12-2-2014

# Standard Written English Grammar and Usage in the First-Year Composition Classroom: First-Year Composition Educators' Perspectives

Mary-Gwynne M. Millione

STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND USAGE IN THE FIRST-YEAR

COMPOSITION CLASSROOM:

FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES

by

Mary-Gwynne May Millione

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

The University of Memphis

December 2014

**Abstract**

Millione, Mary-Gwynne May. PhD. The University of Memphis. December/2014. Standard Written English Grammar and Usage in the First-Year Composition Classroom: First-Year Composition Educators' Perspectives. Major Professor: Dr. Susan Popham.

A study was conducted to discover how first-year composition (FYC) teachers at large, public, 4-year universities respond to students who write prose with numerous Standard Written English (SWE) errors, the techniques the teachers use, and if the teachers perceive themselves as positively impacting the students' writing. The researcher believed the teachers' background (i.e., education and experience) would have an effect. Method: An anonymous survey was sent to FYC teachers at large, public, 4-year universities. A follow up interview was conducted; a web search performed. Results: One hundred and twenty-one participants completed the survey; three were interviewed. Over 49% used the majority of techniques at least sometimes. Most frequently used techniques included making SWE comments on students' papers (84%), and using peer reviews (59%), mini lessons (54%), handbooks (36%), and handouts or worksheets (33%). Teachers with a creative writing degree were more likely to make comments on the students' papers ($r = .278$, $p = .002$), as well as teachers who have taken creative writing courses ($r = .271$, $p = .005$). Those with a linguistics degree were not as likely to use the technique ($r = - .359$, $p = .00$). Participants with higher degrees were less likely to use peer reviews($r = -0.289$, $p = .001$). Participants who have taken more graduate courses in linguistics were more likely to use non-technical terms when explaining SWE. No correlation existed for experience teaching and techniques used. A positive correlation was found between techniques teachers used and their perceived effectiveness, except for handbooks, using excerpts from students' papers, and students

keeping track of errors. However, at least one-third believed the techniques they used were not effective. Of the total participants, 73 wrote detailed comments regarding the teaching of SWE in FYC. Over half believe SWE should be taught during class; 22% during individual conferencing. Almost all felt either somewhat or very prepared to teach SWE, but those with creative writing degrees felt less prepared ($r = -.194$, $p = .035$). Teachers found the following helpful in preparing them to teach SWE: teaching ($r = .304$, $p = .001$), taking writing courses ($r = .197$, $p = .043$), and taking linguistics courses ($r = .321$, $p = .008$). Discussion: Participants would like better preparation and more effective ways to teach SWE. Better teacher preparation may include linguistic courses and writing courses, especially for those with a creative writing background. More research is needed in the area of effective ways to teach SWE.

# Table of Contents

**List of Tables**

# List of Figures

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

When individuals find out that someone teaches English, even at the college level, they many times exclaim, "I'd better watch my grammar!" The word *grammar* often prompts immediate and intense reactions from most people.  Some shudder. Students' eyes glaze over, and they stop listening (Rustick, 2007). Employers start complaining (Heyden, 2003; Selingo, 2012; Shellenbarger, 2012).  Educators ask why students cannot write (Huddleston & Pullum, 2003; Lynch-Biniek, 2005). English teachers begin to swap horror stories regarding students' writings (Blanchard, 2013). Many average individuals voraciously discuss their particular grammar pet peeves (Dunn & Lindblom, 2003). In fact, "if you ask any adult who is not an English teacher what should be taught in English class, high on the list will be grammar" (Dunn & Lindblom, 2003, p. 44).

The American public as a whole expects college educated students to write using what is considered socially acceptable grammar, or "linguistic etiquette" (Hartwell, 1985, p. 109), consisting of rules found in grammar handbooks about correct and incorrect usage in a written context.  When used in writing, this socially acceptable grammar is dubbed Standard Written English (SWE), or prescriptive grammar (Curzan, 2009). Although the general public expects educated individuals to write using SWE, or "correct" grammar (Kolln & Hancock, 2005), the ability or inability of students to do so at the university level has been an issue for English educators since the 19th century when in 1841 the Brown University president complained, "Students frequently enter college almost wholly unacquainted with English grammar" (as cited in Rose, 1985); current research shows that this may still be a common complaint (Graham, Macarthur, &

Fitzgerald, 2007; National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, 2003).

For many outside of composition studies, grammar and English instruction are synonymous; this is not necessarily the belief of English composition educators.  With Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's (1963) study, composition teachers began to consider that teaching grammar, especially through use of worksheets, drills, and handouts, does not help students become better writers.

Throughout the next 50 years composition scholars presented different ways to perceive and teach writing. Britton (1965) called for clear, precise writing not open to interpretation. Writing itself was envisioned as a linear process (D'Angelo, 1978), and then as a recursive process (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Perl, 1979; Sommers, 1980).  Writing was considered as a way of communicating (Berlin, 1982; Corbett,1963), discovering (Murray, 1971; Sommers, 1980), or imparting truth (Moffett, 1965), as well as a way of learning (Bruner, 1966; Emig, 1977) and of creating knowledge (Berthoff, 1981; Odell, 1983).  Some believed writing was a form of self-expression (Elbow, 1981; Macrorie, 1968, Murray, 1971) while others envisioned it as collaborative learning through conversation (Brufee, 1984).

Moffett (1965) used the stages of discourse to help students find their voice. Kinneavey (1971) focused on the kairos or situation and purpose of the writing while Murray (1971) and Elbow (1995) saw the teacher as a guide, or coach, listening to the students and helping them write for themselves.  Hairston (1976) encouraged the use of Rogerian psychology in the argument and focusing on student experiences (Hairston (1992).

Over time, composition research has helped educate first-year composition (FYC) teachers to encourage their students to think critically and to develop voice and ideas. Today, FYC students learn to explore, think, prove ideas, organize thoughts, and persuade audiences. Teachers share the recursive, non-linear process of collecting ideas, writing thoughts, organizing, and editing. In essence, today's FYC teachers guide and facilitate while students explore and create.

The composition community has come a long way from frequently teaching and grading writing on prescriptive grammar (Devet, 2002; Micciche, 2004). Grammar is not the key focus it once was. However, the college composition community seems to have now shifted to the other extreme, being reticent to even mention the word grammar as shown by the lack of professional conference and seminar presentations and research articles published in 4-year college level composition journals, such as *The Journal of the Conference on College Composition and Communication* (CCCC) (Kolln & Hancock, 2005). From personal experience, when I have mentioned the word *grammar* to those in different universities' English departments, many composition educators' postures stiffen, with tense jaws and pursed lips, as though I have uttered a taboo word. As the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2004a) Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar stated, "Grammar is the skunk in the garden party of the liberal arts" (para. 1).

The reaction against grammar is partly due to fear of going back to the days when grammar instruction, rather than writing itself, was a primary focus. The overall idea within the composition community, as indicated especially by College Composition and Communication, is that college is not the place for grammar instruction. One reason

given for not teaching SWE is that little time is available in composition classes to teach grammar along with the previously discussed writing skills (Toor, 2009). Second, teaching grammar is against the prestige of teaching at the university level (MacDonald, 2007) as college is considered a bastion of higher learning and grammar is a lower level skill (Micciche, 2004). After all, many reason, students should have already learned grammar in secondary schools.

Many FYC teachers and the composition community assume students learned SWE in elementary and secondary school. However, even if some students have not learned it prior to FYC, they will probably still be graded for it in their formal writing assignments, as shown by an Internet search of rubrics used in various universities' first-year composition courses. Are FYC instructors assessing students on something not being taught? What happens to the student who constantly loses a percentage of his or her grades due to SWE errors? Are these students simply being passed on to their next classes without any help in teaching them the formal SWE writing? Or do they fail the FYC class without having received the help they need to improve their use of SWE in their writing? My concern with the composition community dismissing the idea of teaching grammar in FYC is that they are ignoring those FYC students who need some type of help with SWE, as well as not guiding the teachers who instruct these students.

It is not that I want FYC to become solely a grammar class; I do not. I do, however, want FYC students who are having trouble using SWE to receive the help they need along with their other writing needs. Of course, I would rather FYC students arrive with enough knowledge of Standard Written English that they would not make blatant errors. But the truth is that not all students have the skill to write in the formal grammar of

academia, SWE (Graham et al., 2007; National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, 2003; "Writing Is the Key," 2008).

However, using SWE in formal writing does not imply that FYC students should be able to write papers totally free of all and any SWE errors. Writing without ever making an SWE error is virtually impossible; no one writes following every SWE rule all of the time (Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008). First, I doubt if few, if any, really know all of the rules in the grammar handbooks, and second some of the rules in grammar handbooks are basically obsolete in current language trends; the handbooks have simply not caught up with the changes in language. The idea of writing formal papers in SWE is to follow most of the rules in handbooks, especially those rules whose users are considered to be uneducated if they do not follow said rules. This will be discussed in more detail later.

Some students have trouble with writing formal papers using SWE in first-year composition courses throughout American public universities. I know because FYC teachers talk about their students' writing issues, including SWE issues. Instructors who teach first-year composition realize that some of today's FYC students have trouble writing in SWE (Baron, 2003; Blaauw-Hara, 2006, 2007). I have had such students. For the past 20 years, I have taught first-year composition, as well as developmental English, at community colleges, large, public 4-year universities, and small, private institutions. In my experience, some students have problems writing using Standard Written English, which makes reading their prose difficult, even though the main idea may still be understandable.

Many composition scholars, including Britton, Elbow, Emig, Moffett, and Murray, have claimed that the coherence of a student's ideas is more important than the

5

grammatical correctness of the student's writing, a claim that many teachers assume to mean that grammar does not matter. The National Capital Language Resource Center (2004) seems to reiterate this stance.  About this idea, however, I am concerned.  Not looking at SWE in creative or narrative writing or early drafts may be justifiable, except in formal academic writing. In formal academic writing, SWE must be important: rubrics used by many FYC teachers include SWE as one of the criterion. For example, the Written Communication Value Rubric by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2014) available on line for FYC teachers to use includes grammar as a criterion, indicating the importance of SWE to formal written communication.

For the most part the composition community has told FYC educators not to focus on grammar, but are the educators prepared to teach or help those students whose writing is not standard? FYC teachers without an educational background in the teaching of composition or in the issues surrounding SWE education may tend to rely heavily on textbooks required for the course, including the grammar handbook, required by many universities as found in a cursory internet search (University of Georgia, University of Florida, Kent State University, Ohio State University).  Grammar handbooks employ terminology and definitions, which are difficult to understand  and not necessarily helpful to students (Fish, 2009b, para. 14).  The teachers may also focus on using worksheets and drills (Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar, [ATEG], n.d.; WPA, n.d.), as well as memorizing the definitions and terminology, all of which have been proven ineffective and do not decrease the number of SWE errors in students' compositions (Hartwell, 1985; Myhill, Lines, & Watson, 2011; Shaughnessy, 1994).

Because composition scholars believe, for the most part, that teaching formal SWE grammar using worksheets, definitions, and terminology is ineffective (Andrews, 2005; Andrews et al., 2006; Devet, 2002; Fish, 2009a), FYC teachers need to rethink how they might teach grammar (Curzan, 2009). Some ideas and techniques for teaching grammar include using students inherent knowledge of language (Liu, 2011; Noguchi, 1991), teaching in context of students' writing (Kolln, 1999; Weaver, 2012), using short, 5-to-15 minute mini-lessons (Weaver, 1996b; Brown, 2008), and having students use sentence combining (Andrews, 2005; Andrews et al., 2006). However, most of these ideas about effective methods of teaching grammar have been published in journals or books geared toward elementary and secondary teachers of English, such as the *English Journal,* a journal for junior and senior high teachers.

Very little research from secondary education reaches college composition faculty. Few college composition teachers have been exposed to the above techniques because professional articles in composition journals on teaching grammar are few or of little help. Articles on effective ways to teach grammar are published in English as a Second Language (ESL) journals, relating to ESL students; in community college level journals, dealing with basic writing courses; or in writing lab journals for writing tutors. Most articles mentioning grammar in college level composition journals, e.g., *College English, College Composition and Communication (CCC), Research in the Teaching of English (RTE),* and *English Education,* discuss grammar either in passing or in a negative context, saying it should not be taught or teaching it harms students' writing. There is a lack of current research on grammar, especially for first-year composition studies, in

composition journals geared toward helping first-year composition faculty at the university level help their students.

Teachers may not even understand what help the students need. Some SWE errors come from writers not paying attention or not carefully proofreading their work. Some come from not knowing or understanding how to use an SWE rule. In addition, many linguists agree that students who have trouble writing in SWE may have strong cultural dialects, or "home speech," which is employing grammar rules that are "non-standard," i.e., different than those of the standard of SWE. Students from diverse backgrounds where English is their Second Language (ESL) may also have trouble writing in SWE. According to the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC, 2009) *CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers*, "Second language writers include international visa students, refugees, and permanent residents as well as naturalized and native-born citizens . . . many of [whom] have grown up speaking languages other than English at home" (para. 2). Their writing may differ from SWE "because the nature and functions of discourse, audience, and rhetorical appeals often differ across cultural, national, [and] linguistic…contexts" (CCCC, 2009, para. 2). Problems with using SWE may not just be about the rules, but may also reflect cultural differences. Therefore, many ESL students may be seen by FYC teachers as unprepared, but in actuality they are somewhere between native English speakers and non-native speakers (Fern, 2009). In other words, many students are not "unprepared" but instead are simply in the process of learning to communicate effectively in the SWE of the culture.

Today, universities have a more diverse student body, with more dialect and ESL users in writing courses (CCCC, 2009), and an increase is expected in the number of students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds projected to be attending college by 2020 (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education [WICHE], 2012). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were "3.5 million foreign-born U.S. residents ages 19-24 and an additional 5.5 million English learners in K-12 public schools" (Fern, 2009, p. 14). The higher number of ESL and dialect learners in secondary schools indicates a future increase in numbers at universities. As additional non-traditional and culturally diverse students attend college, a growing number of FYC students may be writing following the rules of a "non-standard" (not SWE) dialect, creating an even greater need for some type of help in SWE.

Linguists agree that no dialect is better than another and that all dialects are rule based (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001). The problem is that most educators without a linguistics background do not understand that all dialects are equal; neither do the employers or the average educated person, who believe that people who write or speak in non-standard dialects are ignorant or are using slang (Hill, 2009; Johnson & VanBrackle, 2012; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001). Individuals who continue to write using a non-standard dialect in lieu of SWE are judged by their teachers, their employers, and their co-workers. This is not to say that *all* SWE errors are judged, as all of us make SWE errors. Virtually no one employs or recognizes all of the grammar handbook rules, as shown by William's (1981) article where he purportedly placed 100 errors throughout his article to see if his readers would notice. In fact, it is certain that there will be errors within this writing in spite of careful editing. Some errors are noticed and some are not,

9

depending upon who is reading.  In fact, composition teachers don't necessarily agree on

which SWE rules should be followed by all writers, so it is difficult to ascertain which

should be taught as important (Connors & Lunsford, 1988; Williams, 1981).

When SWE errors are found, they are judged, albeit all are not judged equally.

Certain errors are indeed stigmatized, as are those who do not follow them (Wheeler,

2008; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001). Some errors carry more of a stigma. Those

rules carrying stigma may, therefore, be important to teach. For example, the following

rules carry stigmas if not used:

Using apostrophes for possession (e.g., Matt's house)

Placing the –s on the 3rd person singular verb (e.g., he goes)

Adding the –s marker for plural nouns (e.g., 10 cents)

Using the form of *to be* to form progressive forms, describing an ongoing action (e.g.,

John is singing)

These rules as well as other ESL or dialect errors are considered "distracting and

stigmatizing" by college professors not educated in the basics of linguistics and dialects

(Haselwander, 2008, p.6).  In academic circles an educated scholar means understanding

and using SWE, and students not using SWE may be considered uneducated both within

(Lynch-Biniek, 2005) and without of the university environment. Therefore, if SWE is a

status marker essential to professional and social advancement (Beason, 2001;

Hasselwander, 2008; Lindemann, 2001; Lynch-Biniek, 2005), then students using these

forms of non-standard writing may be passed over for employment or promotion

opportunities (National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges,

2004).  If we as educators ignore the stigmatized deviations from SWE in our students'

writing, we do these students a disservice as we are not preparing them for professional and social advancement (Quibble & Griffin, 2007).

I am not advocating a return to drilling and using worksheets to teach grammar at the college level. Nor am I suggesting that we focus entirely on the grammar or even present grammar as a primary focus, especially not to the detriment of critical thinking or even self-expression. However, I do think we as composition scholars need to make sure our students are writing in such a way as to be considered educated by others, especially potential future colleagues, employers, and faculty. FYC teachers, then, need to be prepared to help such students with SWE.

When students taking post-secondary level composition classes do not have the basics of SWE, the instructor must decide whether to teach grammar or not, and if so, how. Instructors of first-year composition need the preparation and education to understand the complexities of the SWE issue in order to make a sound pedagogical decision (Myhill et al., 2011; National Council of English Teachers [NCTE], 2004b). Instructors' preparation may be dependent on the number and type of graduate courses they have taken, their years of experience, and the amount and scope of their research.

Many teaching FYC in large public universities are not full-time, tenured professors. Instead, FYC teachers include part-time adjunct professors, associate and assistant professors, and teaching assistants (TAs) and graduate assistants (GAs) working on a Master of Arts degree (MA) or a Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) (Moghtader, Cotch, & Hague, 2001). Some, especially TAs and GAs, may have little, if any, prior teaching experience. There are "problems associated with leaving the teaching of writing to inexperienced graduate students" (College Board, 2006, p. 54). Not only are some FYC

instructors inexperienced, but their English degrees range in various concentrations from creative writing to literature to rhetoric, which may not prepare the instructors to teach SWE. Those teaching English often have a background in appreciating and analyzing literature rather than an understanding of language development and rules (Baron, 2003; CCCC, 1974; Lynch-Biniek, 2005; Myhill, Jones, & Watson, 2013). Although some graduate level English courses explore various writing theories, not all FYC teachers have taken these courses. Courses taken by FYC instructors may be mostly in the field of literature or creative writing, with few or none in education (how to teach), composition (how to teach writing), or linguistics (how to use the nature and structure of language).

To help those without a background in education, many large public universities enroll TAs and GAs in at least one 3-hour teacher preparation course, which they take concurrently while they teach FYC the first time (University of Memphis, 2011b; University of New Hampshire, n.d.; University of Alabama, n.d.a). Some universities require courses or short workshops prior to teaching (Eng, 2006; University of Alabama, n.d.a; University of Arizona, n.d.). However, only a few do not let TAs teach until after one year of teacher preparation (North Carolina State University, n.d.).

There has also been concern that FYC teachers simply do not know enough about the premise of linguistics or the nature and structure of language for them to be able to properly teach (Myhill & Jones, 2011). Understanding the basic structure of language can help teachers understand the types of errors students make, see linguistic patterns in the errors, and teach students the SWE rules (McDuffie, 2010). In other words, teachers who are familiar with certain linguistic elements can help students understand the differences in the language they use in informal situations, "home dialect," and the more formal

usage of SWE (Asselin, 2002; Blaaaw-Hara, 2007; Fogel & Ehri, 2000).  Teachers may also be able to help English as a Second Language (ESL) students transition from their original language to using Standard Written English.

None of this is to propose that composition level courses should return to teaching grammar as a main aspect of the course. Neither is it suggested that years of pedagogical advancement in the field of composition studies be ignored. However, the fact exists that some students are entering first-year composition classes writing in non-standard English, and the instructors must make the decision of whether to teach, grade, or ignore this area of writing instruction.

All of this leads me to wonder how first-year composition teachers are responding to students who write prose with numerous SWE grammatical errors, if teachers' educational background and experience makes a difference in their approach and the techniques they use, if any, and how effective they feel they are in helping students.

The significance of learning the above is that SWE is an issue discussed in the fields of basic writing, ESL, and elementary and secondary education, but outside of these areas, the composition community remains fairly silent on the issue of grammar in the first-year composition classroom. It is time to address the issue within the profession. The significance of this study is to open a conversation within the composition community regarding how first-year composition teachers are dealing with students who do not write using SWE.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Before the mid-20th century, much of college writing was graded on grammar usage. College writing classes focused on teaching traditional rhetoric, which included traditional grammar. Grammar was taught through worksheets and drills, isolating grammar from student writing, which does not improve student writing (Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Rose, 2010;Weaver, 2012). Due to the negative impact of traditional grammar teaching, many have called these "drill-and-kill exercises" (Devet, 2002, p. 10; Micciche, 2004, p. 717). Researchers Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer's in 1963 illustrated that teaching traditional grammar had either little, or possibly a negative, effect on student writing. Since this research, composition scholars have debated over whether SWE should be taught in the FYC classroom (Curzan, 2009; Hartwell, 1985; Micciche, 2004; Myhill, 2005), and for the most part, teaching SWE "has been out of favor" with college professors from the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st Centuries (Schuster, 2003, p. 20). Because of this phenomenon, Mulroy (2003), a Classics teacher since 1973, states that few college students in the U.S. understand SWE.

**Student Preparation for FYC**

In general it seems many composition scholars believe that grammar should not be taught in the first-year composition courses. Some scholars believe that teaching SWE is one of the "lowskills" (Micciche, 2004, p. 716) and beneath the college level of academia. Many composition scholars would rather work with something that has "greater prestige" (MacDonald, 2007, p. 595). University faculty have academic status, feeling grammar instruction is better suited to elementary and secondary educators.

Many believe SWE does not need to be taught in the FYC because secondary educators are preparing students in SWE usage (Toor, 2009, para. 16).

SWE is part of the core curriculum for elementary and secondary education, as found in the federal guidelines for the No Child Left Behind, Act of 2001 (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010) and the new Common Core Standards, currently adopted by "forty-five states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2012b, para. 1). The Core Standards include "Development of Grammatical Knowledge" and "Making Appropriate Grammar and Usage Choices in Writing and Speaking" (CCSSO, 2012a, p. 29) and are "heavily focused on grammatical constructions, which students are expected to master" (Myhill et al., 2013, p. 78). These outcomes are tested using standardized tests, and secondary educators are under pressure to ensure their students pass these tests in order to comply with the federal and state mandates (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

However, passing grammar tests does not guarantee that students know how to use SWE in their formal writing. More than half, 65%, of college instructors have stated "that their state's standards prepared students poorly or very poorly for college-level work in English/writing . . ." (ACT, 2007, p.3). Therefore, secondary teachers may believe they are accomplishing the goal of satisfactorily teaching SWE by teaching to the tests, but post-secondary instructors believe the students are not necessarily prepared for FYC writing.

According to research, college instructors actually place more stress on students understanding SWE than their high school counterparts (Patterson & Duer, 2006). The

ACT National Curriculum Survey indicates that post-secondary instructors rank grammar and usage much higher than secondary instructors (ACT, 2007). In fact, high school students bound for college are taught less grammar than those who are not college bound (Patterson & Duer, 2006, p. 85). Yet according to a study of California college instructors, 65% believe that students should be capable of using SWE when they graduate from high school (Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates of the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California [ICASCA], 2002); however, many students may not be prepared.

In order to ensure that high school graduates are arriving in FYC with effective knowledge, some colleges' entrance requirements include the optional writing portion of the SAT or ACT. As is commonly understood among college faculty, these standardized test scores do not ensure student knowledge, especially since the written portion is not scored in a way to indicate if the students use SWE in their writing. According to Prince (2009), "Graders [of the writing portion] are advised to play down surface errors . . . . [and] grammar and prose mechanics" (para. 11, 13). Since the test graders are not necessarily scoring for SWE, the test scores are not accurate indicators of a student's ability to understand and use SWE. Students may receive an adequate or high score on the test, yet still not write using SWE.

Even with the above facilitation to help students be prepared for first-year composition, research and personal experience show that many students entering first-year composition courses at large, public, 4-year universities do not have the skills to write relatively error free prose. For example, Budra (2010) wonders how students have graduated high school without "being taught simple grammar and punctuation rules" (p.

18). In a spring 2002 report, California college faculty estimated "only 41% [of their students] were able to use correct grammar and punctuation . . . . and more than 50% of their students fail[ed] to produce papers relatively free of language errors, according to. . . faculty respondents" (ICASCA, 2002, p. 4). The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (NCW, 2003) stated writing is being neglected and called for something to be done about students who "cannot write with the skill expected of them today" calling for grammar to again be a "pillar of learning" (p. 9). The NCW (2003) also stated that students in the first-year composition classrooms are not adequately prepared to write papers with minimal grammatical mistakes and "more than half of new college students are unable to write a paper relatively free of errors" (Graham et al., 2007, p. 3).

The above research backs up personal experience of first-year composition instructors who understand that some students in FYC do not have the necessary grasp of SWE for formal academic writing (Baron, 2003; Blaauw-Hara, 2006, 2007). According to Huddleston and Pullum (2003), college and university faculty "commonly complain that today's high-school graduates are not acquainted with even the most basic concepts of grammar" (p. 20). First-year composition colleagues commiserate by exchanging stories of incorrect SWE grammar usage in their students' writings. According to Lynch-Biniek (2005), English faculty hear their "colleagues lament, 'These students can't write!'" (p. 34). From experience and research, it is obvious that some students are in FYC classes with less than adequate knowledge of how to write using SWE.

**Teaching SWE in FYC**

If students are coming in to FYC without adequate knowledge of how to use SWE in their formal writing, then why does it seem like the composition community in general is so hesitant to teach it? One problem with teaching SWE in FYC is time constraints. Time in the first-year composition class is limited and, therefore, valuable; many scholars discuss how teaching SWE interferes with teaching the more important aspects of writing (Toor, 2009), such as voice, clarity, support, and organization. Teachers are focused on teaching the aspects of composition discussed in the professional field, which include everything from self-expression and persuasive writing to paper formatting and parenthetical citations. Because SWE instruction "takes time away from the real processes of . . . writing" (Hoffman & Topping, 2008, p. 32), many believe time teaching SWE to a class is wasted (Hastings, 2012).

One of the composition community's basic fears of teaching, or even discussing, the use of SWE in FYC is that of composition reverting back to what Connors and Lunsford (1988) called the "Bad Old Days" (p. 395) of focusing on grammar almost to the exclusion of other aspects of writing and teaching. There is a fear that teachers will revert to using the traditional drills, worksheets, and terminology, which many composition scholars believe does not decrease the number of SWE errors in writing (Hartwell, 1985; Shaughnesssy, 1994; Walker & Myers, 2011).

Some scholars believe teaching grammar at the college level hinders students' ability to write (Kreuter, 2009; Rose, 2009). The belief that teaching SWE is harmful to student writing has become a mantra for composition studies since the Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer's 1963 study. One can barely read more than a

few articles on grammar and composition without being told that teaching SWE in FYC is harmful. Baron (2003) states grammar can be seriously overrated and focusing on its importance can lead to stilted writing and to students believing that all they need to do to improve their writing is to minimize surface errors.  Therefore, students may focus on surface errors to the exclusion of content, which leads to stilted, boring writing (Hartwell, 1998; Miller, 2008).

Grammar is also sometimes seen by FYC teachers as timeless and perfect rather than a description of the ever changing verbal language (Miller, 2008). In such cases SWE becomes not a means to an end, but an end in itself.  In other words, instead of students being taught to use grammar to better their writing and increase reader comprehension, grammar is taught as important in and by itself, which is what those against teaching formal grammar have been trying to prevent.

According to the NCTE 1986 Conference Background Statement, teaching grammar in isolation without connection to students' writing "hinders development of students' oral and written language" (Kolln & Hancock, 2005, p. 18).  One way it may hinder students' writing development is by taking power away from the students (Hartwell, 1985; Miccicche, 2004).  In addition, focusing on errors may increase students' fears (Lindemann, 2001) and constrain the mental process of creating knowledge (Elbow, 1981; Harris, 1997).  Elbow (1981) even goes further to state that ignoring grammar may be the best thing a writer can do. Another way teaching SWE in isolation may hinder students written language development is by focusing on SWE students cannot make appropriate context based decisions (Liu, 2011). After all, according to Hartwell (1985), students learn by manipulating language, not by studying SWE.

Although the NCTE statement is based on composition research, a problem occurs when some read the statement as saying that all teaching of grammar hindered student writing. The NCTE statement "inadvertently discourage[d] some professors from teaching grammar . . . altogether . . . [rather than discussing] the role [SWE]. . . play[s] in a variety of communication contexts" (Leahy, 2005, para. 4). The research shows that teaching grammar in isolation of student writing, especially by using worksheets and drills, has little effect on improving the majority of students' writing (Harris, 1997; Noguchi, 1991; Weaver 1996a). However, many in the composition community have taken the idea of not teaching SWE *in isolation*, and generalized it to not teaching SWE *at all*. Many have interpreted that teaching SWE the *traditional way* harms students' writing, and decided that teaching SWE *in any way* harms students' writing. However, Harris (1997) states that "to advocate an . . . unconvincing stance [of] (no concern with error at all)" was unwise because "even if mistakes do not interfere with what a writer has to say, they can still do serious harm to her credibility" (p.80). Students' "ability to prosper over the long term requires facility in the dominant American language" (CCCC, 2011), which is SWE. SWE is important for formal writing, and ignoring grammar in the classroom has not worked (Kolln & Hancock, 2005).

A "standard" exists, SWE, and to not educate students in the use of SWE takes power away from the students (Kolln & Hancock, 2005). Research in the United Kingdom shows that attention to grammar can "have [a] significant impact on the quality of writing" (Hancock, 2012, para. 1). Grammar and discourse are inherently tied together (Hancock, 2012), and grammar knowledge is part of effective and clearer communication (Conley, 2003; Micciche, 2004; Myhill et al., 2011). Not using SWE can and will

interfere with the readability or understanding of the text. Even though SWE is not the whole of communication, "good grammar is a key to good writing; it provides clarity and understanding for the reader" (Beattie, 2004, p. 10). Therefore, teaching SWE in first-year composition may help students advance (Ray, 2008).

<div align="center">**Reasons FYC Students Need SWE**</div>

Some scholars believe that teaching SWE in FYC is a necessity (Beason, 2001; Budra, 2010; Hasselwander, 2008), and composition studies should return to educating students in SWE (Budra, 2010; Fish, 2009a) in order for students to be prepared to communicate effectively and write at a college level for academic, career, and social advancement (NCW, 2004; NCW, 2005; Quibble & Griffin, 2007). SWE is part of the academic community's expected "cultural literacy," the expectations of knowledge and thinking in order to be considered part of that community (Bizzell, 1984).

**SWE and Academic Success**

Linguists Wheeler and Swords (2006) state that students need SWE in order to succeed in school because SWE is the standard for the powerful, the elite, the prestigious, and the educated. Effective communication includes SWE and is "essential to achieving many of the goals regularly articulated in composition studies" (as cited in Micciche, 2004, p. 717). A study funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on defining college readiness found one of the academic skills necessary for college level writing is "to be largely free of grammatical, spelling, and usage errors" (Conley, 2011, p. 10). Writing in a scholarly manner for university courses means writing using SWE. Those not using the SWE are considered "faulty" by a majority of teachers (Ray, 2008).

Success in college courses could depend somewhat on the use of SWE. The Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project (2011) reports on the importance for college success of "developing the knowledge of conventions," consisting of "surface features of a text, such as mechanics, [and] spelling. . ." ("Developing Knowledge of Conventions," para. 1). The report is based on current pedagogical research from secondary and post-secondary faculty nationwide.

According to Mulroy (2003) another reason SWE is important is to help teach students to analyze and think critically. Today, a main focus in teaching FYC is to help students think critically, analyze arguments, and synthesize ideas. Mulroy believes that students cannot be taught to analyze, critique, or synthesize ideas in an essay, or other large body of work, without first understanding the portions that make up the essay: the sentence. Thus, teaching the basics of SWE is important to overall thinking and writing.

Another outcome of FYC is to write using SWE when needed. According to the "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition," by the end of first-year composition, students should be able to "control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling" (Council of Writing Program Administrators [WPA], 2008, "Knowledge of Conventions," para. 1), and faculty should help "students learn the conventions of usage . . ." (WPA, 2008, "Knowledge of Conventions," para. 2).

In educational settings, many professors consider certain SWE errors as "distracting and stigmatizing" (Haselwander, 2008, p. 6), especially certain non-standard dialect errors, even over English as a Second Language (ESL) errors (Johnson & VanBrackle, 2012). According to many, an educated scholar means understanding and using SWE

22

(Lynch-Biniek, 2005, pp. 29-30). Although SWE is only a small component of creating a college scholar, the WPA, NCTE, and NWP include students using the conventions of standard grammar in college-level discourse. In fact, those outside of the composition discipline have appealed to the English department to "teach the students grammar" (Walker & Myers, 2011, para. 2).

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA, 2009) studies how well colleges and universities teach core curriculum, with composition being one of the seven basic subjects for an essential general education. ACTA defines composition study as an "introductory college writing class, focusing on grammar, style, clarity, and argument" (p. 10). The inclusion of grammar in the definition supports the idea that college composition courses are expected to teach students to write using SWE.

**SWE and Occupational Success**

Writing using SWE can be important to students' careers because many employers find some errors in SWE "distracting and stigmatizing" (Haselwander, 2008, p. 6) in business writing, even in emails and memos. According to the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2004) report, all types of business writing are expected to use SWE. According to Budra (2010), an FYC instructor, "The basic [grammar] needed by the majority of people to make themselves clear in a memo or e-mail is really not that hard to grasp or communicate to others. Why not teach it then?" (p. 18). According to College Board (2006) feedback from 64 human resource directors, employers are dissatisfied with recent college graduate employees who cannot use grammar or punctuation of SWE.

Today's employers complain that college graduates lack effective writing skills

(Quible, 2008; Selingo, 2012), which include SWE. Employers state that effective

communication is imperative for advancement from entry level jobs (Louisiana State

University English, 2013; NCW, 2004). According to a survey by the Society for Human

Resource Management (2012) and AARP, "Approximately one-half of organizations

(51%) indicated that writing in English (grammar, spelling, etc.) was [is] the top basic

skill observed among older workers that is not readily seen among younger workers" and

45% of employers surveyed are adding grammar training programs for their employees

(para. 1). The NCW (2004) report finds that 58.7% of the corporate leaders surveyed said

SWE is extremely important and 36.5% said it is important. In the NCW (2005) report,

almost 100% of the state human resource director respondents state grammar was either

important (28.6%) or extremely important (71.4%).

Although knowing SWE does not guarantee financial success, "not having access will

almost certainly guarantee failure" (Delpit, 1997, para 2). In other words, success does

not solely depend upon using SWE in formal writing, but if SWE is not used,

advancement may almost certainly not occur (Quibble & Grifin, 2007; NCW, 2004,

2005).

**SWE and Social Status**

SWE is a status marker and essential to social advancement as well as professional

advancement (Beason, 2001; Hasselwander, 2008; Lindemann, 2001; Lynch-Biniek,

2005). Some SWE errors are common to SWE writers who may not understand the rule

or are simply not paying attention to their writing. Others not using SWE rules may be

due to a writer's home dialect; some of these SWE rules are considered status markers by

most Americans. To ignore the socially charged judgment on those who do not use SWE does not help those students acquire higher level education or careers (Delpit, 1988). It seems that the composition community has forgotten the social stigma of not using SWE when they insist on not teaching it in FYC. Although intelligent, many people who have not mastered SWE are considered uneducated and are stigmatized by society (Connors & Lunsford, 1988; Haselwander, 2008; Micciche, 2004) even though composition scholars realize that good grammar does not necessarily equal good writing. Therefore, Asselin (2002) and Blaaw-Hara (2007), among others, believe it is important to teach the "code of power," SWE.

Even when people do not realize they are doing so, they judge writing that has various dialect errors as being "substandard and careless," and continuous errors are thought to be due to the writer's non-conformity (Johnson & VanBrackle, 2012, p. 37). Those who use non-standard grammar are considered uneducated by many (Johnson & VanBrackle, 2012).

Most schools are failing when it comes to teaching SWE to urban minority students (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Many non-linguists believe dialect is simply SWE with mistakes; however, dialects are rule based, and linguistically no dialect is better than another (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001). Students using a dialect are "writing correctly following the language patterns of their community" (Wheeler, 2008, p. 55).

According to Lindemann (2001), for linguists, SWE is "that variety of English used by the educated upper middle class, Americans who historically wield the greatest social, political, and economic clout" (p. 67). Therefore, those who mainly use the non-standard dialects, not SWE, in formal situations may not be accepted as equals in social, political,

or economic situations.  However, some dialects are more socially and academically

acceptable than others. For example, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), also

known as Ebonics and Black English, is a rule driven language (Rickford, 1999) but is a

stigmatized dialect (Wheeler, 2008; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001) and has been a

sensitive issue for over 50 years.

According to linguistic experts, such as Wolfram (1991), Wheeler (2008), and

Rickford (1999), some AAVE rules include no –s on 3rd person singular present tense

verbs (e.g., he go), no –s marker on plural nouns with countable adjectives (50 cent), the

habitual "be" (He always *be coming* to school late), absence of "to be" verb (*They in* the

house, and *We going* to the store), order (What *that was*?), and the double subject (*Mary*

*she* like me). These grammatical rules, differing from SWE, are seen as a sharp

distinction between social classes, creating a social stigma, with society in general

believing the grammar is "ungrammatical" even though linguists know it is "systematic

and rule-governed" (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001).  These dialectal differences are

"sensitive to social marking," and are considered to be indicators of "lower social status"

(Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001).  Thus, FYC teachers allowing students to continue

using non-standard dialects which are judged socially in formal writing is doing a

disservice to those students.

**Current Writing Assessment Includes SWE**

In general, it seems that most first-year composition instructors must consider SWE

as important to formal writing because they hold their students accountable for grammar

usage in formal writing assessments.  Currently, rubrics are one of the more popular

means of assessment (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010), and one of the criteria in common on

most writing rubrics is SWE.  Many large 4-year public universities use rubrics to assess

writing, as found by researching on the web.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU, 2014) has posted a

"Written Communications Value Rubric"; one of the five fundamental criteria evaluates

"control of syntax and mechanics" with the highest score being for virtually error free

writing.  This document was "developed by teams of faculty experts representing

colleges and universities across the United States" (AACU, 2014, para. 1), reflecting the

importance that many faculty place on SWE. According to the introduction to the rubric,

the research used to guide the writing of the rubric comes from the "National Council of

Teachers of English/Council of Writing Program Administrators' White Paper on Writing

Assessment (2008) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication's

Writing Assessment: A Position Statement (2008)" (AACU, 2014, "Framing Language,

para. 5)  Because SWE is a part of the grading rubrics used for assessing formal papers in

FYC, many composition teachers must feel that SWE is important in formal writing.

Many university FYC courses use rubrics with SWE as criteria. A brief search online

shows first-year composition rubrics that include SWE as a part of the writing grade for

student papers posted from English departments across the United States: East Carolina

University, Georgia State University, Iowa State University, Louisiana State University

Michigan State University, Texas A & M (Kerschbaum & Killingsworth, 2007),  Tulane,

University of Alabama, Birmingham, University of Arizona, the University of Toledo,

Washington State University, and Wayne State University, to name a few.  One

university, the University of Houston (2006), conducted an Undergraduate Writing

Assessment, finding that the students scored the lowest in grammar skills, and one of the

recommendations was for instructors to "help students develop knowledge and strategies for effective editing and improving quality . . . [which] requires the effective application of knowledge about grammar, mechanics,[ and] disciplinary conventions" (p. 20). Their 2009 Writing Assessment Rubric includes SWE.

One common reason for the popularity of rubrics is they are supposed to help reduce grader bias and help graders focus on other aspects of writing besides SWE. However, a recent study shows that graders are "strongly influenced by the trivial mechanics and superficial aspects of students' writing" (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010, p. 26). One participant even commented that one writer obviously did not use grammar or spell check, so he or she deserved a poor grade. It is obvious that "students are still assessed based on standard edited English [SWE] and must be able to understand and produce discourse in this preferred dialect" (Brammer, 2010, para.1).

## FYC Teachers and Preparation

Regardless of whether SWE is taught or not, "formal courses in the teaching of writing (including English Composition) should be the responsibility of well-trained, qualified professional staff" (College Board, 2006, p. 67). Well educated professionals are imperative to any teaching environment, but in large 4-year colleges there are not enough teachers with MAs or PhDs in the subject area of composition or formal writing to teach all of the first-year composition courses. Also, within the past 10 years, the number of tenure track faculty have decreased with approximately more than 50% non tenure track and over 25% of the faculty part time, including adjunct and teaching or graduate assistants who may have limited or no access to office space and have overworked schedules, which can compromise the quality of education (June, 2012, para.

9; Kezar & Maxey, 2013). Adjuncts, as well as teaching or graduate assistants, teach high demand courses such as first-year composition, and the numbers have been rising rapidly especially in large public institutions (June, 2012).

**Teaching/Graduate Assistants**

Usually at 4 –year public universities with graduate programs in English, teaching assistants or graduate assistants teach many of the FYC classes.  However, there are definite "problems associated with leaving the teaching of writing to inexperienced graduate students" (College Board, 2006, p. 54).  TAs and GAs may have little or no prior teaching experience, and possibly no background in writing related upper division or graduate courses, such as linguistic, education, or composition classes.

Some graduate level English courses explore various writing theories, but not all TAs or GAs have taken these courses prior to teaching. Some TAs may only need a Bachelor's degree in order to teach first-year composition (University of Alabama, n.d.a), and the degree may not have to be in English. Usually TAs do need some graduate courses (University of California, Los Angeles [UCLA], 2011) or at least 18 hours of graduate credit in English, and many have Master's degrees in the field (University of Memphis 2011a; Florida State University, 2011). Many times nothing in the job description mentions prior graduate course requirements in composition, education, or linguistics/language awareness for TAs or GAs as per various university websites. Lack of educational background in composition, education or linguistics may affect the way some TAs and GAs teach SWE and how they respond to students not using SWE.

Most universities try to compensate for TAs' and GAs' lack of education and experience by requiring some type of teacher preparation class. Some require TAs and

29

GAs to enroll in at least one 3-hour teacher preparation course, many times while

teaching for the first time (University of Memphis, 2011b; University of California Los

Angeles, 2011; Florida State University, 2011; University of New Hampshire, n.d.;

University of Alabama, n.d.a), meaning some TAs and GAs are learning composition and

teaching theories at the same time they are trying to teach classes and grade papers.  Is

this really enough time to learn how to teach FYC, let alone how to respond to such a

controversial issue as SWE use in students' writing?

Most TAs and GAs are balancing full time graduate course loads while teaching at

least one class of FYC, which includes planning classes, creating assignments, learning

the text, and grading papers.  Adding on the SWE needs of their students may seem

overwhelming, especially if TAs and GAs have no background in education or writing.

TAs and GAs may not have had any previous experience in composition studies or

the theoretical and pedagogical discussions within the composition community because

TAs and GAs, "by the very nature of their position, are just learning about composition

theory and pedagogy and are inexperienced instructors" (Webb-Sunderhaus & Amdon,

2011, "Past as Prologue," para. 4).  If FYC teachers do not have the background in

education or linguistics, they may rely on the traditional approach to cope with the lack of

SWE in some of their students' writing. One example is at Purdue where some basic

writing instructors are "not aligned with the theoretical understandings and best practices

of our [composition] field and instead relied [rely] on skill-and-drill workbook-style

approaches that emphasized grammatical correctness" (Webb-Sunderhaus & Amidon,

2011, "Past as Prologue," para. 3). This may be happening at more universities than just

Purdue. In fact, according to Rustick (2007), those new to the profession of teaching

writing who have missed much of the grammar debate are relying on teaching SWE by using terminology and drill-and-kill exercises.

More preparation time for teachers of FYC would seem appropriate (Myhill et al., 2013), and a few universities do require courses or orientation prior to teaching (University of Alabama n.d.a.; University of Arizona, n.d.). Eastern Washington University holds a mandatory 3-day 10 hour per day pre-fall workshop for new instructors (Eng, 2006, "The Pre-Fall Teaching Workshop," para. 1), and Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, gives mandatory learning sessions each fall and also periodically throughout the school year; however, attendance is sparse (Webb-Sunderhaus & Amdon, 2011). During an Internet search, only one university, North Carolina State University, was found that does not let TAs or GAs teach until after one year of teacher preparation.

**Literature Focus**

Those teaching FYC often have more knowledge of literature (or creative writing) than grammar (Baron, 2003; Lynch-Biniek, 2005; Myhill et al., 2013). According to the CCCC (1974), "The training of most English teachers has concentrated on the appreciation and analysis of literature, rather than on an understanding of the nature of language" ("Introduction," para. 2), insinuating that the main influence of literature or creative writing concentrations is not on SWE, and the graduate may not have a strong grasp of Standard Written English. According to The Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar (ATEG, n.d.), the "lack of knowledge about language has fostered such regressive pedagogies as drill, emphasis on surface errors, and prescriptive rules that limit rather than encourage informed language choices" ("Background," para. 3). Without an

31

understanding of language, teachers may resort to drills and worksheets (WPA, n.d.) as discussed earlier.

Also, most of today's FYC teachers grew up in a time when SWE teaching was abandoned in many schools due to the thought that it was harmful to student writing. Therefore, most current English teachers were not taught grammar in school and may not have a good working knowledge of SWE (Kolln & Hancock, 2005; Myhill et al., 2013). According to a study by Myhill et al. (2011), teachers with limited SWE knowledge give wrong explanation or are anxious when answering students' SWE questions. Also, teachers who feel uneasy about their own SWE knowledge tend to rely more on rule books (Myhill et al., 2013).

Without basic SWE knowledge, instructors rely heavily on the course textbooks, including the basic textbook used in most first-year composition courses: the grammar handbook, such as the *St. Martin Handbook* (University of Georgia Department of English, n.d.), *The New McGraw-Hill Handbook* (University of Florida Department of English, 2011)*, or "any grammar handbook" (Ohio University, n.d.)*. Instructors may simply be teaching the rules in the traditional way by looking up handbook definitions and discussing grammar terms in isolation, relying on the usage guides to tell them the rules.  However, they must have a basic knowledge of the terms before understanding the explanation of the rules. Teachers relying on handbooks must themselves understand the terminology and definitions first before teaching SWE.

On the other hand, teachers who do not understand terminology may be instructing students to look up the definitions and terminology in the handbook in order for them to learn the rules to use in their writing.  However, the terminology and definitions within

the handbooks are difficult to follow and understand for most students.  As S. Fish (2009b) states, using handbooks are "unhelpful because its prescriptions presuppose the knowledge most of our students don't have" (para. 11). If teachers refer students to the handbook without adequate preparation, students can become frustrated. Also, simply knowing grammar definitions and terminology "has not influenced students' writing" (Fearn & Farnan, 2007, p. 66).

**Education and Writing Courses**

According to the CCCC (1974), many teachers are "forced to take a position on an aspect of their discipline [SWE] about which they have little information" ("Introduction," para. 2). Writing classes in composition or professional writing discuss theories and pedagogies in teaching writing and may help these first-year composition instructors be more confident in their teaching, offering them different strategies to choose from when teaching SWE.  Education classes also include various pedagogical theories, which help teachers to know how to create objectives, model learning, and check for comprehension, which can be used in teaching SWE. The more composition, technical, or professional writing classes, or education classes instructors have taken, the more teachers may have been exposed to and probably understand various theories and techniques of teaching writing, including SWE.

**Linguistic Courses**

Linguistics classes or courses that include language structure or dialectology may be the most helpful in preparing teachers to teach FYC to ESL students or those who use a dialect much different than SWE. In many FYC classrooms, students come from widely diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, whose home language, or dialect, is not the

standard of SWE (CCCC, 2009; Lovejoy, Fox, & Willis, 2009). For this reason, students

may write in their own dialect, and because some of the dialects' rules are different than

SWE, the students are seen as making "errors" or their writing is "incorrect."

Most linguists understand that there is no "right" or "wrong" grammar since all

grammars have rules (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2005). Each person uses the grammar

of his or her particular dialect, and all dialects are rule driven. All speakers innately know

the rules of their grammar, albeit mainly subconsciously. First-year composition students

are language experts; they just do not know they are. English instructors can help

students understand SWE by helping them "capitalize on this knowledge by making it

conscious through active, discovery learning" (Kolln & Gray, 2009; Liu, 2011, p. 359).

First-year composition teachers who have taken linguistics or language courses and/or

writing courses may have a deeper understanding of language and thus more insight into

teaching the grammar of SWE.   NCTE (2008) "affirm[s] strongly that teachers must

have the experiences and training that will enable them to understand and respect

diversity of dialects" ("Resolution," para. 4). The CCCC (2009) states that "any writing

course . . . that enrolls any second language writers should be taught by an instructor who

is able to identify and is prepared to address the linguistic and cultural needs of second

language writers" ("Teacher Preparation, para. 1). Those who have degrees in the

linguistic or writing field, or at least have taken upper level or graduate classes in writing

related courses, may understand these students' needs.

By understanding that all dialects have rules, teachers can show students how to

"code switch," change from how the dialect students speak at home or with friends to the

dialect of power, SWE (Asselin, 2007; Blaaw-Hara, 2007). Knowing the rules of dialects

can help teachers understand the types of errors some students make and teach these students the SWE rules (McDuffie, 2010). Teachers with linguistics or language backgrounds may see the patterns in the SWE errors of their students.

A teacher who is aware of languages and language structures may be more sensitive to students' errors as well as the difficulty in learning how to use SWE (Myhill et al., 2013). They can help students have more awareness of their language and access to various forms of discourse (Liu, 2011; Ray, 2008).

Some concern exists that FYC teachers do not know enough about linguistics to understand or help students with different dialects learn SWE (Myhill & Jones, 2011). For example, a recent linguistic study in 2012 found that university and college writing teachers who had a Masters in English or a graduate degree with at least 18 hours of graduate credits in English,  reacted negatively toward the dialect errors that are typical of AAVE dialect user (Johnson & VanBrackle, 2012). Because the raters were unfamiliar with linguistics and AAVE dialect features, the raters were frustrated by those students who repeatedly made the same AAVE "errors" and saw the students as "unwilling  to conform" (Johnson & VanBrackle, 2012, p. 46). In another study, teachers in Detroit associated AAVE dialect users with low abilities and skills (Hill, 2009).

Rather than regard AAVE features as incorrect, code-switching pedagogies require that teachers make a transition from the paradigm of correction to helping students use language patterns for appropriate settings (Baker, 2002; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). "Unfortunately, many teachers lack the linguistic training required to build on the language skills that African American students [or other students] from dialectally diverse backgrounds bring to school" (Wheeler, 2008, p. 54).

When teachers instruct students on how to code-switch or that each dialect has its own rules, students will learn that language is not a moral issue and that their dialect is not "wrong", but simply one of difference (Clayton & Hudson, 2010). Through teaching how to code switch, teachers can help students become aware of and an appreciation for the dialect they use as well as have a deeper understanding of how and when to use SWE (Clayton & Hudson, 2010).

The general belief of those with no linguistics or language background is that because SWE has been taught for years in elementary and secondary school, non-standard dialect users should know and use SWE. However, dialect is part of culture and society and fitting in with a social group is many times more important than using the SWE dialect taught in school (Delpit, 1997b; Wheeler, 2008). People cling to their identity through dialect (Wolfram, 1991). For example, Black Americans do not want to "act white," and using SWE is considered part of being White (Baugh, 1999; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Dialect allows people to identify with a specific group (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2001). The authors give an example of Black Americans and Native Americans seeking ethnic solidarity through dialect, separating from the group they conflict with, which is the power group using SWE. Therefore, some students may resist learning SWE.

In addition to non-standard users resisting learning SWE, the traditional correction methods, where students are simply told they are wrong for using their dialect's rules and then told what they should use, have not helped minority students to use SWE (Wheeler & Swords, 2006; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2005 ). A study by Fogel and Ehri (2000) found that traditional approaches of pointing out and correcting errors produced not only no improvement but an actual lessening of SWE usage.

36

The issue of non-standard dialect users can be an ever increasing issue in first-year composition studies as colleges are actively seeking a more diverse student body, and more dialect and English as a Second Language (ESL) students are in writing courses at all levels (CCCC, 2009). First-year composition courses are becoming more multi-cultural and multi-lingual (Wilson, 2010). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2003), in 2000 about one-fourth of the U. S. population were multilingual, using two or more languages when they speak or write.  This trend will continue to grow (Lovejoy et al., 2009).  Information from the 2008 and 2009 U. S. Census Bureau shows that over the next 40 years, "the United States is expected to experience . . . a large increase in racial and ethnic diversity. . . . [with] the highest levels of . . . growth for the Asian and Hispanic populations, which are the primary immigrant groups to the United States" (Ortman & Guarneri, n.d., p. 3). Immigrant growth usually means a younger population (Ortman & Guarneri, n.d.), which means a high likelihood that more multicultural students will be attending college.

As more students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds attend college, the more the issue of non-standard dialect use occurs. Those FYC courses at universities with a higher number of non-standard dialect speakers and ESL students will have a higher number of issues with students who do not use SWE. For example, within the student population at California State University, Fresno (CSUF) 61.3% of the students speak English with Spanish second followed by various Asian languages (Inoue, 2009). CSUF found that earlier intervention with pre-FYC courses did not help students succeed in FYC; now in CSUF's first-year writing program, two of the three course options include help with grammar as part of the course outcomes with one geared more

toward second language learners (Inoue, 2009). The *CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers* states that writing program administrators should "offer teacher preparation in second language writing theory, research, and instruction in the forms of graduate courses,  . . . . [and] investigate issues surrounding second language writing and writers in the context of . . . first-year writing programs" (CCCC, 2009, para. 4).

Many FYC instructors may not have the background or education in formal writing or in linguistics, and therefore may be using the traditional approaches discussed above, which the composition community explains does not work to help student use SWE in their writing.  Some students need help with SWE in their formal writing, and teachers should help them and not ignore the need, because of educational, employment, and social reasons; however, inexperienced teachers may not be getting the support or preparation they need from the composition community.

## Composition Community Silence

The current composition profession appears to be ignoring SWE grammar in the 4-year college first-year composition class as a potential problem.  First, there have been few, if any, articles in composition journals geared toward English educators at 4-year universities. A search of databases, including JSTOR, Project Muse, MLA, Wilson Web, EBSCO, and Academic OneFile, found articles within the last 10 years relating to teaching grammar in the journals for secondary teacher education, Basic Writing (BW), and English as a Second Language (ESL); few focused on SWE in the first-year composition class. First-year composition instructors need to make decisions on teaching

SWE, but without the help of the composition community, instructors must depend upon their own background education and experience.

A cursory advanced search for *grammar* on the National Council for Teaching English website's college journals: *College English (CE), College Composition and Communication (CCC), Research in the Teaching of English (RTE), English Education,* and *Teaching English in the Two-Year College (TETYC),* listed some grammar articles with the majority of those articles listed being published in the 1970s and 1980s and few to none published from 2000 through the present. The majority of those articles distributed throughout the 21$^{st}$ century were published in the *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* journal, but not in the journals whose main readership is 4-year public college level instructors.

The journal articles published and the workshops conducted by CCCC "offer a yearly snapshot of our [the composition community's] concerns" (MacDonald, 2007, p. 588). According to MacDonald (2007) research, there has been "a clear trend downward in the percentage of sessions categorized as being about the language topics . . . [of] ESL, language, style, [and] grammar" (p. 589).   The peak sessions on grammar in CCCC was in the 1970s with 15% of total sessions on the language topics and has been on a decline since with an average of 2 – 4% sessions since 1990 (MacDonald, 2007, p. 589). Grammar as a topic also disappeared from all NCTE college journals and conferences from 1970s – 1980s, and the only mention of the word in the 1993 conference was the title "Getting Beyond Grammar," a definitively negative connotation (Kolln & Hancock, 2005).  Through its relative silence on the subject of SWE in FYC, the composition community is sending a clear message that SWE is not relevant or important.

For secondary teachers, many books have been published in regard to better ways to teach grammar (Noguchi, 1991; Vavra, 1996; Wheeler & Swords, 2006), and journals for secondary educators of English have published numerous articles on advanced grammar teaching methods.  For example, the *English Journal* published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2011), whose audience is secondary language arts teachers, dedicated its January 2003 and its March 2011 issues to grammar articles, focusing on innovative ways to teach grammar to students.  A few of the teaching techniques include sentence combining activities (Andrews, 2005; Andrews et al., 2006), short, 5 to 15 minute mini-grammar lessons (Brown, 2008; Weaver, 1996b), and  using minimum terminology, simpler terms and definitions than those found in prescriptive grammar handbooks (Noguchi, 1991).

Post-secondary educators can use the more current techniques to teach SWE as illustrated in secondary books and journals; however, FYC educators may not be cognizant of the techniques because the composition community does not publish these ideas; the articles that have been published mainly negate any positive outcome from teaching grammar in FYC.

With the inexperience of many TAs and GAs, and with no real structure given from the composition community in regards to SWE, it is possible that, as discovered at Southern University of Illinois, Carbondale, "considerable disparity" exists between the way various sections of FYC are taught within a university (Dively, 2010, "Catalysts and Contexts for Change," para. 5), let alone among various universities.  Teaching SWE in FYC is also a part of that disparity.  Albeit there is the need for academic freedom where not all classes are taught the same, the need exists for some type of consistency in

knowledge and foundations in FYC, especially in regards to what is taken to the next courses (Dively, 2010).

There has been little to no research on what is actually being taught in FYC classes in regards to SWE, either within each university's' FYC sections or among different universities. There really is no way to know what is happening within the various classrooms (Clayton & Hudson, 2010). According to Fish (2009b), students in his graduate literature course were unable to write using SWE, and "these same students were instructors in the college's composition program. What, [he] wondered, could possibly be going on in their courses?" (para. 1). Lack of research and knowledge brings me to my research questions.

## Research Questions

### General Question

How are first-year composition teachers at large, public, 4-year universities responding to students who write prose with numerous grammatical errors, and do the teachers perceive themselves as positively impacting the students' writing to improve SWE usage?

**Specific Questions.** This quantitative and qualitative research will provide insights into the following research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between first-year composition teachers' education (degree concentrations, and graduate courses taken) and the techniques they use to teach SWE?

2. Is there a correlation between first-year composition teachers' experience (first time teaching first-year composition, number of courses taught, such as

linguistics, creative writing, or formal writing) and the techniques they use to teach SWE?

3. Is there a correlation between the techniques used to teach SWE and the first-year composition teachers' perceived effectiveness of the techniques?

4. Do first-year composition teachers feel prepared to teach SWE based on education and experience? Is there a correlation between what the instructors feel helped prepare them to teach SWE in FYC (courses, readings, individuals) overall and the instructor's education (degree, concentration)?

5. How do FYC teachers perceive the idea of teaching SWE in FYC?

**Significance**

The significance of this study is to open a conversation within the composition community regarding how first-year composition teachers are managing the issue of SWE and students who do not write in SWE. Statistics show many students arrive in first-year composition not being able to write a mostly error free paper. This study will give a glimpse into the way in which some faculty react to the grammar needs of their students. The study provides insights into who is teaching first-year composition, their experience, their feelings about the problem of freshman not following SWE in their writing, the need for grammar instruction at the college level, how teachers approach the issue, and how successful they feel.

Grammar is a topic in the fields of basic writing, ESL, and elementary and secondary education. Outside of these areas, the composition community remains fairly silent on the subject of grammar in the first-year composition classroom. It is time to address the issue within the profession.

## Chapter 3: Methods

This study used methodological triangulation to analyze data from three sources: an anonymous survey of first-year composition (FYC) instructors, a voluntary interview from the survey participants, and a review of data on college websites. The research design was both quantitative and qualitative.

In regards to quantitative design, the study incorporated a survey in order to find out if and how first-year composition teachers are teaching SWE in the classroom and how they perceive their effectiveness in helping students write in SWE (see Appendix A for survey). The survey sought to gather information and perspectives from first-year composition teacher participants with varying degrees of education, background, and experience to see if these variables had an effect on their actions and perceptions.

The survey was initially reviewed by a pilot sample for clarity, simplicity, and time requirements and then edited for clarity and simplicity (Lauer & Asher, 1988), with two types of questions, multiple choice and open ended, serving different purposes: the former yields standardized answers that are easier to aggregate for analysis while the latter results in longer variable responses that give individual information but are more difficult to analyze (Lauer & Asher, 1988).

Qualitative methods are most useful when researching for information about little known phenomenon in order to identify patterns and develop theory to explain reality (Morse & Field, 1995). Because the teaching of grammar in the first-year composition class has not been thoroughly researched, little is known overall as to what first-year composition instructors are actually teaching in their classrooms or the methods they are using, making qualitative research the most practical type of design for this project.

Qualitative sampling is guided by two principles: appropriateness of the chosen

participants and adequate data (Morse & Field, 1995). A qualitative follow-up interview

of some survey participants was thereby sought to procure more detailed data (Morse &

Field, 1995, p. 11). Since the survey participants teach FYC in large, 4-year, public

universities, input was effective and appropriate for the interview because the subject is

teaching SWE in FYC. Further, it was important to interview participants from different

sectors of the survey population (Morse & Field, 1995). Interview participants included a

graduate teaching assistant working on a Master's degree (MA), a graduate teaching

assistant working on a Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD), and an adjunct lecturer. The

amount of data collected was not necessarily adequate to all FYC teachers across the

United States, but qualitative research's purpose is "not to measure the distribution of

attributes within a population" (Morse & Field, 1995, p. 84). Thus, the purpose of the

study is to initiate a conversation within the composition field, and therefore the data will

be adequate for this purpose.

Interviews and surveys were used to obtain the individual's behaviors or beliefs;

therefore, the participants may have assigned their behavior a more positive impact when

they self-reported their actions and ideas (Driscoll, 2011). The understanding of this

phenomenon is important to keep in mind when using surveys and interviews for data

collection since the belief that one is doing better than one actually is may skew the

participants' responses.

## Survey Design

The survey was designed as a voluntary, anonymous survey, which included the

statement, "taking this survey is acknowledging your voluntary and fully informed

consent" (see Appendix A for survey).  The survey was first reviewed by five first-year

composition instructors, and changes were made accordingly.  The Institutional Review

Board (IRB) at the University of Memphis approved the survey in November of 2012.

The survey, located in Survey Monkey, allowed for ease of access and anonymity for

the respondents. Survey Monkey can also be used to tabulate responses by variables, such

as years of teaching experience and types of educational studies. There were no

restrictions as to number of questions or number of respondents allowed by Survey

Monkey.

The survey questions were mainly multiple-choice, allowing respondents to choose

from a list of possible answers. The multiple-choice design encouraged participation, as

answering is less time consuming than open ended questions; multiple-choice responses

also permitted the researcher to easily categorize responses and to compare responses

between different groups of participants.  When respondents were asked to give numbers,

either years teaching or time spent teaching SWE, a range of numbers was given from

which to choose.

Questions were grouped in order to help participants focus on the questions and to

help the researcher look for patterns. Survey questions 1 through 6 asked for information

as to rank, degree, concentrations in degree, education and teaching background, and

experience of the participants (see Appendix A for survey). The first questions are

standard background types of questions, which are non-threatening and helped the

respondents relax and become involved in the interview (Chandler, 1998).  The

information was used to discover the backgrounds of those teaching first-year

composition and what, if any, differences existed between how teachers with various

levels of experience or education responded to SWE problems in their students' formal writing.

The remainder of the survey pertained to Standard Written English grammar, which was defined prior to survey question 7 as follows: "Standard Written English, also known as traditional prescriptive norms or 'correct grammar,' whose rules and usages are found in style guides and grammar handbooks" (see Appendix A). All participants, therefore, understood the same meaning of the term.

Survey questions 7 and 8 asked for specifics about the participants' FYC classes' average student population. Information from question 7 regarding the average number of students in the participants' first-year composition courses was used to see if class size made a difference in how much time the participants spent helping students individually as well as what type of techniques the participants chose to use. Question 8 asked for approximate percentage of participants' students who use SWE correctly in their formal papers, which may affect the need to teach SWE or not.

In order for the researcher to find if there are significant differences in how instructors grade for SWE, questions 9 through 10 ascertained what SWE grammar rules students' papers were graded and what percentage of the students' grades resulted from grammar. Listed in question 10 were various possible SWE grammar rules, taken from grammar handbooks. To ensure the data was easier to handle, SWE grammar rules were grouped into 5 categories: sentence structure, verb issues, pronoun usage, word usage, and language usage. A glossary for the specific categories was provided prior to the questions, so all respondents had the same understanding of the terminology. A Likert

Scale from *never* to *sometimes* to *usually* and finally *frequently* was used for questions

regarding frequency.

Questions 11 and 12 asked for how frequently the same SWE rules listed in questions

10 and 11 were taught, and asked the participant to rank the rules in order of importance.

The information was used to ascertain if the rules being graded for and thought to be

most important are actually being taught.

Participants then responded to how much time they spend discussing or teaching

SWE grammar overall during class time (question 13) and outside of class (question 15).

Question 14 asked if grammar teaching was scheduled or in response to students' needs.

Questions 16 through 17 asked for the techniques the respondents used, and their

perception of each of their technique's effectiveness, choosing from a list of various

techniques ranging from the well-known traditional grammar worksheets to more

recently researched innovative techniques, such as tag questions. The techniques listed

were gleaned from research and personal experience from the researcher's 15+ years of

teaching SWE. Respondents were then asked to show how effective they believed the

grammar techniques they used were, using a scale from *not effective* to *very effective* and

including *don't know* or *don't use*. Any differences in techniques used were examined

against the participants' backgrounds and education.

Question 18 and 19 looked at how prepared the participants felt to teach FYC and

how helpful certain variables, such as courses, books, journals, or peers were to the

participants' preparation.

The last questions asked respondents to discuss how helpful they perceived their

educational and teaching background had been and to give their teaching philosophy in

regards to teaching SWE in FYC.  Respondents were then given a chance to comment or expound further.

In case an instructor's potential answer was not listed, an *other* space was provided with a *please specify* blank to fill in. At the end of the survey, a place existed for further comments or explanations.

## Interview Design

During the interview process, questions were asked one at a time.  Many of the questions began with closed, fixed-response, "yes" or "no", questions in order not to lead or influence the participants (See Appendix B for interview questions).  To then elicit more detailed information, standardized open-ended questions ensued, allowing the participant a degree of freedom. The interview was fairly structured using previously prepared questions; the same questions were asked of all participants, except where additional information was needed by the interviewer for clarification or examples.  IRB approved the interview and questions in July, 2013.

The first questions followed the pattern of the survey questions with questions $1 - 5$ asking for the interviewee's 1) rank, 2) highest degree attained, 3) degree concentration(s), 4) number of sections of FYC taught , and 5) average number of students per section. These questions follow Patton's (2002) "background/demographics,"  or standard background types of questions, which are considered non-threatening and helped the respondents relax and become involved in the interview (Chandler, 1998).  Again, the respondents' background and experience were used to discover what, if any, differences existed between how more experienced teachers

or those with a higher education responded to the SWE issue versus those with less experience or education.

The next groups of questions were knowledge based, designed to obtain facts (Patton, 2002), and also helped to engage the participant. Questions included whether the interviewee graded for grammar, and if so, how. The data gave the interviewer an idea of how important assessing grammar was to the participant.

Next, questions asked for more personal perceptions from the participant. The following questions, classified as opinion/values questions (Patton, 2002), discovered if the participants had many students who had problems using SWE, and if so, in what areas, and the severity of the problem, using a scale of 1 – 10 with 10 being the highest. The next questions, therefore, were behavior questions (Patton, 2002) to find out how the instructor gave feedback and how he or she helped the student succeed in the perceived areas of weakness.

The last set of questions were feelings questions (Patton, 2002) and found out how well the teachers felt their education and current journals prepared them to teach FYC. The last question allowed the respondents to add any additional information or ideas they had.  The same questions were asked of all participants in order to reduce the risk of the interviewer biasing the interviewees' responses (MacNealy, 1999, p. 203).

According to Patton (2002), the most effective interviews include a blend of open-ended or non-directive questions, behavior descriptions, and situational questions, while avoiding closed-ended questions that encourage short, non-descriptive answers. In this design, however, a few closed-ended questions were used, in order not to lead the interviewees, and were followed by an open-ended question.  For example, if the answer

was "yes" to questions, such as "Do you think…," " Have you found…," and "Have you taught…", a follow up question asked for more information or examples.  Open-ended questions were asked for evaluative purposes, such as "How important are…" or "Which do you find most helpful" and "Why?" Behavioral questions (Patton, 2002) were also included, encouraging interviewees to discuss ways they behaved in circumstances. Interviewees were encouraged to give personal responses and their perception of the issue of SWE in connection with their first-year composition students.

<div align="center">

**Participant Selection**

</div>

**Survey**

The researcher asked for voluntary participants from first-year composition instructors at large, urban, public 4-year universities.  Little research has been done on the SWE need in the first-year composition classes at public 4-year colleges, nor in the response of first-year composition instructors to that need. Large, urban, public 4-year universities were chosen due to their diverse student population. A diverse student population includes those with different educational, socio-economic, language, and ethnic backgrounds.  Because of the diverse backgrounds, some students' home speech is different in some regards to SWE, and they may have more difficulty writing using SWE. For the purpose of this research, it was important to have participants who teach or may have taught students in first-year composition who have trouble using SWE.

The researcher originally selected participants from the University of Memphis due to the researcher's familiarity with the first-year composition student population.  Having taught first-year composition classes at the University of Memphis, the researcher knew that a diverse student  population exists within the FYC classroom.

The University of Memphis is a large, urban, 4-year public university with students from different backgrounds. In an effort to increase the number of respondents and to keep the population similar throughout the research, the survey was also sent to the University of Memphis's academic peer institutions and the Urban 13 universities listed on the University of Memphis website (see Appendix C for comprehensive list). These large, public, urban, 4-year universities have numerous first-year composition classes due to a large student population and the requirement of first-year composition credit for a Bachelor's degree. This dynamic naturally lends itself to fairly large class sizes, as well as more classes being taught. More classes equal the need for more teachers. Due to the number of teachers needed, the teaching population may include those of diverse ranks, degrees, focus areas, prior education, and experience.

To find participants, the researcher sent an email to the directors of first-year composition at each of the chosen universities, delineating the study's purpose and asking them to forward the email, which included the survey link, to all of their first-year composition educators.

**Interview**

The initial email to the participants, which explained the study and contained the link to the survey, also included a statement asking those who would like to volunteer to participate in a follow-up interview to reply. Once participants volunteered from the pool of those taking the survey, follow-up emails were used to set up dates and times of the interview.

**Data Collection**

**Survey**

Emails were sent to composition directors at 21 different universities between November 29, 2012 and March, 2013. Initially, in November, 2012, emails with the survey link were sent to composition directors at 12 universities, including the University of Memphis and its Academic Peer and Urban 13 institutions (see Appendix D for a list of universities contacted and their classifications). Due to the close proximity to final exams, semester's end, and Christmas break, however, a lower than expected return rate occurred (Lauer & Asher, 1988). Therefore, another email and survey link was sent to the same universities' composition directors in February and March. An additional 10 universities were also added to the list. Follow up emails were sent to remind participants of the survey and due dates.

A total of 6 composition directors responded stating they sent the survey to their instructors (see Appendix D for responses). Two directors declined, University of Houston and University of Louisville, and no responses were received from the remaining universities (see Appendix D for responses) although the researcher tried numerous times through emails and telephone calls to contact those directors.

The University of Cincinnati sent the survey to 85 instructors; University of Memphis to 95; Arizona State University to 200; University of Illinois to 90; Temple to 80; and University of Toledo to 87, for a total of 637.

Out of a possible 637 FYC instructors, 109 responded to the surveys. However, 25 of the 109 answered only the background portion, basic rank, education, and experience, of the survey, leaving 84 who finished the survey. Due to the small number of participants, a

second round of surveys were sent to additional universities (See Appendix E for a list of added universities, their classifications, and their responses).

For this second list of universities, the researcher called each of the directors before the Fall 2013 semesters began, speaking directly to the directors and explaining the study and the need for participants.  Six said they would be happy to forward the study's survey and email and would encourage their first-year composition instructors to participate.  A time was agreed upon for the researcher to email the survey after Fall classes began, giving the instructors enough time to "settle in" to their classes.  For those directors who could not be reached by telephone, the researcher left messages, made follow up telephone calls, and sent emails, explaining the study and asking for participation.

Emails with survey links to the survey at Survey Monkey were sent out in September of 2013 and reminders were sent approximately three weeks later.  An additional 40 participants completed the survey in the Fall of 2013.

**Interview**

After the surveys were completed, the researcher contacted those who had volunteered to be interviewed. Interview participants chose the time and means for the interview. One interview was conducted face to face and the other two were conducted via telephone.

The interviews began with the interviewer explaining the purpose of the interview and the approximate amount of time the interview would last. Participants were tape recorded after giving their consent, and interviews were semi-structured with questions written ahead of time (see Appendix B for interview questions); however, other questions arose for clarification purposes.  The interviewer encouraged responses by nodding,

inserting "uh huh's," and repeating answers for clarification purposes. At the conclusion

of the interview, the interviewer asked if there was anything else the participant would

like to add; the interviewer also asked if the participant could be contacted again if any

questions arose from the transcribing of the tapes (Mores & Field, 1995). The

interviewees were thanked for their participation.  The interviews were then transcribed

in order for the researcher to recheck information as needed.

**Online Web Search**

For each university whose composition director sent the survey to the first-year-

composition instructors, their English Department website was searched for rubrics or

other information on a) how they assess first-year composition papers, especially in

regards to grammar,  b) the learning outcomes for first-year composition courses, and c)

the philosophical pedagogy of the instructor or department. First-year composition pages

were searched as well as the department's web page and the individual instructor's web

page.

<div align="center">

**Methods of Analysis**

</div>

The researcher used *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics* by Neil J.

Salkind (2004). Data was coded and calculated through Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS), a statistics program for statistical analyses.

While coding, the researcher combined some similar information. Teaching

assistants' and graduate assistants' responses were combined, as were assistant, associate,

and full professors in order to allow for more significant numbers in those categories for

rank.  For highest degree earned, survey question 2, few participants with a Doctor of

Education (EdD) degree responded, so they were added to the PhD's responses. For a

similar reason, Linguistics and English as a Second Language (ESL) concentrations were combined, as were Technical//Professional Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition where applicable.

Using participants' answers from survey questions 1, 2, 3, and 4, frequencies were calculated to find the number of participants by rank, by degree, by degree concentrations, and by number of graduate courses taken. For the first research question, frequencies were also used to find the number of participants who used each technique never, sometimes, and frequently or usually, using question 16 answers. A bivariate correlation was then calculated to find if a correlation existed between the techniques used and the participants' highest degree, degree concentration, or number of graduate courses taken in each degree to answer research question one, "Is there a correlation between first-year composition teachers' education (degree's concentrations, and graduate courses taken) and the techniques they use to teach SWE?"

For the second research question, "Is there a correlation between first-year composition teachers' experience (first time teaching first-year composition, number of courses taught, such as linguistics, creative writing, or formal writing) and the techniques they use to teach SWE?", frequencies were calculated for participants' general experience by first-time teaching FYC, and the number of classes they taught in each of the other degrees listed, using answers to questions 5 and 6. A bivariate correlation was used to measure the relationship between each technique and the first-time teaching FYC experience, and each technique and the number of classes taught in each degree area.

For the third research question, "Is there a correlation between the techniques used to teach SWE and the first-year composition teachers' perceived effectiveness of the

techniques?" frequencies were calculated for the perceived effectiveness of each technique in general, coding answers to question 17 by using the numbers (0) for not effective, (1) for somewhat effective, (2) for effective, and (3) for very effective. Correlations were then calculated for effectiveness of techniques by participants' highest degree. For more detailed information, a cross tabulation was used, which analyzed two variables in the survey to find how they were related. Cross tabulations were calculated for how often a participant used each technique (never, sometimes, and usually or frequently) and each participant's perception of the effectiveness of the techniques he or she used (not effective, somewhat effective, and very effective).

In order to answer research question 4, "Do first-year composition teachers feel prepared to teach SWE based on education and experience? Is there a correlation between what the instructors feel helped prepare them to teach SWE in FYC (courses, readings, individuals) overall and the instructor's education (degree, concentration)?", frequencies were used to find how prepared to teach FYC participants felt with (0) as not prepared, (1) somewhat prepared, (2) prepared, and (3) very prepared from question 18. A correlation was then calculated by level of degree to find if a correlation existed between those who feel prepared and the level of their degree. A correlation was then used to find if there was a correlation between feeling of being prepared and the concentration of the participant's degree. Another correlation was calculated with participants' feeling of preparedness and items which may have helped them be prepared as listed in question 19.

Question 20 and 21 were areas for participants to make comments on their teaching philosophy and further comments in order to help answer question 5, "How do FYC teachers perceive the idea of teaching SWE in FYC?" Each additional written comment

from participants was listed by the participant's highest degree, degree concentration, number of graduate courses taken in each concentration, sections of FYC taught, percentage of students using SWE correctly, and time participants taught SWE in class and outside of class. The researcher then read through the comments and categorized each by type of comment, falling into the following categories: should SWE be taught in FYC, ways to teach SWE in FYC, and ideas to help better prepare teachers.

I believed there would be a significant difference between the way that those with less experience and fewer classes in education, linguistics, and formal writing teach their classes and those with higher degrees and more experience. I also hypothesized that those with less experience and education are using the more current traditional techniques and more in class time to teach SWE; whereas, those with more experience and background will feel more effective teaching SWE, using less class time and no current traditional approach.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then reported in narrative form. Quantitative data from the surveys were reported in tables.

## Researcher Stance

I used a survey instead of a case study because a survey will reach more recipients and receive a wider variety of FYC teachers, from TAs to PhDs from campuses in different cities and states. A case study would give a more in depth look but would be limited to only a few teachers' practices from a limited geographical location. The trade off of having faculty report their own practices and perceptions, of course, is the question of how accurate these self-reports are.

The research is a small-scale study "from which it is difficult to make cause-and-effect statements" (Lauer & Asher, 1988, p. 74). I will only be able to form conclusions about those who responded.

## Limitations

Surveys are limited. First, the questions may be confusing to the respondent or the respondents may want to give more explanation than the survey allows. Set questions and answers may force respondents to answer in a way that may not be accurate. It is difficult for the respondents to expand on their answers even with a place to enter "other" answers. This survey also cannot be used as a sample representation of the population of first-year composition instructors since the sample size is small. The population of instructors is diverse, as is the population of their respective students. Institutions also differ in the philosophy on teaching writing within their English Departments, which may skew answers.

The researcher must rely on the respondents giving true and accurate answers because the respondents are reporting on their own perception of what they do in the classroom. Respondents' perceptions of their own actions may be unknowingly biased, or they may answer the way they believe the researcher wants. Unless one actually observes the instructors in the classroom, it is difficult to know exactly what type of interaction occurs between the instructors and their students. Teachers' perception of how well their students learned SWE may also be skewed since most teachers probably perceive themselves as doing a good job.

A difficulty arises in trying to understand each respondent's actual background in education and teaching since only so many questions can be asked in a multiple-choice format.

The number of questions in a survey must be kept to a minimum in order to encourage participation. A problem occurs if too few answer the survey. First-year composition instructors are busy during the semesters with teaching, grading, preparing lessons to teach; some may also be students themselves with reading and course work to finish.

Since this survey is a nonprobability sample, generalizations cannot be made, and the accuracy level will be high, probably over the normal .05%. Researcher bias is also a potential problem where the questions are asked in a leading manner, albeit unintentionally.

**Chapter 4: Results**

The following discusses the results from the data collected from the survey and interviews as related to the research questions. First, survey results are given as to participants' background and demographic information, and the participants' perception of the average student population in their first-year composition (FYC) classes. The results from the participants' answers to the techniques they use and the perception they have as to the effectiveness of those techniques are discussed in correlation with the participants' background and demographic information data. Results are then discussed as to teachers' perception of their preparedness for teaching FYC and their perception of what helped them prepare. Lastly, the results of the participants' written comments are then categorized and given.

**Participant Background/Demographic Data**

A total of 151 FYC teachers answered the survey; however, 30 of the 151 answered only the education and background information, so their information was not included with the data. Data from 121 participants were used. The following data results on participants' education and experience background was measured for correlations for research questions 1 and 2.

**Education**

Participants were categorized by their highest degree attained. PhD and EdD were combined as only 3 participants had an EdD: 29 had a PhD. Table 1 shows the number of participants by degree.

Table 1

*Number and Percentage of Participants by Highest Degrees Attained*

| Participants | BA | MA | PhD | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total who answered any questions | 15 | 104 | 32 | 151 |
| Only answered background data | 2 | 22 | 6 | -30 |
| Total who completed survey | 13 | 82 | 26 | 121 |
| Percentage of total who completed survey | 11% | 68% | 21% | |

Participants were also categorized by concentrations, if any, in their degrees. The concentrations of particular interest were linguistics, English as a Second Language (ESL), education, literature, creative writing, and formal writing, such as composition, rhetoric, technical, and/or professional writing. Only 1 has a degree in education, so no results were posted for that degree (see Table 2 for numbers and percentages of participants with specific degree concentrations). Participants were asked to choose all concentrations within their degrees; therefore, many had more than one focus. Those who chose more than one were placed in each category selected. Due to small number of participants, some like concentrations were combined. Linguistics and ESL were combined as only 2 participants had concentrations in linguistics and 7 in ESL. Both subjects have the similarity of understanding that all languages (or dialects) follow grammatical rules that may differ from SWE. Composition, Rhetoric, and Technical/Professional Writing were also combined in a "formal writing" category. Those who selected "English" were not counted separately as I was focusing on any differences between formal writing, creative writing, literature, and linguistics.

Table 2

*Participants' Degrees by Concentration*

|  | Linguistics/ ESL | Formal Writing | Creative Writing | Literature |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participants | 9 | 29 | 36 | 48 |
| Percentage | 7% | 24% | 30% | 40% |

Nine (7%) of the participants had concentrations in linguistics/ESL, 29 (24%) in formal writing, 36 (30%) in creative writing, and 48 (40%) in literature.

Besides degree concentrations, number of graduate classes taken in each area was tabulated. Participants indicated the number of graduate courses they took in each of the important concentration as either (0) for none, (1) for 1, or (2) for 2 or more. Figure 1 shows the number of graduate courses taken in each of the fields of formal writing, creative writing, and linguistics. As seen in the figure, the majority of participants (78%) had taken at least 2 classes in formal writing, almost half (44%) had taken two or more classes in creative writing, less than one-third had taken two or more classes in education (30%), and less than one-fourth (21%) had taken 2 or more classes in linguistics.
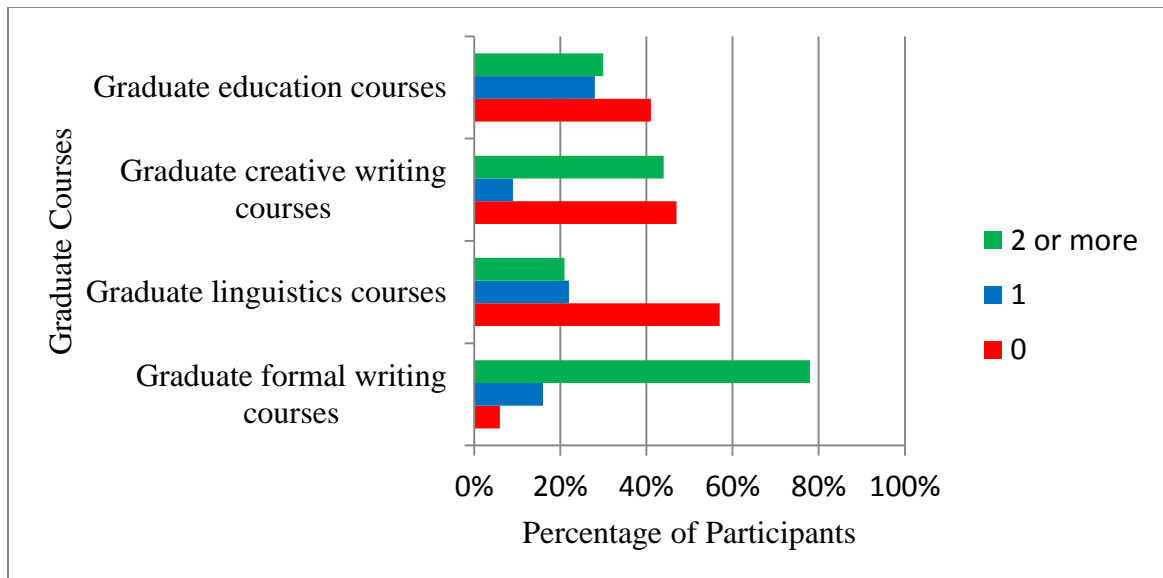
*Figure 1. Number of graduate courses taken by participants*

According to the data, 99% of the participants had taught at least one FYC course while 100% had taught at least one literature course. Approximately 25% had taught at least one creative writing course, and only 4% had taught at least one linguistics course.

**Experience**

To understand the participants' experience, they were first asked if this semester was their first time to teach first-year composition. Only 7, or 6%, claimed this was their first time teaching. Six of the 7 were teaching assistants or graduate assistants (TAs), and 1 was an instructor. Three had Masters degrees, and 4 had Bachelors degrees. Figure 2 shows how many sections of college level courses participants said they taught within the past 5 years for first-year composition, creative writing, other writing (business, technical, and/or professional writing), linguistics, and any other English courses with a place to specify what the "other" courses were. Many specified literature for "other" as it was not one of the choices in the survey. First-year composition courses and other formal writing courses were combined. The number of sections taught for each

63

was coded with (0) for no sections taught, a (1) for one to three sections taught,  a (2) for four  to 10 sections taught, and a (3) for more than 10 sections
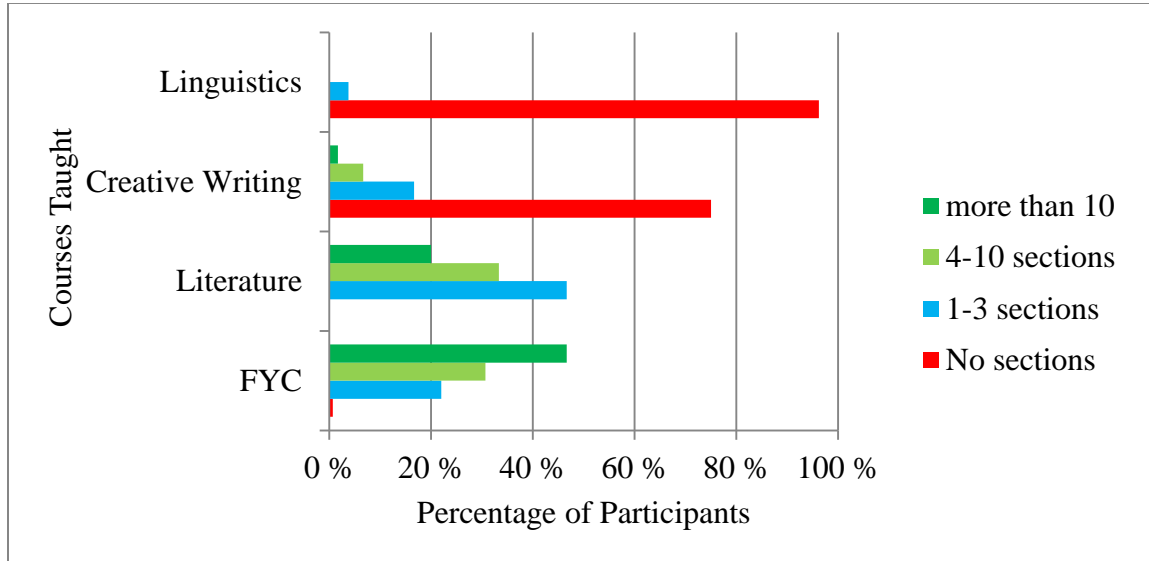


*Figure 2.  Number and types of graduate courses participants have taught*

**Participants' Perception of Student Body Data**

Data was gathered on participants' average class size and teachers' perception of how many students in their FYC classes used SWE correctly in their formal papers. The data was gathered in order to ascertain if class size or perception of average student ability had an effect on the participants' answers. Figure 3 depicts the average number of students per class as per participants' answers.  Less than 1% had classes with fewer than 10 students, 1% had classes with 10 to 15 students, 19% had 16 to 20 students, 65 had 21 to 25 students, and 12 had over 25 students.
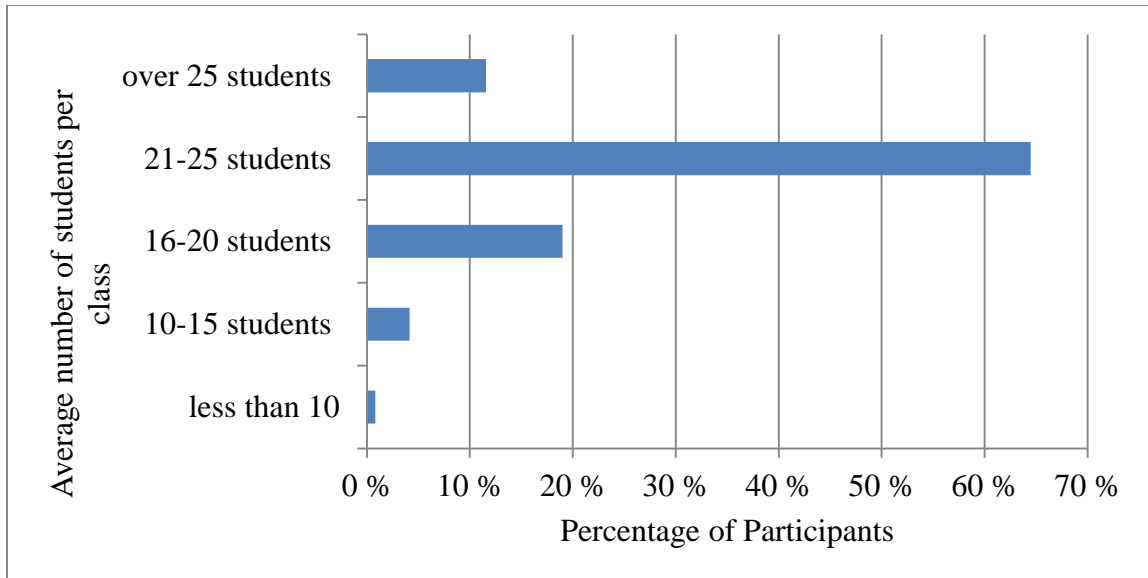
F*igure 3. Average number of students in each FYC class as per participants*

Figure 4 shows the percent of students who use SWE correctly in their formal papers as per teachers' perception. Approximately half of the participants believe the majority of their students were using SWE correctly while the other half believe the majority of their students were not using SWE correctly.
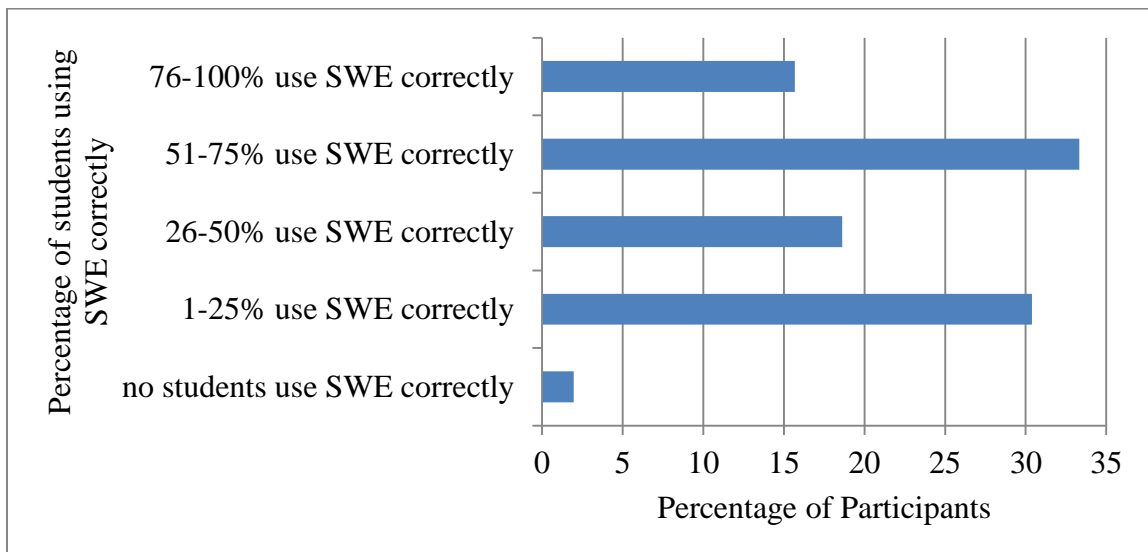


*Figure 4. Percent of students who use SWE correctly in their formal papers as per participants' perceptions*

**Techniques Used**

Next, the list of possible techniques used to teach grammar as listed in the survey were coded and placed in SPSS to see which techniques were used *sometimes*, or *frequently/usually*. Answers of frequently and usually were combined because it is difficult to discern the difference between the two. For the remaining data discussed in this chapter, when a participant did not answer a question, it was not coded with the rest of the data.

Figure 5 lists the techniques and shows the overall use in general by all participants. Use is categorized by percentage of those using the technique sometimes and those using the techniques frequently/usually. The techniques are listed in descending order of frequent or usual use. Most techniques were used at least sometimes by at least 49% of the participants. Only 3 techniques were used at least sometimes by less than 49% of the participants: tag questions, grammar software or internet sites, and the rhetorical approach. Only 3 techniques, however, were used frequently/usually by over 50% of the participants: marking and or explaining errors on students' papers, peer review, and short mini lessons.
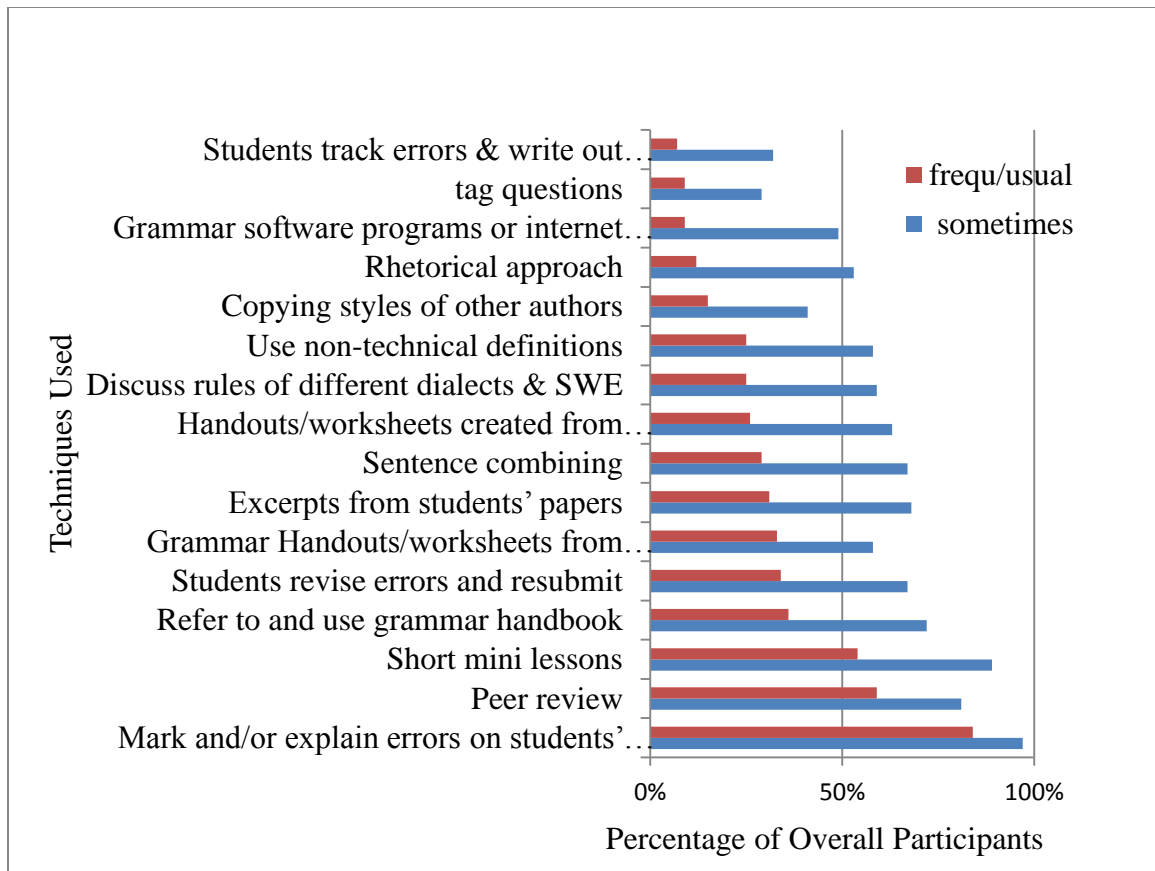
*Figure 5.* List of techniques used by participants. This figure illustrates how often participants used the various techniques to teach SWE as listed in order of frequency.

Figure 6 illustrates the perceived effectiveness of techniques as calculated using the frequency of those who believe the technique they use is very effective, effective, somewhat effective, or not effective. The techniques are listed in the same order as in Figure 5 by overall use, not by effectiveness, in order to compare the two more easily. No one chose "effective"; therefore, it is not listed in the table. No technique scored over 60% as to its perceived effectiveness.
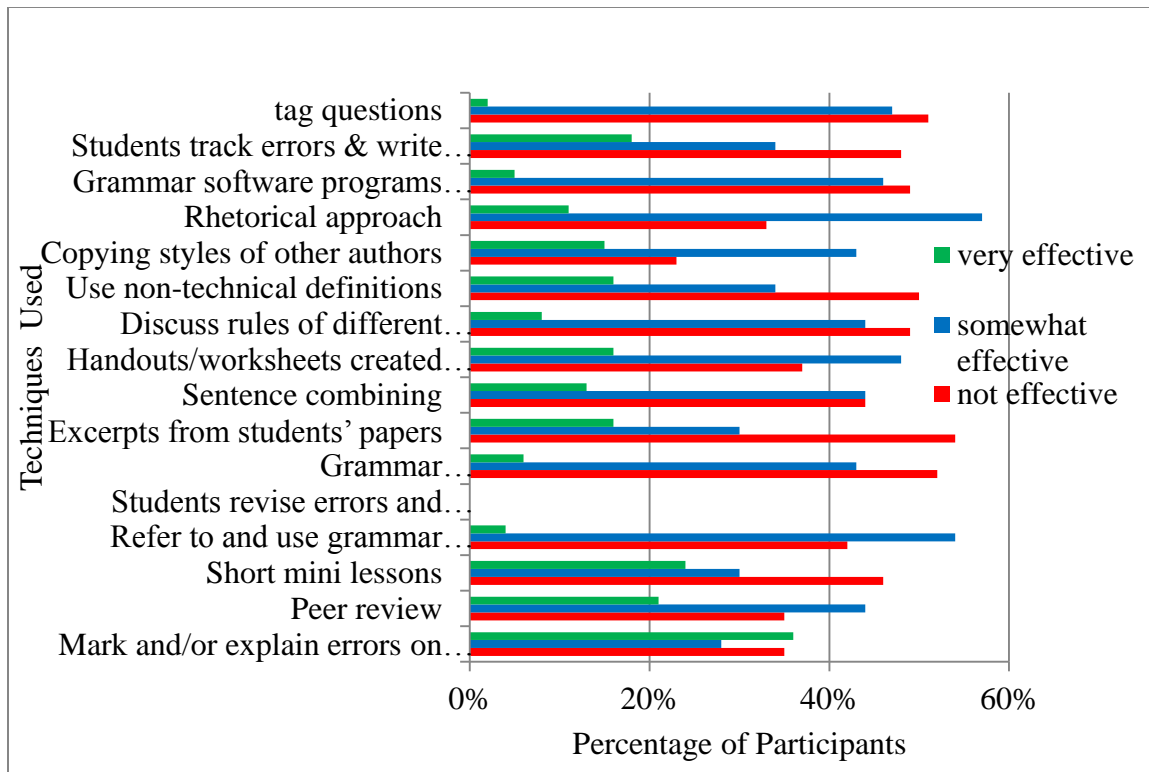
*Note:* Students revise errors and resubmit was accidentally left out of the survey format for perceived effectiveness; therefore, there no data exist.

*Figure 6. Participants' perception of techniques. This figure lists the participants' perception of the effectiveness of techniques they use to teach SWE listed in the same order of frequency of use as seen in Figure 5.*

Research question 1 states, "Is there a correlation between first-year composition teachers' education (highest degree attained, degree's concentrations, and graduate courses taken) and the techniques they use to teach SWE?" Therefore, the data for use of techniques were further sorted to find if a correlation exists between the techniques used and the participants' education, which were coded (1) highest degree attained (as found in Table 1), (2) concentrations or focus within those degrees (as per Table 2), and (3) numbers of graduate courses taken as seen in Figure 1.

Participants scored techniques by how often they use each technique, using class intervals of 0 to 3, with (0) being never, (1) sometimes, (2) usually, and (3) frequently.

68

Table 3 shows a bivariate correlation between techniques  and degrees. Degrees were

coded with Bachelors' degrees as (1), Masters degrees as (2), and PhD degrees as (3).

Table 3

*Pearson Correlation of Techniques Used by Degrees of Participants*

| Techniques by  Degree+ | Pearson Correlation |
|---|---|
| Grammar handouts/worksheets from    handbooks/textbooks/online | 0.073 |
| software | 0.024 |
| Refer to and use grammar handbook | -0.119 |
| **Peer review** | **-0.289\*\*** |
|  | **0.001** |
| Grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by  participant from students' papers | 0.128 |
| Excerpts from students' papers | 0.013 |
| Students keep track of their own errors and/or    write out definitions of their errors | 0.074 |
| Students revise errors and/or write out definitions    of their errors | -0.174 |
| Dialect rules for different dialects and SWE | -0.142 |
| Short mini lessons as needed | -0.051 |
| Use non-technical  definitions rather than    technical definitions | 0.027 |
| Sentence combining | -0.053 |
| Tag questions | -0.083 |
| Copying style of other authors | -0.020 |
| Rhetorical grammar | -0.117 |

 +Degrees were coded in order of hierarchy with BA-1, MA-2, and PhD-3
** Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01  level (2 tailed)

   The only correlation discovered between techniques used by participants with hig

correlation between degrees and use of peer reviews.  Thus, the higher the degree, the

reviews within a *p* = .001 significance.

Table 4 shows any correlation between participants' concentrations of degrees

and use of techniques. A bivariate correlation was used for each degree separately.

Table 4

*Pearson Correlation of Techniques Used by Specific Degrees*

| Techniques Used | Literature Degree | Creative Writing Degree | Linguistics Degree | Formal Writing+ Degree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| handouts | 0.088 | -0.034 | -0.047 | -0.13 |
| **software** | -0.103 | 0.162 | -0.16 | **-.222(*)** |
| | | | | **0.029** |
| handbook | -0.106 | 0.054 | -0.146 | -0.05 |
| **Explain on paper** | 0.065 | **.278(**)** | **-.359(**)** | -0.155 |
| | | **0.002** | **0.00** | |
| **Peer review** | 0.025 | 0.113 | **-.186(*)** | -0.066 |
| | | | **0.042** | |
| **Handouts from students papers** | 0.154 | -0.033 | -0.077 | **-243(**)** |
| | | | | **0.008** |
| excerptsfrstudpapers | 0.085 | 0.105 | -0.066 | -0.12 |
| stkeeptrack | 0.114 | -0.159 | 0.054 | 0.021 |
| streviseresubmit | -0.035 | 0.105 | -0.051 | -0.155 |
| dialectrules | -0.038 | -0.073 | 0.017 | 0.054 |
| minilessons | 0.046 | -0.036 | -0.134 | 0.07 |
| nontechdefinitions | -0.085 | -0.043 | 0.055 | 0.104 |
| sentcombining | -0.055 | -0.004 | 0.127 | -0.065 |
| tagquestions | 0.069 | -0.05 | 0.098 | -0.029 |
| **copystyle** | -0.139 | **.295(**)** | 0.048 | -0.158 |
| | | **0.001** | | |
| rhetorical | -0.1 | -0.113 | -0.007 | 0.08 |

** Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A positive correlation exists for those with creative writing concentrations and their use of explanations of SWE errors on students' papers and having students copy styles of authors. A negative correlation exists between those with linguistics concentrations and the use of explanations on paper and the use of peer reviews. Those participants with a

concentration in formal writing show a negative correlation with the use of handouts created from students' papers and the use of software.

Table 5 depicts the final correlation for techniques and education, which was a bivariate correlation of the techniques used by the participants compared to the number of graduate courses they had taken in the fields listed (as listed previously in Figure 1). Each of the graduate courses taken in linguistics, creative writing, and composition, rhetoric, and other writing were coded by (0) for no course taken, (1) for 1 course taken, or (2) for 2 or more courses taken. The composition, rhetoric, and other writing categories were grouped together again as a "formal writing" heading; even though the "other" writing category was not defined, it was assumed to be other formal type writing, such as professional writing.

According to Table 5, for those who have taken graduate courses in creative writing, a positive correlation exists between taking more creative writing courses and using explanations on students' papers ($p < .01$) and copying styles of authors ($p < .05$).  A negative correlation exists between those participants who have had more linguistics classes and their use of handouts created from students' papers.  A positive correlation exists with those who have more graduate linguistics courses and their use of non-technical definitions when teaching SWE.

Table 5

*Pearson Bivariate Correlation of Techniques Used by Number of Graduate Courses Taken*

| Techniques Used | Graduate creative writing courses | Graduate linguistic courses | Graduate formal writing course |
|---|---|---|---|
| handouts | -.051 | -.043 | -.005 |
| software | .190 | -.113 | .045 |
| handbook | .053 | -.009 | .088 |
| **Explain on paper** | **.271(**)** | -.149 | -.137 |
| | **.005** | | |
| Peer review | .133 | -.001 | -.106 |
| **Handouts from student papers** | -.009 | **-.225(*)** | .008 |
| | | **.014** | |
| Excerpts from students papers | .090 | -.112 | -.115 |
| Students keep track | -.132 | .155 | .028 |
| Students revise & resubmit papers | .138 | .013 | .093 |
| Dialect rules discussed | -.002 | .069 | .181 |
| Mini lessons | -.044 | .125 | -.005 |
| **Non technical definitions** | -.043 | **.264(**)** | .176 |
| | | **.004** | |
| Sentence combining | -.008 | .074 | -.049 |
| Tag questions | -.039 | .090 | .099 |
| **Copy style** | **.234(*)** | -.004 | -.126 |
| | **.017** | | |
| rhetorical | .040 | .085 | .116 |

** Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*  Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The second question states, "Is there a correlation between first-year composition teachers' experience (first time teaching first-year composition, number of courses taught, such as linguistics, creative writing, or formal writing) and the techniques they use to teach SWE?"  One way experience was classified was by those who were teaching FYC for the first time and those who had taught FYC previously (as shown in Figure 2). As depicted in Table 6, no correlation exists between those who were teaching FYC for the first time and the techniques they use.

Table 6

*Pearson Bivariate Correlation of Techniques Used by Teaching Experience*

| Techniques Used | First time teaching FYC | Taught FYC | Taught Literature | Taught Creative Writing | Taught Linguistics |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| handouts | -.094 | -.040 | .000 | -.121 | .039 |
| software | -.151 | .134 | .154 | .012 | .050 |
| handbook | -.030 | -.076 | .052 | -.089 | -.009 |
| explainonpaper | -.055 | .034 | .313 | .062 | -.029 |
| peerreview | .093 | -.070 | -.164 | .009 | .025 |
| handoutsfromstudpapers | -.048 | -.045 | -.210 | .017 | -.130 |
| excerptsfrstudpapers | -.014 | -.037 | -.128 | .099 | -.104 |
| stkeeptrack | -.048 | .028 | .371 | -.088 | -.017 |
| streviseresubmit | .056 | .038 | .315 | .127 | .098 |
| dialectrules | .015 | -.119 | .221 | -.047 | -.045 |
| minilessons | .120 | -.024 | -.059 | -.083 | -.018 |
| nontechdefinitions | -.017 | .094 | -.154 | -.129 | -.127 |
| sentcombining | -.029 | .101 | .069 | -.026 | -.147 |
| tagquestions | .053 | -.027 | .189 | .091 | -.013 |
| **copystyle** | -.016 | .159 | -.364 | **.250(*)** **.015** | .142 |
| rhetorical | .009 | .002 | -.158 | -.036 | -.089 |

\*\*  Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
\*  Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 illustrates the possible correlations between techniques teachers use and their teaching experience.  Only one correlation exists: a positive correlation between creative writing classes and copying style of authors, with the more creative writing classes taught, the more participants use copying of authors' styles to help with SWE.

## Perceived Effectiveness

The third research question asked about the participants' perceived effectiveness of the techniques they use.  One factor which may or may not have an influence on how instructors perceive their effectiveness is the time they spend inside of class teaching

SWE or the amount of time they spend outside of class with students. The amount of time teachers spend inside or outside of class on SWE may indicate how much they value SWE, how they perceive their students' abilities, or which techniques they choose to use.

Figure 7 shows the participants' perception of how much time they spend in class teaching or discussing SWE. According to the figure, over 60% spend less than 10% of class time on SWE, and almost 30% spend somewhere between 11 to 25 % of class time. Few, 9%, spend more than 25% of class time in SWE.
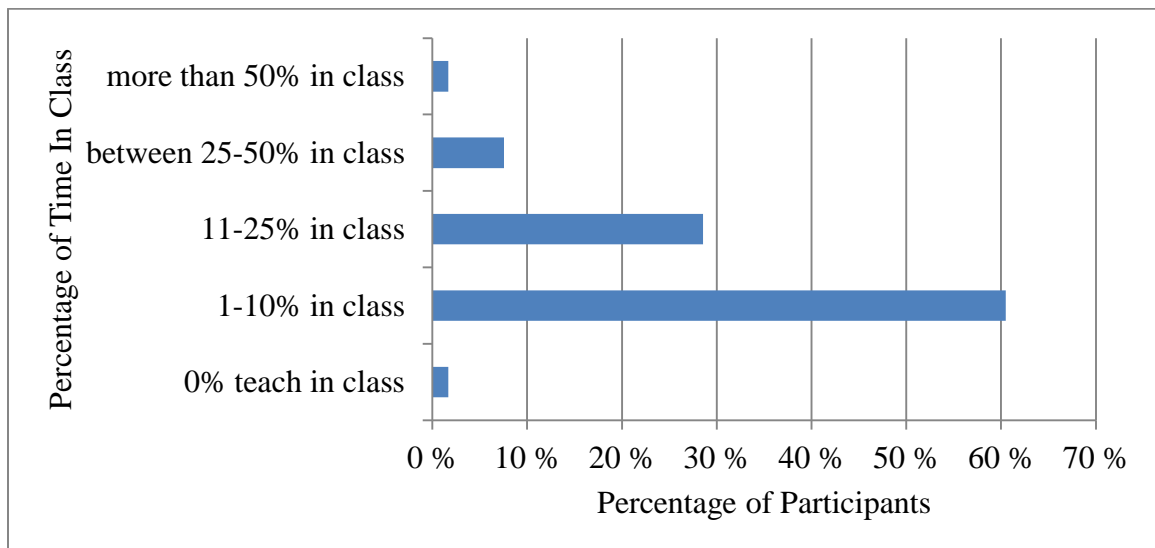


*Figure 7. Participant' perception of time spent in class on SWE. This figure illustrates the percentage of participants who spend what percentage of class time on SWE.*

Figure 8 depicts the participants' perception of how many hours they spend outside of the classroom helping students with SWE for each section of FYC they teach. The majority, 66%, spend less than 2 hours outside of class helping students with SWE, while 30% spend 2 to 10 hours conferencing with students outside of class time. Only 4 % spend between 11 to 20 hours outside of class.
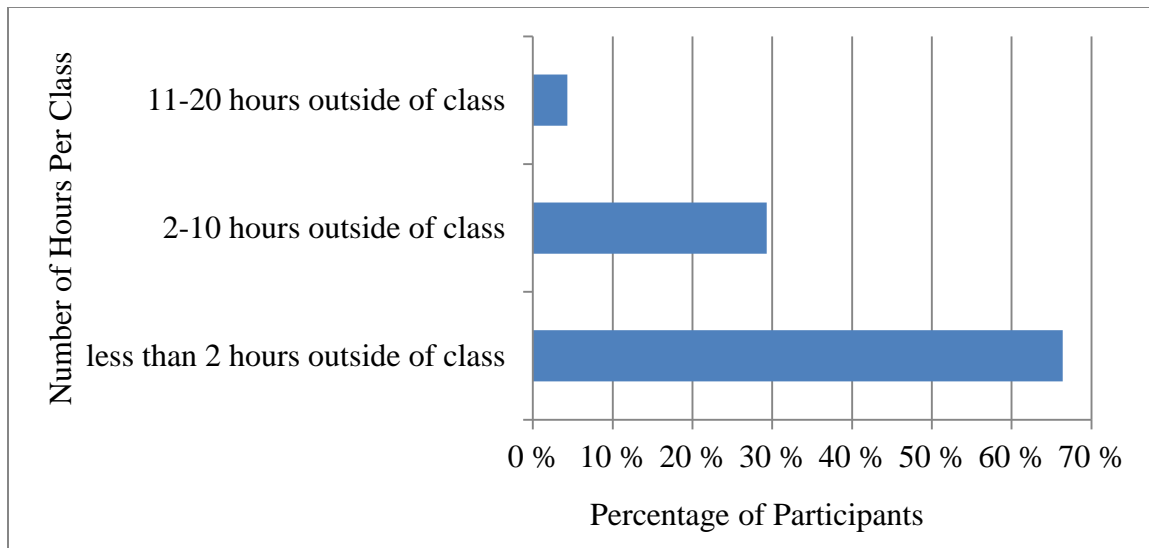
*Figure 8. Participants' perception of hours spent outside of class on SWE. This figure illustrates how many hours spent outside of class on SWE by percentage of participants.*

Table 7 divides the techniques' perceived effectiveness by the participants' highest attained degree. Earlier, Figure 6 showed overall the participants' perceived effectiveness of the techniques they use. Table 7 illustrates if a correlation exists between those participants with a higher degree and their perception of the effectiveness of a technique. A slight correlation exists between those with a higher degree and their perception that handouts and mini lessons are effective. A negative correlation exists between the higher the degree and the perceived effectiveness of rhetorical techniques. The higher the degree, the less effective the participants believe rhetorical techniques work.

Table 7

*Pearson Correlation: Participants' Perception of Technique's Effectiveness Correlated with Participants' Highest Degree*

| Techniques Effectiveness | By Highest Degree+ |
|---|---|
| **Effective handouts** | **.247(*)** |
| | **.023** |
| Effective software | -.027 |
| Effective handbook | .174 |
| Effective explain | .070 |
| Effective peer | -.077 |
| effectivehandoutfromstudent | .063 |
| effectiveexcerpts | -.004 |
| effectivestkeeptrack | -.252 |
| effectivedialectrules | -.034 |
| **Effective minilessons** | **.209(*)** |
| | **.036** |
| effectivenontechdefinitions | .048 |
| effectivetagquestion | -.248 |
| effectivecopystyle | .105 |
| **Effective rhetorical** | **-.293(*)** |
| | **.020** |

\*\*  Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
\*   Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
+Degrees were coded in order of hierarchy with BA-1, MA-2, and PhD-3

Table 8 demonstrates any correlation between the techniques used and the participants' perception of the effectiveness of those techniques. A positive correlation exists between almost all of the techniques participants use and the participants perceived effectiveness of those techniques. However, a correlation is not found for participants' perception of effectiveness and use of handbooks, handouts from students' papers, and students keeping track of their own errors and their perception of effectiveness.

Table 8

*Pearson Correlation: Perception of Techniques' Effectiveness by Participants Who Use the Technique*

| Techniques Used by Participants | Participants'Perceived Effectiveness of Techniques Used |
|---|---|
| **explainonpaper** | **.252(**)** |
| | **008** |
| **Minilessons** | **.361(**)** |
| | **.000** |
| **peerreview** | **.264(**)** |
| | **.008** |
| handbook | .025 |
| | .816 |
| **excerptsfrstudpapers** | **.460(**)** |
| | **.000** |
| **sentcombining** | **.287(*)** |
| | **.010** |
| Handoutsfrom studpapers | .178 |
| **dialectrules** | **.333(**)** |
| | **.006** |
| **nontech definitions** | **.453(**)** |
| | **.000** |
| **rhetorical** | **.415(**)** |
| | **.001** |
| **handouts** | **.290(*)** |
| | **.013** |
| **software** | **.325(*)** |
| | **.015** |
| **copystyle** | **.452(**)** |
| | **.000** |
| stkeeptrack | .266 |
| | .062 |
| **tagquestions** | **.348(*)** |
| | **.024** |

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Although there is a correlation for most techniques and their effectiveness, a cross tabulation was used to delineate the specific number of participants who chose different levels of each technique's effectiveness and how frequently they use each technique. A

cross tabulation was used to see exactly how many participants are in each category to

illustrate the number of participants who use the techniques either never, sometimes,

usually or frequently, and how effective they perceive those techniques to be.  Table 9

looks specifically at the number of participants who are teaching the techniques and the

effectiveness of each.  It is to be noted that the numbers in the following cross tabulations

are actual numbers of participants who answered the questions.  For example, 33

participants said they mark/explain on students' papers usually or frequently but they also

believe it is not effective.  This dichotomy is exhibited through most of the techniques as

listed in Table 9.   No date is shown for "Students Revise Errors and Resubmit Papers" as

it was accidentally left off of the survey.

Table 9

*Cross Tabulation of Frequency of Techniques Used by Participants and Their Perceived*
*Effectiveness*

| Frequency of Use | Perceived Effectiveness | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |
| Mark and/or explain errors on students' papers | | | | |
| Never | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sometimes | 5 | 8 | 1 | 14 |
| Usually | 8 | 9 | 5 | 22 |
| Frequently | 25 | 14 | 34 | 73 |
| Total | 39 | 31 | 40 | 110 |
| Peer review | | | | |
| Never | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Sometimes | 6 | 17 | 1 | 24 |
| Usually | 5 | 13 | 2 | 20 |
| Frequently | 19 | 12 | 18 | 49 |
| Total | 34 | 44 | 21 | 99 |

Table 9 (continued)

*Cross Tabulation of Frequency of Techniques Used by Participants and Their Perceived Effectiveness*

| Frequency of Use | Perceived Effectiveness | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |
| **Short mini lessons** | | | | |
| Never | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Sometimes | 17 | 17 | 3 | 37 |
| Usually | 19 | 12 | 8 | 39 |
| Frequently | 8 | 1 | 13 | 22 |
| Total | 47 | 30 | 24 | 101 |
| **Refer to and use grammar handbook** | | | | |
| Never | 8 | 3 | 0 | 11 |
| Sometimes | 9 | 29 | 1 | 39 |
| Usually | 9 | 10 | 2 | 21 |
| Frequently | 10 | 7 | 1 | 18 |
| Total | 36 | 49 | 4 | 89 |
| **Grammar handouts/worksheets from textbooks, etc.** | | | | |
| Never | 14 | 1 | 0 | 15 |
| Sometimes | 8 | 17 | 0 | 25 |
| Usually | 7 | 10 | 1 | 18 |
| Frequently | 9 | 3 | 3 | 15 |
| Total | 38 | 31 | 4 | 73 |
| **Excerpts from students' papers** | | | | |
| Never | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Sometimes | 20 | 19 | 0 | 39 |
| Usually | 10 | 4 | 5 | 19 |
| Frequently | 6 | 2 | 8 | 16 |
| Total | 42 | 25 | 13 | 80 |

Table 9 (continued)

*Cross Tabulation of Frequency of Techniques Used by Participants and Their Perceived Effectiveness*

| Frequency of Use | Perceived Effectiveness | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |

Sentence combining

| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | 7 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Sometimes | 13 | 22 | 2 | 37 |
| Usually | 7 | 10 | 2 | 19 |
| Frequently | 8 | 1 | 6 | 15 |
| Total | 35 | 34 | 10 | 79 |

Handouts/worksheets created from students papers

| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | 6 | 6 | 2 | 14 |
| Sometimes | 12 | 21 | 0 | 33 |
| Usually | 5 | 6 | 5 | 16 |
| Frequently | 5 | 5 | 6 | 16 |
| Total | 28 | 38 | 13 | 79 |

Discuss rules of different dialects & SWE

| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | 7 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| Sometimes | 11 | 16 | 0 | 27 |
| Usually | 10 | 7 | 1 | 18 |
| Frequently | 4 | 3 | 4 | 11 |
| Total | 32 | 29 | 5 | 66 |

Use non-technical definitions

| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | 8 | 3 | 11 | 8 |
| Sometimes | 14 | 15 | 29 | 14 |
| Usually | | | | |
| Frequently | | | | |
| Total | | | | |

Table 9 (continued)

*Cross Tabulation of Frequency of Techniques Used by Participants and Their Perceived Effectiveness*

| Frequency of Use | Perceived Effectiveness | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Not | Somewhat | Very | Total |
| **Copying styles of other authors** | | | | |
| Never | 12 | 5 | 0 | 17 |
| Sometimes | 10 | 15 | 3 | 28 |
| Usually | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| Frequently | 1 | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| Total | 26 | 26 | 9 | 61 |
| **Rhetorical approach** | | | | |
| Never | 7 | 4 | 0 | 11 |
| Sometimes | 12 | 24 | 2 | 38 |
| Usually | 1 | 6 | 4 | 11 |
| Frequently | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 21 | 35 | 7 | 63 |
| **Grammar software programs or internet sites** | | | | |
| Never | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Sometimes | 15 | 24 | 0 | 39 |
| Usually | 4 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| Frequently | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 24 | 28 | 3 | 55 |
| **Tag questions** | | | | |
| Never | 11 | 2 | 0 | 13 |
| Sometimes | 6 | 13 | 0 | 19 |
| Usually | 3 | 4 | 0 | 7 |
| Frequently | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 22 | 19 | 1 | 42 |

# Teacher Preparation

The fourth research question inquired as to how prepared first-year composition teachers feel to teach SWE based on education, as per their highest degree and their concentrations in their degrees, and what types of courses, articles, presentations, or other items may have helped them feel prepared. Participants were asked how prepared they feel to teach grammar in the first-year composition course. Figure 9 illustrates the frequency of perceived preparedness of participants. Their choices were coded into SPSS from not at all prepared (0), somewhat prepared (1), prepared (2), and very prepared (3). Almost all participants feel at least somewhat prepared.
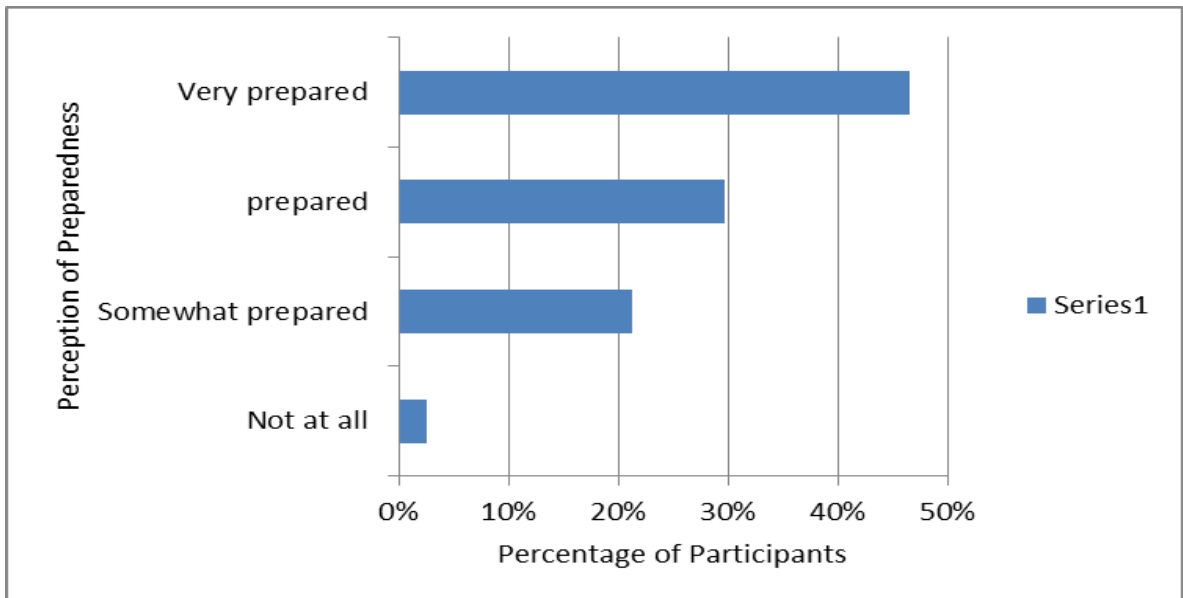


*Figure 9. Participants' perception of preparedness for teaching SWE. This figure illustrates how prepared participants feel to teach SWE.*

Table 10 depicts a positive correlation between teachers who feel prepared to teach and those with a higher level degree.  The higher the degree, the more prepared teachers feel.

Table 10

*Pearson Correlation: Teacher Perception of Being Prepared to Teach SWE Correlated by Their Highest Degrees*

| Prepared for Teaching | By Degree |
| --- | --- |
| Prepared for teaching | .216(*) |
|  | .019 |

+Degrees were coded in order of hierarchy with BA-1, MA-2, and PhD-3
\*  Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

More specifically, Table 11 shows if a correlation exists between the perceived preparedness of first-year composition teachers and their degree concentrations.  A slight negative correlation exists for those with a degree in creative writing.  Those with degrees in creative writing may feel slightly less prepared than those with other degrees.

Table 11

*Pearson Correlation: Participants Perception of Their Preparedness to Teach SWE in FYC as Correlated with the Concentration of Their Degrees*

| Degree Concentration | Prepared for teaching |
| --- | --- |
| Degree literature | -.059 |
|  | .530 |
| **Degree creative writing** | **-.194(*)** |
|  | **.035** |
| Degree linguistics | .043 |
|  | .640 |
| Degree professional writing | .163 |
|  | .078 |

\*  Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
\*\*  Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Participants also chose from a list of possible preparatory items as to how much the items may have helped them prepare to teach grammar in first-year composition classes. They responded for each item as either not helpful (0), somewhat helpful (1), helpful (2), or very helpful (3). Table 12 lists the preparatory items and depicts if a correlation exists between the items and how helpful participants felt each was in preparing the them to teach grammar. As seen in the table, a positive correlation exists between linguistics classes, writing courses, and teaching in helping teachers feel prepared.

Table 12

*Pearson Correlation: Correlation between Preparatory Items and Teachers' Feeling of How the Items Helped Them Prepare to Teach SWE in FYC*

| Preparatory Items | Teaching Preparedness |
|---|---|
| **Linguistics classes** | **.321(**)** |
| | **.008** |
| **Writing courses** | **.197(*)** |
| | **.043** |
| Education courses | .116 |
| books | .090 |
| Journal articles | .172 |
| Professional seminars | -.082 |
| conferences | .141 |
| Professors/mentors | .106 |
| peers | .036 |
| **teaching** | **.304(**)** |
| | **.001** |
| internet | -.048 |

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The survey demonstrates some possible correlations, both positive and negative, between what techniques are being used in first-year composition classrooms and the instructor's education, experience, as well as the participants' perception of the

effectiveness of the techniques they use to help students improve their SWE use in their

formal writing.  The survey also illustrates a few possible items that instructors believe

helped prepared them to teach SWE in the first-year composition class.

## Ideas on Teaching SWE

To supplement the survey, participants were asked to write a short statement of their

philosophy about the role of grammar instruction in FYC.  They were also given an

opportunity to comment or explain further on the subject.  Table 13 indicates how many

participants responded as per each degree. Over half of the participants wrote additional

comments about the topic.

Table 13

*Additional Comments Given by Participants Calculated by Participants' Degrees*

| Participants | BA | MA | PhD | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 15 | 82 | 26 | 123 |
| Added Comments | 7 | 55 | 11 | 73 |
| Percentage | 47% | 67% | 42% | 59% |

The comments were used to help answer research question five, "How do FYC

teachers perceive the idea of teaching SWE in FYC?"  The comments were coded into

similar themes in order to examine the comments in a holistic fashion.  The three themes

were classified as follows: answers and reasons as to whether grammar should or should

not be taught in the first-year composition class, comments on ways to teach and ways

not to teach grammar in FYC, and ideas on changes to FYC to better help students with

SWE.  The majority of comments fall under the first theme, answers and reasons as to

whether grammar should be taught in FYC.  Table 14 sorts the comments by categories,

assigning each a category between one and five with one being never teach it and five

being definitively teach it. Numbers of answers for each category are then divided by

degrees of those who answered.  The total percentage of comments in each category is

also noted.

Table  14

*Theme: Participants' Comments Categorized by Answers to Whether Grammar Should Be Taught in FYC*

| Category | General Description of Category | BA | MA | PhD | Total | % of total comments |
|----------|-------------------------------|----|----|-----|-------|----------------------|
| A1 | Never.  FYC is not the place.  Should have learned in high school or remedial English | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 7% |
| A2 | No.  Only if interferes with comprehension | 1 | 11 | 3 | 15 | 21% |
| A3 | If needed by all; otherwise, individual conferences outside of class | 1 | 13 | 2 | 16 | 22% |
| A4 | Yes, except… | 3 | 8 | 2 | 13 | 18% |
| A5 | Yes, definitely. | 1 | 20 | 3 | 24 | 33% |

In general, 7% of those who gave comments are adamantly opposed to teaching

grammar in FYC.  On the other end of the spectrum, 51% of those who gave comments

believe that SWE should be taught, albeit 18% have caveats as to the teaching of

grammar.

Table 15 depicts all three themes and their categories with a characteristic example

response for each category quoted from the participants.  The first theme and the

categories are the same as Table 14; however, an individual participant's quoted

comment has been added as an example of the overall comments. The final two themes

have been divided into categories and numbered in order to discuss them more

specifically at a later time.

Table 15

*Participants' Comments: Three General Themes, Their Individual Categories, and a Characteristic Response of Comments*

| Theme | Thematic Category | Example of Characteristic Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Answer to should SWE be taught in FYC | | |
| A1 | Never. | "Grammar should not be taught, except in remedial courses or ESL courses." |
| A2 | Not unless it interferes | "Grammar is only important if it impedes a reader's ability to understand the student's argument or ideas." |
| A3 | If needed by all. Otherwise, individual conferences | ". . . individual instruction and [students] revising their own work has been the best method that I have found to teach grammar while avoiding the tendency for grammar to burden the course." |
| A4 | Yes, except for… | "It's difficult to devote extensive resources to teaching grammar with limited class time…" |
| A5 | Definitely | "Grammar plays an import role in first-year composition because we have a responsibility to the student to provide them with the tools they need for future academic and professional success" |

Table 15 (continued)

*Participants' Comments: Three General Themes, Their Individual Categories, and a Characteristic Response of Comments*

| Theme | Thematic Category | Example of Characteristic Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Ways to teach or not to teach grammar | | |
| W1 | Do not use drills (not prescriptive) | "Rote memorization and drills will not help students learn to write effectively." |
| W2 | Teach in context | "[Grammar instruction] must be done within a context of an assignment or linked to other writing goals." |
| W3 | Teach terminology using a handbook | "The best way to teach grammar is to know the rules of grammar [and] use a specific handbook…" |
| Ideas to help students with SWE | | |
| H1 | Additional grammar course | "It would be helpful if more mandatory grammar instruction outside of the first year writing seminar program were available to students…" |
| H2 | Structure classes differently | "…grammar should be a required component of all degree programs…" |
| H3 | More resources for FYC teachers | "We should have more resources made available, so that we can more confidently teach these concepts in class." |
| H4 | Better FYC teacher training | "Teachers should be better trained to teach this important aspect of writing." |

Specific comments from each of the themes and categories will be discussed in more detail in the Discussion chapter as they relate to the research questions. Also, more detailed comments from the three survey participants who contributed to a personal interview will be included.

**Chapter 5: Discussion**

Data collected from the survey and from interviews focus on what first-year composition (FYC) instructors at large, public, 4-year universities believe about teaching Standard Written English (SWE) in the first-year composition classroom, what they are doing, if anything, inside (and outside) the classroom to help students with SWE, and how effective they believe the techniques they are using are. Education and experience background may or may not play a role in their beliefs or actions.

Participants for the survey numbered 151 first-year composition teachers. However, 30 of the 151 answered only the demographic questions; therefore, their information was not included, and data were used from 121 participants. Of the 121 participants, 13, or 11%, had obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree (BA); 82, or 68%, had obtained a Master of Arts degree (MA); and 26, or 21%, had received a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or a Doctor of Education (EdD) as their highest earned degree, as seen in Table 1 in Chapter 4.

**Participants' Educational Background**

**Degrees and Concentrations**

Almost half, 45%, of the participants stated that at least one of their degrees was in English; however, of relevance to the research questions was teachers' education in the following, especially: linguistics, education, or formal writing. Linguistics and English as a Second Language (ESL) may be important due to the increase in a more culturally and ethnically diverse student body (WICHE, 2012). As depicted in Table 2, for those who participated in the survey, few, 7%, had a concentration in linguistics or ESL which has been noted as a definite help in teachers understanding language structure according to

CCCC (2009) revised *Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers*.

Understanding language structure can, in turn, help teachers devise ways to help students add to their SWE knowledge and use.

Approximately one-quarter (24%) of participants had a concentration in some type of formal writing, delineated as composition, rhetoric, or technical or professional writing (Table 2). Although differences exist among the different writing concentrations, at some point during the courses the curriculum probably includes information on a more official, formal style of writing, which more than likely will include SWE. The majority of participants, 40%, had a concentration in literature, while 30% had focused on creative writing, which is consistent with literature reviewed (Baron; CCCC, 1974; Lynch-Biniek, 2005; Myhil et al., 2013). I included education as a concentration choice in the survey because much of the SWE research is in elementary or secondary education. However, fewer than 1% of the participants had a degree in education. Due to such a small percentage of participants with this degree, the data will not be discussed separately. As that data show, the majority of participants have one concentration in something other than formal writing, i.e., composition, rhetoric, or technical/professional writing. Differences may exist in the way participants respond to SWE issues according to their degree concentrations. The correlation between the participants' degree concentrations and the techniques they used will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Graduate Courses Taken**

Even though participants' degrees may focus on one area of English, participants have diverse backgrounds in graduate courses taken, as depicted in Figure 1. Almost one-half of the participants have taken two or more creative writing classes.

Approximately one-third have taken at least two or more education courses, and over three-quarters have taken at least two formal writing courses, illustrating at least some knowledge of writing and the teaching of writing. However, only 20% have taken two or more linguistics courses, showing the majority of participants may not have the knowledge of language that comes from some linguistics type courses. Any correlation between the number and type of graduate courses the participants have taken and the techniques they use will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Along with the participant's degree, concentration, and graduate courses, I originally planned on including the participant's current rank, or job title, but after studying the date, I decided to exclude rank. Rank is a fairly nebulous description of teachers' educational background as the data indicates: those participants with PhDs hold ranks of Instructors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Professors; and those with Masters Degrees (MAs) are classified as Teaching or Graduate Assistants (TAs), or Assistant or Associate Professors. Therefore, rank does not necessarily illustrate the participant's education or teaching experience and will not be discussed further.

## Participants' Background Experience

Teaching experience is another relevant variable for the research questions. As shown in Figure 2, only 7, or 5%, of the participants had never taught FYC prior to this survey; 4 of whom had obtained BAs and 3 MAs. The data indicate no correlation exists between those who are teaching FYC for the first-time and the techniques they use (see Table 6).

92

**Courses Taught**

Figure 2 includes the participants' teaching experience with the number of classes each taught in the main concentrations of FYC, literature, creative writing, and linguistics. As shown in Table 6, experience in type and number of classes taught seems to have little or no significant correlation with the techniques the participants use to teach SWE, except for creative writing.

The only correlation between the number of graduate classes taught in an area and the techniques used by the instructors is between those who have taught more creative writing courses and the technique of copying styles of other authors as seen in Table 6 (r = .250, $p$ =.015).

As shown in Figure 5, copying styles is one of the least used techniques, and as such will not be discussed later in the chapter.  However, before moving on, it is interesting to make a brief note about the positive correlation between creative writing background experience or education and the technique of copying styles of other authors.

Copying styles is used by those with creative writing degrees with r = .295, $p < .001$. as shown in Table 4, and to a lesser degree, with those who have taken graduate creative writing classes, r = .234, $p = .017$ as seen in Table 5. It appears the more creative writing background teachers have, the more likely they are to use the technique of having students copy other authors in order to teach SWE. This seems logical; creative writers enjoy reading other styles and experimenting with various ways to express themselves. Creative writing students may be more likely to be taught to copy other authors' styles, or at least to be cognizant of various styles and imitate what they like in other authors'

writings.  When the students become teachers, they may have a tendency to teach the way they have been taught, i.e. having their students copy the style of other writers.

## Techniques Used and Perceived Effectiveness

The first research question was to identify techniques used by current first-year composition teachers and to find if a correlation exists between the kind of techniques used and the teachers' education, which includes highest degree, the degree's concentration, and the number and type of graduate courses taken. Figure 5 in Chapter 4 depicts the 16 techniques listed in order of usage with 97% of teachers using the technique of marking and/or explaining SWE on students' papers at least *sometimes* and 84% *frequently* or *usually*.  The least used technique was students keeping track of errors and revising their papers with only 7% of participants using it *frequently or usually*.

Almost all of the techniques are used at least *sometimes* by over 50% of the participants, except for tag questions, grammar software or internet sites, and copying styles of other authors. Three of the techniques are used frequently by over half of the participants as follows: 84% mark on students' papers, 59% use peer review, and 54% use short mini lessons. Overall, 7 of the 16 techniques listed in the survey are used frequently/usually by over one-third of the participants as follows: 84% mark on papers, 59% use peer reviews, 54% use short mini lessons, 36% refer to and use grammar handbooks, 34% have students revise their "errors" and resubmit the paper, and 33% use grammar handouts/worksheets from handbooks, textbooks, or online sites. I will focus on the 7 most frequently used techniques in order of use with the most frequent discussed first.

**Write and/or Explain SWE on Students' Papers**

The technique used most frequently (84%) and also used by almost all participants at least sometimes (97%) is writing comments on student papers. This is not surprising. Teachers want to discuss with students their writing's good qualities and needs, yet meeting face to face with students for feedback purposes can be quite time consuming. Individual conferencing was not listed as a technique on the survey; however, one question did ask for amount of time teachers spend outside of class helping students with SWE. Also, some respondents mentioned individual conferencing in conjunction with writing comments on students' papers, so this technique will be discussed here.

**Conferencing versus writing on papers.** Teachers talking with students about their papers may help the students understand SWE premises as students can ask questions and receive feedback. Conferencing with students seems as though it may work better than simply writing comments on the students' papers, but conferencing can be much more time consuming. In an average class of 21 – 25 students (65% of respondents' classes as per Figure 3), if the instructor takes even as few as 10 minutes to conference with each student to discuss students' individual papers, it would take 3 ½ hours per writing assignment for each section of FYC taught. For one 3 unit course, this is more than 1 weeks' worth of class meetings for every formal paper assignment. If the instructor is teaching 4 sections, that equals 14 hours of individual conferencing time for *one* formal paper assignment. The time averaged here is quite conservative as very little can actually be accomplished in 10 minutes, especially if the student has major issues with SWE.

According to one survey participant, a TA who uses individual conferencing,

I do most of my grammar teaching in . . . one-on-one meetings, and I find it very

effective, albeit time consuming. Individual instruction . . . has been the best method that

I have found to teach grammar while avoiding the tendency for grammar to burden the

course. Conferencing outside of class with students could keep instructors from using

valuable class time on SWE, and teachers can discuss each individual's specific needs.

One interviewee, Teacher C, discussed her use of conferencing and making

comments on students' papers. Teacher C, a graduate assistant working on her MA

degree, stated the best way to teach grammar is to sit down with each student and go

through each paper, discussing the SWE problems, how to fix them, and how SWE

makes a difference in writers' ability to communicate effectively with their audience.

Teacher C "requires individual conferences" for rough drafts and "usually cancel[s] one

or two classes," having students meet with her individually. For those "who are having

particular trouble with grammar . . . that require a little bit more time and effort," she

extends the conference. During the conference she "will reference the handbooks or . . .

show them [students] internet sites they can go to that will help navigate specific issues

they are having." She feels this works well and that students "get the hang of it pretty

quickly, and they are able to correct the rest of it [their paper] by themselves." Because of

the time spent on individual conferences, Teacher C writes very few SWE comments on

final papers because SWE problems "have dramatically decreased if they are there at all."

By conferencing with the students on SWE before their final drafts, Teacher C's students

turn in final papers with fewer SWE errors.

I have used conferencing and have also seen the greatest changes in students' writing, including SWE, after working with students individually. Students have often said that the individual conferences are an especially helpful part of composition classes. It may be important to note here that I was a teaching/graduate assistant (TA) at the time of using individual conferencing, as are both teachers who commented on the efficacy of individual conferences. Since TAs do not teach a full schedule of classes, and thus have fewer students than full time instructors, the TAs may have more time to spend on individually conferencing outside of class with their students.

Realistically, those with full time teaching loads may find it time prohibitive to meet with every student for every formal paper for every semester. According to the survey, 60% of the participants discuss SWE outside of class per section less than two hours (see Figure 8). Approximately 30% discuss grammar outside of class 2 – 10 hours, and only 4% for 11 – 20 hours. Therefore, the majority of FYC instructors are probably not individually conferencing with all of their students regarding SWE, especially since 30% of the participants believe that fewer than one-fourth of their students use SWE correctly (as per Figure 4). If the 30% meet with at least 75% of their students at least one time per semester, it could account for the 30% who spend 2 – 10 hours conferencing. However, there are still 18% who believe only 26 – 50% of their students use SWE correctly and the 33% who say that 51-75% are using it correctly (as per Figure 4) who are probably not conferencing. Therefore, it is more probable that teachers are not spending time one on one with students. Instead, most of the participants make comments on students' papers.

**Reasons for writing on papers**. Besides the time element of talking with each student individually, there may be other reasons for the prevalence of teachers writing their comments on students' papers. For example, if teachers are going to conference with students, in order to prepare for conferences the instructor reads through the papers and usually makes some types of comment or mark on the paper in order to remember what to discuss with the student. Even when simply grading a paper, many English instructors make comments on the paper in order to help themselves remember the reason for the grade given; this also allows the student to know the reason for the grade. Since the teacher is making comments anyway, it seems giving the paper back to the students with the comments is less time consuming than conferencing.

The best technique, then, according to the survey participants' beliefs, is for instructors to write the SWE comments on students' papers, hoping students will either ask questions, or go somewhere to find the answers.

Many teachers hope that students will be interested enough to read the comments and then meet for clarification. According to the comments, many teachers are willing to spend time conferencing with students to help them improve their writing, yet teachers feel few students take advantage of this time. Interviewee Teacher K stated, "I always tell them if they don't get it [the SWE comments on their papers], to ask me. Few do." She also stated that she has the most trouble getting the students who have many SWE problems to come to her office hours, which is a common complaint heard often by FYC teachers. Most teachers are not spending office hours helping many students with SWE as seen in the average number of hours teachers stated they spend out of class helping

students. Fewer than one-third of the participants estimate they spend 2-10 hours per class section helping students outside of class with SWE (Figure 8).

Possibly, teachers are sending students to others to receive help as a few participant teachers stated they refer students to the campus writing center for help with SWE, hoping that the writing center can take time with the students to explain the problems. Again the complaint is, according to one survey comment, students "rarely go" to the writing center unless required. Another survey participant commented, "They [students] do not follow up nor correct their mistakes based on my comments on their papers." The survey comments insinuate that students do not care and some students are "disinterested in writing" and "do not follow my instructions and are not doing out of class assignments." Another says the students are "lazy." Some FYC participants believe that students are not taking advantage of what is available and that students really do not care.

This could be an error in perception; perhaps the instructors are not as available as they believe they are. Also, writing centers are not geared to help students with SWE. According to the University of at Chapel Hill (2014) Writing Center, it is "strictly out of bounds" for tutors to check papers for grammar, which is basically proofreading and editing (para. 1).

**Correlation with teacher education.** Even though most teachers write comments on students' papers at least sometimes, is there a correlation between the teachers who use comments and their education background? No correlation exists between teachers with different levels of degrees and writing comments on students' paper (Table 3). In other words, it seems that those with BA degrees, MA degrees, and PhDs use the technique at about the same rate.

However, correlations do exist with different education backgrounds (Table 4). A strong positive correlation exists between those with creative writing concentrations and writing comments, r =.278, *p* = .002. Also, the number of creative writing graduate classes taken and writing explanations on papers are strongly correlated, r = .271, *p* = .005 (Table 5). Therefore, participants with either concentrations or graduate courses in creative writing may be more likely to write comments on students' papers.

This correlation seems logical. First, creative writers enjoy writing and giving their opinions. They may also enjoy receiving feedback on their own writing; therefore, writing feedback would seem appropriate. Also, graduate students in creative writing classes probably have received a good deal of feedback on their own papers; therefore, they are using the techniques they have seen modeled by their own professors.

A negative correlation exists between writing on student papers and those participants having a degree in linguistics (Table 4). The statistics demonstrate a strong negative correlation of r = -.359, *p* = .00 for those who have a degree in linguistics or ESL and the technique of writing comments on papers to explain grammar concepts. Of interest is the negative correlation with those with a linguistics/ESL degree. Of the 9 participants in the category of linguistics/ESL, 7 have degrees in ESL. Possibly, the ESL majors are teaching classes with a high preponderance of ESL students. For example, comments by three participants who had linguistic/ESL degrees only (i.e., they did not have an additional concentration in another area), stated they were teaching ESL composition courses. If a student's first language is not English, then it may not be effective to write comments about language errors in the language with which the student is struggling. Two out of the three teachers who teach ESL spend more time in class on SWE than the

average participants (11-25%) and more time outside of class on SWE (11-20 hours). These participants probably discuss SWE more with their students than write comments.

**Perceived effectiveness.** How effective is writing comments on students' papers? According to the Figure 6, 35% of participants believe writing comments is very effective and 28% believe it is somewhat effective, for a total of 64%. In Table 8, overall a positive correlation exists between those who make comments on students' papers and their perception that the technique improves student SWE learning outcomes (r = .252, *p* = .008). According to Figure 6, the same number of participants believes that the technique is very effective (35%) as those who believe it is not effective (34%). When looking at the cross tabulation of frequency of using the technique and perceived effectiveness as shown in Table 9, out of the 95 total who use the technique usually or frequently, 33 claim that the technique is "not effective." This may not be statistically significant, but it is interesting that over one-third of those using the technique believe it is not effective.

According to one interviewee, writing SWE comments on students' papers may have a negative effect. Interviewee Teacher C believes that if teachers do not go over the grammar needs individually with students, then teachers "wind up writing up a lot of grammar based comments on an essay, which could be harmful . . . [as students] could wind up focusing on that elements of the grading rather on the higher order of ideas or the structure of the paper." Students then believe they should focus on SWE rather than other more important elements of their writing (Baron, 2003; Harwell, 1998; Miller, 2008). One participant noted that students get caught up in SWE and "are burdened with too much anxiety to write with confidence." Composition scholars and teachers have long stated when students focus on grammar, it becomes a stumbling block to the thought

process, constrains knowledge creation, and leads to stilted and boring writing (Baron, 2003, Elbow, 1988; Harris, 1997; Hartwell, 1985; Kreuter, 2009; Miller, 2008; Rose, 2009). A WPA-Listserve (2003) conversation focused on a debate over the effectiveness of writing comments on students' papers. WPA comments charged that writing on student papers was time consuming and not productive and questioned whether the comments really helped students improve their writing. Another WPA concern with comments is whether teachers are taking over the ownership of the student's paper. For example, some teachers found that when they made a comment on a specific sentence or part of the writing, the student simply deleted that sentence or part in question.

If writing SWE comments on papers may not help student SWE use, and if one-third of survey participants who use the technique believe it is not effective, then why are we, as professors, still taking the time to make comments on students' papers? One professor states that we spend numerous hours making comments on papers that students will never read, but it is almost impossible for many of us to stop grading in such a manner, even with rubrics.

What happens if teachers do not write any SWE comments on students' papers? As stated by one professor, if we grade holistically, then students want to know why they received the grade, especially if the grade is not to their liking. Then teachers may re-read the paper, grading it a second time in order to find the areas of students' needs. Teachers may simply believe that it is better to go ahead and make the comments while they are grading the papers the first time.

**Peer Review**

The second most used technique, peer review, is used frequently by 59% of the participants, while 81% use it sometimes. However, only 59% are using this technique frequently versus 84% for writing comments on papers, which is quite an extensive difference between the use of these techniques.

**Correlation with teacher education**. The only correlation for use of peer review was with participants' education: a strong negative correlation as seen in Table 3 with r = -0.289, $p$ = 0.001 level; those with higher degrees use peer reviews less frequently than those with lower degrees. Thus, the higher the degree, the less the instructor uses peer reviews ($p$ = .001).

Perhaps those with higher degrees want to use all of the class time to share the abundant knowledge they have gained from their graduate work. Perhaps they do use peer review for other aspects of their students' formal writing, but do not for SWE. Or perhaps those with higher degrees do not agree that peer review works. This, however, may be a topic for another study.

Educators generally consider peer reviews common practice in writing classes, from high school through college. The problem with peer review is it takes up class time; also, if peers within the group do not understand SWE, they will either not be able to help the other students in the group, or they may give wrong information and actually harm the others' grammar use. This may be seen in the small negative correlation (r = -.186, $p$ = .042) between the use of peer reviews and those with linguistic/ESL degrees. It is possible that the linguistics/ESL concentrations have learned that if students have English as a Second Language or have the same non-standard dialect features, placing them

together in peer groups would not facilitate learning SWE because peers within the group may not understand the rules any better than the writers themselves do.

   **Perceived effectiveness.**  Overall, those who use peer reviews believe they are effective with a strong positive correlation of r = .264, *p* = .008 (see Table 8).  As shown in Figure 6, 21% believe peer reviews are very effective and 44% believe they are somewhat effective, which gives a total 65% for those who believe peer reviews work at least somewhat.  However, when looking at the cross tabulation of frequency of techniques used by participants and their perceived effectiveness in Table 9, out of the 69 participants who said they used peer review frequently, 24, or 35%, see it is not an effective tool.  Again, one-third of those participants using a technique believe it is not effective.

## Short Mini Lessons

   The third most used technique among the participants is short mini lessons to teach SWE.  Over half of the participants, 54%, use the technique usually or frequently (Figure 5).  Almost 90% use mini lessons at least sometimes, which is more than those who use peer review sometimes (81%).   Still, more than half of all participants use short mini lesson frequently.

   **Correlation with teacher education**. No correlation is found between use of mini lessons and the participants' education or experience (Tables 3 – 6).

   Participants' survey comments include that teachers use mini lessons to teach SWE "in response to students' needs," especially when the majority of students have a specific SWE issue.  Participants also commented that they use mini lessons when extra class time allows in order to compensate for the students' lack of understanding SWE.

Participants, therefore, believe they are using class time effectively by using short and quick lessons on specific rules to teach grammar they perceive as needed by the entire class.

Interviewee Teacher K, a graduate assistant working on her PhD, uses short mini lessons, especially in the first semester FYC class.  At the beginning of the semester, Teacher K gives a grammar diagnostic.  Then, if over half of the class has a problem with a certain rule, she begins a few class periods with short mini lessons on that issue. The mini lesson consists of short, intensive grammar exercises of approximately 5-10 short questions or sentences or a 5-10 minute power point.  Some days she may have the class work on comma placement and other days on pronoun antecedent agreement. This way, she believes all students are seeing the rules and how they work correctly. Of course, if only a couple of students need help in one area, she tries to work with them individually.

**Perceived effectiveness.** The higher the participant's degree, the more likely he or she is to believe that mini lessons are effective. A small positive correlation exists ($r = .209$, $p = .036$ as per Table 7).  This is interesting in that the survey did not show that participants with higher degrees use mini lessons more often than others, yet they are more likely to think mini lessons are effective.

The correlation between those who use mini lessons and the perceived effectiveness is strong ($r = .361$, $p = .000$) (Table 8).  There is a significant correlation for those who use mini lessons believing them to be effective. Yet, depicted in Figure 6, almost half, 46%, of those who answered stated the mini lessons were not effective. Also, again, according to the cross tabulation of frequencies of those who use mini lessons and their

105

effectiveness, as seen in Table 9, for those who stated they used mini-lessons either frequently or sometimes, almost half believe they are not effective.

**Refer to and Use Handbooks**

Referring to and using grammar handbooks was the fourth most widely used technique by those surveyed. However, as seen in Figure 5, there is an 18% fewer participants use handbooks than use the short mini lessons. Even so, handbooks are used at least sometimes by almost three-quarters of the population of teachers surveyed.

**Correlation with teacher education**. No correlation, positive or negative, was found regarding those using handbooks and their education (Tables 3 – 6).

The data that approximately one-third of the participants use handbooks frequently is surprising because the composition field has reiterated how the teaching of prescriptive grammar by use of handbooks does not help students' writing or their use of SWE (Fish, 2009b).

On the other hand, the majority of universities requires or recommends a grammar handbook as one of the texts for first-year composition classes (as per numerous English department websites0. According to the survey comments, some teachers refer students to the handbook after writing SWE comments on the students' papers. The participants believe the students will look up the SWE rule or idea in order to learn and understand the SWE usage. Therefore, handbooks may be used basically for students to check rules. As one Associate Professor with an MA states, "I mark errors and ask students to look them up and learn how to correct them." Of course, this professor expects his or her students to "have a firm grasp on basic grammar issues [because] they have high school diplomas, after all, and those should mean something." This professor believes that 25 –

49% of his FYC student do not use SWE, but he also believes "that often students know how to use grammar correctly, but they are lazy or careless." Because the professor believes the students know grammar, he or she may also believe the students will understand the vocabulary of the grammar handbooks.

An Assistant Professor with a PhD states, "The best way to teach grammar is to know the rules of grammar, use a specific handbook, know the handbook and its specific terminology and show students in class and in conferences how to apply it." I am not sure if the professor is saying that teachers need to know the handbook rules and terminology to teach to the students, or if students need to know the handbook and terminology, and then the teacher helps students apply the information. Either way, the belief comes down to needing to know the handbook rules and terminology of SWE.

**Perceived effectiveness.** Interestingly enough, handbooks were rated "somewhat effective" by 53% of the participants. In fact, as seen in Figure 6, using handbooks is second in perceived effectiveness of all techniques, yet only 4% believe handbooks are very effective. Handbooks are one of the few techniques where a correlation did not exist between those using the techniques and its effectiveness (Table 8). Examining the cross tabulation in Table 9, 19 out of 39, or 49%, of those who use handbooks frequently or usually believe they are not effective. One may wonder why half of the participants are using handbooks if they believe that the books are not very effective.

**Students Revising Errors and Resubmitting**

Approximately the same percentage of participants (34%) who use the technique of students revising errors and resubmitting their papers also use handbooks (Figure 5). This technique can be time consuming as the teacher may need to meet with the student

and then grade the revised paper again.  In my own personal experience, simply writing

SWE comments on the paper did not help students to understand enough to revise their

errors to a positive extent without meeting with me.

One way students may be able to revise their paper without a meeting would be for

the instructor to "line edit," or mark every error throughout every line of the paper.

Common sense dictates that this technique is simply editing the paper for the student.

The student then may make the changes as per the teacher's edits, but the student will

still not know why the changes were made or learn to use them in the next paper.

For the revision technique to work best, after the teacher conferences with the

student, the student reads and edits the remainder of the paper for those errors and

resubmits the paper.  The problem arises in how the teacher then re-grades the paper.

Does he or she simply re-grade the corrections? Does the instructor need to re-read the

entire paper and re-grade?  Does the student receive points back on to the original grade,

or are the two grades averaged?  What if the student makes more errors in the revision?

Can the student receive a worse grade? These are some issues that I myself have had to

deal with when allowing students to revise for a grade.

**Correlation with teacher education.** No correlation existed in the data between

those who use this technique and their education or experience (Tables 3 – 6).

**Perceived effectiveness.**  As for its effectiveness, the question asking participants to

mark the effectiveness of this technique was accidentally left off of the survey, so no data

exist as to the participants' perceived effectiveness (Figure 6).  However, one instructor

stated specifically in the survey that "repetition and revising works" and helps students

the most with SWE.  This may be a topic for additional research.

**Grammar Handouts/Worksheets from Handbooks/Textbooks/Online**

Coming in close in sixth place is the use of grammar handouts and worksheets from handbooks, textbooks, or on line sources. Only 2% fewer participants frequently use the technique than students revising their errors. Probably one of the most surprising elements of the survey is the use of handouts and worksheets with one-third of the participants using them frequently to teach grammar. Researchers have reiterated from the 1960's that the use of worksheets and drills does not increase students' ability to use SWE correctly in their writing (Devet, 2002; Hillocks & Smith, 1991; Micciche, 2004; Rose, 2013; Weaver, 2012). There is no transfer of knowledge from handouts that are apart from students' writing.

**Correlation with teacher education.** No correlation existed in the data between those who use this technique and their education or experience (Tables 3 – 6).

**Perceived effectiveness.** There was a slight positive correlation between those who perceived handouts as being effective and those with a higher degree to a r = .247, $p$ = .023 significance (Table 7). Why would those with higher degrees be more likely to think this technique works? Or why would those with a lower degree be less likely to think this technique works? Is it possible that those who are "newer" to the field are younger and have seen the negative effect of using handouts and worksheets personally from their own high school background?

Figure 6 shows that participants believe the use of handouts is one of the most non-effective techniques listed in the survey. A written comment from a GA with an MA states, "I am generally horrified by teachers that spend a lot of time worrying about grammar" and use "arbitrary [practices] (like workbooks and handouts)." Another

comment by an Instructor with a PhD in literature and creative writing states, the "study of prescriptive grammar for its own sake (identifying parts of speech, diagramming, etc.) does not help students learn to write (cf. Hillocks, 'Research on Written Composition')." Both are reiterating the research of the past 50 years that states the traditional technique of teaching grammar by use of handouts and drills does not help students' SWE use in their writing.

Even though there is a slight positive correlation (r = .290, $p$ = .013) between those who use handouts and worksheets and their perception of its effectiveness (Table 8), the cross tabulation again shows that out of the 58 participants who use this technique sometimes or usually/frequently, only 4 believe it is very effective (Table 9).

**Excerpts from Students' Papers and Handouts/Worksheets Created from Students' Papers**

The seventh technique most used by participants is using excerpts from students' papers (Figure 5). I will discuss this technique with the ninth technique, using handouts or worksheets created from students' papers because it seems that both use the basic idea of using "real" writing errors from students' own writing. Of the participants 38 (31%) use excerpts frequently while 84 (68%) use excerpts sometimes. However, fewer use excerpts from student papers to create handouts or worksheets with a total of 32 (26%) frequently and 77 (63%) sometimes. Why do fewer people use the latter? Reading the participants' additional comments may give a clue as to the difference. For example, many who meet with students individually state they take a sentence from the student's paper and discuss the issues with that student. The participants could be labeling this as using excerpts from students' papers. Another possibility is teachers are using an excerpt

or two from students' writing as examples to help teach a concept during mini-lessons. On the other hand, making actual worksheets or handouts is much more time consuming than simply using an example here and there in a mini lesson or with an individual student. Due to the limited time that teachers have, it may be less time consuming to find pre-made handouts that are created from handbooks, textbooks or online. Seven percent more participants use pre-made handouts versus those who create their own.

**Correlation with teacher education.** A minor negative correlation of $r = -.225$, $p = .014$ exists between teachers who have taken more linguistics classes and their use of hand outs created from students' papers (Table 5). It may be that those with linguistics classes are using pre-created handouts, which are plentiful for second language learners.

Table 4 depicts a more substantial negative correlation of $r = -.243$, $p = .008$ between the use of handouts created from students' papers with those who have a degree concentration in formal writing, composition, professional writing, technical writing, or rhetoric.

**Perceived effectiveness.** As discussed before, Table 8 illustrates a positive correlation of participants' perception of a techniques' effectiveness that they use, which includes excerpts from students' papers. If participants use the technique, the data show a strong positive correlation of $r = .460$, $p = .000$. Teachers who use excerpts from student papers believe that they are effective.

However, using handouts or worksheets created from students' papers is the only other technique, besides using handbooks, where there is no correlation with perceived effectiveness, also seen in Table 8.

**Dialect Rules and Non-technical Definitions**

Although not in the top seven of participants' used techniques, the use of explaining

the difference between the rules of SWE and the rules of various dialects is of interest to

this research as linguists have stated that this technique works to help those who speak

and write in a non-standard dialect, especially African American Vernacular English

(Asselin, 2002; Baker, 2002; Delpit, 1997; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 1973; Wheeler

& Swords, 2006).  Having used this technique myself, I was interested in how many

participants use it.  According to the survey, 72 (59%) of respondents at least sometimes

discuss the rules of different dialects and SWE, and 31 (25%) do so frequently or usually

(Figure 5).   I find it interesting that more of those surveyed used handouts, a technique

which has been discouraged by years of research, than those who enlist a comparison of

rules of students' dialects and SWE, a technique upheld by linguistic research.

According to Figure 5, another technique used as much by the survey participants as

the dialect rules is explaining SWE using non-technical definitions, such as FANBOYS

for conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) or the term *chunks* for clauses (Kolln,

1996; Noguchi, 1991; Schuster, 2003; Vavra, 1996; Yoder, 1996). This technique teaches

students how the words function in a sentence rather than giving it a formal name. Using

non-technical definitions has been discussed in much of the secondary education research

(Noguchi, 1991; Schuster, 1999, 2003; Weaver, 1996, 2007). Some believe it is more

helpful to explain SWE rules to students using non-technical terms without using difficult

handbook vocabulary and definitions.

**Correlation with teacher education.** I expected a positive correlation for using

dialect rules, or teaching students to code switch from their dialect to SWE, with

participants with linguistics degrees (Table 4) and graduate linguistics courses (Table 5).

This, however, was not the case. No correlation was found. One-third, of the 9 teachers

with linguistics/ESL degrees use dialect rules usually; one-third, sometimes; and one-

third, never. This may be because 7 of the 9 teachers have their degree in ESL, and they

may be teaching ESL students, in which case teachers would not be discussing dialects as

they are focused on simply teaching English.  Of the 70 who use dialect rules at least

sometimes, 35% (26) have a literature degree, 31% (23) have a creative writing degree,

8% (6) have a linguistics degree, and 25% (18) have professional writing degrees.

However, for use of non-technical definitions, a strong positive correlation was found

for those who have taken graduate linguistics courses (r = .264, *p* = .004) (Table 5). It is

to be expected, however, that those with more linguistics courses would use non-

technical definitions. Some linguistic courses teach different ways to think about

language, such as transformational grammar, which focuses more on the structure and use

in a sentence rather than on formal definitions from handbooks (Kolln, 1996, 2009). Out

of the 40 participants who say they use non-technical definitions, 40% (16) have

literature degrees, 35% (14) have creative writing degrees, 12.5 % (5) have linguistics

degrees, and 12.5% (5) have professional writing degrees.

**Perceived effectiveness.**  The data correlations show a strong positive correlation

between the use of dialect rules and the non-technical definitions techniques and the

perception of  effectiveness, r = .333, *p* = .006 and r = .453, *p* = .000 significance,

respectively as shown in Table 8.  Both are high correlations, but especially for using

non-technical definitions.  A comment from a GA stated that he or she does not use

terminology because the students will "lose consciousness." Albeit an obvious

exaggeration, the gist is not far from the truth.  Students who do not have a strong

background in grammar terminology may have heard the same terms, such as subordinate

conjunctions or coordinating conjunctions, for years in English classes throughout high

school, and when they hear the term again, they simply stop listening.  They are no closer

to knowing how to use a comma or semicolon because they cannot understand the SWE

vocabulary.

## Overall Perceived Effectiveness of Techniques

Figure 6 illustrates the overall perceived effectiveness of each technique.  The

techniques are listed in the same order as Figure 5 by order of frequency.  The initial

response to the data in Figure 6 may be, "Do any of these techniques work to help

students with SWE issues?" because almost half of all participants have judged half of

the techniques as not effective. In fact, 33 – 54% believe the techniques they use are not

effective.  Copying styles of authors is the only technique where only 23% state it is not

effective.  However, there seems to be a positive correlation with those who teach using a

technique and their feeling that the techniques are effective, except for those who use

handbooks, handouts, and having students keep track of their errors as per Table 8.

One technique, writing on students' papers, was classified as very effective by over

one-third of the participants (36%) who use the technique (Figure 6). The technique is

used by almost all FYC teachers.

The techniques ranked as the second and third in frequency of use only have 21% and

24%, respectively, of those who use it saying it is "very effective" (Figure 6).  Of real

concern is the use of handbooks where only 4% see it as very effective and almost half

who use handbooks say they are not effective.

114

Many who are using different techniques feel that they are not effective, yet they still use them (as per the cross tabulation of techniques used and their perceived effectiveness as discussed in Table 9).  There is either a need for something to be done to help some students with SWE, and participants do not know what to do, or perhaps teachers are simply doing what they have seen modeled by their previous teachers. Or perhaps participants hope that something will help a student here and there or that some time in the future, what was taught may connect and the student will have an epiphany. A GA states, "Students cannot be expected to learn . . . [SWE in] a single semester – especially in a class that is not focused on grammar."  Another participant comments, "It can take years for a person to improve their grammar. . . . [It] is an ongoing process . . . that cannot be overcome in 15 weeks."  Teachers know the limitations, but many keep working toward helping students with SWE, not knowing if what is taught will remain with the student.  As one instructor commented, "It's difficult to judge" what students will retain or understand.  Therefore, he or she continues, "It's difficult to always know for certain which strategies are most effective."  Few longitudinal studies have been done on SWE learning.

If FYC teachers do not believe the techniques they use are helpful or they do not know if they can affect a change, then one wonders if SWE should even be taught in FYC.  This question was not directly asked on the survey; however, numerous teachers commented on the teaching of SWE in FYC.

## To Teach or Not To Teach SWE

Participants were asked to write a short statement of their philosophy about the role of grammar instruction in FYC (see survey question 21 in Appendix A).  They were also

given an opportunity to comment or explain further on the subject (question 22). Table 13 depicts the percentage of comments by participants' highest degree. From all participants, 47% of those with BAs, 67% with MAs, and 42% with PhDs had some opinion they wanted to share. I was surprised by the number and length of comments given. Over 59% of all participants took the time to write down their ideas about grammar teaching in FYC. Knowing how busy college educators are, it is worth a note that the participants are passionate enough about the subject of SWE in FYC to state their individual opinions.

The majority of the written comments discussed whether SWE should be taught in FYC or not. As shown in Table 14, the comments ranged from *never* teach SWE in FYC to it *definitely* must be taught. Many were very adamant about their opinions, especially those on either end of the spectrum: those solidly for teaching SWE in some way to FYC students and those who thought it should never be taught.

I coded comments into general thematic groupings as found in Table 14. Table 15 gives an example from the comments for each category.

**Do Not Teach SWE**

Only 5, or 7%, of the participants who made comments on whether SWE should be taught or not stated adamantly that SWE should not be taught in first-year composition classes (Table 14).

One reason given is that students should already know SWE by the time they are in FYC (Budra, 2010; Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates of the California Community Colleges, 2002; Toor, 2008). One GA with a BA stated, "SWE is expected of first-year college students, as students without that footing are on level with remedial

English studies." Perhaps the level of the student's grammar is on the level of remedial English studies, but what should then be done? What happens if a student has already been "remediated" and is now in the FYC course? As another GA with an MA adamantly states, FYC "is not a grammar class. It's a writing class." Few would argue that FYC *is* a grammar class, but many others commented that grammar is a part of writing, and as such, part of a writing class.

**Unless it gets in the way**. However, the GA goes on to state that grammar should not even be marked on students' papers unless it "gets in the way of effective writing" and even then, it should not be graded. A PhD Instructor agrees, stating, "Grammar is only important in how it interferes with the ability to comprehend the argument." For the past 50 years, FYC teachers have heard the mantra of only discussing grammar if it "interferes" with comprehension. The problem comes in when trying to understand to what degree grammar is "in the way" or "interferes." How much does the grammar need to interfere in order to be considered "in the way"? Much can be deciphered by intelligent readers even when the writing is full of subject verb agreement errors, verb tense shifts, verb errors with missing helping verbs or missing –ed endings, missing –s plural markers, double negatives, and incorrectly placed or omitted apostrophes. Yet, should nothing be done for those students? According to the GA, "To state this clearly and succinctly: grammar has very little place in FYC." Interestingly, the GA explains that "there are so many other things related to writing that students should learn first that I feel taking class time to discuss grammar is a disservice to the students . . ." Some researchers agree that other elements of writing are important and are the focus of FYC and taking class time for SWE is a waste of time (Hastings, 2012; Hoffman & Topping, 2008).

117

**Too many other topics to teach**. Many of the comments from participants mention the time constraints on FYC and how there are many other issues to cover in class. Out of the 72 total comments, 12 (17%) listed more important elements on which to focus, including "larger communication issues," "development, organization, coherence, and focus," "establishing and maintaining a focus, [and] developing ideas," "higher order concerns, such as organization, persuasive techniques, and analytical thinking," "analyze material and state arguments," and "higher level writing skills, such as critical thinking, thesis building and support, wordprocesing [sic], and documented evidence from secondary source[s]." Although I disagree that word processing is a higher level writing skill, focusing on grammar to the *exclusion* of the other important elements of writing would be "a disservice to the students" because, as the GA stated, FYC is not simply a grammar class.

**Teaching SWE is ineffective as per research**. However, the GA continues to state that not only would discussing SWE be a "disservice," but teaching grammar "has often been shown to be ineffective anyway." A few other participants' comments state the same reason for not teaching SWE; however, this is a misunderstanding of the research. Research states the *traditional* approach of using worksheets and drills unconnected to a student's writing is ineffective and does not help students write using SWE, and may even hinder it; research does not state that all and any teaching of grammar is ineffective. However, teachers since the 1960s have believed the ineffectiveness of teaching using the traditional method of worksheets or rote memorization to mean the overall teaching of grammar, and, therefore, some have stopped teaching SWE completely (Hastings, 2012; Hoffman & Topping, 2008). For example, the PhD Instructor who was mentioned

earlier, agrees with the GA and "doubt[s] the effectiveness of most grammar instruction. Has research not shown that grammar drills do nothing to improve grammar?" Yes, drills may do nothing to improve grammar, but that does not equate to "most grammar instruction." Again, the Instructor has heard the research that traditional grammar teaching does not improve student's SWE in writing, and the Instructor generalized it to mean that all teaching or discussion of grammar as ineffective, which has not been proven.

What has been proven to be ineffective is not the discussion or instruction of grammar, but the use of the traditional grammar approach of worksheets and drills isolated from the students' actual writing. Yet, many have interpreted these findings as the PhD Instructor above.

An Instructor with an MA states it more succinctly with "grammar should not be taught, except in remedial courses or ESL courses," using the reason, "there can be little benefit to having adults memorize 'grammar rules.'" Yet again, teaching grammar does not necessarily mean memorizing rules or terminology. Memorization, part of the traditional method, and teaching SWE have also become equated in some teachers' minds. However, most of the other participants do not equate grammar with rote memorization as they use some of the different techniques listed in the survey. The techniques listed in the survey were taken from current research, indicating some SWE teaching techniques may work for writers.

**Students cannot learn it**. The previous PhD Instructor goes on to state that "some linguists even note that grammar/spelling aspects of learning are encoded by 7th grade." Perhaps, the home dialect code rules are encoded by 7th grade, but I am sure that

119

individuals can learn to use SWE after the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, as I have seen many students

accomplish, and as I myself have accomplished. To simply say it is encoded and cannot

be learned goes against Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development (Weaver) and

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and scaffolding. Students may have not been

emotionally or mentally ready to learn SWE previously, or perhaps students did not have

the basics to build on.

Furthermore, the Instructor continued, "Your survey seems to imply that the function

of first year English is to fix the grammar problems of students coming into college. This

is an invalid assumption. Our university (and state) core standards do not identify

grammar as a topic that should be taught . . . [it] is at the instructor's discretion." The

other participants did not see the survey in this way. Many believe many of their FYC

students have problems with SWE. According to the data in Figure 4, half of the

participants believe that at least 50% of their students do not use SWE correctly. As per

their survey responses, many of those instructors are trying to help their students by

integrating grammar within their composition courses.

**Students already know it**. According to the first Instructor, "Grammar should not be

taught" basically because "most college students can correct their own grammar if they

simply take the time to re-read what they have written," which is true of many of the

minor errors made by Standard English speaking students who are in a hurry, or who do

not take the time to set the writing aside for at least a day and then re-read for editing

purposes. The Instructor stated that he or she asks FYC "students to read their own

writing aloud, and they *always* [emphasis mine] 'correct' what they have written by

saying the correct version," and yet, the Instructor also stated that 25 − 49% of his or her

students do not use SWE correctly.  If this is the case, how do these students know how to "correct" their papers? I, too, have had students read their papers aloud; some students read what should be written rather than what is written and correct those minor errors orally, yet they do not see the errors on the page (Hartwell,1985).  This is common, especially among those who speak the Standard English dialect.  However, some students are not able to make the corrections as they may not be familiar enough with the SWE rules.

**Departmentally dictated**. Some survey participants believe "grammar is important," but they have been told to ignore or down play grammar as "dictated by department standards and guidelines," as one GA stated.  The GA commented that the department's stance is that FYC students are expected to have a grasp of SWE.  As stated by Schuster (1999), teaching grammar in FYC has been out of favor with the composition community. However, the same GA spends $2 - 10$ hours per section outside of class helping students with SWE. Obviously, the students do not have as strong of a grasp of SWE as the department believes.  Another GA states,

We are encouraged by our program to not focus heavily on grammar when we grade. There seems to be an attitude of 'it's not the student's fault if they haven't been taught grammar before now, so they shouldn't be punished for it.'

To place emphasis on grading something that students have not been taught is obviously not a good choice.  As a brief aside, when researching large, 4-year public universities, I found that almost all use rubrics with SWE as one component of the rubrics to grade formal papers.  I wondered, then, if FYC teachers were using the rubrics to grade their students' papers on SWE, yet not teaching SWE. However, a quick glance at the

121

survey data was enough to prove that participants said they teach the same elements of
SWE that they also grade, and vice versa. Because the data were quite obvious, I have not
discussed this phenomenon in more detail.

An Instructor with an MA states, "We're not supposed to teach [grammar]" because
students are supposed to come in to FYC knowing it, but, "Of course, they don't."
Another instructor is frustrated with the lack of the university's administration's concern
about essential skills, such as SWE, and that the administration then seems confused by
the high drop-out rate from the university.  The Instructor suggests the drop-out rate is
due to the university not realizing the importance of the skills necessary to succeed in
school, such as SWE in formal writing. Although the Instructor, an adjunct, feels the
administration is not "interested in implementing corrective procedures," the instructor
states that he cannot simply "ignore the problems when they show up in my students'
papers," and so he spends numerous hours outside of class to help students with SWE.

The general move by some English Departments or universities away from even
discussing the possible need for SWE in FYC is ignoring the need of some students since
many participants stated their students are not prepared to use SWE.  For example, an
Instructor with an MA in literature whose classes consist of 26-50% who do not correctly
use SWE states, "Most of my students have deplorable writing skills and have been
poorly educated in the use of grammar," but the Instructor does not have time to teach
grammar in his classes. Another GA states, "Roughly half of my composition students
each year cannot write a complete sentence."  Although one hopes this is surely an
exaggeration, one can hear the frustration in the voices of these participants.

An additional Instructor complains of students' "insufficient prior education, [and] poor writing skills."   The Instructor also sees the problem of students not using SWE. He believes, "Teaching grammar is at a very poor level in this education system. Students are pushed forth without basic knowledge of grammar and are encouraged to 'be who they are' i.e., speak incorrectly and write incorrectly." Mostly the idea of allowing students to "be who they are" is geared toward non-standard English speakers.  However, the Instructor may not understand that all native English speakers have a "basic knowledge of grammar" in that they inherently know syntax (word order), and they know the rules of their own dialect.  What they do not know is how to apply the rules of SWE rather than their dialect (Hancock, 2012; Rickford, 2008; Wheeler & Swords, 2006; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2005).   According to linguistics, the students' dialects ("who they are") are not incorrect or wrong; they simply are not SWE, and may be inappropriate for the formal genre and scholarly audience of FYC.

Here, we can respond to the initial comments by teachers who feel adamantly about not teaching SWE unless it gets in the way of understanding.  Teachers may believe they are allowing the students to "be who they are" by sanctioning students' use of their home dialect as per the NCTE Students Right to Their Own Language.  Some have interpreted the NCTE policy to mean that students should be allowed to write in any dialect as long as the teacher can comprehend the ideas.  However, the policy has been misinterpreted to mean teachers should not help students learn SWE (Leahy, 2005). Teachers can exhibit respect for students' dialects by showing students that all dialects have rules. Teachers can then add on to that knowledge by teaching students to "code switch," i.e., to use the

123

SWE rules when needed; at the same time teachers can encourage students to write in their home dialect when appropriate.

Another Instructor states that students not only are "not speaking proper grammar but they have not been taught the rules." Again, "proper grammar" is considered by the Instructor to be SWE. The grammar the students are speaking may be "proper grammar" for their home speech dialect. As far as students not being taught the rules of SWE, it is difficult to believe that students have made it to FYC without teachers teaching the rules of SWE, especially with state and federal mandates and testing and the number of books and articles published for high school English teachers on how to teach grammar. It is possible, however, that teachers are teaching to tests, and passing the tests does not necessarily mean that students can use SWE in their own writing (Prince, 2009). For example, Interviewee Teacher K, a previous high school teacher, believes one problem is that students do not receive a "strong grammar foundation" in high school because the grammar taught "is being taught to pass standardized tests." She says she sees it all the time. For example, she can give a quiz on commas and the students know exactly where the commas go, but they turn in a paper with the same errors. They have learned the rules but not how to apply them to their own writing.

**SWE Is Needed**

Approximately one-third of the participants (33%) who made comments indicate a definite need for some form of teaching SWE to their students, saying it is "necessary," "extremely important," "vital in composition courses," "extremely essential for the textual environment we live in," "absolutely essential," and "HUGELY important!!!" An additional 18% of participants also commented on the importance of teaching

124

grammar.   In other words, 61% of the 73 who wrote comments agree that SWE

instruction is important in FYC.  The 18%, however, feel too pressed for time to be able

to teach it, or they do not know how to teach it.  Therefore, some participants use other

means, such as sending students to the writing centers or having students complete online

grammar exercises outside of class.

Of those who comment that grammar instruction is important in FYC, they expound

on two major reasons for the necessity.  One is that SWE is an essential element of

formal written communication.  Comments include SWE is "a key component to clear

expression," a "fundamental component . . . [of] idea and structure," and "essential to

articulate" in "proper formal contexts." Grammar is intrinsically intertwined with the

meaning and communication of the text and can have an impact on writing quality,

creating clearer communication (Beattie, 2004; Conley, 2003; Hancock, 2012;

Miccicche, 2004).

Another reason for the importance of grammar, a reason repeated by over 15% of the

comments, is that students will need SWE "for future academic and professional

success." As one states, grammar is a "necessary evil . . . [because] my students will be

judged on their capacity to be 'grammatically correct'."  Many researchers agree that

SWE is a necessity to succeed both in the scholarly realm of college and in the business

world (Beason, 2001; Budra, 2010; Hasselwander, 2008; Ray, 2008; Wheeler & Swords,

2006). This idea definitely is contrary to the idea of not teaching SWE unless it interferes

with understanding the argument.  As discussed earlier in the Literature Review chapter,

SWE in writing is considered part of scholarship by professors, as well as businesses,

who will judge students' ability on their writing. As linguist and AAVE dialect expert Wolfram states, "It may be unfair, but that's the way it is" (Alvarez & Kolker, 1988).

Many teachers perceive that their students need SWE; the teachers also are interested in how to deal with this need, as per participants' comments. Participants commented not only on whether SWE should be taught, but they also were vocal regarding the ways to teach and not to teach SWE.

## Ways to Teach SWE

As seen in Table 15, Chapter 4, ideas on ways to teach (or not to teach) grammar was another theme of participants' comments. Many of the comments discuss teachers' beliefs to not teach "prescriptively," stating grammar must be taught within the context of an assignment, "linked to writing goals," or "integrated into [the students'] writing practice." Many articles and books have stated that in order for the teaching of SWE to have an impact on students' writing, SWE should be taught in the context of writing (Haussamen, 2003; Kolln & Gray, 2009; Kolln & Hancock, 2005; Vavra, 1996; Weaver, 1979). Other survey participants made comments as to how they teach, reiterating some of the techniques already discussed in the survey, such as using mini lessons and conferencing outside of class. Only one PhD states the "best way" is through "rules" and "handbook."

## Teacher Preparedness

Out of 121 participants, 118 answered the questions regarding "how prepared do you feel to teach grammar in the first-year composition course?" Almost half or 46% (55) feel very prepared, 30% (35) feel prepared, 21% (25) feel somewhat prepared, and only 2.5% (3) feel not at all prepared (Figure 6). As shown in Table 10, a minor correlation exists

126

between those who have higher degrees and the feeling of being more prepared.  This, of course, makes sense because the higher the degree, the more education and the more knowledge a teacher has of the subject matter, which always helps in teaching.

Table 11 depicts the data on teacher preparedness and degree concentrations.  The survey shows the only correlation between degrees and teachers' feelings of being prepared to teach SWE is a slight negative correlation between those with a degree in creative writing (r = -.194, *p* = .035). Teachers with creative writing degrees may feel slightly less prepared to teach SWE.  Creative writing is just that, creative, and usually rules of SWE are "broken" in order to make connections to thoughts, such as using a comma splice, or using a run on to give the reader a feeling of stream of consciousness. Using SWE is not a main concern with creative writing.  For example, Interviewee C, an Adjunct Instructor with an MA in literature, began as a creative writing major; however, he said he had to switch majors when he saw the lack of rigor in the creative writing degree.  He said basically in creative writing "anything goes" as far as SWE is considered as this is artistic.  If not much weight is placed on writing using SWE in a teacher's major and graduate classes, then it may be difficult to feel prepared to teach SWE.

### Elements That Help Prepare Teachers

Those who feel prepared to teach SWE believe that a graduate classes in linguistics and formal writing concentrations helped prepare them.  A strong positive correlation is shown in Table 12 for linguistics classes (r = .321, *p* = .008) being helpful;  a positive correlation also exists for formal writing classes (r = .197, *p* = .043).  Table 12 also shows a high correlation between teaching experience and participants feeling prepared (r =

.304, $p$ = .001). No correlations were shown for the other possible strategies for teacher preparation, such as journals, conferences, peers, or mentors.

**Graduate Courses**

**Linguistic courses**.  A high positive correlation exists between those who have taken linguistics classes and a feeling of being prepared to teach SWE (Table 12).  Linguists believe that learning about the basics of language can help teachers teach grammar.  They also have stated that understanding the linguistic elements of languages can help students understand and learn SWE rules while remaining proud of their own dialect (Haussamen, 2003; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 1973;Wolfram & Schilling Estes, 2005) which adheres to the NCTE (2008) Position Statement:

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English affirm the students' right to their own language—to the dialect that expresses their family and community identity, the idiolect that expresses their unique personal identity;

that NCTE affirm the responsibility of all teachers of English to assist all students in the development of their ability to speak and write better whatever their dialects. ("Resolution," para. 1 -2)

Linguistics' elements, such as how language is used, how language creates meaning, and how languages vary between cultures, may help teachers learn how to do the above. If teachers do not understand various aspect of languages, they could wind up doing what one PhD participant states happens, using enforced SWE to "shame children (for their racial, class, or regional background) in public schools, and not actually to teach anything significant." Teaching SWE can, as some researchers believe, perpetuate racism and class distinction; therefore, NCTE wrote the resolution to affirm students' right to their own

128

home language.  With a few linguistics type courses, teachers may learn to honor

students' language and may help the teachers demonstrate to students the need for SWE.

**Formal writing courses**.  The survey data also show a positive correlation for formal

writing classes and teacher preparedness, albeit not as high as linguistics (Table 12).

According to Interviewee Teacher C, most of her classes focused on research theory, but

the composition pedagogy class she was required to take prior to teaching  "was helpful

to a certain degree just because it kind of brought the issue [SWE] to light and forced us

to think about how we would handle it in our own classrooms. I don't know if it

advocated a particular way of handling the situation."

Interviewee Teacher K reiterated the same basic idea. Therefore, one way formal

graduate writing classes may help FYC teachers is in simply discussing the SWE issue.

Another way is for graduate composition faculty to write SWE comments on future FYC

teachers' writing. The FYC teachers may then learn about SWE from their professors'

comments.

## Experience

Teaching experience received a high positive correlation to teachers feeling prepared

to teach (r = .304, $p$ = .001) (Table 12).  Of course, the more anyone teaches a subject, the

more he or she feels prepared to teach it.  This is to be expected. Teachers discover what

they believe works for them as they teach, and they develop pedagogical beliefs about

teaching, which includes beliefs about teaching SWE.  At first, it may be difficult for new

teachers to know what to do with SWE.  As one GA with a BA, teaching FYC for the

first time, stated, "I don't know how I feel about this [SWE in FYC]- - I'm still struggling

to find the appropriate place for grammar instruction in my classroom."  TAs are just

learning about theory and pedagogy and are inexperienced (Webb-Sunderhous & Amdon, 2011). The more they teach, the more likely they are to hone their pedagogy, as stated by an Instructor with an MA who has taught between 4-10 sections of FYC, who found the grammar survey "helpful in that it allowed me to reflect a bit on my practices and beliefs." As teachers, the more experience we have, the more we are likely to reflect and improve our beliefs, thus feeling more prepared.

On the other hand, although participants believe that teaching experience helped them be more prepared to teach SWE, there was no correlation between the number of FYC classes participants taught and their use of techniques (Table 6). In other words, the more FYC classes participants taught did not change significantly the techniques the participants used.

**Other Possible Help for Preparation**

No positive correlation was found from the rest of the listed areas that may have helped prepare FYC teachers.  The consensus for professional publications or conferences being helpful was very low.  For those who answered, the data show 24% found books helpful, 13% found journal articles helpful, 14% found seminars helpful, 9% found conferences helpful, and 13% found the Internet helpful.  The majority of participants do not find professional journals, seminars, or conferences helpful when it comes to teaching SWE. Possibly, participants do not belong to a scholarly organization, or their organization may not discuss SWE in their articles.  Although I did not ask the survey participants what journals they subscribe to, according to the interviewees, they do not subscribe to professional writing journals although one said she does read the online blogs. For the interviewees who are literature majors, they may subscribe to literature

130

journals, not composition scholarship journals.  Journals may not be helpful because teachers do not read them or the journals do not include articles on teaching SWE.

Some feel peers and mentors were helpful, with 20% finding their peers helpful, and 29% finding professional mentors helpful. Those peers in close proximity are believed to have been more help than the overall professional community.  Books, however, were rated higher than peers.  One fourth of the participants may believe books are helpful because many textbooks have teaching guides along with assignments and rubrics. Most textbooks also have an SWE section.

## Ways to Help Improve

The last theme of written comments is ideas that participants have to help improve the situation of students needing SWE (Table 15).  Some believe the structure of first-year composition can be improved.  Others comment that teachers should be better prepared, while others would like students to have better preparation.

### First-Year Composition Structure

One participant, an Instructor with an MA in Creative Writing and who has only 1-25% of  students who use SWE correctly, would like to see grammar as a "required component of all degree programs; perhaps it can be scaffolded across the entirety of the degree program.  First year English/Writing classes focus on sentence structure/word choice, subject/verb agreement, etc. and it progresses with each class."

Another participant believes that students need more mandatory help outside of FYC with a "first year writing seminar [for those] without basic grammar skills," states an Instructor with an MA with 1-25% of his or her class using SWE correctly. The seminar,

131

scheduled with FYC, would seemingly give students grammar instruction along with FYC, albeit not in the same class.

An MA Graduate Assistant, with 1-25% of his or her class using SWE correctly, believes "students need additional help with grammar, such as a mini course before they begin composition based on placement test[s] (not ACT scores, AP, etc)." Again, the perception is test scores are not indicative of students' ability to write using SWE, and written placement tests would be more effective.

The GA also believes, "Each composition class should have a designated tutor who is familiar with their [the classes'] assignments and [would] communicate with the instructor. The Writing Center is available, but it is not sufficient to handle the end of semester rush, and students we refer there rarely go unless required." A tutor would probably help alleviate the stress on this GA, who may not have time to spend helping his or her students as needed.

**Improve Teacher Preparation**

Another suggestion is to "have more resources made available to use, so that we can more confidently teach these concepts in class," and another is "teachers should be better trained to teach this important aspect of writing."

<center>**Chapter Summary**</center>

The majority of participants are not formal writing majors, but they have had at least two graduate composition classes. Even though not their major, the majority do feel prepared to teach SWE in FYC, mostly because of their own previous teaching experience. Some think their linguistics and formal writing graduate courses also helped them to be prepared.

Whether SWE should be taught in FYC or not has been debated for the last 50 years, and the participants' comments show that they are also divided on this subject. A few believe SWE should not be taught because 1) FYC students should know SWE already, 2) teaching SWE harms students' writing, or 3) teaching SWE does not work. However, the majority of participants see a need for SWE in their students' writing even though some English departments discourage teaching or grading for SWE. Participants seem frustrated with the lack of time to teach SWE to students and the lack of student involvement.

Those who believe there is a need for SWE are using different techniques to help students. Teaching experience shows no correlation to techniques used, except for creative writing and copying styles. Almost all of the techniques listed in the survey were used by over half of the participants sometimes. The one technique used by almost all participants at least sometimes is writing comments on the students' papers. Participants with creative writing degrees have a higher correlation of using this technique, and those with linguistics/ESL degrees have a negative correlation. Although not a listed technique in the survey, individual conferencing with students was mentioned by some participants; the participants believe conferencing is helpful to students as it does not put too much focus on SWE in the classroom, and it allows teachers to help each student individually with his or her SWE.

Participants use peer reviews, but those with higher level degrees do not use this technique as much, and neither do those with linguistics/ESL degree. When time allows, many participants use short mini lessons. Participants do refer and use handbooks to teach SWE, as well as handouts and worksheets, some from texts and others created by

the participants from their students' writings.  Although these techniques have been touted by researchers as being ineffective, participants are still using them, yet few use linguistics' techniques of teaching dialect rules and using non-technical definitions, which researchers have stated are effective.

A positive statistical correlation exists between each technique and the perceived effectiveness by those who use the technique, except for handbooks, handouts from students' papers, and students keeping track of errors.  However, when looking at the number of participants who believe the techniques they use are effective or not, anywhere from one-third to one-half believe what they are using is not effective.

Chapter 6 will give a more in depth analysis of what the results may mean to the composition community.  Future research opportunities will also be discussed.

**Chapter 6: Implications**

The purpose of this study is to focus on what some large -year public university FYC teachers believe is needed by their students regarding SWE. It is not to imply that other types of writing instruction should be stopped in order to teach SWE, and it is not to suggest SWE be the main focus of FYC or that SWE is one of the major topics that should be covered in FYC. The study is simply to bring to light what may be happening in FYC classrooms as far as SWE is concerned. The composition community as a whole, as per few conferences and journal articles, seem to indicate that there is little to no problem with SWE in FYC, yet the majority of the surveyed participants reveal that SWE is an issue for at least some of their students. These teachers feel a need to help the students learn to use SWE because of the stigma associated with and cultural perceptions of those who do not use SWE.

In a perfect world, people would not judge others by whether they use SWE in formal circumstances; the general public would be aware that all dialects are rule-based and no dialect is "incorrect." People would also realize that all writers make some SWE errors; no one knows and follows every rule in SWE handbooks. In a perfect world, then, people could then write and speak in their chosen dialect or with SWE errors without fear of being judged as "wrong."

However, ours is not a perfect world. Teaching that one dialect, SWE, is better than other dialects perpetuates a racial and cultural system where some feel superior to others, in part due to grammar.

But the majority of first-year composition (FYC) teachers who completed the survey perceive a need for their students to write formal papers using Standard Written English

(SWE). Most participants believe FYC students need to be able to use SWE for scholarly and employment purposes. Students and graduates will be judged in academia, by professors and students, and in many employment situations, by human resources, employers, fellow workers, and administrators. Therefore, educators allowing students to write formal papers in their "home speech" dialect or non-standard English do not help students learn the SWE grammar aspect of formal writing. It is part of our job as "teachers of college writing [to be] responsible for helping students develop their abilities to write for varied purposes and audiences, communicate their ideas clearly, and use language effectively in academic setting" (Lovejoy et al., 2009). Many survey participants agree; SWE is not the entire FYC curriculum, but SWE is part of effective written communication in academia.

As a teacher of FYC for the past 20 years, I have observed that some students' formal scholarly papers did not use SWE. Some errors come from not completely understanding an SWE rule or not paying close attention to SWE in writing. Also, as a graduate with degrees in composition studies, linguistics, and education, I deem many of the SWE "errors" are, in fact, simple dialect or second language issues, many of which are generally highly stigmatized in society. The general public, some employers, and many in academia will judge those who do not use SWE as not being well educated, even though that may be far from the truth. In order to help prevent this type of unwarranted judgment, throughout my career I have attempted to educate those around me "that all languages and all dialects follow grammatical patterns" (NCTE, 2007, para. 2), that no dialect is better than another, and that written SWE rules do not keep up with verbal changes. I have also endeavored to help students learn the conventions of SWE as per

Standard #4 of the NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts to "adjust their spoken and written language for different audiences and purposes . . . [which] include[s] changes in the conventions and style of language" (NCTE, 2010, "The Standards, para. 4).

I have encountered the need of some FYC students to learn SWE, yet I feel the composition community has not necessarily tried to help me do a better job in this particular aspect of teaching writing. While undertaking the task of helping students with SWE, I have searched for books and articles on more effective ways to teach SWE; what I have found is a dismal smattering of vaguely applicable resources. Simply put, composition articles or discussions at composition conferences on effective ways to teach SWE have been difficult to find. Most articles and books on effective ways to teach SWE are written for elementary or secondary educators, basic writing educators, or those teaching English as a Second Language. In fact, much of what is discussed at the 4-year college composition level has to do with either not teaching SWE or how teaching SWE harms students' writing. This led me to wonder what others within the field are doing with the issues of SWE. This study is to acknowledge what some FYC teachers believe about teaching grammar, what they do in response to those beliefs, and what they know about the subject.

Because this study engaged only 121 FYC teachers and their perceptions, we may not really generalize the findings to the entire community of composition teachers. This study, however, does attempt to begin to fill in the gap between what is actually happening in the FYC participants' classrooms as understood from their self reporting, and what the composition community as a whole discuss regarding SWE. From this

study, it would be interesting to perform another similar survey including all large, 4-year, public universities' FYC teachers.  Discovering what individual FYC teachers are doing to help students who have trouble writing formal papers in SWE may have implications to FYC teacher preparation in general and the composition community as a whole.

## Participants' Techniques and Perceptions

Because the majority of those who participated in the study believe some of their students need help incorporating SWE into their writing, many participants report using at least one technique or tool to help said students with SWE.  However, research has proven that some of these techniques do not work, and participants perceive other techniques they use as being ineffective. The question remains: what techniques are the participants using and what techniques do they consider most effective?

### Writing Comments

The vast majority of survey participants are writing SWE comments on the students' papers, even though many of the participants believe that students do not take the comments into consideration for future reference. Some participants expect their students to make an appointment to discuss the SWE comments. However, participants state that the majority of students either do not take into account what was written or do not make appointments to discuss the comments. One can sense the participants' frustration and confusion at what some refer to as the students' lack of caring or effort; the overwhelming perception appears to be that students are to blame for not putting forth the effort to learn by seeking help. Yet, this may not be the case.

A recent article in the *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* reminds us that many FYC students, who are apparently not putting forth the effort to learn, are just out of high school and learning to cope with numerous issues such as being on their own for the first time; students may also simply be nervous about approaching a professor (Kaufka, 2010). I have seen this phenomenon in my students and even in my own college age children, who, even though I encourage them to seek help when needed from their instructors, could not or would not do so as freshmen. Whether students are too intimidated or do not want to appear unknowledgeable in front of their professors, or whether students have been trained by earlier teachers not to bother them, the majority of first-year students seem not to seek out help from their instructors. Therefore, perhaps FYC students are not lazy; they just do not comprehend that their FYC instructors really want to help their students and will not judge the students on their weaknesses.

**Possible tool.** Perhaps it is up to us as instructors to open up that avenue of communication with our students. Kaufka (2010) states that she requires all her FYC students to schedule a short mandatory meeting time with her at the beginning of the semester, simply to meet and make contact with each of her FYC students. Because of this meeting, students recognize the instructor's willingness to assist them, her approachability, and even simply the location of her office. Since she has begun this technique, she has had many more FYC students making appointments to talk about their papers.

Perhaps if FYC faculty took the time to meet with students regarding their papers, teachers would have less need to write SWE comments on the final papers, thus saving time during grading. Theoretically, the time invested with individual students at the

139

beginning of the course may mean less time spent writing comments on papers later in the course, as stated by some of the survey and interview participants. Improved writing may mean having to take less time to grade papers. The initial investment of one on one time on the front end may mean teachers spending less time later grading papers and the students writing better papers, which probably would equate to less frustration of teachers and students alike.

Conferencing may also mean improved writing on later papers which, after all, is our goal. Spending time one on one with students at the beginning of the course may mean more growth and development in the students' ability to use SWE in such a way as to enhance their writing. Many of the respondents mentioned that working with students one on one is the most effective technique in improving students' SWE.

**Future research.** Spending one-on-one time with each individual student may seem like a very effective tool, but it may be too idealistic or unrealistic to believe that spending individual time with students at the beginning of the course will mean less time spent grading or meeting with students toward the end of the course. Future research could be done to identify if this is the case. Also, future research could be conducted to determine if one on one conferencing with students regarding SWE does, in fact, improve students' usage of SWE. In addition, more research may find whether mandatory initial conferences results in an increase in students making additional appointments with the instructor.

**Writing Centers**

Some of the participants believe they simply do not have time to spend either in or out of class to help students with SWE, so they encourage their students to go to the

college writing center to receive help. However, the instructors state that for the most part students do not go unless required. Whether this is simply a perception of the instructors or whether the instructors ask all of the students whether they attended the writing center is not known. If low attendance at the writing centers is indeed a perception, it may be based on only the participants asking one or two students if they attended the writing center or it may be the teachers simply noticing that the students' SWE has not improved.

Furthermore, the perception of writing centers as being somewhere students can go to have their grammar "fixed" or where the tutors will help students understand SWE and how to use it may be erroneous. A majority of articles written by writing center administrators state the goal of writing centers is to improve students' writing, not to teach SWE. In general, administrators state that most writing center tutors do not have the skills or background in language to help students understand their underlying SWE needs, especially students with ESL or dialect issues, indicating that the tutors may be even less equipped than the FYC instructor to teach SWE. Thus, when students ask writing center tutors to help with SWE issues, tutors may not be able to do so or may simply proofread and correct the grammar for the students, which does not help the students improve or understand the underlying framework crucial to improving future performance. Overall, writing center administrators generally dissuade students from using the centers for SWE purposes.

**Handbooks**

Other instructors direct their FYC students to grammar handbooks. Although over 40% of the participants say that using handbooks is not effective, over 50% believe it is somewhat effective (Figure 6). Even though according to the survey use of handbooks is

the second technique thought to be somewhat effective, according to Table 8, handbooks are one of the two techniques which showed no positive correlation between those who employ handbooks as a teaching tool and the perceived effectiveness. Referring students to a grammar handbook may only help those students who have a good understanding of the rules and SWE terminology. Research and personal experience have shown that those who improve most in SWE through discussing the rules are those who already have a good grasp of SWE. Therefore, the 50% of participants who believe handbooks are "somewhat effective" may have students who already know the SWE rules and simply need a quick refresher to remember how to use SWE. Those who already have a good understanding of SWE rules and terminology will be able to go to a grammar handbook and remind themselves of the rules. Other students, however, may be confused by the vocabulary of SWE and not understand the rules or how to apply them.

**Possible tool**. On the Iowa State University (2011) Instructor Resources, one assignment and rubric, the "Grammar/Error Map (Rubric)" instructs students to examine three of their written class documents and locate 10 SWE errors, as described in their handbook; then students label the error using the handbook terminology and look for any error pattern, explaining this in written format to the instructor. This type of assignment may help students see the SWE in their own writing, rather than isolated grammar instruction without meaning.

**Other Techniques**

Besides writing comments on papers and using handbooks and handouts, teachers are trying the other techniques listed in the survey as shown in Figure 6. However, some of the respondents' commented on even more specific techniques. For example, one

participant believes teaching students the terminology and rules works best, while another believes that that is the worst technique to use. However, even though a positive correlation results for almost all of the techniques used (as per Table 8), meaning that those who use specific techniques believe they are effective, the cross tabulations (as shown in Table 9) indicate a dichotomy between those who use techniques and whether they believe it works. For almost all of the techniques listed, anywhere from one-third to one-half of those participants using a technique believe the technique is not effective. Even though the correlations show that those who use the techniques believe they are effective, according to the statistics many teachers do not believe the techniques they use are effective.

**Future research**. Research should be done to look at the each of the various techniques to see which are actually effective for what type of students. Do handbooks help certain students, and, if so, which ones? Do mini-lessons help students understand and use SWE? How does teaching grammar in context work? When is peer review effective to use for SWE? Does using non-technical definitions help students learn and use SWE? Do writing centers help students learn how to effectively use SWE in their writing? Empirical studies on each of the techniques currently being used in FYC to teach SWE may help to enlighten teachers on what techniques to use, and which not to use.

**Traditional Grammar Approach**

A fear exists that English instructors are still teaching grammar the same way they have done for decades, using the traditional approach (Curzan, 2009; Kolln & Gray, 2009; Liu, 2011), which has been referenced for years as being detrimental to student writing (Walker & Mayers, 2011). The high use of handbooks as well as handouts and

143

worksheets (Figure 6) by the participants may indicate that the fear is well-founded. Why are we still using handouts and handbooks and teaching terminology and handbook rules if it has been proven that teaching grammar in a traditional way does not help students to learn and use SWE in their writing?  Why are we still using handbooks and handouts if most of us believe them to be ineffective? According to Myhill et al. (2011), teachers in a secondary education study stated that they had a "tendency to take a formulaic approach" saying that they may "have a habit of teaching it [SWE] quite mechanically."  The FYC teacher, then, may revert back to either what they have been taught to use by past experience or through teaching strategies. They may fall back on what they know, even though they believe it won't necessarily work.

**Future research.** Due to a lack of research and discussion of teaching SWE, some instructors may not have heard about any other possible ways to help students with SWE. The scholarship of composition has stated that teaching SWE in context is most effective, but how exactly does one do that? Few articles have been written on how to effectively teach SWE in the context of student writing, especially at the college level, and resources for teaching SWE at the college level are scarce. However, over the past 4 years in England, Myhill and others have been researching how to effectively teach SWE in context within secondary education classes. Although the focus is secondary education, the tactics could likely be used in post-secondary settings. This research could prove valuable to FYC teachers to help them know ways to teach SWE in context. Research could also be done to find how those techniques that seem to work at the secondary level actually work in the college classroom.

## Implications for FYC Teacher Preparation

As the information presented in this paper has established thus far, FYC instructors

may be using the traditional approach due to a lack of teacher education in SWE. In

general, the majority of the survey participants have Master's Degrees in literature or

creative writing. These areas do not necessarily focus on formal writing using SWE or on

the rules of language acquisition and development (Baron, 2003; CCCC, 1974; Lynch-

Biniek, 2005). Most literature or creative writing graduates are interested in and

knowledgably about teaching in their chosen field, either literature or creative writing,

but because of the need for FYC teachers, these graduates find themselves in the FYC

classroom with little if any preparation on how to help students with SWE. However, the

good news is that over 90% of the participants had at least one graduate class in formal

writing and almost 80% have taken at least two.  In general, though, most will agree that

these classes do not necessarily focus on how to teach or help FYC students with SWE.

The FYC preparation classes are geared to help FYC teachers create syllabi, lesson plans,

rubrics, portfolios, and writing assignments; teach argument and research writing; and

grade writing assignments, as well as teach organization, support, and voice. Perhaps

information about how to help students who have trouble with SWE should also be part

of the curriculum included in FYC teacher preparation classes, but in order to do so,

empirical research is needed to find effective ways to teach SWE.

### Grammar Education

FYC teachers may also not have an adequate understanding of grammar. According

to Myhill et al. (2011), those who teach writing should know and understand grammar;

however, it is quite "possible that these new teachers [have] had little or no grammar

instruction in their own middle-school and high-school experiences" (Kolln & Hancock, 2005, p.19), or possibly they were taught using traditional techniques in order to help them pass mandatory tests.

One hopes, however, that FYC teachers at least know how to write formal papers using SWE.  Because FYC teachers are English majors, it is assumed that they know how to write using SWE in their own formal papers.  After all, they have probably written numerous research papers, at least as undergraduates, and at least some of their English professors probably mark papers for SWE. Because of their own educational experience using SWE, FYC instructors may, then, not only write using SWE but may also be able to detect SWE "errors" in their students' writings. However, FYC teachers may have SWE content knowledge, knowledge on how to use SWE and identify SWE errors, but the teachers may not be able to explain how SWE works in language.

Because many who become FYC teachers may have been unschooled in SWE, they may not understand how SWE works in the context of language. A recent study found that a critical factor in teaching SWE and writing was the teachers' knowledge of grammar (Myhill et al., 2011). In the study, the teachers with limited SWE knowledge gave wrong explanations or were anxious when answering students' questions, thus confusing students. Teachers being able to discuss how language is used may help students use SWE to improve their writing.

A working metalinguistic knowledge of grammar, being able to think and discuss the way language is used, is more important than simple content knowledge (Myhill et al., 2013). FYC teachers who have content knowledge, SWE definitions and terminology, do not necessarily know how to teach students how to use SWE. Just because a teacher has

an understanding of terminology or rules does not mean he or she can teach how to use SWE to construct meaning (Myhill et al., 2011). Teachers who only have content knowledge may simply be teaching the definitions and terminology to their students, which does not necessarily decrease the number of SWE errors in students' compositions (Hartwell, 1985; Myhill et al., 2011; Shaughnessy, 1994; Tarvers, 1992). Including some form of education regarding metalinguistic knowledge during FYC teacher preparation may be very helpful.

Most FYC survey participants indicate little to no preparation on how to teach SWE, especially to those with non-standard ESL or dialect issues. While many FYC students are proficient enough to be in FYC, in actuality, they may be somewhere between native speakers and non-native speakers (Fern, 2009). Some teachers see these students as underprepared. In response, teachers continue to teach using traditional approach or, as the majority of the survey participants do, make numerous written comments about SWE on students' papers. Again, this may be the way the teachers themselves were taught, yet it does not necessarily help their students learn.

**Metalinguistic Education**

Preparation or background for most of the FYC teachers surveyed rarely included any courses that teach about language, and seldom do FYC teachers take any courses in formal or modern grammar, as it is not required for most who teach FYC. Most, therefore, do not have a working knowledge of dialects or syntax; the teachers "continue to struggle with the implications of home and community languages as part of classroom pedagogy, and most composition programs do not . . . address linguistic diversity in the classroom " (Lovejoy et al., 2009, p.262). Because of this lack of understanding, FYC

teacher preparation should include information on linguistic possibilities (Myhill et al., 2011).

Overall, there are several hindrances to ensure FYC teachers receive adequate training on how to appropriately teach SWE to their students. One problem is the lack of teacher training in the area of teaching SWE. Most programs do not even require one course in linguistics or language development, whereas others may have one single survey course, but neither is enough to prepare the FYC teacher to understand the complexities of grammar and language (Kolln & Hancock, 2005), especially in connection with students from various backgrounds and cultures. Typically, teacher preparation has, in the past, "prepared teachers for work in white, middle class settings" (Hill, 2009). Because of this, teachers may not understand how to broach the subject of SWE in a manner that does not threaten the students' home speech (Hill, 2009). This may be one reason why a few participants are so reluctant to grade or discuss grammar with students. Teachers may not understand how to help students learn SWE without the students feeling as if their home language is "incorrect" or "wrong." Composition "pedagogy should be aware of the social conditions and classroom demographics surrounding us" (Lovejoy et al., 2009) and should be taught to FYC teachers.

Teachers need to be taught and prepared for what they will find in their students' writings. It is obvious from the data that some students have a need for SWE. All in the profession realize there is no panacea, no magic wand, that will help all students; however, this does not mean we should not try to find effective ways to help our students. The topic of SWE and the need should be discussed in FYC teacher preparation classes. The research should be studied and shared.

**Future research.** More knowledge about language usage, including dialects, could help teachers understand the reasons some of their students are having problems in SWE, allowing the teachers to talk with the students in a way that allows the students to adapt their language as needed for formal academic situations and indicated by the prospective audience, as well as for students to retain pride of their home language.

## Implications for the Composition Community and Research

A major problem with FYC and SWE is a seeming lack of interest, and thereby a lack of information, from the composition community as a whole. The community has been fairly quiet on the grammar issue except for a few scattered articles on the age old grammar debate -  whether SWE should be taught or not.  Given that the FYC instructors see the need of some of their students, the dispute of "should or should not" does not help FYC teachers know how to address the problems they are finding in the classrooms.

It is also possible that those new to the profession of teaching writing have missed much of the earlier research on SWE and are relying on teaching terminology and "drill-and-kill" exercises (Rustick, 2007), perhaps simply because they do not know what else to do. Participants may use handbooks because they are required texts and use the worksheets and drills because they are part of the handbooks; teachers may hope that students will pick up SWE intuitively through reading, worksheets, and minimal grammar instruction.

Not much is being said in either the journals or the conferences about SWE in FYC. When articles can be found, the majority of SWE articles basically state that teaching grammar in the traditional manner is not useful, which, as shown in the data, is simply being translated by some as "do not teach SWE at all."  Sessions on SWE have all but

149

disappeared from our conventions in the composition field from the 1970s on. In 1993 "out of 340 sessions, and well over 1,000 individual presentations, not a single one was devoted to language structure or linguistics" (Kolln & Hancock, 2005, p. 17). Yet, some teachers see the need for SWE in their own classrooms, so they use the handbooks, which they assume must be okay since it is a textbook required by the English department.

**Mixed Message.** Mixed messages are being sent to FYC teachers. For example, grammar handbooks are required texts in most FYC classrooms. Formal writing rubrics for FYC teachers to use are placed on university websites, with SWE as one of the main criteria. However, some mandatory teacher preparation classes are instructing FYC teachers not to focus on grammar, and some even say not to grade students' writing on SWE. It is difficult to know what to do, given an SWE handbook and rubric on one hand and told not to teach or grade SWE on the other. The mixed messages may be another reason why some FYC survey participants feel frustrated and confused.

As very little actual research is published on ways to help improve college students' SWE, the composition community has possibly, albeit unintentionally, done a disservice to teachers within the recent past by ignoring the SWE issue at the expense of teachers and students. The dogma seems to be teaching SWE does not work when in actuality it may only be the traditional approach to grammar that does not work. Yet, for those who want to teach grammar and who feel the need is there, little is being reported by the composition community to help instructors have more understanding of the subject as well as more tools to use. Much has been written and published in secondary education, but those teachers are under pressure to ensure that their students pass mandated grammar tests, not necessarily for students to take what they learn and apply it to their writing.

According to Kolln and Hancock (2005), "There is a colossal disjunct between the specialized understanding of the college classroom and the expectations places on teachers in our public schools, and they are not even well equipped to understand the nature of the problem" (p. 29).

## Reader Response

This study encourages participants to reflect on their beliefs about SWE in FYC students' writing, what the teachers are doing to help students, and how effective the teachers believe they are in helping students use SWE in their writing when needed. As one instructor with an MA stated, "This survey was helpful in that it allowed me to reflect a bit on my practices and beliefs." The audience for this study may also use the information reported here to contemplate their beliefs and practices within and without of the FYC classroom in conjunction with SWE. Those who read this study may have information and ideas to add to the SWE in FYC discussion, perhaps sharing their experiences and what seems to work or not work. Some teachers may have been apprehensive about discussing the topic of SWE in FYC as the overall sentiment from the composition community seems to be not to discuss it, possibly due to fear of FYC being turned into a class on SWE. Yet, this attitude may be keeping SWE discussion and research to a minimum.

## Summary

The composition community should promote the discussion of teaching SWE, asking for articles from those FYC teachers with personal experience and encouraging new empirical research on the subject in order to explore better ways to help teachers help students with SWE. Expanding the discussion on SWE may make it clear that all

151

grammar instruction is not wrong; it is simply the teaching of grammar by use of the traditional approach of worksheets and drills that does not help students. In this study, over one-third of participants stated they use handouts and worksheets in their FYC classes to teach SWE, which does not follow current composition studies research.

We as a community need to revisit the issue of SWE with an eye to helping FYC teachers, as well as secondary educators, help their students, making sure the research is clearly understood, and encouraging others to research ways to help resolve the issue. Research is needed in the area of SWE to help teachers educate students on how to use SWE to enhance their writing.

Research on how grammar is learned is needed as well. As Myhill et al. (2013) states,

Given the intensity of the debate in Anglophone countries about whether there is a role for grammar in the English/Language Arts curriculum (Locke, 2009; Myhill, & Jones, 2011), it is surprising that there has been so little empirical investigation of teaching and learning with grammar, and of the development of grammatical understanding in L1 [native speaker] learners. (p. 90)

Research in how to teach SWE is occurring in Great Britain and in Australia, and what is being learned about how to teach SWE could be useful in American post-secondary classes. Much of the research in SWE, here and abroad, is in the fields of secondary education, ESL, linguistics, education, basic writing, writing program administration, or writing centers. FYC teachers and composition scholarship should be aware of SWE research findings from other parts of the world, and any SWE research completed in different fields. Sometimes we may be apprehensive about branching out and looking at research and ideas in other fields, as though our field is trespassing on

152

another. However, no single field has all of the answers; fields share and use each other's pertinent research. As Emig (1977) stated, we need a multidisciplinary approach for research in composition. Because SWE is a subject that impacts numerous areas and fields, we need to do more cooperation and sharing in the area of SWE research.

FYC teachers need to understand grammar and how it works. We need to understand the reasons for SWE errors, including but not limited to dialects. We need to understand that all make mistakes, and focus especially on those areas that either impede understanding or are stigmatized within society. Therefore, post-secondary writing administrators should examine their FYC teacher preparation to include discussions of SWE pedagogy and language development, learned either in teacher preparation courses, graduate composition classes, graduate linguistics classes, or elsewhere.

It is time for the field of composition to acknowledge that SWE is an issue in many FYC courses. Since its inception, composition as a field of study has made incredible strides in the teaching of writing, moving from the focus of SWE in FYC to the teaching of argument, support, voice, organization, and numerous other important skills. It may now be the time for the composition field to stop fearing that FYC classes will again turn to only teaching SWE, and to openly solicit research for valuable and viable ways to teach SWE to students who are in need.

# References

ACT. (2007). *Aligning postsecondary expectations and high school practice: The gap Defined. Policy implications of the ACT National Curriculum Survey results 2005–2006.* Retrieved from

http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/NCSPolicyBrief.pdf

Alvarez, L., & Kolker, A. (Directors). (1988). *American tongues* [DVD]. Center for New American Media.

American Council of Trustees and Alumni. (2009). *What will they learn: A report on general education requirements at 100 of the nation's leading colleges and universities.* Retrieved from

https://www.goacta.org/publications/downloads/WhatWillTheyLearnFinal.pdf

Andrews, R. (2005). Knowledge about the teaching of sentence grammar: The state of play. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 4*(3), 69-76.

Andrews, R., Torgerson, C., Beverton, S., Freeman, A., Locke, T., Low, G., . . . Zhu, D. (2006). The effect of grammar teaching on writing development. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(1), 39-55.

Asselin, M. (2002). Teaching grammar. *Teacher Librarian, 29*, 52(2).

Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar. (n.d.). *On the value of systematic grammar study*. Retrieved from http://www.ateg.org/pdf/resolution.pdf

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2014). *Written communication value rubric*. Retrieved from

http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/WrittenCommunication.cfm

Baker, J. (2002). Triangualism. In L.D. Delpit & J.K. Dowdy (Eds.), *The skin that we speak. Thoughts and language and culture in the classroom* (pp. 49-62). New York: The New Press.

Baron, D. (2003, May 16). Teaching grammar doesn't lead to better writing. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/Teaching-Grammar-Doesnt-Lead/27874/?key=HT8lcAZhM3IfM3tmficSKCIDbHUtck8sYXJFZSUaY1xV

Baugh, J. (1999). *Out of the mouths of slaves: African American language and educational malpractice*.  Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Beason, L. (2001, September). Ethos and error: How business people react to errors. *College Composition and Communication, 53*(1), 33-64.

Beattie, J. (2004). Grammar rule 6, 139: Forget the grammar for now. *The Writing Lab Newsletter*. 10 – 11.

Berlin, J. A. (1982). Contemporary composition: The major pedagogical theories. In V. Villaneuva, Jr. (Ed.) *Cross-talk in comp theory* (pp. 233-248). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Berthoff, A. (1981). *The making of meaning: Metaphors, models and maxims for writing teachers*.  Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton Cook.

Bizzell, P. (1984). William Perry and liberal education. *College English, 46*(5), 447-545.

Blaauw-Hara, M. (2006, December) Why our students need instruction in grammar, and how we should go about it. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 165-178.

Blaauw-Hara, M. (2007, September). Mapping the frontier: A survey of twenty years of grammar articles in TETYC. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College,* 30-40.

Blanchard, K.  (2013, June 19) Who do we think we are? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/blogs/conversation/2013/06/19/who-do-we-think-we-are/

Braddock, R., Lloyd-Jones, R., & Schoer, L. (1963). *Research in written composition.* Champaign, IL: NCTE.

Brammar, C. (2010, Summer). Brown, David West. *In other words: Lessons on grammar,code-switching, and academic writing.* [book review] *Composition Forum, 22*. Retrieved from  http://compositionforum.com/issue/22/in-other-words-review.php

Britton, W. E. (1965). What is technical writing? *College Composition and Communication, 16*(2), 113-116.

Brown, D. W. (2008). *In other words: Lessons on grammar, code-switching, and academic writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bruffee, K. A. (1984). Collaborative learning and the "conversation of mankind". *College English, 46*(7), 635-652.

Bruner, J. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Budra, P. (2010, Fall). The case for teaching grammar.  *Education Canada*, *50*(4), 16-20. Retrieved from www.cea-ace.ca/educationcanada

Chandler, D. (1998). *Writing your dissertation*. Retrieved from http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Modules/dissert1.html#I

Clayton, D., & Hudson, D. (2010, November 5). Give us a golden age of grammar. *The Times Educational Supplement*, p. 34.

College Board. (2006, May). *Writing and school reform Report of the National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools, and Colleges.* Retrieved from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-school-reform-natl-comm-writing.pdf

Conference on College Composition and Communication. (1974). *Students' right to their own language*. Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Groups/CCCC/NewSRTOL.pdf

Conference on College Composition and Communication. (2009). *CCCC statement on second language writing and writers.* Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/secondlangwriting

Council of Writing Program Administrators. (2011). *WPA Network for Media Action*. Retrieved from http://wpacouncil.org/nma

Conley, D. T. (2003). *Understanding university success: A project of the Association of American Universities and The Pew Charitable Trusts.* Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. Retrieved from http://cepr.uoregon.edu/publications

Conley, D. T. (2011). *Redefining college readiness.* Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. Retrieved from http://cepr.uoregon.edu/publications

Connors, R. J., & Lunsford, A. A. (1988, December). Frequency of formal errors in current college writing, or Ma and Pa Kettle do research. *College Composition and Communication, 39*(4), 395-409.

Corbett, E. P. (1963). The usefulness of classical rhetoric. *College Composition and Communication, 14*, 162-164.

Council of Writing Program Administrators. (2008, July). *WPA outcomes statement for first-year composition*. Retrieved from http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html

Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, & National Writing Project. (2011, January). *Framework for success in post-secondary writing*. Retrieved from http://wpacouncil.org/files/framework-for-success-postsecondary-writing.pdf

Curzan, A. (2009). Says who? Teaching and questioning the rules of grammar. *The Modern Language Association of America*, *124*(3), 870-879. doi:10.1632/pmla.2009.124.3.870

D'Angelo, F. J. (1978). Advertising the modes of discourse. *College Composition and Communication, 29*(4), 356–361.

Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*(3), 280-298.

Delpit, L. D. (1997). *What should teachers do?* Retrieved from http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/ebonics/ebdelpit.shtml

Devet, B. (2002). Welcoming grammar back into the writing classroom. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College, 30*(1), 8-17.

Dively, R. L. (2010, Summer). Standardizing English 101 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale: Reflections on the promise of improved GTA preparation and more effective writing instruction. *Composition Forum, 22*.

Driscoll, D. L. (2011). *Writing spaces: Readings on writing, Volume 2*. Retrieved from http://writingspaces.org/essays

Dunn, P., & Lindblom, K. (2003). Why revitalize grammar? *English Journal, 92*(3), 43-
50.

Elbow, P. (1981) *Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process.*
New York, NY: Oxford.

Elbow, P. (1995). Being a writer vs. being an academic: A conflict of goals.  *College
Composition and Communication, 46(*1), 72-83.

Emig, J. (1977, May). Writing as a mode of learning. *College Composition and
Communication,* 122–128.

Eng, J. (2006, Fall). Embracing the exit: Assessment, trust, and the teaching of writing.
*Composition Forum, 16*. Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/16/

Fearn, L., & Farnan, N. (2007). When is a verb? Using functional grammar to teach
writing.  *Journal of Basic Writing, 26*(1), 63-87.

Fern, D. R. (2009). Defining L2 student audiences. *Michigan ELT*. Retrieved from
www.press.umich.edu/pdf/9780472033379-ch1.pdf

Fish, S. (2009a, August 24). What should colleges teach? *The New York Times*. Retrieved
from http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/24/what-should-colleges-
teach/?pagemode=print

Fish, S. (2009b, September 7). What should colleges teach: Part 3. *The New York Times.*
Retrieved from http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/07/what-should-
colleges-teach-part-3/

Florida State University. (2011). English department graduate brochure.  Retrieved from
http://www.english.fsu.edu/graduate/brochure.htm

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. In V.

 Villaneuva, Jr. (Ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory* (pp. 251-275). Urbana, IL: National

 Council of Teachers of English.

Fogel, H., & Ehri, L. (2000). Teaching elementary students who speak Black English

 Vernacular to write in Standard English: Effects of dialect transformation practice.

 *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(2), 212-35.

Graham, S., Macarthur, C. A., & Fitzgerald, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Best practictices in writing*

 *instruction*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hairston,  M. (1976). Carl Rogers' alternative to traditional rhetoric.  *College*

 *Composition and Communication,  27*(4), 373–77.

Hairston,  M. (1992). Diversity, ideology, and teaching writing. *College Composition and*

 *Communication, 43(*2), 179-195.

Hancock, C. (2012, February 20). Whole-class grammar teaching. *Teaching and*

 *Learning Forum Digest.* Retrieved from

 http://ncte.connectedcommunity.org/NCTE/Discussions

Harris, J. (1997). *A teaching subject: Composition since 1966.* Upper Saddle River, NJ:

 Prentice Hall.

Hartwell, P. (1985, February). Grammar, grammars, and the teaching of grammar.

 *College English, 47*(2), 105-127. Retreived from http://www.jstor.org/stable/376562

Hasselwander, R.  (2008, September). (The) English article and ELL students. *Writing*

 *Lab Newsletter, 33*(1), 6-10.

Hastings, A. H. (2012, February 16). Whole-class grammar teaching. *Teaching and*

 *Learning Forum Digest.*

Heyden, T. (2003, January). Speaking my mind: Rethinking the role of grammar in

   writing instruction. *English Journal, 92*(3), 15-17.

Hill, K. D. (2009, October).  Code-Switching pedagogies and African American student

   voices: Acceptance and resistance.  *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *53*(2),

   120-131.

Hillocks, G., Jr., & Smith, M. W. (1991). Grammar and usage. In J. Flood, J. M. Jensen,

   D. Lapp, & J. R. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English*

   *language arts (*pp. 591-603). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Hoffman, S.J., & Topping, D. H. (2008, Spring/Summer). Teaching grammar without

   sacrificing reading and writing. *Journal of Reading Education, 33*(3), 32-34.

Huddleston, R. D., & Pullum, G. K. (2003, January 3). Of grammatophobia. *The*

   *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *20*.

Inoue, A. B. (2009, Summer). Self-Assessment as programmatic center: The first year

    Writing program and its assessment at California State University, Fresno.

   *Composition Forum 20*. Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/20/

Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates of the California Community

   Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California. (2002,

   Spring). *Academic literacy: A statement of competencies expected of students*

   *entering California's public colleges and universities*. Retrieved from http://icas-

   ca.org/Websites/icasca/Images/Competency/AcademicLiteracy2002.pdf

Iowa State University. (2011). *Instructor resources*. Retrieved from

   http://isucomm.iastate.edu/forteachers

Johnson, D., & VanBrackle, L. (2012). Linguistic discrimination in writing assessement: How raters react to African American "errors," ESL errors, and Standard English errors on a state-mandated writing exam. *Assessing Writing, 17*, 35-54. doi: 10:1016/j.asw.2011.10.001

June, A. W. (2012, November 5). Adjuncts build strength in numbers: The new majority generates a shift in academic culture. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/Adjuncts-Build-Strength-in/135520*/*

Kent State University. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www2.kent.edu/english/index.cfm

Kerschbaum, S. L. & Killingsworth, M. J. (2007, Fall). Diverse lessons (undergraduate program at Texas A & M. *Composition Forum, 17*. Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/17/

Kezar, A., & Maxey, D. (2013, May/June). The changing academic workforce. *Trusteeship*, *21*(3). Retrieved from http://agb.org/trusteeship/2013/5/changing-academic-workforce

Kinneavey, J. E. (1969).The basic aims of discourse. In V. Villaneuva, Jr. (Ed.) *Cross-talk in comp theory* (pp. 107-117). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Kinneavy, J. (1971). *A theory of discourse: The aims of discourse.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kolln, M. (1999). *Rhetorical gramamr: Grammatical choices, rhetorical effects.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Kolln, M., & Gray, L. S.(2009). *Rhetorical grammar: Grammatical choices, rhetorical effects*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Kolln, M., & Hancock, C. (2005, December*).* The story of English grammar in United

States schools. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 4*(3), 11-31. Retrieved from

http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/2005v4n3art1.pdf

Kreuter, N. (2009, Spring) Style, student writing, and the handbooks. *Composition*

*Forum 19*, Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/19/

Lauer, J.M., & Asher, J. W. (1988). *Composition research: Empirical designs.* New

York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Leahy, G. (2005). Grammar matters: A creative writer's argument. *Pedagogy, 5*(2), 304-

308.

Lindemann, E. (2001). *A rhetoric for writing teachers.* New York: NY: Oxford

University Press.

Liu, D. (2011, May). Making grammar instruction more empowering: An exploratory

case study of corpus use in the learning/teaching of grammar. *Research in the*

*Teaching of English, 45*(4), 353-377.

Louisiana State University English. (2013). *Welcome to the University Writing Program.*

Retrieved from http://www.english.lsu.edu/English_UWriting/index.html

Lovejoy, K. B., Fox, S., & Wills, K.V. (2009, Spring). From language experience to

classroom practice: Affirming linguistic diversity in writing pedagogy. *Pedagogy,*

*9*(2).

Lundsford, A. A., & Lunsford, K. J. (2008). Mistakes are a fact of life: A national

comparative study. *College Composition and Communication, 59*(4), 781-806.

Lynch-Biniek, A. (2005, September). Bemoans, belittles, and leaves. *Teaching in the*

*Two-Year College*, 29-37.

MacDonald, S. P. (2007). The erasure of language. *College Composition and Communication, 58*(4), 585-625.

MacNealy, M.S. (1999). *Strategies for empirical research in writing.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Macrorie, K. (1968). To be read, *The English Journal, 57*(5), 686–692.

McDuffie, K. (2010, May/June). Helping students negotiate dialects in the writing center. *The Writing Lab Newsletter, 34*(9/10), 14 – 15.

Micciche, L.R. (2004, June). Making a case of rhetorical grammar. *College Composition and Communication, 55*(4), 716-737.

Miller, P. (2008, Summer). Writing on the soul: Technology, writing, and the legacy of Plato. C*omposition Forum, 18*. Retrieved from

http://compositionforum.com/issue/18/writing-on-the-soul.php

Mississippi Department of Education. (2010). *Mississippi curriculum test, second edition (MCT2).* Retrieved from http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/osa/MCT2/MCT2_Index.htm

Moffett, J. (1965). I, you, and it. *College Composition and Communication, 16*(5), 243-248.

Moghtader, M., Cotch, A., & Hague, K. (2001, February). The first-year composition requirement revisited: A survey. *College Composition and Communication, 52*(3), 455-467. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/358628

Morris, J. M., & Field, P. A. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for health professionals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Mulroy, D. (2003). *The war against grammar*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Murray, D. M. (1971). Teach writing as a process not product. In. V. Villaneuva, Jr. (Ed).

    *Cross-talk in comp theory* (pp. 3-6). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of

    English.

Myhill, D. (2005). Ways of knowing: Writing with grammar in mind. *English Teaching:*

    *Practice and Critique*, *4*(3), 77-96. Retrieved from

    http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/2005v4n3art5.pdf

Myhill, D., & Jones, S. (2011). *Grammar for writing? The impact of contextualised*

    *grammar teaching on pupils' writing and pupils' metalinguistic understanding.*

    Retrieved from the University of Exeter Graduate School of Educational Research

    website:

    http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/research/projects/details/index.php?id=18

Myhill, D., Jones, S., & Watson, A. (2013). Grammar matters: How teachers'

    grammatical knowledge impacts on the teaching of writing. *Teaching and Teacher*

    *Education, 36.* 77-91. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.005

Myhill, D., Lines, H., & Watson, A. (2011). Making meaning with grammar: A repertoire

    of possibilities. *Metaphor, 2*, 1-10. University of Exeter, UK

The National Capital Language Resource Center. (2004). Teaching grammar: Goals and

    techniques for teaching grammar. Retrieved from

    http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/grammar/goalsgram.htm

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. (2003). *The*

    *neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution.* New York, NY: College Board.

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. (2004, September).

    *Writing: A ticket to work… or a ticket out: A survey of business leaders*. Retrieved

from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. (2005, July). *Writing: A powerful message from state government*. Retrieved from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/writingcom/powerful-message-from-state.pdf

National Council of Teachers of English. (2004a). *NCTE authors weigh in on teaching grammar and writing*. Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/magazine/archives/ncteauthors

National Council of Teachers of English. (2004b). *NCTE beliefs about the teaching of writing.* Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs

National Council of Teachers of English. (2008). *NCTE Position Statement: Resolution on the students' right to their own language.*Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/righttoownlanguage

National Council of Teachers of English. (2011). *English Journal.* Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/journals/ej

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2012a*). Common core state standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subject: Appendix A.* Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2012b). *In the states.* Retrieved Common Core State Standards Initiative website: http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states

Noguchi, R. R. (1991). *Grammar and the teaching of writing: Limits and possibilities.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

North Carolina State University, Department of English. (n.d.). *Teaching assistantships and the graduate student support plan (GSSP).* Retrieved from http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/graduate/grad_teaching_assistantships.php

Odell, L. (1983). Written products and the writing processes. In J. N. Hayes et al. (Eds.), *The Writer's Mind: Writing as a Mode of Thinking* (pp. 53-65). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Ohio State University. (n.d.) *Composition courses.* Retrieved from http://www.english.ohiou.edu/undergrad/compguide/

Ortman, J. M., & Guarneri, C. E. (n.d.). *United States population projections: 2000 to 2050.* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/population/projections/files/analytical-document09.pdf

Patterson, J. P., & Duer, D. (2006, January). High school teaching and college expectations in writing and reading. *The English Journal, 95*(3), 81-87. Retrieved from  http://www.jstor.org/stable/30047049 .

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Perl, S. (1979). The composing processes of unskilled college writers. *Research in the Teaching of English, 13*(4), 317-336.

Prince, M.B. (2009, July 27). A rescue plan for college composition and high-school English. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/A-Rescrue-Plan-for-College/47452

Quible, Z. K. (2008, Fall). The strategies approach: Effective for reviewing grammar and punctuation concepts. *The Delta Si Epslon Journal, 50*(3), 180-191. Retrieved from http://www.dpc.org

Quible, Z. K., & Griffin, F. (2007, September-October). Are writing deficiencies creating a lost generation of business writers? *Journal of Education for Business*, *83*(1), 32-36.

Ray, B. (2008). A new world: Redefining the legacy of Min-Zhan Lu. *Journal of Basic Writing, 27*(2), 106-127.

Rezaei, A. R., & Lovorn, M. (2010). Reliability and validity of rubrics for assessment through writing. *Assessing Writing*, *15*, 18-39. doi: 10.1016/j.asw.2010.01.003

Rickford, J.R. (1999). Language diversity and academic achievement in the education of African American students - An overview of the issues. In C.T. Adger, D. Christian, & O. Taylor (Eds.), *Making the connection: Language and academic achievement among African American students* (pp. 1-30). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED430402.pdf

Rose, M. (1985). The language of exclusion: Writing instruction at the university. *College English, 47*(4), 341-359.

Rose, M. (2009, August 3). Colleges need to re-mediate remediation. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Need-to-Re-Mediate/47527/

Rose, M. (2010, August 13). *The Smithsonian of basic skills* [blog]. Retrieved from http://mikerosebooks.blogspot.com/2010/08/smithsonian-of-basic-skills.html

Rustick, M. T. (2007). Grammar games in the age of anti-remediation. *Journal of Basic Writing, 26*(1), 43-62.

Salkind, N. J. (2004). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Schuster, E. H. (2003). *Breaking the rules: Liberating writers through innovative grammar instruction.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Selingo, J. (2012, September 28). Colleges and employers point fingers over skills gap. *The Chronical of Higher Education, 59*(5), A20.

Shaughnessy, M.P. (1994). Some new approaches toward teaching. *Journal of Basic Writing, 13*, 103-116.

Shellenbarger, S. (2012, June 20). This embarrasses you and I*. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from http://online.wsj.com

Smitherman, G. (1973). "God don't never change": Black English from a black perspective. *College English*, 34(6) 828–833.

Society for Human Resource Management. (2012). *SHRM – AARP strategic workforce planning*. Retrieved from http://www.shrm.org/research/surveyfindings/articles/pages/strategicworkforceplanning.aspx

Sommers, N. (1980). Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adults writers. *College Composition and Communication, 31*(4), 378-388.

Toor, R. (2009, June 9). Writing like a doctor. Advice. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/Writing-Like-a-Doctor/48579/

University of Alabama. (n.d.a). *The graduate assistant guide.* Retrieved from

    http://graduate.ua.edu/publications/ga/gaguide.htm

University of Arizona. (n.d.b) *Writing rubric*. Retrieved from

    http://www.ic.arizona.edu/ic/snsmith/highschool/scoringguides.pdf

University of California – Los Angeles. (2011). *The TA handbook 2011-2012.* Retrieved

    from http://www.oid.ucla.edu/publications/tahandbook1

University of Carolina at Chapel Hill. (2014). *The Writing Center*. Retrieved from

    http://writingcenter.unc.edu/faculty-resources/tips-on-teaching-esl-students/just-

    check-my-grammar/

University of Florida, Department of English. (2011). *Course and syllabus guidelines*.

    Retrieved from http://www.english.ufl.edu/resources/grad/teaching/CRW.html

University of Georgia Department of English. (n.d.) *First-year composition: Description

    of first-year composition courses*. Retrieved from

    http://www.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/course_descriptions.html

University of Houston. (2006). *Undergraduate writing assessment.* Retrieved from

    http://www.uh.edu/writecen/Resources/UndergraduateWritingAssessmentSpr06.pdf

University of Memphis. (2011a). English assistantships and financial aid. In *English

    Department.* Retrieved from http://www.memphis.edu/english/grad/financialaid.htm

University of Memphis. (2011b). First time freshman applicants. In *Undergraduate

    Catalog.* Retrieved from http://www.memphis.edu/ugcatalog/services/req_freshman.

    php

University of New Hampshire. (n.d.) Retrieved from

    http://cola.unh.edu/english/graduate-programs

U.S. Census Bureau (2003). *Language use and English-speaking ability: 2000*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf

Vavra, E. (1996). On not teaching grammar. *English Journal, 85*(7), 32-37

Walker, P., & Myers, E. (2011, Fall). Utilizing strategic assessment to support FYC curricular revision at Murray State University. *Composition Forum 24*. Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/24/

Weaver, C. (1996a). *Teaching grammar in context of writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Weaver, C. (1996b). Teaching grammar in context of writing. *English Journal, 85*(7),15-24. Retrieved from http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/descriptions/engcontent.html

Weaver, C. (2012, Spring). Grammar and "inch wide and a mile deep": Approaching common core standards. *Language Arts Journal of Michigan, 27*(2), 6-10. http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.1898

Webb-Sunderhaus, S., & Amidon, S. (2011, Spring). The *Kairotic* moment:  Pragmatic revision  of basic writing instruction at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.  *Composition Forum,* 23. Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/23/

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. (2012, December). *Knocking at the college door: Projections of high school graduates*. Boulder, CO: Author.

Wheeler, R. S. (2008, April). Becoming adept at code-switching. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(7), 54-58.

Wheeler, R.S., & Swords, R. (2006). *Code-switching: Teaching Standard English in urban  classrooms.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Williams, J. (1981). Phenomenology of error. *College Composition and Communication*, *32*(2), 152-168. Retrieved from http://www.english.illinois.edu/-people-faculty/schaffner/Williams%20Error.pdf

Wilson, J. S. (2010, Summer). Engaging second language writers in freshman composition: A critical approach. *Composition Forum, 22*. Retrieved from http://compositionforum.com/issue/22/

Wolfram, W.  (1991) *Dialects and American English*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Wolfram, W., & Schilling-Estes, N. (2001). *American English dialects and variation*. Malden, MS: Blackwell.

Wolfram, W., & Schilling-Estes, N. (2005). *American English dialects and variation*. (2nd ed.). Malden, MS: Blackwell.

WPA Listserve. (2003, August 4 – 5).*WPA-L Archives: Composition teacher martyrdom*. Retrieved from https://lists.asu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A1=ind0308&L=WPA-L

Writing is the key to college success. Do your students write well right now? (2008, June 22). *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved from http://chronicle.com

Appendix A: Copy of First-Year Composition Faculty Survey

htttps://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=CQnzZEySRLSPMkHFAkucfg%3d%3d

NOTE: The specific information regarding this survey is delineated in the email you received with the survey link. Taking this survey is acknowledging your voluntary and fully informed consent.
1. Rank:

○    Rank:   Teaching Assistant
○  Graduate Assistant
○  Instructor
○  Assistant Professor
○  Associate Professor
○  Professor

2. Highest degree earned:
○  Highest degree earned:   Bachelor's degree
○  Master's degree
○  PhD
○  EdD

3. Concentrations in your degree(s):
☐  Concentrations in your degree(s):   English
☐  Literature
☐  Linguistics
☐  ESL
☐  Creative Writing
☐  Technical/Professional Writing
☐  Rhetoric
☐  No concentrations or specific areas of study

Other (please specify)

4. Number of graduate courses taken in the following areas:

| | 0 | 1 | 2 or more |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Composition** | ○ *Number of graduate courses taken in the following areas: Composition 0 | ○ Composition 1 | ○ Composition 2 or more |
| **Creative writing** | ○ Creative writing 0 | ○ Creative writing 1 | ○ Creative writing 2 or more |
| **Other writing** | ○ Other writing 0 | ○ Other writing 1 | ○ Other writing 2 or |

| | 0 | 1 | 2 or more |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Rhetoric** | ○ Rhetoric 0 | ○ Rhetoric 1 | ○ Rhetoric 2 or more |
| **Education** | ○ Education 0 | ○ Education 1 | ○ Education 2 or more |
| **Linguistics** | ○ Linguistics 0 | ○ Linguistics 1 | ○ Linguistics 2 or more |

5. This is my first semester to teach first-year composition.

○ This is my first semester to teach first-year composition.   Yes

○ No

6. Number of sections for the following college level courses you have taught in the past 5 years:

| | None | 1-3 | 4-10 | More than 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **First year composition** | ○ *Number of sections for the following college level courses you have taught in the past 5 years: First year composition None | ○ First year composition 1-3 | ○ First year composition 4-10 | ○ First year composition More than 10 |
| **Creative writing** | ○ Creative writing None | ○ Creative writing 1-3 | ○ Creative writing 4-10 | ○ Creative writing More than 10 |
| **Other writing courses (i.e., business, technical, and/or professional writing)** | ○ Other writing courses (i.e., business, technical, and/or professional writing) None | ○ Other writing courses (i.e., business, technical, and/or professional writing) 1-3 | ○ Other writing courses (i.e., business, technical, and/or professional writing) 4-10 | ○ Other writing courses (i.e., business, technical, and/or professional writing) More than 10 |
| **Linguistics** | ○ Linguistics None | ○ Linguistics 1-3 | ○ Linguistics 4-10 | ○ Linguistics More than 10 |
| **Other English courses** | ○ Other English courses None | ○ Other English courses 1-3 | ○ Other English courses 4-10 | ○ Other English courses More than 10 |

Other (please specify which course(s)) [                    ]

The following questions pertain to your first-year composition courses only.

For the purpose of this survey, the following glossary is provided:

Grammar means Standard Written English (SWE), also known as traditional prescriptive

norms or "correct grammar," whose rules and usages are found in style guides and grammar handbooks.

Sentence structure includes run-ons, comma splices, fragments, confused word order, parallel structure, awkwardly written, and wordy statements

Verb issues include subject verb agreement, verb tense shift, passive voice

Pronoun usage includes pronoun reference, pronoun antecedent agreement, pronoun case, relative pronouns

Word usage refers to adjective/adverb usage, commonly confused words, wrong word choice, a/an/the, wrong preposition, ending a sentence with a preposition, missing words

Language usage refers to formal vs. informal tone, biased language (racist, sexist, ageist), idiomatic phrases, jargon, and slang

Punctuation and capitalization includes comma rules,semi-colon, colon, possessive apostrophe, quotation marks, end punctuation, and capitalization

7. On average, how many students are in your first-year composition courses?

○ On average, how many students are in your first-year composition courses?  Under 10

○ 10-15

○ 16-20

○ 21-25

○ Over 25

8. Approximately what percent of your first-year composition students use SWE correctly in their formal papers?

○ Approximately what percent of your first-year composition students use SWE correctly in their formal papers?  0%

○ 1-25%

○ 26-50%

○ 51-75%

○ 76-100%

9. When grading student writing, grammar typically accounts for the following percentage of the grade on your formal writing assignments:

○ When grading student writing, grammar typically accounts for the following percentage of the grade on your formal writing assignments:  Less than 10%

○ 10-25%

○ 26-50%

○ More than 50%

10. How frequently do you grade for each of the following grammar issues?

| | **Never** | **Sometimes** | **Usually** | **Frequently** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sentence structure** | ○ *How frequently do you grade for each of the following grammar issues? Sentence structure Never | ○ Sentence structure Sometimes | ○ Sentence structure Usually | ○ Sentence structure Frequently |
| **Verb issues** | ○ Verb issues Never | ○ Verb issues Sometimes | ○ Verb issues Usually | ○ Verb issues Frequently |
| **Pronoun usage** | ○ Pronoun usage Never | ○ Pronoun usage Sometimes | ○ Pronoun usage Usually | ○ Pronoun usage Frequently |
| **Word usage** | ○ Word usage Never | ○ Word usage Sometimes | ○ Word usage Usually | ○ Word usage Frequently |
| **Language usage** | ○ Language usage Never | ○ Language usage Sometimes | ○ Language usage Usually | ○ Language usage Frequently |
| **Punctuation and capitalization** | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Never | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Sometimes | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Usually | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Frequently |

Other (please specify) [                    ]

11. How frequently do you teach the following grammar issues?

| | **Never** | **Sometimes** | **Usually** | **Frequently** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sentence structure** | ○ *How frequently do you teach the following grammar issues? Sentence structure Never | ○ Sentence structure Sometimes | ○ Sentence structure Usually | ○ Sentence structure Frequently |
| **Verb issues** | ○ Verb issues Never | ○ Verb issues Sometimes | ○ Verb issues Usually | ○ Verb issues Frequently |
| **Pronoun usage** | ○ Pronoun usage Never | ○ Pronoun usage Sometimes | ○ Pronoun usage Usually | ○ Pronoun usage Frequently |
| **Word usage** | ○ Word usage Never | ○ Word usage Sometimes | ○ Word usage Usually | ○ Word usage Frequently |
| **Language usage** | ○ Language usage Never | ○ Language usage Sometimes | ○ Language usage Usually | ○ Language usage Frequently |
| **Punctuation and capitalization** | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Never | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Sometimes | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Usually | ○ Punctuation and capitalization Frequently |

Other (please specify) [                    ]

176

12. Please rank each grammatical issue according to importance, with 1 being most important and 6 being least important.

Sentence structure
Verb issues
Pronoun usage
Word usage
Language usage
Punctuation and capitalization

13. On average, what percentage of time do you discuss or teach grammar/usage during each course?

○ On average, what percentage of time do you discuss or teach grammar/usage during each course?   0%

○ 1-10%

○ 11-25%

○ Between 25-50%

○ More than 50%

14. What methods do you use to teach grammar in class? (select all that apply)

☐ What methods do you use to teach grammar in class? (select all that apply)   Grammar is taught systematically with modules and specific schedules.

☐ Grammar is taught in response to student needs.

☐ Grammar is taught when extra time is available.

Other (please specify) [_____]

15. On average, how many hours do you discuss or teach grammar/usage outside of class per section?

○ On average, how many hours do you discuss or teach grammar/usage outside of class per section?   Less than 2 hours

○ 2-10 hours

○ 11-20 hours

○ More than 20

16. How often do you use the following techniques to discuss or teach grammar?

| | Never | Sometimes | Usually | Frequently |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online** | ○ *How often do you use the following techniques to discuss or teach grammar? grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Never | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Sometimes | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Usually | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Frequently |

| | **Never** | **Sometimes** | **Usually** | **Frequently** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **grammar software programs or internet sites** | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Never | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Sometimes | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Usually | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Frequently |
| **refer to and use grammar handbook** | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Never | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Sometimes | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Usually | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Frequently |
| **mark and/or explain errors on the students' papers** | ○ mark and/or explain errors on the students' papers Never | ○ mark and/or explain errors on the students' papers Sometimes | ○ mark and/or explain errors on the students' papers Usually | ○ mark and/or explain errors on the students' papers Frequently |
| **peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers)** | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Never | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Sometimes | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Usually | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Frequently |
| **grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers** | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Never | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Sometimes | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Usually | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Frequently |
| **excerpts from students' papers** | ○ excerpts from students' papers Never | ○ excerpts from students' papers Sometimes | ○ excerpts from students' papers Usually | ○ excerpts from students' papers Frequently |
| **students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors** | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Never | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Sometimes | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Usually | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Frequently |
| **students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own** | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own |

| | **Never** | **Sometimes** | **Usually** | **Frequently** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **errors** | errors Never | errors Sometimes | errors Usually | errors Frequently |
| **discuss rules for different dialects and SWE** | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Never | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Sometimes | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Usually | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Frequently |
| **short mini lessons as needed** | ○ short mini lessons as needed Never | ○ short mini lessons as needed Sometimes | ○ short mini lessons as needed Usually | ○ short mini lessons as needed Frequently |
| **use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.)** | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Never | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Sometimes | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Usually | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Frequently |
| **sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences)** | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Never | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Sometimes | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Usually | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Frequently |
| **tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement)** | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Never | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Sometimes | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Usually | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Frequently |
| **copying style of other authors** | ○ copying style of other authors Never | ○ copying style of other authors Sometimes | ○ copying style of other authors Usually | ○ copying style of other authors Frequently |
| **rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.)** | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) |

|  | Never | Sometimes | Usually | Frequently |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Never | Sometimes | Usually | Frequently |

Other (please specify) [                    ]

17. Overall, how effective are the techniques you use to teach grammar? (i.e., improvement in student learning outcomes)

| | Not effective | Somewhat effective | Effective | Very effective | Don't know | Don't use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online** | ○ *Overall, how effective are the techniques you use to teach grammar? (i.e., improvement in student learning outcomes) grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Not effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Somewhat effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Very effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Don't know | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets from handbooks/textbooks/online Don't use |
| **grammar software programs or internet sites** | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Not effective | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Somewhat effective | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Effective | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Very effective | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Don't know | ○ grammar software programs or internet sites Don't use |
| **refer to and use grammar handbook** | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Not effective | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Somewhat effective | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Effective | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Very effective | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Don't know | ○ refer to and use grammar handbook Don't use |
| **mark and/or** | ○ mark and/or | ○ mark and/or | ○ mark and/or | ○ mark and/or | ○ mark and/or | ○ mark and/or |

180

| | Not effective | Somewhat effective | Effective | Very effective | Don't know | Don't use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **explain errors on the students' papers** | explain errors on the students' papers Not effective | explain errors on the students' papers Somewhat effective | explain errors on the students' papers Effective | explain errors on the students' papers Very effective | explain errors on the students' papers Don't know | explain errors on the students' papers Don't use |
| **peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers)** | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Not effective | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Somewhat effective | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Effective | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Very effective | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Don't know | ○ peer review (using students' peers to review and help with students' papers) Don't use |
| **grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers** | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Not effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Somewhat effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Very effective | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Don't know | ○ grammar handouts and/or worksheets created by you from students' papers Don't use |
| **excerpts from students' papers** | ○ excerpts from students' papers Not effective | ○ excerpts from students' papers Somewhat effective | ○ excerpts from students' papers Effective | ○ excerpts from students' papers Very effective | ○ excerpts from students' papers Don't know | ○ excerpts from students' papers Don't use |
| **students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors** | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Not | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Very | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Don't | ○ students keep track of their own errors and/or write out definitions of their errors Don't |

| | **Not effective** effective | **Somewhat effective** Somewhat effective | **Effective** Effective | **Very effective** effective | **Don't know** know | **Don't use** use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own errors** | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own errors Not effective | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own errors Somewhat effective | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own errors Effective | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own errors Very effective | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own errors Don't know | ○ students revise errors and resubmit writing and/or students write a reflection on their own errors Don't use |
| **discuss rules for different dialects and SWE** | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Not effective | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Somewhat effective | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Effective | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Very effective | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Don't know | ○ discuss rules for different dialects and SWE Don't use |
| **short mini lessons as needed** | ○ short mini lessons as needed Not effective | ○ short mini lessons as needed Somewhat effective | ○ short mini lessons as needed Effective | ○ short mini lessons as needed Very effective | ○ short mini lessons as needed Don't know | ○ short mini lessons as needed Don't use |
| **use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.)** | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Not effective | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Somewhat | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Effective | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Very effective | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Don't know | ○ use non-technical definitions rather than technical definitions (i.e., "chunks" rather than "clauses," FANBOYS rather than coordinating conjunctions, etc.) Don't use |

| | **Not effective** | **Somewhat effective** | **Effective** | **Very effective** | **Don't know** | **Don't use** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences)** | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Not effective | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Somewhat effective | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Effective | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Very effective | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Don't know | ○ sentence combining (creating compound or complex sentences) Don't use |
| **tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement)** | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Not effective | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Somewhat effective | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Effective | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Very effective | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Don't know | ○ tag questions (a short question added to the end of a positive or negative statement) Don't use |
| **copying style of other authors** | ○ copying style of other authors Not effective | ○ copying style of other authors Somewhat effective | ○ copying style of other authors Effective | ○ copying style of other authors Very effective | ○ copying style of other authors Don't know | ○ copying style of other authors Don't use |
| **rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.)** | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) Not effective | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) Somewhat effective | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) Effective | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) Very effective | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) Don't know | ○ rhetorical grammar (breaking the handbook rules for meaning and effect, etc.) Don't use |

18. Overall, how prepared do you feel to teach grammar in the first-year composition course?

○ Overall, how prepared do you feel to teach grammar in the first-year composition course?   Not at all prepared

○ Somewhat prepared

- ○ Prepared
- ○ Very prepared
- ○ Not teaching composition this semester

19. How helpful were the following to you in teaching grammar?

| | Not helpful | Somewhat helpful | Don't know/Not applicable | Helpful | Very helpful |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Linguistics courses** | ○ *How helpful were the following to you in teaching grammar? Linguistics courses Not helpful | ○ Linguistics courses Somewhat helpful | ○ Linguistics courses Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Linguistics courses Helpful | ○ Linguistics courses Very helpful |
| **Writing courses** | ○ Writing courses Not helpful | ○ Writing courses Somewhat helpful | ○ Writing courses Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Writing courses Helpful | ○ Writing courses Very helpful |
| **Education courses** | ○ Education courses Not helpful | ○ Education courses Somewhat helpful | ○ Education courses Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Education courses Helpful | ○ Education courses Very helpful |
| **Books** | ○ Books Not helpful | ○ Books Somewhat helpful | ○ Books Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Books Helpful | ○ Books Very helpful |
| **Journal articles** | ○ Journal articles Not helpful | ○ Journal articles Somewhat helpful | ○ Journal articles Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Journal articles Helpful | ○ Journal articles Very helpful |
| **Professional seminars** | ○ Professional seminars Not helpful | ○ Professional seminars Somewhat helpful | ○ Professional seminars Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Professional seminars Helpful | ○ Professional seminars Very helpful |
| **Conferences** | ○ Conferences Not helpful | ○ Conferences Somewhat helpful | ○ Conferences Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Conferences Helpful | ○ Conferences Very helpful |
| **Professors/oth** | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Not helpful | Somewhat helpful | Don't know/Not applicable | Helpful | Very helpful |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **er mentors** | Professors/other mentors Not helpful | Professors/other mentors Somewhat helpful | Professors/other mentors Don't know/Not applicable | Professors/other mentors Helpful | Professors/other mentors Very helpful |
| **Peers** | ○ Peers Not helpful | ○ Peers Somewhat helpful | ○ Peers Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Peers Helpful | ○ Peers Very helpful |
| **Teaching** | ○ Teaching Not helpful | ○ Teaching Somewhat helpful | ○ Teaching Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Teaching Helpful | ○ Teaching Very helpful |
| **Internet** | ○ Internet Not helpful | ○ Internet Somewhat helpful | ○ Internet Don't know/Not applicable | ○ Internet Helpful | ○ Internet Very helpful |

Other (please specify)

20. Mark the statements below that apply to your course:

○  Mark the statements below that apply to your course:   Student performance on grammar tests and quizzes is a separate grading category on my course syllabus.

○  Students can automatically fail a formal writing assignment if they exceed a specific number of grammar errors.

○  Correct grammatical performance is expected of my students, but not noted on my course syllabi.

○  Correct grammatical performance is nice but not necessary in student assignments in my classes.

Other (please specify)

21. Write a short statement of your philosophy about the role of grammar instruction in first-year composition.

Write a short statement of your philosophy about the role of grammar instruction in first-year composition.

22. Comments or further explanations:

Comments or further explanations:

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Name:

2. What is your current rank?

3. What degrees do you have and in what concentrations?

4. Approximately how many classes of first year composition have you taught?

5.  Do you grade for grammar? If so, explain briefly how you grade.

6. Do you believe your first year composition students have had a problem with poor

    grammar?

    On a scale of 1 – 10 with 10 being the highest, how much of a problem is poor

    grammar/usage in your students' first year composition papers?

7. Why do you there is/isn't a problem?

8. Are there any grammar areas where first year composition students need

    improvement? If so, where?

9. How important do you believe each area is to the students' overall writing?

10. Do you think college instructors should teach grammar to first year composition

    students? Why or why not?

11. If college instructors should teach grammar, can you describe the techniques they

    could use? (What techniques do you know of that teachers use?)

    Do you believe some of the techniques you described would work better than

    others?

If so, which ones and why? If so, when? IF college instructors should not teach grammar, what techniques can be used to help those who need to become more proficient (those whose grades in that area are low?)

12. Which techniques have you used? Which ones worked best? Which ones worked least?

13.  Do you believe your education helped you learn how to  help students with grammar to fyc? What classes helped most? Least? Have you taken composition classes? Linguistic classes? Literature classes?

14. Do you read professional journals? If so, which ones? Do these journals hep instructors learn the best ways to help students with grammar? Why or why not?

15. What else has helped you in this area? learned to teach grammar? What is the most helpful? Least helpful?

16. Would you like to make any other comments on the subject of teaching grammar or helping students become more proficient in FYC?

Appendix C

University of Memphis: Academic Peers and Urban 13

**Academic Peers:**

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Arizona State University - Main Campus

Florida International University

University of South Florida

Georgia State University

University of Illinois at Chicago

University of Louisville

University of Cincinnati - Main Campus

University of Oklahoma Norman
Campus

University of Pittsburgh - Main Campus

University of South Carolina - Columbia

University of Houston - University Park

**Urban Thirteen:**

| | |
|---|---|
| University of Alabama – Birmingham | University of Missouri – St. Louis |
| University of Cincinnati | University of New Orleans |
| Cleveland State University | City College of New York |
| Florida A & M | University of Pittsburgh |
| Georgia State University | Portland State University |
| University of Houston | Temple University |
| University of Illinois – Chicago | University of Toledo |
| Indiana / Purdue U. – Indianapolis | Wayne State University |
| University of Massachusetts – Boston | University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee |
| University of Missouri – Kansas City | |

Retrieved June 2012 from http://www.memphis.edu/oir/additional/peerinstitutions.php

Appendix D

Universities Contacted: Classifications & Responses – First Round

Survey Sent Fall 2012

| University Name | Academic Peer | Urban 13 | Carnegie Classification | | Response |
| | | | Large 4-year Public | Doctor program | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Univ. of Memphis | Y | | Y | Y | Y |
| Arizona State University Main Campus | Y | | Y | Y | Y |
| Univ. of Cincinnati Main Campus | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Univ. of Illinois-Chicago | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Temple University | | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Univ. of Toledo | | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Univ. of Houston | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Univ. of Louisville | Y | | Y | Y | N |
| Georgia State Univ. | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Univ. of Pittsburgh Main Campus | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Wayne State Univ., Detroit | | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Portland State Univ. | | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Florida A & M | | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Indiana Univ. | | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston | | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Univ. of Missouri, Kansas City | | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Univ. of New Orleans | | Y | N | Y | N |
| Florida International Univ. | Y | | Y | Y | N |
| City College of New York | | Y | N | N | N |
| Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia | Y | | Y | Y | N |
| Univ. of South Florida | Y | | Y | Y | N |

Appendix E

Universities Contacted: Classifications & Responses – Second Round

Survey Sent Fall 2013

| | | | Carnegie Classification | | |
| | | | Large | Doctoral | |
| | Academic | Urban | 4-year | program | |
| University name | Peer | 13 | Public | | Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Univ. of Alabama Birmingham | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Univ. of Oklahoma | Y | | Y | Y | Y |
| Wayne State Univ | | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Grand Valley State Univ. | | | Y | Y | Y |
| East Carolina Univ. | | | Y | Y | Y |
| Kent State Univ. | | | Y | Y | Y |
| Iowa State Univ. | | | Y | Y | N |
| Louisiana State | | | Y | Y | N |
| Portland State | | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Tulane | | | N | Y | N |
| Washington State Univ. | | | Y | Y | N |

IRB Approval (Via Email)

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed and approved your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

PI NAME: Mary Millione

CO-PI:

PROJECT TITLE: Standard English Grammar and Usage in the First Year Composition Classroom Phase 2

FACULTY ADVISOR NAME (if applicable): Susan Popham

IRB ID: #2774

APPROVAL DATE: 7/24/2013

EXPIRATION DATE: 7/23/2014

LEVEL OF REVIEW: Expedited

Please Note: Modifications do not extend the expiration of the original approval

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. If this IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.

2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be completed and sent to the board.

3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval, whether the approved protocol was reviewed at the Exempt, Exedited or Full Board level.

4. Exempt approval are considered to have no expiration date and no further review is necessary unless the protocol needs modification.

Approval of this project is given with the following special obligations:


Thank you,

Ronnie Priest, PhD

Institutional Review Board Chair

The University of Memphis.

Note: Review outcomes will be communicated to the email address on file. This email should be considered an official communication from the UM IRB. Consent Forms are no longer being stamped as well. Please contact the IRB at IRB@memphis.edu if a letter on IRB letterhead is required.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS**

**Institutional Review Board**

To: Mary Millione

English

From: Chair or Designee, Institutional Review Board

For the Protection of Human Subjects

irb@memphis.edu

Subject: Teaching Standard English Grammar and Usage in the First-Year

Composition Classroom (Phase 1) (#2452)

Approval Date: November 28, 2012

This is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has designated the above

referenced protocol as exempt from the full federal regulations under category 2. This

project was reviewed in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as

ethical principles.

When the project is finished or terminated, please submit a Human Subjects Research

Completion Form (COMP) to the Board via e-mail at irbforms@memphis.edu. This form

can be obtained on our website at http://www.memphis.edu/irb/forms.php.

Approval for this protocol does not expire. However, any change to the protocol must be

reviewed and approved by the board prior to implementing the change.

—————————————————————

Chair or Designee, Institutional Review Board

The University of Memphis

Cc: Dr. Dr. Susan Popham