ACT undertakes to insure reliability and validity of its tests, including consultation with advocacy groups to insure fairness and cultural sensitivity.

Based on a standard average number of items in an adaptive test format, the reliability coefficient of the reading placement component of the COMPASS Test is .87 while the writing skill component is .89. Validity statistics depend on the median cut off score that colleges use. Most colleges use a cut off score range that corresponds to .62 accuracy rate in reading skills and .67 in writing.

The intent of this study was not to validate the use of a standardized placement instrument as accurate assessment or prediction measurement. Although controversy abounds about the accuracy of standardized testing and the privilege this form of test structure occupies in educational testing, the COMPASS Placement Test and other standardized forms of testing are widely used by colleges and universities for placement and assessment.

*Writing self-efficacy beliefs measurement.*

According to Shell (Appendix G), no permission is needed to use this instrument, and the specific tasks and skills beliefs measured can be adapted to suit test subjects. This instrument developed by Shell, Murphy, and Bruning (1989), measures the level of confidence that college students have in performing a writing task (Appendix H). It consists of two subscales for tasks and skills self-efficacy beliefs. Participants' confidence in performing writing tasks will be measured on a scale of 0-

100. The instrument provides samples of an appropriate set of skills and tasks, but not all were appropriate for the current study group. The researcher, consequently, adapted the instrument to reflect the writing tasks and skills pertinent to the college's freshman writing placement criteria.

Writing self-efficacy beliefs scores were calculated according to the developers of the measures by calculating subscale mean scores to determine two separate scores each for writing self-efficacy beliefs (Murphy & Shell, 1989). The instrument has an established reliability coefficient of .92 for the skills component and .95 for the tasks component.

*Reading self-efficacy beliefs measurement.*

Similar to the Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement, the Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement consists of two subscales to measure tasks and skills confidence. The researcher adapted this instrument to reflect the reading placement criteria used to determine students' reading readiness for college classes at the community college site (Appendix I).

Reading self-efficacy scores were calculated according to the developers of the measure by calculating subscale mean scores to determine two separate scores each for reading self-efficacy beliefs (Murphy & Shell, 1989). This instrument has an established reliability coefficient of .93 for the skills component and .92 for the tasks component.

*In-depth interview questions.*

In Phase 2 of the study, a representative sample of 19 participants was asked questions to describe the experiences they perceived help to explain the relationships among their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and their reading/writing placement

scores. The framework for development of these questions was based on Bandura's (1993, 1995) sources of self-efficacy beliefs and on a study conducted by Zeldin and Pajares (2000). Before the questions were administered for data collection, they were field-tested and modified accordingly for clarity (Appendix J). The sequence of questions, introductions, statement of purpose and assurance of confidentiality were informed by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). The researcher obtained permission from each interviewee to videotape the interview and contact information was provided if the interviewee requested a copy of the transcript. An interview schedule was developed and followed. The prepared interview questions formed the basis of the interview along with elaboration and clarification probes as suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). Transcripts were made of the recorded interviews and reviewed for accuracy and detail by someone other than the researcher. This crosschecking was done to insure accuracy of transcription.

#### *Analysis of Data*

This section explains the statistical analysis for each research question that applied to the quantitative phase of the study. Additionally, it outlines the process for analyzing the qualitative data collected from face to face interviews of 19 participants.

#### *Research Questions and Analyses*

The first research question was as follows:

What is the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers?

To determine the strength of the relationships that exist among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement scores of community college freshman writers, Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation were computed. To test the statistical significance of each of the variables and the combined effect of some variables in the study, ANOVA was used.

The second research question was as follows:

Is there a difference in the strength of the relationships among scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on standardized reading/writing placement tests of diverse community college freshman writers?

To determine if there is a difference in the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on a standardized reading/writing placement test of community college freshman writers, descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment correlation were computed. Details of the findings are discussed in chapter IV.

The third research question was as follows:

How do diverse community college freshman writers describe the experiences they think explain the relationships among their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and their standardized reading/writing placement test scores?

To answer this question, the researcher analyzed the responses of 19 participants selected as a representative sample. Key considerations that a researcher of qualitative

data must include fidelity and structure (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). Thus, accurate recording of interviews and a reliable coding system aided by an interview question schedule were incorporated in the collection of data. Interviews were taped with students' permission, and the researcher collected detailed notes of each interview. Transcripts were transcribed carefully and crosschecked by two additional persons. The researcher read and reread the transcripts. Coding categories were provided partly by the questions asked during the interviews. Additionally, the researcher chunked information into categories that emerged from the responses.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), issues of internal and external validity are as important in qualitative research as they are in quantitative. In order to enhance replication of this study, the researcher systematically coded collected data. The information in each transcript was categorized according to the key terms used in each of the researcher's questions. Although the researcher used open-ended and closed questions for each interview, she was open to unexpected information that a transcript yielded and coded it appropriately. Further detailed steps for coding such as reducing the list of categories of information and identifying useful quotes were informed by Creswell (1994). Each set of transcribed data was photocopied and the originals carefully stored. The researcher used photocopies of transcripts for coding and data analysis. Audiotapes, transcripts, and notes are on file for a permanent audit trail.

#### *Internal and External Validity Threats*

Various threats to internal validity of this study are present:

Selection threat occurs when volunteers are used for a study. Participants in the study were volunteers in intact classes with faculty who themselves volunteered to



participate in the study. To reduce selection threats, the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements were administered within the first few weeks of class to reduce students' interaction time with the volunteer instructor. Also volunteers for Phase 2 of the study were selected from a representative sample based on the outcome of Phase 1 data analysis. Although a random sample would have been a greater control, the representative sample insured that all desired variables were represented in the interviews.

Maturation threats occur when the passage of time and its positive or negative effects change participants in a study. Because freshman composition students may have taken the standardized placement test as long as 9 months prior to enrollment in freshman classes, several factors could have influenced their self-efficacy beliefs, including successful completion of other college courses. To reduce maturation threats, the qualitative research through interviews with students were conducted to elicit students' perceptions of their experiences prior to the study. Students were given opportunities to disclose any academic or nonacademic influences on their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs.

Mortality may be a threat since 25% of enrolled students withdraw before the end of the semester. To reduce mortality threats, the one on one interviews were conducted before the college's last date to withdraw without penalty. Students were encouraged to keep their appointments for interviews through written reminders and a small compensation for their participation.

Researcher bias occurs when a researcher inadvertently influences the outcome of the study by sending verbal or nonverbal cues to participants. To reduce this threat,

the researcher said as little as possible during the interviews but listened intently to what participants said. As much as possible, the researcher stayed focused on the prepared, structured questions and asked additional questions only as follow up to participants' responses. The researcher was careful not to state judgments about comments that interviewees gave. An interview protocol was used to guide the process (Appendix K).

This chapter provided the details of the methodology of the study, including the research questions, participants, the community college location of the study, instruments, and procedures for collecting and analyzing the data along with controls for validity threats. Chapter IV will discuss the detailed findings of the research study.

## Chapter IV

### Findings and Interpretations

#### *Introduction*

This study sought to examine the relationships between skills and reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs. This study also sought to explore students' perceptions of experiences they think explain the development of their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs.

#### Research Questions

1. What is the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers?
2. Is there a difference in the strength of the relationships among scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on standardized reading/writing placement tests of diverse community college freshman writers?
3. How do diverse community college freshman writers describe the experiences they think explain their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and their relationships to their standardized reading/writing placement test scores?

Chapter III described the design and purpose of the study along with the instruments used and the selection of participants. It discussed the importance of using a mixed design to explore the relationships among reading/ writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores and to explore the experiences that students attribute to their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs.

This chapter outlines the statistical analyses results including sample characteristics and significant findings. Additionally, this chapter outlines the qualitative data used to understand student participants' reading/writing experiences based on responses to structured open-ended and closed questions. The development of these questions was informed by the quantitative data and designed to probe the perceptions of students' regarding the sources of their reading/writing self-efficacy experiences.

The organization of this chapter includes three major sections. Section 1 provides an overview of the methodology and pertinent demographic data of participants obtained from descriptive statistics. Section 2 discusses the quantitative findings that answer the first two research questions for Phase 1 of the study. Section III provides an analysis of the qualitative data from Phase 2 of the study.

#### *Methodology and Results*

The study was conducted during the spring 2003 semester in two phases. First, faculty teaching freshman composition classes in spring 2003 at a two-year comprehensive community college campus were invited to have their classes participate in the study. Fifteen teaching faculty volunteered to participate. Students in each of the 15 participating class were asked for informed consent if they wished to participate in the first phase of the study, conducted by the researcher during the first 30 minutes of a scheduled class period during February-March 2003. Within the 30-minute period, participants submitted their informed consent forms, which were read and signed previously, and they completed the instruments for reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs. Three hundred and sixty-nine students consented and participated in Phase I of the study, with 199 participants selected for analysis based on participant eligibility of having

taken the COMPASS Placement Tests rather than some other placement instrument and based on complete sets of data on file.

Each participating student completed a Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement and a Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement, and the scores were tabulated. Demographic information, COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test results, and placement history in developmental reading or writing courses were obtained from college records.

*Phase 1 results.*

Analysis of variance was done to determine the significance of variables on the over or underestimating of self-efficacy beliefs in reading. Because of the varied lapse of time between the participants' scores on the COMPASS tests and their placement in freshman composition classes, some participants had completed at least one developmental course before they completed the self-efficacy measurements. Thus, participants who completed developmental courses probably influenced the outcome of a higher reading self-efficacy score than the COMPASS reading score.

Another significant finding in the analysis of variance was the statistical significance of race as a factor in the outcome of a higher reading self-efficacy score than the COMPASS reading score (Table 1). A subsequent post hoc Tukey B test indicated that no two races were the same on the average difference between the COMPASS reading score and the reading self-efficacy beliefs score (Table 2). Second, an analysis of variance was computed to determine the significance of variables on the over or underestimating of self-efficacy beliefs in writing. Whether or not students took developmental prerequisites was the only statistically significant finding (Table 3).

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Over/Underestimation of Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs (Diff\_RD)

		N
Between Subjects		
Sex	Female	123
	Male	75
Race_3	Caucasian	137
	AA	36
	Other	25
DevR2	No	130
	Yes	68

## Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: DIFF\_RD

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	13010.836 <sup>a</sup>	12	1084.236	7.824	.000
Intercept	20.421	1	20.421	.147	.702
AGE	73.349	1	73.349	.529	.468
GENDER	3.929	1	3.929	.028	.866
RACE_3	1847.419	2	923.709	6.666	.002
DEV2	2539.695	1	2539.695	18.327	.000

Table 1 (Continued)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
GENDER*RACE_3	50.934	2	25.467	.184	.832
GENDER*DEVR2	12.787	1	12.787	.092	.762
RACE_3*DEVR2	275.308	2	137.654	.993	.372
GENDER*RACE_3 *DEVR2	383.152	2	191.576	1.382	.254
	25636.255	185	138.574		
Total	40288.000	198			
Corrected Total	38647.091	197			

a. R Squared = .337 (adjusted R Squared = .294)

Note. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score =  
over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

#### Between Subjects

		N
Race_3	Caucasian	137
	AA	36
	Other	25
DevR2	No	130
	Yes	68

Table 1 (Continued)

## Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: DIFF\_RD

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	12254.617 <sup>a</sup>	5	2450.934	17.830	.000
Intercept	1746.228	1	1746.228	12.703	.000
RACE_3	2681.253	2	1340.627	9.753	.000
DEVR2	4027.919	1	4027.919	29.302	.000
RACE_3*DEVR2	308.857	2	154.429	1.123	.327
Error	26392.420	192	137.461		
Total	40288.000	198			
Corrected Total	38647.091	197			

a. R Squared = .317 (Adjusted R Squared = .299)

## Between Subjects

		N
Race_3	Caucasian	137
	AA	36
	Other	25
DevR2	No	130
	Yes	68

Table 1 (Continued)



Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: DIFF\_RD

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	11945.813	3	3981.938	28.931	.000
Intercept	1789.663	1	1789.663	13.003	.000
RACE_3	2821.835	2	1410.917	10.251	.000
DEVR2	7988.024	1	7988.024	58.038	.000
Error	26701.277	194	137.635		
Total	40288.000	198	137.635		
Corrected Total	38647.091	197			

a. R Squared = .309 (Adjusted R Squared = .298)

Note. DEVR2 = developmental reading-two levels.

Note. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score =  
over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

Table 2

## Post Hoc Test for Race and DIFF\_RD

## DIFF\_RD

Tukey B <sup>a, b, c</sup>

Race_3	N	Subset		
		1	2	3
African American	36	-10.2500		
Caucasian	137		-2.5693	
Other	25			6.0400

Note. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score  
= over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Based on Type III Sum of Squares.

The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 137.635.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 39.959.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used.

Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

c. Alpha = .05.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance of Over/Underestimation of Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs (Diff\_WR)

		N
Between Subjects		
RACE_3	Caucasian	138
	AA	36
	Other	25
DEW2	No	86
	Yes	113
Gender	Female	123
	Male	76

Table 3 (Continued)

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: DIFF\_WR

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	45767.357 <sup>a</sup>	12	3813.946	9.505	.000
Intercept	556.030	1	556.030	1.386	.241
AGE	308.730	1	308.730	.769	.382
RACE_3	688.288	2	344.144	.858	.426
DEVW2	22864.676	1	22864.676	56.985	.000
GENDER	1817.513	1	1817.513	4.530	.035
RACE_3*DEVW2	661.783	2	330.891	.825	.440
RACE_3*GENDER	297.200	2	148.600	.370	.691

Table 3 (Continued)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
DEVW2*GENDER	613.896	1	613.896	1.530	.218
RACE_3*DEVW2* GENDER	730.418	2	365.209	.910	.404
Error	74631.055	186	401.242		
Total	121891.000	199			
Corrected Total	120398.412	198			

a. R Squared = .380 (adjusted R Squared = .340)

Univariate Analysis of Variance of DIFF\_WR

Between Subjects

		N
DEVW2	No	86
	Yes	113
Gender	Female	123
	Male	76

Table 3 (Continued)

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: DIFF\_WR

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	41741.182 <sup>a</sup>	3	13913.727	34.494	.000
Intercept	521.557	1	521.557	1.293	.257
DEVW2	40434.743	1	40434.743	100.242	.000
GENDER	1384.448	1	1384.448	3.432	.065
DEVW2*GENDER	2924.375	1	2924.375	7.250	.008
Error	78657.230	195	403.370		
Total	121891.000	199			
Corrected Total	120398.412	198			

a. R Squared = .347( Adjusted R Squared = .337)

Note. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs.

The second research question was as follows:

Is there a difference in the strength of the relationships among scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on standardized reading/writing placement tests of diverse community college freshman writers?

To determine if there is a difference in the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on a standardized reading/writing placement test of community college freshman writers, descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product Moment correlation were computed.

*Descriptive results.*

Table 4 shows the sex distribution of the 199 participants. One hundred twenty-three participants (61.8 %) were female, and 76 (38.2 %) were male. The population of the community college location for this study is racially and ethnically diverse; however, this study focused on the two largest racial groups for comparison. As shown in Table 5, 138 participants (69.3%) were Caucasian, 36 (18.1 %) were African American, and 25 (12.6%) classified as "other."

Of the 199 participants, 68 (34.2%) were placed in at least one developmental reading course, and 131 (65.8%) participants were not (Table 6). Altogether, 113 participants (56.8%) had taken at least one developmental writing course whereas 86 (43.2%) had taken no developmental writing courses (Table 7).

Table 4

Gender Distribution of Sample Group

---

GENDER				
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	123	61.8	61.8	61.8
Male	76	38.2	38.2	100.0
Total	199	100.0	100.0	

---



Table 5

Race/Ethnic Distribution of Sample Group

RACE

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
White	136	69.3	69.3	69.3
African American	36	18.1	18.1	87.4
Asian	13	6.5	6.5	94
Hispanic	5	2.5	2.5	96.5
American Indian	4	2	2	98.5
Other	3	1.5	1.5	100
Total	199	100	100	

Table 6

## Developmental Reading Distribution of Sample Group

Developmental Reading				
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	131	65.8	65.8	65.8
1	60	30.2	30.2	96.0
2	8	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	199	100	100	

Table 7

Developmental Writing Distribution of Sample Group

Developmental Writing				
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cummulative Percent
0	86	43.2	43.2	43.2
1	98	49.2	49.2	92.5
2	11	5.5	5.5	98
3	3	1.5	1.5	99.5
4	1	0.5	0.5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

The Compass Reading/Writing Placement Tests and the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Tests were scored on a scale of 0-100. Table 8 presents descriptive data regarding these tests for the sample group, the over or underestimation of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs, and the mean age of participants. Tabulation of the Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores of participants indicated that the mean percentage score was 87.28 (SD = 10.42) with scores ranging from 43 to 100. The mean percentage Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement score was 74.58 (SD = 14.67) with scores ranging from 28 to 100. The mean COMPASS Reading Placement Test Score was 84.43 (SD = 12.62) with scores ranging from 28 to 99. The mean COMPASS Writing Placement Test Score was 71.84 (SD = 23.33) with scores ranging from 3 to 99.

An analysis of over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy in relation to reading performance as measured by the COMPASS Reading Placement Test indicated that the mean of  $-2.8788$  (SD = 14.0064) is an overestimation of reading self-efficacy and the range of estimation  $-49.00$  to  $40.00$ . Determination of the level of over or underestimation of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs was made by subtracting the respective self-efficacy percentage score for each participant from that participant's COMPASS score, which is measured from 0-100.

An analysis of over or underestimation of writing beliefs in relation to writing performance as measured by the COMPASS Writing Placement Test indicated that the mean of  $-2.7387$  (SD = 24.6591) is an overestimation of writing beliefs and the range of estimation from  $-76$  to  $54$ . The mean age of the sample group was 24.26 (SD = 7.22) and ages ranged from 18 to 51.

Table 8

## Descriptive Data of Scores and Age of Sample Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CRS	199	28	99	84.43	12.62
CWS	199	3	99	71.84	23.33
WSE	199	660	2388	1788.73	352.31
WSE_PER	199	28	100	74.58	14.67
RSE_PER	198	43	100	87.28	10.42
RSE	199	1166	2700	2359.99	279.69
AGE	199	18	51	24.26	7.22
DIFF_WR	199	-76.00	54	-2.7387	24.6591
DIFF_RD	198	-49.00	40	-2.8788	14.0064
Valid N (listwise)	198				

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

Determination of the level of over or underestimation of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs was made by subtracting the respective self-efficacy percentage score for each participant from that participant's COMPASS score, which is measured from 0-100. An analysis of over or underestimation of writing beliefs in relation to writing performance as measured by the COMPASS Writing Placement Test indicated that the mean of  $-2.7387$  ( $SD = 24.6591$ ) is an overestimation of writing beliefs and the range of estimation from  $-76$  to  $54$ . The mean age of the sample group was  $24.26$  ( $SD = 7.22$ ) and ages ranged from 18 to 51.

### *Testing of Hypotheses*

The first research question was as follows: What is the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers? To answer this question, two-tailed Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed.

#### *Whole sample group.*

Table 9 shows the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores for all in the sample group. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores, Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores, and participants' age.
- Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores, COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores, and age of participants.

- COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and age of participants.
- Age of participants, the COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Test scores.

*All male participants.*

Table 10 shows the relationships among reading/writing beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores for male students in the sample group.

A statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- COMPASS Writing Placement Test Scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement Scores.

*All female participants.*

Table 11 shows the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores for female students in the sample group. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.

*All participants with no placement in developmental reading or writing.*

Table 12 shows the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores for sample students with no prerequisite placement in developmental reading or writing. These students took the COMPASS Placement Test in reading and writing and scored in the college location's highest cut scores range. This group was exempt from any developmental reading or writing courses.

A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- Compass Writing Placement Test scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements.
- Participants' age and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.



Table 9

Correlation of Scores and Age of Sample Group

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.537**	.077	.275**	.161*	.462**	.699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.281	.000	.023	.000	.000
	N	199	199	199	198	199	199	198
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.537**	1.000	.221**	.266**	.086	.814**	.286**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.002	.000	.229	.000	.000
	N	199	199	199	198	199	199	198
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.077	.221**	1.000	.566**	-.071	-.386**	-.354**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.281	.002	.	.000	.318	.000	.000
	N	199	199	199	198	199	199	198
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.275**	.266**	.566**	1.000	.202**	-.084	-.496**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.004	.239	.000
	N	198	198	198	198	198	198	198

Table 9 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.161*	.086	-.071	.202**	1.000	.123	-.006
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.229	.318	.004	.	.083	.932
	N	199	199	199	198	199	199	198
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.462**	.814**	-.386**	-.084	.123	1.000	.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.239	.083	.	.000
	N	199	199	199	198	199	199	198
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.699**	.286**	-.354**	-.496**	-.006	.479**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.932	.000	.
	N	198	198	198	198	198	198	199

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy

percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus

writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score

minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation reading of self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\*P < .05

Table 10

Correlation Data for Males in Sample Group

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.667**	.115	.429**	.272*	.599**	.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.321	.000	.018	.000	.000
	N	76	76	76	75	76	76	75
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.667**	1.000	.245*	.374**	.172	.860**	.393**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.033	.001	.136	.000	.000
	N	76	76	76	75	76	76	75
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.115	.245*	1.000	.588**	.037	-.284*	-.356**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.321	.033	.	.000	.752	.013	.002
	N	76	76	76	75	76	76	75
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.429**	.374**	.588**	1.000	.255*	.061	-.355**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.	.027	.601	.002
	N	75	75	75	75	75	75	75

Table 10 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.272*	.172	.037	.255*	1.000	.151	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.136	.752	.027	.	.193	.516
	N	76	76	76	75	76	76	75
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.599**	.860**	-.284*	.061	.151	1.000	.570**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.013	.601	.193	.	.000
	N	76	76	76	75	76	76	75
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.692	.393**	-.356**	-.355**	.076	.570**	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.002	.002	.516	.000	.
	N	75	75	75	75	75	75	75

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self- efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\*p < .01

\*p < .05

Table 11

Correlation Data for Females in Sample Group

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.407**	.046	.115	.049	.344**	.716**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.610	.207	.588	.000	.000
	N	123	123	123	123	123	123	123
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.407**	1.000	.218*	.168	.012	.778**	.206*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.016	.063	.898	.000	.022
	N	123	123	123	123	123	123	123
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.046	.218*	1.000	.567**	-.147	-.444**	-.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.610	.016	.	.000	.105	.000	.000
	N	123	123	123	123	123	123	123
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.115	.168	.567**	1.000	.157	-.211*	-.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.207	.063	.000	.	.084	.019	.000
	N	123	123	123	123	123	123	123

Table 11 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.049	.012	-.147	.157	1.000	.105	-.071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.588	.898	.105	.084	.	.246	.437
	N	123	123	123	123	123	123	123
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.344**	.778**	-.444**	-.211*	.105	1.000	.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.019	.246	.	.000
	N	123	123	123	123	123	123	123
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.716**	.206*	-.361**	-.611**	-.071	.422**	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.022	.000	.000	.437	.000	.
	N	123	123	123	123	123	123	123

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

Table 12

Correlation Data for Sample Group With No Developmental Reading or Writing Placement

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.263*	.049	.142	.109	.171	.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.021	.673	.221	.343	.138	.000
	N	77	77	77	76	77	77	76
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.263*	1.000	.235*	.248*	.071	.610**	-.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.	.040	.031	.539	.000	.472
	N	77	77	77	76	77	77	76
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.049	.235*	1.000	.673**	-.093	-.627**	-.590**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.673	.040	.	.000	.422	.000	.000
	N	77	77	77	76	77	77	76
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.142	.248*	.673**	1.000	.168	-.345**	-.844**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.221	.031	.000	.	.147	.002	.000
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76

Table 12 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.109	.071	-.093	.168	1.000	.133	-.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.343	.539	.422	.147	.	.250	.413
	N	77	77	77	76	77	77	76
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.171	.610**	-.627**	-.345**	.133	1.000	.409**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.138	.000	.000	.002	.250	.	.000
	N	77	77	77	76	77	77	76
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.410**	-.084	-.590**	-.844**	-.095	.409**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.472	.000	.000	.413	.000	.
	N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs. minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05



*All participants placed in developmental reading or writing.*

Table 13 shows the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores for sample students placed in developmental reading or writing. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores and participants' age.

The sample group in Table 13 took the COMPASS Placement Test in reading and writing and scored below the ranges that the college location designated for direct admission into freshman composition. These students were required to take developmental reading and writing classes.

Similarities in the statistical data for these sample students and those who were placed directly into freshman composition are evident in the statistically significant correlation of the COMPASS reading and writing scores, the reading and writing self-efficacy scores, and the participants' age and reading self-efficacy beliefs. Differences in the statistical data for these sample groups are in the writing placement and writing self-efficacy beliefs.

Table 13

## Correlation Data for Sample Group With Development Reading or Writing Placement

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.365**	.009	.294**	.087	.317**	.725**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.920	.001	.342	.000	.000
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122	122
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.365**	1.000	.163	.240**	-.094	.782**	.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.073	.008	.303	.000	.063
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122	122
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.009	.163	1.000	.485**	-.100	-.488**	-.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.920	.073	.	.000	.273	.000	.002
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122	122
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.294**	.240**	.485**	1.000	.197*	-.095	-.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.008	.000	.	.030	.299	.000
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122	122

Table 13 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.087	-.094	-.100	.197*	1.000	-.020	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.342	.303	.273	.030	.	.827	.509
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122	122
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.317**	.782**	-.488**	-.095	-.020	1.000	.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.299	.827	.	.000
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122	122
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.725**	.169	-.341**	-.445**	-.060	.365**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.063	.000	.000	.509	.000	.
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122	122

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

Table 14

Correlation Data for Sample Group Placed in Developmental Reading

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.353**	.046	.300*	-.027	.292*	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003	.707	.013	.824	.016	.000
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.353**	1.000	.154	.245*	-.216	.812**	.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.	.209	.044	.076	.000	.323
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.046	.154	1.000	.488**	-.153	-.451**	-.344**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.707	.209	.	.000	.213	.000	.004
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.300*	.245*	.488**	1.000	.176	-.066	-.522**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.044	.000	.	.150	.592	.000
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68

Table 14 ( *Continued* )

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	-.027	-.216	-.153	.176	1.000	-.105	-.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.824	.076	.213	.150	.	.939	.182
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.292*	.812**	-.451**	-.066	-.105	1.000	.313**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.000	.000	.592	.939	.	.009
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.657**	.122	-.344**	-.522**	-.164	.313**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.323	.004	.000	.182	.009	.
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

P < .01

P < .05

*All participants placed in developmental reading.*

Table 14 shows the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores for sample students placed in developmental writing. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- COMPASS Reading Placement test scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

*All participants with no placement in developmental reading.*

Table 15 shows a positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- COMPASS Writing Placement Tests scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores and participants' age.

*All participants placed in developmental writing.*

Table 16 shows a statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- COMPASS Reading and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

Table 15

Correlation Data for Sample Group Placed in Developmental Writing

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.266**	.033	.101	.099	.220*	.517**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002	.710	.253	.260	.012	.000
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.266**	1.000	.256**	.163	.086	.734**	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.	.003	.064	.331	.000	.807
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.033	.256**	1.000	.610**	-.064	-.469**	-.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.710	.003	.	.000	.466	.000	.000
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.101	.163	.610**	1.000	.176*	-.277**	-.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.253	.064	.000	.	.046	.001	.000
	N	130	130	130	130	130	130	130

Table 15 ( Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.099	.086	-.064	.176*	1.000	.123	-.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.260	.331	.466	.046	.	.160	.303
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.220*	.734**	-.469**	-.277**	.123	1.000	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000	.000	.001	.160	.	.000
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.517**	.022	-.503**	-.799**	-.091	.371**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.807	.000	.000	.303	.000	.
	N	130	130	130	130	130	130	130

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\*\* P < .05



Table 16

Correlation Data for Sample Group Placed in Developmental Writing

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.461**	.011	.306**	.074	.398**	.735**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.905	.001	.436	.000	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.461**	1.000	.184	.294**	-.058	.757**	.229*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.051	.002	.541	.000	.015
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.011	.184	1.000	.468**	-.108	-.503**	-.322**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.905	.051	.	.000	.257	.000	.001
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.306**	.294**	.468**	1.000	.193*	-.052	-.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.002	.000	.	.041	.584	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113

Table 16 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.074	-.058	-.108	.193*	1.000	.020	-.067
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.436	.541	.257	.041	.	.830	.483
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.398**	.757**	-.503**	-.052	.020	1.000	.416**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.584	.830	.	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.735**	.229*	-.322**	-.421**	-.067	.416**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.015	.001	.000	.483	.000	.
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

*All participants with no placement in developmental writing.*

Table 17 shows the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores for sample students with no placement in developmental writing. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

*Summary.*

The first research question was answered by the findings of analysis of variance and two-tailed Pearson Product Moment Correlation matrices. Findings indicated the relationships among participants' reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs scores and their Reading/Writing COMPASS Placement Test scores. Data were presented for participants according to placement in prerequisite developmental courses or not.

*Second research question.*

The second research question sought to answer the following: Is there a difference in the strength of the relationships among scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on standardized reading/writing placement tests of diverse community college freshman writers? To answer this question descriptive statistics and two-tailed Pearson Correlation were computed.

Table 17

Correlation Data for Sample Group With No Placement in Developmental Writing

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.268*	.112	.200	.208	.139	.523**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.013	.305	.067	.054	.203	.000
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.268*	1.000	.255*	.250*	.072	.645**	-.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.	.018	.021	.509	.000	.783
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.112	.255*	1.000	.682**	-.060	-.574**	-.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	.018	.	.000	.580	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.200	.250*	.682**	1.000	.193	-.322**	-.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	.021	.000	.	.076	.003	.000
	N	85	85	85	85	85	85	85

Table 17 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.208	.072	-.060	.193	1.000	.109	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.509	.580	.076	.	.318	.834
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.139	.645**	-.574**	-.322**	.109	1.00	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.203	.000	.000	.003	.318	.	.000
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.523**	-.030	-.514**	-.731**	-.023	.377**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.783	.000	.000	.834	.000	.
	N	85	85	85	85	85	85	85

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

*Estimation of self-efficacy beliefs by African Americans and Caucasians.*

One of the most significant findings in the quantitative data is seen in Table 18. For African Americans and Caucasians in the study, a strong difference exists in the level of their self-efficacy reading and writing beliefs. Over or underestimation of self-efficacy beliefs was determined by subtracting participants' self-efficacy beliefs scores from the COMPASS placement scores. Consistently, African Americans overestimated their self-efficacy beliefs in comparison to their placement scores.

*Estimation of self-efficacy beliefs scores in reading.*

African Americans placed directly into freshman composition without placement in prerequisite developmental courses scored a mean of -6.11 in reading self-efficacy, indicating an overestimation of beliefs compared to Caucasians whose mean score was 1.15, indicating an underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

For African Americans placed in at least one developmental course, the self-efficacy beliefs mean score in reading was -14.88 at the time they entered freshman composition. Whereas for Caucasians placed in at least one developmental course, the self-efficacy beliefs mean score was -13.82 at the time they entered freshman composition.

*Estimation of self-efficacy beliefs in writing.*

In writing, African Americans placed directly into freshman composition without placement in the prerequisite developmental courses had a mean score of -1.00, indicating an overestimation of self-efficacy beliefs, while Caucasians' mean score was 6.14, indicating an underestimation of self-efficacy beliefs.

Table 18

Mean Differences of Over or Underestimation of Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy by Race

Descriptive Statistics							
RACE 3	BOTH DEV		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
White	0	DIFF_RD	103	-30	40	1.15	11.30
		DIFF_WR	104	-48	54	6.14	20.05
		Valid N (listwise)	103				
	1	DIFF_RD	34	-44	10	-13.82	11.78
		DIFF_WR	34	-65	36	-19.65	22.87
		Valid N (listwise)	34				
African-American	0	DIFF_RD	19	-49	12	-6.11	12.94
		DIFF_WR	19	-68	39	-1.00	23.95
		Valid N (listwise)	19				
	1	DIFF_RD	17	-43	6	-14.88	13.84
		DIFF_WR	17	-76	9	-27.65	26.54

Table 18 (Continued)

RACE_3	BOTH_DEV		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
		Valid N (listwise)	17				
Other	0	DIFF_RD	17	-14	37	10.06	11.98
		DIFF_WR	17	-26	45	5.71	20.94
		Valid N (listwise)	17				
	1						
		DIFF_RD	8	-23	15	-2.50	14.32
		DIFF_WR	8	-40	18	-15.50	17.24
		Valid N (listwise)	8				

Note. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy scores.

DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.



For African Americans placed in at least one prerequisite developmental course, the mean score in writing was - 27.65 at the time they entered freshman composition, while Caucasians' mean score was -19.65. The large overestimation of scores for those student participants placed in prerequisite developmental courses is, in general, a result of the direct instruction they received after their COMPASS Placement Test results and before the administration of the self-efficacy tests in this study, which was conducted at the beginning of their freshman composition class. Since both tests were not taken at the same time, the successful completion of developmental courses by 34 Caucasians and 17 African American students with direct instruction naturally inflates the mean self-efficacy scores. Separate analysis of findings was conducted on the developmental group and the nondevelopmental group. The overestimation of African American students placed in prerequisite developmental classes suggests that completion of at least one developmental course boosted the confidence of African Americans to a greater level as compared to Caucasians completing at least one developmental course.

Overestimation of writing self-efficacy scores by African American and Hispanic students was an equally significant finding in Campillo and Pool (1999), who studied 20 prefreshmen they described as "educationally and economically disadvantaged" (p. 5). In this summer compensatory program, self-efficacy assessment was used as an intervention training procedure during a five-week writing course. Although the students had failed a writing proficiency entrance test before signing up for the course, their writing self-efficacy beliefs were significantly overestimated. The measurement used in the study was one developed by Zimmerman, Bonner, and Kovach (1996). Intervention included self-efficacy assessment before each assignment and at the conclusion of the

study. The researchers reported that discrepancy in self-efficacy assessment was lowered by 60%. Moreover the study group's success was 20% higher than the success rate in the general remedial program.

African American students in the current study cannot be described as educationally disadvantaged since the study group included more than 50% of students deemed likely to succeed in freshman composition by a standardized test.

Overestimation of self-efficacy beliefs is evident in both the developmental group as well as the nondevelopmental group.

*Developmental reading placement, reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs, and COMPASS reading/writing scores.*

Table 19 presents correlation data for students placed in prerequisite developmental reading classes. For sample students placed in developmental reading, a positive statistically significant relationship exists between COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. No statistically significant relationship exists, however, between the COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

Table 19

## Correlation Data for Sample Group Placed in Developmental Reading

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.353**	.046	.300*	-.027	.292*	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003	.707	.013	.824	.016	.000
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.353**	1.000	.154	.245*	-.216	.812**	.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.	.209	.044	.076	.000	.323
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.046	.154	1.000	.488**	-.153	-.451**	-.344**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.707	.209	.	.000	.213	.000	.004
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.300*	.245*	.488**	1.000	.176	-.066	-.522**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.044	.000	.	.150	.592	.000
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68

Table 19 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	-.027	-.216	-.153	.176	1.000	-.105	-.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.824	.076	.213	.150	.	.393	.182
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.292*	.812**	-.451**	-.066	-.105	1.000	.313**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.000	.000	.592	.393	.	.009
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.657**	.122	-.344**	-.522**	-.164	.313**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.323	.004	.000	.182	.009	.
	N	68	68	68	68	68	68	68

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

Table 20 presents correlation data for students who were not placed in prerequisite developmental reading classes. No strong relationship exists between COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. A positive statistically significant relationship exists, however, between COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

*Developmental writing, reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs measurement scores, and COMPASS reading/writing tests scores.*

(Table 21) presents correlation data for sample group placed in prerequisite developmental writing. A positive statistically significant relationship exists between the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements scores. No statistically significant relationship exists between COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

Table 22 presents correlation data for sample group not placed in prerequisite developmental writing. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

*Developmental reading placement and race.*

For Caucasian students placed in developmental reading, a positive statistically significant relationship exists among COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

Table 20

## Correlation Data for Sample Groups With No Placement in Developmental Reading

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.266**	.033	.101	.099	.220*	.517**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002	.710	.253	.260	.012	.000
	N	131	1.000	131	130	131	131	130
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.266**	1.000	.256**	.163	.086	.734**	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.	.003	.064	.331	.000	.807
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.033	.256**	1.000	.610**	-.064	-.469**	-.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.710	.003	.	.000	.466	.000	.000
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.101	.163	.610**	1.000	.176*	-.277**	-.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.253	.064	.000	.	.046	.001	.000
	N	130	130	130	130	130	130	130

Table 20 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.099	.086	-.064	.176*	1.000	.123	-.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.260	.331	.466	.046	.	.160	.303
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.220*	.734**	-.469**	-.277**	.123	1.000	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000	.000	.001	.160	.	.000
	N	131	131	131	130	131	131	130
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.517**	.022	-.503**	-.799**	-.091	.371**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.807	.000	.000	.303	.000	.
	N	130	130	130	130	130	130	130

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs.

DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01      \* P < .05

Table 21

Correlation Data for Sample Group Placed in Developmental Writing

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.461**	.011	.306**	.074	.398**	.735**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.905	.001	.436	.000	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.461**	1.000	.184	.294**	-.058	.757**	.229*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.051	.002	.541	.000	.015
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.011	.184	1.000	.468**	-.108	-.503**	-.322**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.905	.051	.	.000	.257	.000	.001
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.306**	.294**	.468**	1.000	.193*	-.052	-.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.002	.000	.	.041	.584	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113



Table 21 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.074	-.058	-.108	.193*	1.000	.020	-.067
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.436	.541	.257	.041	.	.830	.483
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.398**	.757**	-.503**	-.052	.020	1.000	.416**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.584	.830	.	.000
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.735**	.229*	-.322**	-.421**	-.067	.416**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.015	.001	.000	.483	.000	.
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

Table 22

Correlation for Sample group With No Placement in Developmental Writing

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.268*	.112	.200	.208	.139	.523**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.013	.305	.067	.054	.203	.000
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.268*	1.000	.255*	.250*	.072	.645**	-.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.	.018	.021	.509	.000	.783
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.112	.255*	1.000	.682**	-.060	-.574**	-.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	.018	.	.000	.580	.000	.000
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.200	.250*	.682**	1.000	.193	-.322**	-.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	.021	.000	.	.076	.003	.000
	N	85	85	85	85	85	85	85

Table 22 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.208	.072	-.060	.193	1.000	.109	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.509	.580	.076	.	.318	.834
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.139	.645**	-.574**	-.322**	.109	1.00	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.203	.000	.000	.003	.318	.	.000
	N	86	86	86	85	86	86	85
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.523**	-.030	-.514**	-.731**	-.023	.377**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.783	.000	.000	.834	.000	.
	N	85	85	85	85	85	85	85

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

For African American students placed in developmental reading, no statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

For Caucasian sample students not placed in developmental reading, a positive statistically significant relationship exists between the COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores. A positive statistically significant relationship exists also among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. For African American students not placed in developmental reading, no statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores. Similarly, no statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

*Developmental writing placement and race.*

For Caucasian students placed in developmental writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. For African American students placed in developmental writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists only between the COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores. No statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

For Caucasian sample students not placed in developmental writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists between the Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. For African American sample students not placed in developmental writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists between the COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores, but no statistically significant relationship exists between the Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

*All African American participants.*

Table 23 presents correlation data for African Americans in the sample group.

A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- The age of participants and the reading self-efficacy beliefs scores.

No statistically significant relationship exists, however, among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. Moreover, no statistically significant relationship exists between age and COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores.

*All Caucasian participants.*

Table 24 presents correlation data for Caucasians in the study. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Test scores and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

Table 23

## Correlation Data for African-Americans in the Study Group

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.532**	-.004	.306	.084	.512**	.834**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.980	.069	.628	.001	.000
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.532**	1.000	.159	.244	.157	.883**	.397*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.355	.151	.362	.000	.017
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	-.004	.159	1.000	.282	-.128	-.323	-.168
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.980	.355	.	.095	.456	.055	.328
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.306	.244	.282	1.000	.360*	.100	-.269
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069	.151	.095	.	.031	.562	.112
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36

Table 23 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.084	.157	-.128	.360*	1.000	.211	-.124
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.628	.362	.456	.031	.	.217	.472
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.512**	.883**	-.323	.100	.211	1.000	.460**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.055	.562	.217	.	.005
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.834**	.397*	-.168	-.269	-.124	.460**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.017	.328	.112	.472	.005	.
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

Table 24

Correlation Data for Caucasians in the Study Group

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.513**	.085	.329**	.244**	.428**	.682**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.323	.000	.004	.000	.000
	N	138	138	138	137	138	138	137
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.513**	1.000	.244**	.346**	.119	.782**	.213*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.004	.000	.165	.000	.012
	N	138	138	138	137	138	138	137
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.085	.244**	1.000	.605**	-.068	-.413**	-.392**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.323	.004	.	.000	.431	.000	.000
	N	138	138	138	137	138	138	137
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.329**	.346**	.605**	1.000	.153	-.062	-.466**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.074	.469	.000
	N	137	137	137	137	137	137	137



Table 24 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF_WR	DIFF_RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.244**	.119	-.068	.153	1.000	.155	.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.165	.431	.074	.	.707	.203
N		138	138	138	137	138	138	137
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.428**	.782**	-.413**	-.062	.155	1.00	.449**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.469	.070	.	.000
N		138	138	138	137	138	138	137
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.682**	.213*	-.392**	-.466**	.109	.449**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.012	.000	.000	.203	.000	.
N		137	137	137	137	137	137	137

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

- COMPASS Writing Placement Test score and Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.
- COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and participants' age.

*All "Other" race participants.*

Table 25 presents correlation data for the sample group identified as other than African American or Caucasian. A positive statistically significant relationship exists among variables as follows:

- COMPASS Reading and Writing Placement Test scores.
- Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

*Developmental reading and writing placement and race.*

Table 26 presents correlation data by race for participants placed in both prerequisite developmental reading and writing courses. For Caucasian students with no placement in developmental reading/writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Writing Placement Test Scores, the Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores, and the Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores.

For Caucasian students placed in both developmental reading/writing courses, a positive statistically significant relationship exists among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement scores and the Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. A positive statistically significant relationship exists also between the Reading and the Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. For African Americans with no placement in developmental reading/writing, no statistically significant relationships exist except between the Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Tests scores.

Table 25

Correlation Data for Study Participants Identified as Other than African-American or Caucasian

		CRS	CWS	WSE_PER	RSE_PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.467*	.201	.301	.235	.295	.418*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.019	.335	.144	.259	.152	.037
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
CWS	Pearson Correlation	.467*	1.000	.230	.086	-.063	.765**	.248
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.	.268	.683	.765	.000	.233
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
WSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.201	.230	1.000	.694**	-.079	-.450*	-.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.335	.268	.	.000	.709	.024	.008
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
RSE_PER	Pearson Correlation	.301	.086	.695**	1.000	.160	-.380	-.740**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.144	.683	.000	.	.445	.061	.000
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25

Table 25 (Continued)

		CRS	CWS	WSE PER	RSE PER	AGE	DIFF WR	DIFF RD
AGE	Pearson Correlation	.235	-.063	-.079	.160	1.000	-.006	.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.259	.765	.709	.445	.	.978	.950
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
DIFF_WR	Pearson Correlation	.295	.765**	-.450*	-.380	-.006	1.00	.570**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.152	.000	.024	.061	.978	.	.003
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
DIFF_RD	Pearson Correlation	.418*	.248	-.519**	-.740**	.013	.570**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.233	.008	.000	.950	.003	.
	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\* P < .01

\* P < .05

Table 26

Correlation Data for Study Group Based on Race and Placement in Developmental Reading and Writing

RACE 3	BOTH DEV		CRS	CWS	WSE	RSE	
Caucasian	0	CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.153	.030	.164
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.121	.765	.096
			N	104	104	104	104
		CWS	Pearson Correlation	.153	1.000	.273**	.218*
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.	.005	.026
			N	104	104	104	104
		WSE	Pearson Correlation	.030	.273**	1.000	.649**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.765	.005	.	.000
			N	104	104	104	104
		RSE	Pearson Correlation	.164	.218*	.649**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.096	.026	.000	.
			N	104	104	104	104

Table 26 (Continued)

RACE 3	BOTH DEV		CRS	CWS	WSE	RSE
1	CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.492**	.230	.554**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003	.191	.001
		N	34	34	34	34
	CWS	Pearson Correlation	.492**	1.000	.294	.571**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.	.091	.000
		N	34	34	34	34
	WSE	Pearson Correlation	.230	.294	1.000	.559**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.191	.091	.	.001
		N	34	34	34	34
	RSE	Pearson Correlation	.554**	.571**	.559**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.001	.
		N	34	34	34	34

Table 26 (Continued)

RACE 3	BOTH DEV		CRS	CWS	WSE	RSE	
African-American	0	CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.272	.076	.136
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.260	.757	.580
			N	19	19	19	19
		CWS	Pearson Correlation	.272	1.000	.204	.232
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.260	.	.401	.339
			N	19	19	19	19
		WSE	Pearson Correlation	.076	.204	1.000	.480*
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.757	.401	.	.037
			N	19	19	19	19
		RSE	Pearson Correlation	.136	.232	.480*	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.580	.339	.037	.
			N	19	19	19	19

Table 26 (Continued)

RACE 3	BOTH DEV		CRS	CWS	WSE	RSE
1	CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.398	-.330	.188
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.114	.195	.469
		N	17	17	17	17
	CWS	Pearson Correlation	.398	1.000	-.104	-.129
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	.	.690	.621
		N	17	17	17	17
	WSE	Pearson Correlation	-.330	-.104	1.000	-.079
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.195	.690	.	.762
		N	17	17	17	17
RSE	Pearson Correlation	.188	-.129	-.079	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.469	.621	.762	.	
	N	17	17	17	17	



Table 26 (Continued)

RACE 3	BOTH DEV		CRS	CWS	WSE	RSE	
Other	0	CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.207	.384	.498*
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.425	.128	.042
			N	17	17	17	17
		CWS	Pearson Correlation	.207	1.000	.241	-.073
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.425	.	.351	.779
			N	17	17	17	17
		WSE	Pearson Correlation	.384	.241	1.000	.721**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.128	.384	.241	1.000
			N	17	17	17	17
		RSE	Pearson Correlation	.498*	-.073	.721**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.779	.001	.
			N	17	17	17	17

Table 26 (Continued)

RACE_3	BOTH_DEV		CRS	CWS	WSE	RSE
1	CRS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.374	-.187	-.433
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.361	.657	.284
		N	8	8	8	8
	CWS	Pearson Correlation	-.374	1.000	.276	.342
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.361	.	.508	.408
		N	8	8	8	8
	WSE	Pearson Correlation	-.187	.276	1.000	.652
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.657	.508	.	.080
		N	8	8	8	8
	RSE	Pearson Correlation	-.433	.342	.652	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.284	.408	.080	.
		N	8	8	8	8

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Table 26 (Continued)

Note. CRS = COMPASS reading score. CWS= COMPASS writing score. WSE\_PER = Writing self-efficacy percentage score. RSE\_PER = Reading

self-efficacy percentage score. DIFF\_WR = COMPASS writing score minus writing self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of writing self-efficacy

beliefs. DIFF\_RD = COMPASS reading score minus reading self-efficacy score = over or underestimation of reading self-efficacy beliefs.

\*\*P < .01

\*P < .05

For African Americans placed in both developmental reading and writing, no statistically significant relationships exist among reading/writing placement scores and self-efficacy beliefs scores.

For students other than Caucasian and African American with no placement in developmental reading/writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists between the COMPASS Reading Placement Test scores and the Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores and between the Reading and Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. For the students other than Caucasian and African American with placement in both developmental reading/writing, no statistically significant relationships exist between reading/writing placement and self-efficacy beliefs scores.

*Summary.*

The second research question was answered by the findings of descriptive statistics and two-tailed Pearson Product Moment Correlation matrices. Findings indicated differences in the strength of the relationships among participants' reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs scores and their Reading/Writing COMPASS Placement Test scores. Data were presented for participants according to the diverse characteristics of age, sex, and ethnicity.

*Third research question.*

The third research question was as follows: How do diverse community college freshman writers describe the experiences they think explain their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs scores and their relationships to their standardized reading/writing placement tests scores? To answer this question, a qualitative analysis of the responses from 19 participant interviews was conducted.

## Results of interviews

Of the 60 students invited for interviews, 19 agreed to be interviewed. A descriptive profile of the interviewed students is shown in Table 27. Participants' names were changed to protect their privacy. Ten were Caucasian and nine African American. Of the Caucasians, three were placed in developmental classes before taking freshman English and seven were not. Among the nine African Americans, seven were placed in developmental classes and two were not.

The major purpose of interviewing a representative sample of students in the study group was to learn how these students explain the relationships among their performance on the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Tests and their Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements in reading/writing. The quantitative data showed that overall, for African American students with no placement in developmental reading or writing, no statistically significant relationship exists among their performance on the COMPASS tests and their self-efficacy beliefs scores whereas for Caucasians with no placement in developmental reading or writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists among their COMPASS tests scores and their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs scores.

Table 27

## African American Participants

Name	Age	CRS	CWS	RSE	WSE
Ann	19	86	81	77	85
Amberly	19	83	69	77	72
Trevor	45	80	61	91	86
Charleen	26	76	65	77	56
Danielle	26	59	67	95	71
John	20	65	10	90	56
Joan	34	45	60	94	87
Nikki	31	79	98	81	59
Pam	29	65	18	97	94

## Caucasian Participants

Name	Age	CRS	CWS	RSE	WSE
Arnold	38	95	97	86	74
Anita	19	65	56	82	79
Andy	24	99	96	87	53
Artie	21	33	3	43	60
Eva	19	90	98	96	83
Rick	25	93	98	93	73
Jean	35	88	43	92	53
Kathy	42	93	99	99	85

Table 27 (Continued)

Name	Age	CRS	CWS	RSE	WSE
Laurie	21	92	78	90	74
Tonette	19	78	65	94	87

Note. CRS = COMPASS Reading Score. CWS = COMPASS Writing Score. RSE = Reading Self-Efficacy Score.

WSE = Writing Self-Efficacy Measurement Score.

The quantitative data showed also that for Caucasians placed in developmental reading or writing, a positive statistically significant relationship exists among their reading/writing performance and their reading self-efficacy beliefs and among their reading/writing COMPASS scores and their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs scores. An analysis of the interviewees' responses gives some insight into possible reasons for the disparity between African Americans and Caucasians in the study.

*Positive memories of English teachers.*

- No significant differences were observed in the answers of African Americans and Caucasians regarding positive memories of their English teachers. Seven out of ten Caucasian students stated they had positive memories of their English teachers, and eight out of nine African American students stated they had positive memories. Both groups of students' responses regarding positive memories focused on the instructors' affect in the class and their pedagogical strategies. For example, memories of positive teacher actions included the following list:
- Gave praise
- Complimented handwriting
- "Always had something good to say"
- Gave an "A" for presentation
- Gave personal attention
- "Treated students as if they mattered"
- Held high expectations of students
- Had an easy, comfortable class



- Encouraged students
- Helped to make sure students succeeded
- Told student he “knew what to say”
- Took time to answer questions directly
- Gave strong feedback
- Did not take over ownership of the writing
- Listened to students’ perceptions

Students’ positive references to instruction included these actions:

- Kept small classrooms
- Had students read work out loud to someone else
- Encouraged free writing first and editing later
- Encouraged discussion of assigned reading
- Gave students freedom to choose topics
- Gave verbal, email, or handwritten comments on drafts
- Gave comments that let students know the teacher had read the students’ work
- Gave specific suggestions for improvement, such as use Spell Check; go to the Writing Center
- Isolated areas of weakness and gave one on one instruction
- Allowed opportunities for multiple revision
- Created highly interactive classes
- Developed structured peer review

*Effects of positive memories of teachers.*

Fourteen out of nineteen students had positive memories. Seven African Americans and seven Caucasians said they felt strong or increased confidence in their ability to read or write; one African American student felt that her teacher's critique helped her improve but that her self-efficacy in writing eroded because she worried that her writing would never live up to the teacher's expectations. Others felt supported, encouraged not criticized, and motivated to be creative. These students said they tried harder and saw their grades improve. Four students, three of whom were Caucasian, had no positive memories to share about their English teachers.

*Negative memories of English teachers.*

- Nine students out of the interviewed 19 had strong negative memories of English teachers. Five of the students were Caucasian and four were African American. Negative comments about teachers' actions included the following:
  - Did not take time to help students
  - Corrected student writing but did not explain the errors
  - Overemphasized rules and requirements
  - Did not assign much writing
  - Gave students little feedback on writing
  - Placed low emphasis on revision
  - Made students read Hamlet without adequate instruction and preparation
  - Allowed student projects to reinforce wrong interpretations of literature

- Failed to assist students in making personal connections with British literature
- Put “F” papers on the class bulletin board near the door

Two negative comments related to institutional practices:

- Placed an African American student at a level above one in which she felt she was capable of performing.
- Drastically increased expectations of students to write correctly when they reached the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

*Effects of negative memories.*

Several students said their self-efficacy beliefs in reading/writing decreased.

They described the effects as follows:

- “Gave up on it altogether”
- Student and class struggled
- “Blocked it out and got through”
- Always felt inadequate
- Internalized negative academic performance
- Overcame dissatisfaction by asking, “Who is going to benefit?”

In describing a negative high school English experience, which made him feel stymied in learning, one Caucasian student stated,

It became harder to write because it’s hard to express your ideas under a format that we were given, and I didn’t see why a paper should be written a certain way, and you get graded if you go above a number of words. I couldn’t understand

that because if you had the information why should it matter? I don't think I'd spend any more time on how to write good. Everything was being critiqued.

Another Caucasian student described a teacher's cruel attempt to be kind. She always displayed "F" papers on a bulletin board.

"My papers were always up there . . . When I moved down there . . . it was kind of surprising. And then . . . I mean it just made me really realize that I was just very poor at that, and then after a while it just didn't surprise me. It was like, well, there's my paper. Oh well. My paper looked like it was bleeding. And it was just bleeding."

This student concluded that his vocabulary and sentence structure were fine, but he just could not spell correctly.

This student further described the hurt he felt when an older uncle and family patriarch he admired received a letter the student had sent him from military basic training. He heard that the uncle said, "It's a good thing he went into the military because he obviously isn't that intelligent because he can't write." "I was like crushed." (Chuckle) According to this student, his misspellings vastly improved when he was able to use a word processor with Spell Check. No student attributed negative memories of English teachers to race.

Students were asked to share sources of support for their self-efficacy in reading/writing. The question regarding sources of support was drawn from Bandura's (1986, 1993, 1995) social persuasion in which verbal encouragement is an important source of self-efficacy beliefs. Sixteen of 19 students interviewed attributed much of their self-efficacy in reading/writing to family members, parents, spouses, siblings, and

cousins. This finding is consistent with that of Zeldin and Pajares (2000), who concluded that family was the strongest source of vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion for women who succeeded in entering mathematical, scientific, and technological careers.

An African American student said she did not share her work with family members because she felt she could never compete with an older sister. The 19<sup>th</sup> student, who was Caucasian, declined to explain why his family was unsupportive. Some of the ways that families supported these students were through the following activities:

- Reading aloud
- Providing feedback to written work
- Providing praise
- Keeping books and magazines at home
- Taking students to the library
- Encouraging discussions of books at home
- Encouraging reading for pleasure and not for school alone

Another source for strong self-efficacy beliefs according to Bandura (1986, 1982, 1986, 1995) comes from teachers. In answer to the question, "Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading/writing by your teachers," one student replied, "I never looked at it that way, cause they grading it and because it's a teacher/student relationship." Two students, one African American and one Caucasian, stated that they never felt supported by their teachers. Seventeen others described teachers who created supportive learning environments by doing the following:

- Taking the time to help
- Facilitating revision

- Praising students
- Encouraging collaborative learning
- Providing individual attention
- Holding high expectations of their students
- Providing rich, meaningful feedback
- Staying involved with students' writing at every stage
- Making specific recommendations for improvement
- Showing that they engaged in and appreciated reading their students' written work

One Caucasian student described his first-grade experiences in reading. At first he was placed into the lowest reading group at school, which was reading a book called, *The dog in the dog house*. After one week, he was promoted to the highest group that was reading, *Birds fly, bears don't*. He felt smart, "in the elite . . . alpha male." This class change boosted his self-efficacy beliefs and ultimately, he moved into drama. The student concluded, "At TCC, the teacher made me feel I could write. I really felt like these scores [COMPASS Placement Test scores] matched my abilities, because I was like I can do this. It's like maybe the test wasn't wrong."

Since Bandura (1986, 1993, 1995) posits that school, community, and religious groups can also be sources of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs, students were asked to describe their experiences with these groups. Students described their participation in school groups as follows:

- Peer collaboration in classes
- Study groups

- Informal groups of school friends
- Clubs

Activities in religious/community groups included the following:

- Reading religious books and materials
- Receiving religious prayer and encouragement
- Serving as officer in military wives' clubs
- Working in theatrical groups

Other forms of support that the interviewees identified were coworkers who engaged in activities at work such as reading instructional manuals or forming informal peer groups of working college students.

Since it is critical for students to have role models that they can identify with (Bandura 1986, 1993, 1995, 1997; Zeldin & Pajares, 2000), questions were asked about role models of the same race as theirs and role models of a different race. Most students identified individuals close to them, such as spouses, siblings, parents, godparents, cousins, classmates, or friends. One African American named a pastor and ministers on the radio; another named commentators on talk radio. A few named authors, including Angelou, Morrison, Thoreau, Brooks, and Hughes. One named "some of the great people of our race," Marshall and DuBois. A few Caucasians named teachers, one named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and two named Angelou.

One distinct difference between the responses of African Americans and Caucasians related to the difference of language use at school and language use with families and friends. This question was designed to elicit answers regarding social persuasion within the students' linguistic environments. Students were asked this question:

Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

In describing the differences, which ranged from “not much” to “very different,” students used a variety of descriptive terms. Terms common to African Americans and Caucasians included *grammar*, *proper*, *slang*, and *big words*. Terms used exclusively by Caucasians included *formal/informal*, *lax words*, *polite*, *relaxed*, *well spoken*, and *conversational*. Terms used exclusively by African Americans included *proper English grammar*, *correct/incorrect*, *correct grammar*, *correct way of doing it*, *correct English*, *proper English*, *vocabulary*, *colloquial*, *in a country way*, *street terms*, *street words*, *certain words*, *wrong words*, *Southern accent*, *dialect*, *African American dialect*, and *Standard English dialect*. Among some African Americans, descriptions appeared to emphasize linguistic perceptions of right/wrong, language of street versus home, dialect acknowledgement, and terms usually used in school, such as “colloquial.” In a similar research of eight African American college students, Balester (1993) discovered that the study group used similar descriptors of African American dialect, such as “improper,” or “bad” and that Standard American English was “correct.” Caucasians and a few African Americans, on the other hand, used casual, popular terms that have little stigma attached to them, such as *slang* or *big words*.

Home Language/School



Four Caucasian students said there was little or no difference in language use. The other six Caucasians characterized the difference as informal/formal. The nine African American students interviewed all stated that language use was different, but they described the differences in a variety of ways and degrees.

Five African Americans stressed that their language at home and school changed significantly after they started college:

Pam

I just say the correct words instead of saying the slang words I'd say or the street words. Because if you sit back and listen to it, it's not correct and it doesn't sound correct. [In high school] I wasn't concerned about going to college or school, and I can say this to my friends and it doesn't really matter, but going to college and knowing it's not correct English, it's a big difference to me. I feel if the people around me hear the way I talk and speak correctly, then they will speak to me alike, cause I have an older daughter, and I'm teaching her the correct English. Also it's a lot of confidence for me. In class the teacher's not gonna allow you to say certain words that you say to your friends. The street words, the slang words is a lot different.... I'll know that was incorrect, so it's like okay if I decide to go to college, I got to come out of there and have more confidence in the way I speak to others.

What appears to be most important to Pam is that she and her daughter be part of a community of speakers and writers in Standard American English. One such community for her is college. She also feels that consistent use of Standard American English will boost her confidence in using it.

Trevor

I came to realize that I can't expect my children okay to learn how to use proper English grammar at school if I'm one way in class and when I come home I'm using all the wrong words and all the wrong terminology . . . so I learned . . . it's either going to have be a part of you all the time or not a part of you at all . . . and that's the best way to learn.

Just take for instance that I just went home to Columbus, Georgia, just during spring break, as a matter of fact. I went home and I can see people looking at me when I talk, you know. They're saying that he didn't used to sound like this. In other words, even some would go as far as mimicking the way I talk now as opposed to the way I talked back then see. Because, I again, if you learn these things, they become part of you. My wife said, 'Well, I could hear you sometime kind a slide back.' I said well, I kind a wouldn't do that sometime because I didn't want the ridicule, but then I say, Oh, then the heck with this. Why do I have to break myself down because of somebody else? Because, you know, they didn't go to school or refuse to go to school or whatever. They didn't go so why should I bring myself down to make myself seem less than I am or to go back on what I've learned? Why should I do that? Why shouldn't I use what I've learned? I mean, at my own expense. I don't think so. I said so I'll be more cognizant of what I say, my pronunciation of words, my enunciation of words, I'd be more confident. If I find myself saying something that's not correct, I'll try and correct myself immediately.

Researcher: And you're willing to take the ridicule from the people?

Trevor: Bring it on! Yeah, it doesn't matter because, again, I kind a been through painstaking times, and this thing has come at some price . . . . It comes with some price. So why should I, you know? It really shows ignorance, you know, to tell you the truth. So I told my wife, I said, "I find myself . . . when you hear it happening, stop me immediately. Don't even wait. I said I don't even care who I'm around, I said, because I don't want to sit here and sound like some, just for the lack of a better word, sound like some idiot. Just so I can please someone else? Again, I refuse to put myself down just so I can make someone else feel comfortable with me.

Faced with the responsibility of being a role model for his children, Trevor opts to drop his African American dialect in favor of consistent use of Standard American English at home and in his indigenous community. He expresses his repulsion for his former African American dialect by equating it to "sound[ing] like an idiot." His distress about the reaction of his indigenous community pierces through his reiterations and his order to his wife to correct him immediately, even in company. After much soul searching, Trevor chose to pay the "price" to become proficient in Standard American English. He chose to reject his indigenous community and its ridicule. The observation of Balester (1993) that "talking bad is primarily associated with the street corner, the good-time world of males, and nonstandard or rural dialects or Creoles" (p. 46) appears to mirror Trevor's beliefs. Trevor cannot recognize any identity conflict between his attitudes toward learning Standard American English and his relationship to his home community. Darder (1991) states bluntly, "So often it ["cultural invasion"] has resulted in a process that has systematically conditioned bicultural students to identify with the

assumed superiority of the dominant culture to the extent that they often participate in their oppression via an internalized inferior view of their own culture/race” (p. 41).

Ann

Most of it is how I talk, but being in school helps bring that up . . . because I will write a paper at least once every week. I guess I got into the rhythm into talking the way I am supposed to talk rather than using dialect or slang words.

After writing an email letter to a friend overseas, Ann was told that her language was different than it used to be. The use of Standard American English is becoming subconscious to her and using Standard American English is “the way I am supposed to talk.”

Joan

My family thinks I do [use African American dialect]. My father tells me I lost my Southern accent, so I don't know cause I've been here for so long and going back home it's like okay you're so proper . . . Home is Tennessee. The changes came from me being here [in college] . . . cause even my vocabulary expanded . . . [The sameness of language] helps my self-confidence, and I'll try it, but putting it on paper . . . I'm still taking baby steps. I guess my biggest thing is I don't like rejection.

For Joan, the linguistic change is welcome, and it builds her self-confidence. Her use of the term “taking baby steps” suggests that in her mind, before college she could not write, but now she is learning like a baby.

Nikki

I had to learn to change it . . . . [My friends] always call me the English teacher . . . Usually I don't [use an African American dialect], but my daughters definitely bring it home from school, and now I'm having to learn it. Every now and then I may, you know, surprise them and they will be, "What she say?" . . . Age itself has definitely made a difference and made me more able to accept criticism and now that I am in college, I am speaking more of that Standard English dialect than I did in high school . . . I believe it's helping it [my confidence] because I realize what I'm doing now. When you can identify something, you can either fix it or leave it.

In her interview, Nikki shared a long linguistic journey to Standard American English. It is ironic that in her home neither she nor her daughters speak in an African American dialect, but when she was growing up in her grandmother's house as a child, she, her grandmother, and her friends used an African American dialect routinely. "[S]chooling weakens the Black community by teaching 'successful' students to break their ties to the community by rejecting its behavior, norms, and values," states a community college researcher in Balester (1993).

The other four African Americans described their efforts to negotiate home and school language differences:

Charleen

It's a lot different. When I speak to my family and friends I use a lot of slang . . . . You know, I'll say words . . . in a country way instead of pronouncing it or trying to make sure that I hit every syllable when I'm in school or at work than when

I'm in the comfort of my family and friends . . . .If me and my friends are on the phone, and we're talking and we're using the dialect . . . it's been occasions where my mom she'll say something to me, and they won't get my attention. Then if she say it in a dialect or something, it'll be a kind of joke, and she'd say, "Yeah, you understood that, didn't you?"

I wouldn't say it affects my confidence now. It probably did indirectly, maybe when I was younger, cause I didn't know how to separate the two until I learned the techniques of more how to write . . . .When I was in high school, I probably wrote like I talked . . . a lot of red marks on my paper.

Amberly

Yes, I do better at school writing and stuff than I speak to my family and friends. I may use better vocabulary at school and at home I don't. It [this difference] doesn't affect my confidence. Maybe, I don't comprehend stuff real fast.

John

In school I try to use proper English. When I write, I try to use proper English, so the reader can understand what I'm saying. Sometimes I do; sometimes I don't [use African American dialect]. I have to be careful which words I use . . . just depending who I'm with.

Danielle

Yes, at home I am kind of laid back, so if I don't pronounce something the right way, it's not like I'll be at fault. When I am in school, it's like more proper, and I try to make sure that everything is pronounced correctly . . . .I think that it helps me because I don't want to graduate from college and still have problems as far

as language, and if I own my own business, I want people to understand what I'm saying, without looking at me like I am crazy. Sometimes you can say something, and they will be like, "What are you saying?"

These four students appear to have developed some negotiating skills that allowed them to be bicultural in their language use. Biculturalism, according to Darder (1991) is "a process wherein individuals learn to function in two distinct sociocultural environments: their primary culture, and that of the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live" (p. 48). This group of code switchers indicates its appreciation for both African American dialect and Standard American English. They distinguish between audiences and purpose, with Dana specifically referencing Standard American English as the dialect of business. The level of appreciation for the African American dialect expressed by the students, however, is expressed as less a source of cultural identity and more a vehicle for informality outside of the classroom. In her analysis of the stories shared in Howe (1973-74), Lu (1999) references the term "living with the tension of biculturalism," which brings to students in subcultures "'pain and dislocation' when trying to connect with the larger, cosmopolitan culture" Lu (1992, p. 42). Similarly, Darder (1991) states, "First, the language that many bicultural students bring to the classroom is systematically silenced and stripped away through values and beliefs that support its inferiority to standard English" (p. 36).

The responses of the Caucasian students contrasted strikingly with those of the African American students (Appendix K). Some Caucasian students' responses were pithy and centered on the use of slang, word usage, or differences in tone. (1-8):

1. "I don't think so."

2. "It's not very different. Because of my parents, I must be well spoken. Must not use certain words. Must not, you know you don't say ain't in my house. And my little brother is still learning that. As far as when you're writing a paper, you do use certain language. You do say certain things properly instead of saying *it's*, you say *it is*. Simple things like that, but I would say there is a slight difference. Not a major difference, though."
3. "I don't really use a lot of slang . . . I don't use different words that I wouldn't use when I am writing . . . I am writing the same words that I use to speak."
4. "Not too much. I don't use a lot of slang."
5. "I still try to talk with proper grammar, but I definitely use more slang when I am with my family, but I try to keep that out of my paper unless it's a narrative paper or something like that."
6. "Very different. At school I will be more polite than at home or friends. Not that I will be rude to them, but I will be more relaxed, grammar is the same, except the tone."
7. "I usually don't curse but [I would at school]. I don't curse with my family."  
[This student attributes his mental and emotional difficulties to a severe brain injury he sustained in high school.]
8. "So it's formal here and informal at home. It's not extremely different."

The two discussions below focus on the differences of voice in discourse in and outside the classroom:

1. After a tour of duty in the military, "[I]t helped me be able to find a voice, I guess, and actually talked to people. Whenever I do talk, I have a lot of



personality. I speak and I write with a lot of personality. It's hard for me to write a research paper because everything I just want to put in first person. I want to put it from my experience. I want to put it from like because I got something to say, but it's so hard. It's so hard to take that step back."

2. "I try to write papers, if allowed, the same way I would talk because it seems that that's more easily understood, depending on whom I am writing to."

[This student engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the effectiveness he perceives in the informal, conversational tone of popular literary publications versus the perceived absence of voice in academic writing.]

The stated differences in language use at home and at school for the Caucasian students did not include dialect differences nor suggest conflict of identity.

*The role of children in the reading/writing of student mothers.*

Two African American mothers of young children attributed their motivation to read and write to their young children. They perceived that an important role for them as parents is to be strong role models for their children through their efforts to read and write well. One woman references the number of young women with children who lack higher education. "I want to do better for myself, so by reading and writing and knowing the correct way of doing it, I have a future ahead of me compared to them . . . . " I gotta understand mostly for my kids." Another African American mother attributed her motivation to one of her adolescent sons, who is studying English in high school at an equivalent level to her in college. She and her son study together, and her son encourages her to read outside of college. The family formed a book club with friends and creates competitions among the book club participants. Many of the books they read

focus on Afrocentric themes. These African American mothers hold strong expectations for themselves as well as their children to succeed academically and thereby economically. Closer parental involvement with children's education as well as higher economic brackets may help these families move out of the Black/White education gap (*Closing the gap*, 2001).

Two Caucasian mothers expressed different relationships with their children in the study of reading and writing. These mothers indicated personal interest as a motivator unlike the two African American mothers who indicated family ambition as a motivator. One Caucasian mother encourages her children to read and write well because, she stated, "People should read and write." Another Caucasian mother indicated that since her children were in day care, she had more time to "do something for [her]self." Neither one of these mothers, unlike the African American mothers, indicated socioeconomic reasons or models for their children as their motivators for higher education. No generalization is intended because of the small sample, but these observations are being made only for the sample group.

*The role of religion in reading/writing of students.*

Religious and community groups, according to Bandura (1986, 1993, 1995, and Zeldin & Pajares 2000), are important sources of self-efficacy beliefs. Two African American students stated that their religious communities provided them with motivation to read and write. An African American male student described "one of the greatest events" that motivated him. A fellow church member, who ran the church newspaper, invited him to submit an article. Although he had little confidence in his ability to read and write, he agreed. "She had enough confidence in me to ask me to do

it, then I should have confidence in myself to give it the best I could give . . .” An African American female student stated that her church encouraged weekly lay preaching and that she was invited to preach on several occasions. This activity forced her to research, write, and present to an audience.

*Demotivators for reading and writing.*

Among the most common reasons given for discouragement in academic reading and writing is the lack of interest in a topic. Students described frustration at not being able to choose books for reading or topics for writing in school. One student questioned the logic of being asked to write on common topics when the list of easily accessible references already contains hundreds or thousands of entries on them. For example, the student was writing a research paper on police chases, but “once I got into it and saw how many people have written on it and all the opinions were there, it became nonappealing.” Students cited other sources of writing discouragement, which included emphasis on rules, time constraints, and de-emphasizing of personal points of view or narrative experiences.

*Motivators for reading and writing.*

Motivators for reading and writing included reading for pleasure, such as popular novels or magazines; reading for information, such as health journals; writing in journals; writing for transactions, such as protesting a parking ticket; writing for pleasure, such as letters to spouses and friends away. The most popular genre for reading and writing was narrative in journals, letters, memoirs, and biography. The most popular writer mentioned was Angelou whose autobiographies appealed strongly to African American and Caucasian women. Most of them identified Angelou’s *I Know Why the*

*Caged Bird Sings* as the work they admired, the most well known of Angelou's five autobiographical books. In responding to why they found this book appealing, both African Americans and Caucasians stated that her ability at story telling as the main factor that made Angelou's work memorable. Students find the personal accounts of despair and triumph moving and inspiring. One African American student stated that she could relate to Angelou's experiences in general.

"I write for the Black voice and any ear which can hear it," declared Angelou (Gates and McKay, 2004). Ironically, the most common textbook excerpt from *I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings* is Angelou's encounter with Mrs. Flowers, "our side's answer to the richest white woman in town," according to the young narrator. The young narrator was enduring a serious identity crisis in the volume. Ashamed that she was raped and that she was large and black, the young narrator fantasized that she was white with blond hair and blue eyes. She admired the way Mrs. Flowers spoke and how much she loved books. The contrast between the Standard English speaking Mrs. Flowers and the African American dialect speaking grandmother is linguistically striking and a source of shame for the narrator. Balester (1993) asserts that Angelou's shame is rooted in her judgment that the African American dialect is substandard. Regardless of the root, it is an adolescent shame of "language of naming" [Yiddish], shared by Howe (1982, p. 269). After young Angelou cringed at her grandmother's subject/verb agreement error in a discussion with Mrs. Flowers, the tables turned when the grandmother hears Angelou imitating Mrs. Flowers's use of "By the way."

Like Mrs. Flowers, Angelou's grandmother was aware of the power of words. She indicated no shame or ambivalence about her routine use of an African American

dialect. In the grandmother's mind, use of the words "by the way" was blasphemous because "Jesus was the Way, the Truth, and the Light." (Walker 1995). Angelou's grandmother may have understood that her dialect was an important part of her identity, that it held linguistic and historical value to her as an African descendant in America and that it was a vehicle for expression of her cultural values.

### *Summary*

African American dialects remain the language of a subordinate culture, and African Americans themselves must adjust to their role in the lives of the educated. According to Helms (1992), most African Americans live with the exposure to African American dialects, and often unconscious code switching occurs to a language they are most comfortable with, especially during times of stress. Adopting a new culture requires unlearning as well as learning in order to assimilate successfully (Purves & Purves, 1986). African American students must negotiate this transition for themselves at whatever cultural price they are willing to pay. Difficult negotiation of two linguistic cultures for one group is a major finding in this study. Because the education stakes are high for all students, it is understandable that African American students may choose to avoid prolonged effort to be bidialectal and opt for assimilation in light of an education and social environment that provides little support for them. Bandura (1982) states, "It is the internal barriers created by perceptions of collective inefficacy that are especially pernicious because they are more demoralizing and behaviorally self-debilitating than are external impediments" (p. 144). He asserts that individuals are highly influenced by collective efficacy, "Those convinced of their inefficacy will cease trying" (p. 144).

The results of this current study, like those of Campillo and Pool (1999) and Murphy and Shell (1989) indicate that African American students overestimate their self-efficacy beliefs in writing. Campillo and Pool (1999) attribute the overestimation of beliefs by African American and Hispanic students to poor achievement since, they conclude, poor achievers usually fail to perceive how difficult a task may be. Murphy and Shell (1989), however, partly attribute the overestimation to low skills. They determined that African American and Caucasian students appear to have different causal attributions to success and failure. Caucasian students attribute causality by an internal-external dimension and a control through effort and ability rather than luck. Moreover, Caucasian students relate enjoyment to effort and not intelligence or ability. On the other hand, African American students appeared to “differentiate causality by success or failure dimensions rather than an internal-external dimension, do not have a negative linkage between luck attribution and effort or intelligence and relate enjoyment to all other internal attributions” (p. 7). Although these differences are not explained fully in the researchers’ short article, causal attributions and their relationship to race are explored in the realm of educational psychology (Carter, 1990).

In this current study, data was presented for the African American students who scored in the range of competency for freshman composition, and therefore, these students cannot be described as skills deficient or low achieving. Causality cannot be claimed by a correlational study, but the qualitative data suggest that in this study, a significant difference between the compared racial groups may be cultural backgrounds and collective experiences in the study of Standard American English.

## Chapter V

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### *Introduction*

This study explored the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers. Additionally, this study sought to understand the sources of these students' reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs through the descriptions of personal experiences these students feel have influenced those beliefs. The study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the strength of the relationships among reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and reading/writing standardized placement test scores of diverse community college freshman writers?
2. Is there a difference in the strength of relationships among the scores of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and scores on standardized reading/writing placement tests of diverse community freshman writers?
3. How do diverse community college freshman writers describe the experiences they think explain relationships among their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and their reading/writing placement test scores?

Chapter 1 presented an overview of current perceptions of freshman composition stated by faculty and researchers. This required course often functions as a gatekeeper for students beginning a college education and thereby is a critical course for the introduction of students to reading and writing at college level. The theoretical framework used in the study is that of Bandura (1986, 1993, 1995), who defines reading self-efficacy beliefs as the level of confidence one has in one's ability to read and apply

appropriate skills to the task. Similarly, Bandura (1986, 1993, 1995) defines writing self-efficacy beliefs as the level of confidence one has in one's ability to accomplish a writing task and apply appropriate writing skills. Reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs are not superficial beliefs of one's capability. Reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs are based on complex cognitive processing of multiple factors, including cognitive, motivational, affective in terms of handling stressors as challenges, and a selection of activities and environments. Chapter 1 also described the community college and its urban environment in which the study was conducted.

Chapter II provided relevant background research to frame the study. The topics in the research literature started with general discussion of the Black/White gaps in education, the importance of culture in an examination of race and racial differences, and freshman composition as a cultural activity. Chapter 2 continued to provide an overview of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and gaps in the research of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs and race.

Chapter III described the mixed research design of the study and the methodologies used to collect quantitative and qualitative data in two phases. Phase 1 involved administering the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Beliefs Measurements to a sample of freshman college writers in spring 2003. The tests results were compared with the students' results on the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Tests to determine the relationships among them. Phase 2 of the study involved the interviews of 19 representative sample students to understand how these students described the sources of their self-efficacy beliefs and the relationships among their placement tests results and their Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements results.



Chapter IV presented the analysis of statistical data collected to show the relationships among the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Tests scores and the Reading/Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements scores. Chapter IV also reported the research observations related to sources of self-efficacy based on interview responses provided by 19 students in the study.

Chapter V presents the implications of significant research findings, limitations of the research, and recommendations for future research. Suggestions are made for teachers of English and community college administration as they uphold their mission to teach a diverse student body.

#### *Implications of the Research Findings*

##### *Self-efficacy beliefs, COMPASS placement test scores, and race.*

The research findings, both quantitative and qualitative, suggest that a significant difference exists between the sample group's African Americans and Caucasians in relation to self-efficacy beliefs in reading/writing and their relationships to the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Tests scores. For Caucasians, the relationships are statistically significant to a greater degree than they are for African Americans. Mean scores indicate that African Americans overestimate their self-efficacy beliefs to a greater degree than Caucasians. Theoretically, self-efficacy beliefs in reading/writing should align with or be slightly higher than student performance in reading/writing to insure positive outcomes in performance, persistence, choice of careers, reaction to failure, level of interest, coping strategies, level of emotional engagement, and effort (Bandura 1986, 1993, 1995; Zeldin & Pajares, 2000; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989). The quantitative analysis in Phase I of the study indicates that for Caucasians placed in

freshman composition without a developmental course prerequisite, a positive statistically significant relationship exists between the COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and the Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. In contrast, for African Americans in the sample group placed in freshman composition without a developmental course prerequisite, the statistical analysis indicates that no statistically significant relationship exists between the COMPASS Writing Placement Test scores and the Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement scores. Since the writing self-efficacy beliefs scores and the reading/writing placement tests scores of African American students are statistically unaligned, African American students in the sample group did not enter freshman composition classes with the same profile for predicted writing success, as did Caucasian students in the sample group.

Possible explanations for the disparity in self-efficacy beliefs lie in an examination of the sources of reading/writing self-efficacy according to Bandura (1986, 1993, 1995) and Zeldin and Pajares (2000). The qualitative findings based on an examination of sources of reading/writing self-efficacy in Phase 2 of the study suggest a major difference in the experiences of Caucasians and African Americans in regard to the language they use at home and at school. The primary perspective used to solicit and interpret answers in the study was based on the sources of self-efficacy beliefs outlined by Bandura (1986, 1993, 1995) and Zeldin and Pajares (2000). These sources include the following:

1. Mastery experiences in which successful experiences build belief in self-efficacy and increase perseverance.

2. Vicarious experiences in which individuals' self-efficacy beliefs are strengthened by observations of successful performance by models similar to themselves.
3. Social persuasion, in which verbal persuasions and external environments operate to encourage success.
4. Physiological and emotional states in which low stress, high energy, and positive moods can prevail.

Self-efficacy beliefs are based on complex cognitive processing: cognitive, in which thought controls goal setting and required effort; motivational, in which high self-efficacy beliefs are attributed to effort whereas low beliefs are attributed to low ability and thus influence how motivated someone will be to perform a task; affective, in which handling of stressors as challenges determines success; selection processes, in which success requires suitable choices of activities and supportive environments (Bandura, 1986, 1993, 1995; Pajares & Johnson, 1993; Horn, Shell, & Benkofske, 1988).

*Mastery experiences.*

African Americans who placed directly into freshman composition without developmental courses scored within the same ranges in the COMPASS Placement Tests as Caucasians who placed directly into freshman composition. The current study did not examine the history of success and failure among its participants but used the COMPASS standardized computerized adaptive skills test as the means for determining similar reading and writing skills of African American and Caucasian students. The students who were placed in reading or writing developmental classes showed evidence of mastery also when they moved out from the developmental level and on to the higher

level of freshman composition. African Americans and Caucasians took similar developmental classes, and although the grading was not objective as in the standardized COMPASS Tests, students were placed on similar writing performance criteria outlined in the disciplines' course guidelines. Thus difference in mastery experiences is concluded to be similar between African American and Caucasians in the study whether or not they were required to take developmental reading and/or writing.

*Vicarious experiences.*

African Americans and Caucasians in the study group appeared to have similar vicarious experiences with family, friends, significant others, teachers, and external role models. In general, these common experiences appear to have served to support the study participants in their goals and successes, although for African Americans and Caucasians, the role models were mainly found in close relationships. Of note is that only two of the interviewees, both Caucasians, named teachers among their role models in reading and writing. The external role models that African Americans named were mainly popular African American authors and orators, but it is unclear how much these students know about the private struggles these individuals experienced in order to gain their place among the American literary elite.

*Social persuasion.*

African Americans and Caucasian participants appeared to have similar support systems in place. Parents, friends, teachers, school groups, and religious/community groups from student accounts appear to be similar in the weight of their support and encouragement. No interviewee described feeling unsupported in his or her study of reading and writing, even though the support each received may have varied from

general encouragement to specific tutoring. One major difference appears to be an implicit lack of social support in home communities for the use of Standard American English experienced by many of the African American students interviewed.

*Physiological and emotional states.*

This source of self-efficacy is one in which low stress, high energy and positive moods can prevail. Since several researchers, (Lu, 1999), (Darder, 1991) (Delpit, 1995) (Ball, 1995), Fordham (1988), (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986), have indicated that African American students endure complex difficulties in the study of Standard American English, it was prudent to include one of the interview questions that might elicit relevant responses. The challenges that African American students face range from peer rejection to ethnic identity conflicts, as discussed in chapter II. Moreover, since Oettingen (1995) concluded from his studies that culture might influence self-efficacy beliefs, an interview question was developed to connect culture to self-efficacy beliefs and physiological and emotional states. Oettingen (1995) referenced his definition of *culture* as that of Hofstede's (1980, p. 2): "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (p. 151). The interview question designed to probe the participants' comfort level in studying Standard American English and the role that culture may have played in the process asked students about the major difference between home and school language. The responses to this question showed the largest disparity between African Americans and Caucasians, as outlined in chapter IV. No Caucasian described the same level of intensity in his or her answers, as did the African American students. The brevity and detached tone of Caucasian respondents was discussed in chapter IV. The difference for

Caucasians according to their responses was benign, described usually as informal versus formal or differences in word usage. African Americans, on the other hand, either revealed a basic level of comfort in their ability to code switch while maintaining progress in their study of Standard American English, or they revealed negative visceral experiences in their attempts to immerse themselves in Standard American English only. Caucasian students expressed no strong effort at code switching in their study of Standard American English and no similar severity in the conflict between two distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Although the sample of nine African Americans in the study is relatively small, analysis of the students' responses is in line with related research findings of Balester (1993), Fordham (1988), Fordham and Ogbu (1986), and Ford, Harris, Webb, & Jones (1994), discussed in chapter II. At the core of the African Americans' experiences in the current study and those of the researchers listed lie conflicts with the students' cultural identities, conflicts that Caucasian participants did not express. One may conclude that culture may influence positively or negatively the physiological and emotional states of composition students. One interpretation of the study's findings is that culture may negatively affect the physiological and emotional states of African American composition students.

*African Americans' overestimation of self-efficacy beliefs in reading/writing.*

Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1995) described self-efficacy beliefs as personal judgments of one's confidence to complete a task. Thus if one's self-efficacy beliefs are nonaligned with performance, one may not succeed at the task on hand. Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1995) suggests that ideally self-efficacy beliefs should be aligned with

performance or slightly overestimated. Caucasian students in the current study on average indicated that their self-efficacy beliefs were underestimated while African Americans on average indicated that their self-efficacy beliefs were overestimated. However, Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis indicates that a positive statistically significant relationship exists between the Caucasian students' self-efficacy beliefs scores and their writing skills scores whereas no similar statistically significant relationship exists for African American students in the current study. (Table 28)

Campillo and Pool (1999) assert, "Because of their metacognitive limitations, poor achievers often fail to perceive the difficulty of a task or to evaluate their progress accurately. As a result, they do not study sufficiently" (p. 3). One may conclude that the African American students' overestimation of their self-efficacy beliefs in reading and writing will negatively affect their performance if these students can be described as "poor achievers." However, the overestimation of self-efficacy beliefs in reading and writing exists for African Americans in both the developmental group as well as the group placed directly into freshman composition without a developmental course prerequisite. With few research studies available on reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs and African American students and even fewer on high achieving African American students, it is difficult to find explanations for these findings.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

Sample participants for the current study were obtained by self-selection. In the first phase of the study for quantitative data collection, faculty volunteered to have their classes participate and students in intact classes individually volunteered to complete the Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurements. On average 90% of the students in each class

participated. Secondly, for the qualitative phase of the study, interview data were obtained from 19 volunteers from a representative sample invited for interview. Appropriate measures were taken to strengthen validity and reliability of findings in the qualitative phase of the study. Details are outlined in chapter III. The design of the study was based on social cognitive theory, and specific tenets of that theory were tested and analyzed, yielding localized results. In such a study, generalizability outside the study cannot be made, but the findings may provide hypotheses for further study. Moreover, since the researcher was the one who designed the interview questions, gathered the data, and analyzed them, the possibility for researcher bias exists.

Instruments used for the quantitative data included the COMPASS Reading/Writing Placement Tests prepared by American College Testing (ACT), a widely used standardized computerized adaptive placement instrument with published reliability and validity scores. The researcher did not administer the COMPASS tests, but the college's Office of Institutional Research and Advancement provided score data from the COMPASS Placement Tests. The Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement developed by Shell, Murphy, and Bruning (1989) has a reliability coefficient of .92 for the skills component and .95 for the tasks component. The Reading Self-efficacy Beliefs Measurement developed by Shell, Murphy, and Bruning (1989) has an established reliability coefficient of .93 for the skills component and .92 for the tasks component. The interview instrument used in the qualitative portion of the study, however, was developed by the researcher based on social cognitive theory, and the responses to the interview instrument were self-disclosed.



There was a varied lapse of time from weeks to months between the completion of the COMPASS Placement Tests and administering the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Beliefs Measurements because of restraints on the researcher in accessing students for the study. Since students were unlikely to receive English instruction unless they were placed in developmental classes, this lapse of time may be perceived as a minimal limitation to the study. Students placed in developmental classes were analyzed separately from those who were placed into freshman composition classes without a prerequisite of developmental reading or writing classes.

#### *Recommendations For Further Research*

Replication of the study may be done with administering the Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement before students take the COMPASS Placement Tests to factor out any effects that may originate from the passing of time such as maturation or extraneous variables such as successful completion of college courses other than English. The research, however, will have several challenges, such as access to students to administer two instruments before students begin the lengthy COMPASS tests.

Qualitative research often yields rich data (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000) when subjects provide descriptive narratives of personal history. Research into the long-term progress of the most conflicted African American students in the study may reveal more of the relationships between their cultural backgrounds and their paths to success in mastering Standard American English. "Case study methodology," states Yin (1994), "is especially appropriate when prior theoretical propositions guide data collection and analysis and the researcher wishes to account for and describe contextual conditions" (as cited in Zeldin & Pajares, 2000, p. 221). Such research may also reveal if greater or

lesser persistence, differences in career choices, or differences in G.P.A among Caucasian and African American students are related to self-efficacy beliefs in reading and writing.

*Implications for Community College English Teachers*

The narrative experiences of African American students in the current study suggest that although mastery of skills may be similar for Caucasians as for African Americans, the cultural identity conflicts in one group have almost no parallel in the other. In a diverse student body, cultural preoccupations seldom are heard (Heath, 1983). In a chapter titled, "The awakening of the bicultural voice," Darder (1991) suggests that bicultural dialogue can provide opportunities for a democratic classroom in which students can share common lived experiences. On the other hand, she states, "[W]hat generally occurs in most classrooms is the silencing of the bicultural experience by teachers who have been trained to concentrate their efforts on creating an inauthentic climate of cohesions, conformity, and harmony. In so doing, they fail to involve bicultural students in their own learning and to provide opportunities for them to enter into dialogue regarding the cultural conflicts and social contradictions they experience in the classroom and in their communities" (p. 69). A classroom that encourages democratic dialogue can be informative for teachers and students alike.

Berlin (1996) argues that English teachers and English departments are more powerful than they may realize. Since almost all college students take composition classes, English teachers are influential in who succeeds and who does not. He advocates an interdisciplinary classroom in which teachers encourage interpretation and production

of texts for varied contexts: "The classroom should not be a stage for the virtuoso performance of the teacher" (p. 110).

Lu (1999) states that recent composition theory "recognizes that reading and writing take place at sites of political as well as linguistic conflict" (p. 31). English teachers must be sensitive to the challenges that bicultural students face in learning Standard American English and the values embedded in the language. The extent to which English teachers are sensitized to linguistic conflicts in students remains controversial. They may do as Balester (1993) suggests and study the rhetorical traditions and complexities of Black English Vernacular (BEV), so that all students in the study of English may benefit from its richness. On the other hand, English teachers may do as Lu (1999) suggests and be conscious of the bicultural students' prudence to study racial politics and its relation to the study of reading and writing. To this end, the personal struggles of African American intellectuals such as Du Bois (1985) and Baldwin (as cited in Lu, 1999) may help students understand and overcome their own challenges.

Sleeter (1991) advises English teachers, who remain predominantly white, to examine their own racial identity and how it relates to their roles in the classroom. She describes the prevailing attitude of white teachers to be that they are color blind, and by not attending to racial differences, treat all students the same. Yet these teachers will admit to teaching to assimilate students into a mainstream American culture that is essentially a construct of whiteness posturing as a universal culture that transcends race (Stockton, 1995). Such advice for racial reflection is unlikely to be heeded because of the pain required in turning oneself inside out and learning what it feels like to be

someone else (Delpit, 1995). Smitherman (1999) outlines the arduous journey that the Conference on College Composition and Communication has undergone since its 1974 resolution, "Students' right to their own language." She remains optimistic because of literary contributions to composition research that address, "the linguistic-cultural complexity of the composition classroom and of the writing instructor's task in that classroom, (p. 369).

Examination of curriculum may be another approach for English teachers. Hurlbert and Totten (1992) state, "Curriculum, by its very nature, is a social and historical construction which links knowledge and power in very specific ways" (p. 306). English curriculum has been traditionally based on dominant views of which texts will be studied and why, which courses will be valued more than others, and whose voices will be heard (Horner & Lu, 1999), (Gilyard, 1999), (Berlin, 1996), (Balester, 1993), (Hurlbert & Totten, 1992). Although the controversy continues among college level English teachers about the role of literature in freshman composition, Tate (2002) and Woodson (2002) advocate its benefits. For Woodson (2002), imaginative literature offers a catalyst for multicultural discourse that embraces the multiple experiences of her diverse students. For Tate (2002), imaginative literature enlivens and enriches his freshman composition classes. Overemphasis on academic discourse makes the course dull, artificial, and restrictive, limited to the academy as audience when students will have another discourse community outside the wall of academia out in the public arena. Tate (2002) states, "I refuse to look at my students as primarily history majors, accounting majors, nursing majors. I much prefer to think of them and treat them as people whose most important conversations will take place *outside the academy*"

(p. 149). Community college English faculty should consider adjustments in curriculum as their students increasingly become more diverse. Is the English classroom always to be a place of acculturation or can there not be room for accommodation?

*Recommendations for Community Colleges*

As community colleges attract greater diversity of students, they must provide opportunities for understanding the richness of America's cultures (Boyer, 1992). Although the definition of multicultural education is still being debated, thirty-four percent of colleges and universities, including community colleges, have some form of multicultural education as part of their general education curricula. Much of the emphasis, though, is placed on global education rather than American diversity (Story, 1996). Multicultural education, on the other hand, is an important way to facilitate African American racial identity (Ford, 1995a). The community college has the opportunity to influence negative attitudes toward African American dialects by faculty and students, including African Americans themselves. Balester (1993) makes a hopeful observation when she states:

Gradually, we [educators] are learning to value the experiences of those whose voices and knowledge have not shaped academic institutions or discourses – the experiences of minority students, of women students, of working-class students. Far from passively accepting the status quo, many of these students are themselves questioning institutional academic authority, listening to the voices of their cultures, and recognizing that their differences can be more than deficiencies. (p. 1)

*Summary*

This chapter discussed the conclusions that may be drawn from the study's findings. It offered implications for English teachers, composition curriculum, and community colleges. It presented limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

This study of diverse community college freshman students has resulted in the statistical conclusion that Caucasians and African Americans differ in the types and strengths of the relationships among their reading/ writing skills and their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs. It has resulted also in a description of students' perceptions of the sources of their reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs. This description indicates a distinct difference between African Americans and Caucasians in the study in regards to the role that culture and identity play in reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs. Implications abound for the teaching of composition and institutional efforts to assist bidialectal students in the study of English.

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APPENDIXES

**APPENDIX A**

**Invitation to Faculty to Participate in Study**



Dear :

Recently your class participated in the first phase of a research study about self-efficacy beliefs of freshman students in reading and writing. You have been selected to participate in the final phase of the study, which requires a 30-minute follow-up interview with the researcher. This session will be scheduled at a convenient time for you on campus and outside of class. Please consider participating.

As in the first phase of the study, your responses will be kept confidential and your name will not be used in any reporting of the research outcome. The purpose of the interview is for the researcher to understand how your levels of confidence in reading and writing developed.

To participate in the final phase of the study, please do the following:

1. Read the enclosed Informed Consent Document.
2. Print your full name and sign on the copy of page 3 of the Informed Consent Document.
3. To schedule a 30-minute interview, please call me at ---
4. If you have questions about the Informed Consent Document, please contact me.

Students who complete the interview will receive a \$10.00 gift certificate redeemable at the college bookstore, as a gift of my appreciation.

If you decide not to participate, please check NO on the attached RESPONSE FORM and return it with the enclosed Informed Consent Form to your instructor.

Thank you for your contribution to this research project.

Sincerely,

Ann Woolford-Singh, Researcher

APPENDIX B

Memo of Understanding to Faculty

# Memorandum

**To:** ENGLISH FACULTY

**From:** ANN WOOLFORD-SINGH

**Date:**

**Re:** RESEARCH STUDY

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs of freshman community college students.

Although you have granted permission for me to conduct the first phase of the study in your class, each student has the right to decide if he or she wants to participate. Each student's agreement to participate is documented by his or her signature on an informed consent document, which I have enclosed for each student in your class. Please distribute to your students a copy of the Informed Consent Document and a copy of my letter to students, which explains the purpose of the study and how it will be conducted. Please ask your students to read the two documents outside of class and bring the signed Informed Consent Document to class on the scheduled day of the study. Please do reassure students that their participation is voluntary, their responses are confidential, and reporting data will be anonymous.

As scheduled, I will visit your classroom to administer a reading and a writing self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire and collect a signed copy of the required Informed Consent Document from each participating student. This process should take no more than 20 minutes of class time and will complete your class's participation in the first phase of this study.

Should any student in your class be selected for the second phase of the research study, he or she will be invited to participate in a 30-minute interview to be conducted outside of class later in the semester. The purpose of the interview will be to understand the sources of students' self-efficacy beliefs in reading and writing.

If you would like to receive a report of the outcome of this study, please let me know. You may contact me at - - - for additional information.

Enclosures: Letter to students  
Informed Consent Document

APPENDIX C

Invitation to Students to Participate in the Study

Dear Student:

Your instructor has agreed to have your class participate in a research study on reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs, (one's level of confidence in the accomplishment of a reading or writing task). Each student in your class, however, is free to choose whether or not to participate. Participation in the study will have no effect on your course grade. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential and that your name will not be used in any reporting of the research outcome.

Your participation in the first phase of the study will necessitate your completing in class two short questionnaires about your levels of confidence in reading and writing. There are no right or wrong answers, and no grades will be assigned. Please read the enclosed Informed Consent Document for further details, and should you agree to participate in the study, please print your full name and sign on page 3. I will collect signed documents at the time I administer the two questionnaires in your class. In the second phase of the study, some students who have completed the questionnaires will be invited for 30-minute follow-up interviews outside of class. In this second phase, the researcher will seek to understand how your levels of confidence in reading and writing developed. You will be notified if you have been selected and, once more, you will decide if you wish to participate.

Please consider participating in this important study. Your instructor will advise you of the scheduled day and time for the research questionnaires, at which time I will collect your signed Informed Consent Document.

Sincerely,

Ann Woolford-Singh  
Researcher

**APPENDIX D**

**Informed Consent Document**

## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Old Dominion University

Darden College of Education

**TITLE OF RESEARCH:** An examination of relationships of reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs, standardized placement test scores, and diverse community college students' perceptions of those relationships.

**INTRODUCTION:** The purpose of this form is to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES.

**INVESTIGATOR:** Ann Woolford-Singh, Ph.D. Candidate, Darden College of Education, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. Home: Virginia Beach, VA.

**DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH:** This study will examine the relationship between freshman writers' reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs and their reading and writing placement test scores and seek to understand how students explain this relationship.

**EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA:** As a participant in this study, I am unaware of any prior knowledge, experiences, or physical limitations that would prohibit my participation in this study.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** Participation in this second phase of the study requires my answers to closed and open-ended questions in an interview to determine how my confidence in reading and writing developed. The interview with the researcher, scheduled at a mutually convenient time on campus, will last approximately 30 minutes. The researcher knows of no risks. Responses will not be shared with classroom instructors and there will be no impact on course grade.

I understand that the main benefit from this study is the attainment of information relative to the reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs of freshman composition community college students.

**COSTS AND PAYMENTS:** I understand that my involvement in this study is voluntary, and I will not receive payment for my participation.

**NEW INFORMATION:** I understand that any information obtained about me from this research that is directly related to my willingness to continue to participate in this study will be provided to me.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** I understand that any information obtained about me from this research will be kept confidential. Information obtained will be stored in a locked filing cabinet prior to processing. I also understand that the data derived from this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but that my name will not be used. Of course, my records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

**WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE:** I understand that I am free to refuse to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time and that my decision to withdraw will not adversely affect my grade or standing at this college. I also understand that the investigator reserves the right to withdraw my participation at any time throughout this investigation if she observes any contraindication to my continued participation.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT:** I certify that I have read the preceding sections of this document, or they have been read to me; that I understand the contents; and that any questions I have pertaining to the research have been answered by Ann Woolford-Singh, (contact information). If I have any concerns about this research procedure, I may address



them to the Old Dominion University Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (Phone number). A copy of this informed consent will be given to me if I desire. My signature below indicates that I have freely agreed to participate in this investigation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject's Printed Name & Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian's Signature (if subject is under 18 years of age) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness's Printed Name & Signature (if applicable) Date

**INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT:** I certify that I have explained to the subject whose signature appears above the nature and purpose of the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this study. I have answered any questions that have been raised by the subject and have encouraged him or her to ask any additional questions during the course of this study.

Ann Woolford-Singh  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Printed Name & Signature Date

APPENDIX E

Invitation to Students for Interview

Dear :

Recently your class participated in the first phase of a research study about self-efficacy beliefs of freshman students in reading and writing. You have been selected to participate in the final phase of the study, which requires a 30-minute follow-up interview with the researcher. This session will be scheduled at a convenient time for you on campus and outside of class. Please consider participating.

As in the first phase of the study, your responses will be kept confidential and your name will not be used in any reporting of the research outcome. The purpose of the interview is for the researcher to understand how your levels of confidence in reading and writing developed.

To participate in the final phase of the study, please do the following:

1. Read the enclosed Informed Consent Document.
2. Print your full name and sign on the copy of page 3 of the Informed Consent Document.
3. To schedule a 30-minute interview, please call me at ---
4. If you have questions about the Informed Consent Document, please contact me.

Students who complete the interview will receive a \$10.00 gift certificate redeemable at the college bookstore, as a gift of my appreciation.

If you decide not to participate, please check NO on the attached RESPONSE FORM and return it with the enclosed Informed Consent Form to your instructor.

Thank you for your contribution to this research project.

Sincerely,

Ann Woolford-Singh, Researcher

APPENDIX F

Memo to Faculty Regarding Students Selected for Interview

# Memorandum

**To:** PROFESSOR \_\_\_\_\_

**From:** ANN WOOLFORD-SINGH

**Date:**

**Re:** RESEARCH STUDY

In preparation for the final phase of the research study on freshman students' self efficacy beliefs in reading and writing, I have invited the following students to participate in 30-minute interviews at a convenient time outside of class:

Please ask your students to read their invitations and contact me with questions or to schedule an interview. Please do reassure students that their participation is voluntary, their responses are confidential, and reporting data will be anonymous.

The purpose of the interview will be to understand the sources of students' self-efficacy beliefs in reading and writing. Each interviewee will receive a \$10.00 gift certificate for completing the 30-minute interview.

If you would like to receive a report of the outcome of this study, please let me know. You may contact me at -----for additional information.

Thank you for your contribution to the research study of reading/writing self-efficacy beliefs of freshman community college students.

APPENDIX G

Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement

Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement (Adapted from Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989)

Participant's

Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** On a scale from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident), how confident are you that you can successfully communicate, in writing, what you want to say in each of the following writing tasks? You may select any number between 0 and 100.

0    10    20    30    40    50    60    70    80    90    100

No confidence  
at all

Completely  
confident

1. \_\_\_ Write a letter to a friend or family member.
2. \_\_\_ List instructions to play a card game.
3. \_\_\_ Compose a will or other legal document.
4. \_\_\_ Fill out an insurance application.
5. \_\_\_ Write an instruction manual for operating an electronic equipment.
6. \_\_\_ Prepare a resume describing your employment history and skills.
7. \_\_\_ Write a one- or two-sentence answer to a specific test question.
8. \_\_\_ Compose a one-or two-page essay in answer to a test question.
9. \_\_\_ Compose a term paper of 5-10 pages.
10. \_\_\_ Author a scholarly article for publication in a professional journal in your field.
11. \_\_\_ Compose a letter to the editor of the daily newspaper.
12. \_\_\_ Compose an article for a popular magazine such as Newsweek.
13. \_\_\_ Author a short fictional story.
14. \_\_\_ Author a 400-page novel.
15. \_\_\_ Compose an essay expressing your views on a controversial topic.
16. \_\_\_ Write useful class notes.

**Directions:** On a scale from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident), how confident are you that you can write and apply each of the following writing skills? You may select any number between 0 and 100.

1. \_\_\_ Correctly spell all words in a one-page paragraph.
2. \_\_\_ Correctly punctuate a one-page paragraph.
3. \_\_\_ Correctly use parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.)
4. \_\_\_ Compose a simple sentence with proper punctuation and grammatical structure.
5. \_\_\_ Correctly use plurals, verb tenses, and apostrophes.
6. \_\_\_ Organize sentences in a paragraph to clearly express an idea.
7. \_\_\_ Use transitions and combining strategies to join ideas together in a sentence or paragraph.
8. \_\_\_ Compose a paper with effective overall organization of ideas.



**Appendix H**

**Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Instrument**

Reading Self-Efficacy Beliefs Measurement (Adapted from Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989)

Participant's Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_ *First* \_\_\_\_\_ *Section* \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** On a scale from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident), how confident are you that you can successfully read each of the following items? You may select any number between 0 and 100.

0      10      20      30      40      50      60      70      80      90      100

No confidence  
at all

Completely  
confident

1. \_\_\_ A letter from a friend or family member.
2. \_\_\_ A recipe for cooking a meal.
3. \_\_\_ A rental contract for leasing an apartment.
4. \_\_\_ An automobile insurance contract.
5. \_\_\_ An employment application.
6. \_\_\_ An instruction manual for operating a computer.
7. \_\_\_ An employee manual describing job duties and company procedures.
8. \_\_\_ The questions on a multiple choice test in a college class.
9. \_\_\_ An introductory textbook in your major.
10. \_\_\_ A graduate level textbook in your major.
11. \_\_\_ A scholarly article in a professional journal in your major.
12. \_\_\_ A daily newspaper.
13. \_\_\_ An article in *Time* or *Newsweek*.
14. \_\_\_ A short fictional story.
15. \_\_\_ A 400-page novel.
16. \_\_\_ A play by Shakespeare.
17. \_\_\_ A book of poetry.

18. \_\_\_ A philosophical argument.

**Directions:** On a scale from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident), how confident are you that you can read and apply the following skills? You may select any number between 0 and 100.

1. \_\_\_ Recognize letters.
2. \_\_\_ Pronounce individual words.
3. \_\_\_ Recognize parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.)
4. \_\_\_ Recognize grammatically correct sentence structure.
5. \_\_\_ Understand the meaning of plurals, verb tenses, prefixes, and suffixes
6. \_\_\_ Understand short and long sentences.
7. \_\_\_ Phonetically “sound out” new words.
8. \_\_\_ Recognize the “main points” or theme in a passage or short story.
9. \_\_\_ Use previous knowledge to help understand new material.

Appendix I  
Interview Questions

Relationships of reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs, standardized placement test scores, and diverse community college students' explanations of those relationships

By Ann Woolford-Singh, Spring 2003

### Interview Questions

1. Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?
2. After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).
3. Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_.
4. I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?
5. Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?
6. Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:
  - Family members                      YES /HOW \_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_
  - Friends                                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_
  - Teachers                                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_
  - School clubs/groups    YES/HOW \_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_
  - Religious/community groups.      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_

- Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

7. Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN
8. Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN
9. Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?
10. Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?
11. Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

Appendix J  
Interview Protocol

Relationships of reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs, standardized placement test scores, and diverse community college students' explanations of those relationships

By Ann Woolford-Singh, Spring 2003

### Interview Protocol

The following is an interview protocol adapted from Maykut & Morehouse (1994) for Phase 2 of this research study. This researcher conducted each interview of 19 participants in a representative sample of participants from Phase 1 of the study.

- Introduction
- Extend greeting to participant.
- State my name and occupation.
- State the purpose of the study.
- Remind participant that information is confidential and will be reported anonymously in the study. To protect participants' privacy, numbers will be used as identifiers.
- Briefly review with participant two sets of information previously completed that will be referenced in the study – Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Beliefs Measurements and the Compass Reading/Writing Placement Tests.
- Request permission to tape record.
- Turn on tape if permission is received.
- Begin recording.



Thank you for consenting to this interview. Your contribution to this study is invaluable.

If you wish to receive the results of this study, please complete your address on the envelope provided.

**Appendix K**  
**Transcript of Participant Interviews**

Relationships of reading and writing self-efficacy beliefs, standardized placement test scores, and diverse community college students' explanations of those relationships

Anita, Student #43

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** Bayside high school Virginia Beach. Yes, last year.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO X\_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** I thought that I was more confident in reading than writing than what it states on the chart.

**Question:** Why do you feel that your reading confidence is greater than your writing?

**Answer:** Because I don't consider myself a great writer. It's hard for me. I can comprehend reading more than I can actually write about my feelings.

**Question:** So you're basically saying that the reading score surprised you because you thought you were more confident?

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** Are you surprised by the writing confidence?

**Answer:** Right, yes. I thought actually it would be the opposite.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do

the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** I guess I based my confidence level on actual classes that passed.

**Question:** Is that because you didn't do very well?

**Answer:** Actually, I did worse in writing than I did in reading as it's shown here. Yeah basically I did on past experiences. I guess that wasn't very accurate. My confidence level and the actual scores, the placement scores, weren't accurate.

**Question:** So in thinking about it you think then that you were more confident, and it just didn't get reflected in the responses to the questionnaire?

**Answer:** Yeah it's interesting, maybe that I am overly confident and should get help on writing.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I can go back to last year. I was in my junior year. In high school, I had an English teacher and my English performance was average. You know what I usually do over the past years. Between the summer of my junior year and my senior year starting, for some reason I was put into honor's English in my twelve grade year, and I thought that was odd because I didn't think that I should be put in honor's English, but I was like, it's a challenge. I'm going to see if I can do it. So my senior year honor's English was so different. If I can go back, I would not go into honor's English my senior year. The class, I didn't have motivation at all, and my work performance, it was down. It was terrible. It was like, because I felt like I didn't belong in my honor's English class. I felt like most of the kids in this class have been in honor's English, so they know more

than I do, so I kind a felt like an outcast in that class. I didn't perform as well as the other students. I wasn't used to the amount of work that she gave. If I really tried and you know I had some family issues going on too, so that really made my grades lower 'cause I really barely passed that class to graduate.

**Question:** In spite of that class though, you maintained a high confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yeah. Well, English was always my favorite subject. To me it didn't mean that, I mean most people stay with subjects that they do exceedingly high in, and that's not really why I liked English. I liked having discussions and talking and learn about literature. I did average towards middle school and elementary school. I had A's and B's in English. High school I had about B's and C's.

**Question:** Do you think that part of the reason then why your confidence level stayed up is because it's a subject that you liked?

**Answer:** Yeah. Basically, my confidence level stayed up because I mean I have confidence that I know I can do it, but when it actually came down to it, like okay you take a test and you study and you do fine on it and the next test you don't do so well. Your confidence level goes down, and I guess my confidence I wasn't like I said really working towards my potential, but I always knew that I had it there.

**Question:** In your classes, can you think of anything memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain that confidence level?

**Answer:** My sophomore year in high school, my English teacher, she was very difficult. The way that she taught it was very confusing. It was unclear. It was just the way that she taught, it was different. It was more like instead going over directions, she would

tell us the directions and then we were left alone. Like no explanations or anything, she just basically left it to us. It was funny because at the beginning of the year, she talked about potential, but by the end of the year it's like she passed all the females and the males. Most of the males failed her class. I thought that was odd. It might just of happened by coincidence, but I thought that was odd. I think I got a C in her class.

**Researcher's Statement:** It didn't seem to affect your high confidence.

**Answer:** No not really, but I just thought she taught in a rather interesting way.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** I guess I can say my parents. Actually, I say yes and no. Yes because they always supported me doing well in school. Out of my brothers and myself, it's the three of us, and they always looked at me as an achiever like high expectations of me, so that was good because it challenged me. But at the same time when I didn't do well at school, they looked at me like you can do better, but I mean that's good seeing now that I'm a little bit older now. 'Cause that means they knew that if I was doing poorly at school, I wasn't working up to my potential.

Friends                                      YES/HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** Maybe not so much when I was younger, but now I know my friends really support me. They'll help me anyway possible in school that they can.

**Question:** How did they help you in reading and writing?

**Answer:** If it means that we can't go out per se that night, they'll let me study, or they'll actually help me if they know they can help me—actually help me with an assignment.

Teachers YES/HOW  X  NO

**Answer:** Not by all of my English teachers, but for the most part yeah I think they actually do care about students that they had, and they always offered help after school when it was necessary.

**Questions:** So you felt supported because they seem to care. How did they show that they cared?

**Answer:** They always gave, not every single teacher, but most teachers yeah they give. They tell us ways to help us study different study technique, and they offered their help. Like if you need help, stay after class then I'll help you.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW   NO  X

**Answer:** Not really. I wasn't really active in school per se.

**Question:** Or clubs of any sort or study groups?

**Answer:** I've never been in a study-group as far as teamwork with other classmates. Yeah, I had certain students that would like I need help with this assignment.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW  X  NO

**Answer:** Most definitely, I can remember in elementary school at my church I would go to tutoring class.

**Question:** What subject?

**Answer:** All subjects, Math that's my worse subject. I mean English I can usually get by in. Math is my worse subject.

**Question:** So, the tutoring in English in reading and writing occurred at your church?

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** Can you think of any other way that the church supported you in your study of reading and writing besides tutoring?

**Answer:** Yeah, financially they give scholarships. We have teachers, of course, in the church, so there's no problem. Youth ministers that help, so there's a lot of support.

**Question:** How often did you have the tutoring offered at the church?

**Answer:** It's every Thursday. I haven't been there in years. I just went in elementary school.

**Question:** Any other way the religious or community groups supported you in reading and writing?

**Answer:** Yeah. I guess if you can count as far as reading the Bible. I guess that's a way and really trying to understand it. I'm sure that helps.

**Question:** Did you do any writing in your religious groups?

**Answer:** At Bible study, they're thought provoking questions, so we do write in it yeah. Basically, we answer questions then we discuss them—mainly our opinions.

**Question:** Did you have to share the writing with the group or your writing was for you benefit?

**Answer:** Both. Sometimes. Basically, they go around from person to person, usually individual, and ask them what their answer was and why they answered it that way. And you know somebody opposed so I had a different opinion and they would stick their opinion in. It would be like a big discussion.

**Question:** So this kind of discussion in reading and writing of the Bible took place when what periods of your life?



**Answer:** From the time I've been to that church 'til now. So much I guess when I was in elementary school 'cause they go by school age and grades, so when you're younger, you wouldn't do so much writing because it's kind a hard to express your feelings when you're younger than when you're older.

**Question:** So when you were writing and reading and sharing your reading and writing with the groups, how did that make you feel supported?

**Answer:** They wouldn't judge you, but according to the Bible, if your answer didn't line up with the Bible, then they will offer you suggestions on how to help you get to work.

**Question:** Did you feel that there was criticism?

**Answer:** I can take constructive criticism because like I said if it's not what you believe in, then they're gonna tell you what you need to do.

Other                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_      NO X \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well?      YES X \_\_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_\_      EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Yeah. It's more than one person. I think about famous poets like Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, like Martin Luther King. He wrote a book when he was in prison. He's a very profound speaker, so it's a lot of people, too many to mention. Those are just a few.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well?      YES X \_\_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_\_      EXPLAIN

**Answer:** All I can think about is the children authors because when you're kids always read a lot of books—have book reports like Judy Bloom, like little kid's books. I enjoy

children books and like I used to have the babysitter's club series. I forget the author though. I use to read a lot of books.

**Question:** What was it about Judy Bloom and the Babysitter's Club that you particularly enjoy?

**Answer:** They were about my age when I read them. Basically, the story, the plot, it was nothing too horrific, nothing horrible, or nothing too.... It was like it went along with the way I live my life too, like ordinary.

**Question:** I'd like to go back to those famous African American writers like Martin Luther King, Langston Hughes, and Maya Angelou. Can you think of what it is about them that you particularly admire?

**Answer:** Maya Angelou the way she writes, she's just a great writer. She is very clear when she explains like one poem comes to mind "Phenomenal Women." I think she really gets the point across how she really feels about her race, her ethics, her values, and her beliefs you know as far as how she feels being a woman herself. I admire that poem a lot.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Somewhat. Actually, it's slight because it's funny because I'll share this experience with you. I was writing to my friend, he's overseas, he was over in Kuwait

with the war with Iraq, and he wrote to me. He e-mailed me the other day and he was like why'd you use such a big words because we were talking about relationships and I was like platonic, monogamous and all of that good stuff. So I was sharing. I think with one of my works was hypothetical. They're not really big words, but he just found it funny because I'm not talking to him as a friend and I guess because I never really talked to him that way before.

**Question:** Do you think it's because you're changing, or have you always spoken that way?

**Answer:** I told him that mainly in school 'cause the first semester I wasn't in school. Most of it is how I talk, but being in school helps bring that up because I'm in school. You know my English teacher we write a paper at least once every week. I guess I got against the rhythm into talking the way I'm supposed to talk rather than using a dialect or slang words.

**Question:** Was there a time when you used the dialect with your friends and family?

**Answer:** Yeah. I mean I still do it now, but it occurs more that I used correct grammar because I'm at school, but I always had used it at the same time. I just didn't use it as much when I got out of school because I had the time period from I graduated in June all the way to January when I just started spring semester.

**Question:** What are your friends and family like when they speak to you? Do they use dialect or some other form of speaking than you would normally use?

**Answer:** My friends, like talking to my mother, my father, my older relatives, I tend to use correct grammar. They wouldn't really understand if I start talking in slang, so I do use it. It depends on the person. Family wise the younger generation part is like I'd say

about thirty and younger. They usually know what I'm talking about in slang, but it depends on the person. Every individual is different.

**Question:** So when someone speaks slang or speaks a dialect to you, do you usually speak back?

**Answer:** Right. Yeah.

**Question:** Does that difference in the use of language influence or affect your confidence in any way in reading and writing?

**Answer:** Yeah because like using slang a lot you tend not to. When it comes down to it, writing an assignment the grammar you have actually think twice about writing correct grammar than using slang. You have to think twice about it, and it does hurt as far as when you're writing more so than when you're reading. You have to think twice about it; it takes more time. You have to stop and figure out the correct words to use then this is just easy it's takes no thought-to-you slang.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Well, me as a person I like to read about different things, so yeah it does motivate me to read and write. I can just go to the library. I'm funny about it because I have actually be forced to read. I have to be in an environment to read. If I go to the library, I'll pick up a book. That's no problem. If I'm not at the library, I'm not thinking about reading. What I do is like one of my cousins gave me this book, it's about typical black family, and it's about a male who struggled with life. I tend to read books fast if I'm really interested in it. If I had a choice to read or not to read, I would say read because I do enjoy it, but it's the fact of actually picking up a book, actually going to the library. Once I'm there, I have no problem.

**Question:** What would make you want to go to the library or go to pick up a book?

**Answer:** I don't know. Maybe because I drive passed it or something. Like my brothers go to the library a lot. I don't like going to the library. I mean if I dropped them off that's fine. I know I'm confusing, but I don't know because if it's there if I had a whole bunch of books to read then that would be no problem.

**Question:** Do you usually have a lot of books in your house?

**Answer:** Not so much anymore. I used to before I moved.

**Question:** Does anything in particular motive you to write?

**Answer:** Actually, I write poems. I don't write poems all the time because I don't feel like I have to be not so much in the mood to write that goes along with it, but I have to be inspired to write.

**Question:** What would inspire you?

**Answer:** I write a lot about friendships, love, and life experiences. Mostly negative life experiences that because it's an outlet. It's something to do instead of taking your anger out on somebody else. I just learn how to do that. I don't know where it came from.

**Question:** Is it formal like keeping a journal or you just find a pad and paper whenever you feel motivated?

**Answer:** Yeah. Just find a pad and paper whenever I feel motivated to write because it comes from writing from you.

**Question:** And mostly negative things when there's a problem of some sort?

**Answer:** Most of the time it's a problem. Other times it's the opposite.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Yeah a lot—other priorities and life situations. You know experience stuff that happens. It's like if you're going to school, working, when do you have time to read? You can always make time to read, but it really takes...you know.

**Question:** What would discourage you from writing?

**Answer:** Being overly mad or excessively mad. So mad that I doubt one could come to mind. I have to be somewhere more than more or less melancholy to write or to be extremely mad.

**Question:** In terms of school, what are some of the things that would discourage you from writing in school?

**Answer:** I feel that sometimes that I can't express myself the way I feel accurately or very clearly, so that tends to discourage me from writing and writing a lot. I'm also in writing when your teacher gives you a word count a specific amount of words I have to write. I usually never meet.... It doesn't matter if she said write a page. Usually I make a page, but when it comes to research papers and other things, I never because I'll write straight to the point. I'll take everything you need to know in a paragraph rather than try and filter it out and go through different avenues of saying basically the same thing, and I find that I repeat myself of writing a lot—repetition.

**Question:** What about school and writing? What encourages you to write in school?

**Answer:** Writing about something I like or that interests me. That's basically it

**Question:** Do you have a list of things in your mind? How do you know that something interests you or it doesn't?

**Answer:** Basically, I don't know 'cause I'm always up to fire. I guess it has to grab a hold of my attention for me to really enjoy it, or it has to be something that I have

experienced. I mean I'm not saying that I'm close-minded 'cause I like finding different things, but if I don't know a lot about it I guess it's a way to find out more about it but I don't know it's like more difficult.

Amberly, Student #67

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** I went to two high schools. I went to Bayside from '98 to 2001 then I went to Princess Ann from half of 2001 to 2002. I just graduated last June.

Skipped Questions

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Middle. I can't remember anything.

**Question:** So you went through high school with English teachers. Anything you can say about them?

**Answer:** Well I liked my 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher.

**Question:** What was memorable about her or him?

**Answer:** He was easy.

**Question:** So you had a very comfortable class?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Any other teacher you can remember?

**Answer:** Not I can think.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X        NO       

**Answer:** My mom. Like sometimes when I write papers, she would check on them or make sure the grammar is right and stuff like that.

Friends                                      YES/HOW             NO   X  

Teachers                                      YES/HOW   X        NO       

**Answer:** I will say my 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher.

**Question:** How did they support you?

**Answer:** She was like helpful because I had the same teacher in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Question:** Do you remember how she might of helped you?

**Answer:** She will help me with tell me what's wrong with my papers and stuff like that.

School clubs/groups    YES/HOW             NO   X  

Religious/community groups.      YES/HOW             NO   X  

Other    YES/HOW             NO   X



**Question:** You mentioned your mom. That was the first question about your family member. Can you elaborate a little more on how your mom used to help you with your homework in reading and writing?

**Answer:** Mostly writing 'cause every time I write a paper, even now, she'll check on it and make sure the grammar and stuff right 'cause sometimes my words don't make sense.

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  NO  EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Maybe Maya Angelou.

**Question:** How did you encounter Maya Angelou?

**Answer:** I wrote a report about her last year 12<sup>th</sup> grade. She was a poet and stuff like that, and she wrote many things. It was just for the class project.

**Question:** Do you ever read more about her or was it for the class project?

**Answer:** It was for.... That's all I can remember for the class.

**Question:** So, you don't read about her outside of that class project?

**Answer:** I might have one time.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  NO  EXPLAIN

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yeah. I do better at school writing and stuff than I speak to my family and friends.

**Question:** How is it when you speak to your family and friends? What is that like that is different from school?

**Answer:** I may use better vocabulary at school and at home I don't.

**Question:** How does that difference affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** It really doesn't.

**Question:** So you don't have any difficulty when in you're in school trying to read and write for school?

**Answer:** Well, like maybe I don't comprehend stuff real fast.

**Question:** What about when you have to speak or write? How easy or difficult is that?

**Answer:** To speak in front of the class? Sometimes I don't like it. Sometimes I don't know I just don't want to.

**Question:** So, do you think it's because of your self-confidence that prevents you from liking it?

**Answer:** Yeah. Probably.

**Question:** Do you think it's the same in writing that your confidence is shaped by that difference?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** I want to finish college.

**Question:** Finish college. So you're motivated by your career goals?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Maybe if I watch too much TV 'cause I like to watch a lot of TV.

**Question:** So you'd rather watch the TV sometimes rather than writing or reading?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question:** Anything else discourages you? Perhaps think about classroom environment and something that makes you want to write and want to read.

**Answer:** Maybe if I don't like the way the teachers teaching and not understanding it.

**Question:** If you don't understand it, you don't feel like writing or reading?

**Answer:** Yes.

Ann, Student #83

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** Tallwood High School. Yes. I graduated last year in 2002.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** It does. Just how my beliefs were.

**Question:** You weren't aware that there was this difference?

**Answer:** Not at all.

**Question:** Same in reading?

**Answer:** Same thing in reading. I thought the writing would be a little bit higher.

**Question:** That's because you feel confident and so you thought that your ability would also match?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** So I guess you were never aware that you were overly confident?

**Answer:** Never.

**Question:** Let's talk a little bit about why that might be. Well, let's talk about the placement test because sometimes that's the key. What was it like when you took the placement test?

**Answer:** I didn't like either one of them. I knew I didn't do good actually on the writing one because the topics. I did not like the topics at all. I think I had to write on monster trucks or something. I don't know anything. That's the best one, and I didn't know anything about that.

**Question:** And what did you think of the reading test?

**Answer:** I have a hard time reading, so I don't like it at all.

**Question:** What is it about reading that gives you a hard time? You seem to be very literate and articulate.

**Answer:** I just do not enjoy reading at all.

**Question:** And no reason why that you understand why you don't like it?

**Answer:** No. It's something I've never acquired, and reading like plays and stuff, I don't understand them, and poem I don't understand them.

**Question:** Do you read anything for pleasure then?

**Answer:** Magazines.

**Question:** What's the difference between reading a magazine and reading a book?

**Answer:** A Magazine is very short and a book is just too long for me to keep catch on it.

**Researcher's Statement:** And that of course magazines have pictures.

**Answer:** Yes, definitely. Their more real life; I find it more interesting too.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I don't remember exactly which teacher, but there's two I can actually think of. They just always said, "Oh, that's really good," and they would give me an A on it, so that's like okay. That's good then.

**Question:** When you think about your writing classes in high school, any one particular teacher stands out?

**Answer:** Ms. Nachowski. She was just very...everything had to be perfect. She wasn't one of the teachers if it wasn't perfect she would tell you, and I had to revise many papers for her.

**Question:** How did you feel about revising?

**Answer:** I was glad she gave me the second chance, but I didn't want to do it.

**Question:** But if your grade was going to improve then...?

**Answer:** Oh definitely then.

**Question:** Sometimes students are discouraged when they have opportunities to revise because they feel that pressure to perform. Were you ever discouraged then by having to revise?

**Answer:** Not really. I felt pressured probably by the deadline. Oh I was like I don't want to do it but I did it. I always did it.

**Question:** Was there ever a time when you thought that you had done a revision well and it turned out not to be?

**Answer:** Not that I can remember because she always helped us to make sure that we did it right the second time.

**Question:** Anything memorable about your teachers in reading?

**Answer:** Ms. Fitch. In my senior year, she made us read a bunch of Hamlet. I do not understand that at all.

**Question:** It was a requirement. So how did you get through that class?

**Answer:** I struggled. I think I ended up getting a D in that class. It was so hard. It was the hardest class I've ever had.

**Question:** Was there anything that your teacher could have done or did do to help with the reading difficulty?

**Answer:** She did lots of activities, and one day like projects that were due the next class it kind of helped, but some people did the wrong parts like and old skit or something. They would do it wrong, so I remembered it wrong. She would have to correct them, but I mean we tried.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members YES /HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** My mom and my older sister, they just encourage me and help me and tell me it was good and read it and proofread it.

**Question:** So when you had a paper that you were working on, your mom and your sister would help read it and give you feedback?

**Answer:** Yes. My sister is really good at writing, so she definitely would help me.

**Question:** Is it an older sister?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Why do you think she did it?

**Answer:** Why she was good?

**Question:** Why do you think she wanted to help you?

**Answer:** 'Cause some of the papers I did she knew I could do better, and she wanted to make sure that I was doing my best.

**Researcher's Statement:** Big sister.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** And how did you feel supported by your mother?

**Answer:** She's just my mom. Of course she's going to support me. Just help me and make sure. She was in college at 2 and some points so....

**Question:** So your mom would look at your drafts and give you feedback also?

**Answer:** Yes. She'd help me type them up too sometimes. She typed a little faster than I did, but I always went back through them.

**Question:** Any other family members that you felt supported by?

**Answer:** Not to talk about really no.

**Question:** What about support in reading? You've mentioned that both your sister and your mom encouraged and gave you feedback in your writing. How did they do that in reading?

**Answer:** They tried to encourage me to read, but I was just kind of stubborn about it. Every one in our family loves to read except for me. Except me and I don't know why.

**Question:** So your mom did all the usual things—take you to the library and read books with you?

**Answer:** Yes, all of it. I have my library card still and everything, but no...I could never get into it.

**Question:** Friends? YES/HOW   X   NO       

**Answer:** Best friends.

**Question:** He or she?

**Answer:** She. They just wanted to make sure that I'm passing the class and we all graduate at the same time.

**Question:** So you talked about your work?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** With friends?

**Answer:** Yes. We had classes together, so we could help each other out.

**Question:** How did you help each other out?

**Answer:** We'd have like little work-study times during class, and we'd help each other then and then we'd also do it outside of school.

**Question:** So you think it's just the friendship and their caring for you that helped you?

**Answer:** Yes.



**Question:** Did they also give you feedback to your work?

**Answer:** All the time. Sometimes they'd say, "Yours is better than mine." Of course I don't think that.

**Question:** It didn't sound like they were very critical of your work?

**Answer:** Well...I mean they did, but they would just get jealous for a minute, and they would say, "Well...you can fix this now."

Teachers YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Answer:** If any they just wanted me to pass so I wouldn't be back in the same grade but not really.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Answer:** I would go to church a couple of times but not to.... We'd just do a like Wednesday night kind of thing. Yeah, I go with friends. We don't. My family doesn't go to church.

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** My sister. My older sister, I wish I could be just like that. I wish.

**Question:** What is it about her that you admire?

**Answer:** I remember when she was in college, and she had to do some real hard thing and had to write to the Dean. She did so well that the Dean ended up letting her do something that she really wanted. I was so wow! That was so cool. She was on the debate team, so she could talk really fast, and she loves reading.

**Question:** What did she finally major in?

**Answer:** Criminal justice. Well, she's a parole officer in Chesterfield County. She loves it, and I just want to be just like her.

**Question:** Any one else of your own race maybe a published author or anybody that you admire?

**Answer:** If I ever read any books, it was like the little kid books like Judy Bloom or something like that. I'll read her books. That's about around that area.

**Question:** Did you ever stop to think about race when you were reading the books?

**Answer:** No I didn't.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO      EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Yes but I can't think of the names. There's a couple.

**Question:** Whom might they be if you don't remember the names?

**Answer:** Just from well-known books and....

**Question:** So these were books in school that you've read?

**Answer:** Yes, that we had to read.

**Question:** The authors were a race different from yours?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Even though you don't remember the name?

**Answer:** They're well known.

**Question:** So these are well known authors and not people you personally know?

**Answer:** Yes. Right.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Very, very different. At school I'd definitely be way more polite than the way I was brought up than I would be at home and with my friends. Not that I'd be rude to them, but I'd just be more hung back and relaxed.

**Question:** What about dialect differences? When you think about grammar for instance, would you use the same kind of grammar at school as you would at home?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Very similar, it's just tone and style that might be different?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Sounds like your school and home life are very similar except for the tone, so the grammar is the same. It's just the tone might be different?

**Answer:** Pretty much.

**Question:** Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yes. It was easier to write it than just to fake it up and use school language or you know.

**Question:** So you were not really using school language as much as you were just using your language?

**Answer:** Regular the way I talk.

**Question:** So you think that might of helped to boost that confidence?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What about reading? Did that sameness of grammar between school and home help you in reading?

**Answer:** I would read totally different things at home than I would at school, so it's hard to say.

**Question:** And you were not much of a reader at home?

**Answer:** No at home anyhow, and the stuff at school I just really didn't like reading.

**Researcher's Statement:** So it's very different.

**Answer:** Yeah. Actually, some of the stuff would put me to sleep, and I felt really bad.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** To want to finish school maybe and to feel better for myself to know that I did it 'cause I do...I have to do it. I have to get through.

**Researcher's Statement:** And you're right. A lot of courses in school have to do with reading and writing.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Anything else that motivates you to read or write apart from school?

**Answer:** Well apart from school there was a contest sometimes when we were in school.

**Question:** Writing contest?

**Answer:** Yes. I started to do one, but I never finished. Like if you write, you could win first place and there was money or something.

**Question:** So there wasn't anything else that would want to make you pick up a book or a magazine. You said you like magazines. What would make you pick up a particular magazine? What kind of magazines do you like?

**Answer:** I read just like actually read the YM and Seventeen and Cosmopolitan and stuff like that, and I like the weekly magazines—the news or something. The ones you can get at the store.

**Question:** Reader's Digest?

**Answer:** Yeah, I like those.

**Question:** What is it about all of those names that you've listed that makes them readable to you rather than a book for instance? What do they offer you?

**Answer:** Real life stories and there's something there that says, "If you need help" and you know.

**Researcher's Statement:** So it's very practical.

**Answer:** Yes. Very.

**Researcher's Statement:** So that's what appeals to you.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** The boring. I think then if it's boring then....

**Question:** And you had said if it's very long you lose your focus and interest?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** But if it were something short than that would be different?

**Answer:** The shortness but the Hamlet, the longness, and how we don't talk like that anymore. I couldn't understand it, so I definitely lost real quick.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from writing?

**Answer:** No, I enjoy writing unless it's a topic I don't like on a placement test. A topic that I don't know anything about it's really hard to write.

**Question:** Do you write for pleasure apart from school?

**Answer:** If I do, it's just like a letter to my sister or something like that. I don't enjoy writing documented essays either. I don't like doing that, but if I have to then I will.

Andy, Student #110

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** I attended most of my high school here in Virginia, and the rest of it was in Mississippi. I graduated in 1997 from Salem.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES   X   NO       .

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** The writing one surprised me very much so. The reading not so much because I'm a constant reader.

**Question:** Tell me about the surprise then that you had in the writing?

**Answer:** I think the surprise was, actually the biggest surprise was, that it was on a computer. I think if it hadn't been on a computer I don't think I would of placed into a college level. I definitely think I would have been placed in a...more building level.

**Question:** If you had handwritten it?

**Answer:** Right, if I had handwritten it because I can visually see what's wrong with something, but don't ask me why, and don't ask me to be able to write it correctly after I've read that. My spelling is atrocious. I like big words, but I just can't spell them.

**Question:** Were you able to edit your spelling on the computer program?

**Answer:** Umm...what do you mean?

**Question/Reply:** For the writing placement test.

**Answer:** I didn't have to do a writing, but my scores were just high enough.

**Question:** On the editing?

**Answer:** Yes Ma'am.

**Question:** Good, so you didn't have to produce a writing...

**Answer:** No Ma'am.

**Question:** So, that was what helped you then?

**Answer:** Yes Ma'am. And actually, I mean with all pretense, 111 and from what I found from 112 I'm tight, so I have spell check. I mean what's the purpose of writing anyways, anymore, expect for if you're doing it on a computer? (Chuckle). No one needs a writing sample these days.

**Question:** And you mentioned that there was no surprise in the reading placement and your reading self-confidence because...?

**Answer:** Because I read all the time. I have a new novel and a new book. I mean my world revolves around Harry Potter since it came out, and I understand that it's a children's book. I understand that. But, nonetheless, it's fabulous. I read adult books as well.

**Question:** The ideal is it should appeal to both children and adults?

**Answer:** Right. Trust me, I got June 21<sup>st</sup> marked on my calendar.

**Question:** You're an avid reader?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I guess my opinion on my writing ability revolves around two instances, and one was a teacher, and one wasn't. In while I was in Mississippi, I was in the seventh grade. I was actually a bit seventh to the tenth. I was brought in. Like we had just transferred there. I was a navy family of course. Because I didn't...I just couldn't spell. I still can't spell to this day. It was just.... This teacher was a little cruel. She was like you know put theft papers in front of the class for the world to mock you. That's a southern thing. It's truly southern. They feel....

**Question:** In front of the classes and how?

**Answer:** Like, you know, how much teachers would put up A's?

**Question:** On the blackboard?

**Answer:** Right. Well, on a bulletin board as going out the door. Well, she put up F's. Yeah, that's a real southern thing I think, and from my experience they rather ridicule



the.... They feel like ridicule is a way of helping teach I guess. I'm not sure. My papers were always up there. (Chuckle).

**Question:** So, how did you react to seeing your paper up there?

**Answer:** The first couple times when I moved down there it was, I don't know, it was kind of surprising. And then, surprising and I mean it just made me really realize that I was just very poor at that and then after awhile it just didn't surprise me. It was like, well there's my paper. Oh well.

**Question:** Did you mark things on the paper?

**Answer:** Oh yeah. Like my paper looked like it was bleeding, and it was just bleeding. Every word, my sentence structure was great. I had beautiful sentence structure, and I speak like I write. My punctuation is good; it's just my spelling. It was always bad.

**Question:** So, it was primarily through the spelling you had your papers up on the board?

**Answer:** Yes. See that's why with the editing I was able to edit because the punctuation I can do and sentence structure, but I don't think they had any spelling on there. If they did had spelling on there....

**Researcher's Statement:** It's the commonly confused words probably.

**Answer:** Okay, like they had *they're* and *there*. Well, those I know, but if they had like true. I misspell like *have*. Okay. I'm just so...I write...I guess I write so fast. I don't know what it is. And then my second...my second experience was actually when I was an adult. I mean I always felt like my writing was bad. I was in basic training, and I sent a letter to one of my great uncles, an older uncle. Very smart man, very intelligent, and more like the matriarch of our family. No, that would be a woman. Yeah, patriarch,

and he ridiculed me about it. He said, he was like, it's a good thing he went into the military because he obviously isn't that intelligent because he can't write. I was like, aah. I was like crushed. I was like, well that's really the last time I talked to him. (Chuckle).

**Question:** Sure. So, you were sending him a letter. Was he in the military?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What was the reason for this letter?

**Answer:** Oh, well he was in the military and had told me all about it, and it was one of the reasons why I went into the military. And uh...he also was helping me get started—mutual funds and stuff like that. I just wanted to let him know how I was doing because I only call certain people. Later came back that he ridiculed me, and it was just people doing. It was a southern thing because he was raised in the south too.

**Question:** So, you think those two incidents are part of the reasons why you have that low self-confidence in writing?

**Answer:** Yes. Right.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO   X  

Friends                                      YES/HOW   X      NO       

Teachers                                      YES/HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** I don't think a teacher could have had an effect on me. I mean even my seventh grade teacher. I mean it was up there, but it was like sure it's hard to spell words better, and spelling tests I did okay. You know because I would get a list of

words, but then it was like after that list was gone then I was all out of new words, and that was forgettable. I mean even when I was a little kid I was just poor at spelling.

**Researcher's Statement:** Well, I 'm not sure you understood the last question. The question that I'm asking has to do with the reading.

**Answer:** Oh, the reading! Oh.

**Question:** So, you have fairly high confidence that matches your ability in reading?

**Answer:** Oh, yeah.

**Question:** So, I was wondering if any teacher....

**Answer:** Yes, my first grade teacher. Once again, we just moved to Virginia, and I had started kindergarten in New York and then we had moved to Virginia. I did my placement test, and of course I was in first grade. So, when I went into my class, I guess I scored lower on that. In the eighties in each class, elementary class, you had three to four different books in different groups of class because every kid was in a different reading level. And I started at Birds Fly Bears Don't, and no...no...no, it was The Dog in the Dog House. That was the first book. That was like you start as a first grader.

Well in The Birds Fly Bears Don't, that was for the higher reading group. I was in the lowest reading group and then after a week, I was in the highest reading group. I was so proud of that.

**Question:** Because?

**Answer:** Because I just felt so smart. I mean of course because if you're going into the higher reading group, you're in with the elite. You're in alpha-male okay.

**Question:** So that boosted your confidence right then.

**Answer:** Yeah. That and I think I'm a good public speaker. I was in drama and stuff like that, so it just kind of tied it all in.

#### **Refers to Family Members**

**Answer:** Yes, my stepmother was.... Actually, I didn't start reading books, like novels, for pleasure until I was in the ninth grade and it was because of my stepmother. She handed me like...she got me interested like in a first John run. That opened a floodgate. Umm...no because my mom was a little...she wasn't very supportive of extra-curricula reading. We never went to the library. I mean when we were little kids, she always read to us. Every night before we went to bed, she always read to us. Then, she felt it was important, but as we got older...yeah, she wasn't very there for that.

#### **Refers to Friends**

**Answer:** Writing no. Yes, to the fact of reading because me and my friend Kelly, we exchange books continually. We go back and forth on why we like or dislike a book. We have our own little club group. I mean our book club.

#### **Refers to Teachers**

**Answer:** Other than that first grade experience for reading, no...but righting yes because until I got out of high school I thought I was a horrible writer. I really thought I was bad. I mean when I would write things on the computer, I would turn it in, and you know it would be okay, but it was nothing great. And until I got in to Ms. Marits class, and fabulous teacher by the way, not until I got in to her class I really felt that I was a good writer. I really felt like these scores matched my abilities because I was like I can do this. It's like maybe the test wasn't wrong. That's what I came up with my theory that you don't need a writing sample. All you need is a computer.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Drama for reading I guess because I can take any piece and because the punctuation and because of the way it's written. It's like instantly I could go for an audition. Writing no, I never been in a group or club.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Theater once again for reading not writing. Do you see a trend?

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Although you're gonna have to give me a second think up some name. Why I just lost it. I don't know. It is...he's a writer. He's a fabulous writer. He's on MPR all the time. Sedarious. David Sedarious. His books are hilarious and they're just so funny. I don't know if that was the answer to the question.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Miss Boone my fourth grade teacher. I loved her. She was fabulous. She's the one who actually taught me sentence structure. Not until the fourth grade, I really didn't know it.

**Question:** Miss Boone was somewhat of a different race?

**Answer:** Yes, she was this voluptuous, loud black woman, and I just loved her. I fell in love with her that day. She was just everything that I wanted to be in a person. She was just loud. She was boisterous. She was like "Honey that is not right. This is what you do." I was like you're fabulous; you just don't know it yet.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Other than the fact that, I mean everyone speaks in fragmented sentences and I use “so” and “yeah” and “um,” but I think typically...and I always say this because my friend Kelly. Whenever I turn in a paper, I always get her. This is the girl that me and her used to exchange books because when you’re editing your own work it doesn’t work as well as when you get someone else to look over it. So, when she edits it, she always laughs because she’s like you read exactly how you write. I mean you write exactly how you talk. She thinks that’s just so funny. She was like I just can’t believe you can capture your personality on paper. She thought it couldn’t be done, so.... That’s the only reason why I say yes because she thinks so.

**Question:** Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I think it used to. I changed a lot when I went into the military. I realized I was very shy. I was very different than the way I am now. I don’t think I would ever come to do this until I went into the military. I was very shy. I didn’t like being near people, and then I went into the military and met a whole new set of people. I realized who I was, and not realizing who I was it helped me be able to find a voice I guess and actually talked to people. Whenever I do talk, I have a lot of personality. I speak and I write with a lot of personality. It’s hard for me to write a research paper because

everything I just want to put a first person. I want to put it from my experience. I want to put it from like because I got something to say, but it's so hard. It's so hard to take that step back.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Yes. I like for people to think I'm intelligent. I do. Everyone may think they're intelligent, but they have their own insecurities. Like on the phone last night, I was.... We have to do an interview that was due today with someone in the profession in the career field that our group chose, and ours was education. So, I had to do an interview with a teacher, and the only teacher I knew was a family friend, actually, my mother's friend's daughter. I knew these people when I was little, like really little, so I don't really know them now. I mean she's a couple years older than me. I new how intelligent this girl was. This girl graduated Suma Kulate. She has a Masters. She's working on her P.H.D. and she's 26. I hate her. I hate her. And she's just a teacher. She's doing this like all...she's finding the time. She's pulling it out of the air. I don't know. I know you can hate her too. Her name's Wendy. So, anyways I had to do an interview with her last night, and I felt...I didn't speak like I normally speak because I was just so intimidated by her. That it was like, ah. I was like asking my questions out of order and I would lose my question. I would lose my train of thought. I would just be like, oh no, oh no, where was I at! And then she'll of answered a question, and I'd of already written that question for later. And I'll be like, "I know that sounds like a dumb question, but so you say you like teaching?" So, I forget what the real question I'm supposed be answering.

**Researcher asked the question again.**

**Answer:** Yes. When it comes to family I guess. My sister and my brother-in-law were starting a business, and they couldn't get the loan the first time. It \_\_\_\_\_ me off. I felt it was like just because they were a mixed race couple, and just the area they lived in was just very wrong. So, I went on the Internet all that afternoon and all the next day. And I just found all these different things they could do. I made calls and stuff like that about coming to get a loan here for there. And...my mom, she had tumors in her uterus. Once again, I went on-line just to look it all up. My mom wants to try something new like a diet. Like she's trying to do this Atkins thing. She has higher liver protein count. So, I was like, I don't think you should do it. She's doing it anyways, but all the stuff I found for her...(deep sigh).

**Researcher's Comment:** I noticed you said a lot about reading.

**Answer:** Oh, when do I write? Do you know I would love to write? I would absolutely love to write! I've got so many ideas, so many sources before I go to bed at night. I'll sit there. Like that's how I go to sleep. I've done that since I was a little kid. I would lay there and I would make up stories in my head—like hour-long stories. Sometimes I won't go to bed because these stories are so great, but to actually put these stories on paper...ah...no. It would just come out wrong because my ideas just won't translate. It's like if I write, like I write like I speak, but I don't write like I think, and I know that doesn't make sense. It's just the style, the way I speak; I can translate to paper. Putting ideas that come from nowhere, like writing the research paper is easy, or writing something that happened for me is really easy. But to write something that's never happened or that's my idea to put it down it's just ah.... No, I could never do it.



**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Like I said I wouldn't be able to translate. What makes me enjoy thinking up these stories? To make other people, oh, and I'm a horrible story-teller. I am so bad telling stories, and I hope this is not going off the topic again. I feel like I'm doing that, and that's what I do. I take a story. I can start it just nice, but then I find a tangent and I go off on that. And then, I'm like, what was my point again? And I want to be a teacher! Okay. I want to be a history teacher! I'm gonna be one of those old them who's like never stays on course, never. Okay, back to the original thought. Writing. What discourages me from writing? Well, that discourages me from writing because I don't feel like...

**Question:** So, it's going to be hard to stay on task? Stay focused?

**Answer:** That, and I don't think...it would never live up to my standards. It's like my friend Kelly she's sings beautifully. She will not sing for anyone but me, no one, because she's just so embarrassed. It's like me, if I write something I think is queue, or I think is like it's just not good enough not even for me. So, it's like a distraction because it's like I just know there's probably something wrong with it. No, I wouldn't want to be embarrassed like that. And this facade, it's taken a lot of time to create this façade. Okay? You just can't ruin it overnight. But reading, what does discourage me from reading? My eyesight, and believe it or not I don't need glasses. I just still don't get it.

**Question:** Are you near sighted or farsighted?

**Answer:** No, I get lines of color. So, my eyes get a little crossy, but I call it wonky eye. They get wonky and I can't read all the time like I'd like to.

## Artie, Student # 82

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** Cox High School. Yes. 2001.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Because if I'm writing something that I like to write about, then I just write like three essays just about that one thing. Sort of like a mini-story.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** No. It's because if I write something that I like to write about, I'll write a mine-story about it.

**Question:** So when you took the placement test, you didn't find a topic you liked?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** So apart from the placement test then normally you're very confident in your writing, but the placement test you didn't like the topic?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** What about in the reading part?

**Answer:** I probably agree with it because when I first came here I didn't read anything. I just liked looking at pictures.

**Question:** Where did you come from?

**Answer:** South Korea.

**Question:** So you came here and it was a new language for you?

**Answer:** No, I was born here. Yeah, my parents were moved here. Well not in Virginia. When they left South Korea, they lived in Washington state or Seattle.

**Question:** So when you came to Virginia Beach what happened?

**Answer:** Nothing. When I was in pre-school, the teacher asked everyone to count as high as they can—each person. Everyone could only count to 10. I counted up to 100, and then she says that I'll be good in Math. I was good in Math until I got hit by a car. My doctor says that my whole left-brain is damaged from when I got hit by a car. When my head hit the traffic lights, head butted the hood of the car and then the bumper and then hit by the road. Then the car ran over this leg. That's why there's extra fat here because it tore off the skin and the bone. They added eight pounds of fat to my right thigh.

**Researcher's Statement:** That was pretty serious.

**Answer:** Yeah and they said I was dead for two-and-a-half months, so they put me in the hospital. They tried to survive me but they couldn't. They put me in the hospital where dead people go, and they took off all the wires that were on me. Then my parents told me that they wanted to see me again. When they saw me again, I started moving again. I had a 98.6% chance of dying, and in my church, they say I got resurrected.

**Researcher's Statement:** That's amazing Andrew!

**Answer:** But people in my neighborhood said I was on the 700 Club.

**Question:** Yes, they were praying for you?

**Answer:** Yeah, they said that they were praying, but I don't know if they were.

**Question:** I'm sure they were. So when you filled out the questionnaire then, you felt that your confidence in reading was fairly high?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** So is this any surprise then that the two...?

**Answer:** My reading? No.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** My high school teacher Ms. Foresteine. She helped me out in writing, but not in reading because I read more in a high school book than anybody else. That's why I got extra credit for doing that thing—reading.

**Question:** So the teacher gave you extra credit?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** How did she help you out in writing?

**Answer:** She just by punctuation. She just read it. My special Ed teacher, she read what I wrote down, and she said if was good or not good. She usually says it's good, but she only has problems with punctuation—commas and periods.

**Question:** So your other teacher was able to help you understand the punctuation?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** How did she do that? What do you think made the difference?

**Answer:** They both did.

**Question:** Do you remember how they helped you to do that? Did you for instance write and have them make comments on the paper?

**Answer:** Well, I first wrote what I want to write down with no punctuation. They said if it's good or not good. If they it's good then I got to mark all the punctuation.

**Question:** So you went back in. What happened when you made an error in your punctuation? What did the teacher do?

**Answer:** She just told me where I made an error.

**Question:** And you understood?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Researcher's Statement:** Sometimes students don't like teachers correcting their work. They feel discouraged, but it doesn't sound like you felt discouraged.

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** How come you didn't feel discouraged?

**Answer:** I don't know.

**Question:** Don't mind people correcting you?

**Answer:** Criticizing me? No.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** My brother. When he was in college and when I was in high school, when I had to write about a story that they told me to read and when I wrote it down, my brother said if it was or wasn't in the story if I just didn't make it up.

**Question:** Is your brother older then?

**Answer:** Yeah, he a year older me. In Virginia Wesleyan, he got all A's in the four years Dean's list. He's like an Asian Doogy Houser.

**Question:** Any other family members?

**Answer:** Sometimes my mom but not my dad or my oldest brother.

**Question:** Why do you think your brother took such an interest in your work?

**Answer:** He's in psychology four, and he's just says he wants to know how a mentally handicap person thinks.

**Question:** So that's why he's so interested in your work?

**Answer:** I guess. My oldest brother, he'll just make fun of me.

My oldest brother, he's fat or obese. He's 6' 1" and weighs 248. He's like a football player, big, chubby guy.

Friends YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Teachers YES/HOW X NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** My English teachers.

**Question:** All of them or some of them?

**Answer:** All of them.

**Question:** How is it that the teacher makes you feel supported, encouraged to read and write?

**Answer:** They just tell me if it's good or if it's not good, and if it's not good, I'll just rewrite what I wrote down. Just try and fix it, or just try to rewrite it and try and mark all the punctuation. If I give it to them and they say it's good then they just give me an A on whatever I just wrote down.

**Question:** Sometimes students give up and they don't want to keep trying. What is it that you think made you want to keep trying to get it right?

**Answer:** Well, when I was in middle school, I wanted to be like the others. I turned 16 when I was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I wanted to get the S.A.T's like 1600.

**Question:** So you just wanted to succeed and excel? That's the motive for keeping...?

**Answer:** If that's what excelled me. My vocabulary not very good. My brother says my vocabulary is like a sixth-grader.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X\_\_\_\_\_

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X\_\_\_\_\_

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X\_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X\_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** My brother Louis because he got the Dean's list who graduated from college. He got a business degree and something else—two degrees.

**Question:** And apart from your brother, is there anyone else of your own race?

**Answer:** Nope.

**Question:** Anybody of your own race whose work you've read? Have you read any work by someone from Korea for instance?

**Answer:** Yeah. Well, he just wrote about the business—how to get a good business and how to get a bad one.

**Question:** Is this your brother or somebody else?

**Answer:** Somebody else.

**Question:** Did you admire the way he wrote? Did you admire him for his ability to read and write?

**Answer:** No but he got a certificate from I think George Bush. Not this George Bush but the other George Bush.

**Question:** Do you remember his name?

**Answer:** No, he lives in Washington.

**Question:** Do you remember when you heard about him whether or not you admired him?

**Answer:** No, I didn't admire him. All I did was just read the book. Just like people in school who just read a book. They don't really care about the author.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_ NO X EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Well I know they could read or write, but I don't think I admire them. There's someone I admire probably still do.

**Question:** Who's that?

**Answer:** Jordon. Michael Jordan.

**Question:** So you admire him not for his reading and writing ability but his for his...?

**Answer:** But also because of his money.

**Question:** Is there anyone that you admire for his or her ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Nobody except for my brother.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language



use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** What's different?

**Answer:** Well at home I usually don't curse, but if I'm pissed and if I want to write a story then I usually curse.

**Question:** But not with your family?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Do you curse with your friends?

**Answer:** If I get pissed at them then I do. Then I kick their butt. Well writing in school and when I talk to my friends are similar than writing at school and talking at home, so it's more similar with friends than talking at home with family.

**Question:** So when you're talking with family, you don't curse?

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** Any other differences that you can think of between the ways you speak and write at school and with your family.

**Answer:** No not really.

**Question:** You don't suppose you curse at school either?

**Answer:** Oh no. I did that in high school. In middle school, I got 18 ISS—in school suspension and four out-of-school suspensions.

**Question:** Why? What did you do?

**Answer:** Well, this girl...I don't know if she still comes here. She comes here. When I first came here, (*mentioned student name*), she hits black people, and she just says wants

black people to become slaves. She says she still wants black people to become slaves. Only thing I did to her was kick her in the chin and choked her in her neck and picked her up and just threw her down on the ground. I could have killed her. My middle school principle, she says that it's not the first thing to do.

**Question:** Did all this happened before your accident or after?

**Answer:** After.

**Question:** Do you think the accident has anything to do with your anger?

**Answer:** Yeah. The accident screwed up the left side of my brain. It takes how much knowledge I know—your IQ. My IQ before Cox in elementary school was 1800 something now it's 674.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** No, only if I'm bored then I just read and write. I just read about mystery.

**Question:** Do you go to the library for those books?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Where do you get them?

**Answer:** Write now all I have is a learner's permit. Can't drive without a license.

**Researcher's Statement:** So when you're bored then you would read.

**Answer:** At home I wrote something about the Dayton Hill because this was when we were still going to war against Iran or Iraq, so I just said that Saddam Housain is still alive and Bin Laden's still alive. Then he went to North Korea. They're communists country; they're one big communist country, and they made everybody in their country become like communist soldier. My two cousins in South Korea, one is finished with the army

and the other one he's in the army. They just made those two go to war against South Korea against North Korea.

**Question:** So this was because of your boredom that you sat and created this story?

**Answer:** Yeah...and also watching Reading Rainbow.

**Question:** So you like to create stories. Do you do that a lot?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** The only thing that propels you to do it is boredom. And do you write about things in the news as you wrote about the war?

**Answer:** Yeah, if we have to like in Dr. Deweese's class.

**Question:** What motivates you to read? Just boredom nothing else?

**Answer:** Yeah just boredom. Boredom or if the teacher tells me to do it.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Reading...not writing but reading. If you read a lot of it then it makes you go to sleep, and you'll have your little bedtime.

**Question:** So you of course feel sleepy, and of course when you're sleepy, you don't want to read. Anything else that makes you not want to read?

**Answer:** Well, if there's a word that I cannot pronounce and that's it.

**Question:** You just loose interest if you don't know the words?

**Answer:** Yeah, or if the story is boring then I just don't read it. I just read the back of the book to see what's it about. If I go to school, my teacher asked if I read it. I just tell him, "Yeah I read it." I just make up something.

**Question:** What makes a story boring for you or a book boring?

**Answer:** If it's not a mystery or if it doesn't have violence.

**Question:** Or action?

**Answer:** Or no blood.

**Researcher's Statement:** Well, you're going to have a hard time in school because we don't have very many books with action in it.

**Answer:** But I like history and then reading about the war then I'll really enjoy it.

**Researcher's Statement:** With history, it doesn't have a lot of action. Do you think?

**Answer:** Unless someone picks a fight with the teacher...in reality and action.

**Question:** When you're reading the history books, you said you like those?

**Answer:** History books...yeah I used to like reading about what happened.

**Question:** You like the narrative, the action, the events...

**Answer:** Yeah, and what year, what happened.

**Question:** What prevents you from writing? What is it that stops you from writing?

**Answer:** If I get bored. If I'm bored if I'm writing then if I find something to do then I just do that instead of writing. I just save what I wrote on the computer.

**Question:** Anything else? Think about your writing in class for instance. Anything in particular that you endure in class that makes you not want to write in class?

**Answer:** No. I can't think of anything.

**Question:** Basically, your teacher gives you something to write; you would just get it done?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Eva, Student #124

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** Granby high school. Yes. Last year 2002.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Question:** Were they different?

**Answer:** Very much so.

**Question:** Did that surprise you?

**Answer:** Yes. Because I thought I wasn't a very good writer. I've always thought that, but the placement scores said that I'm an extremely good writer.

**Question:** But your confidence was low?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** And the same with reading?

**Answer:** With reading it was a kind of different. I thought I was a very good reader 'cause I read a lot. Placement scores weren't as high as I thought they would be.

**Question:** Were you placed in a developmental class in reading?

**Answer:** For college? No, I was placed right into a 111.

**Question:** Okay, but your confidence was higher than the placement?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** How is it that you thought you were a good writer because that's what fed your self-confidence in writing? What made you feel that?

**Answer:** Well, I'm not sure. I know that whenever I would write papers that I would have to turn in for classes, there'd be a lot of corrections made. I know that.

**Question:** I have to correct myself because you had said that your confidence is low in writing, so I'll rephrase the last question. What is it that made you feel less confident than you should have been?

**Answer:** I think it's because I've always been corrected on my papers, and I guess I took that on myself.

**Question:** Some of the students I've spoken to have corrections, but they felt the need for their grade, so they just kept on correcting and didn't process that to affect their confidence. You obviously were processing that. What was it telling you when you saw those errors?

**Answer:** I'm not sure. I've always wanted my paper corrected because I always wanted my paper to be better than it is. I'm not sure.

**Researcher's Statement:** If you wanted it to be better and one way that you could make it better is by accepting the criticism and working at it, but at the same time it shifted your confidence.

**Answer:** Yeah it did. I never thought of it that way, but yeah....

**Question:** How did you see your error? How did you know you needed to correct the draft? What is it you saw?

**Answer:** Actually, I think a lot of it had to do with stupid corrections like oh yeah I knew that. Of course, yep, right. I knew that! Careless mistakes. That's what I was looking for—careless mistakes. I make a lot of those.

**Question:** How did the teachers show you your corrections?

**Answer:** Most of them just said this is wrong in testing. That's the paper they really didn't said anything about. They circled it, corrected it, and handed it back.

**Question:** Did you have opportunities to rewrite and to revise?

**Answer:** Not until college. The teachers just didn't really...this is the grade. Here you go. Know better next time.

**Researcher's Statement:** So that was kind of hard then when you got your grade back and then you looked at the circles and you saw that you could of avoided those because you knew them.

**Answer:** Yeah. Know better next time.

**Question:** Then you said your confidence in reading was high because you always read. Tell me how you read, how often, what kinds of things you read, how that happened to be the case.

**Answer:** Well when I was very young, I'd read big books. I read Nancy Drew. I read a lot of Nancy Drew and Secret Garden and big books like...I can't remember them all. I know in a lot my high school classes, when we do a lot of reading out loud during class I was always the reader. Before bed I always read something. When I was a pre-teen, I'd always just read just magazines of course, but I still read all kinds of books. I like to read, so I thought my reading was excellent.

**Researcher's Statement:** And it probably is. You just have greater confidence than the ability. That's okay.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I can only do it recently not in the lower grades.

**Question:** Can you explain how long ago?

**Answer:** A few years ago. I had a really mean teacher. She was one of the few just grade papers and passed it in. Didn't tell you anything about your grade. Didn't tell you can improve. Didn't tell you anything. This is what you need to do. Do it. Do it in class. Okay, pass it in. I'll give it to you tomorrow and that's it. That's it. You'd go up to her and ask and she'd say, "Go to the writing center," or "why don't you look over it and you tell me," or something like that.

**Question:** That must have been hard for you because you're such an open, warm people-person. How did you feel when she said those things to you?

**Answer:** She was very mean. I didn't like her very much. I was always nice to her but....

**Question:** Did you follow through with what she asked you to do?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** If she said go to the writing center you'd go?

**Answer:** Well, I'd go, but I had so much packed in to one schedule. I did a lot during high school, so I could only go maybe during lunch, and then most of the writing teachers weren't there because they were at lunch or something like that.



**Question:** So you would just try to follow through with what she said, but it didn't always work?

**Answer:** Yeah. I guess you remember more the bad things along that. I don't know.

**Question:** So after that bad teacher did you get a good one after that?

**Answer:** After that I just got mediocre teachers. At least in high school, they tell if I asked, but I don't think I really asked.

**Question:** Do you think your expectations of your teachers changed in that when you found a new class and a new teacher you weren't expecting much?

**Answer:** Yeah probably. I just remembered a lot of times I'd ask my mom to help me. Like I'd have a sentence in my head that didn't sound right or didn't do exactly what I want it to say and that would happen a lot, so I'd always ask other people, especially my mother, "How can I say this?" and they would say it so well. I think that has something to do with it.

**Question:** To do with your low confidence?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Researcher's Statement:** Okay, because they seem to be able to say what you couldn't.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** That's interesting. Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high confidence in reading?

**Answer:** A lot of my teachers like I said in high school, especially in lower grades you know middle school and elementary when we have class reading time or if the class is going through poems or Shakespeare or anything, I'd raise my hand to read because I like to read and I like to speak. I remember in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade we were reading the *Raven*

by Edgar Allen Poe, and I love Edgar Allen Poe. I read one verse, and we had to take turns, and I read one verse and they were like, “Oh! Read more! Read more!” so I read the whole thing and I loved that. That’s my favorite poem.

**Question:** You think that particular teacher had something to do with your willingness to read in class?

**Answer:** Not really. It might have been more of my mother because she likes Shakespeare and I also do. Actually, a lot of it has to do with my drama classes because I’d get parts and I’d read out loud. “Oh that’s great! That’s great! Now people do it like that! Shakespeare’s like this, you got to do it like that!” I understood it.

**Question:** So your drama and history classes got merged together?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** Always with my mom, she loves reading very much so, and she also likes Shakespeare. That’s one thing we share Shakespeare together, and she also tells me that I write pretty well. Still again, I can’t place words the way I want them to be without someone’s help.

Friends                                      YES/HOW   X      NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Sometimes when we’d enter poems together in a competition or something. I can’t do that kind of stuff alone, so I’ll have my friends do it with me and submit poems. “Oh yeah! That’s a good poem!” or something like that.

**Question:** So you would submit an entry together. Did you ever win?

**Answer:** Yes. In fourth grade a long time ago, we won a pizza and ice cream party. In the entry, and we made it in a book. It was in a book and all the fourth grade and fifth grade poems.

**Researcher's Statement:** So that should have helped to boost your confidence.

**Answer:** Yeah, it should of.

Teachers YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Especially this year. Well, Ms. Jellig helped me out. She would write comments. If she ever made corrections, she would write comments about it, why, what and at the end....

**Question:** So, it's not just the corrections themselves but also the explanations that helped you?

**Answer:** Yeah. Another thing, like at the end, she'd either relate to it or she would say something like yeah... I was at this place at this time also bla, bla, bla. You know just neat little comments or something like, "Next time you can try doing this," or "You can try rewriting this, this way," and I could send it back in. I also had a good English teacher, Ms. Tarr. She was one of my good teachers in high school.

**Question:** And what did Ms.Tarr do that made you feel supported?

**Answer:** Well, she was my first teacher at a high school, so her letting us turn in papers back to have it rewritten was a big help.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Drama, acting of course.

**Question:** How did the reading and writing take place in the club?

**Answer:** Well actually, not just the club but my theatre appreciation class was kind of tied in into the club, and we'd pick a play to do and we do that play and sometimes we'd have to take parts off because it was too long or something like that. At one point we did "Oedipus" as in modern times. We'd still kept the language, but we staged it differently. Like instead of a king we had a president. Instead of the people we had reporters, so in my theatre class we had to rewrite some of the things so that the actors could understand what they were saying and really feel it for the now. Like you couldn't say oh Lord, oh king. You couldn't say that, just not just those little things but also bigger things. We had to rewrite it.

**Researcher's Statement:** So there was a lot of reading and writing going on there.

**Answer:** Oh yeah. Read the whole play; write the whole play.

**Researcher's Statement:** And then see it performed. That's a nice thing.

**Answer:** Yeah.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** My mother of course, she reads very well, and I love Edger Allan Poe of course. He's real awesome.

**Question:** How does your mom read and write well that you can see? What is it about your mom's ability that you admire?

**Answer:** When I have trouble reading something or understanding something, she can pick it right up. Just by me talking she doesn't even have to read it. I can read it out to her, and she can pick it right up.

**Researcher's Statement:** It's the understanding and rephrasing.

**Answer:** Yeah, exactly. Writing, she can write applications very well, and she does things like letters. Like I once asked...wanted to ask my principle if my friend from Oklahoma could come over and stay a little bit in school for one day, and the way I had it written it was more like can you please ...pretty please.... and she did more professionally and it sounded better. Sure enough he let her come to my school.

**Researcher's Statement:** So I'm sure there are several authors and your mother that you've admired for their ability to read and write well.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Forgot her name again. An author. She's very strong on women's rights.

**Question:** A lot of high school students have read Maya Angelou?

**Answer:** I remember the last name. Yes.

**Question:** So tell me how you've come to know Maya Angelou. What is it do you admire?

**Answer:** We had to read a lot of books during high school, and I admire her enthusiasm and her ability to put it in words to make other people feel the same way. I think that's really cool; that's real strong.

**Question:** And you knew that she was African American, and you had read the book?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Anybody else.

**Answer:** No one I can think of.

**Question:** In thinking about Maya Angelou then, you were impressed by her ability to create the stories and to be able to describe them clearly. Anything else that you can think of that you admired about that ability?

**Answer:** It just seems more like a power like a super power because whenever I read her works, I think one person could feel one way read something about her and completely change their thoughts. I just feel that way. I've always felt that way when I...

**Researcher's Statement:** She's very persuasive.

**Answer:** Yes, without even using the persuasive tone. She's cool too.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yes, very different. I use a lot better grammar. At school I talk clearer.

People at school and even on paper, they can't understand when your friends and family can. You say hey I am going over there you know. Somebody like you, hey I'm going over there. You might not know what I'm talking about. I'm gonna go over there, but if I were talking to you, I'd say "I'm going to go over to the A building."

**Question:** So you use very formal diction at school?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** And informal diction at home?

**Answer:** Yeah, slang.

**Question:** Is the grammar very different, or do you think it's just a choice of words?

**Answer:** It's not extremely different. It may be a little bit.

**Researcher's Statement:** So it's not entirely the same; it's not entirely different of the two sets of languages.

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** So in terms of the difference in tone, one is formal, one is informal. Do you think that difference in any way affects your confidence in your reading and writing ability?

**Answer:** I'm not sure about reading, but I think it does in writing because like informal I can just say something and you'll understand, but friends and family they'll understand, but I just can't say that something in the paper. Any reader can come by and say what the heck is she thinking. What was she writing about?

**Question:** So, do you find that it's hard then for you in school to readjust your thinking? Do you find that hard?

**Answer:** Yes, and like changing what I want to say with what I can say and I can't figure it out. It takes me forever it seems.

**Question:** So if you're writing a paper, you have a sense of knowing what's informal and that it's not going to be okay?

**Answer:** Yes. I have a very sense of knowing that. I know that I have a very strong sense in what's formal and grammar. I know that for sure.

**Question:** But it's not easy to do?

**Answer:** No at least not for me.

**Question:** You said basically the same grammar that you used in school that you would use at home. Is that sameness in the grammar influence your confidence in any way in reading and writing?

**Answer:** Well I always thought I was very good at grammar. Like in class when exercises in a book you have to replace *ain't*, or you have to put in a word like is it *this*, or *there*, or *they're*. *They* with the *re* or *there* you know that kind of thing. I've always been able to pinpoint and we'd do it in class in high school. I'll write all the answers down and have it done by the time they're on the second question, so I always felt stronger in grammar. It's just....

**Researcher's Statement:** And that strength and the grammar have to mean more confidence in grammar.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Not really, I love to read anyway, so I read way before. I can't go to sleep without reading.

**Question:** How do you decide what you want to read and what you don't want to read?

**Answer:** Usually, I have a book beside my bed that I try to finish up before I'll go to the next book. I like certain kind of fantasies and scientific books sometimes and a lot of novels. I like novels.

**Question:** What motivates you to write?



**Answer:** Nothing but school. I really don't like to write. I don't like to write at all. I will if I have to, but that's the only time I write. I write when the teacher says, "Look you have to write a paper." I say "Okay I'll go ahead and write a paper."

**Question:** But no writing for pleasure?

**Answer:** No, not at all.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** When I have to write for class. I don't like to write. I just never found a passion for it or anything.

**Question:** So those questions are blurring together. You can't think of anything that would encourage you, motivate you to write except if you're in school and you have an assignment that's due?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** So pretty much most of the time you're just discouraged from writing because you don't enjoy it?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Whereas reading, on the other hand, you like doing so you do that a lot?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Is there anything that discourages you from reading?

**Answer:** If I have to read something that I am not interested in. I remember one book I was usually in high school. We'd be assigned a book to read, we have to read a book, and we'd read it during class or on our own time you know tests on the book and things like that. I remember one year, I think it was my tenth grade year where my teacher had a choice between two different books—I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings and another

one. I really wanted to read I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings and she picked the other one.

**Question:** For you or for the whole class?

**Answer:** For the whole class, for all her classes, and she discussed, “You know I got these two books from Loring.” I was really mad about that. I didn’t want to read that other book and it wasn’t interesting to me.

**Question:** How did you make that decision that the book wasn’t going to be interesting?

**Answer:** I can’t remember what it was.

**Question:** You think you might have heard a little bit about the plot?

**Answer:** Yeah...it was that. It just seemed boring to me. I read the first chapter, and it was just slow and down. It was a drag to read that book, and I just read the beginning, the middle, and the end. I didn’t want to read that book.

**Question:** Whereas Maya Angelou’s I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings appeals to you. Do you remember why that book would appeal to you more?

**Answer:** Yes. It might have been the fact that I had already read it, and I really wanted to that for a class. I think I would of liked to read it out loud in class.

**Question:** So you enjoy reading it for pleasure and you would of liked to use it for school?

**Answer:** For class, yeah.

**Question:** So what discourages you from reading is a topic that you don’t like—a book that you don’t like. How do you make that decision? Do you preview the books first?

**Answer:** Like you know back how it tells you the plot, or a lot of times I’ll read the prologue in the first chapter then I decide whether I like it or not usually.

**Question:** So since you said you like fiction, fantasy, and science fiction, do you ever read anything other than those?

**Answer:** Novels. Shakespeare. I like to read play-writes just to read them. Different plays....

**Question:** Because you're interested in Drama?

**Answer:** Yes. I don't really like action, or sometimes non-fiction will appeal to me but not always.

**Question:** Usually fiction?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Trevor, Student # 137

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** I attended high school in Columbus, Georgia. High school called Georgia Vocational High School in Columbus Georgia. Yes. It was in 1977. In a...July 1977.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** Yeah, I think they reflect pretty close to my level.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Yeah, I was kind of a bit surprised that it...but then, therefore, once I think about it, I can kind a think of some a...some why the playin' why the gap is there.

**Question:** Can you tell me about those gaps?

**Answer:** I think because mostly because I do work nights and of course you know. When I come and get off work and come and take a placement test, you don't have time. You can't study for a placement test and you come in a...come in and take a placement test, and you know you might be kind a tired. And another reason I think that reason why when I did test, this test, I was supposed to be wearing glasses for the computer and for reading and writing and for the whole nine yards. It's like I kind a refused until I got to the point that I didn't have no other choice but to wear glasses. Every time I took the placement test for writing, I didn't wear my glasses. Didn't have my glasses. Then when I came back, every time I took my placement test for reading, I was wearing my glasses, which probably will explain the difference between the reading and writing.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Teachers seem to a...well, the one I've been involved with there, seem to kind a take more time with you. If you had to ask a question, they would stop and try to explain the best they could. Try to make sure you understood the material and that it was being taught. Just mostly just that uh...just took their time with you. They took more time with you as opposed to some that would rush through the material. If you got it you got it if you didn't you didn't. That's where you know a lot of teachers didn't encourage you—question/ask anything. They say they did, but when it came to, you know, they didn't encourage you.

**Question:** Your confidence is pretty high, so how do you then think about the teachers who were encouraging vs. the teachers that were not? Are you saying that encouraging teachers helped your confidence?

**Answer:** Yeah, that's exactly what I'm saying. Those that would hurry, it kind of hurt my confidence because I feel that if I don't know something, I'm going to ask a question. And if I get a favorable answer that will cause me to go back and look at the material a second time, then you say well maybe that's where I'm missing it. And suppose some teachers that will say, well, they wouldn't come out and say that okay I don't have time, but their demeanor, their action, would say you know you can't keep up with the rest of the group. You know you get it the best way you can. As opposed to those that would stop and answer the question as best they could to make sure I got the material. And it kind of boost my confidence that I would say you know I can do this, and when I go back and actually started reread it or rewrite it, I find myself I do much better.

**Question:** So, do you think that the numbers of teachers who were encouraging were greater than the ones who were discouraging?

**Answer:** I think the ones greater were more encouraging. I guess that's why I saw myself, you know....

**Question:** As you encounter the teachers that you felt weren't helping you, did that erode take away the confidence that you had, or you just basically managed to maintain the confidence in spite of them?

**Answer:** Well, I managed to maintain the confidence somewhat in spite of them because I looked at well ultimately who's gonna benefit? It's gonna benefit me, so I refused to

let someone bring me down because whether their lack of willing to teach me, or think I should know as much as the next person, whatever. Maybe they had a bad day. I refuse to let that bother me to the point that where I start getting down on myself and say, well I'm a dummy and this and that. I never make myself feel.... I guess what I am trying to say whether I know the material or not, I still try to pump myself up enough to say well yeah you know you can do this. You can do this regardless of what's being told. You can do this. And I just take that part of the attitudes towards it. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

**Question:** Your answers suggest that you were speaking more about the writing than the reading?

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** Talk a little bit about the reading then—your level of reading self-confidence and whether or not you can think of a memorable teacher that might of helped you with your reading confidence.

**Answer:** Well, I can't say one that I could think of one that would help me more read because me, if I find something that's, and I don't know why I'm this way, interests me in reading than I'll read it. Regardless of whether it's a book or a magazine or a pamphlet or whatever, if it interests me and holds my attention than I will read it through. And if doesn't, if it doesn't hold my attention the first chapter or the first two chapters, than I don't call it a character flaw in me or whatever, but if it doesn't hold my attention then you know.... Even if I have to read it even something I must read, I find myself not getting as much out if it's not interesting to me.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** I have a brother that loves to read. He'll read anything. I mean he's one that reads while he eats. I mean he just have a love a reading. I also have a cousin who is the same way. I mean he's a sports nut, and anything that has to do with sports he'll read it. I don't care if it's a book three thousand pages long or whatever. If it has anything to do with sports, he'll read it. Those are the two main people that would try to encourage me about reading, and I will see them reading and I will try to follow suit with them. But again if I can't get into, I just kind of lose interest in it.

**Question:** Friends                      YES/HOW           NO   X  

**Answer:** Not so much as the first group.

Teachers                                  YES/HOW           NO   X  

**Answer:** Again, pretty much going back to the previous what I said about my teachers which are, you know, if I could stop and ask a question about those who will stop them and would help them, I'd feel more confident about what I'm doing. But again if it didn't interest me, I'd you know.... I guess either the age I am I'm still that way, and I guess you'd say because it's kind of hard to teach old dogs new tricks.

**Question:** School clubs/groups      YES/HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** It's kind of more school groups. When I can form a study group, when I can get into a group and read, I find myself influenced more that way because if I happen to kind of fall off or slow down, you all got somebody there to try and keep up. Or...are you having trouble in this area then okay let's see if we can get over this hurdle then.

With that I find my confidence is higher with groups. Clubs...ah...don't have much time, but I try to make time as much as I can for study groups.

**Question:** I heard you talk about school groups in the sense of study groups with reading. Have you ever had study groups that supported you in writing?

**Answer:** Not so much.

**Question:** Religious/community groups. YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** I am a minister and of course being a minister you're encouraged to read the Bible. That's why I know. There's not much you can ask me about the Bible I don't know because I'm in church to read the Bible quiet a lot of it. And again... that's interesting. I'm quiet interested in that, so I'll take time in reading that. Take for instance, some of my past college courses like psychology. I am interested in that and I'll read. I'll pick up a psychology book and I'll read three chapters just for the mere fact of reading. Take sociology. I'll read those types of books because they interest me. When I find that something interests me, I find myself doing better with it.

**Question:** Any other way religious or community groups support you?

**Answer:** I still say religious because when I'm dealing with that setting, I get to help a lot of people as well. As like teaching people. Learn them to teach them how to read the Bible. Teaching them certain passages of the Bible, so that's a great encouragement for me to read the Bible and to understand what's going on, so I can help someone else.

Other YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** I'll say my work. Now I have to read. Well, this is going to kind of sound like a conflict. Now, the manuals that I have to read at work there's nothing exciting about reading a manual. For say, learning to do a simple procedure in my job, it's nothing



exciting about that, but that something that I have to do to maintain my level of work, to maintain my livelihood. So...I'll pretty much undertake that and do what I have to do to maintain my work.

**Question:** Do you think that your employers support you?

**Answer:** Umm...well, I don't know if it's as much a support. You got to do...well I will say it's a support because I have to do this. To being a supervisor, I have to kind of be on top of my job.

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well?      YES   X        NO           EXPLAIN

**Answer:** My pastor, my wife.

**Question:** What is your pastor like? What is it about him or her that you admire?

**Answer:** Writing. He's a great writer and he's an excellent reader. What admires me the most about his writing is that he can take a simple subject and really expound on it. In other words, he has a great ability in his writings to draw you into it writings. In other words, he can take his writing and paint a picture so vividly that you actually can become a part of it. When he reads, his auditory skills is I mean is such he's such a great auditoria that you kind a hinge on almost every word he says. My wife, you know, she's another. She's a great encouraging for me. She's right now going to school to finish her master's work and then going on to get her PHD, so she encourages me. One of the main reasons the way she encourages me to read is that she'll get me to help her in her homework even if when I don't feel like it. "Well, you're not going to help me." Rather than see her not make the grade, I'll assist her in her homework. I will read for her, or I'll ask her questions. So that's a great encouragement to read as far as family goes,

which I didn't mention earlier. Yeah, some of the great people of our race, Thoroughgood Marshall and W.E.B. DuBois and those people, I've read some of their stuff. I guess that's the main reason why I refuse to.... I can see why my company is so high these days; I refuse to put myself down. I figured that well if they could do it with the insurmountable odds they had then with the things the way they are in my day, so I should be able to do it too. Even though that I look back at my family, I think and maybe one or two of us in my whole family that have been to college, one didn't finish and I'm bound determine that I'm gonna get this degree if it take me to ninety-nine-years-old to get it. So as I think, I think back you know those are the things that encourage me to read and write and to learn how to do these things.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Oh...several. Several ministers, several people that I listen to over the radio. There's a numerous...too many that I can't even call their names out. I like, you know, I kind a grown fond to listen to talk radio now; whereas, a couple of years ago, I wouldn't be caught dead listening to talk radio. But now I find myself not being able to change the channel. I mean I get in the car with my wife and "uh-oh don't touch! Well, you have to drive your car and I drive mine." I just like to listen to talk radio because I found myself being more informed and like Art Build and a...Sean Haney and those types of people. When I hear something, it automatically stimulates me to go back and try to substantiate what they're saying. I mean if you say something then I want to find what you're saying is true.

**Researcher's Statement:** I see. Get to the source.

**Answer:** Yeah... Absolutely so. So a lot of those people have encouraged me to read and to learn how to write as well.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** It used to be. Use to be that the language that I used in school would be much different than from what I used with my family. But I came to realize that I can't expect my children okay to learn how to use proper English grammar in school if I'm one way in class and when I come home I'm using all the wrong words and all the wrong terminology. I can't expect them to learn how. I can't expect them to do it because, again, people learn from what they see people do so especially children. So again, like I said I used to, but I learned that if it can't be...it's either going to have to be part of you all the time or not a part of you at all. So I've learned that if I'm going to learn these things, then I have to put these into practice. That's the best way to learn. I mean things that you gather being in the classroom or life or whatever. If you put these things into practice then they become more part of you. So I try to use the words at home that I learned to use in class.

**Question:** That brings us to our next question. Does that difference or sameness of language use affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Oh yeah. I think it directly affects my confidence in my ability to read and write because again if I put into practice what I learn, then it becomes a part of me. It's

just that. It's learning stuff. It's memorizing. A memorizer is supposed to learn this stuff, so if you learn it's a part of you. If you memorize it, you're going to forget it sooner or later. So what better way to become a part of you then use what you learn? I think that's a problem with a lot of Christians is that they read the Bible, they go to church and they hear the sermon, but the vast majority of them never put it into action. So they're stuck in ruts that they find themselves they can't get out of because they never put anything into action. Just take for instance that I just went home to Columbus, Georgia just during spring break as a matter-of-fact. I went home and I can see people that looking at me when I talk that you know they're saying that he used didn't sound like this. In other words, even some would go as far as mimicking the way I talk now as opposed to the way I talked back then see. Because, I again, if you learn these things, they become a part of you. My wife said, "Well I could hear you sometime kind a slide back." I said well, I kind a wouldn't do that sometime because I didn't want the ridicule, but then I say, "Oh, then the heck with this." Why do I have to break myself down because somebody else. Because, you know, they didn't go to school or refuse to go to school or whatever. They didn't go so why should I bring myself down to make myself seem like less than I am or to go back on what I've learned? Why should I do that? Why shouldn't I use what I've learned? I mean, at my own expense. I don't think so. I said so I'll be more cognizant of what I say, my pronunciation of words, my enunciation of words, I'd be more confident. If I find myself saying something that's not correct, I'll try and correct myself immediately.

**Question:** And you're willing to take the ridicule from the people?

**Answer:** Bring it on! Yeah, it doesn't matter because, again, I kind a been to painstaking times, and this thing has come at some price. Steady and learning how to do things and wanting to do it correctly. It comes with some price. So why should I you know? It really shows ignorance you know to tell you the truth. So I told my wife I said "I find myself...when you hear it happening, stop me immediately. Don't even wait." I said I don't even care who I'm around I said because I don't want to sit here and sound like some, just for lack of a better word, sound like some idiot. Just so I can please someone else? Again, I refuse to put myself down just so I can make someone else feel comfortable with me. I mean what you see is what you get. Like it or leave it. It took some time to learn how to do that because, again, I was one that I was always shy, and I always worried about what people thought of me. We all have to, to a point, care about what people think, but it'll get to the point where I have to completely change because of what you think you know. Hey for that I'm not going to do it. I'm just not going to do it.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** I think one of the greatest events that really motivated me to get more to reading and writing is that when one of my church members who ran the church newspaper asked me to write an article for him. First, I was going to say no because that was during the time when I didn't have much confidence in my writing or reading. As a matter of fact, I said no, but she was a relentless person. She wouldn't take no for an answer. She kept on and she kept on, so I finally I agreed. So, I sat down at the computer. I didn't know anything about a computer. I mean I didn't even know how to start a computer. I mean it took me almost a whole night to write a two-page article. I mean it took me almost all night. You know, pecking the finger-the finger the finger the

finger! But because I felt that she had confidence enough in me to ask me to do it then I should have enough confidence in myself to give her the best part I could possibly to give her, so I sat there and I peck-peck-peck- peck-peck-peck. When the article finally came out, it was printed in the newspaper. I had several people come back and they said, “Did you write this?” Even the pastor, “Did you write this?” I say yeah. They say, “Did you know that you’re a writer?” You know of course I had some typos. I had some grammar out-of-place, some punctuation out-of-place, but still yet the continent of the writing and what I was trying to convey is this, and it blessed a lot of people. So I think that was one of the most, in my adult years anyway, one of the most recent, greatest event that really encouraged me to try to learn how to read and write.

**Question:** How did you know that the grammar errors and the punctuation errors were there?

**Answer:** Because, you know, after I got the article back, and I told them I’ll say, “Don’t change anything that’s gonna cause this thing structurally to sound like I’m in Jupiter somewhere.” I’d say but you know, “if it takes something where a word here that might be easy then go ahead and change that.” Again, one of the things that was the greatest motivators, again when I did the article for the church member, and the article came back, is that when it did come back and I saw the errors that I did make. It was nothing real great because she did tell me that well, I really didn’t change anything in the continent of the article, but like you said certain punctuations don’t bother her. And I sat down with my wife and I found out, and we sat down and we went over it that it wasn’t really that much that I have gotten out place, so that was one of the greatest motivators

to kind a jump-start and propel me and to learn how to write and learn better to read and to a go finish my degree.

**Researcher's Statement:** And you said her confidence in you.

**Answer:** Yes, yes, her confidence in my was I think was the greatest because nobody ever really asked me to write an article. I mean there were hundreds of people going to look at it and read it, and she had enough confidence in me. Like when I said, "No!" she said, "Well, you can do this. Come on you can do this. I want you to write this for me." So I did and as I said earlier, once the article was finished, it wasn't that many errors in it at all. I said, "Wow, hmm, I can do this!" As I said, I'm gonna write a book once I really learn how to write. Once I learn the reading part, I'll have much more problem with that, but once I really learn how to write and how to structure these things to where it'll hold someone's attention. Again it's going to be a novel and the name of the book is going to be called Satin. Of course call it the enemy.

**Question:** And you had said that you're ready journalistically?

**Answer:** Right. I'm already begin to journal it. I didn't even know how to do that. I didn't know how to journal until I got back into class. I guess I can go back to one of the first persons you ask me about teachers. One of my instructors which is Mrs. Jellig, she is a great encouragement. I just thought about that when I mentioned the journal because I never in the past knew how to journal, but now I'm learning how to do that, and I began to do that and write certain things down and hold it and to go back and refer to them. And one of the things that I guess is the hardest thing is to put this stuff together and hopefully a book will come from it. That's something I want to read anyway! So yeah, when I think about that yeah that goes back to the question you asked

me earlier about my teachers. She really is a good teacher. She's stern! She don't take any mess, but she'll help you. She'll really help you, and if a comma's out-of-place or you don't have a comma splice, she'll comma splice-it. She told me in one of my journals she said, "You will need long sentences." Because I think I'd have a sentence with three commas, a comma splice, and then a period. She said, "You'll need long sentences. You need to learn how to cut down your sentences." I find myself after this last two papers I turned in the one before the last one I think it was a B-. This last one I turned in, just before the brief of the term paper, it was a B+ on that one. And now on the brief of the term paper, she'll only corrected one word. No punctuation marks, no punctuations out-of-place, so these things are kind a even boosted my confidence even that much more. They'd say, "Well, Calvin you can't do this. You can't do this." And yeah she'd tell me, "You have great ideas." That's one thing she didn't hesitate to say, "You do have great ideas. You need to learn how to place these punctuations where they belong." I thank her for teaching that. I think it's getting there. It's getting there.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Right. Right. The primary is on a lack of interest. As I stated that I found out that's probably hurt me more in lookin' at my placement test and my placement scores. That probably one of the greatest single things that hurt me even the more because if I would just press through and read it anyway sooner than later...don't get me wrong that's an important thing in the Bible as well, but I would press my way and read anyway even though it's boring. There's some real dry stuff in the Bible. I put myself and I find myself learning, and then I go back and reread some of these things. I found out that I did myself a great injustice by not pressing my way in reading it, so I'm



learning. It's a hard road, but I'm learning that going into the field I'd like to which is some type of psychology. I guess that's more stuff that I'm going to have to read whether I want to or not. So I'm learning that I'm going to have to press my way in reading whether I like the article or like the book or like the magazine or not. Other than that, if I have to if it's for my studies, I'll read it, and I'll get whatever I can out of it. If of course it's for my job, I have to read it even if though it's boring then I guess I'll get a lot out of it. Again, by me learning how to read in my job brought me to the rank of supervisor. So, it must not be all bad.

Charleen, Student #135

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** I attended high school from 1991-1995 at Laurel High School in Laurel, Maryland.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** YES  X  NO  \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** I'm not really surprised because I feel that I know where my level of confidence is when it comes to reading and writing.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** One of my English teachers, the first one that came to my mind was my high school English teacher. His name is Mr. Foster, and he just basically seemed like he took his time and made us feel confident. He was confident in us, which made us feel confident about ourselves.

**Question:** How did he show that confidence in you?

**Answer:** By always encouraging us. If we made a mistake or if we had questions, he answered the questions completely. He didn't dance around the questions. He always seemed to answer the questions to a level where we understood it.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** Yes. I felt supported in reading and writing from my siblings and also my parents.

**Question:** How did they support you?

**Answer:** At home when I'm doing home work or if the family goes to the library after class, a lot of times after school my mom would take, I have three older brothers, my mom would take myself and my three older brothers to the library so we can check out books if it's in the summer time or to complete home work. With my brother being

older, if I had a question on a word or how to spell something then I would go to them and they will help. I can specifically remember a time, I guess maybe I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, you know how when you're in elementary school every week you have a weekly spelling test, and I was having a real hard time spelling the word *together*, so one of my brothers, he broke it down to the three words that's in the one word. Of course now that I'm in college, you know sometimes when I still write the words together, I write *to get her*.

**Question:** And this is your older brother?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** You must have had a special relationship with him?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** How did he do in reading and writing himself?

**Answer:** Well...I have three older brothers. The one in particular, well all of them used to help me, but the eldest was the one that I just remembered. He taught me how to spell the word *together* 'cause I was having a really hard time, but they're very intelligent. Their level of reading and writing is good.

Friends YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Yes. For instance a couple of my friends now, they read more than I do, but if they read interesting books, something that they know that I'll read the whole book then they'll refer it to me or give me the book and say, "I would like for you to read this." First of all, it has to be something that they think will hold my attention because other than that I won't finish the book, so I feel supported by my friends by them passing along the literature that they read.

Teachers YES/HOW  X  NO

**Answer:** The large majority of my confidence for reading and writing I feel came from my teachers. Of course being a student in English classes, I guess it's a certain curriculum that teachers have to follow in. I feel that my teachers did a pretty good job in help learning me. You know showing me how to read and write and things of that nature.

**Question:** This is through high school and college, elementary school or all through your school?

**Answer:** All through my schooling.

**Question:** You said that you felt that they did a good job. What are some of the things you think they did particularly well?

**Answer:** Particularly well is like I said having the confidence in me to make me have confidence in myself. You know just making me feel really good about the material and letting me know that I can learn it and I guess making it as easy as possible to learn...making it fun as well as work.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW   NO  X

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW   NO  X

Other YES/HOW   NO  X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  X  NO   EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I have two half sisters from my father and they're younger than I am.

Actually, one of them is in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade a junior, and the other one she's a freshman at DePaul College in Chicago. I really admire her for her reading and writing abilities. In

high school, she was in governor school and kept a 4.0 and just very intelligent. I really admire her for her confidence and her knowledge of reading and writing.

**Question:** Anyone else of your own race that you can think of?

**Answer:** Maya Angelou. I admire her for her reading and writing.

**Question:** How did you encounter Maya Angelou? Was it through her books?

**Answer:** Yes, book reports...through books in school. I just always had a great interest in Maya Angelou. As far as I can remember in middle school and maybe freshman in high school, whenever we had to pick an author to write about or a book, I'll pick Maya Angelou.

**Question:** What is it about her that you find striking that you want her book rather than somebody else's?

**Answer:** Basically when I read her material, I can understand it and visualize and kind of have a concept of the story she's telling or the point she's trying to make.

**Question:** Is it because you see yourself or the people you know in her stories?

**Answer:** Yeah I believe so. I believe it would be because I can see myself or I can understand where she's coming from or what character in her book had to go through.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES   X   NO        EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I guess when you ask these questions and I think back, I think of a friend that I had in high school. I believe it was my sophomore year, and her name was Tiffany, and she was white girl. She just was always on point. Definitely, if I had any questions as far as an assignment or anything like that in English, we used to always match up to

study for a test and things like that, and she was very intelligent. I would admire her.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** It's a lot different. When I speak to my family and friends, I use a lot of slang. You know I'll say words...I guess I'd say in a country way instead of pronouncing it or trying to make sure that I hit every syllable you know when I'm in school or at work than when I'm in the comfort of my family and friends.

**Question:** Do you think that's part of the country where you use an African American dialect?

**Answer:** Yes, definitely.

**Question:** How does that happen at home? Is it that you use the dialect alone or that your family and friends also use it?

**Answer:** Family and friends also use it even to the point say if me and my friends are on the phone and we're talking and we're using the dialect. Even it's been occasions where my mom she'll say something to me and they won't get my attention then if she say in a dialect or something. It'll be a kind of a joke, and she'd say, "Yeah, you understood that didn't you?" You know so it's with my family and friends and my mom and my dad.

**Question:** So does that difference in the language use affect your confidence in your ability to read and write? Does that difference between home and school affect your confidence in any way?

**Answer:** I wouldn't say it affects my confidence now. It probably did indirectly maybe when I was younger because I didn't know how to separate the two, or until I learned the techniques of more how to write and got more information on how to form a sentence as far as writing or reading it than that probably helped more now than so when I was maybe in high school. I probably wrote like I talked.

**Question:** Do you remember what it was like in school when you wrote the way you talked?

**Answer:** Yeah, a lot of red marks on my paper.

**Question:** Did the teacher ever point out that you were writing the way you spoke?

**Answer:** Yeah, the teacher pointed that out to me.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Besides regular school work, like I said I like to read only like maybe if I'm waiting at a doctor's office or sitting under the hair dryer at the beauty salon or things of that nature. I really don't have time set aside through out the week when I say yeah I'm going to read this. Not unless it's pertaining to school, so I really don't read as much as necessary besides entertaining or while I'm waiting.

**Researcher's Statement:** But you mentioned growing up with your mother taking you to the library.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** How did that change?

**Answer:** It changed a lot once I graduated from high school because I guess I didn't feel that I had to keep reading or to keep stimulating you know learning more. When I came to college, I just kind a figured that it will all pan out. You know what I mean? I'll go ahead and be able to read and write to the level when I have to more than just to go to the library when I'm older.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Yeah. If I see literature that just look like a lot of words. That look like it may not be interesting, or like to be honest with you if it's a book and doesn't have a lot of pictures in it then that might discourage me from not reading it. If I feel it's too much information or if I feel like it's large words in it that I might not comprehend then that would discourage me.

**Question:** In the last two questions, you've spoken mostly about reading. In other words, the previous question asked what motivated you to read and write, and you mentioned school and reading, but I didn't hear anything about writing, and I didn't hear much about writing in the discouraging questions, so I want to go back to the question.

What motivates you to write?

**Answer:** It's a lot of things that motivates me to write. I feel that I write more than I read as far as voluntarily. I write a lot of letters to friends 'cause I moved up and down the east coast, so I have friends everywhere. If I'm not emailing a letter to a friend then I'm writing or typing.

**Question:** Or calling?

**Answer:** Right. I'll write or type letters to friends?

**Question:** Why do you think you do that rather than a phone call?



**Answer:** I do call them, but a lot of my friends at the age that we are, we're really trying to build the foundation for our future, and a lot of my friends have children so they're either doing things with their kids and yeah.

**Question:** So you find that emailing the letter is a better way of getting to them?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Researcher's Statement:** So you write a lot to your friends.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Researcher's Statement:** So motivating you to write to your friends would be one reason to keep in touch.

**Answer:** Yeah, to keep in touch. That's the main reason why I write. I will write a letter to my friend...to friends' maybe once a day, once every other day and maybe a two-page letter and things like that, so I like to write. As far as when it comes to schoolwork and things like that then my confidence isn't as high because it's a technique that the writing has to go whether than free-handwriting to a friend.

**Question:** And what discourages you from writing?

**Answer:** If I had to write something on a subject that I really don't know much about and had to do the research. Just I guess not having the confidence in myself that I can do a good job at whatever the task of writing that I'm doing. That would discourage me.

**Question:** Can you think of an incident that you might be able to use to explain what you just said?

**Answer:** For instance if I had...or on the paper that we're doing now in my English class, it's a research paper, and I guess that wouldn't really discourage me because the paper before that was the argumentative paper, and we're doing the research paper on

the argument, but the argumentative paper that kind of discouraged me because I had to persuade someone to do something, so I guess persuasion trying to convince someone from your point of view that will kind of discourage me from writing. Feeling that I won't accomplish persuading the person or you know get all the information to the reader.

**Question:** Why do you think that the argument was so difficult for you then?

**Answer:** The argument probably was difficult because of the main persuasion thing. I didn't want to leave anything out that I felt would persuade the reader, or I didn't want to add anything that I thought would have the reader to you know to hold firm at their view point or whatever the subject was.

**Researcher's Statement:** So just getting the content in and knowing how much to put in and knowing how much to leave out is difficult. In dealing with that, not being sure is what you're saying has caused your confidence to go down and therefore discourage you from writing

**Answer:** Right. Correct.

**Question:** Anything else that you can think of that discourages you from writing?

**Answer:** No...I can't think of anything that will discourage me from writing because like I said I really like to write more than I like to read.

Danielle, Student #128

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** I went to Princess Ann High School in Virginia Beach. Yes in June of 1995.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES \_\_\_ NO  X

**Answer:** I think my beliefs are more...they might not be as accurate.

As far as writing, I can write if I'm given an assignment to write on, but if which is told to write about something, I get stuck a lot of times and I'm sittin' and I wait, and I'll think about a lot of things that go through my mind. Eventually, I'll come up with something, but most of the times with writing, it has to be like she'll give us something to write about and then I can start from there, but if I have to figure out something by myself, it's probably gonna take a little while.

**Question:** When you filled out the questionnaires, do you think that at the time you felt that those scores represented in general what your confidence level was?

**Answer:** I think they did 'cause I'm more confident writing than I am reading.

**Researcher's Statement:** But that graph shows different.

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** So I guess maybe we'll try to figure out what the difference is because the graph showed that you appear to be more confident in your reading, but you think it should have been reversed?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do

the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Yes because I didn't know that...my belief as far as reading was gonna be that high compared to the way they were on the placement test.

**Question:** Why do you think that is?

**Answer:** Because I know I'm not that confident in reading. I'm not. I can read if we're given something to read and I can talk about what I read, but I know on the placement test I think I was just trying to get it over with too. I can honestly say that. When I came in to take the placement test, I was trying to get it over with, and I didn't realize that it was going to affect the classes I was going have to take. I didn't even think about that when I came in to take the placement test.

**Question:** Were you confident that your answers were right or you just rushed through it?

**Answer:** Actually, honestly, I just rushed through the placement test. I know as far as Math and writing, I did the best I could but reading, I was just trying to rush. Some of the answers I didn't even think about what the questions were asking when it came down to reading. I just tried to hurry up and get it over with.

**Question:** What about the similarities in the scores in writing? Do the similarities in those scores surprise you in any way?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** How is it that it doesn't surprise you?

**Answer:** Because like I said on the placement test as far as writing I know like it asks you questions, certain things, so a lot of times when I'm asked what to write about when

I'm told what to write about, I can write about it. I know the placement test I can easily put something on the paper and know what's on the paper and remember what is it about. That's not surprise me.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** As far as writing, I have a teacher now. Well I had a teacher when I first came here which was Dr. Deweese, and he kind of complimented more on my handwriting, and he read the papers and things that I wrote. He kind of gave me confidence as far as writing because I was trying to make it as neat as possible to where he can understand what I was writing. He always has something good to say about the writing so that helped.

**Question:** So in your handwriting he was able to appreciate?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What about in reading?

**Answer:** Reading, I didn't really...I didn't like to read, and I know we had to do it because that was like our homework, but with him we like read in class. We talked mostly about everything that we read, so I could kind of ease by the reading part.

**Question:** Your confidence in reading is pretty high. Do you think that the teacher contributed to that in any way?

**Answer:** I think he did because I got mostly A's and B's on the test and everything.

**Question:** And this was in reading class?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW \_\_\_\_                      NO   X  

**Answer:** No, not really 'cause I don't share a lot of writing. If I write something, it's just like I'm jotting something down, so I haven't really shared anything with them to be confident.

**Question:** No discussion of grades?

**Answer:** If it's good! If it's good, I'll share it with him.

**Question:** If it's bad, you don't share so you don't care anything about that?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Was that always the way it was even when you were growing up?

**Answer:** Well...kind of because my sister is like a writer. She writes poetry and she'll sit and write a lot of stuff, and I didn't want to feel like mine wasn't as good as hers, so when she shared hers and everybody liked it, I didn't want to try and come back with the same thing 'cause I might not get the same response.

**Question:** So you just kept it to yourself?

**Answer:** Yeah.

Friends                                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_                                      NO   X  

**Answer:** It's kind of the same with them. I didn't really share a lot of writing. Reading, I would read like around them if I find an article or something to read about and we'll discuss it. Reading was better 'cause it was easy. I could look on the paper and read something to them and we'll all give our opinions, so reading was kind of easy with my friends.

Teachers YES/HOW  X  NO

**Answer:** Just like actually in the class, I'm in early child education class now, and if we find articles to share with the teacher, she's usually positive. If we ask her opinion, she is positive about the articles, or she's kind of happy that we at least looked to try to find an article to share with the class, so I really like that.

**Question:** And what about writing? Have you ever felt supported in writing by your teachers?

**Answer:** Yeah. Actually now, again it's the same teacher, we had to do a project on goals.

**Question:** Did you have to do any projects in high school?

**Answer:** High school? Not really. I was kind of lazy in high school, so I really didn't want to turn in a lot of work. We had to turn in a goal's project, and we had to write down what our goals would be and how far down the line our goals have been set, and when I got it back, I had a 100% on it, so that was good. She's really positive. She jots down little notes like, "keep the faith," and "things will happen," and "stay behind your goals." It's actually good to know that she even read it 'cause sometimes you turn in work they don't really read it. They'll just scan through it, so she'll jot down it on each piece of paper something about what I have written. That's kind of good too.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW   NO  X

**Answer:** I wasn't really into many clubs.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW   NO  X

**Answer:** I really don't do much like in church and stuff.

**Researcher's Statement:** Sounds like you're a bit of a loaner.

**Answer:** Yeah. I don't really write things to like to talk to people about because I'm kind of shy. If a person doesn't say anything to me, I'm not gonna to say anything, so in church I don't really talk. I'm just there.

Other                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_              NO   X  

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well?              YES   X                NO \_\_\_\_              EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Actually my sister, like I said before she writes poems, poetry, so if she's upset, she'll write a poem about her being upset—what happened to cause her to be upset, what she can change so that whatever happened won't make her upset in the future. All my life that I can remember, she'll write down poems and things, so she can read them. She puts in the action and all that, so it's very interesting to read her work and to watch her if she has to perform it.

**Question:** Is there anyone else of your own race?

**Answer:** Actually, I like Maya Angelou. I watched her on Oprah Winfrey maybe two years ago, and she read, "Yet Still I Rise" and I just loved that poem.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES   X   NO \_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I had a third grade teacher name Mrs. Scholl, and in the classroom, she used to read a book Ramona Quimby by Beverly Clearly, and it was just interesting to see that she put like feelings into what she was reading. She would change her voice. It was so fun. She would change her voice, so she would make sound like the mother at one time. She would sound like a little girl being Ramona at one time, a little boy, so that was very fun. I like that and that was interesting.



**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yes. At home I'm kind of laid back, so if I don't pronounce something the right way, it's not like I'll be at fault. When I'm in school, it's like more proper and try and make sure that everything is pronounced correctly. Writing, you make sure you have your periods and everything is where it's supposed to be, but at home it's kind of like if you don't finish a word all the way, *gonna*, stuff like that. People are not really gonna care. I mean sometimes they might correct you, but at school it's more geared towards doing things the correct way.

**Question:** Does this difference of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yeah, sometimes because I don't want to turn in the paper if I'm not sure if I've used language correctly because I know that's gonna be points deducted, so I'll like read over it, read over it, take something out, put something in, to make sure that it's okay.

**Question:** Any other way that you can think of the difference in being a problem for you? You said at home you're very casual, informal. At school you have to be very formal. Do you find then that having to be formal at school is somehow eroding your confidence taking away from it because of the need to be so formal?

**Answer:** No. Actually, I think that it helps me because I don't want to graduate from college and still have problems as far as language, and then if I own my own business, I want people to be able to understand what I'm saying without looking at me like I am crazy 'cause I know sometimes you can say something that like, "what are you saying." I think it's good that in school you have to be formal which my mom is formal all the time. She's like very proper, so I want to be like her.

**Question:** So are you usually informal with her at home?

**Answer:** Yes. But I think it's good because I feel like school is gonna help me with my language, with writing and reading, and the classes that I've chosen to take are helping me now also.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Yes. Reading, now. I have a 7 year-old-son and he has a learning disability, so I'm on the internet, I'm reading magazines, I'm reading books about how to help him because I know he struggles with a lot of things, and I feel the more education I have then I'm able to help him so it won't be so bad as he gets older. It's really motivating me to read and ask questions now because I wouldn't ask questions when he first started school. It was just like he would go to school whatever happened at school happened. I would ask him how was his day. "It's fine". Now we can have a conversation. "Well, do you know why this happened?" and things like that so that's really motivating me.

**Question:** It's certainly motivating you to read. Is there anything that motivates you to write?

**Answer:** Just on a regular basis, probably just going out and meeting people. Kind of jot down, "I met a person today" or if somebody helps me like if something happens if I get

stranded, anything, just having a conversation with a person would motive me to write something because a lot of times you talk to people and something they say you remember. You don't want to forget it, so you write it down. That usually is like meeting new people.

**Question:** So you write it down in something like a journal?

**Answer:** Actually, I'll just jot it down somewhere, anywhere, and then I go home and probably put it on the computer. I have a little section in the computer that I put stuff in.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Reading aloud. I don't like to read out loud. Like I have to do an oral presentation in my early childhood education class and I am not very ready for it. I'm very nervous and I'm shy, so standing up in front of people and having everybody look at me, and that is discouraging. I do not want to read out loud. I don't.

**Question:** What about discouraging you from writing?

**Answer:** The only thing I can think of that would discourage me from writing is not being able to sit down and have any time 'cause usually if I can sit down, I can write down anything, but lately, I've just been busy. I haven't been writing too much lately. Other than that, as long as I have time. If I have time, I can write down something.

**Question:** What would be some of the things you would write if you had time?

**Answer:** Like how my day went—if I met somebody new, if I learn something new.

**Question:** What about classroom writing, anything that motivates or discourages you from academic writing?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** You just do what you're told to do?

**Answer:** Yeah, most of the time.

**Question:** To get it done?

**Answer:** Yes, I try and hurry up and get it done 'cause I don't like to be waiting, and waiting, and waiting, and prolonging it. I know if I prolong it, whatever I write down is going to be something rushed, and nobody is probably gonna understand what I'm trying to say. If we're given something to do, I'll try to go ahead and do it like while it's fresh.

**Question:** And you had said earlier in the interview that as long as someone gives you a topic it's usually easier for you than having to create your own?

**Answer:** Yes it is. We have to for my research paper we're given a long list, and it was either choose something off the paper or think of something on my own. I still even that way I'll still not able to decide. I couldn't decide on what I wanted, so I waited like a couple of days and I looked back at the paper again then I decided just to do something about early child hood education.

**Question:** Is that on the list?

**Answer:** Yeah it was, but it was like there were a lot of other things up there. I was like "Ooh...I can do this one. This is good. This is something I want to talk about." But I figure I want to be a teacher, so if I could learn as much about early childhood education and I could do my paper on that, that'll be interesting to me and hopefully to the audience.

Rick, Student #134

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** Tallwood High school. Yes. 1997.

After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

**Question:** Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** The writing surprises me that I actually I placed higher than I believed. I thought it would be more dead-on with that as in the reading.

**Question:** Why did you think that?

**Answer:** Its just maybe high school in English writing there's so many rules—MLA, APA, and the old standards. I always felt that I was more of a free writer. I never really particularly liked these rules, and I never took the time to learn them all, so I figured I wasn't as stronger writer as somebody who might be more standardized.

**Question:** You're surprised that the ability in your placement test is greater than your confidence level, but what about the reading? The reading beliefs and the reading performance are that even. Were you surprised by that?

**Answer:** Not really because out of reading you can take your time with it. The information's there it's just how you got it. It can be gathered in different ways. I think I developed ways to do that.

**Question:** So you feel in greater control over the reading process?

**Answer:** Of course.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Well in early years of high school, I had a teacher, Ms. Wadsworth to be exact. I liked her. She has a lot freedom in her writing. She'd like to hear the stories the way we perceived them, but as I moved on in high school, the rules started applying. It became harder to write because it's harder to express your ideas under the formats that we were given, and I didn't see why a paper should be written a certain lengths. You know you always get a 500-word essay or a 1500, and you get graded if you went over above. I couldn't understand that because if you had the information why should it matter, so the format really bothered me. I think later on in high school I kind of gave up on it all together. It didn't affect my reading at all.

**Question:** So what does giving up mean?

**Answer:** Towards the end of my high school career, I was not really interested in much. I couldn't apply this to a real life. I started working, and I just couldn't see how this is going to help along in any way, so I don't think I spent any more time on how to write good. I wrote it the way I wanted to from that point on.

**Question:** What about your teachers? You mentioned Ms. Wadsworth as being on of those encouraging teachers and after that things went down hill.

**Answer:** Well, it didn't go downhill. I was in honors English and it became really tedious. Everything was being critiqued and it seemed if I wrote something and the teacher at the time liked it, I would bring it to another teacher and she would critique it

till the way she wanted it. I couldn't understand how to get the right thing across, the right idea.

**Question:** Can you think of anything in particular about one teacher that might of helped to illustrate this trouble that you were having?

**Answer:** No. I didn't take English my senior year because I had a very slack schedule, but I can't remember one teacher who might....

**Researcher's Statement:** Stand out.

**Answer:** Yeah...I think it was kind a just me growing up at the time and guys in high school. I can't pick a teacher out. I just remembered I really liked free writing and having no boundaries, but I'm no published author who can do that.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** My parents. They would always when we were young they would read to me. They'd always make sure we were doing our work—me, my brothers, and sisters. But they spent individual attention on each one of us. They'd always read papers we wrote and always wanted to see our projects. I'd say I definitely had family support.

**Question:** In reading also?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What are some of the things that you did with your parents for reading that made you feel supported?

**Answer:** They would like to here whenever we had a report—an oral report. They'd want to hear it first. They wanted to hear the way we presented it and give their views.

There was always reading material around the house. Maybe not books but reading was always stressed highly in the family.

**Question:** So you had reading material such as?

**Answer:** We had textbooks. We didn't have a home computer, but we did have dictionaries you know all kinds of non-fictional resources—magazines always around the house. My mother worked for a lady who had tons of books, and she would always bring them over.

Friends YES/HOW   X   NO       

**Answer:** Yeah my girlfriend. She's always got her nose in what I'm doing too. Last night for example, she wanted me to email her my argumentative essay, so she can see what was going on. My girlfriend's big into making sure that I read and write well.

**Question:** So she would give you feedback?

**Answer:** Recently though not in high school. It seemed like after class nobody cared. Besides my parents, it wasn't something that came up, so recently the support for reading and writing has been real good.

Teachers YES/HOW   X   NO       

**Answer:** Well most of it's been recently. It's been six years since I've been out of high school, but Ms. Jellig stayed after class with me the other day and she would stress certain points. She said I was a strong writer, but she was easing me into the MLA telling me it's not so hard. Few times she sat down and talked to me about what she likes about what I do and how it can be better. You know which is better than the big red X in the grade, and she is always available to peer-edit the papers, so that's been a positive experience.



**Question:** So the support from teachers has been mostly then during college?

**Answer:** Yes. In high school, I think they're just so overwhelmed with everything. The teacher has a million research projects to grade now. Unless the student pursues staying after which I never did. I didn't want to be around school when it was over so I never pursued. I'm sure I could of...the support was there if I sought it out, but it seems that in college they're making it a point to make sure that individually we're doing good.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Other YES/HOW X NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Maybe the workplace—fellow employees. It's weird. Well I've always bartended and been in the restaurant business, and in that it seems like that you have more people that are struggling to go back to school. Some of the best information about school and about schoolwork and about different assignments, teachers, it's from the work place. You get a group of kids after work and they end up talking about their papers—what they're doing. There's a lot of peer editing going on at work after the bar closes which is surprising, so that for me was a big factor and more than one establishment. I see it everywhere too. You always have schoolbooks at work, so I've looked at outlines. It's an example of seeing outlines of stuff people done. They've wanted to see my work. I've talked about it and I like bringing it.

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** My father. I admire the most about his reading 'cause it takes him forever, but when he's done, he knows he hasn't missed a thing. If you watch him work on anything

if he's reading something—a manual or something, you get frustrated at first, but when he's done with it saves time.

**Question:** He pays close attention to the words?

**Answer:** Very closed attention to detail. He breaks stuff down. I've tried to do it. I'm too impatient right now, but when he's going over something, his style is something that's influenced me.

**Question:** Anyone else of your own race that you have admired?

**Answer:** The next closest person is my girlfriend. She's not of my race. She's Philippine American, but she inspires me the way she writes.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES   X   NO        EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Yeah my girlfriend. She's at MTV right now. She's in graduate school and watching her level of work the way she writes stuff while she's on the phone. She can have reports that take me a week time you know an hour while we're chatting. She just has a good sense of obtaining information and relating it. When she edits my paper, it's like she's got her own dictionary of what's right. She has like these check lists for everything—mental checklists. Another friend that just moved to LA my old roommate Quincy an African American, he's very free in his writing and very artsy style. No rules what so ever, but he used to do poems and stuff. He was big into art. His uncle's Clarence Clemmons from the E Street Band, so he's got it in his family. He used to write stuff—lyrics. He had a good way of expressing it. That was the only other person that I was awed by.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** That's funny. Coming back to school, I try to write papers if allowed the same way I would talk because it seems that that's more easily understood depending on who I'm writing to. I think the language in general amongst people is gotten pretty slack. I mean you see that in the halls. It's almost scary the way slang has taking over, and I do incorporate it into my writing. I always have to make it understandable. Now if I have this research paper done, I find myself correcting myself every line.

**Question:** What are you correcting?

**Answer:** The slang and the way...very lax words.

**Researcher's Statement:** Very informal.

**Answer:** Yeah very informal words, but it seems to me when you read a paper like that, if I'm looking to a magazine and I find an article that it's written like that, I find it to be a little more hooking than something.... You know my reading level might not be as high as whose it's intended for, but when I find something I can understand, I stick to it. When I find something of a non-fiction that's written a little lower level, it's much better to understand. Written with slang or something I might not understand. You find a lot of journals directed towards kids and magazines—especially like anti-smoking campaigns and stuff. It would be a little more informal, and I think it works in a sense,

but I definitely write informally, and I try to write a little more scholarly in my papers, but I do talk the way I speak. It's getting pretty bad.

**Question:** Does that difference in your language use at home and at school affect your confidence in your ability to read or write?

**Answer:** It doesn't affect my confidence because I feel I've distinguished between them. You know some people lose track. Altogether, I do try to learn new words. Every now and then, I get joked by my friends for using big words sometimes, and I like to harp on them—use them out of context, but I know the difference and I know when it's a good time and when it's not a good time.

**Question:** What about the family? You mentioned the differences between school language and the language with your friends. Is your language use at home very different from your language use at school?

**Answer:** Yes, when I'm around my family. I live with a family of six in a house. Language isn't always proper when you try to get things in order.

**Question:** It's similar language use with your friends?

**Answer:** Similar with friends. My parents are pretty open. They realize I have friends over, so it's kind of fallen off the formal scale.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Well, I'm trying to think of an event that would motivate me without an assignment. Truthfully, some of the assignments Ms. Jellig assigned for us in English 111—the free writing, the journals. I had no problems. I would write them before she told us. Somewhere I had freedom. If I have an assignment or if I have freedom and it's my opinion, non-research, I would write until my hand fell off.

**Question:** What is it about that? What is it about the free writing? Yes, you don't have the rules, but something is driving you to write vs. not at all. For instance if you feel motivated to write in your journals, what is it about that journal writing that you think compels you?

**Answer:** I think its imagery. Like if it's on a past experience it's easy. If there are colorful images, I think I can put it to paper pretty well. If it's an opinion, it can be mine. I'm going to give my sharp opinion. Research...research is done. I don't understand why I have to write a paper on something I look at the Internet and there are 7.000. You know it's done. It's there. It's boring. I had 400-500 topics—printouts, and I had looked over them all and none of it excited me. I think some of the researches it's already been done. Your opinion's not going to change a thing. It's a dead end to me. If maybe if I found something that I wanted to change people's minds, which I haven't yet something I've written on, I would be able to do that, but if I can come up with some imagery.... I did one on parking tickets at the beach. I did a little research on it. That interests me because I have battled with them, and when I was writing the paper, every thing I wrote was from memory or I saw it new, and that was probably the easiest one to write, but some research is pretty generic to write. I did mine on L.A. police chases and how they should be stopped, but once I got into it and saw how many people have written and all the opinions were there, it became non-appealing anymore.

**Question:** So what are some things then that you would write in your journals for instance?

**Answer:** About...some of the journals were about a book you've read.

**Researcher's Statement:** Very personal.

**Answer:** Yeah very, very personal experiences. Who you'd have dinner with, and I'd write about my family. It's just easy and given that freedom I like to write about it.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** What discourages me is when you have something written out of my reading level and very scholarly and its formatted right, I kind of get lost. It'll discourage me real quick. If I can say something on my terms, it's a lot easier. That and just stuff that's been done. Like I said before if it's a pretty broad topic. Other than that though, sometimes deadlines discourage me. If you have to have something done right, I don't want to do it. That's how I used to be in high school. I would cram and cram. I would worry so much about it, and I would worry more about the deadline than the actual work. If I would of just sat down and done the work, it would have been easy. Deadlines and research, that all is kind of discouraging.

**Researcher's Statement:** But the deadlines are meant to motivate.

**Answer:** It's funny how that happens, but I never had any dead lines on any of my journals. It became something I wanted to do. I was pretty closed- minded too before, and I'm trying to be a little more open.

John, Student # 11

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** At Greenwood High School. Yes I did in the summer of 2001.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES   X   NO       .

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Not really.

**Question:** How is it that it doesn't surprise you?

**Answer:** I have confidence I could do better but, I do less and I keep on thinking I could do better than that and the next time try harder.

**Question:** And still your confidence is greater than your performance?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Do you have any idea why your confidence isn't matching your performance?

**Answer:** I'm not studying like I should, or I should study a little bit harder or find a new way to study.

**Question:** Has anybody ever pointed out the things that you could do or explain to you why that difference may be happening?

**Answer:** Yeah, like my writing. Some of my teachers say after I'm done writing that paper I should read it out loud, so I can hear my mistakes.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I can think of a teacher, Ms. Green. She said that I know what I'm supposed to do. I can get it down. It's just that it's the learning the commas and putting wrong words in past tense with present tense words.

**Question:** How long ago were you with Ms. Green? Was this a high school teacher or a college teacher?

**Answer:** A college teacher English 03.

**Question:** Can you think of anything memorable in your high school years about an English teacher that might of explained how your confidence level is so high?

**Answer:** (Hesitation)

**Question:** What was high school English like for you?

**Answer:** In the beginning, it was kind of easy, but when I got to 12<sup>th</sup> grade English when I started learning British stuff, it kind a got harder.

**Question:** You mean the literature?

**Answer:** Yeah the literature.

**Question:** What was hard for you in the literature class?

**Answer:** Well when I got the British, I kind a well I wrote some down, and I kind a thought it would be correct and it wasn't. It's hard to understand that something knew for me.

**Question:** So the reading was the hardest part or the writing or both?

**Answer:** I'd just say they both were.

**Question:** Was there anything memorable about one of your teachers that you can think of that might explain the high confidence that you have in spite of the difficulties you are having?



**Answer:** I'd say yeah.

**Question:** Can you think of anything in particular that a teacher might of said or done?

**Answer:** One teacher said, she said that I get the point when I'm writing, but sometimes my spelling I'm bad with spelling. She said I should go to the writing center or get a word speller.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** I'd say my mother cause she pounded on me all the time. She expected nothing but the best and nothing less.

**Question:** How did she do that in reading and writing specifically? She probably wants you to do your best in school in general, but can you think of how she might of supported you in reading and writing?

**Answer:** She told me read books. Don't read any stupid book you don't like. Read something that you could gradually you like, and you can keep on reading.

**Question:** What about writing? Did she make you feel supported in writing?

**Answer:** Yeah. She encouraged me to write; keep a journal.

**Question:** Did you keep a journal? She encouraged you to do so?

**Answer:** Yeah. (Chuckled).

**Question:** Why did you keep the journal?

**Answer:** Really, truth is I thought it was stupid, and like some days I don't want to look back at my life. Just wanted to die.

Friends                                      YES/HOW           NO   X

Teachers YES/HOW   X   NO       

**Answer:** Well, the teachers' keep on telling me I could do better. They give me names which teacher's to see that could help me—tutors.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW        NO   X  

**Answer:** I was never in a club.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW        NO   X  

**Answer:** Well, I go to church, but I keep to myself.

Other YES/HOW        NO   X  

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES        NO   X   EXPLAIN

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES   X   NO       

**Answer:** Thoreau.

**Question:** What is it about him that you admire?

**Answer:** Well, I think he was good writer.

**Question:** Where did you encounter Perot?

**Answer:** In English 11 high school.

**Question:** Can you remember anything specific about him?

**Answer:** It was a long time ago.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language

use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yes. I'd say with family and friends I probably use more slang, but in school I try to use proper English. When I write, I try to use proper English, so the reader can understand what I'm saying.

**Question:** Sometimes we use the word slang to mean informal language. In that informal language, do you also use an African American dialect?

**Answer:** Sometimes I do; sometimes I don't. I have to be careful which words I use.

**Question:** How do you make the decision as to when you're going to use the dialect with your family and friends?

**Answer:** Just depending who I'm with.

**Question:** When would you use your dialect?

**Answer:** Like for slang I probably would use it around my cousins or relatives around my age, and for people who are older like my mother. My aunts, uncles, and my father, I'll use proper English.

**Question:** Does that difference in language use with some of your family and friends affect, influence your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Not really.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** I'd say yes. Like I get an idea in my head. I just like to write it down.

**Question:** In a journal sense?

**Answer:** I'd make to a story type or something like.

**Question:** So you like creating stories?

**Answer:** Yes and reading but if a book says something about fiction or a word name on it, I'll look at it and start reading the first page. If I feel like it, I'll keep on reading.

**Question:** What are some things that would make you like the book after you've read the first page?

**Answer:** I have to say it has to be something with action in it. It has to be with a...it can be something with a memoir about a person's life or somebody's culture.

**Question:** So if you find a book you open it up, it has a topic that interests you then you would continue to read?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** If you have an idea that you wanted expressed, you'd do it in a story form. Do you feel motivated by anything in particular for school writing or reading? Because both of those things you mentioned are sort of things you would do outside of school. In school is there anything that motivates you to read?

**Answer:** I'd say narrations, illustrations.

**Question:** Those things would make you want to write?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** I'd say if somebody asks me to write a story about my life, I like no. Some days I did in my life I don't want to remember.

**Question:** Discouraging you would be talking about your personal life?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** What else would discourage you from reading?

**Answer:** If I'm not in the mood to read. If I don't have that feeling, I have a high chance I might fall asleep and it's supposed to be good.

**Researcher's Statement:** So if you're tired or you're bored and you want to fall asleep then of course then you just don't want to read the book.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Anything else that you can think of that discourages you from reading and writing? Can you think of high school? What was it like in high school? You mentioned Perot, so you were very impressed by him during your reading. Can you think of things in high school that might have discouraged you from reading?

**Answer:** I'd say when I was in 12<sup>th</sup> grade English 11, that's when all the British literature it kind a got me like reading all this stuff as far as a British point of view. It kind a got me bored.

**Question:** Can you tell me why? What was hard about reading that British point of view? Why didn't it speak to you?

**Answer:** To me it sounded boring, made no sense. Just had no kind a...looking forward to. Like to me I think the Great Gatsby is a good book to read or Mice and Men, but just reading like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, I think that was a boring book.

**Researcher's Statement:** It's good that you remembered those names. They really stayed with you.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** What was it about those two books that you found motivating to you?

**Answer:** Well, they way Gatsby was this rich man. This other guy who lived next store to him he was kind a stuck in the middle between two different people. One man liked this other woman, and he's keeping quiet, so he gets towed around.

**Researcher's Statement:** So you were drawn in to the story.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Researcher's Statement:** That kept you reading; whereas, the other one you mentioned is one that you didn't feel connected to.

**Answer:** Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

**Question:** That one you didn't feel connected to is there something in particular that you can remember about that book that you didn't really want to talk about?

**Answer:** Well, there was two people going around who's a man Dr Jekyll. Him and his personal life going around and killing people. To me they don't make no sense how you can't tell the two people apart. You go in one door and they come in and out the same house, but people say they don't know him, and but you don't see them together at the same time.

**Question:** And of course this is a book that you've discussed in school?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** So even when you went through discussions and you understood, it just didn't appeal to you?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Did you read the book from cover to cover?

**Answer:** Yes I did.

**Question:** Is there any time that you remember not wanting to read the book entirely?

**Answer:** Many times.

**Question:** So you read Jekyll and Hyde because you felt it was important to read for an assignment?

**Answer:** Yeah. It was an assignment the teacher told us to read, so I read it.

**Question:** So now in your personal life when you have the freedom to choose to read, is there anything that makes you not want to read? Do you read a lot?

**Answer:** Yeah. High school got me started on reading a lot more.

**Question:** So you're reading now?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** So you read for assignments as well as...?

**Answer:** For personal.

Reference Back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Questions

**Question:** I want to go back to the very second question that I asked you before. When we look at the writing performance and the writing self-confidence, could you remember a little bit about your placement test? Do you have any sense as to why it might have been so low in comparison to your confidence? You said in your question it didn't surprise you.

**Answer:** No, it didn't surprise me.

**Researcher's Statement/Request:** It didn't. So I'd like to hear a little bit more about why it didn't surprise you.

**Answer:** Well, it didn't surprise me because with the placement test I figured well it was in the morning, so in the first session I was the last to person finish. When she gave me

the paper to write about, something about casino, again I was like well, so I figured my scores would be low. I mean I was in a rush and unprepared.

**Question:** The topic you chose was casinos?

**Answer:** It was the only topic I had.

**Question:** So you didn't have a choice of topics?

**Answer:** Yeah. It was about gambling.

**Question:** Do you know anything about gambling and casinos?

**Answer:** Well, I just did a part like the good part and the fun part and the bad side of gambling.

**Question:** Then there was another part to the test in the computer. Did you do it in the computer part?

**Answer:** The reading. It was periods and past tense and commas.

**Question:** So you think the placement test was low because you were late, you were rushed, you had a topic that you didn't know much about?

**Answer:** Well, I was just unprepared for it.

**Question:** But your confidence is still high. Sometimes when people are not doing well they'll say, "Well, I don't know if I'm going to do that well. Where is it that your confidence you have come from?"

**Answer:** Something inside me saying I can do better. It's in my heart—don't give up.

**Question:** Where does it come from?

**Answer:** Well, I'm a Christian, so I believe it comes from God. Not to give up, and I could do better.



**Question:** Because we went through that list of groups and I think the only person you mentioned was your mother who's a strong support...

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** ...and some teachers, but over and above that then, you think the other would be your religious faith?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Researcher's Statement:** Keeps your confidence up.

Jean, Student #130

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** East Islip, New York. 1986.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES   X   NO       .

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Well, I guess I'm surprised that I had more of a belief in my writing than I did in my reading, and it's quite the opposite.

**Question:** Why did you think that you're more confident? What makes you more confident than one than the other?

**Answer:** I don't know, and if I looked at it now, I wouldn't necessarily say I was more confident in writing than I would be reading, so I don't know if I just wasn't filling out the original survey right, or I think it was really right after I got that A. I just gotten an A on my first essay, and I guess that made me feel a little overly confident that day.

**Question:** When you gotten the placement test scores were you surprised by the placement recommendation?

**Answer:** No. I was worried about it because I hadn't taken any college classes or anything. I graduated high school so long ago, but you know I write some letters from work and stuff, so I guess maybe I feel like I had more experience in that because you know.

**Question:** Were you placed into freshman composition class?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What about the differences in the reading scores are you surprised by that?

**Answer:** I guess I'm surprised that my placement score was much higher than what I thought it would be. Yeah.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I don't know if I can relate it all the way back to high school being that it was so long ago, but again with the writing, I think I might have. I thought maybe I might have had a better confidence level because in my work I do right letters and memos a lot; whereas, in the reading, I haven't done too much reading here lately other than little baby books and kids books for the last few years because of my children. I haven't had much time to sit and read novels or much like that in a few years.

**Question:** Reflecting on your teachers, whether teachers at TCC or teachers in high school, is there anything about any of them that stands out in your mind that might be for instance an example of how a teacher helped your confidence to rise or helped it to lower?

**Answer:** Not really.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Well my mom always write to us and always encouraged reading and then my sister. She chose to help me out in school. She's older than me, so she used to help me out in school.

Friends                                  YES/HOW   X      NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Friends at work help me. You know we'd help each other  
What we were doing—report and letters and stuff.

**Question:** How do you work with them? How do they help you?

**Answer:** Proof read them and things like that and hit feedback. .

Teachers                                YES/HOW   X                        NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Well this is actually my first college course ever in high school so long ago, but so far Miss Jellig helps a lot—encourages us.

**Question:** How does she do that?

**Answer:** Setting examples and she'll show an example or something, and so we have formats and things like that.

**Question:** Anything in particular that you can think of that she did to support you or to make you feel supported?

**Answer:** Well she goes over like we have a research paper that we're working on now, and she goes over it and looks at it a little bit at a time and encourages.

**Question:** Praise?

**Answer:** Praise, yep.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Answer:** I haven't been involved in any school clubs or anything, but in our class, we do a lot of peer review, and we all talk about you know help each other out and discuss our topics and all.

**Question:** How does the group work? What do you all say, and what do you do to each other to support one another?

**Answer:** We just go over like right now we're doing our research paper, and the paper we did prior to that was an argument paper, so we'll talk about a topic and other people will give us pro's and con's of it and try to act like the person who's against the topic or whatever, so we can make sure we explore all the angles.

**Question:** So you get along well with the people in the group?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Do they ever say anything that you don't like?

**Answer:** Well sometimes. Not necessarily that we don't like, but I know sometimes when you have people, we try and have at least two or three different people who'll look at your paper. They might make corrections on it, but you don't necessarily agree with you know but other than that nothing major.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** My friend Julie that I worked with who's never had any college experience or anything, but I admire her because without any experience or formal training, she's really good. She's the person that everybody goes to ask the questions, and "Is this right?" or "Did I do this right?" and everything else, so on the much lower level, I'd be with her.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO X EXPLAIN

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** No really, no.

**Researcher's Statement:** Tell me a little more about how it's similar.

**Answer:** I don't really use a whole lot of slang or anything. It may not be quite as proper I guess maybe if I'm writing things, but I don't use different words that I wouldn't use when I'm writing.

**Question:** Does that sameness of language use affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I guess it will probably contribute to my confidence because it's not like I have to think a whole new vocabulary just to write something. I'm writing using the same words that I use to speak.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Other than English 111? I haven't read an actual novel or book anything like that other than short articles and magazines in quite some time.

**Question:** What would make you read those?

**Answer:** I think that the whole going to school just learning and having more time to myself is motivating me to learn more. Just to experience more outside of my own little realm of things.

**Question:** Did something change that you have more time to yourself now?

**Answer:** Well, no. My kids are in daycare now 'cause I'm in school, so I have more time to myself, but I work and go to school, so it's different time anyway. No, I think it's just an attitude, and I just decided that I need to start doing something for myself.

**Question:** When did you decide that you have time to read? What kinds of things do you like to read?

**Answer:** Well, I used to read some mystery novels and things like that. Some of those girly books—girl kind of things, but now it's mainly.... Well for a while there I was investigating in a new career and things like that so I guess kind of research type stuff, but I haven't gotten into any other books. A lot of it here lately is just research and learning experience and things like that.

**Question:** What about writing? You've mentioned a lot about reading and what motivates you to read such as wanting to find out a research topic or to read for entertainment, but what motivates you to write?

**Answer:** I don't do much writing other than in class, other than writing to friends and things. Okay my work related stuff, but I don't do poetry or anything like that. I don't keep a journal or anything.

**Question:** So you'd be motivated to write if your work is demanding it?

**Answer:** Right, if it was needed for work or something.

**Question:** You also mentioned friends. How would you be motivated to write to friends?

**Answer:** I'm down here for military and my family is all in New York, and the friends that I do meet here eventually they all go somewhere else, so I'll write letters to keep in touch and things like that or emails and that such.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Well as long it's a casual type of thing. The formality of it all other than like in class where I have to, but I haven't had the desire to do anything formal other than just casual stuff and when I have to for work. I still don't understand where I got that belief that I was so good at writing because overall I'm not so sure about it.

**Question:** What are you not so sure about?

**Answer:** For work stuff, I'm pretty confident in my writing for work because I've done that and had the experience with that, but it's just with the essays and things I haven't done stuff like that in 15 years since high school. Like I said I've been getting A's, so I

guess I'm somewhat all right on it but you know with a little work. I just...it's just the fear of the unknown or not knowing whether I can do it so it's discouraging.

**Researcher's Statement:** A reason for you to feel discouraged is being afraid that you're not going to perform.

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** Anything else that just stops you in your tracks? Can you think of anything in high school for instance that makes you not want to read or write?

**Answer:** With the writing even in this class to pick the topic it's tough. You get that writer's block type thing before you even start not know where to go, so I think that's kind of a little discouraging. It takes me a few days just to come with a topic and then once I come up with a topic, it seems to come up all right, but that's a little discouraging choosing the topic. To make sure it's a good topic and feel to enough write about it and all.

**Question:** Of course choosing a topic then you have to figure out what to write about, but at some point when you do chose the topic, what is the process like for you then in writing? Do you have writer's block often?

**Answer:** Well, the first few essays that I had to do in this class, we got to chose the own topic and we were writing from our own view, and the last few we've had to write from outside person's view or like the research paper. That's a little bit harder for me to come up with. When I'm writing my own opinion on something, it's easier to come up with, but when you have to do research or write from a view that other people might see then it's a little trickier.

**Question:** But you get it done?



**Answer:** I get it done.

Joan, Student #140

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** I attended high school in Virginia Beach. No I got my GED. I left high school in '87.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** As far as the confidence, yes it does.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** No because I feel that I'm a better reader than writer. I thought I've always been a lousy writer 'cause I read more than I write.

**Question:** So you feel that your reading scores should have been higher?

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** And you don't have any idea why?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** In terms of the writing, there is a gap again between your confidence and your writing. You're not surprised by that because?

**Answer:** Because writing is just one of those things where I get infuriated when I see okay I gotta do an assignment an essay or someth'n. Punctuation, I'm like okay am I supposed to put a comma. If it wasn't for spell check and grammar check you know if I had to do it on my own, it would take me days.

**Question:** So, then how is it that you're so confident in your ability?

**Answer:** I guess because I was always been told that nothing beats the best, but I try. I feel like if I put my best foot forward then I can do anything.

**Question:** Where do you think that attitude comes from?

**Answer:** Like because of life itself—things that I've gone through. I mean I feel like being as though I got married at 16, I'm still married. I guess that's one thing. Both my grandmothers instilled in me, you know you tried it you stepped out there. Do your best. Give it your all. If you fall, okay fine, but get back up and do it again. It was like when I came to enroll here, you don't know it took a lot for me to do that and then once I got going, it was like okay. I was okay. When I went to admission's office, the secretary can even tell you I cried. I was like I don't believe I'm doing this. I'm here with all these high school kids then once I got in I was okay.

**Question:** So was it your grandmother you said who has this influence on you?

**Answer:** Yes. I was raised by my grandmothers and my father.

**Question:** Both grandmothers?

**Answer:** Yes and my father. My mom abandoned me when I was some three months old.

**Researcher's Statement:** They have certainly done a good job because for you to have that courage in spite of what the circumstances are says a lot about you.

**Answer:** Thank you.

**Researcher's Statement:** So you have that same attitude when it comes to reading and writing if your form doesn't quite match.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Mr. Hargrove. He was my English 111, and I had told him that I was not good at writing. He told me...he just made his class more fun with the techniques and the way he describes something and the way he went about putting us in groups. Mixing us up and we all kind of got to know different things about each other, and we wrote about different things. So with him doing that, it was like, like I said technique that he used that's what got me through. That's what took me through his class and even when I felt okay I can't do this. This is frustrating. I don't understand anything you're saying. I mean he took me to the side and gave me that one-on-one attention, and he said to me, "Look you can do this." I even got to the point where I had to e-mail him from home and say this is what I've come up with, and he would look at my unfinished product and he'll say, "Okay you're on the right track." Do this. Do that. And that's how I made it through.

**Question:** Any teachers in high school or middle school that you can remember?

**Answer:** Ms. Harris. She was my English teacher, and the reason why I remembered her was because we had to do a paper in reading in front of the class, and she gave me an A because of my presentation. I remember her telling me she said, "You're very good orally." But on paper she told me, "I had to give you a C on the writing because of the punctuation, grammar and..." you know. She gave me an A for my presentation.

**Question:** Do you think that helped to make you more confident then?

**Answer:** Yeah. That did. I mean I've never had a problem orally speaking, but if I have to put it on papers, like I lock up. I come out of it but I come out of it like okay. I'm not sure this is it, but here we are.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** My husband. My husband is in the military and he's A.B.H. He's air. He's a chief, and he has to do evals, and you know in the military they have like strict and everything has to be in order. He uses those techniques on me, and that's another reason why I got through Mr. Hargrove's class because I would email him my papers and he would correct them. When he would correct them, he would always say something like, "This is so simple. Just think about the verbs" and this and that and I am like okay. I didn't know that this particular word was a verb at the time you know, so he's been right there during the whole time.

**Question:** Was he deployed when he was emailing you back?

**Answer:** Yes. He just came back the 29<sup>th</sup> of May. He's been a big help.

**Question:** Sometimes people don't like their family members looking at their work because they feel they're being criticized. Was that a problem for you?

**Answer:** Yes. I was like that when I was in Ms. Green's class. My first semester here and I had to repeat her class because I just was not there and that was because my husband was willing to help me, but I didn't want him to help me because I thought he was too critical. So when I did her class the second time, I took another teacher and I

passed it and I passed it with my husbands help. The reason why I'm laughing is because if he was here he'll be like you could have made it easier, so the next two semesters of English he was there.

Friends YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Yes. My best friend, she helped me with my final paper.

**Question:** How did she do that?

**Answer:** The topic that I chose was a broad topic, and she helped me narrow it down. She was like, "You got stuff everywhere." So she kind a helped me narrow it down and helped me stick to that one particular topic instead of using that topic, talking about it, and then talking about things that come along with it, and that's how she helped me.

**Question:** So you didn't mind the criticism again?

**Answer:** No, I didn't mind. Not from her 'cause that was a girlfriend, so that was okay.

Question: Teachers YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Yeah, Mr. Hargrove and yeah Ms. Harris.

**Researcher's Statement:** Repeat again why you felt supported by these particular individuals.

**Answer:** Because with Ms. Harris, like she said, my presentation was good, and she told me where I was wrong in all my writing, but again I had to step out there. And with Dr. Hargrove, it was his technique. It was the way he did it and his one-on-one.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X

**Answer:** Besides prayers? I mean they're always supportive of me in that aspect but not as far as my papers or whatever.

**Question:** So these are the family members or other people in your church?

**Answer:** Other people and my friends but I go to church with my choir members because the majority of us go here, so we try to keep each other going. When it's mid-term time, everybody's saying, "Okay you all let's pray. We got mid terms this week." in choir rehearsal on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

**Question:** Do you do any reading and writing in your church?

Skipped question

**Answer:** No, I don't do any reading or writing. We have sing and praise team also.

Other                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_      NO \_\_\_\_

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well?      YES X      NO \_\_\_\_      EXPLAIN

**Answer:** That would be Maya Angelou. I just did a little thing with my daughter who's doing a presentation on a Wednesday for her graduation, and one of her poems "While the Birdcage Sings," and I did a little mind-type thing with her. That's what we're currently practicing on. I like her because the way she expresses herself. It's different and it's in a way where you can visualize what she's saying. I didn't really come to grips with that until about a couple months ago when I went to the poetry café and this gentleman was speaking and everything that he said was so clear that you can see it. You know and that's what I gathered from her, and I was like okay I've been noticing this you know. When I've heard her speak and by listening to the tape over and over, I'm like okay this is the same thing I was experiencing with the poetry café a couple months ago.

**Question:** And the only time you encountered Maya Angelou was through your daughters?

**Answer:** No. When she did the speech, her first speech, it was a while back. I can't even remember the speech.

**Question:** Was that when President Clinton's inauguration?

**Answer:** Yes. I mean I knew she was out there, but you know how you just...someone doesn't really catch you until you know you're starting it either gets interested in something else. You know otherwise I probably would flip the station and say okay I'm not into that right now. When you start to change and want to do something different, you start to open yourself up to a lot of different things.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_X EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I can't think of anyone right now.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yes, very much so. Well with my family with my husband, it's more like conversation. With my children, it's either or conversation or I'm chastising, reprimanding, and with my friends, I'm more explanatory, expressive. It's totally different.

**Question:** Do you use an African American dialect or any other dialect when you're speaking with your family and friends?

**Answer:** My family thinks I do. My father tells me I've lost my southern accent, so I don't know 'cause I've been here for so long, and going back home, it's like okay you're so proper.

**Question:** Where is home?

**Answer:** Memphis, Tennessee.

**Question:** So they're telling you that you're speaking differently?

**Answer:** Yes. They tell that all the time.

**Question:** Where do you think the change is coming from?

**Answer:** From me being here.

**Question:** In college?

**Answer:** Yeah. Totally different because my vocabulary has even expanded because when my husband came back, I used a word on him. I can't even remember what it was and he was like, "Oh college girl. Your third semester and you're just excited," and I was like, "Yeah!"

**Question:** So how do you feel when your family in Tennessee says that you're different?

**Answer:** We'll see when they say I'm different; I'm different all the way around. Everything is different for them, so when they say it's like okay.

**Question:** Because you're happy with the change?

**Answer:** Yeah. Exactly.

**Question:** You don't have any conflicts with your being different in speech?



**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Does that sameness then of the way you're speaking now and speaking in school affect your confidence in your ability to read and write? In other words, if you perceive your language to be similar in and out of school, does that help your self-confidence?

**Answer:** It helps my self-confidence, and I'll try it but putting it on paper. (Laugh).

**Question:** So speech is still a hard thing in writing?

**Answer:** Yes. Definitely. I think I'm gonna die with that one.

**Question:** So it's not getting much better?

**Answer:** Yeah it is, but it's like I'm taking baby steps. I guess my biggest thing is I don't like rejection. I don't like to hear participant's name you did this or you know, so I'm like okay I'm sorry. Then I'll go back and I'll say alright you get it together 'cause I mean I can start out saying I can do this, and I'll get out there, but then you come back and say this, this, this. I kind a shut down.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** I can honestly say since I started back in college, the thing that motivated me was my sons. I have twins. I have 14 year-old twins, and one of them are going to attend Lands Town Technology Academy. When he told me he said, "It's affiliated with TCC." He said, "So that means I'm going to be taking English classes on your level. So one day when I had a paper due, he actually sat there, and couple of times he came to class with me, and I was really impressed by my son knowing what we were already doing on a college level and he was like, "This is easy." So he's like, "Ma, you have to do this. Read this that." So now it's like I'm starting to read more, and with him going

into journalism and doing a lot of different things he always saying, “Mom did you read this? Did you read that?” He’s always bringing me something. Now we have this little thing where okay we’re gonna to read a book a month. We’re gonna read the same book along with my girlfriend and her daughter and then we gonna see we can talk about the book the best, so it turned into a little game.

**Researcher’s Statement:** Your own book club.

**Answer:** Yeah. Basically. And that was the thing that we did while my husband was gone.

**Question:** You mentioned the motivation to read coming primarily from your son and informing this little community in your family of readers. What about writing? Does anything make you want to write?

**Answer:** Only when I’m upset about something. You know I can write a letter; I’m not pleased with this.

**Question:** So you write letters to businesses or group?

**Answer:** Yeah. My father got married for the fifth time and that disappointed me ‘cause it’s always been me, him, and my two grandmothers, and both of my grandmothers passed on, and it was just me and him, and he didn’t tell me. So I was just like livid, upset with him, so I sat down and wrote a six-page letter. I did spell-check and punctuation so many times ‘cause he is a business major, so I knew he would call me and say, “You can’t even spell! You’re fussing at me,” you know. It’s the only time that I really feel motivated to write. Other than that, I will read, but I’m just intimidated with writing. And I would like to get that writer’s block removed, but it’s pretty difficult.

**Researcher's Statement:** Sounds like your determination to succeed is carrying you along very well.

**Answer:** Yes, and I guess that's because of my major. I know that I have to communicate verbally.

**Question:** What is your major?

**Answer:** Forensics. And I have to do a lot of dictations and writing, and that's what I really want to do, so I have to achieve that, so I'm trying to get passed that.

**Researcher's Statement:** Sounds like you're doing a lot of the right things especially with your children.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** No. Nothing discourages me from reading. Writing is errors. I don't like those red flags. Don't give me a red flag 'cause if you do, I'll shut down.

**Question:** What do you think makes the grammar and the punctuation so hard for you to master?

**Answer:** I guess it's just being unsure you know. You're not sure if you're using it in the correct way.

**Question:** So those rules, you haven't felt that you've mastered the rules?

**Answer:** Yes. Right. And I always have to go back and break my sentences down and look at the rules.

**Question:** Were you taught those rules in high school and middle school?

**Answer:** I don't even remember. I mean because with school when I finished the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, I didn't return from a senior year because I've gotten married. I can't remember if

we did the rules or not, but since I've enrolled in college and did the 03, 04, 05 and 06, it's like I'm starting to get back on track. My memory's starting to come back to me and say okay, all right. I remember some of it but not all of it, but that's one of my most difficult things, and it drives me nuts. It really does.

**Question:** But you've spent a few semesters and you've taken developmental classes, so you've had some review of the rules. You think it's getting a little better, but it's still not at the place where you feel confident?

**Answer:** Right. And that's what I'm working towards. I want to be able to hand this paper in and say okay, this is my finished product. It's like when I get ready and hand it in, I don't know, I just get butterflies, and I feel like I got to go back and check it again, and that's what I found myself doing.

**Question:** When you first started college here, do you think that you were aware of the difference between standard English and the way you were speaking in your community? Do you think you came to school recognizing that you were studying standard English?

**Answer:** Yes and no because most of the time when you speak it's totally different from writing, and then when you write, it's totally different from speaking. You know using the words in certain forms when you're speaking, it's not always proper when you're writing, so that's where my difficulties lie. So I've learned a little bit, but there's more for me to learn. I just don't want to always have that English book next to me where correct grammar usage, correct punctuation to refer back to every time I have something to write.

**Researcher's Statement:** Yes. I mean never mind what level you're writing you're always going to want that book nearby.

**Answer:** Yeah that's what I've found out. Exactly. So that's one of the things that I'm really trying to work towards.

**Question:** And you've clearly said that you enjoy reading. What are some of the things that you read? How do you read? Do you go to the library and check out books consistently? What is it that makes you want to read?

**Answer:** I basically order my books from Black Expressions or my son.

**Question:** Are these novels or magazines?

**Answer:** No, they're novels.

**Question:** About black people?

**Answer:** Yeah. Different authors. Like authors that write about their life growing up and their family.

**Question:** Did you do that before you came to college?

**Answer:** Yeah but it wasn't a lot, but it's more now since I've been in college. Me and my daughter are doing the chapter books with Abbey chapter books, and then I have the one book with my son Priceless Wizard.

**Researcher's Statement:** It's a family of readers.

**Answer:** Yeah. They like to read a lot, and I guess that's because all four of them, all five them really. I have a stepson, but they're all different, and I have two that's out-going and two that's house hermits. There's something always for them to do.

Pam, Student #132

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** Kellam High School in Virginia Beach. Yes. 1979.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES   X   NO       .

**Answer:** I'm probably more confident now in the reading than when I actually took your placement test.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** No because I like to read and write. I was pleased with the placement scores when I got them back on the initial test. I was a little surprised that the confidence was lower.

**Question:** Any idea why between your confidence and your ability in reading?

**Answer:** No. Probably, I tend to have my confidence level tends to be lower than probably what I'm capable of doing.

**Question:** Why do you think that is?

**Answer:** I just worry too much. I've done well since I started college and even though I still worry that I'm not going to do well. I just feel like I am too old.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Well it's been a long time. I guess only English teacher that stands out is my English teacher from my senior year in high school. Her name is Mrs. Virginia Mathews, and she was very proper and treated us like we mattered I guess you can say. It was very important to her that we learn to read and write properly.

**Question:** Do you think that helped you with your self-confidence having her in the classroom?

**Answer:** Yeah possibly. She had high expectations for us.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Well when I decided to start college at 41, everyone supported me. My husband especially encouraged me to go back. My family members, brothers, told me you're smart. You can do it, so everybody has supported me in that way.

Friends                                      YES/HOW   X      NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Yes, the same way. The friends that I have, the people that I work with were all encouraging.

**Question:** Specifically, in terms of reading and writing, you shared though that your family and your friends supported you in your returning to school. But specifically in reading and writing, do you feel that in those two particular areas that you get support that you value from your friends and your family members?

**Answer:** Yeah, I do. When I write something for English composition, I'll let all of them read it and see what they think.

**Question:** Who's all?

**Answer:** Everybody at work. There's about four people in the office, I'll let each one of them read my paper and tell me what they thought and look for grammar, that kind of stuff and those types of mistakes for me.

**Question:** Where do you work?

**Answer:** I work for a construction company and then I let my mother-in-law read one of my first papers. Actually, she chopped it up. She used to be an editor for a newspaper years ago, and she chopped it all up. But then Ms. Jellig, after she read it again, she goes, "What happened to the first paper you had? That was fine." So everybody looks at it differently. It was fine; I still got an A. She was very supportive, helpful.

Teachers YES/HOW  X  NO

**Answer:** Probably Ms. Jellig, she's my most recent teacher that has anything to do with reading or writing.

**Question:** How do you think she does that?

**Answer:** She gives me good feedback. She's just encouraging. She's always telling me I'm a good student and tells me I'm doing a good job.

**Researcher's Statement:** Lots of praise.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Researcher's Statement:** That's good. Positive feedback.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW   NO  X

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW  X  NO



**Answer:** Yeah, I guess I have. Well just basically the people at church and the committees that I'm involved on. They all know that I'm back in school and they support me that way.

**Question:** Do you ever write for those groups or write with those groups?

**Answer:** Not with church. I was also on the PTA board years ago for the school that my children were at, and I was the secretary and then I was also on the board for the girl scouts.

**Question:** Did you have to write in those community groups?

**Answer:** Yes I did.

**Question:** What was the experience like then? I suppose that you felt supported because you're not sharing anything negative about it.

**Answer:** I enjoy it. I enjoy doing things like newsletters and that kind of stuff. I do that now where I work. I came up with a company newsletter, and I do that once a month.

**Question:** Do you do that yourself?

**Answer:** Yes, so I enjoy it. I like working with the computer and graphics and coming up with little articles.

**Question:** So this goes back to being in high school or your work with these committee groups? You mentioned the P.T.A.

**Answer:** The P.T.A. and girl scouts.

Other                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_      NO  X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well?      YES  X       NO \_\_\_\_\_      EXPLAIN

**Answer:** Janette Oak and I like Daniel Steele.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I enjoy the speech that Martin Luther king did his famous "I have a Dream" speech. Whenever I hear him say those words, it's very inspirational to me. He was able to put those things the way he felt and draw so many people in to his beliefs.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Not too much, I don't use a lot of slang. A lot of times I think my kids tease me; they think I'm a little too formal. I use big words that kind of stuff, but I might use more describing words maybe adjectives when I'm writing but not a whole a lot of difference.

**Question:** So does this sameness of language use affect your confidence in your ability to read and write well?

**Answer:** I don't think it decreases or increases it in any way. It just kind of keeps it at an even keel for me.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** I think people should read and write. I encourage my kids just because of the knowledge and the way you can expand on things. I love to read the paper. My husband

doesn't; he's not a reader, but if I can read, I'm always reading a magazine or a newspaper a book or something.

**Researcher's Statement:** So it's that basic love for reading that draws you.

**Answer:** Yes. My oldest daughter has the same thing. She loves to read as well, and I think it has really helped her through school since she started reading so young.

**Question:** What about writing? When do you feel motivated to write?

**Answer:** A lot of times I feel motivated when things are bothering me. I feel if I can put them down on paper....

**Question:** In the form of a journal?

**Answer:** Yes...or a letter to somebody that you never give to them or a journal. I've done a lot, and my daughter she likes...she journals too. She's in journalism in her school.

**Question:** So you're motivated to write when you're bothered by something....

**Answer:** ...that I can't say out loud or won't say out loud. I put it on paper; I feel better.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** No I don't think so. Not unless there was an article that I felt was vulgar or something that I don't think that was proper to read. Other than that, nothing specific would discourage me in reading.

**Question:** Anything discourages you from writing?

**Answer:** Well, essay exams. I hate to sit down and think of how to expand. Like say I had an essay in World War II, of course I've gotten better since I've been taking English comp 1, it helps me. No, there's nothing real particular except when I have to write.

**Question:** You are succeeding in your English classes. How do you think that's happening then because in many of the classes you're given an assignment you have to perform, so is there anything in your academic experience that you think discourages you from writing?

**Answer:** No, I don't think so. I was always one to keep journals in school too. It was just the way I dealt with what was going on in my life was to just write it down.

**Question:** So the main thing is if you're pressured to write an exam?

**Answer:** Right. If someone says you have to then it's like oh my goodness.

**Question:** What happens to you when that happens?

**Answer:** I get nervous. I get uptight thinking maybe that's why my beliefs are low here. I tend to be harder on myself than I guess I really need to. I had really done well, and I kept thinking I'm just so stupid. I'm gonna be stupid. I'm not going to pass. I've made straight A's in all my classes, so it really was unfounded. It was just worrying.

**Question:** Is it a general worry that you're just not going to pass, or when you write, is there a specific fear that you have?

**Answer:** I'm not going to say the right thing. It's not going to be worded right.

**Question:** That someone's going to judge it poorly even though you have put all your effort into it?

**Answer:** Right. Yes.

Laurie, Student #167

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** First Colonial, Virginia Beach. Yes I did. I graduated in 2001.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** No they don't. Well, I've always been very strong in English in general. It's just been something you know whereas I'm a good English student, not a very good Math student. You know, that's really my strong, my strong subject.

**Question:** So how early did you recognize your strengths?

**Answer:** Well, probably between first and second grade. I went to a private school pre-kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. I was very lucky to have a very good teacher. Just very small classrooms and I think I already had the ability but it helped develop it. You know and I was just lucky to have such good teachers.

**Question:** So, you recognized this way back as first grade you said?

**Answer:** Yes. It's been my strong subject you know pretty much straight A's in English.

**Question:** So, you think then according to what you said it's the preparation and the pre-school and kindergarten that you think helped you prepare for the first grade?

**Answer:** I definitely think it helped.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Let me think here. I had a teacher; I think it was about second grade. His name was Mr. Lello, and there was a book that he had. I don't remember the author, but it had beginnings of stories, and it had two or three sentences on each page. It would say something like, you know, it would have the very beginning to a scary story the first two sentences and then you would have to write the rest of the story. And everyone got to pick a different page on the book. And the first sentence was the first sentence of your story that was in the book. And then from there you created. So I think maybe it was my, the allowing me to create. You know, then I guess grammatically and whatnot, then I was probably pushed a little bit to refine my grammar skills. But, I think it was definitely, you know, my imagination was allowed to run wild. And I think that might have been part of it. It was enjoyable for me, so hence I latched onto it and wanted to do well.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** Yes, absolutely. Books are very big in my house. It wasn't TV or video games. It was books. My mom was always... I was always allowed to have books. If I saw a book I liked, it was mine. And the library... still a big fan of the library. I will be on my way there after I leave here. My reading was definitely supported by my family. I was allowed to read everything and anything. I had a subscription to National Geographic by age 8. Not only for the great pictures but the articles and the interesting

things. But books were definitely a big part of everything. I think you just learn so much from them.

**Question:** So do you think that it was something that your parents did beyond having the books that contributed to your feeling supported? In other words, I can think of cases in which a parent may have the books around but if the children don't feel the need to read it, then they may not. So, what was it about your parents that made you feel so supported in that effort?

**Answer:** I was read to a lot. And maybe just the fact that both my parents being educated people, just listening to them have a conversation you know. I think kids pick up a lot. And I not only learned a lot of new words but just a lot about everything by just listening. But I was definitely was read to a lot.

Friends YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Answer:** Friends can be I guess, I wouldn't really call them a support group, support as far as my education goes. More kind of a moral support, emotional support I guess, but not necessarily. I do remember a few times where I can bring writing to...you know a piece to a friends and have them look at it. And you know what do you think? I did get some good responses and some bad responses. Friends should be honest. Not too much as far as...you know, definitely more my family than my friends.

Teachers YES/HOW X NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Well, with all of my teachers there's always been a policy where you can bring a piece of writing to them at any stage in the creation process of the writing if you want them to look at it. Maybe give their thoughts. That right there is a lot of help. If you're

trying to create something and you're just stuck or you don't know how to put this into words, they can help you. All of my teachers helped me to do that.

**Question:** During school or after school?

**Answer:** I remember staying after school several times to have teachers look over papers and essays and whatnot. Because I do feel confident about my reading and writing skills, but I still want feedback. I still want somebody to say what do you think. Even sometimes I like to sometimes check myself grammatically as well because I always think there might be something I'm missing. I could of overlooked something. So, it's definitely good to have somebody look it over, and I was definitely able to go to all of my teachers for that.

**Question:** What level of your education did this happen? In high school, in elementary school, in college? When did this take place?

**Answer:** It took place mostly throughout elementary to middle school. 'Cause that's when a lot of my late elementary to middle... We were doing a lot. The work was getting harder. The papers were getting longer. It wasn't just a paragraph. It was two or three pages. Once you start getting into that, it gets a little bit more difficult.

**Question:** Did you initiate those trips to the teacher after school or did the teacher encourage you? How did you feel welcomed by the teachers after school?

**Answer:** Well, they did say if you want to bring me your paper at any time you can. You know, after school, before school, whatever, and I took advantage of it. Most of time I got good responses. You know this is very good. Trying focusing on this or this but I definitely took advantage of that.

**Question:** Of that invitation?



**Answer:** Right. Absolutely.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Answer:** Most of the organizations I was in I didn't really bring anything like that into them. I relied much more on, like I said before, teachers and family. It was just more family.

**Question:** So your school groups and clubs you clearly participated in there was no reading and writing taking place that you might have been a part of?

**Answer:** Right. Exactly. I used the skills, but it wasn't an academic thing.

**Question:** Can you think of one of the clubs you used your reading and writing skills?

**Answer:** I was in club in high school called Operation Smile. We sent a few students overseas to help some of the doctors, and we had to write up proposals to get the school to help us with that. So that was one thing where we all had to put our heads together and really have something that was good and very professional that they would take us seriously, so that we could get the funding to send these students overseas. So that was one instance I can remember.

**Question:** When you were writing for the proposal, for instance, how did the group interact in the process? Did you all give each other feedback, for instance, and what was that feedback like?

**Answer:** Absolutely. We definitely did. The proposal was...this was a few years ago. It was I believe...it was one to two pages long, and we did all participate. We each I think we took two people, and we each took a section. Each group took a section of the proposal to work on. We...from there brought everything together, and each person or

each group switched to give whatever was written down on the piece of paper to give to the other to let them look at it, for not only words that can be changed or made better but grammatically as well. That's how we kind of did it. We did it individually and then brought it all together as a group, so all of that feedback was there which again is something I'm a big fan of because having feedback from others is good. It's just like peer editing. It's a great thing.

**Question:** So, did you get anyone to go?

**Answer:** Yes, two students went to Russia. It was really great. I was glad I was a part of it.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I had my senior English teacher. His name was John Webster. He had been teaching at First Colonial since it opened, which was 36 years ago I think. And he's been there for that long. He's a wonderful person. He's actually an English teacher. He's got his masters in education. I think he's published a few journal articles. I'm not exactly sure where, but I do know he's had some writing published. He was an excellent, excellent English teacher. Definitely a great finish to my grade school years having him. He would definitely be someone that I would admire as far as a professional and someone who is an excellent writer.

**Question:** Anyone else of your race?

**Answer:** That's really all I can think of. He's the one.

**Question:** Now, this person can be somebody that you know personally or it can be someone you've heard about, read about, but not necessarily someone you know personally. Anybody else?

**Answer:** One person that I really do admire as far as not just only a writer but just a wonderful person would be Maya Angelou. She is an all around an amazing person. I don't think you can get much better than her.

**Question:** She's African American?

**Answer:** She is.

**Researcher's Statement:** And you're not.

**Answer:** Yes, that's true.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  NO  EXPLAIN

**Answer:** That would be Maya Angelou. I began learning about her of course when I was in grade school. Once I started reading some of her stuff, she's a very amazing person.

**Question:** What is it about Maya Angelou? Because I've heard this comment before from students and I'm just amazed at the impact that she seemed to have had on students during that time of study. Can you tell me what is it about her that you particularly admire? Is it the work? Is it the way she writes?

**Answer:** Well, she writes from life. She struggled. She went through some bad stuff. Where as some people would be angry and bitter, she knows why the cage bird sings. She is someone that I would aspire to be. As far as, she's not angry. She's taken her

experience and she's turned it into something positive. Not only made millions of people know who she is but write some wonderful stuff that is inspired many people.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** It's not very different. Because of my parents I must be well spoken. Must not use certain words. Must not, you know, you don't say ain't in my house. And my little brother is still learning that. As far as when you're writing a paper, you do use certain language. You do say certain things properly instead of saying *it's* you say *it is*. Simple things like that, but I would say that there is a slight difference. Not a major difference though.

**Question:** Does that sameness of language use affect your confidence and ability to read and write? Does it influence it in any way?

**Answer:** I think if anything it helps it because I think the more educated and well spoken you are, the easier it's going to be for you to put your thoughts down on paper. Even if it isn't your thoughts, but if you're writing a research paper, to put the information where it should be and correct grammatically and how it should sound. How everything should be. I think if you live it then it's easier for you to do it.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** As far as reading goes, I'm always on the lookout for a good book. I'm not always looking at the best-seller list, but I am at the library. I am looking for something.

It doesn't have to be a fictional book. Anything that looks interesting to me, but as far as...I'm motivated to read by looking. I go out and hunt for books. If I see something that I like, it motivates me to read it.

**Question:** How do you decide it's something that you like?

**Answer:** I try my very hardest not to judge a book by its cover. Some things will jump out at you at the library and some things won't, so I really try and take my time. I flip through a book. I sit down. I'll sit down in the aisle and look at and see if it looks interesting. Read the inside of it and maybe the first chapter depending if it passes my test or not. That's probably how I do it. I don't just look at it and say no because you can't do that. You might be missing something good.

**Question:** What is it in reading then does for you? Why do you desire it as much as you do?

**Answer:** Well, I think anybody who's ever read a book knows that you can kind of escape from everything if you're reading something you're interested in. I kind of alternative between...I don't read too many fictional books, but I do read some. And the ones I do read you can really escape. If you sit down and read and the next thing you know it's two hours later and you've been interested in the book the whole time then there goes your two hours. If you're waiting in line, you've got a book and there you are. So, that's definitely some of it.

**Question:** What motivates you to write?

**Answer:** Well, I keep a journal. I've actually kept one for quite some time now.

**Question:** How frequently do you write?

**Answer:** At least two or three times a week. And my life motivates me to write basically. I don't want to forget anything, so I've kept a journal since I was probably about nine or ten. My mom I guess sort of motivated me to do that. She bought me a hardbound journal, and she said you should write everything down in here. She said that you're going to treasure this when you get older; this will be your journal that you will keep very safe because it's your childhood. I think now...I'm 20 years old now. Now it's even more precious to me because I'm getting a little older now and I'm starting to understand what she meant. When I was nine and ten, I didn't understand what she meant. Now I do. I'm very glad I still kept the journal when I was that age. I'm lucky I listened to her, and mom's right. My life does motivate me to write. Like I said I don't want to forget anything. I don't want to forget the way I was feeling as this time or that time. I want to be able to look back on the good and the bad and kind of see what it was.

**Question:** Have you kept the journals all this time?

**Answer:** Absolutely. I've got about five journals that are hardbound journals that I've kept very safe.

**Question:** Do you share them with any one?

**Answer:** I don't. No. It's just kind of my thing. It's nothing incredibly personal, but it's just my life. You know, what I did. What I did that day.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** I wouldn't say anything discourages me. Maybe, just the fact that I'm working and going to school and might not have as much time as I would like to do that, but that might be I guess something that would discourage me. As far as anything negative, no.

**Question:** When you're writing for school, is there anything discouraging you from wanting to write or from actually writing?

**Answer:** I've have had writer's block before as everyone has. School papers are harder to create than just your own writing with your own motivation. Well, you're being told to write. You have to write on this topic. You have to write about this and sometimes it's hard to just sit down and say I 'm going to write this paper right now. That can be a little bit difficult at times. I can sometimes I have to just kind of sit there and really think about it. A technique I learned when I was probably in fourth or fifth grade would be the brainstorming technique when you would just write phrases or words on a piece of paper. That helped you to kind of jog sentences and things in your brain that can kind of help everything come together, and I've used that technique ever since because it really works. It's the simplest of things but it really does work. It is hard having to just sit down and write on a topic.

**Question:** Could you talk a little bit about a book you would not want to read? What is it about that book that would discourage you from wanting to read more after you've previewed it?

**Answer:** That's kind of a hard one because I've never really thought about that. I just kind of think, well... I just don't want to read it. There aren't too many subjects that I'm just not interested in, but books that are.... I guess I want a book to grab me. Just like you would any book. Maybe if I see something that's not, that's just kind of dragging on, that's not so much a.... I give it a chance to grab my intention. Maybe two or three chapters or whatnot, and by then if I'm just really not following, uninterested, and I'm kind of just speaking of a fiction book at this point then I probably won't pick it.

I guess there has to be something there to make me say, oh, I want read it. I want to find out what happens next.

**Question:** So, when you go looking for books you're looking for, not necessarily fiction or non-fiction, you're looking for all types of writing?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** So, what about non-fiction? Is there anything about a non-fiction book that might discourage you from reading it?

**Answer:** Well, I'm very interested in mostly all subjects. Lately, I've been looking at a lot of psychology books, and those are a little hard to follow sometimes. When you're sitting down.... When you're reading something like that you really have to pay attention. You really have to try and follow. You have to go slow. And sometimes I guess with some books, I can't go that slow and can't follow that well. And that might be I think that's part of what might discourage me from picking a book if I'm a quarter the way through the book and I have retained nothing.

**Question:** What made you think of psychology?

**Answer:** Well, I'm actually taking my first psychology class this semester. Actually, it's very interesting. I'm really enjoying it. So, I kind of just wanted to read into it a little more. I'm actually taking the second. I'm taking psych 202 this summer, but in between I kind of just want to....

**Researcher's Statement:** Read more of the textbook.

**Answer:** Right. Exactly. The textbook isn't very interesting, and I just went to the library to try and you know, a little bit more. Maybe get a little more than what is in there. I checked out a couple of books and took them home. I think out of the four I



checked out I brought two back early. It was because I couldn't follow them. I don't know whether I checked out the worst of the worst as far as being able to understand it. I'm wondering whether it was just meant to be a textbook. Just for information. But definitely, it wasn't a reading book, nor was the other one I got. That kind of discouraged me from reading it. It was just the fact that it was very hard to follow. I recognized a few of the terms and that's what kind of kept me going within the book. And then it's started getting very strange and I'm like well this is probably like way beyond what I'm doing right now. So, maybe I should just wait a little while. So, that's what kind of discouraged me from those two.

Nikki, Student # 37

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** In Washington Dc. Yes. 1990.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_, but not the writing.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Yes, probably the writing because according to my placement scores I did pretty well on the writing. My belief level is almost half that.

**Question:** Your reading scores and your reading placement test are pretty evenly matched. Were you surprised at that?

**Answer:** No. Just because I know what my capabilities are. I guess I'm in the win with that one. I don't do writing as often as I do reading.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I did a lot of reading my high school for my English teacher who was Ms. Lions at the time. She knew what she wanted and that's what she expected. I didn't do a lot of writing for her, and the writing I did for her she critiqued it. I guess that kind of lower the confidence because at the time I thought the writing was good, but when she critiqued it and I guess that would lower the confidence.

**Question:** What is it about the critique that would do that rather than encourage you?

**Answer:** Well, at that time I thought the writing was good and then when she critiqued it, it was mostly corrections that needed to be made which did better at that assignment. I thought I had it.

**Question:** What made you think might have contributed to your feeling confident before she started correcting your papers?

**Answer:** Because it sounded good to me when I read it. This is actually my first class in writing course in college.

**Question:** Did your confidence change in your college class?

**Answer:** In writing yes. I thought I felt I was struggling through writing, but I got pretty good grades on all my writing assignments.

**Question:** So, you think if you would take the confidence level questionnaire again it might remain the same?

**Answer:** I might get it up a little bit.

**Question:** What do you think caused your confidence to change in this class that you took?

**Answer:** Probably that I received better grades than I thought I would receive on the writing. I think I put too much time into worrying about it than just writing.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X   NO       

**Answer:** When I was an adult. My husband because he reads everything I do and gives his opinion on them and goes from there. He may read a paper and ask who is this referring to, or what is this talking about, or could you use this word instead of that word.

**Question:** How does he feel capable of doing this for you?

**Answer:** Just because he knows me and he knows that in writing he knows what I'm trying to say and maybe try to put it across differently.

**Question:** How do you feel about his critiques?

**Answer:** Fine. I'm very open to them except one thing that was on my research paper—it was between *this* and *that*. It was basically the statement was "everything that starts out bad does not have to end that way." I used another word for *bad*.

**Question:** So how is that critique different from that you received from Ms. Lions?

**Answer:** I believe with Ms. Lions I was much younger, ten years younger probably, and with Ms Lions the papers or the assignments were already complete and I thought it was pretty well written. And with my husband, the assignment is not complete yet. I'm getting his input before I feel it's complete. There is a difference in the stage.

Friends YES/HOW  X  NO

**Answer:** Yes and it's again pretty much it's the same thing. It's the stage of the paper. I have a couple of friends right now that have already taken the course that may give the input doing the draft.

**Question:** How were they willing to spend the time to have the interest in helping you?

**Answer:** I would just call a girl, and read a paragraph to her and say, "What do you think about this? Do you think I need to change this? Am I missing something?" and I think she's very good at writing.

Teachers YES/HOW   NO  X

**Answer:** I've never looked at it that way because they're grading it.

**Question:** Do you because that's the way they portray themselves as graders of your writing?

**Answer:** I believed I've perceived them that they because it's a student teacher relationship.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW  X  NO  X

**Answer:** The groups and clubs that I've been a part of I was always the money handler, the treasure. I was the secretary one time. That was pretty much a bunch of ladies who just didn't want to do it.

**Question:** And how was that experience in writing?

**Answer:** That was a good experience. I guess I would have to say yes because I recorded all the information; it was a navy wife's organization group that I was a part of it. Pretty much kept details you know minutes and everything

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** My church has an annual Sunday school convention where they have delegates, and I was a delegate for one of the conventions, and I had to record everything that happened at each sermon. There would be a week of services and I had to go to each service record exactly what the speaker said and give my interpretation and then presented before my church when we go back to our churches. The conventions are located in different areas.

**Question:** How do you feel the church received your work?

**Answer:** Oh my goodness they were so excited, and they wanted me to do it every year, but it's not fair to the other people in the church. I felt each person needed a chance to do it.

**Question:** Any other community groups besides the religious ones you mentioned?

**Answer:** None that I can think of.

**Question:** How long ago did you work then as this delegate for the church or service?

**Answer:** I'd say about four years—three or four years ago.

**Question:** That was out of high school and before you started your college?

**Answer:** Definitely.

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** There's tons of them. Tony Morrison would be one. That's beside my adoptive mother who is in Portsmouth. She's the counselor in charge of all public school counselors. It's so cool. There's quiet a few; I could go through a list of them. I just did a paper on Langston Hughes.

**Question:** So these are people that you've read. How did you encounter them?

**Answer:** Tony Morrison and Langston Hughes both I encountered through high school—in required reading through high school. Basically, started in high school in belief in them.

**Question:** What is it about them that you found particularly interesting?

**Answer:** Well, Tony Morrison I guess I can put myself into the story. I can relate to a lot of the things she went through. With Langston Hughes, I guess because he was one of the first writers that was introduced to me as far as black history that kind of drew me to his writing.

**Question:** Do you remember how you felt reading for the first time the work of a black writer?

**Answer:** Oh my goodness, they exist! They exist.

**Question:** So, this was in your high school study?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** You did not encounter them in middle school or elementary?

**Answer:** Well, I think I did, but I didn't appreciate it. It was like you did it because your teacher told you too. It was nothing that I really put myself into.

**Question:** So, how did you connect then with the work of Langston Hughes? Is it because the teacher said, “Langston Hughes is an African American writer; here is his biography,” or did you come to see him as an African American through his work?

**Answer:** I saw him as an African American through his work. I guess it’s a little of both. When the teacher introduced him, you had to read certain assignments by him or from him. My godmother at the time was a Howard University student, and she did a lot of short stories through black history—black writers. That’s how.

**Question:** So she shared that with you before?

**Answer:** Right. She would do an assignment and I’d sit there and listen to her read out loud or whatever. So, it’s pretty cool.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_ NO X EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I won’t say that I’ve actually admired him, but I just take the readings and....

**Question:** Where did you encounter those readings by people of a different race?

**Answer:** Definitely school.

**Question:** High school?

**Answer:** Definitely yes.

**Question:** Did you admire them? Is there anyone you particularly admired?

**Answer:** None that I can remember. Again I was reading because they were required assignments. When it came to the black authors, it was pretty much a required assignment and then maybe a friend would have a book and I’d pick it up and read it or.... You know and that’s how that got started. That was the difference.

**Question:** So the difference then is the connection that you had with the black writers?

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** I'd like to go back to the previous question about people of your own race.

You mentioned your godmother, Langston Hughes, Tony Morrison. Anybody else that you'd like to list as people of your own race that you've admired for their ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Oh my goodness I could go through a list. Gwendolyn works with one of her favorites, you know, when she would read, I'd read that and listen to that. But I've never really just sat down to read her stuff.

**Question:** So this was through your godmother?

**Answer:** Yes. Most of it came through her at that time and the other writers. (chuckle) Dunbar was the high school I went to, so I had to read those stories.

**Researcher's Statement:** Sounds like you had a very rich high school experience then with black writers.

**Answer:** Right. That's because it was inner city—Washington D.C. inner city.

**Question:** So do you think that was pretty common in the Washington high school in that kind of...

**Answer:** Definitely...definitely.

**Question:** When did you move here to Virginia Beach?

**Answer:** I moved to Virginia Beach in '94.

**Question:** So this was after your high school education was completed?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be



different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I had to learn change it. It was Miss Ryan in fact.

**Question:** So your language use with family and friends has been somewhat different, very different from your language use at school?

**Answer:** Somewhat different.

**Question:** What was it like? What is the difference like?

**Answer:** First of all, in the family, just in general, friends/family they always call me the English teacher because if they use the word incorrectly, I kind of correct them. Then I get here and it's like Nicole you're not talking to your friend. You know I write and then she said it's colloquial, and it's like okay. Well, I want you to be able to understand what I am saying. It's not that I use slang, but I guess it's colloquial. That would be the difference. So I guess it's somewhat different.

**Question:** So when you speak with your family and friends what is that like? What is that speech like?

**Answer:** Colloquial. It's just general conversation.

**Question:** Do you have dialect differences in that you might speak in an African American dialect with family and friends?

**Answer:** Usually I don't.

**Question:** Do they?

**Answer:** Some. My daughters definitely bring it home from school and now I'm having to learn it.

**Question:** So do you speak back to them in it, or do you basically stay with the standard English patterns?

**Answer:** Every now and then I may, you know of been a surprise to them. You know, “What she say?”

**Question:** So how is it when you were growing up, especially when you lived in Washington D.C., was the speech that you used close to standard English, or did you ever...?

**Answer:** Oh! As a teenager it was definitely just not....

**Question:** Not an African dialect?

**Answer:** Definitely...definitely.

**Question:** So, tell me about that then. How are you negotiated between the dialect with your friends and family and school—in high school?

**Answer:** Well, the friends and family in high school and that whole time era there was dialect. Even in the house at that time, my grandmother was pretty much older, so it didn't matter to her that I spoke the same language that my friends spoke. So I never really looked at it as a dialect. After graduating from high school, I moved to Rhode Island, and there was a drastic difference in dialect, so I guess that's where my dialect begin to change. By the time I got here it was....

**Question:** When you were in D.C and you were speaking to your family and friends in your dialect mostly, do you remember what it was like being in school when out of school you spoke with a dialect? So did you, for instance, did you speak in your dialect in school?

**Answer:** I believe I did. I don't know if the teachers just accepted it or expected us to speak that way. I don't know. I'm gonna think back on it. I don't think there was pretty much difference.

**Question:** How do you think you wrote in school? Do you think the dialect was part of your writing?

**Answer:** I think it was.

**Question:** So the dialect was part of your speaking and writing?

**Answer:** And the writing, yes.

**Question:** Do you remember then when you encountered Ms. Ryan what that must have been like for you? In other words, when Ms. Ryan read your writing, did she ever comment on the dialect for instance?

**Answer:** You mean in high school—Ms. Lyons? Umm...no. Not to brag on myself, I was pretty much her best student, and she was harder on me I think because of that. So I guess to go back to your first question, did I get support from her? I guess she did support me as well because she demanded more from me, but to me as a student, as a teenager, I didn't want any more demands than the next student. So I guess she did. That was probably part of her critique is taking out the dialect.

**Question:** Did it ever come up in conversation with Ms. Lyons that you were writing in a dialect, or do you remember being addressed about the dialect?

**Answer:** I can't remember.

**Question:** So it was part of the general critique?

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** So that meant that when you were writing in high school, then you were probably not writing entirely in your African American dialect?

**Answer:** Probably not.

**Question:** Do you remember consciously making the decision not to?

**Answer:** No. No. I do not.

**Question:** The second part to this question is going to be a little complicated given what you said. We may have to break it down into several parts. Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write? So since you said your language use was different in high school, lets talk about high school vs. college because of change. So in high school, did that difference in language use affect your confidence in any way?

**Answer:** In high school?

**Question:** In writing and reading.

**Answer:** I don't know, but I can tell you the difference between high school and now.

**Question:** In high school, was Ms. Lyons an African American teacher?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** So you don't recall any problems with confidence?

**Answer:** Right. Expect for that one time when she critiqued the research paper and you know....

**Question:** Now, in college, go ahead and tell me then how did language use apply?

**Answer:** I think just time, age itself has just definitely made a difference and made me more able to accept criticism.

**Question:** And now that you're in college, you're speaking more of the standard English dialect than you did in high school?

**Answer:** Right. Definitely.

**Question:** So now you would say your language use outside of school and in school are basically similar?

**Answer:** Yes. Yes.

**Question:** Expect for the colloquialisms?

**Answer:** Right. Right.

**Question:** So is that use of colloquialisms outside of school affect your language use—your ability to use language use in any way?

**Answer:** Repeat the question.

**Question:** The difference now in school and out of school has to do with colloquialisms. So does that use, colloquialisms, affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Yes. Yes.

**Question:** Can you explain how it affects your confidence?

**Answer:** I guess before Ms. Ryan's class I didn't realize colloquialism existed. I'm sure I may have heard it in the past but never really realized what it was, and in writing my papers, she would say, "You know this is colloquial," or you know just bring to my attention that you know this is colloquial. It's like oh my goodness I didn't realize that; I thought I was writing a good paper!

**Question:** So is this helping your confidence or eroding it?

**Answer:** I believe it's helping it because I realize what I'm doing now. When you can identify something, you can either fix it or leave it.

**Question:** And then when you identify to fix it then that helps you feel more confident?

**Answer:** Definitely.

**Question:** And your grades have been reflecting that?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What grades have you been making?

**Answer:** Pretty much A's.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Health issues.

**Question:** Tell me how that does motivate you.

**Answer:** Just because I want to.... Basically, my major is going to be dietetics, and I want to be able to better educate people about their health in general not just African Americans but mostly African Americans right now because most of the diseases that I want to educate them about they effects society as a whole, but right now I am surrounded by African Americans who need information.

**Question:** How does this help you to write or read?

**Answer:** Well, before I can write about it, I have to read about it—educate myself on it. And...through experiences I've had several illnesses that have caused me to become interested in reading.

**Question:** How does it motive you to write, and what way do you write about the illnesses?

**Answer:** Usually, most of my assignments through college right now different through public speaking or through my actual English courses. A lot of them have related to health issues.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Time. That's it—time...but other than that, no.

**Question:** In motivating you to read or write, then you said that the health issues and the desire to educate African Americans about health issues motivates you to chose the topics for in reading and writing in school. What about out of school? Does anything motivate you to read or write outside of school environment?

**Answer:** Probably religious issues. Again at my church, we have different times where on Friday nights you don't have to ordained minister to speak, and they have different lay members of the church to speak or preach, and several times I've been chosen to do that, and before I'm up to speak before the people, I'd like to write down my thoughts. And you know search the scriptures and study them and write them and then speak before the people.

**Question:** This is in small groups at your church where you would do this?

**Answer:** Well, it would be just the congregation where I wanted to come out, so it was a pretty descent size.

**Question:** Anything else that motivates you?

**Answer:** None that I can think of. I guess children's issues though because I have a nine old daughter, and you know there's so many things happening now and you wan'a just be aware of everything.

**Question:** So, the reading serves a different purpose for you?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Do you write letters or any other forms of writing besides school or church?

**Answer:** No, not any more.

Pam, Student #123

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** Indian River High School in Chesapeake. Yes. 1993.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Yes. Well, the first line the writing on the placement test is a lot lower than what I have in confidence.

**Question:** ...and similarly in the reading?

**Answer:** That is correct.

**Question:** So do you feel then before you did the study that your placement was even with your confidence?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What is it that made you think that?

**Answer:** Well on the placement test, I pretty much guessed a lot of the answers just to get through the test thing.

**Question:** Is it because you didn't know the answers?



**Answer:** I knew the answers. Most of them I kind of like guessed, but after awhile I did know the answers to those.

**Question:** What is it about the test then that you find difficult?

**Answer:** Math. I have a lot of problems with math to read and write. Writing because most of the time I think and write and don't read out loud, and it makes sense more when you read out loud, and I didn't do that with the placement test.

**Question:** Before you came to the placement test, your self-confidence was definitely formed in writing. What do you think contributed to make you that confident in your writing before you took placement test?

**Answer:** I love writing first of all, so I don't have a problem with writing.

**Question:** Well, when I tested you this was after the placement test. Were you placed in developmental when you took this placement test?

**Answer:** Yes I was.

**Question:** So what development courses did you take at TCC?

**Answer:** English 01, English 03.

**Question:** Do you think that any of that study in those two classes contributed to your self-confidence being so high?

**Answer:** Yes I do.

**Question:** Can you tell me a little about your study in English 01 and 03 and how that helped your confidence?

**Answer:** Well, English 01 and 03 has been a while since I've been out of school, so it was like a refreshing course for me, so it gave me a chance to review some of the stuff that I did back in high school.

**Question:** How did you perform in 01 and 03?

**Answer:** 01... I had to retake Eng 01. English 03 I did very well, but in English 01 I did have to retake that one.

**Question:** What was going on in 01 that made you have to retake it?

**Answer:** The verbs, and nouns, and fragments, and all of that. I was having problems with that.

**Question:** So then you think then that your confidence is where it is because of 01 and 03?

**Answer:** Yes it is.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Eng 111 Ms. Jellig. She told me if I take my time when I'm writing 'cause I have good answers and good thoughts if I read out loud, it make a lot more sense to me instead of reading it to myself, and that's how you skip over a couple of words or fragments and stuff like that, so I can say Ms. Jellig. She helped me a lot.

**Question:** What about before you go to Ms Jellig, anything memorable that you can think of that might help to show your confidence in reading and writing?

**Answer:** English 05 Ms. Pellet. When we had to do research and had to stand up in front of the class, that helped me a lot with my writing and stuff, and reading out loud it makes a lot more better sense than reading it to myself.

**Question:** She made you stand in front of the class? Most students hate that.

**Answer:** I did.

**Question:** What was it that made you feel better about your writing or reading?

**Answer:** Because she said you have good ideas. If you read in front of someone, you can understand more what you're writing, and when I stood up in front of the class, I wasn't as nervous, and I was confident throughout my writing.

**Question:** I see. Did you have to read your writing or just talk about it?

**Answer:** Just talk about it and read like a paragraph of it, so that was a lot.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** My cousin Deon. The one who told me about going back to school to better myself, and with my reading and my writing, I was a little embarrassed to go back because I know I've been out of school for a while. She made me feel confident as in there's nothing wrong with if you don't understand what a verb is, a noun is. Many days I went over her house and she helped me along with it, so that was a lot to me.

**Question:** So she just taken an interest in you and suggested to go back to school?

**Answer:** Yes, to better myself for me and my kids I have.

**Question:** Is she a college graduate herself?

**Answer:** She just finished all her, I just talked to her today, she just finished all her basic Math and English, so she's ready to go into the nursing program.

**Question:** Anybody else in your family?

**Answer:** My mother. She supported me a lot telling me I can do it. Don't give up. Keep going. Think about my kids.

**Question:** Specifically in reading, how much has your mother helped you?

**Answer:** The same thing as reading out loud—take my time.

**Question:** Giving you words of encouragement?

**Answer:** Yes.

Friends YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Teachers YES/HOW X NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** My high school teacher, we had to read out loud there too and not putting the paper in front of our face and read and bring it down, and try not to read off the paper read from what I read before. That was very supportive to me.

**Question:** What about writing? Have you felt supported by your teacher?

**Answer:** Yes. She helped me to put the commas behind you know, so they won't make a fragment in a sentence. She took the time out to help me with that too

**Researcher's Statement:** Sometimes when teachers are pointing things out wrong to students they resent it. It doesn't sound as if you did.

**Answer:** No. I appreciate it.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW X NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** In marketing in school, marketing helped us with a job.

**Question:** High school?

**Answer:** High school. I'm sorry, high school. Marketing.

**Question:** How did you feel supported by the marketing program?

**Answer:** Well, you've got to fill out the application. You want to put the correct word on the application, so we had study groups and appropriate words to say and write, so that was very helpful too.

**Question:** So these were student groups?

**Answer:** Yes student groups.

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** Community groups well religious group 'cause I just got saved, so I'm into the church and they tell me that I can stand up in front of everybody and read certain parts so I'm getting into that. I haven't really got into it yet, but that's something we're working on now.

**Question:** What about writing? Do you ever have to write in your religious groups?

**Answer:** Not as of yet. I just got into it mostly just reading and understanding.

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I must say my cousin again. I really admire her the things she accomplished in life and the thing she believed in me and that's a lot to me.

**Question:** And she is a reader and writer that you admire?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question:** What is it about her reading and writing that you particularly admire?

**Answer:** When she was helping me with my papers and I'll read it to her and ask her how it sounds. She didn't do like some people like you do—put the comma here. She'll like read it again; read again till you actually hear your mistake, and I admire that instead of just telling me put it here, put it there. She let me figure it out for myself.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_ EXPLAIN

**Answer:** A class mate in my English 111 class and she's a very good writer. We had to stand up in front of the class for our research paper, and she stood up and she wasn't

nervous. She read her paper. It sounded just like a book. That's how well it was. I admire that. She did hard working at the computer lab and going to the writing lab to get help, so I admire that.

**Question:** And when you were in high school was there anyone there? It can be famous people. It can be people that you know personally.

**Answer:** In high school in English, I had a classmate and she was a very good writer also of a different race, and I admire her also.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** Before I got into school, yes.

**Question:** For college?

**Answer:** Yes for college.

**Question:** What was it like? What was the difference there?

**Answer:** I call it street terms—more street words instead of saying it correctly. Once again in school, I understood it correct.

**Question:** So now that you're in college and you're studying standard English, is your speech at home with family and friends different from the way you speak and write at school?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** How is it different now?

**Answer:** I just say the correct words instead of saying the slang words I'd say they'd say or the street words.

**Question:** So even though they're spoken outside in a different dialect, you still stay with your standard English?

**Answer:** Yes because if you sit back and listen to it, it's not correct and it doesn't sound correct.

**Question:** When you were in high school and your language outside of school was very different from your language in school, did that difference affect your confidence in reading and writing?

**Answer:** It did, yes. I wasn't concerned about going to college or school, and I can say this to my friends and it doesn't really matter, but going to college and knowing it's not correct English, it's a big difference to me.

**Question:** Do you think that you're confident now that you're speaking and writing the same similar ways?

**Answer:** Yes it is.

**Question:** You feel more confident?

**Answer:** Yes I do.

**Question:** How does that work? How did you manage to feel more confident in school?

**Answer:** Well, I feel if the people around me hear the way I talk and speak correctly then they will soon do it to speak to me a lot, and I have an older daughter and I'm teaching her the correct English also so it's a lot of confidence for me.

**Question:** When you were in high school then and it was so different, was it hard for you in school when you're so accustomed to speaking in this street talk?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What was hard about it?

**Answer:** Because in class the teacher's not gonna allow you to say certain words that you say to your friends. The street words, the slang words is a lot different, and the class the teacher's not going to allow you to say that, and she'll tell you that it's the incorrect, improper English.

**Question:** Did that affect your confidence then when you were in class?

**Answer:** It did because I know that was incorrect, so it's like okay if I decide to go to college. I got to come out of there, have more confidence and the way I speak to others.

**Question:** Do you remember how your teachers corrected you in high school or what they might of said specifically?

**Answer:** Mostly, "Interviewee's name that's not the correct way of English." That was pretty much it.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Writing. You see a lot of younger females that have kids and don't have any education. I want to do better for myself, so by reading and writing and know the correct way of doing it, I have a future ahead of me. Compared to them, don't understand or don't know how to write it's a big difference.

**Question:** So you feel that this desire to improve yourself through education is what's motivating you to read and write?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Anything else that makes you want to read and write maybe in school or out of school?



**Answer:** I have two kids that look up to me, so I got to understand how to read and write for them mostly for them.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** No 'cause I love writing.

**Question:** Tell me what it is that you like about writing. Do you write outside of school? What is it that you like to write?

**Answer:** I like doing stories.

**Question:** You make up your own stories?

**Answer:** Make up stories that help my daughter along with her homework. On Thursdays she got to pull up an article out of the newspaper and we'll just make up.... I can flow with it. I can read sentence or a paragraph and just write with it, and I try to explain to her that's the way of doing it instead of reading each word and copying it down, so I love writing.

**Question:** How do you read the passage? Could you explain that little more about helping your daughter?

**Answer:** For example, we did a paper Thursday about a man in Detroit who had a piece of chewing gum in his salad, and she had to write about that, and I took two sentences and wrote like a paragraph about it. I like writing. I like doing things like that, so that was very interesting to me—to help her along.

**Researcher's Statement:** So that's something that helps motivate you to write to help your daughter.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Anything makes you not want to read and write?

**Answer:** It don't make me not want to read; I just don't understand the writing of it—the Bible. I have a difficult time understanding the Bible. In just the wording, the writing in the Bible but it makes me want to give up then I don't. I keep on going with it.

**Question:** Have you ever found that in other books that you've read where you don't understand the material then so it discourages you from continuing?

**Answer:** No. Pretty much just the Bible, I just have a hard time reading the Bible.

**Question:** You took a reading class here at the college?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What was that experience like?

**Answer:** It was reading 05. It was okay. I liked to read. Certain words I might not understand. Get a dictionary and I'll get the definition of it and keep reading from there, but it was very interesting. It was like a challenge to me not to give up to pass the class.

**Question:** What about writing? Anything makes you not want to write?

**Answer:** No. I like writing.

Tonette, Student #64

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** I attended at Kellam High School. I graduated 2002.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write (show and explain graph).

Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES   X   NO       .

**Questions:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Not from the time I had taken my placement test. Well, when I was placed into my English class in the fall, I was placed into developmental reading and writing. I don't feel that my reading has changed any, but I have definitely seen a difference in my writing because my instructor was great and she helped me out a lot.

**Question:** How long did you take the placement test before you actually got into freshman composition? Was it just the one English 03 course you had to take before you got into 111?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** So during that course of the semester, you feel that your confidence improved?

**Answer:** Well, it was at the beginning of the grade course that after our first paper that I had turned in, and my instructor told me that I didn't even need to be in that class. I think that's what helped out because I was like "oh."

**Question:** Sometimes when that happens students lose interest in the course and feel they're learning nothing. So what was your experience like in that 03 class after the teacher said that?

**Answer:** Well, she always made things interesting, and she always commented on my papers and let me know how I was doing.

**Question:** How were you doing?

**Answer:** I did well. She told me I was doing excellent and I'd do absolutely fine in 111.

**Question:** So you consistently got positive comments from her?

**Answer:** Definitely.

**Question:** What do you think you learned then during the course of the semester?

**Answer:** I had to change my grammar. I had to fix my grammar—different writing styles basically.

**Question:** Have you felt your confidence has improved as your performance improved?

**Answer:** Yeah. Well, I think that with the confidence it improved my writing because I got more into the writing instead of just being an assignment that I had to do.

**Question:** So you came to the placement test just after high school?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Can you think back to that time soon out of high school and you were taking the placement test? Think about your level of confidence at that point.

**Answer:** I didn't like writing at all. I dreaded writing.

**Question:** Why do you think that is?

**Answer:** I didn't have very good teachers in my English classes in high school and nobody was there letting me know how to change something. It didn't seem like anybody really worked with me to fix it. You just turn in the papers and you get your grade and that was it.

**Question:** Did you engage in revisions during the high school classes?

**Answer:** We did peer editing but that's about it. When you're in high school, people try to be nice to you and that's good. It's like it didn't really help me, but when I took my

03 course, we peer edited with four other people and everybody was honest and straight forward and with the help of my teacher. It makes a big difference.

**Question:** What about reading? Your performance was lower than your confidence in reading as well. When you took the placement test and you just came out of high school, what can you tell us about reading beliefs at that point?

**Answer:** I have never really been a big reader so I don't know.

**Question:** Did you like to read?

**Answer:** Well, I just didn't read I guess. I mean I read magazines and stuff, but I'm not your typical person to just pick up a book.

**Question:** So you didn't go to the library for leisure?

**Answer:** Not usually and I still don't. I guess if I set aside the time I would but I don't.

**Question:** What kind of reading do you actually do now when you do read?

**Answer:** You mean beside from my classes? I read some of the newspaper and still magazines. I haven't picked up a book in a long time.

**Question:** How consistently do you read magazines?

**Answer:** It varies. When I'm bored or taking a meal break at work or something.

**Question:** It's not that you have subscriptions of magazines?

**Answer:** Not any more.

**Question:** You did?

**Answer:** Yeah I did.

**Question:** What magazine did you subscribe to?

**Answer:** Teen magazines and something like that.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write? When you were doing peer editing for instance, how did that work with your peers?

**Answer:** There is a total of five of us, and we'd have to come in to class prepared with our paper and we would have to have a copy for all of them and a copy to turn in to her at the end of class. When it was your turn, you'd have to read your paper aloud and the group would read along with their paper and then as a group they'd sentence-by-sentence pick out grammatical errors and maybe sentences that you might want to include...subject to take out.

**Question:** Did the teacher give specific questions to guide the discussions and the feedback or no?

**Answer:** I think the first paper she had given us an outline of questions that we could ask or things to look for and then it was second nature from there. Everybody kind of remembered so...but it was very helpful.

**Researcher's Statement:** And you'd said that your teacher was also very consistent with positive comments towards you.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** How did you get that feedback?

**Answer:** When we were in our peer groups, she would try and visit and revise as many peoples' papers as she could during the course of the class. She would say hey I don't like this sentence. She wouldn't necessarily say I don't like this sentence 'cause it's.... She made it so that it was our paper or ideas. She wouldn't say I don't like this sentence; don't put it in there. She left it open to you. She would just say, "Hey, you've

got a comma splice here,” or she’d just give you ideas of things to maybe liven it up or something.

**Question:** So you never felt as if you were being criticized?

**Answer:** No. Never.

**Question:** It sounds then that your experience in that class was very different from what is was like in high school. Was there a teacher that stands out in your mind that might of helped your confidence before you came to the English 03 class.

**Answer:** I honestly cannot think of a teacher who helped me in high school.

**Question:** Can you think of one who did not help you? Something memorable that might explain the relatively low confidence when you were coming in to TCC?

**Answer:** Nobody I guess you can say helped me in that sense. My senior English teacher, he...we basically did nothing the whole year. I mean we turned in papers and peer-edit stuff, but if you turned in your paper and I guess if you had enough information to cover your topic, you got an A on the paper. He’d talk about helping you—making a good paper and all sorts of stuff, but he never followed through on anything.

**Question:** So you didn’t feel you got much feedback?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** And in your earlier years perhaps your junior or sophomore year in high school, what was that experience like? Can you think back to your English classes then?

**Answer:** I didn’t seem like we wrote very many papers. I don’t think I have since I’ve been here. I mean we would write papers. Not necessarily even a paper just more something we had to turn in. There would be questions from a book that we read or how we felt about it that’s something maybe a couple pages long not even.

**Question:** So there was very little writing?

**Answer:** Yeah, from what I can remember. I can't remember writing too much.

**Question:** So you did more of your writing in your English 03 class than you probably did in high school?

**Answer:** Yeah. Probably. I mean we did our share of writing in high school, but from what I can remember, it didn't seem like it was as in-depth as we did here. I mean senior year we did write a few papers but nothing was really followed through with.

**Question:** Did that make you feel confident when you didn't get much negative feedback then in high school?

**Answer:** No. I don't think it really changed me. I think I kind of knew what was going on. Especially my senior year, I knew how he worked. We'd just write the paper and we'd turn it....

**Question:** So you didn't really feel that you might of earned it?

**Answer:** ...and I didn't proceed to try any harder because I knew if I did it I'd get my good grade. I didn't have that mentality—work a little bit harder. I do my minimum. It's changed since then.

**Question:** What about reading? Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high confidence in your ability to read?

**Answer:** Not necessarily very high confidence in reading. I feel comfortable with my reading. I feel comfortable reading out loud in the class.

**Question:** So you came to TCC, took the placement test and got put into a developmental class?

**Answer:** Yes.



**Question:** How did you feel then when that happened? Were you surprised?

**Answer:** For my reading, I actually didn't really even know what was going on. I mean the counselors were like you take this class so I was just like okay, but when I was placed into the reading class, I didn't feel that I really got anything out of it except for pre-reading. I've really never done that before. I think that's about all that I've gotten out of that class.

**Question:** So you don't feel like your ability has changed much?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW   X      NO       

**Answer:** I think mainly my mom. I mean my dads been in there too, but I think most of it, the motivation, has come from my mom because I come home with a paper and she seems to think that everything is good. I mean even if I know that there's something in there, she'll still tell me that it's good. That she likes it.

**Question:** So in your English 03 class, you were able to take your papers home and share them with her and talk and get some feedback?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** What about other family members? You mentioned your dad.

**Answer:** My dad, he's been the one to kind of help me with the grammar or says you need to pull this or that out. Just because he just graduated from college, so he's kind of fresh into that.

**Question:** Sometimes when students have a relative correct the grammar they feel that lowers their confidence and their abilities. What was your reaction like?

**Answer:** From my dad, yes sometimes because it would be something that I thought was fine and he'd go back and say, "no, no, no." I guess he would kind of say...I guess put it in how he would say it sometimes not all the time. Of course because it's from your dad your like, well. I didn't feel degraded from him or anything.

**Question:** You felt supported?

**Answer:** Yes. My parents have been helpful.

Friends YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** I guess my best friend. I'll read paper to her and she's like "Wow, that's really good."

**Question:** Is that from high school or 03 again?

**Answer:** I think in 03 'cause we didn't really share papers in high school.

Teachers YES/HOW  X  NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** My Eng 03 instructor but not last instructor.

**Question:** Not the 111?

**Answer:** No. I did maybe okay on the first paper, but from there on, there was nothing.

**Question:** What was it about your last experience in English 111 that you feel was not supported?

**Answer:** We didn't spend very much time on our papers.

**Researcher's Statement:** Sounds like high school again.

**Answer:** Yes. It kind of did remind me of that. That's why I was in some ways glad that I had the 03 course even though I felt that I probably still would have been fine

without the course, but I felt that the 03 was maybe I would say better. I guess it was better than the 111 course though our papers were longer. Other than that, she didn't...we didn't spend much time on our papers. We maybe revise for 20 or 30 minutes of the class, and the students because she didn't emphasize much on it very long. It was kind of like high school again. You know you read the paper, "Oh that's fine," you know. "Maybe add a comma here," and she did the thing where if she didn't like a sentence she would want you to take it out. I felt like it was my paper, and she didn't like a certain part of it or whatever and she wanted to ran it how she liked it. That's how I perceived everything from her course.

**Question:** So that was not a situation that made you feel supported?

**Answer:** No, I definitely didn't feel supported, but I don't think it lowered my confidence or anything because I know it was there, but I kind of just blocked out.

**Question:** And got through the course?

**Answer:** Yeah.

School clubs/groups YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

Religious/community groups. YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Answer:** Not really involved in that, but my neighbors when I was like in high school and stuff, I'd go over to them when my dad's been out to sea. Go over to a neighbor and have them help me, and they helped me in that part.

Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO X EXPLAIN

**Answer:** When I was a lot younger, I used to read a lot of horror stories. I guess I enjoyed those, but there was a kid in my 03 course who was on the same level as I was, and him and I shared a lot of our thoughts together which helped both of us out because we knew some of the things that maybe some of the other students didn't catch on to.

**Researcher's Statement:** There was admiration it sounds like.

**Answer:** Yeah, kind of. It was nice to have him in the class, and he was in my group too.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_ NO X EXPLAIN

**Answer:** If I read more, maybe.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** At school my writing somewhat. I still try to talk with proper grammar, but I definitely use more slang and stuff like that when I'm with my family, but I try to keep all that out of my paper unless it's a narrative paper or something like that.

**Question:** Does that difference then in the formal, informal but basically same grammar affect your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** I like to write narrative papers or descriptive papers where I can use my imagination or things from my past childhood. When assigned a paper like that or

something I'm always like on it. I usually get into it unless it's a research paper or something like that. Usually it drags along. I guess reading if there is something for me to read. Like if I see a book that really strikes my interest or something, I'll read it.

**Question:** What kind of things would strike your interest?

**Answer:** Maybe something about a fictional story yeah usually fictional. I like stuff about true stories. Well, I like books about someone, something real. Then again I like the stuff that's not real too.

**Question:** So now you pick up a book especially now that you know about previewing. What is it that might make you want to pick it up if it's a fiction for instance?

**Answer:** Maybe if it's something about somebody who had a hard life or whatever—maybe about somebody famous or something like that.

**Question:** Something to connect to your experiences?

**Answer:** Ah...I don't think so. It's just interesting to read about. You feel happy for that person.

**Question:** You mentioned you're motivated to write if you get an opportunity to be creative. Outside of school, anything motivate you to write?

**Answer:** Not within the past few years. When I was younger, I used to write stories on my own all the time. I even started a little book I haven't finished. You know one of those sayings where I was just a little kid.

**Question:** You just lost interest in that kind of writing?

**Answer:** I don't know that. Maybe I've lost interest. I think time, and friends, and school, and work kind of overwhelmed me.

**Question:** Never go back there—a journal or anything like that?

**Answer:** No...on and off throughout my life taking journals, but I've never been consistent with it.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** Other than I just don't feel like it. I don't think there's anything that maybe discourages me unless it's like a French novel or something. I wouldn't be able to read.

**Researcher's Statement:** ...or some story.

**Answer:** ...or maybe some big science book or something like that. If I can't understand the language, then yeah I probably wouldn't read that.

**Question:** When you think about school and writing for school, can you think of times when you just can't get through it? You mentioned research papers. Maybe you can talk a little more about that. What is it about writing a research paper for instance that would be such a turn-off for you?

**Answer:** I just don't like to write about facts. I think it's boring. I think if you want to find out about it, just look it up yourself and read it. I know that somebody's got to make that information, but I don't like to write those facts. I get bored with it very easily even if it's about subject that I would be most interested in. I still have trouble with it. I procrastinate; it's awful.

**Researcher's Statement:** Very different from the narrative in which you could do.

**Answer:** Yes. I think because you have to sight the sources. Everything has to be perfectly formal. Every *i* had to be dotted every *t* crossed, and I guess I'm semi-formal, semi-informal.

**Researcher's Statement:** I guess you just don't get very many opportunities to write creatively as far as you can see at school.

**Answer:** Well, yeah now that I'm in college, it's about research papers and stuff. You don't get to use your imagination like you do in elementary school. My 03 instructor had recommended if I wanted to take a creative writing course which I'd probably be interested in doing if I can fit it in.

**Question:** What is your major?

**Answer:** Nursing. It's a lot of reading about facts.

**Question:** How do you like reading those nursing books?

**Answer:** Well, I haven't really had to get into that. I've gone as far as journal biology. Starting next semester, I'll be getting into all that other stuff, but when it comes to science like that, I'm always interested. If it's I guess like history, and social, political, it's not me.

**Question:** If you ever have to write in your nursing, what might you write about that would make you want to write about nursing?

**Answer:** Maybe the pediatric aspects of it. That's what I'm looking to go into. I mean I guess if I set my mind to it, I can definitely do the research papers, but I just have a hard time getting into them. Once I get into it, it all flows so easily.

Arnold, Student # 180

**Question:** Where did you attend high school? Did you graduate? When?

**Answer:** In 1983, I graduated from Little Cypress Mauriceville HS in Orange, TX.

**Question:** After I scored your responses on the Reading/Writing Self-efficacy Measurements, I created a graph to show you your confidence in your ability to read and write.

**Question:** Do you feel the scores accurately represent your confidence in your ability to read and write? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO X\_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** I don't believe confidence can be quantified or 100 % accurate through a survey.

**Question:** I compared your reading/writing confidence levels with your scores on the Compass Placement Tests in reading and writing, and created graphs for you to see. Do the similarities or differences in the scores, as shown on these graphs, surprise you in any way? Why or why not?

**Answer:** They do not surprise me at all because I had no expectation as to what they may or may not be.

**Question:** Can you share something memorable about one of your English teachers that might explain your high or low confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** My memories with regard to English teachers are pretty much limited to doing what I had to in order to move on to a subject more interesting to me. I probably would have dropped out of high school if God had not blessed me with the ability to achieve the minimum standards with little if any effort.

**Question:** Have you ever felt supported in your study of reading and writing by anyone in the following groups:

Family members                      YES /HOW \_\_\_\_\_      NO X\_\_\_\_\_

Friends                                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_      NO X\_\_\_\_\_

Teachers                                      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_      NO X\_\_\_\_\_

School clubs/groups   YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_      NO X\_\_\_\_\_

Religious/community groups.      YES/HOW \_\_\_\_\_      NO X\_\_\_\_\_



Other YES/HOW \_\_\_\_ NO

**Question:** Is there anyone of your own race that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_\_ NO  EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I don't admire people for their ability to write.

**Question:** Is there anyone of a race different from yours that you have admired for his or her ability to read and write well? YES \_\_\_\_ NO  EXPLAIN

**Answer:** I don't admire people for their ability to write.

**Question:** Many students find that the way they speak to friends and family is very different from the way they write in school. For instance, grammar or dialect may be different. Is your language use with family and friends very different from your language use at school? Not much at all. Does that difference or sameness of language affect your confidence in your ability to read and write?

**Answer:** I don't think so.

**Question:** Does anything in particular (behavior, event) motivate you to read or write?

**Answer:** Yes, work, school, and subjects that interests me.

**Question:** Does anything in particular discourage you from reading or writing?

**Answer:** I don't think so, it's just not something I particularly enjoy or seek to do.

Usually, I read or write to provide or receive information. Only when communication is desired or required.

## VITA

Ann Woolford-Singh was born in Georgetown, Guyana, and immigrated to the United States in 1968. She earned a bachelor's degree in English from Brooklyn College in 1977 and a master's degree in English at New York University in 1979. She has taught developmental reading and writing at Brooklyn College, Baruch College, and the University of Houston.

After relocating to Virginia Beach, Virginia, in 1991, Ms. Woolford-Singh taught English and African American Studies at a local community college where she now serves as an academic dean.