Understanding College-Bound Students' Perceived Preparedness and Expectations for College-Level Writing

by

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DEDICATION

In Memory of Dr. Brent Chesley, who always believed I was a “person of quality” and who guided me through my own transitions to college and later to graduate school.

Dedicated to Jim and Sue Burke-my parents, my teachers, my advisors, my rock.

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When things were particularly tough in trying to get this project off the ground, my Dad, an avid basketball fan, invoked the late, great Jimmy Valvano: "If you laugh, you think, and you cry, that's a full day. That's a heck of a day." I think of that moment often and know that each and every person involved in my dissertation process (and Lisa Lattuca often reminded me that it is indeed a *process*, so thank you Lisa) contributed to a full, heck of a day, each day, and I am grateful for it. I am thankful for all that I have learned from my dissertation committee: Anne Gere, Melanie Yergeau, Chandra Alston, and Lisa Lattuca. The time, care, and energy my co-chairs, Anne and Melanie, dedicated to this project is invaluable. From Anne's encouragement to "write on" to the sometimes weekly meetings Melanie generously provided, they both reminded me that this work matters and they helped me to see its potential. Thanks to Chandra Alston for asking hard and thoughtful questions and pushing me to look at my work from different angles. Lisa was also so generous with her time, when she didn't have to be. Offering to read multiple chapters in their early stages, and sitting down with me to work through the process is something for which I am ever-grateful. The encouragement my committee provided me is remarkable, and each member is owed gratitude for her guidance in helping me to bring this project to life.

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Abstract

In current conversations about student preparedness for college, the common argument in public and academic discourse is that students are not prepared. My dissertation attempts to further these conversations by integrating scholarship from writing studies, English Education, and self-efficacy and social cognitive theories in order to examine students' perceptions of their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Through a series of two qualitative interviews of a group of fifteen Advanced Placement (AP) senior students that I conducted during the Fall 2016 semester at Great Lakes High School (GLHS), my dissertation study examines potential connections between participants' writing self-efficacy and perceived preparedness to write at the college level, based on how college-level writing has been previously represented to them.[1] Interviews prompted students to reflect on their expectations for college-level writing and who and what have influenced their expectations and perceived preparedness for college-level writing.

My study found that many participants believed that taking AP Language and Composition during their junior year better prepared them for college-level writing than students who did not take the course. Consequently, these participants expressed more confidence and certainty about their success with college-level writing. Differently, other participants demonstrated self-positioning in a novice way that acknowledged their uncertainty about college-level writing and an openness to learn from possible failure. Paradoxically, what looks like a lack of mastery, I argue, potentially situates students to be successful writers at the college level. Additionally, many participants used common language, e.g., "How many pages does it have to be?" when speaking about college-level assignments to begin far more complex conversations involving ideas about writing such as audience, genre and context. By listening to students talk about their writing experiences, my study challenges K-12 and college instructors to

[1] Great Lakes High School (GLHS) is a pseudonym created by this study's participants. GLHS is a public high school located about six miles from a state university in a small Midwestern city, in a community of approximately 9,000 citizens.

consider the nuanced and complex knowledge with which students walk into our classrooms—knowledge that we might not see if we only look at their test scores.

This dissertation offers important implications for how educators and educational institutions represent college-level writing to students and the ways in which those representations influence students' perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Even though participants acknowledge uncertainty about what to expect about college-level writing, findings revealed important implications for how college-level writing and preparedness can be represented to them through peer comparison, teacher talk, curriculum, and assessment.

CHAPTER ONE

The Relationship between Student Writing Experiences and Perceived Preparedness for College-Level Writing

Introduction

This study is driven by my interest in how educators can support students as they transition from high school to college-level writing. I developed these research interests from my experience as a secondary K-12 English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, along with my experience, here at the University of Michigan, teaching courses that range from first year writing for undergraduate students to field instruction for pre-service ELA teachers. In all these instances of teaching, I have heard and participated in conversations among educators about student preparedness for college-level writing, but those conversations are not consistent across contexts, and unfortunately, sometimes perpetuate a blame game between teachers for student unpreparedness. What is more, the subjects of those conversations—the students—are not often invited to participate in those conversations. Through my dissertation study, I sought to better understand the writing experiences students have encountered as they transition out of high school and how these experiences inform their perceptions about their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. In learning from students, this study fills a gap in the research on student transition from high school to college-level writing by illuminating student voices that have previously not been heard. Learning more from students about their writing experiences, as they report them, can bring students into the conversation about their own preparedness to write at the college level and provide educators a better understanding of what student expectations are for college-level writing, based on the writing experiences students have already encountered.

With this qualitative study, I also aim to contribute qualitative research to self-efficacy research that is largely quantitative. In order to foreground college-bound student voices, I interviewed fifteen college-bound students, who were, at the time of this study, seniors, enrolled

in AP Literature and Composition courses at Great Lakes High School (GLHS). [2] GLHS is an affluent and high-performing school, and I recognize that I cannot necessarily generalize the writing experiences of this study's participants to suggest that their experiences are equivalent to other students' experiences in different schools. Still, the participants for the present study offered rich data about their writing experiences and how those experiences inform their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing, which instructors across K-12 and college classrooms might find useful to consider as they design and implement writing curriculum. Before I delve into their experiences, this chapter offers an overview of current conversations around student preparedness, shaped by popular and academic discourse. Throughout the dissertation, I consider participants' perceived preparedness to write at the college level, which I argue is shaped by broader experiences beyond academic and cognitive skill. Part of the work of this dissertation will be to first, consider how preparedness has been conceptualized by popular and academic discourse and second, and most importantly, how participants in this study perceive their own preparedness. When considering the student voices of this study, I argue that preparedness for college-level writing is shaped by students' specific learning contexts and as well as their interactions and observations around writing. Contrary to the seeming obviousness that context influences individual experiences, I want to emphasize that it is not enough to say that context influences students' perceptions of their preparedness, but that there are various elements that make up contexts and that have not been considered as influencing students' perceptions and expectations for college-level writing. In this dissertation, I consider the kinds of contextual factors with which students engaged to better understand where they are in terms of their preparedness for college-level writing, but I also take into consider their individual perceptions as informed by their agentic self-beliefs.

Following that overview, I continue the chapter by drawing on social cognitive theory and self-efficacy to consider how writing experiences influence student perception about college-level writing. I then use relevant research about student writing experiences as a springboard to identify what we know about students' perceptions of their writing experiences and point to gaps in relevant literature where more research is necessary to better understand students' perceptions of preparedness for college writing.

[2] Great Lakes High School is a pseudonym and collectively created by the students enrolled in both sections of the AP Lit courses.

Discourse of Preparedness

First, and in order to contextualize student experiences within the context of current conversations about preparedness for college, I offer examples from popular and academic discourse that address student preparedness for college-level writing. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, students are not included in current conversations, which results in a narrow notion of what student preparedness for college-level writing can entail. In particular, current conversations do not necessarily consider the writing experiences that inform students' perceived perceptions of their preparedness and are concerned more with measuring students' academic performance, often through standardized assessment. Findings from this study revealed that participants do not only consider their abilities to complete writing skills and tasks as part of their perceived preparedness, but also believe characteristics like adaptability and taking responsibility for their own learning in new writing contexts are crucial to their preparedness. Participants' perceived preparedness was also influenced by specific courses and interactions with their peers, teachers, and family members. Thus, participants' perceptions of preparedness, in many ways, depart from how stakeholders like educators and policy makers currently conceptualize preparedness. In some ways, outcomes (e.g. SAT scores and grades) did shape the way participants thought about their preparedness, but they did not necessarily define every aspect of their perceived preparedness. Nevertheless, preparedness is a common theme in both popular discourses and in academic scholarship on education and it is important to understand current conversations in academic and popular discourse to understand how preparedness is currently represented to college-bound students and how college-bound students' perceptions of preparedness could shift current conversations.

While academic scholarship has taken up conceptualization of preparedness, most of these conceptualizations stem from conversations happening in popular discourse that include policy and government conversations about preparedness. To elaborate, popular discourse can include documents, media, and conversation in general circulation that do not require academic background to create or consume (e.g. policy briefs, promotional material for CCSS, etc.). In these conversations, preparedness is associated with measurement of students' academic skills based on reports from organizations like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Achieve, Inc., and ACT. So, I begin here with the conceptualizations from these government and policy sources that fuel popular discourse about preparedness to examine the

discourse of preparedness that currently excludes student voice and student writing experiences from the conversation.

"Academic preparedness" is defined, specifically by NAEP, as knowledge and skills needed to achieve "entry-level placement without remediation" at 4-year institutions (NAEP, p. 2). Further, Barnes, Slate, and Rojas-LeBeouf (2010) posit that academic preparedness, as conceptualized in popular discourse, is indicated by success in rigorous academic courses and high scores on standardized tests. However, this understanding of preparedness is not inclusive of the holistic interplay of environmental, personal, and behavioral factors that will be later theorized in this chapter and that participants identified as important to their self-efficacy to write at the college level.[3] This holistic interplay is important to consider because while college-bound students might consider assessment scores as one way to determine whether they are prepared, they have likely encountered other experiences, like teacher feedback or peer comparison, that have helped them to develop beliefs about their own preparedness.

"Preparedness," as defined by popular discourse, does not consider college-bound students' perceptions of what the term means in their own lives. In popular discourse, preparedness is limited to academic skill and performance (e.g. content-specific knowledge and skills, standardized assessment outcomes) without considering the contexts in which students learn those skills. Instead, preparedness is currently understood as a quantitative assessment based largely on standardized assessments. For instance, a quick search on *YouTube* for Achieve, Inc. and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) leads to a promotional video entitled, "Preparing all students for tomorrow. Today." In this video, business leaders and state governors advocate for college and career readiness, and by extension, the national CCSS framework. One telling point of this video occurs when, Craig Barrett, former chairman of the board of Intel, emphatically suggests, "An honest assessment compares your children's learning with an international counterpart. We find out where our kids perform—way down at the bottom half!" According to this view of preparedness, our students are virtually unprepared to compete with the rest of the world, let alone prepared for college. Measurement of content-specific knowledge and skill might show that our students do not fare well on certain assessments, and the video portrays students in a certain way—that they are subpar compared to their global counterparts,

[3] Self-efficacy will be defined and explicated below. Briefly here, self-efficacy is individuals' belief in their capability to perform skills and tasks and achieve goals (Bandura, 1986).

and that outcomes define our students. Participants in this study were certainly cognizant of the importance of successful outcomes, but for some participants, outcomes were only one aspect of the whole picture of their preparedness. Because popular discourse seems to focus on limited aspects of preparedness, it is also crucial to understand other pieces like how students perceive their own writing experiences and what specific writing experiences they believe as preparing them to be successful in the future. Further, participants in this study also demonstrated that their perceived preparedness is informed by how preparedness is represented to them on a local and global scale. If students perceive only one way of achieving preparedness for college-level writing (e.g. high scores on the SAT test, AP credits, GPA), then students might give less attention to other skills and qualities that could potentially bolster their preparedness for college-level writing (e.g. effective communication skills, ability to learn from failure and adapt to new writing contexts).

The few conceptualizations of preparedness that are offered in academic scholarship are not wholly different from conversations common in popular discourse, especially as definitional work from scholars also draws on limited snapshots of, for example, NAEP results. For instance, Conley (n.d.) differentiates preparedness from college readiness by associating academic preparedness with NAEP, which defines preparedness as academic qualification as measured by NAEP.[4] Conley states that academic preparedness, then, does not necessarily mean success in college, and therefore, a term like "college-readiness" is more inclusive of habits of mind and necessary to consider.[5] This distinction of college-readiness from preparedness, however, leaves understandings of preparedness as a measurement of decontextualized writing skills that does not consider the broader writing experiences of students that can often include contextual influences (e.g. school environment and culture) or nonacademic habits (e.g. adaptability, resourcefulness).

Academic conversations often call on definitions reminiscent of Conley's (n.d.) distinction between preparedness and "college readiness." Massengill (2015), in her dissertation work, also defines preparedness for college-level writing as "students' competency in synthesizing information from multiple sources in order to generate an original text, a skill needed for college-level, research-based writing" (p. 9). While Conley and Massengill offer a

[4] NAEP uses a computer-based assessment to assess students' ability to develop ideas, organize ideas, and use of language facility and conventions.

[5] Habits of mind are defined in the *Framework for Postsecondary Writing* as ways to approach learning that include the following: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2011).

useful, nuanced distinction between preparedness and college-readiness, this distinction, as they note, is rarely taken up in literature about preparedness. Instead, preparedness and college-readiness are often used in the same breath or taken up by educators as related to one another. For instance, students prepare to be college ready, or, if students are unprepared, they are not college ready. CCSS and the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* use common terminology like "college readiness," indicating a similar, broader goal for student preparedness that includes behavioral characteristics and interpersonal skills in addition to academic knowledge. However, the *Framework* authors and the authors of CCSS might disagree on what constitutes college-readiness as CCSS employs the term to include the knowledge and skills necessary to enter credit-bearing courses in two or four-year institutions. In a different way, writers of the *Framework* also acknowledge the importance of college-readiness but make sure to posit that writing curricula "should be designed with genuine purposes and audiences in mind in order to foster flexibility and rhetorical versatility" (p. 3) and recommend that teachers should foster "habits of mind" to prepare their students for college writing.

The *Framework* and CCSS offer different representations of college-readiness which students may or may not be exposed to as they learn about and prepare for college writing and beyond. The main difference between these two frameworks demonstrates a prioritization of academic skill over versatility and flexibility in the writing process, which contributes to the varying definitions of what preparedness for college-level writing can mean. The prioritization of students' knowledge and skill in core academic subject areas speaks more to Conley's conception of preparedness rather than the habits of mind he associates with college-readiness, or the writing and the recursive processes that are often associated with readiness, like demonstrating rhetorical awareness through writing. I suggest that more attention be given to traits like the "habits of mind" that the *Framework* highlights, in addition to academic skill. While traits like flexibility and versatility might be difficult to measure with, for example, standardized assessment, I suggest that measurable academic skills are actually shaped by the personal traits students possess, behaviors they engage in, and the environmental factors to which they are exposed. Further, because my study explores students' perceptions of their preparedness, it is also important to consider characteristics students see as important to their preparedness. Do they believe they are prepared for college-level writing solely because of their

academic performance or the writing skills they believe they possess? In what other ways, if any, do students see themselves as prepared for college-level writing beyond academic skill?

This dissertation study is grounded in the assertion that writing is a social process that involves interaction with multiple individuals and continually develops over time, based on those interactions (e.g. teacher feedback, peer interaction, reading and comparing various texts). The social processes of writing likely inform students' perceptions of their preparedness to write at the college level. Further, because writing is not simply an academic or cognitive skill but rather a complex social process, reductive definitions of preparedness do not offer much in the way of understanding high school students' writing experiences that influence their perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Instead, current conceptualizations of preparedness exclude student voices and only provide a reductive snapshot of high school student preparedness. Further, this snapshot potentially limits conversations about preparedness to a prioritization of testing for academic skills through means like standardized assessment.

This dissertation study is framed with theories that emphasize the interplay of environmental, behavioral, and personal factors within writing experiences, which point to gaps in current conversations about preparedness in both academic and popular discourse that do not account for this interplay. For example, questions remain of whether current conversations around preparedness reflect content knowledge or the ability to participate in, for instance, activities like peer review and write collaboratively. Additionally, current conversations do not seem to embody environmental factors that influence students' everyday learning about writing, nor do they include consideration for the broader writing experiences of students. How important are prior writing experiences for developing preparedness to write at the college level, and what, specifically, should those prior experiences entail? Current conversations emphasize the measurement of academic skills, but in writing practice what do these skills look like for students and how have they come to develop these skills? The answers to these questions depend in large part on what we know about the writing experiences of college-level writing students. The current study thus identifies students' beliefs in their ability to perform specific skills and tasks at the college level, but also works to understand who and what have influenced these beliefs, which potentially contributes to the already occurring conversations about preparedness, prompting educators to give more attention to students' perception of their own preparedness and the underlying sources that influence those perceptions.

In popular and academic discourse, both K-12 and college representatives take up college and career readiness, and some, like Conley and Massengill, define preparedness as related to academic skill. Still, even with multiple perceptions of preparedness for college writing, there is little known about how students understand their preparedness for college writing. Thus, this study seeks to surface college-bound students' perceptions of their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Further, because I also build on social cognitive theory and self-efficacy research to assert that environmental factors (e.g. teacher and peer interaction, school culture, etc.) shape students perceived preparedness, I conceptualize "preparedness" as more holistic and capacious in nature, embodying not just a measurement of academic skill and content-specific knowledge, but also a consideration of environmental factors that influence students' self-beliefs about their preparedness for college-level writing (e.g. peer comparison, prior writing experiences, teacher feedback, etc.). I argue that the participants in this study offer accounts that suggest that while their belief in their ability to perform writing skills and tasks contributes to their preparedness, so too do other circumstances of their broader writing experiences, which will be examined in subsequent chapters. Part of the work of the whole dissertation will be to understand how preparedness has been constructed in discourse and by my participants. In the current chapter, because I conceptualize preparedness for college-level writing as socially contextualized, I offer scholarship, in the following sections, that socially contextualizes the human experience.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory: An Overview

With this dissertation, I assert that participants' perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing must be understood ins both social and individual terms. I argue that participants' perceived preparedness and expectations are shaped by environmental factors like peer and teacher interaction, class experiences, and prior writing experiences in and outside of school, but that participants also demonstrate individual self-beliefs that constitute important developing rhetorical approaches and knowledge that they will carry with them to new writing contexts at the college level. With this project I am looking at students in a particular context, and each chapter in this dissertation takes different angles on the reciprocal interactions between student and context. Thus, my thinking for this dissertation project is informed by social

cognitive theory (SCT) because the theory gives attention to the interconnectedness of personal factors (e.g. self-beliefs), behavioral factors (e.g. peer comparison) and environmental factors (e.g. context, human interaction, etc.). I draw foremost from Albert Bandura whose seminal work is still drawn on by others who do work in both social cognitive theory and self-efficacy (see Bong and Skaalvik, 2003, Pajares, 2002 Pajares and Schunk, 2001, Schunk, 1987, Redmond, 2010, and Zimmerman, 2000). Bandura's work and naming of SCT stems from earlier work of Miller and Dollard (1941) who theorized that learning is socially situated and individuals garner knowledge through observation. Bandura drew from these early theories but further developed SCT out of social learning theory to foreground self-beliefs, which are the result of what individuals interpret and how they apply information.[6] Self-beliefs are the feelings and judgments individuals have and make about themselves. So, not only do I argue that participants' perceptions are informed by environmental factors, but so too do participants actively develop their self-beliefs on an individual basis. Thus, I draw on key features of SCT, namely, the reciprocal relationship of behavioral, personal, and environmental factors that all intersect to influence participants' perceived preparedness and expectations to write at the college level.

Because my project is situated at the intersections of K-12 and college settings, it is particularly useful for me to draw on SCT, which, since Bandura's spearheading of SCT, has crossed disciplinary contexts and has been influential in education studies for a range of disciplines and topics (e.g. ranging from studies in K-12 settings to studies in subject matter like STEM) with specific regard to self-efficacy (For some examples, see Lent & Brown, 1994; Lent, et al., 2016; Pajares & Schunk, 2002; Pajares & Valiante, 2006). Namely, scholars in educational research have taken up SCT to examine the relationship between self-beliefs and school success (Pajares &Schunk, 2002), the social context of academic settings (Lent & Brown, 1994).[7] For example, findings from Lent et al. (2016) about the persistence of engineering students suggests that self-efficacy, satisfaction with factors like students' selection of major, and social support

[6] That learning experiences and individual development are socially contextualized has long been a point of scholarly conversation, especially in educational spaces. For instance, some education scholars who are interested in social factors draw from Bandura, but scholars also draw from theorists (and Bandura's contemporaries) like Bruner, Piaget and Vygotsky, to name a few, who, in their work, also examine social factors in relation to individual learning the ways in which individuals take responsibility for their own learning development. Researchers especially interested in sociocultural theory might, for example, draw on Vygotsky. For useful, foundational work see Bruner's cognitive development of children (1966), Piaget's cognitive stages of development ((1959), and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978).

[7] Other scholarship interested in public health has also drawn heavily from SCT. See Glanz et al., 2002 for a comprehensive overview of SCT and its utility in that context.

contribute to their participants' paths to persistence. Similar to this research, my project takes up how individual writing experiences and self-beliefs are socially contextualized by specific representations put forth by educational institutions, and I particularly examine the influence of institutional representations on students' perceptions and expectations in Chapter Four. I will depart from the previous research noted here in that this project does not aim measure self-beliefs based on school success or performance, but instead offers descriptive findings to understand the influence of self-beliefs and contextual factors on participants' perceptions and expectations for college-level writing as they report them.

Others have drawn on SCT to study readers and writers themselves (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 1996; Hodges et al., 2016; Pajares & Valiente, 2006). Hodges et al. (2016) conducted a review of theories used in literacy studies and found that research that draws from SCT aims, like my study, to emphasize individuals' unique learning experiences. Further, like previous studies on readers and writers, I focus on my study's participants' perceptions and how their writing experiences inform those perceptions. For example, Flower and Hayes (1981) put forth foundational work that focused on individual writing practices and the strategic knowledge that students apply to their writing processes through planning, translating, and reviewing. Hayes (1996; 2006) later built on earlier work to consider how motivation factors into individuals' writing processes, nuancing Flower and Hayes initial, linear model of the writing process. Unlike previous research from Flower and Hayes, my study does not focus on individual processes of participants, or the steps they take to write, for instance, but I still extend their earlier work to consider students' perceptions of their own experiences and, especially in Chapter Five, to understand the developing knowledge about college-level writing participants believe they have. I also draw from Pajares and Valiante (2006) who give attention to the effects of social interaction, namely peer and teacher feedback, on students' motivation for writing. Pajares and Valiante, along with others, have drawn on Bandura's SCT because of the theory's fundamental assertion that individuals are proactively engaged in their own learning experiences. For example, Pajares and Valiante (2006) suggest that it is one thing for a student to receive feedback from a teacher, but it is another thing to consider how the interaction between teacher and student disrupts or furthers a student's motivation to write. Considering previous work that has examined the influence of social interaction on individuals' experiences, my thinking is informed by SCT because I aimed to explore how students reflect on their writing experiences

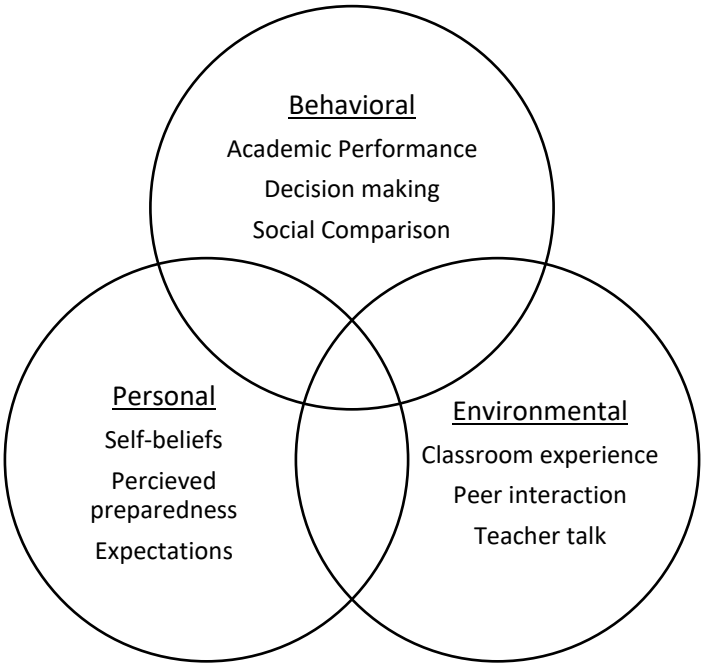
and how what participants report about their perceptions of preparedness and expectations for college-level writing are shaped by the interconnectedness of behavioral, personal, and environmental factors.

Given that I sought to examine the broader writing experiences that influence college-bound students' self-beliefs about their ability to write at the college level, as well as their expectations for college-level writing, this study uses social cognitive theory as a foundational framework to consider, especially, the environmental factors that influence participants' perceptions. In order to understand the relationship between students' writing experiences and their beliefs about their ability to write at the college level, it is useful to first understand the tenets of social cognitive theory that draw attention to the writing experiences college-bound students have had. Personal, environmental, and behavioral factors are interconnected and influence each other, causing individuals to be proactively involved in their own learning experiences (Bandura, 1986). *Personal* factors refer to what individuals think, believe, and feel in regard to certain experiences. *Environmental factors* can include people, places, and situations that are external to an individual but influence that individual in some way. *Behavioral* factors refer to the ways in which an individual encounters certain experiences and then acts in response to those experiences (Bandura, 1986).

Below, Figure 1.1, illustrates SCT's fundamental components of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, their interconnection, and examples of each component that are relevant to my study. The larger circles encompass what I suggest are relevant examples of how environmental, behavioral, and personal factors that participants demonstrated during the time of my study. The figure is adapted from Bandura's (1986) triadic reciprocality model in which personal attributes, individual behavior, and environmental factors all affect one another bidirectionally (Bandura; 1986; Lent, Brown, & Hacket, 1994, Pajares, 2002). In the figure, I offer examples of how Bandura's model could play out for college-bound students preparing for college-level writing. The circles containing those examples overlap to illustrate the reciprocal nature of how each factor informs individuals' perceptions and self-beliefs. Students' perceptions are developed through the interconnectedness of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, and this relationship between those three kinds of factors is reciprocal, and not unidirectional (1986). For instance, students' self-beliefs about how they believe they will fare at the college-level could be influenced by what the individual expects college-level

writing to entail (personal), how those expectations are informed by what the individuals learn about college-level writing from teachers and peers (environmental), as well as how they compare themselves to their peers in terms of how they believe they do compared to their peers (behavioral). Thus, the ways in which college-bound students develop their perceptions about college-preparedness, I suggest, have to do with context of their learning environment (e.g. how college-preparedness is represented to students by their school culture), but also the ways in which students might engage with behavioral factors and interact with their peers and teachers as they prepare for college (e.g. comparing themselves to their peers to determine their self-beliefs about their preparedness). The circles in Figure 1.1 are not meant to illustrate a linear relationship or that one kind of factor outweighs or is equal to the other. The reciprocal relationship is fluid and malleable in the sense that how students' perceptions are influenced depends on their individual experiences and the context in which they are learning.

Figure 1.1: Social Cognitive Theory Components and Study Examples



For the purposes of this dissertation study, I conceptualize writerly selves as shaped by varying self-beliefs individuals hold—self-beliefs that can range from beliefs of self-worth to self-efficacy beliefs. The writerly self can develop over time as it interacts with the intersection of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. I use SCT as a framework to help me understand participants' writing experiences and how individuals situate their writerly selves

within the contextual interaction of environmental, personal, and behavioral factors. Because SCT gives specific attention to self-beliefs and the ways in which environmental factors intersect with personal and behavior factors to shape individuals' thoughts and beliefs, it serves as important theoretical framework for the current study, because I theorize that college-bound students are negotiating broader writing experiences that inform their self-beliefs and thoughts about their perceived preparedness to write at the college level. I also suggest that behavioral factors like comparing themselves to their peers or making decisions about their academic trajectory (e.g. enrolling in certain classes) can also influence how students perceive their preparedness or develop their expectations, especially as they interact with specific environments and develop their own self-beliefs.

As students anticipate the transition to college-level writing, they interact with their peers and teachers who might talk about college-level writing in certain ways. My project is interested in the ways in which students interpret information through interaction and observation. Chapter Four especially focuses on how perceptions and expectations of participants are socially contextualized. Bandura's general work with SCT and self-efficacy is particularly useful in this chapter because SCT directly addresses the role of environment and social interaction as influencing an individual. This study therefore asks questions about how students' prior and current experiences inform their expectations for college writing, and from *whom* and from *where* students learn about college writing as they prepare to transition from high school. With this study, I attend closely to what students report as important factors that shape their expectations for college writing and their self-beliefs about their preparedness to write at the college level.

At the same time, while I am very much interested in how environmental factors might shape perceptions and expectations of this study's participants, my thinking is also informed by Bandura's more recent considerations of SCT and individual agency. For instance, in Chapters Three and Five, I examine participants' developing knowledge and the ways in which they articulate what they believe their writerly selves are capable of. In Chapter Five, some participants demonstrate a "writerly independence" through which they express an interest in building on their prior knowledge, but also learning new writing strategies and crafting their own unique arguments. Bandura's more recent work (1989; 2001; 2011) on agency as emergent through the processes of navigating certain contexts is also particularly useful to consider how

this dissertation study's participants believe they will navigate new writing contexts at the college level, and also assert themselves within those contexts. Further, in Chapter Three, I explore how the self-beliefs some participants demonstrate constitute rhetorical approaches that could enable them to effectively navigate new rhetorical situations like college-level writing. By highlighting self-beliefs as ways that individuals proactively apply information, Bandura refuted previous behaviorist notions that human beings are solely products of their environment (2011). This assertion is extended in Chapter Three, as I explore the ways some participants' rhetorical approaches, made up of certain self-beliefs, prompt them to understand what they believe they are capable of accomplishing even in the face of uncertainty or possible failure. Thus, I assert that context does matter for the ways in which individuals garner and apply information, but this does not necessarily mean that environmental factors automatically lead to changes in an individual's self-beliefs. To elaborate on this assertion, in Chapter Four, I suggest that college-level writing or standards for college-level writing might be represented to a student in a certain way, but that some students might also choose to either "buy in" to or reject those representations. Even if they are uncertain about what to expect at the college-level, students are not blank slates and draw on, not only what they have observed or what has been modeled for them in writing experiences, but also strategies they believe useful to navigate new writing situations. When college-bound students are aware of and reflect on their prior writing experiences, they are likely to garner a sense of their writerly selves, what their writerly selves are capable of, and how their writerly selves will fare at the college level, especially if they practice self-reflection and forethought—two important components of SCT, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Reflection: Students' Reflections on Prior Writing Experiences as Informing Perceived Preparedness and Expectations for College-level Writing

I assert that the participants in this study continually reflect on their experiences and develop self-beliefs about their writerly selves, and specific to self-efficacy beliefs, what they believe they are capable of achieving. When students are given the opportunity to think about their previous writing experiences in the context of preparing for college-level writing, participants may also have the opportunity to enact agency by expressing their thoughts and beliefs about how they will apply those writing experiences to future experiences. Bandura

(1986) identifies self-reflective capability as distinctively human; it is the ability of individuals to "analyze their experiences and to think about their own thought processes" (p. 21). Human behavior, personal factors—like self-beliefs—and environmental factors all interact with each other and individuals become both products and producers of their environment (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2002). For example, the who and where of college-bound students' writing experiences are important environmental factors to consider as students have likely developed certain perceptions about writing based on what they have learned from others and the many contexts in which they have learned about writing. At the same time, students themselves, deploying their own self-beliefs, serve as important sources of information for their own learning.

Through self-reflection, it is likely students synthesize what has been represented to them about preparedness and college-level writing and what they believe about themselves in regards to their prior writing knowledge and how they believe they are prepared for college-level writing. Out of this reflection, students establish perceptions and expectations that they believe to be true about themselves and about what college-level writing might entail as they anticipate the transition. For example, in Chapter Four, while some participants seem to accept specific representations of preparedness for college-level writing as presented to them by their local school or by College Board expectations, other participants suggested they had "other skills to bring to the table," despite the ways in which preparedness was represented to them at GLHS.

College-bound students may or may not always actively reflect on their writing performance, and it cannot be easily assumed that college-bound students readily think ahead and imagine what college-level writing is like. Still, college-bound students likely encounter various writing experiences and have received feedback and appraisal on some of those experiences. Because of this, and through this study, I sought to learn from a selected group of college-bound students by prompting them to actively reflect on and assess their writing experiences. In encouraging such self-reporting, I aimed to learn what these participants believe writing will entail at the college level as well as what environmental and interpersonal elements contribute to their perceived preparedness to write at the college level. College-bound students have likely learned about writing from a variety of sources of information in and outside the proverbial classroom, and in fact, I will highlight participant accounts that give much attention to their peers, teachers, and other resources like AP curriculum as sources for their learning. As

they transition from high school to college writing, students will have to negotiate with themselves about what is appropriate to take up or shelve in terms of writing skills and tasks.

In Chapters Three and Five, I examine how participants' self-beliefs make up the ways in which they are planning on navigating new writing contexts like college-level writing and how participants express idea about what they believe they already know about important writing skills. In some cases, participants highlighted in the noted chapters also express uncertainties and feelings of unpreparedness. SCT's attention to self-reflection is useful for my study as I suggest self-reflection also prompts evaluation to account for what has been learned and accomplished and what is possible to achieve in the future, based on those prior experiences. Much of the participants' accounts offered in each of the findings chapters of this dissertation highlight developing rhetorical approaches (Chapter Three), perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing (Chapter Four), and developing writing knowledge that students seem to have come to based on how they reflect on their prior writing experiences (Chapter Five), and ways in which those experiences have influenced their ideas about their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. The ways in which this latter group of students demonstrated self-reflection seemed to illustrate how they were enacting a certain amount of agency to assert their self-beliefs about what they were doing at the college level.

Social Cognitive Theory and Forethought: Students' Expectations for College-level Writing

Through the interplay of environmental, personal, and behavioral factors in an individual's life, emerge capabilities like forethought and reflection—capabilities that further prompt students to predict and determine their capability to achieve certain tasks in the future. Through this process, college-bound students not only establish expectations for what college-level writing could look like, but also establish expectations for themselves. SCT also pays specific attention to the relationship between participants' prior writing experiences, their self-beliefs, and their expectations for college-level writing. According to Bandura (1986; 2001), forethought occurs when individuals guide their actions in anticipation of future events. Individuals do not simply react to environmental circumstances, but consider the significance of certain events and organize information into beliefs about "what leads to what" (Bandura, 1986). This is important to understand for the current study, because, in addition to processing information, college-bound students have likely reflected on various writing experiences to

consider how prior experiences inform their current expectations and beliefs about their ability to transition from high school to college writing.

It should be noted that reflection and forethought are important components of what SCT scholars have identified as self-regulation (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000). Self-regulation embodies the interplay of reflection, forethought, and performance. While I am interested in how students reflect on their prior writing experiences in relation to what they expect college-level writing to entail, or how they belief they will fare when they arrive at college, I am not measuring their actual performance, but I do give attention to the ways, if any, students report behavioral components like peer comparison, for example, as influencing their perceptions. In other words, because this study focuses on one moment of transition—college-bound students anticipating their transition into college-level writing—this study will not focus on how they systematically enact their performance. Additionally, another limitation of SCT is that the general theory assumes that changes in the environment will automatically lead to changes in an individual when this may not always be true (LaMorte, 2016). In fact, later chapters of this dissertation will consider how participants maintain their individual self-beliefs despite the potential influence of their school environment. Ultimately, this is a descriptive study of students' perceptions as informed by the interplay of SCT's fundamental components of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors as demonstrated in Figure 1.1.

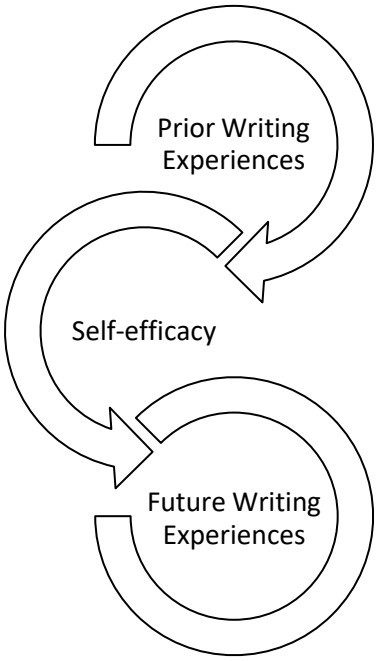
Finally, I find SCT most useful for my dissertation study because of its emphasis on personal self-efficacy (a certain kind of self-belief important to SCT), which will be explicated in a later section, and SCT's attention to the influence of social factors on individuals' self-efficacy on both a micro level (e.g. specific school environment) and macro level (e.g. national frameworks and assessment expectations established by the College Board for Advanced Placement courses in the United States). For example, in Chapter Four, I will examine how students' perceptions of their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing are influenced by specific representations of college-level writing that circulate within GLHS and that also are channeled through more global representations like the College Board. Because this study pays close attention to students' perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level, based on their writing experiences, this study is also framed by self-efficacy as theorized by Bandura's social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy is conceptualized by SCT as a core self-belief that embodies individuals' belief in their ability to be successful in a given situation or perform a

certain task. This conceptualization illuminates the relationship between individuals' prior experiences and their belief in their ability to perform certain tasks in subsequent experiences, which I will explicate in the following section.

Self-Efficacy as a Mediating Mechanism to Write at the College Level

Taking up both SCT and self-efficacy affords writing studies and education scholars the opportunity to consider the writing experiences that college-bound students report as influencing their beliefs about their ability to write at the college level as well as what they imagine college-level writing to entail. With this dissertation study, I use Bandura's (1986) concept of perceived self-efficacy which is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391). It is important to emphasize that self-efficacy has to do with students' belief in their *capability* to perform skills and tasks and achieve goals. Beyond asking students to assess their prior knowledge, framing this study with self-efficacy creates space to ask students about what they believe they are capable of achieving at the college-level, based on their writing experiences. Figure 1.2 illustrates that at the core of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy serves as a mediator between individuals' prior and subsequent learning experiences. Throughout this dissertation, I examine participant accounts through which they consider their prior writing experiences and how those experiences influence their belief in their capability to write at the college level. Through their reflection, participants also consider what they believe they are currently capable of in order to imagine what they believe they will be able to do in the future. The figure below illustrates a top circle that encompasses prior writing experiences and is connected to the middle circle which is meant to inform self-efficacy for future writing experiences. The arrows are purposefully connected and circular to suggest that self-efficacy serves as a mediator between prior and future writing experiences, but that for individuals this is also an iterative and ongoing process. Participants reflect back on what they have learned and consider what they currently know about college-level writing to consider what that means about their capability to write at the college level in the future.

Figure 1.2 Self-efficacy, prior, and subsequent learning experiences



If self-efficacy is a "mediating mechanism" between prior experiences, including influences and performances, and future experiences (Bandura, 1986; Pajares 2003), then students' beliefs about their preparedness for college writing are likely informed by prior experiences and expectations for college-level writing. Bandura posits that each stage of development for an individual poses certain challenges and an individual must master new skills and tasks at each transition point. When individuals make transitions, the ease of a given transition depends on the self-assurance of an individual's ability to achieve future skills and tasks. For example, prior experiences perceived as successful raise confidence and those deemed unsuccessful lower confidence (Bandura, 1989).

In its most basic form, self-efficacy theory suggests that individuals who have high levels of confidence anticipate successful outcomes in a given situation. For instance, college-bound students who have been successful in their writing endeavors and are confident in their writing abilities might believe that they are prepared and equipped with the necessary skills to write at the college level. Alternatively, college-bound students who lack confidence in their writing abilities, or who have encountered failure with writing, might be doubtful of their capability to

write well at the college level.[8] With the current study, I seek to understand students' levels of confidence in their preparedness to write at the college level, but not without first understanding the experiences that inform their confidence levels. The relationship between social cognitive theory and self-efficacy becomes even more important in order for this study to ground college-bound students' perceived self-efficacy beliefs in the experiences that influence those self-beliefs.

Considering Holistic Writing Experiences and Sources of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is also domain-specific (e,g, area, field, or discipline) and context-specific (e.g. location, influencing environmental factors), which means that individuals' self-efficacy varies depending on the skills and tasks at hand and depending on the current environment where those skills and tasks are performed. Because this study is about preparedness to write in the domain of academic writing at the college level, this theoretical framework warrants a discussion about how writing self-efficacy has been theorized and the specific experiences that shape college-bound students' writing self-efficacy. According to Pajares (2003), writing self-efficacy is measured in three common ways: assessing writing skills, writing tasks, and writing grades.

Writing skills range from writing complete sentences with correct grammar to organizing an essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007). *Writing tasks* are the actual activity or job of composing an academic essay, for example. Grades have likely influenced college-bound students' writing experiences and affected the way they think about their own capability to write through social comparison. Grades might also serve as an underlying source of self-efficacy, and will be explicated in the following section, embodying influential feedback from others that shape an individuals' learning and development of self-beliefs. In other words, I am not using grades to measure or compare performance self-efficacy levels, but to consider things like grades only as they are relevant to participant reporting in interviews. For the purposes of this study, while grades might be a part of participants' writing experience, they will not be used as a measurement to determine participants' self-efficacy, as they have been in previous studies, because I did not intend to compare participants' grades to their perceived self-efficacy to perform skills and tasks. Instead, this study works to understand

[8] Confidence is not a synonym for self-efficacy, but serves as a formative component of self-efficacy.

how writing experiences that may include the practice of certain skills and tasks inform students' perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

Unlike previous studies about writing self-efficacy, I am not measuring students' actual self-efficacy or their performance but using self-efficacy, specific to the domain of writing, as part of my theoretical frame to understand students' self-efficacy levels as they report them in relation to their expectations and perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Additionally, the study was not implemented without the consideration of college-bound students' broader writing experiences that inform their expectations for college writing, as research in writing self-efficacy also indicates that writing self-efficacy develops during the writing process. This study is put forth with the assertion that college-bound students are able to evaluate their capabilities based on their writing experiences and determine what *they* believe they are capable of performing in subsequent writing situations and why.

Self-efficacy and its underlying sources

Self-efficacy manifests from mastery and vicarious experiences, concepts that will be explicated below. Self-efficacy also illustrates individuals' beliefs in their capability to perform certain skills and tasks at a given time. Bandura (1986) argues that self-efficacy is developed from four underlying sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological state. Through these four underlying sources, Bandura suggests that individuals' observational learning, direct experience and performance, and other environmental cues like feedback and individuals' emotional responses to certain circumstances all hold varying degrees of influence on an individual's thoughts and beliefs, especially on perceived self-efficacy to perform certain tasks in a given situation. With Table 1.1, I briefly outline each underlying source of self-efficacy and then explicate each concept below. The table provides a definition for each underlying source and an example of how that underlying source could play out in respect to my study.

Table 1.1 Underlying Sources of Self-efficacy

Underlying Source	Brief Definition	Example
Mastery Experience	Knowledge gained from direct experience	Performance of writing tasks
Vicarious Experience	Information through observation	Teacher modeling; observing peers perform a task
Social Persuasion	Negative and positive judgments of performance	Teacher feedback
Physiological State	Emotional and affective responses	Fear or anxiety to take a test

To determine their capability for performing writing skills and tasks, college-bound students might call on their prior performances, or *mastery experience*. Bandura posits that knowledge is gained by the individual through enactive or direct experiences and, based on those experiences, individuals select and guide their actions (p. 182) to determine how they will move forward with the knowledge they have obtained and whether they believe they can perform certain tasks. Successes and failures in a given performance can influence how individuals perceive their capability. For example, if a student experiences more success in writing throughout high school, that student will likely exert more confidence in their ability to do well at the college level. Alternatively, the less success a student has with writing, the less confidence that student will have in their capabilities to do well at the college level. Mastery experiences are also important to consider because the current study theorizes that as college-bound students prepare to transition into college, they have likely garnered knowledge about writing in and out of school, which could inform what they expect writing to be like at the college level, and how they think they will fare in writing when they arrive at college.[9]

[9] In his work with SCT and self-efficacy, Bandura acknowledges that even though environmental factors can influence an individual's beliefs and expectations, the information that individuals extract from their experiences is not always accurate. For example, a student might perceive information conveyed by a teacher in a way that was unintended by that teacher. Or, a student might expect that because they earned AP credits, they will not have to take college first year writing, which is not always the case, depending on the college. Still, what individuals extract and develop their own ideas about, informs what they believe and expect in certain circumstances (Bandura, 1986; p. 186).

While individuals develop self-efficacy beliefs based on their own performance, their learning and individual experience of writing is not solitary, and this study theorizes that college-bound students develop thoughts and beliefs that embody expectations about college-level writing based on *vicarious experiences*, through which information has been provided to them by, for example, peers or teachers. Individuals' knowledge can be derived vicariously through individuals' observational learning via modeling of behavior or instruction, for example. Vicarious learning can be derived from sources of knowledge like family members, peers, and school representatives and when individuals enact social comparison and compare themselves to others like their peers. Indeed, peers are especially influential to individuals' vicarious learning, which can, in turn, affect their self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, this study pays close attention to how participants talk about their peer networks, and how those networks influence their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

College-bound students have also likely observed and engaged with instances of instruction and modeling that inform their knowledge about writing. In turn, this knowledge could possibly inform their expectations for college writing. Modeling and instruction are often provided by adults like parents or teachers, but a peer network in which students observe their peers succeed and encounter challenges can also inform their knowledge about writing (Pajares and Schunk, 2001). College-bound students, through their writing experiences, learn from modeling and determining whether they can do what they see their peers are doing. These observations and determinations thereby influence their self-efficacy beliefs.

In addition to developing self-efficacy based on what individuals learn through observation and comparison, levels of self-efficacy can result from how performance is appraised. *Social persuasion* can include negative and positive judgments (verbal or written) of performance that, in turn, shape self-efficacy beliefs. For example, in and out of school, students practice writing, in some cases, receive feedback on that writing, and develop their own thoughts and beliefs in response to those writing experiences. Therefore, self-efficacy beliefs could be informed by how they have been assessed. Positive social persuasion results in higher levels of self-efficacy, while negative social persuasion weakens levels of self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002). Specific to self-efficacy for writing, Pajares, Johnson, and Usher (2007) found that social persuasions like positive and negative appraisals of students' ability specifically influenced high school students' writing self-efficacy beliefs. If social persuasion affects an individual's writing

self-efficacy, it is likely factors such as social persuasion inform what students believe about their preparedness for college-level writing and their ability to perform writing skills and tasks.

With my study, I posit that college-bound students not only receive positive and negative appraisals of their performance through social persuasion, but also react in positive or negative ways to given writing situations by exerting particular *physiological states*. Another underlying source of self-efficacy, physiological state includes emotional and affective responses such as stress levels and moods, respectively. When individuals demonstrate a positive mood toward a given situation, their perceived self-efficacy to perform certain tasks within that situation are higher. Alternatively, when individuals exert a negative physiological state, like anxiety, perceived self-efficacy levels are lessened. For example, Pajares, Johnson, & Usher (2007) explain that the ways in which students react to writing feedback or activities can affect their levels of self-efficacy. When students react to writing situations with fear or anxiety, their levels of confidence to perform writing tasks are lowered and additional stress and anxiety, ensues (p. 107). This particular example from Pajares, Johnson, and Usher demonstrates Bandura's assertion that various underlying sources play a significant role in students' self-efficacy beliefs. Moreover, the interrelationship between the sources explicated above and self-efficacy can determine whether students believe they are prepared to write at the college level. In order to learn about college-bound students' expectations for college writing and their beliefs about their preparedness to write at the college level, it is not enough to only measure students' writing self-efficacy. Along with understanding self-efficacy beliefs of college-bound students for their ability to write at the college level, it is also necessary to understand the underlying sources that influence those self-efficacy beliefs. There is research that highlights students' perspective on writing experiences and thereby provides valuable information for educators about what students encounter in various writing experiences in both high school and college. The following sections will thus examine literature that illuminates writing experiences as contextualized by various factors and situate the current study about college-bound students' perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

Review of Relevant Literature

Overview

There are existing bodies of scholarship that contribute to our understanding of how preparedness is currently operationalized as well as literature that examines students' perceptions of their writing experiences in high school. For example, popular discourse about high school students as well as scholarship in higher education offer some definitions of preparedness, while scholarship in composition offers college students' retrospective accounts of their high school writing experiences. Additionally, research from literacy studies and English Education offers some indication of high school students' perspectives of their classroom writing experiences, though not of their expectations for college writing or their perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level. Finally, while educational psychology offers existing studies that examine writing self-efficacy of both high school and college students, these studies provide mostly quantitative findings about students' perceived self-efficacy to perform writing skills and tasks, which offer valuable, precise illustrations of students' writing self-efficacy. Although this study seeks to consider a more nuanced illustration in which qualitative and quantitative data can offer different ways to understand students' perceived preparedness for college-level writing, the existing research discussed offers some insight into student writing experiences and some moments of transition from high school to college-level writing. The scope of these studies, however, generally does not consider the underlying sources or prior writing experiences that might be informing students' current perceptions about writing; nor do they consider students' expectations for and perceived preparedness to write at the college level. What is more, despite the assertion of self-efficacy theorists that self-efficacy serves as a mediator for how students engage with prior writing experiences and anticipate future writing experiences, there is a dearth of scholarship about college-bound students' perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level. In what follows, I review scholarship that begins the conversation about students' perceived self-efficacy and creates space for my dissertation study to offer new information about high school students' perceptions of preparedness and expectations for college writing, based on their prior and current writing experiences.

The first section of this literature review examines research about college students' remembered accounts of high school writing, which provides a glimpse into college student experiences as they transitioned from high school to college-level writing. Finally, I identify the

scant research that draws attention to secondary-level students' experience with writing. While this research is useful to consider in terms of understanding students' perspective of writing and connections between those perspectives and the underlying sources of self-efficacy that might influence them, I use the few studies offered in the final section of the literature review to show the hole that exists and the need for new qualitative research. Specifically, there is more to understand about college-bound students' beliefs about their preparedness to write at the college level as well as their expectations for what college-level writing might entail. This literature review also serves as a way to examine the spaces in which self-efficacy studies, writing studies, and English Education scholarship might overlap.

Retrospective Accounts about High School Writing Experiences

This section of the literature review draws attention to college student perspectives of their high school writing experiences. In current literature, there is a sense of how college students remember high school writing, and while preparedness is not necessarily addressed explicitly, research on perspectives from college students is useful for the purposes of this study because the studies identified in this section value student voices and offer a retrospective account of students' high school writing experiences and in some studies, students' perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level, based on their high school writing experiences.

While retrospective accounts do not provide a full picture of individual students' writing experiences as they inform their beliefs about their preparedness for college writing, the studies highlighted in this section still point to aspects of high school writing experiences that warrant more attention in order to better understand college-bound students' perceptions of preparedness and the writing experiences that have informed those perceptions. For instance, Whitley and Paulsen (2010) surveyed and interviewed college students who took high school AP English courses and, at the time of the study, were enrolled in an advanced first year writing course (H150). Students were asked to compare their experiences of their AP writing experiences with those of H150. Whitley and Paulsen's study elicited mixed results as some students felt that their AP coursework did not prepare them for H150, while others found AP coursework did prepare them or at least provided a foundation of what was expected of them in the college course. Findings from the study, however, do not indicate what specific experiences in their AP coursework provided students the foundation they felt they had for H150. Importantly, Whitley

and Paulsen's study focused on college students' retrospective accounts of their high school experiences, but detailed information about high school writing experiences that influenced students' sense of preparedness while the students were anticipating the transition does not fall into the scope of their study. The students that reported any sense of unpreparedness did point to kinds of writing they felt only useful for test-taking like brief, time-constrained essays (Whitley and Paulsen, 2010). From these students' remembered accounts, we start to garner a sense of the writing experiences they encountered in high school, which may have resembled short on-demand writing different from the kinds of writing instructors expect students to write at the college level.

With this study I sought to examine the ways, if any, college-bound students differentiate writing in high school from writing at the college level. It is clear that writing experiences between high school and college are different and research indicates that much of the writing that occurs in high school is practiced for high-stakes testing (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Scherff, L. & Piazza, C., 2005). While students in some instances might be required, for instance, to analyze informational texts, college writing experiences for students will be different from the more common high school experience of writing as responding to classic literature (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Hillocks, 2011; Newell, Bloome, and Hirvela, 2015, Whitley & Paulsen, 2010). Therefore, it is also clear that students will encounter different writing experiences between high school and college writing, and are expected to navigate those changes as they transition from high school to college. What is unclear is whether students are aware of these differences while in high school and whether knowing about these differences influences their perceptions of preparedness for college writing before they reach college writing.[10] Further, it is unclear what underlying sources and enactive or vicarious experiences directly influence, if at all, students' beliefs about their preparedness for college-level writing.

Nelson (1991) argues that First Year Writing (FYW) students are probably most familiar with high school classroom writing experiences, which they can call on to help them navigate new writing experiences. Indeed, first-year college students likely put a lot of stock in their high school experiences and teachers as preparing them to write at the college level because it is the

[10] It should also be noted that the differences in writing highlighted by the studies noted above do not account for recent CCSS that might influence and change kinds of writing in high school classroom, with its attention to informational texts and argumentative writing, for instance. Recent adoption of CCSS by high school classrooms is even more reason to understand how students' interaction with curriculum framework influence their perceptions of preparedness.

knowledge they are equipped with when they first arrive at college. At the same time, Nelson also suggests that college students might also find that when they arrive at college, the transition into college writing is sometimes confusing and frustrating because they might perceive little similarity between high school and college writing. Therefore, students' experiences of transitioning from high school to college writing vary widely depending on the context, yet students are expected by educators to be prepared. Through my study, understanding the writing experiences that college-bound students report as contributing to their perceived self-efficacy and expectations for college-level writing surfaces underlying sources of the classroom that influence high school students' perceptions of preparedness. The following section considers literature that attends to underlying sources—ranging from specific high school experiences to attitudes about writing—that influence college students' perceived preparedness to write at the college-level.

Underlying Sources of College Students' Perceived Preparedness for College-level Writing

Recent research from English Education and Literacy Studies consider K-12 student perspectives and call for more research that highlights student voices at the secondary level (Juzwik, 2006; Sperling & DiPardo, 2008; Swofford, 2015). While student voices are rarely invited into conversations about their high school writing experiences, as prior research has suggested, research on what college students report as remembered high school accounts can still provide insight into how students understand prior writing experiences as influencing their perceived preparedness to write at the college level.

Sullivan (2014) worked with students in a FYW course, in which she was the instructor, to learn more about how to accommodate students in their transition from high school to college writing. Sullivan reports that students felt unprepared for college writing due to various reasons including difference in expectations from teachers around writing skills, lack of rigor in high school, and a focus on standardized testing in high school. Students also noted a difference in content and amount of writing between high school and college, in that students did less writing in high school than college and focused more on studying literature in high school English courses. Findings from Sullivan's and Whitley and Paulsen's studies might mean that because of the differences in kinds of writing between high school and college (e.g. genre and length) and the time allotted for writing in high school compared to college, students feel unprepared for

college writing. This sense of unpreparedness could be because students did not know what to expect as they transitioned from high school to college, or because students expected that what they learned in high school would prepare them for college writing. If the latter is the case, it is largely unknown what exactly students, still in high school, understood from their high school writing experiences as preparing them for college writing. However, as I have been suggesting, it is important to learn more about those experiences. For instance, keeping social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theories in mind, it is likely that college-bound students base their expectations and perceptions of their preparedness for college-level writing on what they already know. Their current knowledge about college-level—even the smallest amount of knowledge—may draw from what they've been told by others, what they have observed of older peers and siblings, or what they have experienced themselves in college writing workshops, for example. Ultimately, developing certain expectations likely happens through vicarious and mastery experiences, as well as social persuasion and physiological states. The research discussed in this section provides an idea of what prior experiences students might associate with their perceived preparedness, but more could be learned from the perspective of high school students as they prepare for college-level writing and are possibly influenced by varying environmental, personal, and behavioral factors that all work together to shape students' self-beliefs about their learning experiences.

McCarthy et al. (1985) and Shell et al., (1989) studied college students to examine relationships between self-efficacy and writing performance and found that writing self- efficacy predicted writing performance (e.g. composing an essay). Additionally, Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) studied the relationship between college students' self-efficacy and self-regulation and found that college students enrolled in advanced English composition courses had higher self-efficacy for managing writing activities, compared to participants enrolled in regular English composition. While these studies provide insight to self-efficacy as it functions in the college writing classroom, these studies do not address the underlying sources, especially prior writing experiences, that might have influenced these writing self-efficacy beliefs.

From their findings in a study of college student interviews, Spear and Flesher (1989) suggest that students who took AP courses in high school think they are better prepared than they actually are. Spear and Flesher attribute students' belief in their mastery of writing skills— these students believed they had mastered the skills necessary to write at the college level. In more recent research, Massengill begins to answer the question of what prior experiences influence

students' perceived self-efficacy. Generally speaking, according to Massengill's participants, more experience with writing results in higher confidence to write at the college level. Massengill surveyed college students and analyzed essays they wrote for the study to examine the relationship between high school writing experiences, perceived self-efficacy, and their preparedness for college writing. Massengill determined that those students with higher levels of self-efficacy around their writing, found more success in college writing. Across the college students studied, writing experiences in high school varied, and these differences affected the level of each student's self-efficacy and sense of preparedness for college writing. Those students who reported higher levels of self-efficacy also reported writing more frequently in high school and practicing various genres.

Several studies in composition studies focus on transfer of prior knowledge and genre awareness as individuals move from one context to another and engage in various discursive practices (see, for example, Anson, 2016; Lu, 2004; Miller, 1994; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011, Rounsaville, et al., 2008; Sommers & Saltz, 2004). Scholarship also draws attention to novice writers (see, for example, Beaufort, 2009, Hassel & Giordano, 2009, Reiff and Bawarshi, 2011, Sommers and Saltz, 2004). Because my study considers the prior writing experiences students perceive as informing their preparedness and expectations, I draw from scholarship that considers student "incomes" or prior knowledge that students carry into new writing experiences. Research about genre and transfer in Writing Studies is useful to consider how students situate themselves within new writing contexts and are also concerned with the proto- (beginning or potential knowledge) and meta-knowledge (developing knowledge that can be strategically applied in context) these participants develop as well as the nuances and complexities of those individual experiences.

The scholarship noted above examines the complex and sometimes conflicting experiences of language, relationships, and senses of self—all of which have the possibility to inform new learning experiences. In some cases, students' incomes (e.g. writing knowledge they already have) can be undercut when their understandings of and beliefs about writing conflict with new writing expectations at the college level, affecting their confidence in writing abilities and lessening motivation to perform certain writing tasks. In other cases, student incomes, while possibly different from college-level outcomes, can also embody a motivation to take on new challenges and learn new writing genres (Reiff and Bawarshi, 2011, Rounsaville et al., 2008,

Sommers and Saltz, 2004). I extend the noted scholarship and posit that by recognizing and fostering college-bound students' prior experiences and their perceptions of those experiences, educators can more flexibly understand how students' perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing are formed.

Existing research also draws attention to students' attitudes as one factor influencing perceptions about their own writing. For instance, Palmquist and Young (1992) surveyed students to elicit their attitudes toward writing and found that students who had higher levels of belief that giftedness is essential to writing indicated less positive experiences with writing instructors (p. 534). From their findings Palmquist and Young might agree with Massengill in that exposure to writing increases self-efficacy, as they conclude that "belief in giftedness alone does not lead to increased writing apprehension or relatively lower self-assessments of writing ability. Instead, the notion of giftedness appears to make an important, though largely unacknowledged, contribution to a constellation of expectations, attitudes, and beliefs that influence the ways in which students approach writing" (p. 537). What educators might think of and expect of students' preparedness might be different from what students' perceptions of preparedness actually are. Palmquist and Young's findings also speak to the physiological state as it influences students' future writing experiences. In their study, students make their own determinations about writing and their attitudes demonstrate their reactions to their writing experiences. If students hold onto these attitudes, it can affect the way they view their own capabilities to write. This may be especially true when some students, as Palmquist and Young indicate, see writing as a gift—you either have it or you don't—and other students like Massengill's participants believe students have to practice writing to find more success in their writing. Therefore, looking closely at how students encounter and react to writing experiences in high school and whether it informs their perceptions of preparedness offers a point of study that can uncover underlying sources-- *who* and *what*--are shaping these expectations and attitudes in, as Palmquist and Young call it, the constellation of expectations, attitudes, thoughts and beliefs that might affect how students' perceptions of preparedness for college writing are influenced in high school classrooms.

The studies discussed above show that there is important work being done to give voice to students who experience transition from one writing experience to another. Most of these studies, however, focus on college students' retrospective accounts of past high school writing

experiences, and we are left without a sense of the lived experience of high school students and how those writing experiences inform high school students' perceptions of preparedness for college writing. What's more, there are few writing self-efficacy studies that consider the relationship between college students' prior writing experiences and their current perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level. In addition to asking college-bound students to complete self-efficacy scales, this study adds a new dimension to writing self-efficacy research that qualitatively interviews college-bound students about the experiences that are potentially influencing their beliefs about their preparedness for college-level writing. The current study examines the perceptions of college-bound students to isolate a critical transitional moment between high school and college when students are possibly taking stock of what they know about writing and beginning to look ahead to the kinds of writing experiences they will face outside the high school doors, which the above studies are not able to do.

Secondary-level Writing Experiences and the Interplay of Environmental, Personal, and Behavioral Factors

Writing self-efficacy studies that focus on high school student populations have found that self-efficacy mediates the effect of other influences (e.g. previous achievement) on subsequent performance (Pajares & Johnson, 1996, etc.). Additionally, there is research about high school students' thoughts and beliefs towards writing, studies that are foregrounded in the final section of this literature review (Jeffery & Wilcox, 2014; Smagorinsky & Daigle, 2012; Samuelson, 2009). While these studies do not consider students' perceptions of preparedness or expectations for college writing, they still provide a foundation to consider the relationship between secondary students' writing, their self-beliefs and their stance towards writing (Pajares & Johnson,1996). The literature reviewed here creates space to consider the connections between scholarship on high school experiences and self-efficacy research, which is useful for the current study as it considers the underlying sources of students' perceived self-efficacy and beliefs about their preparedness to write at the college level, in an important moment as college-bound students look ahead to college.

Writing self-efficacy research also suggests that underlying sources as theorized by Bandura (1977; 1986) influence high school students' perceived self-efficacy. Pajares and his associates have conducted multiple studies that examine the relationship between high school

students' self-efficacy and underlying sources. In one study, Pajares and Johnson (1996) conducted path analysis methods to examine the influence of writing self-efficacy and writing apprehension on students' writing essay performance.[11] They found that prior accomplishments are an important source of students' self-efficacy. Additionally, the researchers determined that teachers' judgments of their students' aptitude also influenced students' perceived confidence. Therefore, social persuasion was also determined to be an important influence on students' perceived self-efficacy. In a later study, Pajares, Johnson, and Usher (2007) administered a *Sources of Self-Efficacy* scale that included 28 items to assess students' (in grades 4-11) evaluations of the four underlying sources (vicarious experience, mastery experience, social persuasion, physiological state) as influencing their self-efficacy beliefs. Once again, social persuasion and mastery experience were measured as directly influencing high school students' self-efficacy beliefs.

While Pajares and Johnson identified the significance of two underlying sources as playing an important role in students' perceived self-efficacy, the authors recommend that quantitative studies, such as theirs, should be complemented with qualitative research to explore how writing beliefs are developed and influence their academic paths (p. 173). Additionally, Bruning et al. (2012), whose study will be discussed later in this section, call for more research that considers other factors of lived experiences, like language background and course-related experiences. Pajares and his associates also suggest that there is a relationship between students' apprehension and perceived writing self-efficacy. Additionally, the studies noted at the beginning of this section about secondary students' writing experiences suggest that there is a relationship between affect, attitudes, and persistence in writing. While quantitative illustrations of self-efficacy are important to consider, these studies together create an important space to qualitatively explore students' perceptions and learn from them about their writing experiences and how they inform their self-beliefs as they look ahead to college-level writing.

The assertion from self-efficacy theorists (Bandura, 1997 and 2001; Pajares, 2003; Zimmerman, 2000) that self-efficacy serves as a foundation for human agency especially informs this section of the literature review because efficacy beliefs affect individuals' capacity to adapt and change, which in turn influences whether people think pessimistically or optimistically.

[11] Path analysis, as operationalized by Pajares and Johnson (1996), is a method used in statistics to determine indirect and direct effects between certain variables.

These thoughts, depending on the person and context, can be self-hindering or self-enhancing of an individual's performance.

Similar to Palmquist and Young's analysis of college students' attitudes toward writing, Smagorinsky and Daigle (2012) argue that for high school students, more positive attitudes about writing increase motivation to practice writing. Smagorinsky and Daigle (2012) uncover the consequences of contextual factors on students and their writing in high school, asserting that communities, including schools, can exclude students who find difficulty in "transforming academic knowledge into value, capital, and power" (p. 297). Here, Smagorinsky and Daigle's assertion demonstrates how the interplay of environmental, behavioral, and personal factors, as theorized by social cognitive theory, can influence an individual's learning experience. Similar to what the current study theorizes, Smagorinsky and Daigle assert that students do not learn in a vacuum, but are instead constantly navigating the varying elements of their learning context, while also becoming independent learners. For their study, Smagorinsky and Daigle employed protocol analysis for which students thought aloud as they completed classroom writing assignments. Through think aloud protocols, high school students were asked to talk aloud their thought process as they were writing assignments. Smagorinsky and Daigle found that students' attitudes towards having to complete certain kinds of assignments affected their motivation to complete the assignments. Therefore, certain attitudes students voiced towards kinds of writing either distanced them from wanting to complete writing tasks or motivated them to complete tasks.[12]

Smagorinsky and Daigle also argue that more positive attitudes towards writing affect students' persistence to achieve tasks, which could be related to students' levels of confidence for preparing for college writing. If the physiological state of an individual serves influences levels of self-efficacy, then college bound students' attitudes towards writing not only demonstrate students' physiological state or reaction to certain writing experience, but also influence their perceived self-efficacy to write in specific contexts. The current dissertation study builds from Smagorinsky and Daigle's study to consider student perspectives on writing, students' perceptions about their ability to write at the college level, as well as their expectations

[12] The study here does not directly study college-bound students' motivation to write. However, self-efficacy is a predictor of motivation (Pajares & Johnson, 1996), the literature from Smagorinsky & Daigle provides a foundation to consider the relationship between secondary students' self-beliefs and their stance towards writing (Pajares & Johnson, 1996).

for what college writing might entail. Students have likely thought about their preparedness to write at the college-level in the context of how they have experienced and reacted to writing in different contexts. Also recall from the discussion about SCT in the that there is a relationship between personal factors, behavior, and environmental factors. Personal factors like attitude might contribute to college-bound students' perceptions of their own preparedness as they look ahead to college-level writing. Attitudes might also be demonstrated through an individual's physiological state as a college-bound student reacts to environmental factors of certain writing experiences (e.g. kinds of writing they are asked to complete or teacher instruction) which can in turn influence how that student develops their self-efficacy belief for that writing experience.[13] In other words, students may have positive or negative attitudes towards college-level writing depending on their self-beliefs about their writing capabilities or previous writing experiences they have encountered—what they enjoy about writing and what they find particularly challenging about writing. Furthermore, Pajares and Johnson (1996), whose study will be explicated later in this section, suggest that affective factors associated with specific academic areas can mediate an individual's self-beliefs, how that individual acts on those self-beliefs, and thereby influence academic outcomes.

Similarly, Jeffery and Wilcox (2014) also find that students' attitudes toward writing in different disciplines affect their stance on writing. In their analysis of student interviews from a previous study, Jeffery and Wilcox found that students hold more positive attitudes towards writing in English Language Arts, and more negative attitudes towards writing in other subjects. Students found less favor with rigidly bound writing tasks, favored writing that involved voice and opinion and subjective positioning, ultimately finding ELA writing to be more agentive. While Jeffery and Wilcox focus on students' experiences with writing across disciplines within a secondary setting, their findings speak to the negotiating students must take up as they move from context to context with different writing experiences. Findings from Jeffery and Wilcox point to students' abilities to navigate their own writing experiences, through which they develop self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions and influence their learning development (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). The study from Jeffery and Wilcox demonstrates that there are varying factors, like the context of writing experiences and students' reactions to writing experiences, at

[13] Here and in other places throughout my dissertation, I employ the use of "they" and its variations as a singular pronoun because it is gender-inclusive.

play in an individual's learning experience, a notion I examine in this study and that is further supported by writing self-efficacy research conducted by Bruning et al. (2012), whose study serves as an example of how components of social cognitive theory and self-efficacy are related and will be discussed below.

Bruning et al. (2012) examined the relationship between high school students' writing self-efficacy for generating ideas, conventions, and self-regulation and students' liking writing, self-reported writing grades, and statewide writing assessments. In their study, 563 juniors and seniors completed a Self-Efficacy for Writing Scale and a Liking Writing Scale. Participants also reported their writing grades from their courses for that current year. Participants' statewide writing assessments were also collected. Results from the data collected showed a relationship between students' liking writing and their capabilities to generate ideas and self-regulate for writing. Less of a relationship was found between liking of writing and students' perceived self-efficacy for conventions. Ultimately, from their findings, Bruning et al. (2012) argue that there is a commonality between high school students' confidence to engage with self-regulation and self-reflection and their feelings about writing. Bruning et al.'s findings prompt me to make a connection to the theoretical framework for this current study and its attention to self-reflection and forethought. Recall that Bandura (1986), through social cognitive theory, identifies the practice of self-reflection and forethought as the ability to demonstrate metacognitive abilities through which individuals reflect on their own experiences and take stock of what has been learned and accomplished and what is possible to achieve in the future, based on those prior experiences. In Bruning et al.'s study there also seems to be a relationship between how students react to their writing experiences and the influence those physiological states have on their perceived writing capabilities, as theorized by Bandura's self-efficacy theory.

Secondary-level Experiences of AP Students

It should also be noted that Bruning et al. recruited participants who were enrolled in a range of English courses: General English (GE), Composition (Comp), American Literature and Composition (ALC), and Advanced Placement Language and Composition (APLC). Of interest to this study are the findings, similar to findings noted in the previous section from Zimmerman and Bandura (1994), that show APLC students reported higher self-efficacy for all dimensions of writing self-efficacy measured. Additionally, APLC students reported more positive feelings

towards writing and higher writing grades. While I am hesitant to generalize the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of all AP students, the findings Bruning et al. report about AP students were important to keep in mind for this particular dissertation which studies college bound students enrolled in AP courses. Samuelson (2009) offers particularly useful research for this study as she focuses on the environmental factors that influence students in the AP classroom. I am reminded of social cognitive theory's attention to the environmental factors that influence student learning. Environmental factors like the goals and expectations specific to AP curriculum often shape the context of AP courses. In order to pass the AP exams or receive AP credit for college, students must meet the expectations outlined by the College Board and disseminated by their AP teacher.[14] Samuelson's study also speaks to ways in which vicarious learning play a part in student writing experiences. One of the ways vicarious learning can occur is through the observations students make of how their teachers model a task. Similar to vicarious learning is Samuelson's concept of ventriloquation. Samuelson draws attention to teachers' and students' "talk about writing", or what Samuelson calls "ventriloquation," as students prepare to write AP essays. Through ventriloquation, individuals reveal their attitudes and beliefs about the AP essay, but it is also possible that individuals mirror attitudes and beliefs shaped by modeling through teacher instruction and AP guidelines and thereby learned vicariously. Samuelson's study demonstrates how vicarious experiences can inform student learning as students and teacher prepare for AP testing.

Samuelson identifies how students and their teacher interact together to prepare students for writing AP essays. During these interactions, teachers and students appear in sync, understanding the expectations of how to write an AP essay. However, when the students and teacher disperse within the classroom, interactions change, and some students ventriloquize in a different way. No longer do they show an understanding of how to write parts of the essay, but express that they do not know how to write a thesis, for example, even though they may have demonstrated to their teacher during large group discussion that they did understand. Samuelson's case study demonstrates how students negotiate moments of learning, which is relevant to my study as I explore the ways in which participants interact within contexts and think about how they situate themselves in new writing contexts. This study also explores how

[14] College Board is not-for-profit organization that develops and administers standardized assessment and curricula used by K–12 and higher education institutions (e.g. Advanced Placement, the SAT, assessment for college admissions).

students draw conclusions about what they believe they are capable of based on what they have learned through vicarious learning. Samuelson's study also creates more space for the current dissertation study, as it points to the influence of explicit teacher instruction or what students observe and then put into practice from their teacher through vicarious learning.

Vicarious learning is an important component of developing self-efficacy, but it is not the only underlying source, nor is it always effective. While students observed modeling in Samuelson's study, not all students fully understood or followed through with their teacher's instructions. Students' perceptions of how to prepare for or actually write an AP essay might look different from what the teacher modeled. Here, social cognitive theory's interplay of environmental, behavioral, and personal factors seem to be at work as students and teacher interact with each other in order for students to meet effectively the expectations of the AP essay for which they are preparing. However, the experience is likely different between the teacher and students and this result of their interaction calls to mind the ways in which individuals process and apply information, but then develop their own independent self-beliefs based on that process It may be convenient to generalize AP students as more prepared to write at the college level, but some students in Samuelson's case study may have had a different idea based on their learning (or lack thereof) of how to write a thesis statement. Studies like Samuelson's and the others examined in this literature review warrant more consideration for the writing experiences college-bound students encounter and the implications for their perceived preparedness to write at the college level.

Conclusion

I call to mind again the current discourse of preparedness that introduced this chapter. The relationship between social cognitive theory and self-efficacy highlights learning experiences that are socially contextualized, but also show that individuals proactively develop self-beliefs about their learning experiences. Current conversations about preparedness do not fully represent the writing experiences of students in relation to students' perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing as this study theorizes. As a way to invite students into the conversation, this chapter has offered a theoretical framework that creates space to establish what students have come to know about writing and how they have developed their expectations of college writing. Self-efficacy creates space for this project to measure students' belief in their

capability to perform specific writing skills and tasks at the college level. When individuals are familiar with the demands of a task, they are likely to call on the self-efficacy beliefs that have developed from previous experiences or similar tasks (Pajares and Schunk, 2001). Understanding students' writing self-efficacy serves as a crucial mediator between prior and future writing experiences and I make the argument in the chapters that follow that it is important to not only consider students' self-efficacy for performing college-level writing, but also the writing experiences that students report as informing their current self-beliefs about their perceived preparedness and their expectations for college-level writing.

This chapter also examined relevant research that provides a glimpse of student writing experiences at the both the high school and college level. While there are studies that provide retrospective accounts of high school writing experiences from college students, the specificity of what those students experienced and how those experiences influenced their expectations of college-level writing before they made the transition is unknown. For example, studies like those from Whitley and Paulsen (2010) provide insight about college-level students' perceived preparedness to write at the college level. Learning even more from college bound students about their writing experiences before they arrive at college could improve pedagogical design and practice as well as articulate important themes from student writing experiences that are important to understand in order to facilitate student transition from high school to college-level writing (Sullivan, 2014).

The current study serves as a contribution to existing research that has already been done about student writing experiences and seeks to better understand, across fields, the relationship between students' writing experiences and their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. In the Chapter Two, I outline my research questions and describe the methods for data collection and analysis process I used in order to reach the findings and implications of those findings I share in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

Overview

Better understanding students' perceptions of their own preparedness and their expectations for college-level writing is important when it is the students themselves that are most affected and measured by curriculum and assessment initiatives. Beyond instructor self-reports, large-scale surveys, quantitative self-efficacy measures, and retrospective studies that ask college students to remember their high school writing experiences, there has been little attention paid to high school students' perception of their writing experiences in high school and how college-bound students understand college writing (Jeffery & Wilcox, 2013; Juzwik, 2006; Smagorinsky & Daigle, 2012). My aim in asking the questions below, then, was to bring high school college-bound student voices to the surface and by doing so, understand college-bound students' expectations about what college writing could be through an interview study. Learning more from students about their writing experiences, as they report them, can bring students into the conversation about their own preparedness to write at the college level. These findings can support better preparation for students for college-level writing, as well as valuable information for high school and college instructors on students' writing transition. In order to understand the relationship between college-bound students' writing experiences, their perceived self-efficacy to perform college-level writing skills and tasks, and their perceived preparedness to write at the college level, this study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What are college-bound students' expectations for college-level writing?
    a. In what ways, if any, do college-bound students differentiate writing in high school from writing at the college level?
    b. What, specifically, do college-bound students believe they have learned about college writing from their prior and current experiences?

2. In what ways do college-bound students perceive high school writing experiences as preparing them to write at the college level?

a. About which, if any, college-level writing skills and tasks do college-bound students have a sense of self-efficacy?

b. What are the underlying sources of college-bound students' writing self-efficacy?

c. In what ways, if any, do college-bound students' sense of their writerly selves influence their perceived preparedness for college-level writing?

To answer the research questions above, I designed a qualitative interview study of college-bound students' experiences and reflections on their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. This study uses a series of two semi-structured interviews with fifteen college-bound student participants. In what follows, I first discuss the research site for this study and then describe methodologies for choosing participants, including the use of a self-efficacy survey, the design and conducting of interviews, and the employment of data analysis. Finally, I reflect on ethical considerations for this study.

Study Design

Criteria for Selecting a Research Site

Data collection took place at Great Lakes High School (GLHS).[15] When selecting a site, I was looking for a high school in which most of its students were college-bound. I also needed cooperation from a teacher and permission from the district superintendent and high school principal. When I was connected with Mrs. Gerard, through a mutual colleague, she expressed interest in opening her classroom as she was also interested in learning how to support her students as they anticipate the transition. [16] Mrs. Gerard then connected me with both the district superintendent and GLHS principal, who graciously gave their permission. [17]

Because this study is concerned with college-bound students' perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing it is also important to acknowledge the population of

[15] GLHS is a pseudonym that was recommended as a group by participants.

[16] Mrs. Gerard is a pseudonym

[17] GLHS was secured as a research site through the completion of the University of Michigan's Institutional Review Board's (IRB) application process when it was determined that the study posed no more than minimal risk to participants. The approval of the research site's superintendent and principal was also received for this study.

participants for this study. Student participants were recruited from two sections of senior-level Advanced Placement English Literature (AP Lit) offered at GLHS. Surveying and interviewing college-bound students enrolled in AP Lit provided the opportunity to learn from students who, collectively, were college-bound and anticipating the transition into college-level writing and, as they indicated in both sets of interviews, held beliefs about whether they were prepared to write at the college level as well as ideas about what college writing could be like. Participants could therefore speak to those ideas during interviews, which provided rich data for my study. Furthermore, while some of the AP students in this dissertation study indicated higher levels of self-efficacy on the survey, their interview responses provided rich and nuanced data that contextualized survey responses and provided further insight into how students perceive their writing experiences as related to their anticipated transition into college.

Research Site

GLHS is a public high school located about six miles from a state university in a small Midwestern city, in a community of approximately 9,000 citizens. *U.S. News and World Report, Newsweek,* and *Niche* have identified GLHS as a top school in its home state and the country. The school also participates in a limited Schools of Choice Program.[18]

GLHS enrollment during the semester of my study (Fall 2016) was approximately 1,800. The students at GLHS come from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds, though the majority of students (90%) are white, and the largest minority group (5%) is Asian. 6% of students qualify for free lunches and 2% qualify for reduced price lunches. As of 2015, over 93% of seniors graduated from GLHS and most students had plans for post-secondary education. I chose my site both purposefully and as a matter of convenience. After reaching out to various high school teachers whose schools could serve as potential research sites, I chose GLHS because one of its teachers taught two sections of senior-level Advanced Placement courses. As a first-year writing instructor at U-M, many of the students I meet come into my class with experience in Advanced Placement (AP) English courses and are often surprised by the differences between my course and what they experienced in AP English Literature and Composition or AP Language and Composition. Curious about this anecdotal observation, I wanted to interview students like them

[18] The GLHS school board annually reviews the decision to participate in the School of Choice Program. If there is availability in the district's schools and programs, applications are accepted for review.

to understand a different moment of student transition from high school to college-level writing. The cooperating teacher, Mrs. Gerard[19], seemed excited about my dissertation study and interested in learning what I might find out from her students. She had questions about how she could better support her students as they anticipated the transition into college-level writing. Finally, GLHS promotes academic excellence and ensuring its students are prepared for college, which made it more likely that I would find interested and willing participants who would talk about their prior experiences and share their ideas about what they were anticipating as they prepared to transition into college-level writing.

The context of this research site provided an important backdrop for participants' reported writing experiences and for our conversations about their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Additionally, my participants were taking AP Literature and Composition and some of those participants had previously taken AP Language and Composition or other AP courses. The context of a senior-level AP course fostered student determination to do well as they looked ahead to and prepared for college, and so I wanted to learn from students who participated in an environment where preparedness was potentially being fostered, was expected of these students, or students expected it of themselves, based on their academic status.

Participant Selection

In order to identify students who are college-bound and represent a cross-section of race and gender identities, students first completed a brief inventory survey. Following this portion of the survey, and to understand students' beliefs about their preparedness for college-level writing, students completed a self-efficacy survey that asked them to indicate their level of confidence to perform writing skills and tasks at the college-level, as well as their level of confidence that they are prepared to write at the college level (see Appendix B). The design of the survey draws from Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007) to define writing skills as ranging from writing complete sentences with Standard Academic English to organizing an essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Writing tasks are the actual activity or job of composing that a combination of skills practice makes up (e.g. writing a complete essay).

[19] pseudonym

The survey served two main purposes: 1) the survey responses provided preliminary information and helped me to establish a pool of fifteen participants who were college-bound and represented a range of self-efficacy levels for performing college-level writing skills and tasks; 2) student survey responses were also used to engage students in the semi-structured interviews to further discuss reasons why students indicated certain levels of self-efficacy for each subset of the measurement.

I aimed to recruit ten to fifteen senior-level, college-bound students. Based on the initial survey results, I selected student participants who represented a cross-section of race and gender and who had plans to attend college. Students provided this information on the survey. I also purposefully selected participants based on their scores on the survey, selecting students from what I determined to be low-, middle-, and high-level perceived self-efficacy groups.

The survey that I used to assess students' self-efficacy scale is a 26-item instrument to measure self-efficacy related to writing skills, writing tasks, and preparedness to write at the college level. Prior to distributing the self-efficacy survey for the current study, the subscales were tested as part of a pilot study in July 2016. Student participants at a local school took the survey and participated in a focus group to offer feedback about how the survey design and language can be improved (See Appendix G for an overview of the Pilot Study). The writing skills and tasks subscales have been reported as reliable by Jones (2008), and testing these subscales through a pilot study further ensured the instrument's validity. As noted early, given the small participant pool, I did not have statistical power to run a factor analysis, so in order to see how the three subscales worked together, I examined all three subscales to see where students indicated low, middle, and high levels of confidence for each item. There were some discrepancies between subscales based on students' reported levels of confidence, which is why the interviews were crucial to understanding the nuances of students' perceived self-efficacy levels to write at the college level.

The instrument, which consists of three sub-scales, asks students to report the degree of confidence with which they believed they could complete a writing task or skill as well as their preparedness to write at the college level. The subscales assess, on a scale of 0-100, students' beliefs in their ability to 1) perform specific writing skills at the college level 2) complete specific writing tasks at the college level and 3) their confidence in their preparedness to write at the college level with consideration for their prior writing experiences. To create the first two

subscales, I drew from two skills and tasks subscales of the Writing Self-Efficacy Survey (WSE) as developed by Jones (2008) and used in Massengill's dissertation study (2015). Reliabilities for each of these subscales are high and above .8 (Jones, 2008). Jones followed task and skills self-efficacy scales, originally developed by Pajares & Johnson (1994), but further adapted the scales to align with the WPA outcomes for the first-year composition (2000) and College English I curriculum at her research site. Maintaining the skills and tasks of WSE subscales was useful for this study as each item prompted participants to identify their level of confidence to perform writing skills and tasks appropriate to the college level.

Following Bandura's (2006) guide for creating scales that are domain-specific, I further developed the writing skills and writing tasks subscales to identify other skills and tasks specific to college-level writing that include the task of practicing rhetorical awareness, reading skills to inform writing processes, and skills that involve writing with multiple technologies. These additions were included on the writing tasks and skills subsets to adhere to the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*. Using guidelines, as Jones does, from the WPA Outcomes, limits college writing standards to first-year composition courses. Creating items that are guided by the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* broadens writing standards that might be applicable in a variety of college-level courses and include skills like reading and analyzing. I also added one item on the writing skills instrument that includes correctly using citation styles like APA, which students might encounter in their college writing courses, as well as other discipline-specific courses that involve writing and research.

Following Bandura's recommendation that self-efficacy measures should reflect the domain or subject matter of the study, I created a third subscale to measure students' self-efficacy beliefs for their preparedness to write at the college level. This subscale assesses college-bound students' perceptions of the relationship between their prior writing experiences, capabilities, and future writing experiences. For instance, the preparedness subscale asked students to indicate their level of confidence for using what they have learned about writing at the college level. Additionally, this subscale prompted students, during interviews, to explain reasons for the level of confidence they indicated for their preparedness to write at the college level.

Although the instrument I designed used a 5-point Likert response scale, I revised this to a 100-point response scale after a pilot study that revealed little variance in students' responses. The revised response scale for the survey is depicted below.

Figure 2.1 Survey Response Scale

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Not confident at all					Fairly confident					Totally confident

Distributing the survey

When I met with students in early September 2016, I distributed paper copies of an explanation of my study to all 46 students in the classroom. During my overview, I stressed to students that all survey responses and data collected for this study would remain confidential. I also distributed student assent forms and parent consent forms (see Appendix D). Students were able to take the consent/assent documents home, discuss my study with their parents if necessary, and bring back signed consent forms, signed by both students and if necessary, their parents. Students who were under the age of 18 provided parental consent in addition to their assent. Within one week, all 46 students returned signed documents indicating their willingness to participate in the survey and possible interviews, if selected.

After assent and consent forms were collected, all 46 students elected to take a survey that included an inventory section and three self-efficacy subscales. Mrs. Gerard helped me to distribute and facilitate the survey during class time in the media center, which was created through *Qualtrics* and taken by students online with laptops in the GLHS media center (see Appendix A for the survey protocol).

Use of Survey Results

There are various approaches one could take to analyze and use survey data from this study's survey alone. I wanted students' survey responses to inform the recruitment process and serve as prompts during interviews. I thus used the survey results to recruit a sample of college-bound participants who represented a cross-section of races and genders within the two sections of AP English and a range of overall average scores of the three subscales.

Given the small pool of survey participants, I did not have statistical power to do factor analyses of the survey responses. Instead, I examined any discrepancies between students' degree of confidence to complete college-level writing skills and tasks and their degree of confidence in their preparedness to write at the college level. To assist with this process, a graduate student in the School of Education who was well-versed in this type of analysis was hired for consulting work, and compensated for approximately ten hours of work.[20] With the assistance of the graduate student consultant, participants were organized into three groups based on their overall average scores. The low-level self-efficacy group included students with the scores from the minimum to the 25th percentile. The middle-level group included those with the scores from the 26th to 75th percentile. The high-level group included those with the scores from the 76th to the maximum. From the 46 survey respondents, I selected five students from each self-efficacy group, totaling in 15 participants, keeping in mind the desire to balance the sample by gender and race/ethnicity.

The qualitative data provided by the subsequent interviews complicates the group level (low, medium, or high) students may have been delegated to based on their responses. For example, while one student may have been placed in the lower self-efficacy group based on their responses, that student may have expressed higher levels of self-efficacy in conversation.[21] Furthermore, using the survey data as a recruitment tool as well as supplementary information for the interviews allowed me to respond to calls for the use of more qualitative studies in self-efficacy research (Bruning et al., 2012; Pajares & Johnson, 1996).

As noted above, Massengill (2015) also used a similar survey in her dissertation study to understand first-year college students' preparedness for college writing. Massengill put the results in conversation with a qualitative analysis of essays students wrote for the study. The essay prompt was borrowed from an AP English Language and Composition course. My dissertation study instead put an adapted version of the WSE in conversation with qualitative interviews to leverage student voice and further understand students' writing experiences in context with their perceived self-efficacy and preparedness to write at the college-level.

[20] In the fall of 2016, I was awarded research grants from the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate school. Part of this grant paid for the consultation work.

[21] A reminder that here and in other places throughout my dissertation, I employ the use of "they" and its variations as a singular pronoun because it is gender-inclusive.

The levels of confidence students indicated on the survey created space during the interview to ask follow-up questions about the reasons why they indicated those particular levels of confidence, and the writing experiences they attributed to their self-efficacy levels. Because writing self-efficacy can serve as a mediator between prior and future experiences (Bandura, 1986; Pajares 2003), using the survey and interview data also helped me to better understand the relationship between college-bound students' perceived self-efficacy to perform writing skills and tasks and their perceptions of preparedness to write at the college level.

Qualitative Interviews

I conducted two sets of interviews with the 15 participants from October-December 2016 (see Appendix B for interview protocols). Blakeselee and Fleischer (2010) posit that qualitative interviews serve as opportunities to garner insight about a person's thoughts and perceptions in relation to a specific issue or situation (p. 129). Especially because this study focuses on student perception, interviews allowed me to explore, in depth, college-bound students' beliefs about their preparedness for college writing and expectations for college-level writing. Interviews also provided a more individualized and descriptive picture, beyond statistical data, of college-bound students' perception of their preparedness, as well as their expectations for college-level writing.

Interviews were semi-structured to initiate and guide the interviews in a way that allowed for conversation, follow-up questions, and unanticipated information to emerge. I also hoped that interview responses from college-bound student participants would draw attention to how students talk about college writing and the underlying sources that participants indicate contribute to their perceptions of preparedness and ideas about college writing. Formal data collection includes two sets of interviews with college-bound student participants. Also included in the data analyzed is a written response students provided during the second set of interviews. In total, 15 written responses were collected and analyzed. I transcribed the first interview to get a better sense of the interview's content and the time it took to conduct the interview. The remaining interview recordings were submitted to a transcription service, which helped me to adhere to my data collection and analysis timeline.[22]

[22] Research grant money awarded by the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate school was used to pay for transcription services.

Visiting the Research Site

After recruiting participants, I visited the AP sections most Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during the months of October through December 2016. Beyond the purposes of garnering context for interview conversations and becoming a familiar face in the classroom, observations were not used as data. The classroom visits provided important contextual information that helped me understand what students were learning and talked about in their interviews about their writing experiences. Additionally, my visits served as a useful tool for me to reference when students had difficulty responding to an interview question. For instance, if a student participant "got stuck" on one of my interviews questions or needed additional prompting in order to elaborate, my observations of participants' AP course was useful as our shared knowledge for Mrs. Gerard's class provided contextual information or specific examples that further clarified a question from me or a response from a participant. Finally, frequent visits allowed me to establish a presence in the classroom and be a face in the classroom community. By simply being there, I hoped that this would prompt students to feel more at ease and engage more readily when participating in the interviews.

During the selection process I chose students who indicated they wanted to participate in the future interviews and who planned on attending college in the fall. Those who said on the survey that they were not interested in participating in the study or said they did not have plans for college in the fall were not selected. In my decision-making process about which students might be asked to participate in the interviews, I examined all 46 survey responses, item by item. I looked for instances in which students indicated especially high levels of confidence, as well as significantly low levels of confidence to complete specific writing skills and tasks. I also looked for instances where there might be some discrepancy between items and where more explanation and clarification could be useful for this study. For example, on the survey, some participants noted that they were totally confident that they would be successful at college-level writing, but at the same time, they indicated lower levels of confidence that they knew what to expect from college-level writing. I wanted these participants to explain their perceived confidence to succeed at college-level writing even if they were less confident in what to expect about writing when they arrived at college. There were other instances on the survey in which some responses to items were seemingly in conflict. For example, some participants indicated high levels of confidence to write essays for English professors at the college-level. At the same time, some of

those participants indicated less confidence to write essays for any professor at the college-level. I chose these students as potential participants in hopes that I could better understand from them what underlying sources were contributing to their confidence levels and how their expectations for college-level writing might be related to these particular responses on the survey.

Participant Profiles

In this section I provide demographic information for each of the 15 participants who participated in the interviews for this study (see Appendix A for participant biographies). In the table below, each participant is highlighted with demographic information as well as how they scored, overall, on the initial self-efficacy survey. Their overall self-efficacy scores are highlighted by a certain color to first, indicate which group students fell into based on their scores, and second to correspond with Figure 2.2 below. Additionally, because the Advanced Placement Language and Composition (AP Lang) course surfaced as an important factor to many of the participants' writing experiences and perceived preparedness, I note whether each participant took the course to provide an idea of how many students took the class

Table 2.1 Participant Profiles

Participant name[23]	**Age**	**Gender**	**Race/ethnicity**[24]	**Overall self-efficacy scores on survey**	**Took AP Language and Composition?**
Alice Carroll	17	female	white	Minimum-25th percentile	No
Frank N. Stein	17	Male	Caucasian	Minimum-25th percentile	No
Tangerine	17	female	White	Minimum-25th percentile	No
Charlotte James	17	female	black and white	Minimum-25th percentile	No
Maya Wilson	17	female	Greek	Minimum-25th percentile	No
Alex	17	agender	Asian American	26th-75th percentile	Yes
Zach Skoneki	17	Male	white	26th-75th percentile	Yes
Stephen Burbassa	17	Male	White	26th-75th percentile	Yes
Moon	17	female	Indian	26th-75th percentile	No
Jillian	17	female	White	26th-75th percentile	No
Stewart	17	Male	Caucasian	76th-Maximum	Yes
Emma	17	female	White	76th-Maximum	Yes
Swimmer	17	female	white	76th-Maximum	Yes
Rosy Potter	17	female	white	76th-Maximum	No
Sarah	18	female	Caucasian	76th-Maximum	Yes

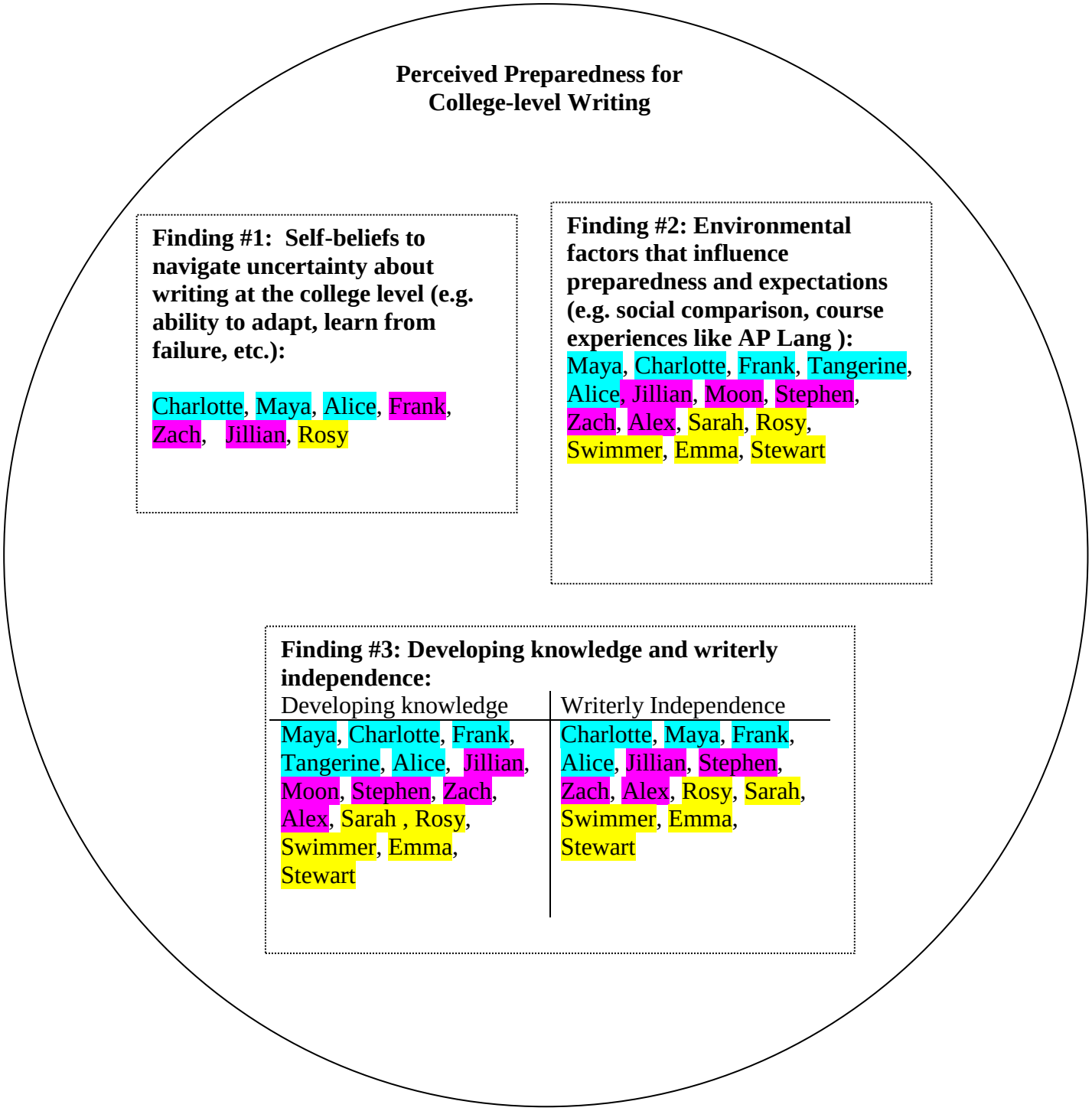
As I noted in the "Use of Survey Results" section, all participants were grouped into three self-efficacy levels—low (blue), middle (pink), and high (yellow)—based on how they responded to the initial survey. Regardless of their grouping, during interviews, all participants offered rich descriptions of their perceived preparedness, expectations for college-level writing, and information about their writerly selves. Each participant talked to me about the kinds of writing they prefer, what they believe their strengths and weaknesses to be with writing, and reasons for their reported feelings of preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

In Chapter Three, I begin to zoom in on certain students who illuminated each major finding. It should be noted that while all fifteen participants collectively informed the key findings of this dissertation, I choose to focus on subsets of these students that directly illuminate each major finding from this study and its complexity in subsequent findings chapters. However,

[23] All names are pseudonyms that participants, with the exception of Stewart, chose for themselves.
[24] On the survey, students responded to open-ended questions about how they identified by race and gender. Their responses are reflected in the above table. As a result, some racial identities are not grammatically consistent as, for example, some participants capitalized "White," while others did not. My description of participant age, race, and gender reflects how participants responded on the survey, in their own words.

I want to be clear that all participants, in their own ways, contributed to the overall findings of this chapter, and a brief snapshot of their contributions is offered below in Figure 2.2. The larger circle represents perceived preparedness, as discussed by all 15 participants. Overall, participants discussed writing knowledge they already have, their self-beliefs, and environmental factors that both shape the key findings of this dissertation and also contribute to participants' perceived preparedness. All participants described for me prior writing experiences, self-beliefs, and environmental factors that informed their ideas about their own preparedness. Each participant's response was unique and nuanced, but the ways in which students called on their prior writing experiences, talked about common characteristics of the GLHS environment, and drew on self-beliefs to talk about preparedness and navigating college-level writing, all contributed to key themes and patterns that emerged from this dissertation. Thus, while the self-efficacy survey students initially took was a useful starting to understand their self-efficacy beliefs for completing writing skills and tasks, Figure 2.2 illustrates that their ideas of their overall preparedness is much more nuanced than what they reported on the survey. For example, even if students responded to surveys that resulted in low, middle, or high self-efficacy, Figure 2.2 illustrates the complexities of students' accounts.

Figure 2.2: Snapshot of Participants' Contributions to Findings



I found that the visual chart above also enabled me to show the ways in which quantitative data or existing research does not illustrate the nuanced ways participants are thinking about preparedness. For instance, notice in the chart above that Charlotte is listed in all

aspects of the chart, even though she reported lower self-efficacy levels on the survey. In some ways, participants shared information that aligned with the ways they reported their self-efficacy beliefs on the initial survey. For example, during interviews, Frank and Tangerine, in the lower self-efficacy group, expressed less confidence in their ability to write at the college level, compared to their peers, while participants in the higher self-efficacy group, like Stewart, Emma, Swimmer, Rosy, and Sarah all expressed confidence to do well at the college-level. At the same time, some participants, especially in the low and middle self-efficacy groups, complicated their survey responses by expressing more confidence to do well at the college level during their interviews. Regardless of their levels of certainty to complete writing skills and tasks, most participants reflected on prior experiences they believed prepared them for college-level writing or looked ahead to reflect on how they would navigate college-level writing. Their reflections inform my findings that consider the strategies, developing knowledge, and writerly independence many participants seemed to be demonstrating—all of which suggested a more nuanced idea of what preparedness can look like.

Data Collection

Interviews: The focal point of the dissertation study

The fifteen students initially selected for this study all completed the first and second interviews, which occurred September-December 2016. Each student was enrolled in one of the two sections of Literature and Composition courses that Mrs. Gerard offered during the 206-2017 academic year. Participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms. Only one student, Stewart, said he did not have a preference for his pseudonym, so I chose it for him.

The First Set of Interviews

The first set of interviews took place October-November 2016. The first interview protocol prompted students to reflect on their writing experiences, talk about themselves as writers, and what, according to them, makes writing good. Students were asked to reflect on their prior writing experiences and articulate in their responses how they see themselves as writers. SCT guided my approach to interview design because of its attention to how individuals engage with information from environmental factors to establish their own thoughts and beliefs. The first set of interviews was therefore an opportunity for me to learn from student participants as they

voiced their thoughts and beliefs about how their writing experiences have informed their expectations and perceived preparedness for college-level writing. I asked students to reflect in this way so they could focus their thinking on what they have come to know about writing and the writing experiences they have encountered up to this point. This exercise served as a way for students to focus on their writing experiences, and then use what they have reported about their writing experiences as a touchstone to talk about their expectations for college writing and their self-beliefs for their preparedness to write at the college level.

Once students engaged in reflection about writing experiences and who or what has influenced what they currently know about writing, more interview questions prompted students to talk about what they know about college writing and whether they believe they are prepared for college writing. Because I sought to understand the sources of knowledge (Bandura, 1986) that influence students' perceptions of preparedness and expectations for college writing, students were asked to discuss who and what have informed their ideas about college writing in and outside of school. Students were also asked to discuss what they've learned about college writing from their peers, teachers, and family members. Students were thus prompted to report their perceptions, including their perceived self-efficacy, about their preparedness to write at the college level based on their interactions, observations, and direct experiences with writing (see Appendix F for a document that aligns key factors of this study's theoretical framework with interview questions).

During the interview, I asked students to look at specific results from the survey they each completed. I identified items for which students indicated low and high levels of confidence and asked students why they feel "not confident at all" or "totally confident" to perform the identified items or tasks, which provided more information about students' perceived preparedness to write at the college level. While we looked at the student's survey results, I asked students to think aloud about the survey items at hand. For instance, if a participant noted on the survey low levels of confidence in their ability to be successful at writing at the college level, I was able to ask the participant why they responded the way they did. Asking participants to think out loud was useful for this study as participants were able to call upon something tangible (e.g. their survey item responses) and respond with more ease and confidence to the question posed as they were able to have their responses right in front of them. Furthermore, asking students to talk about why they indicated a certain level of confidence for particular items

on the self-efficacy scales provided more detail about potential underlying sources that influence students' self-efficacy to perform certain writing skills and tasks. Ultimately, asking students to think out loud and to perform tasks while they were interviewed was useful for engaging the student, anchoring their thinking with a particular task at hand, and clarifying and contextualizing participant responses in interviews.

Finally, I asked participants to "think ahead" to college-level writing, and imagine what college writing will be like when they get to college. Participants were also asked to consider what they believe to be different between high school and college writing and why they have those beliefs. Concluding with this question about similarities and differences served as a way to invite college-bound students to enter the conversation about their transition and highlight what they want to know about what is expected of them as they transition into college writing.

The Second Set of Interviews

The second set of interviews took place during November-December 2016. This set of interviews largely served as a follow-up interview to address any information that has emerged over the course of the study or clarifications about initial interview responses. The follow up element of the second set of interviews served as a useful member checking tool to make sure I honored all voices (Hatch, 2002). Meeting a second time also provided another opportunity to reify trust between myself and the participants.

During the second interview, students were also asked to perform another think aloud protocol and look at a series of assignments common to a college first year writing course. As noted earlier in this methods section, I acknowledge that college writing is not universally defined. However, college writing programs often design and implement curriculum with the goal of prompting students to engage with academic writing in various campus contexts. For example, the University of Michigan English Department Writing Program (EDWP) notes on its website, "The goal of the First-Year Writing Requirement is to prepare students for the type of writing most often assigned and valued in University courses." The assignment examples provided by U-M first year writing instructors are informed by EDWP curricular goals, which are conversant with goals from the *WPA Outcomes* and *The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing.* These goals for students include developing critical reading, writing, and thinking skills, as well as demonstrating rhetorical knowledge. Each assignment represents

specific learning goals for first year writing such as producing complex, analytic, and well-supported arguments (assignment 1), developing strategies for reflection on the process of writing (assignment 2), and analyzing and synthesizing complex texts (assignment 3). The documents have been anonymized to maintain confidentially (see Appendix C). The assignment examples were used to engage students in conversation and used as a prompt to better understand students' expectations for college-level writing.

During the second set of interviews, when I asked students to think aloud about the provided writing assignment examples, I was explicit in my overview of the assignment examples and emphasized to students that these assignment examples did not represent writing at *all* colleges, but represent examples of how writing can be assigned at one particular, four-year public university. As students discussed the provided assignment examples with me, I asked students how these assignments met or departed from their expectations for what they believe college-level writing will be like. A major question posed in this dissertation study asks what expectations college-bound students have for college-level writing. Asking students to talk about whether they could complete the provided assignment examples created space for students to articulate their perceived expectations for college-level writing and allowed them to compare and contrast their own ideas about college-level writing to the examples that were in front of them.

Additionally, I asked all the students to read the assignment prompts out loud, if they felt comfortable doing so. As participants read and thought aloud , students were able to pause and reflect about whether they could complete the assignment. I also asked students to talk about terminology in the assignment that was familiar or unfamiliar to them. I wanted to ask students to identify familiar and unfamiliar terms on the college writing assignment prompts in hopes that participants would highlight similarities and differences between high school and college-level writing to potentially illuminate high school writing experiences and inform the ways in which educators design writing curriculum to best facilitate student transition from high school to college writing.

Writing Task during Interview 2

Serving as part of the last question for the second set of interviews, participants were asked to complete a writing task: "What do you think it means to be prepared for college-level

writing?" The task-oriented question was posed as a way for participants to think through the question in writing and develop their response by "talking it out" with me. The writing task also served as way to for participants to reflect on what we had talked about regarding their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. In order to complete this writing task, I asked all students to briefly consider what we had talked about together, over the course of this study, and write a brief paragraph about what they believed it meant to be prepared for college-level writing. There was no length requirement and students could take all the time they needed to write. However, most students wrote at least one paragraph, and at most, two paragraphs. Additionally, most students took no more than five minutes to write their responses. After approximately five minutes, I asked participants to summarize what they wrote and talk to me about whether they believed they fit their written description of preparedness. Both written and verbal responses about preparedness for college-level writing at the conclusion of this interview addressed participants' self-perceptions as well as their general impressions of what it means to be prepared to write at the college level. These responses provided rich data about college-bound student perceptions and add a new collection of voices to current conversations about student preparedness for college-level writing.

Data Analysis

Transitioning from data collection to initial stages of coding

Because I wanted to give space to my participants' voices, my coding process was conducted in the spirit of grounded theory in order to stay close to the data, using a combination of initial, open, and focused coding methods.[25] In part, my coding and analysis process was guided by thematic analysis as the initial stage of coding was grounded in my research questions and theoretical framework. Borrowing analysis approaches from grounded theory prompted me to conduct a systematic, gradual process that involved transcription of interviews, composing memos in response to interviews and student writing and initial coding. Elements of grounded theory also created space to iteratively engage with the data. By adapting coding and analysis approaches from grounded theory, I kept in mind, during my analysis process, my organizational framework, which was shaped by research questions and theoretical framework, but also

[25] Grounded theory is a systematic research approach through which conceptual categories emerge from the process of practicing reflective and iterative methods. See works from Glaser and Strauss (1967) or Charmaz 2006) for some useful overviews and methods.

remained open to new discoveries, themes, and patterns that emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2006).

While collecting data and reviewing the transcripts, I kept in mind an organizational framework while moving through initial coding, thought processing, and the memo-ing process (Maxwell, 2013).[26] The organizational framework was developed from this study's research questions and Bandura's underlying sources of self-efficacy. The organizational framework includes the following concepts listed in table 2.2 that I believed were important to remember and consider in the beginning stages of coding and analyzing data:

[26] For the sake of clarity, I'm using the term "organizational framework" in place of Maxwell's (2013) term "organizational categories". I found using Maxwell's original term in my initial drafting of this chapter became confusing when I began to discuss categories that later emerged from the coding process. The organizational framework as informed Maxwell are broad ideas that I used to organize my ideas and thinking when I began data collection and the initial stages of the coding process. The organizational framework was not used with the intention of using a pre-imposed analysis. Rather, the organizational framework was used to organize ideas and iteratively keep my research questions and theoretical framework in mind while collecting data and then coding and analyzing the data.

Table 2.2 Organizational Framework

Concepts derived from Bandura's (1986) underlying sources of self-efficacy:	**Concepts derived from research questions:**
● Mastery experience ● Vicarious experience ● Social persuasion ● Physiological state	● Capability ● Differences between high school and college writing ● Influencing sources of information: 1. Enactive or direct experience 2. Symbolic sources of information, which includes meaning-making of environmental cues and 3. Vicarious or observational learning (from Bandura's SCT, 1986) ● Expectations for college writing ● Preparedness for college writing

The concepts included in the above organizational framework did not all necessarily become codes or categories. Still, by using the noted organizational framework during data collection and in the initial stages of coding and memo-ing, I was able to keep my research questions in mind and draw connections between the prior writing experiences students report, their self-efficacy to perform college-level writing skills and tasks, and their self-beliefs about preparedness to write at the college level. Keeping these connections in mind was a useful way to transition from data collection to analysis. Writing memos, for instance, was helpful to move from conducting interviews into the analysis process. Furthermore, once I started the coding process keeping in mind the organizational framework helped me to develop new codes, identify patterns and themes in the data, and then create categories that ultimately emerged from focused codes. (Maxwell, 2015).

To begin coding and analyzing my interview data, I dedicated time to thoroughly and carefully read and reread all of the transcribed interviews. During the reading process, I underlined and jotted notes by any words, phrases, sentences, or sections that shed light on or

was relevant to my research questions. After reading through the transcripts and jotting notes, I made note of my general impressions through memo-ing and established an initial set of codes. I then began a new stage of manually coding transcriptions from both the first and second sets of interviews. Manually coding before using an electronic software to code was an important part of the coding stage because it prompted me to garner more control over my data and delve further into the interviews after reading through them more cohesively and breaking the interviews down with electronic software (Saldana, 2009). I manually coded more than half of the interviews before garnering a sense of my initial codes. Charmaz (2006) explains that establishing initial codes and developing codes from that point is a useful way to stay close to the data. In the early stages of data analysis, I used initial codes as tools to identify themes and patterns in the data and then establish categories to apply to my codes (Charmaz, 2006). Part of initial coding process also involved descriptive codes that helped me to stay close to the organizational categories and research questions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). This process also helped me to develop a final codebook that guided my initial and focused coding, and then my analysis of the coded data (see Appendix E for the detailed codebook).

Focused Codes and Categories

Through the process of deciding which were the most important and useful codes for this study, categories emerged by grouping these codes together. Practicing the different stages from using preliminary organizational categories to applying focused codes and categories for data analysis prompted me to recursively stay close to the data. Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2013) emphasize the value of illuminating participants' "lived experience" in qualitative research. For the present study, using the described coding process allowed me to deepen my understanding and explanation of college-bound students' self-beliefs about their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. In later stages of analysis, I used focused coding that determined which codes to use for analyzing and clarifying meaning. Therefore, some initial codes were preserved in this process, while others were discarded. Especially after manually coding, my codebook was revised to include twenty-four codes that were grouped into six different categories. Like the organizational categories noted above, these codes and categories were also developed with my research questions in mind.

During the final stages of coding, I imported the interview transcripts and written responses into Nvivo, a qualitative software program. Once all my codes from the codebook were also added to Nvivo, I used the software to code the documents. After coding in Nvivo, I ran multiple queries to identify trends across interview transcripts and written responses from students. In these queries, I sought to better understand connections between various codes. For example, I ran a query to determine any relationship between the four codes "sources of self-efficacy to write at the college level," "Performance or mastery experience," "Prior writing experiences in courses," and "Prior writing experiences in school." This query allowed me to compare the underlying sources that contributed to students' perceived self-efficacy and determine any patterns within that coded data. It should also be noted that while I aimed to identify trends and patterns in the data, I did not discount data that did not seem to fit in that data. In fact, any outliers or differences in the data re-emphasized the importance of identifying nuances of student experiences, some of which are addressed in the findings chapters of this dissertation.

The analysis of interviews and written responses was a reflexive process. After running queries, I wrote memos of what I was seeing as trends or patterns in the data. In revisiting the data and running queries to determine how codes intersected or overlapped, I developed ideas about what themes were most interesting and relevant to my research questions that could relay the stories of my participants' experiences and their perceived self-efficacy and expectations for college-level writing.

Research Ethics

Validity

In order to bolster the validity and lessen researcher biases in this dissertation study, I employed multiple research approaches including surveying students at GLHS, conducting multiple interviews, collecting writing samples, and making frequent visits to both AP sections during the fall semester of 2016. For my dissertation study, the interviews were designed in such a way that participants could have a conversation with me, as a researcher, teacher, and learner to tell their stories so that we are all "dialogically and discursively engaged…in making meaning and formulating interpretations of their experiences" (Selfe and Hawisher, 2012, p. 39). On that same note, while I never completely shed my "outsider" role as researcher, I made clear to

participants that it is they who are allowing me to enter their worlds and learn from them about their writing experiences and their ideas about what college writing entails. As noted above, students were also asked to write a response about what they believe preparedness to write at the college level means to them. With the writing participants provided about preparedness during the second interview, I was able to talk to participants about their writing and push their thinking about whether they believe they meet the criteria they described in their writing. Then, outside of the interviews, I examined how the participants talked about their preparedness for college-level writing through the interviews and how they wrote about it. These various approaches to utilizing the writing sample positively influenced the validity of the evidence I collected.

Furthermore, Hatch (2002) argues that final interviews can serve as a way to member check and provide participants an opportunity to react to initial findings. In addition to the writing task I asked students to complete during the second interview, the follow up questions during the second-interview especially helped me to make sure, through member-checking, that I captured each student voice appropriately. Asking follow-up questions during the second set of interviews also afforded me the opportunity to address potential misunderstanding and obtain clarification. Finally, during the coding and analysis stages of this dissertation study, I used iterative and reflexive processes to stay close to the data and determine patterns and trends across participants' responses. Doing so allowed me to identify not only the patterns and trends, but discrepancies that illuminated nuances between participants' writing experiences as well as their perceived self-efficacy and expectations for college-level writing.

Research Subjectivities and Treatment of Participants

The present study is about people and what they say, and therefore I collected data from people about people (Creswell 87). This, of course, has the potential to raise ethical issues. First, when recruiting participants, I made sure to emphasize, to the participants, that confidentiality would be maintained, and that this research proposal was approved by the University's Office of Research Protections. I obtained informed consent from all participants 18 years of age or older and informed assent from those under 18 as well as consent from their parents (See Appendix D). All participants' personal information was kept confidential and all data from each individual participant was de-identified.

I aimed to build rapport, or a working relationship, with student participants (Hatch, 2002; Maxwell, 2013). As Hatch (2002) suggests, the process of building rapport is necessary so that participants feel comfortable in offering information throughout the study. So, in the recruitment process, I offered my story as former English teacher and a current college writing instructor who wanted to know more about how to best facilitate student transition from high school to college writing. I also became a familiar face in the classroom with frequent visits. While visiting, I observed class happenings, but at times provided feedback to students about their work and participated in whole group class discussions. Mrs. Gerard every now and again asked me about my perspective as a college-level writing instructor when she talked to her students about developing and practicing writing. Before the study began, Mrs. Gerard and I established what I would and would not do in the classroom. Simply being there helped students to become familiar with me and the project I wanted to put forth with their participation. To help students feel comfortable in participating in interviews, I emphasized to students that it is their expertise that will help me learn more in my research. Maxwell (2013) highlights the researcher's experiential knowledge as a valuable component of qualitative research. Still, I wanted to offer my experiential knowledge with a critical eye as I did not want to impose my experience, my role as a researcher, or my role as an outsider on participants and distort local-meaning (Maxwell, 2013, p. 45). Therefore, I offered my experience as a way to encourage participants to participate, but beyond that, I emphasized my willingness to learn from the participants. Thus, the interviews were framed as low-stakes conversations—I often brought treats—in hopes students would feel at ease during the interview and call on information easily accessible and something they feel comfortable talking about.

When both sets of interviews were completed by all participants, I brought donuts to class and shared what I was thinking after experiencing the fall semester with them. I thanked them all for participating in the initial survey and allowing me to "sit in" and gave special thanks to those who participated in the interviews. I emphasized to them the power of their voices and emphasized that their expertise provided rich and important data for my dissertation study.

Limitations

While findings from this study offer implications for the larger transition experience of students from high school to college writing, I acknowledge that this study focuses on one specific population experiencing one moment of that transition—college-bound high school students who

are writing in AP English courses and anticipating the transition. For example, other schools in the region might not have the same resources and their students might not all be college bound. Further, we do not learn from this dissertation how college-bound students' understanding for college writing shifts when they transition into college writing. Nor do we learn about non-AP students anticipating the transition. All of these participants attended a high-performing, well-funded public school and most of these participants had all taken at least one AP course or honors course. Additionally, the make-up of the participant pool for this study was largely white and female. Future research could usefully illuminate how class, race, and gender issues influence students' perceptions of their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

An initial justification for studying AP students as a research sample was that doing so could potentially contribute to the focusing and bounding of the collection of data. Of course, a bounded population could have also created a limitation for this study as a goal of the AP curriculum is often to exempt students from taking college courses like first year writing. Additionally, some students who take AP courses to bypass introductory courses in college, expect that AP courses will leverage their status in the college admissions process, or heighten their cultural capital by broadening their knowledge in content matter (Hansen, p. 16). However, I found that while the population for this study was bounded in the sense that these participants were enrolled in the same AP literature class at the time, and that they all were college-bound, these students took this AP course and other AP or advanced level courses for varying reasons. What is more, AP Lit was the first AP course some of these students had taken. The varying reasons for whether students took AP courses added complexity about preparedness and expectations for college-level writing to the data.[27] Research suggests that AP students show higher levels of perceived self-efficacy, but the factors that contribute to these higher levels are not clear (Bruning et al., 2012; Spear & Flesher, 1989; Zimmerman and & Bandura, 1994). The AP student participants in this study begin to clarify certain factors that do contribute to their perceived self-efficacy for preparedness as well as their expectations for college-level writing.

[27] In my pilot study (see Appendix G for an overview of pilot study), International Baccalaureate (IB) students reported on a survey, similar to the one used in this dissertation study, higher levels of self-efficacy. However, when students were interviewed, they offered caveats to their sense of preparedness for college-level writing. While IB students are not the same as AP students, these students are similar in that they are taking different or advanced coursework: coursework that is sometimes intended for college preparation, which was the case amongst the AP student participants.

This study offers space to consider AP students' perceived self-efficacy and expectations for college-level writing, especially in light of how they are often perceived—as high performing and well-prepared for college. Furthermore, the present study affords the opportunity to learn from AP students the experiences that contribute to their sense of preparedness, which in turn, could complicate the expectation that AP students are by and large better prepared than other students. Even if AP students perceive themselves or are perceived by others as better prepared for college-level writing, it is important to understand what contributes to these perceptions of preparedness and whether AP students' preparedness for college-level writing can be generalized.

Another limitation of this dissertation study is that we do not learn from college students who have already transitioned from high school to college-level writing, nor will the students in this study be followed into college. However, by isolating one moment of transition, this study reveals the ideas college-bound students have about what college-level writing entails, and how they have come to those conclusions through the ways they talk about their writing experiences in interviews. Furthermore, studying one moment of transition, that is otherwise under-researched, could create space for future longitudinal research that follows high school students into college to understand the ways, if any, their perceptions of preparedness for college-level writing shift during the transition. Finally, while one student's experience is not representative of all students' experiences, this study provides a better understanding of college-bound students' expectations for college-level writing and creates space to consider how educators can learn from these students to better facilitate student transition from high school to college writing. The following chapter offers the first key findings from this dissertation study and explores the ways students rhetorically approach their uncertainty about college-level writing.

Chapter Three

Navigating the Uncertainty of College-level Writing with Rhetorical Approaches

Introduction

When I asked participants to talk with me about their expectations for college-level writing, a common response for most was that they did not know what to expect. In fact, participants' uncertainty for college-level writing seemed to also influence their perceived preparedness. For example, when I asked Alice, on a scale of 0-100, how confident she felt that she is prepared to write at the college level, Alice responded, "I think right now probably a 60 or 70…now that I'm getting back into writing I feel ready, but I also feel uncertainty. I don't really know what to expect. Even if I think I'm ready, I'm not really sure even what ready is." Based on her survey results, Alice was in the lower writing self-efficacy group, but even though she placed herself in the lower self-efficacy range on the survey, Alice's statement is noteworthy because she also acknowledges that she cannot assess her readiness for something that she does not fully understand or has not yet experienced.[28] I suggest that Alice's feelings of uncertainty contribute to her sense of unpreparedness, but Alice also notes that, despite those feelings, she "feels ready," which raises a question of what exactly contributes to her confidence that she is prepared for college-level writing.

I also note that some participants, including Alice, talked through their uncertainty, while some also gave attention to components important to any rhetorical situation—audience, context, genre, to name a few. For example, when talking about her expectations for college-level writing, Emma thought of future audience expectations when she said, "It's all about the professor individually. I don't know what that professor's gonna want of me, so I don't really know what to expect yet." In another instance, Rosy thought about the uncertainty of transitioning into any new writing context:

[28] In Chapter Two, I explained that the low-level self-efficacy group included students with the survey scores from the minimum to the 25th percentile. The middle-level group included those with the scores from the 26th to 75th percentile. The high-level group included those with the scores from the 76th to the maximum.

> The difference between high-school level and college level—if you even think about middle school between high school, you still don't know what to expect with writing. Because every single teacher is different. Every class is different. You don't really know what you're gonna get until you're in that situation, and, you work with what you have.

When Alex talked through their expectations for college-level writing, genre was invoked: "The uncertainty of the assignments that I could get makes me nervous, but at the same time I'm just there like, I'm sure I could use my skills to get through it somehow and figure it out eventually." What was also interesting about how some participants talked about their expectations for college-level writing was how they imagined they were going to navigate new writing contexts. Briefly here, both Rosy and Alex offer a caveat to their feelings of uncertainty—even if they are uncertain, they plan to as Rosy says, "work with what you have" or as Alex suggests, "use my skills to get through it somehow and figure it out eventually." I pause here to consider the uncertainty that participants acknowledge about college-level writing as a rhetorical situation with which some participants fully expect to engage. In "Uncertainty as Opportunity," Fredricksen (2014) argues that feelings of uncertainty are a natural part of the learning process and how writers respond is critical for whether they will continue to grow and learn as writers. I extend Fredricksen's argument to consider uncertainty as a rhetorical opportunity, or, an exigence that some participants seem to recognize by acknowledging their uncertainty for what college-level writing could be.

Importantly, participants not only acknowledge their uncertainty, but identify self-beliefs in their ability to address that uncertainty. In Chapter One, I explained that self-beliefs are personal factors—feelings about or judgments of one's self—that can range from beliefs of self-worth to self-efficacy beliefs. In the current chapter, I examine the ways in which participants acknowledged their feelings of vulnerability and moved beyond their feelings of unpreparedness to talk about their confidence in navigating college-level writing. In doing so, they identified self-beliefs such as, adaptability, resiliency, and resourcefulness.[29] I argue that these self-beliefs constitute what I am calling rhetorical approaches to navigate the rhetorical situation of college-level writing. I will explicate this concept in the following section, but briefly here, rhetorical

[29] To identify and discuss some self-beliefs I use words participants used verbatim. For other self-beliefs I name them, based on how participants described them. For instance, in some cases, participants identified their self-beliefs in their ability to, for example, adapt or learn from failure. I use their words to identify the self-beliefs that constitute rhetorical approaches In other cases, students describe their self-beliefs in for example, asking instructors questions or analyzing examples and I identify this self-belief as resourcefulness).

approaches are sensibilities and practices, informed by self-beliefs that enable students to navigate uncertainty. Self-beliefs (feelings/judgments) are the result of what individuals interpret and how they apply information. I also suggest that self-beliefs are inherently rhetorical because individuals draw on their self-beliefs to proactively apply information in certain situations. Further, through the lenses of invention and disposition, two classical canons (and which will also be explicated later in this chapter), we can begin to see how students' self-beliefs—their reported feelings of vulnerability, but also their predicted responses to that vulnerability—mark their future selves as taking uniquely rhetorical stances. In this way, participants' response to vulnerability, as well as their self-beliefs about their adaptability, resiliency, and resourcefulness, become modes of arranging, inventing, and imagining how students might respond to the rhetorical situation of college-level writing. Thus, I offer rhetorical approaches as both a concept that illustrates how participants are imagining themselves capable of navigating their uncertainty and the rhetorical situation of college-level writing, and also a concept that can serve as lens for educators to consider the ways they can support students as they navigate uncertain rhetorical situations, like transitioning into college-level writing.

The rhetorical approaches that participants demonstrate also contribute to their ideas about their perceived preparedness to write at the college level. For example, when students expressed their feelings about their preparedness to write at the college level, they considered that while they may be uncertain about college-level writing or they might experience some initial challenges or failure, they expressed self-beliefs for their ability to for example, adapt to college-level writing and show resiliency. In this chapter, I consider rhetorical approaches that participants take toward college-level writing to help them think about how they will navigate new writing experiences, especially in the midst of their uncertainty. These rhetorical approaches do not necessarily address participants' attention to specific skills or tasks of writing (e.g. writing essays, correct grammar and syntax, organization, etc.). This is not to say that participants in this study discount the importance of knowing and practicing writing skills and tasks, but that a new writing context also requires knowing how to demonstrate rhetorical knowledge of that particular context, which, in turn, requires knowing how to interact appropriately within the context, and understand key characteristics of the context.[30,31] For example, I consider the ways in which

[30] Different from this chapter, Chapter Five will take a closer look at students' attitudes towards actual components and tasks of high school and college-level writing.

participants talk about the interactional components of college classes, whether that is thinking about to whom they are writing as well as to whom they are speaking or engaging. In this chapter, I will examine how three participants—Charlotte, Maya, and Alice—provided verbal and written responses that shed light on the rhetorical approaches to college-level writing they value as important to their writerly selves.[32] What Charlotte, Maya, and Alice value, I suggest, is in line with what many instructors value about their students' learning development, and thus complicates popular and academic discourses that deem students virtually unprepared.

Of all my participants, seven participants represent the first major finding discussed in the current chapter. However, I chose to focus on depth over breadth by focusing on the stories of three participants. I also focus on Charlotte, Maya, and Alice, because I found it remarkable that they reported lower self-efficacy levels on the survey, but expressed more confidence in talking about how to move beyond feelings of uncertainty. Charlotte, Maya, and Alice all acknowledge their uncertainty for what college-level writing will entail, and consequently, acknowledge feelings of vulnerability by suggesting that because they do not know what to expect, they feel unprepared for college. At the same time, Charlotte, Maya, and Alice also act on their vulnerability by reflecting how they believe they will navigate uncertainty. I argue that the self-beliefs participants identify prompt students to actively think about necessary components to the rhetorical situation of college-level writing like interacting with context and audience. Classical rhetoricians like Aristotle define rhetoric as the domain of the probable and contingent that does not necessarily consist of immediate knowledge, but ways of coming to a better understanding of something (Lucaites et al., 1999). The participants highlighted in this chapter similarly recognize a domain—college-level writing—about which they do not have complete knowledge. But, I suggest that they do have some knowledge about college-level writing, along with rhetorical

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[31] In writing studies, it is common that rhetorical moves are theorized and applied to pedagogy to consider how individuals interact with specific writing tasks and situations (see, for example, Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1999; Nystrand, 2006). I take up the concept rhetorical approach in this chapter on a more macro level to consider the ways in which participants are thinking about transitioning into new writing experiences, and not necessarily with the actual act of writing.

[32] As noted in Chapter One, this study considers the writerly selves of participants and how participants' writerly selves influence their perceived preparedness. I conceptualize writerly selves as shaped by varying self-beliefs individuals hold—self-beliefs that can range from beliefs of self-worth to self-efficacy beliefs. In this study, participants identified self-beliefs about how their writerly selves have developed over time, their beliefs about their current writing strengths and weaknesses, and most notably, their self-efficacy beliefs in their writerly selves to successfully write at the college level.

approaches that they believe will help them to come to a better understanding of how to situate themselves in the rhetorical situation of college-level writing.

Embodied in the rhetorical approaches participants demonstrate also is a response to their uncertainty and their feelings of preparedness—their vulnerabilities. Contemporary scholars like Miller (2016) invoke the idea of "productive uncertainty" as inherent to rhetorical situations. Rhetoric is thus necessary to make knowledge from uncertain situations, and I argue that rhetorical approaches serve as participants' strategies to respond to their vulnerabilities. Participants did not use the term rhetorical approaches verbatim, but I argue that rhetorical approaches is a useful concept to consider the knowledge and strategies these participants are already developing in high school to adapt to new and challenging situations. Thus, paradoxically, what might at first look like a lack of mastery, I argue, potentially situates students like Alice, Charlotte, and Maya to be successful writers at the college level.

Further, in Chapter One, I explained that self-efficacy beliefs are developed based on specific contexts and domains. To add, social cognitive and self-efficacy theories view individuals as pro-active and self-reflective rather than simply reacting to environmental forces (Bandura 1986), which provides a similar way of thinking about the rhetorical situation as socially constructed (Miller, 1984). Extending these theoretical perspectives and considering self-efficacy and social cognitive theories in concert with the socially constructed rhetorical situation, I offer rhetorical approaches as a way to bring self-efficacy research and writing studies in conversation together.

Conceptualizing Rhetorical Approaches

As noted above, I conceptualize rhetorical approaches as a capacious concept that primarily encompasses sensibilities and practices, informed by self-belief, that enable participants to navigate the uncertainty of college-level writing. Rhetorical approaches also embody interconnectedness between self-beliefs and modes of arranging, inventing, and imagining how participants might respond to the rhetorical situation of college-level writing. For example, in this chapter, I consider how participants act on their feelings of vulnerability for uncertain rhetorical situations like college-level writing and talk about their self-beliefs to navigate college-level writing I am not suggesting that rhetorical approaches can only include the self-beliefs identified in this chapter, nor do all participants mention the same self-beliefs

consistently. Indeed, I will focus on some self-beliefs more than others (e.g. adaptability) throughout this chapter based on the three participants' attention to them in different ways. I also suggest that these self-beliefs can intersect with each other to contribute to rhetorical approaches for navigating new writing contexts.

Self-beliefs noted by participants seemed important to the ways in which they talked about their writerly selves and what they believed as contributing to their preparedness for college-level writing. So, while Charlotte, Maya, and Alice, for instance, may have demonstrated some vulnerability in not knowing everything about college-level writing or expecting some challenges, they seemed to also respond to their own sense of vulnerability by talking about traits they have that will help them to situate themselves into new college-level writing contexts. Consequently, adaptability seemed to be key for these participants and thus significant to how I am conceptualizing the rhetorical approaches these three participants demonstrated.

I also chose to draw from these particular participants because, when they were initially recruited based on their survey responses, they were grouped into the lower self-efficacy group. Further, it is significant that three of the five participants in the low self-efficacy group expressed confidence in rhetorical approaches that contradicted their initial lower self-efficacy results on the survey. In some ways, these participants expressed less perceived self-efficacy to complete writing skills and tasks at the college level, but the interview data analyzed and highlighted in this chapter, suggests that their self-efficacy levels for college-level writing are not necessarily fixed.[33] Indeed, participants' perceptions of their writerly selves demonstrate a nuanced picture of their perceived preparedness to write at the college level, and departing from their survey responses, indicate higher levels of confidence in their preparedness to write at the college level. Thus, I posit that the examples from the participants offered in this chapter offer a rich and nuanced idea of how preparedness is thought about by the participants, but also how current conversations about preparedness do not include certain self-beliefs that participants identify as

[33] While it is notable that Charlotte, Maya, and Alice were in the lower self-efficacy group, yet expressed higher confidence during their interviews, this is not to say that all students in the lower self-efficacy group only valued rhetorical approaches, or that all students in the higher self-efficacy group did not have these values. Still, the examples offered in this chapter from Charlotte, Maya, and Alice show that self-efficacy in performing discrete writing skills and tasks at the college-level are not the sole marker of what they perceive as preparedness for college-level writing. Furthermore, while these participants value their prior writing experiences, these are experiences that participants fully expect to develop and evolve. The three participants' rhetorical approaches were a striking difference from some of the participants who were in the higher self-efficacy group.

important to their own preparedness (like dealing with vulnerability or practicing adaptability, resiliency, and resourcefulness).

Further, responding to the call for more qualitative work in self-efficacy research (Bruning et al., 2012 & Pajares & Johnson, 1996) for the purpose of exploring how self-efficacy for college-level writing is developed, I suggest that writing self-efficacy involves more than a confidence in one's ability to complete writing skills and tasks, but confidence in one's ability to face new writing contexts, like college-level writing, with rhetorical approaches. Self-efficacy scholarship has generally included future-oriented assessment, and this chapter specifically considers the ways three participants are thinking about their future with college-level writing based on the rhetorical approaches they demonstrate. In fact, in the following section I will also consider how rhetorical theory can provide language for us to further consider how participants are imagining themselves as future college-level writers. At the same time, I suggest that rhetorical approaches are future-oriented, but require an awareness of current self-beliefs and active thinking about how one may need to adapt prior knowledge to new experiences.

The Rhetorical Situation of College-level Writing

My conceptualization of rhetorical approaches also presupposes a rhetorical situation that requires the making of and continual development of knowledge. My thinking draws on rhetorical theory that considers ways in which individuals learn about new rhetorical situations, but also how individuals create a space for themselves by developing and adapting their prior knowledge. To start, Lloyd Bitzer's (1968) early conceptualization of the rhetorical situation demands a response to a given situation (exigence), an audience for the response, and a set of constraints that shape the particular rhetorical situation. While Bitzer's work is decades old, his conceptualization of the rhetorical situation continues to inform and raise more questions for contemporary scholarship. Bitzer's rhetorical situation is hierarchically structured requiring that rhetorical acts stem directly from the situation. Bitzer's rhetorical situation does not consider how individual agency prompts exigence, or, how an individual's self-efficacy beliefs are shaped by the way he or she approaches a rhetorical situation. Later scholars have suggested that exigencies are socially constructed (Vatz, 1973) and a form of social knowledge (Miller, 1984). I draw from both Bitzer and from theorists who responded to and complicated Bitzer's rhetorical situation. For example, Richard E. Vatz (1973) and Kenneth Burke (1951;1969) suggest that

individuals independently interpret and situate themselves in rhetorical situations with a certain amount of agency. It is important to consider not only that participants in this study are expecting to make a transition into a new writing context—or situation—but what they might imagine that writing context to be, based on their prior knowledge, observations they have made, interactions they have had, etc. about college-level writing. For instance, Vatz (1978) posits that the rhetor's response to a given situation is determined by the imagination and the "art" of the rhetor. I will demonstrate how participants in this chapter consider what they believe they are capable of on an individual basis (self-beliefs) in new rhetorical situations, but that they do so with further consideration of what they have learned from others (e.g. peers, siblings, teachers), and how they will interact within new writing contexts when they arrive at college.

In this chapter, I consider how, through rhetorical approaches, these participants are not simply reacting to the expectations of a rhetorical situation or the exigence of transitioning to college without quite knowing what's ahead, but also reflecting on how they will adapt to actively situate themselves in new writing contexts (e.g. attempting to address the exigence—a somewhat unknown—with related knowledge and experience). For instance, Carolyn Miller (1984) conceptualizes the rhetorical situation as a social construct and posits that, "Exigence must be located in the social world, neither in a private perception nor in material circumstance." Ultimately, I draw on contemporary rhetoric that broadens the scope of rhetoric and its purposes. Exigence, for Miller, is social knowledge, and in this chapter, I extend Miller's argument to examine the ways in which students are acting on social knowledge to consider how they will transition into college-level writing, even if they are faced with feelings uncertainty or unpreparedness.

For some participants in this study, an exigence for them seems to be responding to their uncertainty and feelings of preparedness, or making their uncertainty productive. In this chapter, I argue that participants like Charlotte, Maya, and Alice are equipped with rhetorical approaches to navigate the rhetorical situation of college-level writing. Further, these rhetorical approaches not only embody self-beliefs like the ability to respond to vulnerabilities and practice resourcefulness, adaptability, and resiliency, but also participants' capability to imagine themselves as college-level writers. In the following section I consider two foundational components of rhetoric—invention and disposition—that make up the rhetorical approaches participants in this chapter demonstrate.

Finding One's Place in the Rhetorical Situation: Inventio and Dispositio

I want to acknowledge that rhetorical invention and disposition are traditionally understood as methods that help individuals find their place within a rhetorical situation. Because this study focuses on one moment of transition—before participants have actually transitioned into college-level writing—I want to emphasize that we cannot know how the rhetorical approaches I suggest participants in this chapter are demonstrating will play out when participants arrivedat college. However, by considering rhetorical invention and disposition as lenses that constitute rhetorical approaches, we can consider how participants are already developing important strategies that are helping them to imagine themselves finding their place, when self-beliefs become modes of inventing and arranging (disposition) ideas about how they might navigate the rhetorical situation of college through rhetorical approaches. While interviewing participants, even though they may have initially responded with something like, "I don't know what to expect," most participants were still able to talk out loud about what they imagined college-level writing to entail—kinds of writing they might practice, courses in which they might write, interactions they might have with their peers and teachers around writing. In some ways, what students reported about their expectations for college-level writing seemed situation-driven and their exigency was to "figure out" how to situate themselves in that situation. In our conversations, students were actively imagining a rhetorical situation in which they would have to understand and meet certain expectations. I suggest that much of this figuring out and imagining also require attention to what participants believe they are already capable of and what they can imagine themselves doing in the future. In this chapter, I argue that participants are faced with the rhetorical situation of college-level writing and they draw on their self-beliefs to consider how they will situate themselves within that rhetorical situation.

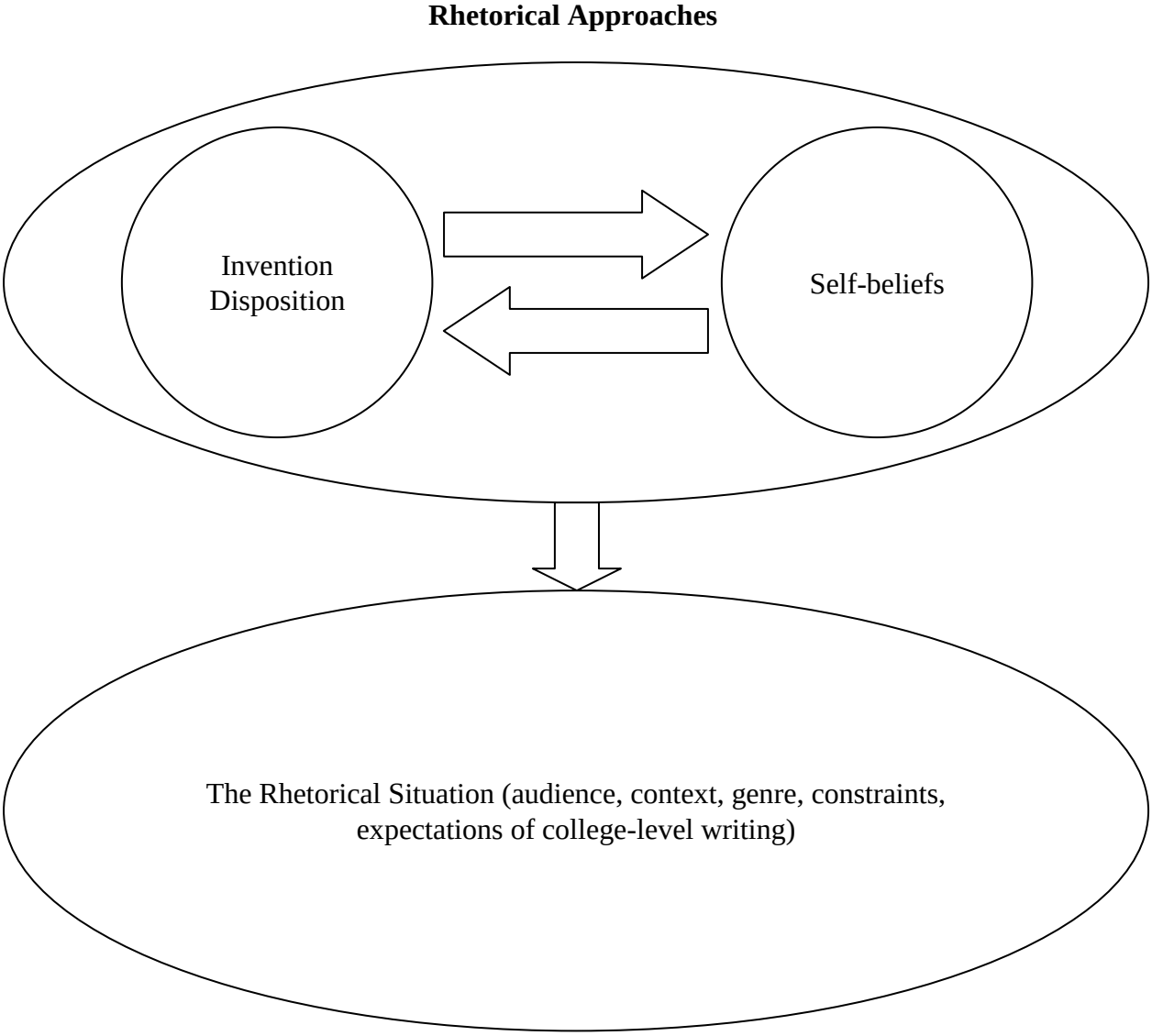
Traditional rhetoric gives us five canons: inventio (invention), dispositio (arrangement), elocutio (style), memoria (memory), and (pronuntiatio) delivery, which are all methods used by rhetors to persuade an audience. Contemporary scholars (e.g. Hawhee, 2002; Miller, 2016) have considered the five canons as useful for rhetorical purposes beyond persuasion, and in this chapter, I consider two of those canons—inventio and dispositio—as part of what constitutes rhetorical approaches for some of these participants. Inventio and dispositio provide language to consider the ways participants are anticipating the transition into college-level writing and

imagining how they will discover and learn about a new rhetorical situation (invention), but also arrange their already developing knowledge to interact within rhetorical situations of college-level writing (disposition).[34] Invention and disposition require individuals to explore, discover, create, and arrange ideas. Consequently, these methods can often be seen as something that happens at the beginning of something. And in some ways, participants are facing the beginning of something new—college-level writing. But I also suggest invention and disposition constitute participants' rhetorical approaches that help them to continually invent and (re) invent their writerly selves in new rhetorical situations.

Rhetorical approaches that include methods of invention prompt participants to consider what they will do and how they will continually reshape toward expertise. Rhetorical approaches that involve disposition prompt participants to arrange and organize what they know about themselves, and consider how this knowledge will help them to engage with new audiences and successfully participate in college-level writing. Part of disposition is also articulating their self-beliefs for what they believe they are capable of at the college level. Together, as Figure 3.1 illustrates below, rhetorical approaches are made up of self-beliefs participants have about themselves to imagine themselves forward, and to develop ideas about how they will draw on their self-beliefs to navigate college-level writing. The inner circles (self-beliefs and invention/disposition) within the larger first circle, which represents rhetorical approaches, are purposefully intersecting within each other to illustrate how self-beliefs can become ways of moving past uncertainty to invent, arrange, and imagine themselves into the rhetorical situation of college-level writing, represented by the second circle in Figure 3.1.Together the relationship between self-beliefs and rhetorical invention and disposition make up the rhetorical approaches that I argue participants demonstrate in order to address their current feelings of vulnerability, but also predict their future responses to that vulnerability. I suggest that when participants imagine themselves in the new rhetorical situation of college-level writing, they are inventing and arranging ideas about how they will effectively navigate college-level writing, while drawing on their self-beliefs to move past uncertainty and actually learn about and eventually find success with writing at the college level.

[34] I will use inventio and invention interchangeably throughout the chapter. I will also use dispositio, disposition, and arrangement interchangeably.

Figure 3.1: Rhetorical approaches and the Rhetorical Situation



In some sense invention and disposition are blurred in that both require participants to imagine themselves forward in a new rhetorical situation. The lines between invention and disposition are not sharply drawn and the two methods can often complement each other, prompting individuals to analyze audiences and developing ideas for how they will engage with their audiences (Enos, 1985; Kontny, 2014; McCroskey, 2015). Returning to Figure 3.1 above, the back and forth arrows between self-beliefs and invention/disposition circles represent the fluid, non-linear ways students are synthesizing what they know about themselves, and then building on that information (self-beliefs) to continually, invent, arrange, and (in)vent and (re)

invent when necessary. Ultimately, rhetorical approaches that embody invention and disposition, I argue, prompt participants in this chapter to take account of the total rhetorical situation of college-level writing, moving beyond their vulnerabilities with consideration for what they know about themselves and what they believe they are capable of doing (self-beliefs), while continually reshaping their knowledge and ideas toward expertise.

Charlotte's Rhetorical Approaches to the Uncertainty of College-level writing: "I'm going in knowing I have so much to improve on."

Debra Hawhee (2002) offers another perspective on invention that is useful to further illustrate the rhetoricity of rhetorical approaches. Hawhee's concept of "invention in the middle" happens when rhetoric itself is reshaped by the rhetor (p. 32). Traditional rhetoric suggests that invention is part of a linear process and always at the beginning of the process and that individuals discover means of persuasion within a particular rhetorical situation. In the teaching of writing, this can mean using strategies like brainstorming, preliminary research, asking questions, etc. And indeed, participants in this chapter are brainstorming or imagining what they will discover in new college-level writing contexts. At the same time, this traditional viewpoint can also convey individuals as "blank slates," and does not account for how they are possibly using invention to build on what they already know or (re)invent themselves to effectively situate themselves within rhetorical situations. This whole dissertation is grounded in the assertion that these participants, not yet at college during the time of this study, are not blank slates. Rather, I want to reconsider fundamental components of traditional rhetoric and suggest that participants have long been developing and enacting rhetorical approaches that embody means of invention and disposition and other self-beliefs like adaptability, resiliency, or resourcefulness, to name a few.

Take for instance, Charlotte, who, when I asked her during her first interview, on a scale of 0-100, how confident she felt that she was prepared to write at the college level, she responded with "somewhere in the middle of preparedness—a 50." She went on to explain:

> I know that's like not what you wanna hear. I feel like you wanna hear a more definite answer. I feel like I'm more confident to like kind of absorb myself in like the college style of writing. I'm confident in like I guess my first few failures. Not like, "Okay, I'm going and knowing I'm going to fail." Like "I'm going in

knowing that, like, I have so much to improve on." I feel like I'm confident in that fact.

Charlotte demonstrates a rhetorical approach to the possibility of failure at college-level writing by acknowledging that she needs to first, "absorb" the context of college-level writing. I argue that this process of absorbing college-level writing is rhetorical in nature because Charlotte acknowledges a specific rhetorical situation—writing at the college-level—and imagines how she will situate herself in and adapt to this new rhetorical situation. I suggest that Charlotte's use of absorb suggests that she is looking outward, with a consideration for audience, and a need to "absorb herself in the college style of writing" and therefore learn how to identify with and practice that style herself.

I further argue that participants are enacting invention through rhetorical approaches in the sense that invention involves, not just a discovery of something new, but as Hahwee suggests, a process of looking outward to discover ways of participating, but also to continually (re)invent one's self, based on what individuals learn about new rhetorical situations. In-between-invention is a way for participants to invent and also be invented by themselves and others. Charlotte's response and her need to absorb is significant to how Charlotte believes she will navigate the uncertainty of writing and her overall preparedness. So while Charlotte might place herself "somewhere in the middle of preparedness," rhetorical approaches that embody vulnerability (my first few failures) and adaptability (absorb myself) also demonstrate a means of invention (through absorbing herself and learning from failure to improve) if she wants to effectively interact with that new context."

Part of absorbing college-level writing, as Charlotte further explains, also means learning the expectations of a new writing context, but also learning from possible mistakes. Considering oneself as an expert before even arriving to college-level writing can be, Sommers and Saltz posit, detrimental to first-year college students' writing experiences. As will be highlighted in Chapter Four, some participants, without even having experienced college-level writing, expressed resounding certainty about what to expect at the college level and even more certainty that they will be successful. Different from demonstrating what seems to be more of a fixed sense of preparedness, Charlotte, in this moment, talks about her preparedness in a way that she cannot give a "definite answer," but can at least say that she expects she will be able to adapt and eventually find success with college-level writing. In a sense, her preparedness is malleable, and

consequently, Charlotte offers a nuanced and possibly more flexible and productive way to think about her future writing experiences. When Charlotte posits, "I'm going in knowing that like I have so much to improve on," I suggest that Charlotte, as she acknowledges a sense of vulnerability for possible failure, also recognizes that she is capable of perhaps, first failing, but then improving. Thus, she exerts a sense of rhetorical awareness to engage with a new context, knowing that college-level writing will be different from her previous experiences, even if she does not know exactly how it will be different. In order to learn about that new context, however, it will be up to Charlotte to learn from the experts within that context, figure out the expectations of her audience, and learn from mistakes—what works and what does not work—along the way.

Charlotte's rhetorical approach to absorb the style of college-level writing also resembles disposition. Traditional rhetoric holds that individuals use dispositio as a method to engage with and persuade audiences (e.g. What arrangement of ideas will persuade an audience? Who is my audience and how can I appeal to them? What language will be most useful to appeal to a given audience?). I suggest that Charlotte's notion of absorbing resembles disposition in that through absorbing the style of college-level writing, Charlotte is preparing herself to ask questions of audience and the language and expectations of college-level writing. Participants in this chapter show that they are thinking about future audiences (e.g. college instructors) and ways in which they will interact with them and successfully appeal to a college-level writing audience. To further this idea, I offer another example from Charlotte, who even in her uncertainty, Charlotte imagines she will be able to seek guidance from her college instructors (her audience) and suggests she will actively engage with them to understand how she can improve her writing:

> I feel like I would talk to the person who graded it because like always like your professor doesn't grade it, right? It's like sometimes the TAs [Teaching Assistants] or something. I would talk to the person who graded it or like maybe if I had someone I knew in that class like talk to them. Just, like, use that paper to, like, make my next one better, stuff like that. I mean, it's like up to me to learn how to do it.

While Charlotte appears at first to be focused on grades and who will grade her work at college, she also seems to be thinking beyond the proverbial college instructor as her audience. As Charlotte imagines new college-level writing contexts, she expresses rhetorical considerations for audience expectations and the context in which she images she will be writing. By illustrating her self-beliefs in her ability to absorb the college style of writing and the ways in which she

seems to be already engaging in invention and disposition to eventually engage with a college-level audience, I argue that Charlotte is practicing rhetorical approaches. Through her reflections about who might grade her work, Charlotte also points to her ability to question, to request feedback, and ultimately learn from college instructor (whether they will be a college professor or TA). Embodied in the rhetorical approach is a traditional sense of dispositio through which Charlotte is figuring out who she needs to talk to and ask questions of in order to understand how, for example, she can do better on the next paper. Even though Charlotte knows she has more to learn, she anticipates using specific resources, like the feedback and knowledge of her instructors, to help her learn the language of the context. Ultimately, Charlotte seems to understand here that interaction with and learning from her writing instructors at the college level—her audience—is important.

Charlotte might be concerned about the uncertainty of college-level writing, but when she suggests she will "talk to the person who grade[s]" her work, Charlotte also seems to be aware of what teaching structures might look like in that context. Imagining professors or TAs who will assess her writing—"your professor doesn't grade it, right? It's like sometimes the TAs or something"—Charlotte demonstrates an awareness of her future audiences and attention to how she will work to eventually meet audience expectations. Through her audience awareness and how she might interact with instructors at the college level, Charlotte also demonstrates a self-belief in her ability to take responsibility for her learning to address uncertainty of college-level writing, and ultimately, to be successful, even if she at first experiences failure. By explaining that she would take it upon herself to seek out instructors who can help her improve her writing, Charlotte suggests that she is willing to also move beyond feelings of vulnerability and failure and take responsibility for her writing experiences. Beyond traditional rhetoric's dispositio of arranging ideas to engage with and persuade an audience, I want to also consider another way of thinking about dispositio, which I will refer to as disposition. Disposition allows individuals to take stock of the world, to learn the language of the world, and to interact with specific audiences, but I argue that disposition also serves as an important part of these participants' rhetorical approaches not just for finding one's self in the world, but knowing how to do that based on what they already know about themselves. For instance, in the following section, I examine how Maya demonstrates rhetorical approaches that require recognizing what she does

not know, but asserting what she does know about herself and how her self-beliefs constitute the rhetorical approaches she demonstrates.

Maya's rhetorical approaches to college-level writing: "I feel like that resilience feeds into my idea that I can learn and adapt."

Maya shared similar sentiments of uncertainty, to that of other participants, for college-level writing, which possibly contributed to her initial survey results. At the same time, Maya further explained that she believed she was ready to learn the process of college-level writing and eventually adapt to and be successful with college-level writing. When she explained to me why she believed her confidence level fell around a 60-70, on a scale of 0-100, Maya posited:

> I put it on a higher level, not necessarily because I think I can write at a college level, but I have faith in my ability to adapt and learn and change. I have reservations about it, because I'm afraid that it could be so drastically different that I can't—it's just shocking to me. I don't really think—I don't know. I just think I can do it. I think I'll have challenges, like everyone else.

Maya makes it clear that the uncertainty of college-level writing plays a role in her perceived preparedness to write at the college level, and in Chapter Five, we will learn more about what Maya and other participants believe could be "so drastically different" between high school and college-level writing. For now, Maya also demonstrates feelings of vulnerability when she says, "I have reservations about it because I'm afraid that it could be so drastically different." Maya counters her feelings of vulnerability by reminding herself, in the same statement above, that she knows, because of her self-beliefs in her ability to "adapt and learn and change," that she can face the uncertainty and navigate possible challenges ahead. By expressing "faith in [her] ability to adapt and learn and change," I suggest Maya's faith can also be viewed as a self-belief, and when I asked her to elaborate on where she thinks this faith in herself comes from, Maya reflected:

> I think it comes not necessarily from a writing point, but just overall as a student. I think I've come a long way. I struggled with school a lot when I was in elementary school. I couldn't really read…When I was in first grade I struggled with reading. I was in a different class to help with that. I've come to the point where I can read at higher levels. I don't know. That changed, that I've seen,

> happen over the years. Being in advanced honors classes and AP classes and stuff. I've been able to hold my own and do well. I feel like that resilience feeds into my idea that I can learn and adapt.

Maya's point that her faith is derived from her overall experience as a student is significant, as her reflection supports my argument that there is much more to preparedness for college-level writing than mastering writing skills and tasks. What Maya has overcome on her own is important to her, but she also points to her classroom experiences, ranging from the "different class" to help with her reading to the honors and AP classes that have further shaped her experiences. Maya may have initially struggled, but that struggle resulted in success, and it seems Maya keeps in mind how she persevered and the resources that were in place to support her as she looks ahead to college-level writing.

By using the word resiliency, Maya demonstrates a self-belief that suggests she believes she is capable of overcoming challenges and learning from failure. I suggest that Maya's attention to her resilience also indicates how she believes she will continue to navigate uncertainty, and ultimately, new rhetorical situations like college-level writing. Maya concludes that "resilience feeds into [her] idea that [she] can learn and adapt." I posit that Maya's self-beliefs in her ability to be resilient and to learn more about and adapt to college-level writing interact with each other to shape rhetorical approaches toward college-level writing. Importantly, just as Maya suggests that her resiliency has developed over time, I also suggest that Maya's rhetorical approaches have been continually developed over time. So, even if Maya is "afraid that college-level writing could be so drastically different" than high school writing, she is already developing and will continue to develop rhetorical approaches as she transitions into new rhetorical situations of college-level writing.

In one way, Maya seems to recognize an already existing rhetorical situation for which she has to invent ways of responding the rhetorical situation, and that might be similar to Bitzer's original conception—that rhetorical situations act on individuals causing them to react. In another way, Maya is already imagining that she will have to draw on her resilient capabilities to navigate college-level writing. She has an expectation of inventing and reinventing, or invention in between, but also indicates that her capability to be resilient is crucial to her ability to adapt and change. Maya, by recognizing a self-belief in her resiliency as part of her writerly self, also seems to demonstrate contemporary conceptualizations of the rhetorical situation that allow

room for her to not change according to the situation, but adapt to what she already knows about writing, interact within the rhetorical situation and creates her own success by developing her self-beliefs.

During her first interview, Maya continued to acknowledge her uncertainty of college-level writing, but explained how she expects her experiences to unfold:

> I think I can write at a proficient level, but I'm not sure—I don't know how to compare myself to college because I've never been able to get feedback like that or understand that. Except for my brother, cuz my brother's told me some things. I think I have the ability to change myself—or not change myself, but to learn and adapt to the environment. I don't think the first—I feel like the first couple essays might not be the best, and I won't do as well as I want, but I will be able to learn and adapt and work at that level.

Especially important, Maya holds onto what she values about her writerly self when she corrects herself while saying, "I think I have the ability to change myself—or not change myself, but to learn and adapt to the environment." Turning again to Hawee, invention-in-the-middle suggests a scenario of "I invent and am invented by myself and others" (p. 17). The aim for Maya is not to change or lose her writerly self in new writing contexts, but adjust, revise, and continually develop. I pause here briefly to draw attention to writing processes which can involve large overhauls or revision, the kernel of the initial idea, as well as the writer's voice importantly remains. On a more macro level, Maya seems to be aiming to do the same thing through the rhetorical approaches she will practice at college—learning new things about writing, getting better at writing—reinventing her writerly self, according to the expectations of the rhetorical situation—but holding onto what she believes is and has always been important to her writing development.

Maya also calls on similar strategies that, I suggest, contribute to her rhetorical approaches to college-level writing. Between vicariously learning from her brother's experiences and the writing experiences she has already encountered, Maya indicates here that she is already developing rhetorical approaches that illustrate adaptability and a sense of responsibility for her learning. Furthermore, Maya does not so much credit her writing development and expectations for eventual success to other influences like her teachers, but more to her own abilities that she believes she has developed over time. These qualities could be what self-efficacy research

identifies as mastery experience, another underlying source of self-efficacy in which individuals' encounters with both successes and failure can affect self-efficacy levels in positive and negative ways (Bandura, 1994). Interestingly, if individuals only experience overwhelming success, they might expect more success that comes easily and quickly, but then be discouraged by failure. Alternatively, those who encounter setbacks and use those moments as learning experiences to revise and persist likely develop higher levels of self-efficacy if they know they can eventually be successful with sustained effort (Bandura, 1994). I suggest that the sustained effort Maya intends to put forth as she navigates a new rhetorical situation like college-level writing also requires her to, as she suggests, demonstrate adaptability.

In the spirit of traditional dispositio as a method to arrange and organize ideas, I suggest that Maya is engaging in imaging how she will "arrange" her prior capabilities to what a new rhetorical situation like college-level writing requires. Further, by expressing that, "I feel like the first couple essays might not be the bests, and I won't do as well as I want, but I will be able to learn and adapt and work at that level," Maya demonstrates a rhetorical approach that embodies a relationship between her self-belief in her abilities to adapt and learn from the process and rhetorical disposition through which Maya could possibly organize ideas about how she will navigate the new rhetorical situation of college-level writing. Her initial arraignment or disposition for engaging with the new rhetorical situation is to engage in challenging moments (essay performance), but learn how to adapt to what is expected of her. Thus, her self-beliefs become ways of arranging her ideas about what she is capable of, but also imagining herself moving beyond her uncertainty and actually interacting within the new rhetorical situation of college-level writing.

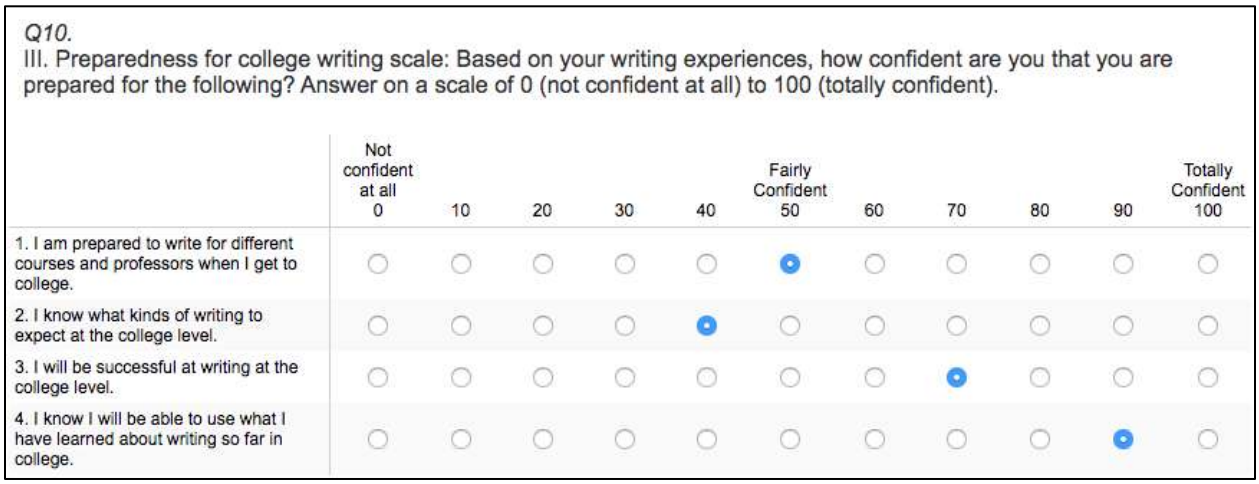
As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, some participants acknowledge that they will have to do some "figuring out" when they arrive at college. Similar to Charlotte and Alice, Maya acknowledges feelings of vulnerability for further college-level writing experiences because she does not know what to expect. However, I suggest that her expressions of adaptability and resiliency constitute the rhetorical approaches that account for ambiguous expectations of a new rhetorical situation, or her uncertainty of college-level writing. In other words, the rhetorical approaches Maya demonstrates here suggest that she is not only willing to adapt to new situations, but also take responsibility for her learning while building on the experiences she has already had. I also draw attention to Maya's use of "proficient" to describe her level of

performance at the college level. By using the term, Maya suggests that she has garnered a sound amount of experience and developed expertise to feel prepared for college-level writing. Also wrapped up in the use of this term is her aspiration to learn even more and perhaps be more than proficient at writing. The developmental arch that Maya illustrates a rhetorical approach to new writing contexts through which Maya is, just like Charlotte, "ready to learn the process," and continue to improve.

Alice's "toolbox" of prior knowledge and ability to adapt to college-level writing

When I first reviewed Alice's survey responses, I was particularly struck by her responses to the items on the third subscale about students' confidence in their preparedness to write at the college level. For example, Alice indicated a higher level of confidence to use what she had learned about writing so far at the college level. The rest of the items did not match that level of confidence, however, and she indicated less confidence that she would be successful at writing at the college level, that she knew what kinds of writing to expect at the college level, and that she was prepared to write for different courses and professors at the college level.

Figure 3.2: Participant Survey Response



Q10.
III. Preparedness for college writing scale: Based on your writing experiences, how confident are you that you are prepared for the following? Answer on a scale of 0 (not confident at all) to 100 (totally confident).

	Not confident at all 0	10	20	30	40	Fairly Confident 50	60	70	80	90	Totally Confident 100
1. I am prepared to write for different courses and professors when I get to college.	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○
2. I know what kinds of writing to expect at the college level.	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. I will be successful at writing at the college level.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○
4. I know I will be able to use what I have learned about writing so far in college.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○

The discrepancies Alice indicated between the four items were a point of conversation for us during her first interview, and she explained her thinking for her survey responses:

> I know that everything that I've learned so far will be useful. With the other ones [survey items], it's like everything that I learned so far I know that's definitely not going to be everything that I need 'cause you go to college to learn more. That's

> why I was feeling like unsure because but I know I will be able to adapt quickly and that's why I was moderately—fairly confident about being able to do well because—from like being able to do well in my classes here, I know that I should be able to learn quickly and figure things out.

I suggest here that Alice is responding to "feeling unsure" by asserting her self-belief in her ability to "adapt quickly." Responding to her uncertainty prompts her to consider what she believes she is already capable of, which becomes a way of imagining herself as part of the new rhetorical situation of college-level writing, primed to learn more. That, according to Alice, is the purpose of college, "to learn more." Here, Alice believes that what she has learned in one context has been important and will likely be important to her writing development as she moves on, but in thinking about the purpose of college, Alice's expectation that she might not use everything she has already learned and that she expects to learn more suggests an understanding that new writing experiences in college might require different expectations. Part of Alice's self-belief in her ability to adapt might also have to do with the certainty she experiences in her ability "to learn quickly and figure things out." Alice's elaboration below provides insight as to how she envisions her ability to adapt at the college-level will play out:

> I think that I will be able to adapt quickly because of the way I was taught by my teachers, but there's still the uncertainty because I don't know exactly what I need to be a college writer. I think what I have now for skill and like my toolbox, I think those will be helpful, but not only just basically but also to adapting to different ways that I need to be able to write.

While Alice credits some of her sense of preparedness to how her teachers have supported her, Alice demonstrates a rhetorical approach to uncertainty when she considers how she will move forward equipped with a toolbox of prior knowledge, but also an expectation that she will need to revise and adapt her toolbox to new situations along the way.[35] The idea that Alice might actually be more prepared than what she first indicated on her survey responses based on the confidence she expressed in her prior knowledge about writing and ability to adapt that

[35] Interestingly, a quick google search of the terms rhetorical and toolbox surfaces a variety of resources for teaching and using the "rhetorical toolbox" in Advanced Placement Language and Composition. Alice did not take this course, nor did she ever note that she picked up the term "toolbox" from a specific course or learning experience. Additionally, no other participant used that term in conversations with me. Still, I make note of it here for future research that might take up concepts used in AP courses that are meant to develop writing skills and ultimately, help students prepare for college-level writing.

knowledge also embodies another canon of the rhetorical tradition: invention. The rhetorical tradition typically identifies invention as ways that a rhetor discoveries or generates ideas. In Alice's case, she aims to take her toolbox with her as a way of inventing, but with an understanding that she will likely have to reshape—adapt—what she knows and what she could possibly learn. Alice is essentially turning outward to consider how she will adapt to the expectations of her audience. At the same time, Alice is turning outward with a toolbox that includes strategies she has already learned. Alice's goal is likely to understand which tools are necessary—what tools will continue to help me? What tools are no longer useful or need to be slightly adapted? With the acknowledgement that she will "adapt to different ways that [she] she needs to be able to write," Alice seems to be demonstrating a rhetorical approach through which she has identified a self-belief in her ability to adapt and that prompts her to ready herself, with her toolbox, and engage in rhetorical invention in order to determine what will work for her and what will not when she arrives at college.

While it is possible that Alice's teachers may have helped her along the way to build her toolbox, Alice will be the one who is responsible for knowing how to use that toolbox, when her high school teachers are no longer there to help her. Alice's expectation that she will use what she has been taught and find resources to support her in new writing experiences demonstrates a rhetorical approach that suggests Alice anticipates imagining herself in a new rhetorical situation with what she already knows about writing and *reinventing* herself with a novice, yet resourceful disposition. What both Charlotte and Alice have suggested so far is that their rhetorical approaches to college-level writing embody a vulnerability that illustrates their novice dispositions. At the same time, both Charlotte and Alice express confidence in moving past their uncertainty, building on prior knowledge, and taking action (e.g. asking questions, talking to instructors, finding resources) to navigate the new rhetorical situations of college-level writing contexts.

Alice will have to figure out which tools, so to speak, are useful or not for the various writing contexts she encounters. Alice's ideas about how she will adapt, also seem to be rhetorical in nature in that she is already arranging (disposition) how she will socially interact with others and learn about the new context of college-level writing from experts and models of expectations. In our conversation, I asked Alice to elaborate on her ideas of what it will look like for her to adapt to new writing situations. She argued:

> I think it would be looking at using older students and asking them for how they did it, like the example things, I work really well with examples. Finding resources where I can see what needs to be done, and then adapting in the way that I use the ABCDE paragraph [format], I use that a lot.[36] Adapting that to what needs to be written 'cuz I think that helps a lot with any paper.

Alice's rhetorical approaches embody a resourcefulness and adaptability that prompts her to take careful consideration of the context in which she will be writing, shaping and reshaping her writing experiences through rhetorical invention and disposition. Essentially, Alice shows that she is willing to do the research about what she does not yet know about college-level writing and the social interaction of talking to her peers is important to how Alice will rhetorically approach college-level writing. Furthermore, Alice demonstrates self-awareness for what works well for her as a writer when she states, "I work really well with examples." Alice turns to a specific writing skill—the ABCDE paragraph," but reflects on how she might adapt that skill. I suggest that, similar to how Charlotte demonstrates a responsibility for her writing, Alice's confidence in her ability to adapt and take responsibility for her learning, also requires disposition or arranging steps to seek out resources, learn from examples, and identify how her figurative toolbox can be useful or adapted according to the rhetorical situation of college-level writing. Alice's rhetorical approaches also indicate how Alice might see herself as more prepared than what she reported on the initial survey. Even though Alice reported lower self-efficacy levels on the survey and expressed feelings of uncertainty, she seems to counter those issues with more expressed confidence in her capability to navigate what will be new writing experiences for her.

Turning again to Hawee, invention-in-the-middle suggests a scenario of "I invent and am invented by myself and others" (p. 17). To extend this idea and to intersect self-efficacy research with rhetorical theory, I argue that vicarious learning also prompts participants like Alice to practice rhetorical approaches by inventing ideas about entering the rhetorical situation of college-level writing, but also demonstrating an openness to learning from others, and thus being continually invented (and (re)invented by others). In Chapter One, I described vicarious learning as an underlying source of self-efficacy theory. Vicarious learning can be derived from sources

[36] As reported by participants, ABCDE is an acronym for creating an assertion, background, a claim, discussion, and an extension within a paragraph.

of knowledge like family members, peers, and teachers. In Alice's case, vicarious learning affords her the opportunity to keenly observe her writing contexts and interact with both her peers who might already have useful information about how to navigate the new rhetorical situations. But again, Alice argues that she already has a toolbox, so now it is a matter of continually engaging in the invention process, interacting with and learning from others, to further build or add to the tool box to more fully understand college-level writing contexts. By insisting that "She does really well with examples" Alice, I argue, is already thinking about how she can use the skills she has (e.g. analyzing exemplars) to become an apprentice and situate herself within a new writing context and produce similar products to what she has observed from her peers or teachers.

Rhetorical Approaches and Preparedness

Charlotte, Alice, and Maya seem to understand the importance of effectively situating themselves in new environments by learning about that particular context, rather than jumping right in, so to speak. As discussed in Chapter One, prior research in writing studies suggests that writers who take a temporary novice stance or show a willingness to learn about new contexts are more inclined to effectively build on prior knowledge, but effectively situate themselves in new and different writing contexts (Reiff and Bawarshi, 2011, Smart and Brown, 2006; Sommers and Saltz, 2004). I build on this research to suggest that, in order to practice the rhetorical approaches discussed in this chapter, it is not only necessary to demonstrate an awareness for specific rhetorical situations, but actively think about how to imagine one's self into that rhetorical situation by means of invention and disposition. The ways in which participants articulate their self-beliefs also become ways for them to imagine themselves as college writers, understanding what they are already capable of, and primed to continually invent and arrange to actively engage with new rhetorical situations of college-level writing. Thus, rhetorical approaches not only serve as ways to help participants approach new rhetorical situations, but also nuance current conceptualizations of preparedness offered by academic and popular discourse for what it means to be prepared for college-level writing.

At the conclusion of their final interview, I asked every participant to write about what preparedness for college-level writing meant to them. Charlotte, Alice, and Maya all provided written responses that point to their developing rhetorical approaches in relation to their

perceived preparedness. Thefindings offered in this chapter also present a new way of thinking about preparedness for college-level writing, beyond what my initial survey could offer, and challenges educators to consider how we foster rhetorical approaches with which students might already be walking into our classrooms.

Earlier, Charlotte explained her self-belief in her ability to absorb, and here, I return to Charlotte to consider how we concluded her second interview in relation to Hawhee's in-between-invention. When I asked Charlotte to write about what preparedness for college-level writing means to her. Charlotte concluded, "Being prepared for writing also means to me that I am aware of the fact that I won't ace every paper and I do have a lot to learn once I get there. Having unrealistic expectations for grades and level of rigor in college is definitely a sign of unpreparedness." Charlotte's preparedness is not fixed (e.g. I can or cannot because of x,y,z) and part of Charlotte's invention-in-the middle could possibly be interacting with a new rhetorical situation of college-level writing with a willingness to learn so that Charlotte is not only saying, "I will invent," but that her rhetorical approaches opens space to say, "I will invent, I will discover, and I—by learning from others and by learning from failures—I will invent, re(invent), and be (re)invented by others." Charlotte suggests that "Having unrealistic expectations for grades and level of rigor in college" is a sign unpreparedness. Consider then, that those with unrealistic expectations might be trying to invent a rhetorical situation that does not exist; or, that those with unrealistic expectations might be less flexible to practice rhetorical approaches that embody adaptability. Alternatively, Charlotte's rhetorical approaches, I argue, situate her not simply to learn from failure, but to engage in a process that allows her to learn more about the audience, expectations, and constraints of the rhetorical situation of college-level writing.

To approach the uncertainty of college-level writing, Charlotte looks inward and outward. By defining what she believes unpreparedness is—having unrealistic expectations for grades and level of rigor in college, Charlotte also seems to be complicating the ways in which academic and popular discourse conceptualize preparedness. Instead, between the accounts offered by Charlotte earlier in the chapter and her written response analyzed here, she indicates that preparedness for college-level writing also requires acknowledging vulnerability and knowing when it is time to ask questions and learn from possible failure, which requires a careful organization and arrangement of applying prior knowledge, with an interest in developing that knowledge.

The trial and error of acing papers described by Charlotte above requires a need for experience and exposure, which are key components to Alice's ideas about preparedness. When Alice wrote her ideas about preparedness for college-level writing, she posited, "The best way to prepare for college would be through experience. You can get that experience through various classes in school or exploring different types of writing independently. I feel exposure is the best way to be educated about anything." Importantly too, it is not easy enough to say that one should simply adapt to new writing situations. At the beginning of this chapter, I asserted that rhetoric is the making of knowledge, and with this assertion in mind, I suggest that Alice recognizes that something like college-level writing is not something one can automatically know and that she will continue to add to her toolbox, forever-learning and adapting to new rhetorical situations through the writing experiences she encounters.

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, Alice expects that she will learn from the expertise of her peers and synthesize what she has learned about strategies like the ABCDE paragraph to adapt to writing effectively for new college-level writing experiences. What's more, it is also important to note that between her first and second interviews, Alice's ideas about facing uncertainty changed. After sharing her written response with me, Alice elaborated:

> I guess, in terms of preparedness, I think I was, maybe, a little bit more worried before I was even a senior, where now, as a senior, I'm just like, 'It's gonna happen,' so I'm like—I just have to go with what I know. I think I've been prepared pretty well. I think I'll know what I'm gonna be doing. My teachers, they try to help us get ready, and I think that helps. Yeah, I think I'm just at the point where it's like, "I have what I know, and I think it's pretty good." I think I'm gonna do okay.

Alice does demonstrate a sort of acceptance that she is moving forward and there is no looking back. There is, however, an exception to this notion—Alice will look back. She will remember her prior writing experiences and count on them for at least a stepping stone. Indeed, I argue that those prior writing experiences are part of the toolbox Alice invoked earlier and contribute to the rhetorical approaches, which is to reiterate again, that although we cannot know from this study how these students will actually perform when they get to college, we can, I argue, see how these participants are developing a sense of their writerly selves and developing important rhetorical approaches, based on the experiences they have had, to move beyond their uncertainty.

Rhetorical invention and disposition require individuals to take stock of a given rhetorical situation, but I argue, especially for these three participants, that these rhetorical moves require taking stock of their already developing rhetorical approaches to understand what they are capable of when they have to navigate new rhetorical situations. Alice will go to college "with what [she] knows," but as we have learned, she will go with rhetorical approaches that prompt her to adapt and learn new ideas about writing—all the while developing her toolbox.

We have learned from Maya that she is confident that, while she might not know exactly what to expect and she does fear the unknown, she has self-beliefs in her ability to be resilient, and adapt to new rhetorical situations. Further, it is the prior experiences, including her academic struggles, that have created for Maya a sense of, as she used the term, resilience, which in turn, bolsters her confidence to learn new concepts and adapt to new writing environments when she transitions to college. Similar to Alice, Maya also, in her written response, acknowledge prior writing experiences as important to her future writing experiences.

> I think being prepared to write at the college level means using tools and information about writing from previous learning and incorporating them into broader ideas. More specifically, it means combining previous skills and experiences with writing to develop more complex ideas. On a different note, I think it means being able to adapt and change when faced with different types of writing assignments.

When Maya defines preparedness as "using tools and information from learning and incorporating them into broader ideas," prior knowledge is a way to invent in response to the expectations of the new rhetorical situation of college-level writing. The invention and disposition of Maya's rhetorical approaches toward college-level writing especially overlap here because I suggest that Maya might first invent ideas for audiences based on the knowledge she already has. At the same time, Maya will have to continually invent and be invented (Hawhee) while also, through disposition, arrange prior knowledge with new knowledge to eventually, "develop more complex ideas." By engaging in arrangement, individuals invent toward specific social ends (Kontny, 2014), and in Maya's case writing certain assignments at the college level. Part of this process, as Maya points out, also requires confidence in "being able to adapt and change," a self-belief Maya identified as having earlier in the chapter. While Maya is thinking about what it means to be prepared in the above written response, she evokes rhetorical

approaches that embody self-beliefs and methods of invention and disposition that she has before to discuss how she will move beyond her uncertainty.

Together, Charlotte, Alice, and Maya offer some important ways of rethinking preparedness for college-level writing. While performing writing skills and tasks are an important piece of preparedness, I suggest that the rhetorical approaches—made up of self-beliefs and rhetorical methods like invention and disposition—are also key components to participants' perceived preparedness, but also how they believe they will navigate uncertainty and new rhetorical situations like college-level writing.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have identified specific moments that allow us to consider how participants complexly narrate their beliefs about their preparedness through the rhetorical approaches that they illuminate when thinking about how they will move beyond their uncertainty of college-level writing. These accounts demonstrate that students are thinking beyond actual writing skills and tasks to consider how they will situate themselves in a new rhetorical situation of college-level writing. While Charlotte, Maya, and Alice carry an uncertainty for what college-level writing will actually entail, they also show a rhetorical awareness that college-level writing will be different than what they have experienced so far. I further posit that their feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability serve as an exigency for these three participants to engage with productive uncertainty (Miller, 2016) and practice rhetorical approaches through which they draw on their self-beliefs in order to situate themselves in new rhetorical situations.

I suggest that building positive self-efficacy to write at the college-level involves practicing rhetorical approaches to navigate new, often uncertain, rhetorical situations. Participants are inventing themselves and arranging what they already know about writing to imagine how will they navigate college-level writing. But importantly, they are not going to college as blank slates, or completely vulnerable to the constraints of a new rhetorical situation. Rather these participants are able to act on feelings of uncertainty, acknowledge their vulnerability, but also use capabilities they already have to navigate uncertainty like adaptability, resourcefulness, and resiliency, to name a few self-beliefs. For example, Charlotte moves beyond just relying on her instructors to support her, and argues that "it's up to][her] to learn how to do

it," and similarly, Alice is prepared to seek out the resources she needs to do well, as she navigates new writing contexts. Maya prides herself on the resiliency she has already developed to learn from academic challenges and improve along the way. These participants have a sense of their writerly selves, what they are capable of with writing, and how they will approach new writing contexts, even if it means transitioning to college-level writing with uncertainty and showing some vulnerability.

I posit that the participants in this chapter demonstrate a vulnerability that might actually help them to better adapt to college-level writing, so long as they act on that vulnerability (e.g. productive uncertainty). Charlotte, Alice, and Maya demonstrate largely positive self-beliefs, and questions emerge about students who do not have similar, positive self-beliefs or cannot acknowledge and move beyond their vulnerabilities. Future research could usefully explore how unmotivated students or students with negative self-beliefs in relation to the utility of rhetorical approaches for college-level writing. For now, Charlotte, Alice, and Maya all demonstrate a confidence in how they have already developed as writers and the ways in which their experiences have been largely successful and been supported by people and resources in their writing contexts. In some ways Charlotte, Alice, and Maya may be less confident compared to other college-bound students. However, their confidence is not fixed and rather, more like a trajectory. It is possible that with the rhetorical approaches these participants are developing and will continue to develop with new experiences, they are confident in their ability to do well eventually.

I also suggest that by considering the rhetorical approaches these participants practice as they move from one writing context to another serve as an opportunity for instructors to consider the nuanced and complex knowledge with which students walk into our classrooms—knowledge that we might not see if we only look at their test scores. In Chapter Five, I will discuss developing knowledge about writing that participants already have—developing knowledge that instructors could potentially leverage to support students in their ongoing learning experiences. Likewise, I am suggesting in this chapter that Charlotte, Maya, and Alice are already developing important rhetorical approaches that instructors could also leverage in order to help students navigate the uncertainties and challenges of transitioning into college-level writing and beyond. Thus, rhetorical approaches is not only a concept I use to identify how Alice, Charlotte, and Maya could navigate the uncertainty of college-level writing, it is also a concept that can be used

as a lens for stakeholders invested in student transition from high school to college-level writing to consider how to best support students from one writing context to another.

In proposing rhetorical approaches as a pedagogical lens, it might be useful here to briefly consider scholarship around "invitational rhetoric." While I did not discuss the concept in the body of this chapter, I introduce it here to help us further consider rhetorical approaches as pedagogical lens. For other scholars (see Foss and Griffin for foundational scholarship), invitational rhetoric is another means of moving beyond rhetoric as solely for means of persuasion. Invitational rhetoric frames understanding as a means for relationship-building. Invitational rhetoric is rooted in ideals of equality, immanent value, and self-determination, and is meant to be reciprocal.

Invitational rhetoric is useful in that Charlotte, Alice, and Maya through their expressions of vulnerability, adaptability, and a willingness to take responsibility for their learning, they are also inviting their future instructors and fellow peers to interact with them as they try to successfully navigate college-level writing. Participants are already imagining themselves in college-level writing settings and organizing and arranging ideas about how they will interact within these new rhetorical situations. Further, participants seem to have a sense of their writerly selves, ready to draw on their already-established capabilities, but also adapt in new ways, enacting rhetorical approaches that require them to engage with their audiences and invent new ideas, invent themselves, and let others invent them (Hawhee). In any case, the participants in this chapter, in order to successfully write at the college-level, need their audience to respond to the rhetorical approaches these participants are willing to practice. Foss and Griffin (1995) explain that "audience members act on the invitation offered by the rhetor by listening to and trying to understand the rhetor's perspective and then presenting their own. When this happens, rhetor and audience alike contribute to the thinking about an issue so that everyone involved gains a greater understanding of the issue in its subtlety, richness, and complexity" (p. 5). Invitational rhetoric is more useful as a lens for educators here, because the concept requires a reciprocal relationship—others must respond. We have learned from participants in this chapter, that they want to learn more about college-level writing, and that they carry important rhetorical approaches that might help them to be successful at the college level. They have in some ways prompted the invitation for educators to respond and support them as they continue developing their rhetorical approaches.

For example, instructors and students often put into conversation the basic principles of the rhetorical situation with attention to the relationship between the rhetor, audience, and message. Even though instructors use the rhetorical situation for teaching effective writing skills and tasks, these elements are important to consider in concert with the rhetorical approaches participants talk about in this chapter. When we teach the rhetorical situation to students, we are often asking them to figure out how they will situate their argument within a specific context that appeals to a certain audience. Similarly, when students go to college, they are expected to situate themselves into new writing contexts while familiarizing themselves with the kinds of writing they will practice, who will judge their writing, and how they will effectively meet the specific expectations of a new writing context.

In the following chapter, I will examine the ways in which students compare themselves to their peers shape their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. I consider the ways students self-position as they anticipate the transition to college-level writing while navigating various environmental factors like peer comparisons, teacher talk, and other representations of preparedness for college-level writing. We will also learn from other participants who not only rated themselves as more efficacious on the initial survey but also seemed to demonstrate more moreconfidence to write at the college level and less uncertainty, without expressing vulnerability or describing their abilities to adapt and take responsibility. These participants talked more about their certainty, success with grades and outcomes, and how their prior writing experiences will be mostly similar to what they expect at the college-level. Different from Charlotte, Alice, and Maya, some of these participants did not express feelings of vulnerability, nor did they express confidence in traits like adaptability, resiliency, resourcefulness, or responsibility.

CHAPTER FOUR
What Does It Mean to Be Prepared for College-Level Writing?: Examining how College-bound Students are Influenced by Institutional Representations of Preparedness and College-level Writing

Introduction

The previous chapter explores ways in which participants navigated uncertainty and imagine themselves in the future. In this chapter, I will continue to explore how students see themselves in the future. In contrast to the previous chapter, some participants in this chapter express less uncertainty and more confidence in what they believe they do know about their own preparedness and expectations for college-level writing, based on how they compare themselves to one another. Further, while participants in Chapter Three identified how they would navigate new contexts, even in the face of uncertainty, the current chapter explores how environmental factors circulating throughout a context like GLHS inform their ideas about their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. So while the ways in which the participants in the current chapter talk about context or doing well at the college level might have a rhetorical bent, I am not suggesting that they too are demonstrating rhetorical approaches. Because I suggest that rhetorical approaches are grounded in productive uncertainty and, through rhetorical approaches, participants draw on self-beliefs, participants in Chapter Three also seemed to make knowledge, beyond their uncertainty, and imagine themselves writing at the college level. Differently, participants in this chapter will give more attention to the environmental factors—the external messages they receive—that inform their perceptions and expectations. Additionally, participants highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, I suggest, express more confidence in their expectations about college-level writing and their preparedness to write at the college level than participants expressed in Chapter Three. Participants highlighted in this chapter, at times may have demonstrated rhetorical approaches throughout the study. For instance, in addition to their confidence in their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing, Stewart, Alex, and Emma arguably may have demonstrated resiliency and even flexibility, based on what they learned from the intense and challenging writing experiences they

reported as being a part of the over AP Lang course. However, I am specifically looking at their stories under the lenses of social comparison and institutional representations to consider the ways in which environmental factors influence participants' perceived preparedness. Thus, in this chapter, a focus on social comparison and institutional representations, or environmental factors that circulate throughout GLHS, will provide more insight on ways in which students shape expectations and perceived preparedness.

In Chapter One, I argue that vicarious learning is part of the reciprocal relationship between personal factors, environmental factors, and personal behavior that together, affect an individual's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).[37] Social comparison is one form of vicarious learning and a natural way in which individuals build their notions of self (e.g. I know myself, because I know other people),when individuals observe another individual's failure or success in completing certain tasks (Bandura, 1997; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). Individuals then judge their own capability of completing given tasks based on what they have observed and the confidence they have in themselves to complete certain tasks (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Schunk et al.,1987). Throughout the study, students talked to each other, they compared their grades, and they compared their learning experiences.[38]

Previous research has argued that social comparison more greatly affects the way an individual perceives themselves as a writer (e.g. How do I feel about myself as a writer), but might affect an individual's self-efficacy to complete certain tasks (e.g. I can write well) to a lesser extent (Schunk &Pajares, 2001). Bong and Skaalvik (2003) argue that mastery experience affects perceived self-efficacy more than vicarious information, like social comparison.[39] The examples from participants I offer in this chapter will demonstrate that mastery experience does matter for their self-efficacy development, as do rhetorical approaches that embody self-beliefs like resourcefulness and a willingness to learn. However, I also argue that social comparison should also be taken into consideration here, especially when the findings revealed that

[37] Recall from Chapter one that vicarious learning can occur through observation and how tasks are modeled to individuals. One example of vicarious learning is when teachers model a task for students (e.g. how to write a paragraph), but vicarious learning can occur for individuals in any learning experience.

[38] It should be noted that in their first interview, I did explicitly ask participants to consider their perceived preparedness, based on how they compared themselves to their peers (see Appendix B for interview #1 protocol), and I did this with the assertion that social comparison is a natural way in which individuals build their notions of self (e.g. I know myself, because I know other people).

[39] Discussed in Chapter one, mastery experience is direct experience that individuals encounter with a given task, rather than just observing someone else perform the task, for example. For the purposes of this study, I consider mastery experience to function as what individuals have learned and practice from prior writing experiences.

participants actively compare themselves to each other to determine their preparedness based on how certain things about writing and preparedness are represented to them. (e.g. high SAT scores and taking AP are equivalent to college-level writing).

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the effects of social comparison. As I note above, social comparison is a vital part of self-efficacy research. I suggest, most pressingly, that we revisit the role of social comparison because my data, though confined to a small sample, reveals that students' self-efficacy in their perceived preparedness is informed by a relationship among their learning context and interactions with their peers. I prompted participants to talk about how they compare themselves to their peers because social comparison framework is a fundamental underlying source of self-efficacy. Thus, it was important for me to understand how students engaged in social comparison and understood this phenomena as influencing their perceived preparedness. For example, when I interviewed participants, most acknowledged that the ways in which they compared themselves to their peers was a factor for how they determined their preparedness to write at the college-level. *How* they compared themselves to their peers did vary among participants. Sometimes participants used task-based examples to compare themselves to their peers and then consider their perceived preparedness (e.g. participating in peer review). In other instances, participants used course experiences or assessment outcomes (e.g. SAT scores). Interestingly, even though participants drew comparisons between themselves and their peers, when they talked about these comparisons, participants often brought into conversation other environmental factors like teacher talk, Great Lakes High School (GLHS) expectations, or specific curriculum and assessment measures like the SAT and AP courses. In turn, these environmental factors represented certain expectations and standards that seemed to bear on the comparisons participants made and, by extension, the conclusions the participants drew about their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. The rhetorical situation is, by default, about context and environmental factors. In Chapter Three, I identified differing conceptualizations of the rhetorical situation—one from Bitzer and others from later theorists like Vatz, Miller, and Burke. Recall that Bitzer's conceptualization of the rhetorical situation is more hierarchical in that rhetorical acts stem directly from the situation and does not consider how individual agency prompts exigence. Differently, later conceptualizations suggest that individuals independently interpret and situate themselves in rhetorical situations with a certain amount of agency. Despite these differences between early and later conceptualizations, these

rhetoricians still identify individual, audience, and context as crucial components to the interactions between individual and context. Thus, ideas around environmental factors and the rhetorical situation are mutually reinforcing. In some ways, the representations I identify in this chapter resemble Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation, discussed in Chapter Three, which demands a response to a given situation (exigence), an audience for the response, and a set of constraints that shape the particular rhetorical situation. But in other ways, the expectations and standards I discuss here resemble constraints that both shape the context of GLHS and the ways in which some students think about their preparedness. Thus, the messages students receive as they interact and observe are perpetuated by the constraints of this particular rhetorical situation.

Further, the expectations and standards noted above, I argue, stem from institutional representations of college-level writing and preparedness that students must navigate on both a local and global scale. Already established theory from social cognitive theory and self-efficacy research offers us a way to think about how individuals situate themselves within the reciprocal relationship of personal factors, personal behavior, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986 Lent, Brown, & Hacket, 1994, Pajares, 2002). What is more, even though I explicitly asked students to consider their preparedness according to how they compare themselves to their peers, for some of these participants, comparison involved more than comparing writing and grades. Rather, their comparisons also seemed to point to the reciprocal relationship of local and global institutional representations like AP Lang curriculum and experiences, teacher instruction (or lack thereof) and standardized assessment that serves as a gate-keeping function for college admissions. In this chapter, I also consider how institutional representations can serve as environmental factors and how those representations can affect college-bound students' perceived preparedness and expectations, especially when they actively compare themselves to others.

Local and Global Institutional Representations at GLHS

I define institutional representations as environmental factors that are directly related to the ways in which students practice social comparison. Environmental factors can include, for example, how AP curriculum is represented to students by their teachers, school, and third-party organizations like the College Board. Other environmental factors can include peer interaction or teacher talk. It is possible that, unlike the participants described in Chapter Three, participants

highlighted in the current chapter receive certain messages from institutional representations and based some participants use the messages to inform their perceptions and express less uncertainty about what to expect from college-level writing. For instance, I argue that institutional representations circulate throughout contexts like GLHS and when students actively compared themselves to one another, those comparisons were informed by local and global institutional representations of preparedness and college-level writing.

Table 4.1 Examples of Institutional Representations

Local Institutional Representations	**Global Institutional Representations**
• Teacher Talk • Peer Interaction • School expectations	• College Board curriculum and assessment (e.g. Advanced Placement, SAT assessment) • Common Core State Standards • College Admissions requirements • Popular discourse about preparedness

Members of global communities are not always readily linked nor do they always participate in face-to-face interactions with peers and teachers, for example, and these global communities can include academic fields, business organizations, religions, etc. (Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, 1999). I suggest that college-level writing and preparedness for college-level writing can be represented by global institutions that students will not interact with directly or face-to-face, but interact with indirectly as they shape their own perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. For example, the College Board can serve as a global institutional representation that establishes academic expectations through curriculum and assessment and serves a gate-keeping function for college admissions.

While I look at participants' interaction with context from a different angle in Chapter Three, the ways in which participants seem to be interacting with the GLHS context also seems rhetorical in nature. In Chapter Three, I drew from Miller (1984) to consider the rhetorical nature of participants' imagining of their interactions with future contexts. Miller is once again useful to consider in this chapter as we will learn that the ways in which students socially interact within certain contexts inform the conclusions they draw about their expectations and preparedness. Recall from Chapter Three that according to rhetorical theorists like Miller, the rhetorical situation as a social construct and exigence is social knowledge. In the current chapter, we will learn how students receive messages about college-level writing and preparedness from

institutional representations, and that the ways in which students interact by comparing themselves to their peers, is another form of social knowledge that influences participants' perceptions. While I am looking specifically at phenomena like social comparison and institutional representations, which offers a different angle of the reciprocal interaction between student and context, compared to Chapter Three, I still draw from Miller's argument to examine the ways in which students are acting on social knowledge to draw conclusions about their expectations and preparedness for college-level writing.

Further, meaning-making is constructed when individuals observe and interact with others at a more local level (Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, 1999). Indeed, in this chapter, I argue that participants' vicarious learning was affected by global institutional representations (e.g. the influence of the College Board and its AP curriculum and assessments), but participants' observations and interactions with teachers and peers within GLHS directly affected their writing self-efficacy, perceived preparedness, and expectations for college-level writing. For example, in discussing with their peers the SAT exam and high school English courses, some students came to believe that AP Language and Composition (AP Lang) was equivalent to what they expected college-level writing to entail. Seven of the fifteen participants took this course during their junior year. These seven participants pointed specifically to AP Lang as a significant experience that influenced their expectations and perceived preparedness. AP Lang was also offered as an example by some participants who did not take the course. For example, some participants expressed feelings of unpreparedness because they did not take the course. Throughout this chapter, I will offer other examples of how students compared themselves to one another, but did so with institutional representations of college-level writing and preparedness in mind. Similar to Chapter Three, the accounts I offer in the current chapter will illustrate the significance of context. Similarly, participants in both chapters are thinking about how they will fare in future writing contexts at the college level. Differently, participants in the current chapter give specific attention to their current context and the ways in which college-level writing and preparedness are represented to them. So while Charlotte, Maya, and Alice expressed uncertainty about college-level writing, they still found ways, through rhetorical approaches to look ahead to college-level writing and imagine how they would navigate future writing contexts, despite their uncertainty. Chapter Three's highlighted participants focused more on those participants looking outward and imagining themselves interacting with future audiences and learning about new

context expectations. In the current chapter, most participants will give specific attention to how they interact with their past and current contexts, through social comparison for instance, and use particular messages they are receiving to think about ways in which they will then navigate certain contexts. Most participants, especially at the beginning of this chapter, will, different from participants in Chapter Three, also express more certainty about what they already know and higher levels of confidence to do well at the college level. Specifically, in some cases social comparison was shaped by how teachers talked about college-level writing and their expectations for college-level writing. In other instances, students compared SAT scores to determine their perceived preparedness for college-level writing. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that while institutional representations of college-level writing and preparedness are very much present at GLHS, some participants showed a recognition of these representations, but sometimes chose to reject or question them as influential to what they believed about their own preparedness or what they expected college-level writing to entail. For example, the final section of this chapter will highlight participants who recognized that a course like AP Language and Composition held a certain reputation for college-level preparedness, but rejected the notion that without the course on their transcript, they were less prepared than other students.

How participants use outcomes to draw comparisons might also have to do with the local GLHS academic institution, which embodies high expectations for its students. During her first interview, Rosy Potter explained to me that, "In GLHS, we have very, very high expectations…I think that just like the teachers that I've worked with in the classes that I've been in, have done a really good job preparing. I think that being—I mean going to GLHS, one of the goals is to prepare students the best they can for college." Indeed, while visiting GLHS to interview students, I once overheard Mrs. Gerard say to her students in AP Lit, "As the pillars, the pinnacle of the English department, the AP seniors, you guys are supposed to be the best of the best." Between student responses like Rosy's and comments like Mrs. Gerard's, it seems GLHS works to foster an environment in which it is a given that students will be prepared for college. As noted in Chapter Two, GLHS is a top school in its home state and the country and as of 2015, 93% of its seniors graduated—most with plans to attend college. In addition to the environment of advanced learning and preparedness that GLHS seemed to foster, and especially based on findings presented in this chapter, social comparison seemed to be a regular part of the participants' academic experiences. For example, participants reported that when they received

course grades or scores on assessments like the SAT or AP exams, they talked to their peers about the scores they received, so that in comparing their scores to those of their peers at GLHS, it became not only a concrete and accessible way of determining their own capabilities, but also a way to situate themselves among their peers, and possibly gauge where they stood among the competition.[40] In this section, I examine how participants are possibly responding to local institutional representations put forth by GLHS. Representations of high expectations, competition, and preparedness are reflected in interview responses from Frank and Rosy, who were in the low and high self-efficacy groups, respectively.[41] I suggest that by listening to these two accounts, we might garner more information about how college-level writing and preparedness can be represented to students in specific contexts like GLHS, but also how individual students decide to take up these representations. Participants like Frank and Rosy show that their self-efficacy, as well as their perceived preparedness for college-level writing, is affected in response to these institutional representations.

Frank was keenly aware of the high expectations of GLHS, especially as he initially struggled with meeting those high expectations when he first moved to GLHS from a different school. During his first interview, Frank actively compared himself to his peers, but through that social comparison, he surfaced much more about how differences between academic contexts can influence an individual's academic performance. For Frank, moving to GLHS was a shock, which caused him to rethink his academic performance. A new student at GLHS, Frank saw himself as less prepared compared to his peers at GLHS. During both his interviews, Frank also seemed to be cognizant of the environment of high expectations and preparedness that GLHS seemed to foster, and through navigating from one context to another, Frank quickly learned that writing and preparedness are represented differently than with what he was familiar. Therefore, Frank drew comparisons, based on a number of factors including the change in expectations from one school to another, his own performance, and how his performance was judged differently at GLHS. Comparing himself to his GLHS peers, during his first interview, Frank reflected.

[40] Participants did not say outright that they were in competition with each other. Yet, competition seemed to be an implicit aspect of students' perceptions and a natural part of the GLHS environment.

[41] A reminder here that participants were initially put in three self-efficacy levels according to what they reported on the self-efficacy survey.

> I think just the fact that they've [GLHS students] been challenged longer. They've met the challenge and now they can continue at that level, whereas now I'm just—my old school, it was a lot easier for me. I don't really know how to explain it, but I'm—maybe it was the way they taught or whatever, but I didn't really try very hard and I could still get "A"s. Here I have to actually work for it. Maybe if I had always gone here, then it would be like I'd be more prepared, I guess. Yeah, I guess it's kind of just like a shock. I mean, I'm glad it happened, because now I can see. I need to step up and so for college I'll be more prepared.

Franks suggests that he is behind in terms of his preparedness when he states that his peers at GLHS have been challenged longer and "now they can continue at that level." As he continues, however, Frank moves beyond comparing himself to his peers and compares the different schools he has attended determining that, perhaps, based on "the way they taught" and the mere fact that getting A's was a lot easier for Frank, he's not as prepared as he believes he could be. Interestingly, before moving to GLHS, Frank was also able to take a dual-enrollment English course at a local community college. This is an opportunity to which none of the other participants had exposure. Still, even with some experience in a college setting, Frank did not seem to think that this course increased his preparedness, and when he moved to GLHS, Frank was more impressed with what he believed to be the academic caliber of his GLHS peers and the resources GLHS offered. For example, in his first interview, Frank also noted that unlike GLHS, his previous school did not offer certain resources like AP courses or electives like art. At the same time, it should also be noted that no participant intended to go to a community college, for many, even Frank, planned to apply to ivy-league universities. Thus, even though Frank had exposure to a college setting, this raises questions about how community college and regional dual-enrollment are regarded by the participants of this study and within the expectations of a school like GLHS. None of the participants ever expressed their opinions or identified specific GLHS attitudes toward institutions like community colleges, but Frank's suggestion that he is less prepared than his fellow GLHS peers and his attention to the differences between his prior experiences and resources available at GLHS that were not previously available to him at least reifies the reputation of and expectations for college-level writing and preparedness at GLHS.

Additionally, Frank did receive lower grades when he first arrived at GLHS, which indicated to him that he might not be as prepared for college-level writing as he ought to be.

Therefore, in drawing the initial comparison that his peers have "been challenged longer," Frank also demonstrates an instance of self-comparison of the kind of student he believed he was at his former school and the kind of student he recognizes he needs to be in order to be better prepared for college-level writing. In seeing a difference in both the learning contexts of his prior high school and GLHS as well as the difference in his academic performance and that of his peers, though he does express concerns about his unpreparedness, Frank expresses confidence in himself to learn from the disappointment of receiving lower grades and the challenges of a new, perhaps more rigorous school. The fact that he received lower grades at GLHS, compared to grades he received is a clue for him as to why he might be less prepared, compared to his peers. By wondering if he "had always gone here," Frank seems to believe he was put at a disadvantage and for him the differences in the institutional representations he has experienced influence how he compares himself to his peers and in turn, how he determines his own perceived preparedness. Despite these perceived disadvantages, Frank also seems to now trust in the local institutional representation of preparedness that GLHS offers him, because "now [he] can see," based on what he has observed from his peers, and how his academic performance has changed based on the school context, what Frank needs to "step up" to meet the GLHS expectations in order to be prepared for college-level writing. For Frank, and other participants like Rosy, that might mean having more of a competitive edge.

Not only do some participants compare themselves to one another and use this comparison as a basis for their perceived preparedness, but so too, does social comparison have negative and positive effects on participants' self-efficacy. Thus, social comparison is not necessarily a static phenomenon, but something that changes based on the context, a person's mastery experience, and how participants take up or reject the ways in which institutional representations can bear on the comparisons that participants make. Another participant, Rosy, demonstrated that a number of factors affected the extent to which comparing herself to others informed what she believed about her preparedness for college-level writing. Rosy ultimately concludes that she is prepared for college-level writing, but she first takes into consideration how she compares to her peers and the circumstances she finds herself in at GLHS to reach that conclusion. During her first interview, Rosy echoed both her earlier response and Frank's thoughts about GLHS when she said, "In GLHS, we have very, very high expectations," which importantly illustrates GLHS as an environment that fosters high expectations for college

preparedness and suggests that participants like those highlighted in the first part of this chapter, through social comparison, may be naturally responding to how college preparedness is represented to them on a local level. Rosy then continued:

> I think a lot of us are—even a lot of the students, I feel that we're like all about the same level in some ways than others, but I feel very prepared. A lot of my friends are very, very smart and they do put a lot of pressure on me. Sometimes I feel, compared to them, I'm not as great as I should be. Then again, they're receiving merit scholarships. I mean I have to also put that in perspective. I think that I'm doing pretty well compared to most.

During this moment of the interview, Rosy demonstrates some important thinking about her own preparedness—first, acknowledging the school environment she is in, which paints an important picture of GLHS that not only illuminates the high academic expectations, but how she and other students interact within the context ; second comparing herself to her peers; third, questioning her preparedness when alluding to institutional representations present at GLHS; and finally resolving that, despite the peer pressure she sometimes feels, she is confident that she will be successful, "compared to most." By noting the pressure she feels from her peers, Rosy also raises a question of whether this peer pressure and possible competition heightens her self-efficacy and makes her feel more prepared for college-level writing. In one way, when Rosy states that she feels, "very prepared" and follows that statement by explaining that, "A lot of my friends are very, very smart and they do put a lot of pressure on me," it is possible that Rosy benefits from this peer pressure and that her friends who do put a lot of pressure on her, motivate her rather than make her feel less prepared. On the other hand, Rosy also demonstrated a back-and-forth about her actual preparedness for college-level writing within the context of GLHS when she explained, "Sometimes I feel, compared to them, I'm not as great as I should be. Then again, they're receiving merit scholarships. I mean I have to also put that in perspective. I think that I'm doing pretty well compared to most." Rosy is doing some important thinking in response to how she practices social comparison, suggesting that actively comparing herself to her peers boosts her confidence in her ability to write at the college level, but also makes her question her actual level of preparedness.

In both Chapters Three and Five, I consider self-efficacy as a mediating mechanism through which participants reflect on their current capabilities to determine their future

capabilities (Bandura, 1986). In this moment, Rosy walks us through what she has observed of her peers, as well as how her writing experiences have prepared her. Thus, Rosy makes an agentic move to determine her own preparedness, despite the pressures and expectations for preparedness that might bear down on her experiences at GLHS. Pondering her capability, in one brief statement, Rosy worries she might not measure up to college-level expectations, based on what she knows about her peers. Alternatively though, Rosy puts those peers who have received merit scholarships in a category of their own—scholarships that, for her, may be unattainable—but by categorizing those peers in that way she resolves that she is still prepared compared to most students. The way in which Rosy questions her preparedness also suggests that there is a relationship between her self-efficacy and social comparison and how those two factors, together, affect her perceived preparedness. To elaborate, Rosy seems to consider her surroundings at GLHS, how others are performing, and how their performance compares to her performance. The ways in which she interacts with and compares herself to her peers is an important factor in shaping her self-beliefs, and ultimately, her feelings about her preparedness for college-level writing. To that end, participants might compare themselves to each other to help them determine their perceived preparedness to write at the college level, but some also seem to have a sense of their self-confidence in their writing ability, which has likely been fostered by the context in which these participants are writing and are expected to be, as Mrs. Gerard put it, the "best of the best."

With the examples offered from Rosy and Frank, I argue that participants observe and interact within specific learning contexts, and situate themselves in response to particular environmental cues based on local institutional representations. In a different way, students can also be affected by global institutional representations that often share a reciprocal relationship with that of the local. In fact, we will learn later from Rosy that even if she is feeling peer pressure that possibly stems from local institutional representations of preparation at GLHS, Rosy also seems to reject certain global institutional representations that, for example and as Stewart will suggest below, AP Language and Composition (AP Lang) is equivalent to college-level writing. For the remainder of this chapter, which focuses on AP Lang, I will examine these differing perceptions, as well as the seven participants who took AP Lang and collectively

believed they were at an advantage, compared to their peers who did not take AP Lang. [42] Thus, I argue in the following section that AP Lang functions as an institutional representation of college-level writing and preparedness at GLHS on both a local and global level for the participants highlighted in this chapter.

AP Lang as a Local and Global Institution

In Chapter One, I begin with an interest in how human behavior, personal factors, and environmental factors all interact with each other. Through this interaction, individuals become both products and producers of their environment (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2002). In this section, I explore how the who and where of college-bound students' writing experiences are important environmental factors to consider as some participants seemed to develop certain perceptions about writing based on what they have learned from a particular experience: taking AP Language and Composition during their junior year. When analyzing the data, most surprising was how frequently participants used their experience with AP Lang as a way to compare themselves to their peers. While all fifteen participants were enrolled in AP Literature and Composition during the time of this study, important findings surfaced about how some participants compared themselves to each other and discussed their perceived preparedness based on the AP Lang course seven out of the fifteen participants elected to take during their junior year.[43] That almost half of the participants mentioned that taking AP Lang shaped their perceptions and that the course was mentioned multiple times by participants regardless of actually taking the course is significant because it seems the reputation of the course influenced the ways these participants thought about their own preparedness and their expectations for college-level writing, even if they did not take the course. The examples offered in the remainder of the chapter also demonstrate how participants felt AP Lang functioned as a global institutional representation but also how participants, on a local level through interactions and observations, made meaning of how AP Lang represented college-level writing and preparedness on a local level.

As noted above, all seven participants who took AP Lang during their junior year noted that this course was significant to their writing experiences and perceived preparedness for

[42] Zach, who also took AP Lang, proved to be an exception to the general assumption that AP Lang was the epitome of preparedness for college-level writing. His perspective will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.
[43] Participants did not explicitly identify AP Lang as an institutional representation. Rather, in my data analysis, I identified the ways in which participants talked about AP Lang as an institutional representation, along with other examples like GLHS and standardized assessment.

college-level writing. In the current chapter, I look at three students—Alex, Emma, and Stewart—who all told a similar story of how AP Lang influenced their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Though they are not highlighted in Chapter Four, other students, like Sarah, Stephen, and Swimmer shared similar sentiments. Together, their accounts informed a key finding from this dissertation that suggests environmental factors, or institutional representations, influence the ways in which students think about their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

All fifteen participants identified environmental factors that contributed to their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Eleven of the fifteen participants mentioned AP Lang as representative of college-level writing or preparedness, regardless of whether students actually took the course. For example, Maya and Moon, discussed later in the chapter, represent participant accounts of those who did not take AP Lang, but saw the course as having an important reputation at GLHS. To add, these participants noted the course's reputation and expressed concern for not having taken the course. For contextual purposes, it is worth explicating how students described AP Lang and what they learned or valued from their experiences in that course in order to understand how AP Lang was situated as both a local and global institutional representation of preparedness for college-level writing at GLHS.[44] According to what participants reported, AP Lang focuses on composing genres in response to informational texts. A clear difference between AP Lang and other English courses is that the latter focused more on writing that had to do with literary analysis. In AP Lang, participants reported that they practiced writing genres that involved comparison, synthesis, rhetorical analysis, and research. Additionally, many of the participants who took AP Lang often referred to the rhetorical analysis as a common feature of the AP Lang course, as well as a genre they expect to practice at the college level. Students employed rhetorical terms through daily writing assignments, blog posts, and formative assessment via Quizlet, an online learning program. Along with more informal activities, many of the participants who took AP Lang referred to "style days" as a regular component to the AP Lang course. Based on participant responses, it seems the class was designed in such a way that students could practice and experiment with

[44] While information about participants' experiences with AP Lang emerged from the data, this study did not include any observations of the course of itself or an interview with Mr. Chesley (the AP Lang teacher). Still, it is worth first providing some context about the AP Lang course to better understand the experiences participants in this chapter draw upon to enact social comparison.

different ways of writing and through different means of writing (e.g. blog writing). All of this work, according to participants, also served as work towards the major essay assignments and the AP Lang exam—the synthesis essay, for which students were given about two weeks to gather research through interviews, online databases, and any other resources they believed useful to their research. Most participants who took AP Lang reported that overall, the class was not easy, but ultimately was a huge accomplishment.

Taking AP Lang was a crucial event in the larger high school experience of participants who took AP Lang, and beyond developing specific writing skills, was a seminal experience that influenced their perceived preparedness in that many participants who took the class believed they were more prepared mainly because they took AP Lang. For example, as we will learn from Alex later in this chapter, AP Lang, for them, was also a very challenging experience, and making it through the course and doing well on the exam was a proud moment for Alex. [45] Alex even questioned whether college-level writing could actually get any more challenging than what they have already experienced through preparing for the AP Lang exam: "Considering the whole College Board AP test, I would think that is also how you want to write in college because I'm technically taking a college class. I assume it would be the same. Not to mention, just thinking about it, I just figure, how else could they add stuff onto rhetorically analyzing I just think about it, and I'm like, 'How do you add more complicated stuff to it?'" Alex was not the only participant who seemed to equate AP Lang with college-level writing, and we will learn from other participants later in the chapter that success in AP Lang caused them to expect success with college-level writing. Additionally, for most participants who took AP Lang, the rhetorical analysis was a genre that they were able to practice throughout their junior year in AP Lang and because this genre was a component of various assessments, like the AP exam and the SAT, Alex and other students associated their experience with writing rhetorical analyses both with their preparedness to write at the college-level as well as what they expected college-level writing to entail.

Regardless of whether they took AP Lang, most participants perceived AP Lang as an intensive writing class. Furthermore, most participants were well aware that AP Lang carried a certain air of prestige and high academic status within the halls of GLHS. Not all participants

[45] A reminder here, that when discussing Alex, I will use the singular "they" and its variations as the singular they is Alex's preferred personal pronoun.

necessarily agreed that it was the "be-all-end-all" of preparedness for college-level writing, as will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter, but AP Lang's reputation at GLHS was certainly on most of the participants' radars, and for some it made an impact on students' self-efficacy for their preparedness to write at the college level. Take Stewart who, when asked to reflect on what preparedness for college-level writing meant to him, resolutely responded, "I think it means that I've had practice doing what I'm going to need to be doing before. I've had the practice. I know what to expect, and I know what I'm getting into with this and that I'm going to be able to go and write successfully at college." Throughout his interviews, Stewart often associated his expectations for college-level writing with the writing he had done in AP Lang, but the ways in which he talked about those AP Lang experiences surfaced an interconnectedness of global and local institutional representations that seemed to affect how Stewart perceived his level of preparedness for college-level writing. This interconnectedness of global and local institutional representations emerged from how Stewart talked about his teachers, but also how he saw a course like AP Lang as an investment that was sold to him by the College Board.

When he elaborated on his expectations for college-level writing during his first interview, Stewart explained, "Especially in the AP settings, 'cause these are supposed to be college classes, the teachers have been drilling it into our mind, that this is what we'd be doing in college, and what we will be doing in college."[46] Stewart's description of teachers "drilling" ideas into students' minds suggests that Stewart's teachers take part into the local institutional representation that perpetuates certain conceptions of preparedness present at GLHS. Teachers, then, play a role in how AP courses serve as a local institutional representation that influences what preparedness means and looks like at GLHS. Teachers are expected to provide models for their students about what is correct and what is not (Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, 1999). By indicating that he is certain about what college-level writing will entail because "teachers

[46] Throughout his interviews, Stewart pointed even more to AP Lang and his belief that it directly prepares students for college-level writing. Stewart, along with other participants, perceived college-level writing as writing across various subjects. Therefore, for some participants, college-level writing was not necessarily limited to a singular first year writing course. Although Stewart, in the above excerpt, groups AP Lit and AP Lang together, it should be noted that Stewart and other students associated AP Lang with college-level writing, more than AP Lit. This is likely because, according to participants, AP Lang facilitated the practice of a variety of writing skills and tasks, while the AP Lit course more narrowly focused on writing in response to literature. Participants did not expect college-level writing would have very much to do with literature unless they majored in English, and therefore, because AP Lang encouraged various writing tasks like rhetorical analyses and synthesis essays, participants, especially Stewart, felt highly prepared to write at the college level.

[especially in the AP settings] have been drilling it into our mind", Stewart's account illuminates teachers as disseminating specific information about what students should be prepared for and what they will be writing when they arrive at college. Thus, teachers, on a local level, are conveying specific representations that may have derived from global institutional representations like the College Board, but are verified and considered *the* way to write at the college level. Stewart picks up on environmental cues from his teachers that inform his ideas about his perceived preparedness. It is possible that Stewart's teachers might have also suggested that what they are learning in AP courses are stepping stones to what they will actually do at the college-level, but even so, Stewart drew conclusions about college-level writing based on how he perceived AP courses as represented to him by his teachers on a local level where students and teachers interact to make meaning together. Essentially, global representations exert pressure on how college-level writing and preparedness are defined and these representations are reinforced by teachers on a local level.

Stewart's ideas about AP classes also surfaced the ways in which AP courses function as a global institutional representation. After Stewart reported what his teachers said about AP courses, I asked Stewart to clarify whether he equated AP classes with college-level writing and he responded, "Yes. That's how the College Board sold them to us." Stewart's statement embodies an inherent contradiction: affirmatively stating that yes, he equates AP Lang with college-level writing, but then offering the caveat that that is what was sold to him by the College Board. Stewart's statement also demonstrates that the local representation AP Lang functions as a relationship to how college-level writing and preparedness are represented by AP Lang on a more local level. Stewart's teachers have "drilled" the idea that courses like AP Lang are equivalent to college-level writing, but it is ultimately the College Board that sells the "package," to teachers and students alike. Stewart continued, "I understand that the College Board is, they're out there trying to make money. They're the purveyors of the standardized testing that allows us to be compared adequately with other students. Especially when going into the college level." Stewart's use of "purveyors" to describe the College Board is fascinating because while Stewart does identify the entity as sellers of something, with a motive to profit from the curriculum and assessments they distribute, his use of "purveyors" also illuminates how, as Hansen (2010) describes "competing brands" like AP courses "are often marketed to students and their parents as a way to 'take care of' the college writing requirement or 'get it out

of the way'…and thus save time and tuition once [students] matriculate at college" (p. 2). Consequently, AP Lang, for Stewart, might be seen more as a commodity.

By using "purveyors" to describe the College Board, Stewart also invokes an entity that disseminates a particular representation of college-level writing. Interestingly enough, Stewart does seem to "buy into" the latter depiction of the College Board, because as I will demonstrate in the next section, Stewart uses his AP Lang experiences to not only deem himself more prepared than students who have not taken AP Lang, but as examples to demonstrate his preparedness for college-level writing. Furthermore, Stewart's commentary suggests that the College Board and its AP Lang curriculum and standardized assessment, like the SAT, demonstrate a reciprocal relationship between local and global representations that shape the ways in which social comparison occurs within the context of GLHS. Indeed, Stewart's description of the College Board as "purveyors of standardized testing that allows us to be compared adequately with other students" suggests that perhaps students are compared by a more global entity like the College Board, but as this chapter will further highlight, these purveyors also create space for students to actively compare themselves to one another and possibly engage in competition.

To further demonstrate how AP Lang, by way of the College Board, emerged from the data as an institutional representation that influenced participants' social comparison and, in turn, their perceived preparedness, I offer three examples in the following section of participants who used one specific event from their AP Lang experience to demonstrate how they believed they were more prepared to write at the college-level than their peers who did not take AP Lang. Out of this event, these three participants—Stewart, Emma, and Alex—illustrate a useful example to show how students talk to one another, compare notes about their performance, and as a result foster both an inherent competition among themselves and also use assessment as a way to determine their perceived preparedness for college-level writing.

The SAT Incident: An Example of Social Comparison

Overall, AP Lang, for the participants who took it during their junior year, was a seminal experience. From their AP Lang experiences, participants highlighted moments from the course that they attribute to their perceived preparedness, and also, reasons for why they believed they were more prepared than their peers who did not take the course. For Stewart, Alex, and Emma,

taking the SAT was another seminal experience that shaped the way these three participants thought about their own preparedness, compared to their peers. In fact, these students, along with others who shared similar sentiments about their experience with AP Lang, seemed to express less uncertainty about what they believed writing would entail. They also expressed more confidence in their perceived preparedness both on the initial survey and during their interviews. So, in a similar way, they still, in conversation, imagined themselves navigating college-level writing, like the participants in Chapter Three, but did so with more certainty. Again, this certainty also seemed to be informed by the messages they were receiving at GLHS and through their AP Lang course. The following accounts offered by Stewart, Alex, and Emma all center around a shared memory of when participants were preparing to take the SAT, which I will call the "SAT incident." The SAT incident was an important experience for three participants--Stewart, Emma, and Alex—that not only illustrates a moment of social comparison, but shows how these participants used their comparisons to further shape their perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Furthermore, the SAT incident serves as not only an example offered by these three participants to show how they believed they were more prepared than some of their peers, but also as an example of social comparison that seems to be mediated by various institutional representations through established expectations of the SAT assessment and AP curriculum.

During his first interview, I asked Stewart to elaborate on the ways in which he compared his level of preparedness for college-level writing to that of his peers, and for him, the experience of taking AP Lang offered him a higher level of preparation than his peers, who did not take AP Lang. Thus, because he took AP Lang during his junior year, Stewart believed he was much more prepared to write at the college-level than those who did not take AP Lang. He reasoned, "I see myself as—I think it goes to what you define as a peer because you could define my peers as being the other students who are in the AP Englishes, AP Lang and AP Lit, at which point I think I'm about the same preparedness. But compared to the students who're in the normal English classes here... I think I'm much more prepared." Stewart describes a sort of hierarchy to the English courses at GLHS, and for Stewart, the type of English course students take seems to hold implications for their academic status and preparedness. In the same breath of comparing himself to his AP peers, Stewart identifies both AP Lit and AP Lang as the gold standard for English courses and that these courses effectively prepare students for college-level writing. To further

illustrate how Stewart not only believed he was more prepared than his peers who did not take AP Lang and that a course like AP Lang was the key to ultimate preparedness, Stewart offered an example of what he had learned from AP Lang and how it resulted in his success on the SAT:

> One example of that is the new SAT has a rhetorical analysis on it. That is the main essay for it, and when all of us who are in AP Lang took it... we all walked out of it saying, 'Wow, that was so easy. We wrote about this, this, and this.' All of the students who weren't in it were talking about, 'Well, we just wrote about ethos, pathos and logos,' if they even came up with that. I think that the fact that we were able to get into techniques—and I know all of the AP Lang students I talked to got sevens or eights out of eight on all three categories on the new SAT. All of the non-AP Lang students got much lower than that. I think if you compare me and define my peers as those who've taken the same courses as me, I'm about the same preparedness. But if you compare me to the general student population here, I'm a lot more prepared.

Stewart sets up the scene for the SAT incident and through his account, also seems to further the divide of standards and outcomes between AP Lang and other "regular" English classes. Stewart also seems to be directly associating his success with writing a rhetorical analysis, thanks to taking AP Lang, to his perceived preparedness. For Stewart, the direct benefits of taking AP Lang include successful outcomes on the SAT as well as specific knowledge about what kinds of writing he expects to practice at the college level. There is the question of whether a rhetorical analysis prompt on the SAT is the same as a rhetorical analysis in a first year writing course. Research shows that the purpose behind what a standardized assessment asks students to write is largely different from the purpose behind what students will be asked to write in the context of, for example, a first year writing course (Guzy, 2011; Issacs & Molloy, 2010; NCTE, 2015; White, 1990). Certainly, Stewart identifies the foundational and important elements of the rhetorical analysis—ethos, pathos, logos—and his success on the SAT rhetorical analysis suggests that he was able to master that particular genre. However, there is still the question of whether the same techniques Stewart used to master the SAT essay will effectively translate in a college-level writing classroom, especially when SAT essays feature other characteristics like on-demand and "one and done" writing sessions. Ultimately, the SAT exam cannot account for other elements of the writing process that are important in college-level writing courses like revision, in-depth arguments, and nuanced application of rhetorical appeals. Still, according to

Stewart, if he can excel on the SAT, he is prepared to write at the college level, and his expectations for college-level writing embody the importance of high scores and standardized assessments. Additionally, Stewart reports that he and his fellow AP Lang peers were all prepared with the necessary writing techniques to do well, or as he put it, "get into the techniques." Stewart does not elaborate on what those techniques are, but the experience of taking the SAT and observing other students' experiences is an important indication that Stewart believes he has learned what he needs to in order to be successful with his writing experiences. Further, while, beyond Stewart's word, it cannot be said for certain that his "non-AP Lang" peers all actually received lower scores on the SAT essay portion, Stewart uses the marker of the SAT score to compare himself to his peers and determine himself as more prepared to write at the college level. For Stewart, his preparedness is founded on how he has perceived AP Lang, through teacher talk about AP courses and how the "package" has been sold to him by the College Board, as setting him up to do well on the SAT and the expectation that his college-level experiences will be similar, if not identical, to those he has had in AP Lang.

Like Stewart, Emma's perceptions of preparedness for college-level writing are also based on her AP Lang writing experiences to the point that taking AP Lang, according to Emma, has given her the advantage in terms being prepared for college-level writing. Emma explained to me that while she does not want to bring attention to the ways in which she compares herself to her peers, she is confident that she is more prepared than some of her peers, specifically those who did not take AP Lang:

> I mean I don't like to compare myself to my peers, just because that makes me feel bad. Not just like that they're better than me so I feel bad, but also I'd feel bad if I was trying to put myself on more of a pedestal. I know I am definitely at an advantage to people who have not taken an AP language course. I know that I'm top of my class. I'm not *the* [Emma's emphasis] top of my class, but I'm very high up there.

Emma believes she has the credentials (e.g. being at the top of her class) to substantiate her higher confidence in her perceived preparedness, but interestingly, while other classes may have contributed to her class ranking, Emma homed in on her AP Lang experience, which she credits as a pivotal experience in her academic career that prepared her first for the SAT and will eventually set her up for success at the college level. Emma reported a similar perspective about the SAT incident to that of Stewart when she recalled, "During the SAT, apparently nobody who

didn't—people who didn't take AP Lang did not know how to write a rhetorical analysis essay very well. That was problematic for them, because I guess they had gone two years without writing a rhetorical analysis essay, because English 10 or Brit lit didn't really have them do that." The institutional representation of AP Lang at GLHS is very much present in Emma's response as she suggests that those who did not take AP Lang, did not have the appropriate knowledge to do as well as they could have on the SAT. Further, Emma demonstrates an insight to the classes offered at GLHS and what those classes seem to lack in regard to preparing students for the SAT. Both Emma and Stewart indicate that the key genre to know was the rhetorical analysis, but from their accounts, it seems only AP Lang offered experience with writing particular genres—experience that other classes like English 10 and Brit Lit could not offer.

While recounting the SAT incident, Emma also indicated what writing skills she believed necessary to not only do well on the SAT rhetorical analysis, but to also eventually do well on the college level. Emma posited, "You need to be able to know how to write a rhetorical analysis, like a synthesis essay, and something that—argumentative I guess is what I can say. Or a creative style, if that's what the teacher requires…Mr. Chesley taught us to do that." Like Stewart, Emma also directly drew on her AP Lang experience to talk about college-level writing expectations, demonstrating specific genre awareness, as well as teacher expectations. On one hand, by identifying different genres she expects to write at the college level and then stating the caveat, "if that's what the teacher requires," Emma highlights writing skills that any college instructor might applaud, like genre awareness and rhetorical awareness of teacher expectations. However, I pause here to extend questions from Chapter Three about self-efficacy in rhetorical awareness about the way both Stewart and Emma draw mostly from their AP Lang experiences to explain not only their success with the SAT, but their expectations for success at college. For example, how might Stewart and Emma navigate a college-level writing experience that is wildly different from what "Mr. Chesley taught [them] to do"? Other participants discussed in Chapter Three indicate that, for them, success at the college level will result by first practicing strategies that I suggest illustrate rhetorical approaches to uncertainty and even possible failure. Later in the current chapter, some of those same participants will challenge the notion that AP Lang results in complete preparedness for college-level writing, and suggest that AP Lang actually narrows writing curriculum to "teach to the test." In contrast, Stewart and Emma both seemed to offer more certainty about their future—a certainty that was largely based on their AP Lang

experience. I am not suggesting that due to their sound perceived preparedness and trust in their prior experiences Emma and Stewart are actually less prepared than other participants who are willing to be more flexible. What I am suggesting though, is that Emma and Stewart might be so certain about their ideas for college-level writing, that they might be more resistant to writing experiences that do not resonate with what they experienced while taking AP Lang, especially if they were led to believe that AP Lang not only prepares students for college-level writing, but is equivalent to college-level writing.

The accounts from Stewart and Emma have suggested thus far that their perceived preparedness is due to how they draw directly from their AP Lang experiences to demonstrate their expertise and success, without much consideration for other writing experiences or the possibility of uncertainty or failure at the college level. On one hand, the accounts from Stewart and Emma might suggest that they actually have a limited perspective of both their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing, especially if their accounts reflect an institutional representation of both preparedness and college-level writing. (Recall Stewart's statement: "The College Board sold [AP classes] to us.") On the other hand, their accounts of the SAT incident might not reflect the challenges and failures some AP Lang students actually did face while taking the course, which might also be contributing to their perceived preparedness and cause them to believe that if they can survive potential failure in AP Lang and be successful, they can do the same in the future. Another participant, Alex, who also shared an account of the SAT incident, offers a broader perspective of how AP Lang better prepared those who took the course for both the SAT and eventually for college-level writing.[47] I also offer Alex's broader perspective to consider how students and teachers might interact on a local level in response to how AP Lang functions as an institutional representation of college-level writing and preparedness.

Alex, in the way they described the AP Lang environment, almost as if the class was a war zone, was proud of their accomplishments in AP Lang and confident they were more prepared than their peers who did not take AP Lang. Alex explained first that, "AP Lang puts you through hell. It's the whole puts you through hell and then you come back, and you're just there, suddenly, like, 'I'm a staunch-hearted warrior, and I know what I'm doing.'" Recall that while some students seem to equate their AP Lang experiences with what they expect college-

[47] A reminder here that Alex's preferred personal pronoun is the singular "they."

level writing will entail, most participants expect that college-level writing will be more challenging than their high school experiences. What is interesting about Alex's assessment of AP Lang and how it has shaped Alex, in terms of their perceived preparedness, is that Alex describes AP Lang as the epitome of challenge. At first, AP Lang was not a pleasant experience to be sure, and another participant, Swimmer, did at one point in her interview note that "kids were dropping out [of AP Lang] left and right." Still, from Alex's perspective, those who took the course completed their junior year feeling more confident in their writing knowledge and better prepared to take on any writing challenge in the future. For Alex, AP Lang prepared students for any and all things writing, and when it came time to take the SAT, AP Lang students were not only prepared for that moment, but they had already learned what they were expected to do on the SAT as early as the first trimester (tri) of their junior year. During their first interview with me, Alex reflected back to the SAT incident: "There's the thing where I think back to when we took the SAT last year. We knew what the prompt was kind of—it was gonna be rhetorical analysis. We all knew it was gonna be rhetorical analysis. The thing is, is that we're all here like, 'Oh, man, dude, we literally did a rhetorical analysis only in first tri.'" Alex continued, "That's it. That's what we did, and so we're just there like, 'Yeah, we're totally prepared for this,' but the thing is we're going around telling all our friends who are not in AP Lang being like, 'This is how you do rhetorical analysis,' because in other classes, they're just vague about it, and they do one essay, and they're done. We did like five.'" In this moment, Alex not only expresses that AP Lang has done the work of preparing these students to excel on the SAT, but that there is a recognition among Alex and their AP Lang peers that they had more time to prepare for the SAT than their peers who did not take AP Lang. Just as Stewart described the College Board as purveyors of preparedness, Alex describes themselves and their AP Lang peers as purveyors of knowledge, of how to do well on the SAT, all because they took AP Lang. The interaction Alex describes importantly conveys what AP Lang represents at GLHS and through comparing their AP Lang experience to their peers' different writing experiences, Alex matter-of-factly determines that AP Lang is superior to other courses in terms of the content that is taught in order to prepare students for future writing experiences. As Alex describes it, the AP Lang students took it upon themselves to provide information—"this is how you do rhetorical analysis"—that they believed had not been adequately provided to their peers. Alex recalls a teaching moment with a friend and recounts:

> I remember I was telling one of my friends, and she was just there like, "Man, all you AP Lang kids are all ready for this rhetorical analysis when we're just here failing." I'm like, "Hmm." Yeah, I would say that those in AP Lang are more prepared than those that were not in AP Lang. Oh, man, I'm having war flashbacks right now. [Laughing]. Yeah, I do think I'm more prepared than those that were not in that class.

Alex describes a moment in which social comparison is seemingly at play for both Alex and their friend. From this conversation between Alex and their friend, it is affirmed for Alex that students who took AP Lang are more prepared to write at the college-level than those who did not. Alex humorously notes "war flashbacks" of how challenging and at the time, awful, AP Lang was for Alex. But for Alex, it paid off, and they have lived to not only tell the tale, but to demonstrate a sense of confidence in this particular experience and argue that AP Lang has most definitely prepared Alex to write at the college level. For Alex's friend, social comparison happens in a different way. Even though this friend did not take AP Lang, the friend still seems to recognize the reputation of AP Lang and deems the "AP Lang kids" as more ready for the SAT than others. We cannot know for sure how Alex's friend fared on the SAT or what that friend feels about college-level writing. However, in the moment Alex describes, the friend expresses less confidence to do well than Alex and other AP Lang students highlighted in this chapter feel about their preparedness to write at the college level.

In describing this one moment around the SAT, together, Emma, Stewart, and Alex demonstrate an unwavering allegiance to their AP Lang experience and a strong trust that AP Lang has effectively prepared those who took the course to be successful with college-level writing. Furthermore, AP Lang, according to these three participants, has done the work of preparing them to be successful on the SAT, and likely college-level writing. According to Emma, Stewart, and Alex, the students who did not take AP Lang do not have this knowledge and are therefore less prepared to write at the college level. Even after participants were somewhat removed from the AP Lang experience, now in their senior year, AP Lang was a salient experience and used for some students to compare themselves to other students and determine their preparedness.

While the participants in this section argue that AP Lang better prepares students for future writing experiences and that AP Lang exposes students to a variety of advanced writing experiences, these students cling to a standardized test, which research shows is not equivalent to

college-level writing. However, it is important to remember that the success Stewart, Alex, and Emma all describe stems from their classroom room experience in AP Lang and in part, what they learned from Mr. Chesley. Therefore, while standards and expectations can be represented on a more global level, through standardized testing, and affect the way participants think about their own preparedness, these participants consider their preparedness based on important, local interactions they have had in GLHS classrooms with their teachers.

In some ways, the institutional representations that participants encountered and used to compare themselves to others were more abstract manifestations of standards and expectations. However, AP Lang as an institutional representation seemed to also manifest through teacher talk, especially as participants, like Alex, demonstrate that Mr. Chesley was an important influence on Alex's experience in AP Lang and the conclusions they drew about their preparedness for college-level writing. When Alex reflected on how they believed they were more prepared than their peers, Alex further explained their beliefs about what AP Lang prepares students for:

> Not does it only prepare you for logical essay writing, it also prepares you for creative because, at the end, after the AP test, he [Mr. Chesley] had us do some college application essays. I didn't use any, but he was just there like, "This is how you use style," and not to mention we had style days where we'd write on a blog, and he's just like, "Use this kind of sentence structure or description," or whatever. It helped.

How Alex describes Mr. Chesley's teacher talk holds important implications for how ideas about college-level writing and preparedness can be represented to students by teachers. What Alex recalls from Mr. Chesley's instruction may not be completely accurate. Regardless, the explicit "this is how" instruction is what Alex has carried away from the course and is steadfast in believing that AP Lang is *the* way to success with college-level writing. At the beginning of this chapter, I noted Mrs. Gerard's comment about AP students being the "best of the best," and later Stewart noted how messages about AP Lang and college-level writing have been "drilled into" students at GLHS. Alex once more highlights the influential role teachers have when they convey certain messages to their students, and when teachers talk, students might pick up on certain messages. In Alex's case, Alex very much values the explicit instruction Mr. Chesley provides about different kinds of writing. Even more importantly, Alex credits how Mr. Chesley taught writing in AP Lang as a crucial element of their preparedness. Again, it is worth being

transparent that this study did not include classroom observations of AP Lang, so I cannot speak to the realities of the course that Mr. Chesley taught. It is possible that Mr. Chesley's students received a "thorough exposure" (see Joliffe, 2010) to the principles of rhetorical theory and analysis and garnered important analytical reading and writing skills necessary for college-level writing. Furthermore, we know that AP Lang can work differently, depending on the instructor and school setting, which is why how college-level writing and preparedness is represented to students by teachers is so crucial.

It is important to acknowledge AP courses as potentially useful stepping stones to the preparing of students for college-level writing, but it is also possible that AP courses can prevent students from being flexible and open to new challenges and writing experiences. Stewart, Emma, and Alex were confident that they *knew* what to expect for the SAT, and it was AP Lang and how AP Lang was represented to them, that they had to thank for that knowledge. The following sections of this chapter offer examples from participants who did not take AP Lang during their junior year yet still recognized AP Lang's reputation as a way to actively compare themselves to their peers.

Moon, Maya, and Alice: Am I Prepared if I Didn't Take AP Lang?

While all participants in this study did take AP Literature and Composition, most participants, even if they did not take AP Lang, were very much aware of the reputation AP Lang holds among GLHS students and teachers. In fact, some participants, who did not take AP Lang, questioned whether they should have taken the course and how not taking the course affected their preparedness to write at the college level. These participants raised these questions based on how they compared their experiences to those of their peers who took AP Lang. How these particular participants talk about their awareness of the AP Lang experience, without even having taken the class, also reflects how AP Lang worked as institutional representation of both preparedness and college-level writing as many believed AP Lang was a ticket, so to speak, to mastering college-level writing, if not being exempt from it altogether because of earned AP credit. Consequently, I argue that the ways some participants questioned whether not taking AP Lang affected their preparedness suggest that their self-efficacy for preparedness to write at the college level can be influenced in negative ways by what AP Lang represents at GLHS. I further assert that the ways these participants simultaneously compare themselves to their peers and

consider their preparedness, even though they did not take AP Lang, are still mediated by the institutional representation AP Lang perpetuates in GLHS.

According to their initial survey responses, Moon was in the middle self-efficacy group and Maya Wilson and Alice Carroll were in the low self-efficacy group. Recall from Chapter Three that despite the lower levels of self-efficacy indicated on the survey, however, both Maya and Alice, during their interviews, did express higher levels of confidence in their preparedness to write at the college level based on their belief in their ability to practice rhetorical approaches that embody resourcefulness and a willingness to learn. However, when I asked them whether and how they compare themselves to their peers, their thoughts about AP Lang surfaced and caused them to question, in conversation, their perceived preparedness. Moon affirmed that she does compare herself to her peers to determine her own preparedness to write at the college-level. She matter-of-factly stated, "I do compare myself because I feel like kids who did take like AP Lang practiced it way more than the rest of us did, especially that being a three-tri class, and just primarily writing based, whereas if you took something like British Literature, we did—you know—we did write, but it wasn't nearly as intense or as crucial to the class, I guess." Along with Moon, other students (regardless of whether they took AP Lang) reported that compared to other courses, AP Lang was more rigorous and writing-intensive. What is more, Moon seems to recognize the disciplinary difference between a class like British Literature and AP Lang. While students might practice writing in British Literature, for instance, they are likely going to write in response to the literature they read in class. Participants like Moon not only recognized this difference, but also associated the kinds of writing practice with their expectations for college-level writing. In other words, AP Lang maintained a reputation of preparedness for college-level writing, likely because of the writing practice it entailed was not limited to literary response. Thus, despite the writing Moon was able to practice in British Literature, she still perceived a disadvantage to the kinds of writing she practiced for that class and the amount of time dedicated to writing. At the same time, Moon not only associated preparedness for college-level writing with *what* she and her peers write, but *how fast* they can produce certain kinds of writing. With Moon's excerpt below, I argue that she is comparing herself to AP Lang students to determine her preparedness, Further, the way she describes their writing practices is reminiscent of how Stewart described writing as a commodity earlier in the chapter as something that was "sold to him" by the College Board. When I asked Moon whether she felt more or less prepared,

compared to her peers, she responded by describing AP Lang students as better able to write at a faster pace and with more efficiency:

> I think I'm more—I think I'm slightly more prepared, not very. I think I'm only slightly more prepared because I'm more aware of the fact that I don't feel as up to par with them [AP Lang students]. It's just 'cause I always thought—I kind of regret not taking AP Lang because you can just tell, really quickly too. They're writing their college essays way faster. They're out there figuring out what to do in class way faster, whereas we're still—I mean, I'm not bad or anything, but it's harder, I think, just 'cause we didn't practice it that much, and they did for like a whole year.

Moon's attention to the speed and efficiency that she believes AP Lang students can practice more effectively is a sign of, as she sees it, their higher levels of confidence in their writing. To Moon, AP Lang students have had more writing practice than she, and thus it is possible that writing skills and tasks come more easily to AP Lang students than Moon. Therefore, Moon might believe that speed in writing is a sign of ability. Even though she did not take AP Lang, Moon echoes similar beliefs to Alex, Emma, and Stewart about the course. For those three participants, the SAT essay they needed to produce came with ease because of, according to them, their AP Lang experience. Moon suggests the same of her peers who took AP Lang and their ability to more easily and quickly produce other genres like college application essays (e.g. Common App essays), that, similar to the SAT, are designed by external institutional representations and distributed to schools throughout the country. Consequently, Moon seems to measure her perceived preparedness, as well as that of her peers by the pace of learning expectations and producing a product as well as the lack of practicing writing in order to more readily understand genre expectations and produce written products. The significance of this is that Moon's perceived preparedness is less if it means that she cannot produce written products as easily or as fast as her peers who apparently learned to do so in AP Lang. Moon's perspective also highlights how preparedness for college-level writing might be represented to students through prioritizing speed, pace, and product. Writing at the high school level is often "on-demand" (Applebee & Langer, 2001), and in AP courses, students are often preparing to write for standardized tests that require this kind of writing. It is possible that a lot of what students who took AP Lang were exposed to, could have been writing to prepare for a test that required producing a piece of writing in a short amount time. Even more broadly, writing for speed, pace,

and product might be a representation of "good writing" that even if she did not take AP Lang, Moon might be very aware of those representations.

Similar to Moon, Maya Wilson and Alice Carroll both question their perceived preparedness to write at the college level. In Chapter Three, I suggested that while both Maya and Alice reported less perceived self-efficacy on the survey for their abilities to complete writing skills and tasks at the college level, Maya demonstrated more self-efficacy in her resilience to overcome challenges and learn from those experiences, while Alice Carroll also demonstrated confidence in her willingness to learn new material and adapt once she made the transition to college-level writing. In the following examples Maya and Alice Carroll, acknowledge their self-efficacy in their preparedness to write at the college level, but at the same time, they still question their actual preparedness based on how they compare themselves to their peers who took AP Lang. In doing so, Maya and Alice raise important questions about what it means to be an "average student."

When I asked Maya if she thought she was more prepared or less prepared compared to other students, she initially responded, "I think I'm more prepared than the average student. I know there are definitely people that are more prepared than me." It is interesting to note Maya's identification of the "average student," which Maya believes she is not. The word "average" will be important to remember for the remainder of this chapter as it is used differently by Maya, Alice, and Charlotte. For example, later in the chapter, Charlotte identifies herself as an "average student," while Maya separates herself from that category. Yet Maya also believes herself to be less prepared than AP Lang students, whereas Charlotte will suggest she, as an average student, might actually be more prepared than AP Lang students. I asked Maya to clarify what might cause her to think she is more prepared than "the average student" while at the same time believing she is not as prepared as other students. Maya reflected:

> I think it's mostly just about the classes I've taken. I've been in honors English from ninth grade to now. The only year I missed is last year. I didn't take the AP writing class. This is literature I feel like that's part—I guess I'm comparing myself within my own school. I guess I don't really think about it from other schools' perspectives. We have a pretty good school, so I feel like it works. I know there are students last year who took AP Language and Composition. I feel like they're far ahead.

Interestingly, Maya's perspective seems to reflect the institutional representation that taking AP Lang results in immediate preparedness for college-level writing, and while she did not take AP Lang, Maya makes it clear that she is still better than average. Furthermore, by acknowledging that she is drawing comparisons with those she knows at GLHS and that she doesn't "really think about it from other schools' perspectives," Maya offers a perspective that reflects how writing and preparedness are represented to her on a local level. "Average" might look different at GLHS than it does at other schools. Like other participants, Maya is aware of the high academic expectations present at GLHS and in the excerpt above. Maya is not explicit about what that average student looks like, but she gives us some clues by first suggesting that she is not average, in part, because of the advanced classes she has taken. Maya seems to recognize that specific to GLHS, the expectations are high and taking courses that are not honors or AP courses leave students in the "average" category, which carries a more pejorative tone when Maya is careful to identify herself as "more prepared than the average student." For Maya, the local institution of GLHS has provided classroom experience, namely through her honors English courses that contributes to her perceived preparedness. At the same time, Maya also seems to recognize that in not taking AP Lang, her preparedness is lessened.

What also might be contributing to this sense of lessened preparation is that similar to Moon, Maya demonstrates awareness of the disciplinary differences between courses like AP Lang and her experiences with honors English. For example, Maya ultimately concludes that the AP Lang students are "far ahead," and this might have to do with the kinds of writing they have done. Indeed, other participants in this chapter, who did take AP Lang, illuminated the kinds of writing and time dedicated to writing that they believe have positioned them to be more prepared than their peers who did not take AP Lang. Maya also gives further insight to other advantages of taking AP Lang that better prepared those students who took AP Lang, which might also have to do with teacher instruction. For example, Maya explained, that to draw the conclusions she did about her perceived preparedness, she also considers the interactions she has with her peers and refers to Mr. Chesley as a possible reason why AP Lang students might be more prepared. She says, "I had friends who took it. I would see some of the times the papers that they write. I know the teacher gave a lot of feedback and really helped them. I know they say that people who thought they were already good writers came out even better than they were." Maya suggests here that the way AP Lang is represented at GLHS, might not only have to do with its general

reputation of preparedness that was "sold to them" by the college board, but also to do with the reputation of the teacher—Mr. Chesley. We have already learned from other participants like Emma and Alex that explicit instruction from Mr. Chesley contributed both to their expectations and perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Even from Maya, who did not take AP Lang, we learn more about the useful feedback Mr. Chesley provided to his students to help them grow as writers. Based on what she has observed and who she has interacted with, Maya shares similarities in the way she thinks about preparedness, compared to some AP Lang students, like Emma, Stewart, and Alex. Similar to Moon, Maya is generally pleased with her experiences at GLHS, but also is aware that AP Lang is different in that students who took the course were able to grow as writers, most likely from the specific instruction and received from Mr. Chesley. On a global level, the reputation of AP courses seems to bear down on multiple participants at GLHS, whether they have taken a course like AP Lang or not. Maya illustrates how she and other students seem to be making meaning of representations they are exposed to on a local level as she considers what she might be missing out on by learning from her peers about Mr. Chesley.

What Maya also suggests, as have other participants discussed in this chapter, is that students both observe and talk to each other about what they are experiencing, and that for better or for worse, peers can serve as important sources of information. In fact, another participant, Alice, not only offers additional examples of social comparison, but also elevates her peers as a primary resource for learning about writing. Generally, Alice sees her peers as a primary source of information that has contributed to the development of her writing skills and her perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Additionally, not only did Alice explain that her peers have always been an important resource for her, but that she would seek out peers before professors if she needed academic support at college, because as Alice explained, "you are living with your peers and things, in college. I think my friends that I make, and things like that, will be more helpful, and maybe older students that I get to know, will have more insight on it, things like that." For the most part, Alice believes that her peers will serve as an important and positive role for the development of Alice's writerly self, as well as an outlet for her to seek support or answers to her possible questions. In another way, and similar to Maya, Alice shows how, when it came to AP Lang, peers served as a different, perhaps more debilitating influence on Alice's perceived preparedness. While Alice seemed to demonstrate confidence in her capability to write at the college level throughout most of her interviews, there was a moment during her first

interview when she demonstrated a sort of inner conflict. In that moment, Alice expressed confidence that she expects she will be successful based on what she knows and based on her idea of her "writerly self," but in comparing herself to her peers, especially those who took AP Lang, she wondered out loud if she really was prepared to write at the college level.

> Compared to my peers in AP Literature I would say I'm probably average, but last year when—I was in Honors English last year—I would say I was doing a little bit better and that's why I took AP Literature this year. This year I would say average, but last year I might have said a little bit more than average.

Like Maya, Alice invokes the word "average" to describe herself, and her use of the word seems to carry more of a pejorative tone, especially as her perceived preparedness has lessened over time. Further, both Alice and Maya, use "average" to help them illuminate where they stand, compared to their peers who took AP Lang. While Maya saw herself as more advanced than the average student, despite not taking AP Lang, Alice *is* the average student, because she did not take AP Lang. Ultimately though, the use of "average" from both Maya and Alice surface how they perceive the reputation of AP Lang, and suggests how AP Lang has been represented to them. I assert too that what AP Lang represents to participants and how they use the course to compare themselves to others further lessens their self-efficacy for their preparedness to write at the college level. Maya may be "above average", but not as prepared as AP Lang students. For Alice, social comparison and the way AP Lang is represented, influences her perceived self-efficacy in a more reductive way that causes her to think differently about herself and her abilities. When I asked Alice to further explain why she was determining herself now only average, compared to her peers, she reflected:

> Just seeing the level of writing that the people around you are. Like I see my friends, like today we got our papers back. I did the same as the person next to me who also didn't take AP Lang last year. The person who did take AP Lang did better than us, but we did the same. It makes me think because she took AP Lang, does that mean she's going to be more prepared? I just wonder have I learned what I need to for college and things like that.

The questioning Alice does in this moment shows the root of this counterproductive social comparison, and that is the AP Lang/other English divide that most participants, whether they took AP Lang, perceive so clearly. Not only did Alice receive a lower grade than the AP Lang

friend, but so did her other friend who did not take AP Lang, giving her more data to suggest that AP Lang better prepares students for college-level writing. Just as the participants in the previous section used the performance of their peers on the SAT to compare themselves to others, Alice uses summative assessment grades to compare herself to her peers and attribute the difference to AP Lang.

As discussed in Chapter Three, what was most striking about Alice was her belief that the prior knowledge she garnered would serve her well as she moved forward, and if she were to face any challenges along the way, or gaps between her prior and new knowledge, Alice was confident in her flexibility to adapt to new environments and take on challenges. However, the above accounts from Alice also demonstrate her internal struggle with her perceived preparedness, which shows how social comparison can also affect self-efficacy levels in a negative way. Interestingly, Alice, even though she did not take AP Lang and in this moment feels less prepared to write at the college level, echoes similar perceptions to those of her peers who have taken AP Lang.

Maya, Moon, and Alice all echo similar ideas to those of Stewart, Alex, and Emma about AP Lang. What all these participants' reflections demonstrate is that they are comparing themselves to each other to determine their preparedness and using AP Lang as a concrete example to demonstrate how they compare to each other. As a result, the effect that AP Lang and what it represents has on students' comparisons ultimately influences students' writing self-efficacy and their perceived preparedness. I suggest that these participants have taken up the institutional representations of AP Lang and come to believe that taking AP Lang results in better writing skills, better grades, and better preparedness for college-level writing. Without the course, students remain average, as Alice describes herself, or just above average, like Maya, describing herself and ultimately, not as prepared as they could be and less so than their peers who did take AP Lang. In some ways, the participants highlighted so far affirm some of the ways preparedness is currently conceptualized by academic and popular discourses in success in advanced courses and outcomes are key to preparedness. In the following section, other participants will consider qualities they have to offer that they believe contribute to their preparedness—these qualities do not necessarily always mean getting A's or having Advanced Placement courses listed on a high school transcript.

"I feel like I have other skills too that I can bring to the table": Complicating the Representation of AP Lang and its Effect on Participants

In the earlier sections of this chapter, I have shown how AP Lang is an important institutional representation that affects how some participants compare themselves to their peers, and through that comparison, determine their preparedness to write at the college level. The participants presented in this chapter have, up to this point, indicated that AP Lang positively affects their preparedness for college-level writing and that students who take the course are likely more than an "average" student. While these representations might hold influence over some students at GLHS so much so that participants' self-efficacy was influenced, it is also important to acknowledge how some participants resisted these representations and in some cases, expressed more confidence in their own mastery experience. The final section of this chapter complicates the idea that taking AP Lang better prepares students for college-level writing. While I continue to focus on the social comparative perspective, rhetorical aspects still appear and are considered in this section. The ways in which the participants in this final section resist the common narrative of AP Lang at GLHS is reminiscent of the rhetorical theory I discussed in Chapter Three. For instance, while participants in the earlier sections of this chapter seem to respond to the discourse within a particular rhetorical situation and take up its narrative (AP Lang students are more prepared for college-level writing), the students discussed here seem to more independently interpret and situate themselves within a rhetorical situation, more agentically, breaking away from the common narrative. Recall from Chapter Three that contemporary rhetoricians suggest that individuals independently interpret and situate themselves in rhetorical situations with a certain amount of agency (Vatz, 1973; Miller, 1984). Participants in this section will demonstrate an awareness of the reputation AP Lang has at GLHS, but these participants, different from those highlighted earlier in this chapter, choose to resist the notion that this course results in absolute preparedness for college-level writing. Whereas Bitzer's rhetorical situation may have seemed more at play earlier in the chapter, in that the rhetorical situation and its constraints are acting upon individuals, requiring a reaction, more recent conceptualizations of the rhetorical situation—that individuals interact and interpret the rhetorical situation seems to be more apparent with the accounts that follow. Simply put, students will acknowledge the messages about college-level writing and preparedness that are perpetuated throughout the halls of GLHS, but they will not fully take up those messages or let the messages

directly inform the ways in which they think about their own preparedness for college-level writing.

I offer three examples from Zach, who did take AP Lang, and two other examples from Rosy, who dropped AP Lang, and Charlotte James, who did not take AP Lang. The examples offered in this section do not necessarily contribute to frequent instances of AP Lang references in the data, but do serve as interesting outliers that offer a different perspective on the reputation of AP Lang at GLHS and how students might compare themselves to one another to determine their perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Ultimately, I argue that even though institutional representations bear down on these participants in both local and global ways, the views of the participants in this section help us to consider how students might actually think carefully about how college-level writing and preparedness are represented to them in concert with their mastery experience. Through their thought processes, these participants make informed decisions about their own preparedness and expectations for college-level writing that depart from the ways in which other participants in this chapter have been affected by institutional representations.

I asked Zach, during his first interview, whether he believes he learns anything from comparing himself to his peers. He argued, "Yeah, I think too, when you set the bar high and you look at—I find myself always, when I'm doing something, whether it's playing a sport or trying in school, even playing a video game or whatever, I'm always looking at, okay, who's the best and how can I get up to that level? Obviously, more oftentimes than not, I'm never going to be as good as them, but when you set the bar that high you can improve a lot more than if you set the bar lower, I think. That helps." Earlier in the chapter, I explained that social comparison is a natural way for individuals to understand themselves (I know other people, therefore I know myself). Zach seems to use social comparison for the purpose of personal goal setting, and even though he might not ever be "as good" as some of the peers to whom he compares himself, social comparison is practiced by Zach not only as a determining factor for his perceived preparedness, but also as a driving component to continually improve. In some ways, Zach is confident that he is more prepared to write at the college level than his peers. In other ways, while he accepts that he might not ever be as good as some of his peers, that will not stop him from setting goals to continually do better. Thus, Zach is constantly thinking about his own performance and how that performance is situated among that of his peers. Interestingly, while Zach credited AP Lang as

preparing him for college-level writing, he did not use the class as a way to compare himself to other students and he also dismissed the idea that the course was equal to his expectations of college-level writing. Different from other participants in this chapter, Zach did not indicate that AP Lang was equivalent to college-level writing, nor did he think it was *the* ticket to complete preparedness for college-level writing. Rather, he saw the course as appropriate for the high school context.

I did, however, ask Zach during his second interview to clarify whether he equated AP Lang with what he expected college-level writing to be like when he made the transition. Zach admitted a level of uncertainty about what college-level writing will entail, but did suspect that it won't necessarily be the same as his AP courses. He explained:

> I haven't taken any [college-level courses]—well, technically, they pretty much are, but personally, I would say that they come—to me, come off—and this is from someone who—I haven't taken any actually college course at a college yet. I think that they might be more geared towards the high school environment just because the teachers are high school teachers. Once you have that high school mold around it, I don't wanna say it waters it down, but it takes a little bit of that edge off of it actually being a college class, I think….and I wanna say that once you take—I think the ones you take in college, they might be shorter. You're doing more material in less time than you would in high school.

By using phrases like, "waters it down," to describe AP courses I do not think Zach meant to suggest that his high school courses were not rigorous or that his teachers did not teach him well. On the contrary, Zach believed that AP Lang, as he explained, "really helped me get the balance I needed between math and English. That helped me open up my mind more to nuanced things, and how to argue, conceding your argument, and learning a lot of those little nuances that helped me out." But Zach also fully recognizes the high school context he is in currently, and the possibility of differences in writing in a new context. In fact, different from what some of his AP Lang peers might suggest, Zach sees high school and college as different places, with different purposes. Essentially, Zach takes into consideration the local context of his GLHS experience, the global context of high school, and what the purpose of high school should be. Especially when he suggests that courses like AP Lang are "geared towards the high school environment" and are taught by *high school* teachers, for Zach, it is not just about what the College Board

might be selling to him, as it was for Stewart, but the context Zach is currently in. Zach is recognizing a specific context and its members, and draws his own conclusions about what that context represents. In that way, Zach has developed a different idea of what preparedness and college-level writing should be, and thus rejects the notion that AP Lang, and really anything about high school is equal to what college entails.

> I would say I'd expect it to—as far as preparation, I view this as my preparation, to an extent. As far as what I expect, I'm expecting it to be just this is high school here, then this is college, moving—it's just going to be another step up. If you go into that without being—having that mindset, you can be shocked at first.

Zach has the foundation, as he indicated, to embrace nuances and perhaps practice more critical thinking, but for Zach, it takes steps. This final argument from Zach about having the kind of mindset he describes is similar to what participants in Chapter Three suggest about demonstrating flexibility and a willingness to learn. Zach also indicates that suggesting that classes like AP Lang should be equated with college-level writing might actually be more challenging to negotiate new writing experiences different from AP Lang if students do not carry a more flexible mindset that expects change and is opent o learning new ways of writing. Zach recognizes that there is more to learn and that perhaps, despite its academic rigor and benefits, AP Lang does not necessarily ensure complete preparedness or is it equal to college-level writing. In a similar way, Rosy also embraced the idea that there is more to learn as she transitioned from high school writing and in fact, dropped AP Lang for fear of the class limiting her writing experiences.

Earlier in this chapter, I provided examples from Rosy who, during her first interview, described how she compares herself to her peers to consider her preparedness. Similar to most participants, Rosy does not discount the significance of AP or SAT scores or the peer pressure she gets from her friends with merit scholarships. However, while she uses these kinds of comparisons, similar to Zach, Rosy does not use AP Lang as an example to compare herself to her peers. Importantly, while Rosy recognizes elements of competition and rigor at GLHS and uses social comparison to determine her own preparedness, this does not necessarily mean for Rosy that preparedness for college-level writing is solely dictated by how preparedness and college-level writing are represented to students at GLHS by courses like AP Lang. I offer further discussion of Rosy's writing preferences and her take on AP Lang to consider how she

situates herself in the face of institutional representations at GLHS to determine her own preparedness, develop her writing skills, and continue to enhance her writing experiences. Like Zach, Rosy demonstrates a similar resistance to the notion that a course like AP Lang will result in ultimate preparedness for college-level writing, but she offers a different representation of AP Lang altogether. Rosy first perceives the purpose of AP Lang as relegated to test preparation and then discusses how what she believed the purpose of AP Lang to be could actually be detrimental to her writerly self.

Also during her first interview, Rosy described her writerly self as creative and expressed a love for reading and writing fiction. When describing kinds of writing she preferred, she explained, "I do prefer writing more fictional, write at your own—I don't know, whatever you feel like. If it's a given topic and I can just write whatever I want and there are limited guidelines, I think that it's more fun and easier." Rosy's creative writerly self and her writing preferences might contribute to why she was not convinced that a course like AP Lang was equivalent to college-level writing or that it automatically made students better writers. In fact, during her second interview, Rosy explained that she originally intended to take AP Lang during her junior year, but after a week, she decided to drop the course when she realized the course might have negative effects on her writing:

> Rosy: I was in it for a week, and, originally, I wanted to take the class. It was a lot of really intense writing, and, I write because I like writing, not because I want to prepare for a test. I felt it was not really going in the direction that I wanted it to, so, I ended up dropping it.
>
> Ann: You stuck with AP Lit this year. What's the difference, I wonder?
>
> Rosy: AP Lit is more reading, and, I like that one thing that Mrs. Gerard does is she doesn't teach for the test. The class is for students that are actually interested in expanding their reading and writing abilities. It's not taught towards one area. A certain structure. It's more a club…They [AP Lang] teach to the test and it's very structured, and everything has to be uniform. I was in it for a while and I was like, "You know, this isn't really where I wanna go with writing." 'Cause I like it [writing] and I felt if I stayed in the class forever, that it might destroy my love for writing because it was really intense and stuff.
>
> Ann: As you're looking ahead to college, are you okay with that decision still?

> Rosy: Yeah. It was a good direction because I feel I would hate writing if I did take the class. It may have made me a better writer and helped me a lot for college, but I didn't wanna not have that [love for writing] still….Other classes still prepare you, 'cause the goal in any class is to prepare you for college, even if it isn't an AP class. It's still designed to help you do better.

While her exposure to AP Lang was brief, Rosy learned enough to know that the course would not be a good fit for her, and in fact, that it might narrow and limit her writing ability "destroy [her] love for writing." Rosy might also be aware of the reputation AP Lang has at GLHS, but importantly, she makes her own decision that practicing writing skills and preserving her love for writing are more important to her writing development than "prepar[ing] for a test." Instead, Rosy values the writing experiences she has had and trusts that those experiences have helped her to develop important skills, and, in turn, prepare her for college. Like Zach, Rosy also demonstrates an awareness for how a local context can shape writing experiences when she says, "the goal in in any class is to prepare you for college, even if it isn't an AP class." Rosy sees her high school courses as preparatory, but not necessarily equivalent to college courses. Thus, Rosy might not agree with other students like Stewart, Emma, or Alex, that AP Lang is equivalent to college-level writing. Further, unlike other participants, Rosy does not seem to relegate her perceived preparedness to achieving outcomes, preparing for tests, and churning out written products. Rosy still values those outcomes and is explicit about how she uses those outcomes to compare herself to her peers, but also seems to expect that there is room for growth when it comes to developing her writing and reading skills. Rosy did not believe AP Lang was the place to do that. Intermixed with her sense of institutional representations important to her perceived preparedness, Rosy also seems confident in what she believed is best for her and what has so far best prepared her for college-level writing. Rather than accept AP Lang as the equivalent to college-level writing or that it is the best way to prepare future writing experiences, Rosy trusts in her writerly self, the mastery experience she has developed, to confidentially make the transition to college-level writing.

In Chapter Three, we met Charlotte James, who, based on her survey results, was in the lower self-efficacy group, but in her interviews, expressed higher levels of confidence in her preparedness based on other qualities she believed she had to offer. Like Alice, Charlotte also identifies herself as creative, and I offer a brief excerpt from her to further demonstrate how

some participants, while recognizing dominant representations of college-level writing and preparedness at GLHS, chose other ways of approaching new writing experiences, while still expressing higher levels of confidence in their ability to write at the college level. In the earlier sections of this chapter, we saw how students compare themselves to each other with attention to things like equating college-level writing to AP courses and mastering standardized assessment. While they are aware of what AP Lang represents to other students, when Rosy and Charlotte compare themselves to other peers they do not necessarily direct all of their attention to grades, for example. In the following excerpt, Charlotte will acknowledge that she believes AP Lang students are prepared, but what seems key is that Charlotte does not seem to believe that the course is the "end-all-be-all" or a means for ultimate preparedness. In fact, Charlotte instead suggests that students who she identifies as "wired to like get an A," might face some challenges when they are asked to write something that is not part of what they have already experienced or that does not match their expectations for college-level writing. Furthermore, for Charlotte, it does seem that more self-confidence emerges out of what she determines about her own mastery experience:

> I'm like a pretty average person. I feel like I'm pretty in the middle. Obviously, like there's people in my AP Lit class who took AP Lang and like literally it was their life. I feel like, yeah, those people are prepared. I feel like I have other skills too that I can bring to the table. I'm like a little bit more creative, I think. Some people are just like really smart have a hard time with that. Especially if an English class, they're like, "Okay, we're doing something like fun writing." I feel like certain people, like especially at [this school], their brains are literally not wired to do that. They're wired to like get an A. I think that in a sense, I am like in the middle of preparedness."

Charlotte, without being explicit about it, does seem to have awareness of institutional representations that shaped students' ideas of what it means to be prepared for college-level writing. Even for Charlotte, while she is confident that she has skills that other students might not be able to offer, she still identifies herself as "in the middle of preparedness." Does, Charlotte, then, despite her resistance to institutional representations like AP Lang, still consider herself only in the middle of preparedness because she does not necessarily meet the expectations of those institutional representations? Recall from Chapter Three that Charlotte

acknowledged that she might not always be able to immediately perform certain writing skills and tasks, but she expressed confidence in being able to adjust and work through challenges, while always carrying a willingness to learn. Certainly, she demonstrates an understanding of institutional representations and how it might affect her peers' perceptions, but Charlotte seems to be more comfortable and confident in swimming around in the middle, so to speak, if it means she can practice other skills and learn more from her writing experiences along the way.

In fact, compared to how Maya and Alice used the word "average" in the previous section, Charlotte has a more positive take on "the average student" and seems to identify herself as such. Earlier in the chapter, Alice suggested that because she did not take AP Lang, she is less prepared and "average." In a different way, Charlotte, through her comfort with average, does not demonstrate complacency or that she is "less than," but an awareness for other qualities and skills she has developed without taking courses like AP Lang. Just as she did in Chapter Three, and similar to Rosy, Charlotte suggests that there is room for growth and other kinds of writing skills and approaches, like creativity, to bring to the table as she anticipates the transition to college-level writing. In fact, when she compares herself to other peers, even though she identifies herself as average, it might be that Charlotte believes she is at an advantage because she is not "wired to get an A," but could possibly explore and learn about other kinds of writing.

Together, Zach, Rosy, and Charlotte suggest that AP Lang also has limitations and is one way of developing preparedness for college-level writing, but not *the* way. Further, both Zach and Rosy indicate that while AP Lang might be an avenue for preparedness, the purpose of this course, as well as any other high school course does not serve the same purpose as college courses. Thus, these students are very much aware of the contexts in which they are learning, but do not seem to accept the institutional representations that circulate throughout GLHS. Rosy and Charlotte especially suggest that institutional representations of college-level writing and preparedness might not account for other writing skills like creativity, skills beyond what are required for the test or to get the A.

Conclusion

Even though this chapter focuses on an angle of social comparison and theorizes the institutional representations of college-level writing and preparedness that bear down on comparisons students make, the rhetorical thread continues onward from Chapter Three. All the

participants in this chapter demonstrate a keen sense of rhetorical awareness for and response to their surroundings and make significant decisions on what to embrace in their learning and sometimes, what to resist. In fact, while I draw from SCT to consider social comparison as well as the environmental factors that influence students' perceptions, the ways in which students do interact within GLHS, through social comparison and reporting environmental factors, are reminiscent of my argument that students are rhetorically acting on social knowledge to draw conclusions about their preparedness for college-level writing. In this chapter, that social knowledge was particularly drawn from means of social comparison and ultimately, the interactions and observations students made and reported.

When some participants in this study used AP Lang as an example to compare themselves to one another, their accounts reflected ways that the course potentially better prepares students to write at the college-level, and that AP Lang represents the "gold-standard" of college-level writing and preparedness. However, other participants, while recognizing the reputation of AP Lang at GLHS rejected the idea that they needed the course to be adequately prepared to write at the college level, and thereby pushed back against the institutional reputation that AP Lang is equivalent to college-level writing. Even if some of the participants highlighted in this chapter disagreed on the value of AP Lang for college-level writing preparedness, I argue that all the participants in this chapter brought to light that first, social comparison does not just occur through observing one another, but interacting and essentially (e.g. talking to one another about courses like AP Lang, talking about how they did on the SAT, etc., comparing notes with each other, like for example, the participants who talked to each other about their experience with the SAT incident. Especially for Alex, Emma, and Stewart, they came to believe by talking to their peers who also took the SAT but did not take AP Lang, that not only did these three perform higher on the SAT essay portion, but that for them, their success directly resulted from taking AP Lang. AP Lang provided Alex, Emma, and Stewart the intellectual capital they believed they needed to be successful on that particular assessment.

Second, based on participants' accounts in this chapter, I further argue that social comparison emerges from observation and interaction and much of the participants' observations and interactions were based on the institutional representations that are bearing down on them. On a global level, Stewart buys into, so to speak, what the College Board, as the "purveyors of standardized testing," are selling him. Similarly, even though they did not take AP Lang, Moon,

Maya, and Alice still recognize the dominant representation of AP Lang and worry that by not taking the course, they are less well-prepared for college-level writing. In a sense, participants are not only interacting with each other to determine their preparedness, they are also interacting with their environments that shape the decisions they make about their preparedness. Frank especially illustrates how different academic contexts can shape perceptions by comparing his prior experiences of his former high school to the different expectations put forth by GLHS. Further, the high expectations and competition that are fostered at GLHS suggest that on a local level, participants are responding to institutional representations of preparedness that possibly pressure students to engage in social comparison in order to compete and excel. I also suggest that the way social comparison plays out within the halls of GLHS could be significantly different from other schools, based on their location and the resources to which those schools have access. Stewart and Rosy have indicated to us that GLHS is a high-performing school, but also a wealthy school with myriad resources to support its students, including the opportunity to take AP courses. Frank had other resources like dual-enrollment courses, but he believes that the caliber of what GLHS has to offer is superior. While the scope of this project does not focus on economic inequalities of access to education, the ways in which participant accounts reflect institutional representations points to future, crucial research on how college-level writing and preparedness are represented and promoted (or not) across varying school contexts.

Participants' accounts also raise questions of how institutional representations of college-level writing promote or inhibit learning. This chapter supports self-efficacy research that posits that individuals are both products and producers of their environments. It is important to remember that my study examines the response of a purposefully selected group of students, and their responses are certainly specific to their experiences and learning contexts. In this study, participants were clearly responding to certain representations and pressures within GLHS, to the point that a course like AP Lang was believed to be the epitome of preparedness and the equivalent of college-level writing. Additionally, for Alex, the rigor of AP Lang was seemingly beneficial. From Alex's experiences, they believed they became a staunch-hearted warrior and could take on anything moving forward. Differently, their awareness of how AP Lang might be the best way to prepare for college-level writing resulted in feelings of insecurity and regret for participants like Moon, Maya, and Alice, who did not take the course. Alice first recognized that her peers are often a valuable and positive resource for her learning, but when she compared

herself to students who took AP Lang, what she learned from her peers in this case resulted in more of a detrimental effect on her perceived preparedness. Ultimately, participants indicated what they learned from interactions with their peers and teachers, and their accounts reflected how local and global institutional representations can affect interactions on a local level and how students and teachers can make meaning of those representations. The examples I offer in this chapter hold important implications for how educators represent the purpose of writing as they encounter different writing experiences.

Other participants seemed to make a more agentic move away from the dominant AP Lang reputation at GLHS. For example, AP Lang served more as a stepping stone for Zach to take up even more rigorous and nuanced writing practices. Importantly, what this chapter demonstrates is that these participants are drawing informed conclusions about their preparedness based on how college-level writing is represented to them. Participants give attention to the context they are in, and I suggest, interact with particular rhetorical situations, depending on how they choose take up or resist the messages they receive from institutional representations. In some ways, students are reacting to Bitzer-like rhetorical situation in which students, like Alex, Stewart, and Emma, are responding to certain messages from specific audiences. In other ways, Zach and other participants hear the messages, but make their own interpretations based on what they know about themselves, and as Charlotte indicates, the "other skills [they] bring to the table." Out of their awareness emerges important questions that they are both explicitly and implicitly raising about writing and in the next chapter, participants will collectively address questions of how college-level writing is different from high school writing, while crucially surfacing their attention to important writing practices like rhetorical awareness and writerly independence.

CHAPTER FIVE

Looking Beyond the Uncertainty, Insecurity, and Resistance: Developing Knowledge and Writerly Independence for College-level Writing

Introduction

The first thing that came to mind for Stephen, when I asked him what he imagined college-level writing to be like, was the amount of writing he anticipated having to produce, that it would be like, "writing to the point where your hand hurts at the end of it." Like Stephen, most participants seemed to have the page length of writing on their minds, when they imagined the differences between high school and college-level writing. As a result, by reflecting on the sheer number of pages they expected to write in college, participants provided more insight to what they expected college-level writing to entail. In some ways, responses like Stephen's confirm what we already know from the literature about the differences between high school and college-level writing. Namely, a major difference between high school and college-level writing is the amount of writing that is practiced in high school in order to prepare for high-stakes assessment (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Scherff, L., & Piazza, C., 2005). However, through identifying differences between high school and college-level writing, like page length requirements, participants also revealed that they are trying to figure out what effective writing processes look like at the college level. Indeed, the pattern in the data of participants quickly turning to page length as an example to show what they perceive as different between high school and college-level writing, raised important questions: Why do participants fixate on quantity when they think about college-level writing? What do their concerns about page length reveal about their rhetorical thinking about writing?

Regardless of whether participants seemed more resolute or uncertain about their preparedness for college-level writing, all fifteen participants demonstrated important developing knowledge about college-level writing and some participants expressed the importance of working toward writerly independence, which I discuss in the current chapter. Themes and patterns around developing knowledge particularly emerged when I talked to participants about

their beliefs about the differences between high school and college-level writing. What immediately came to mind about differences between high school and college-level writing was the amount of pages they expected to write at the college level. For instance, while talking about the idea of writing a 7-10 page paper, Alice said, " I've never written something that long. I think the longest I've ever written was five pages. Yeah, that was—I was thinking about how could I write that much? That's a lot." Just as some students did not stop at their feelings of uncertainty, while talking with me, Alice and others did not stop at their concerns about writing more pages at the college level and talked through what that might mean for their writing experiences, revealing developing knowledge, and in some cases writerly independence. As noted, all fifteen participants, demonstrated important developing knowledge, while thirteen of the fifteen showed an interest in working toward writerly independence. Two participants—Tangerine and Moon—in the low and middle self-efficacy groups, respectively, shared accounts that illustrated less writerly independence. Their concerns for writing large amounts at the college level and advancing to college-level writing, in general, are discussed later in this chapter.

Conversations around the differences between high school and college-level writing also pointed to students' self-efficacy beliefs in their capabilities to write at the college level. In this chapter, students start with notions of what they believe they are not capable of (e.g. writing the amount of pages they think college requires), but then draw on what they already know about writing, highlighting what they are already capable of. Whereas Chapter Three discussed students' uncertainty around the uncertainty of the broader context of college-level writing, Chapter Five focuses on what students already know about the practice of writing and how they are interested in learning more. For example, and as an immediate attempt to answer the questions in the previous paragraph, some participants, through their concerns about page length, revealed ways in which they were questioning the possibility of being able to write, for example, seven to ten pages, a feat some of them had never accomplished before. Through questioning the possibility, students revealed developing knowledge about what it might take to write longer essays, but then acknowledged that they would also have to learn more to really be able to accomplish such a task (e.g. I know a little and I'll have to learn more). Thus, with this chapter, I extend self-efficacy research that suggests self-efficacy is related to how individuals' belief in their capability to perform skills and tasks (Bandura, 1986; Bruning et al., 2012; Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007). Participants highlighted in this chapter expressed self-efficacy beliefs

about writing at the college level; some participants questioned their capability (how will this even be possible?), while others demonstrated that they are not only confident in their ability to write at the college level, but that they are eager to establish more writerly independence, which will be explored toward the end of this chapter.

Much of what participants expect about different writing processes, I argue, is also informed by how writing is represented to them at the institutional and classroom levels, as we learned in Chapter Four, and how participants approach not only the writing process itself, but different contexts of writing. In other words, much of how some participants think about the writing process has to do with figuring out the expectations of new rhetorical situations. [48] In some ways, this chapter feeds back in to Chapter Three and is meant to build a bridge across findings chapters to further illuminate the reciprocal interactions between the self and context. For instance, similar to the participants who were highlighted in Chapter Three, the participants discussed in the first part of this chapter demonstrate productive uncertainty—or ways of moving beyond their vulnerabilities and uncertainties (Miller 2016)—by asking questions about the differences between context (e.g. difference between amount of writing in high school and college-level writing), for example, that are actually more productive than we might at first listen given participants credit for. In fact, I revisit two participants who were highlighted in Chapter Three—Charlotte and Maya—and demonstrated important rhetorical approaches in response to their uncertainty for college-level writing. At the same time, the ways in which participants in this chapter use rhetoric to make knowledge of what they do not yet know is different from how participants demonstrated their rhetorical approaches to uncertainty of college-level writing examined in Chapter Three. While in Chapter Three, individuals demonstrated rhetorical approaches constituted by adaptability, resilience, and a willingness to learn from failure, participants in this chapter speak more to how they are thinking about ways and processes of writing at the college-level.

Differently, Charlotte, Moon, and Tangerine all respond to feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, and resistance with actual developing knowledge about and writerly independence for writing practices at the college level. From the accounts, Charlotte, Moon, and Tangerine offer, it may at first seem that they express lower levels of writing self-efficacy based on negative perceptions. For instance, in Chapter One, I discussed the underlying sources of self-efficacy and

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explained that when individuals exert a negative physiological state (an underlying source of self-efficacy), perceived self-efficacy levels are lessened. Further, when students react to writing situations with fear or anxiety, their levels of confidence to perform writing tasks are lowered and additional stress and anxiety, ensues (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007). Charlotte, Moon, and Tangerine will start with these seemingly negative physiological states by expressing uncertainty, insecurity, and resistance, but as they continue to reflect, they will also voice important developing knowledge that suggests they are more prepared to take on more challenging writing tasks at the college level than these participants, at first, believe possible. It is thus important to understand both the underlying sources that might influence perceived self-efficacy, but also consider the ways in which participants, despite their concerns, continue to engage in productive uncertainty and voice developing knowledge about college-level writing that, if recognized, instructors can work students to continue to foster.

Further, in the second part of this chapter, I will examine accounts from participants who demonstrate less uncertainty and higher levels of confidence in their abilities to write at the college level. Julia, Maya, Sarah, and Swimmer also ask questions around page length and quantity, but demonstrate important developing knowledge about college-level writing and in some cases, a writerly independence through which participants, especially Swimmer, demonstrate an eagerness to shape and hone their voice and style through writing. Ultimately, all participants in this chapter raise questions about page length, but through those questions point to their more complex, rhetorical awareness of writing for different contexts. Through examining participants' concern for page length, I argue that when these participants ask about page length they are actually asking more complex questions about meeting teacher expectations, knowing how to craft unique and meaningful arguments, and understanding how to practice appropriate genre conventions.

The Uncertainty, Insecurity, and Fear around Anticipated Differences of College-level Writing: And, an eye toward developing knowledge

Charlotte's Uncertainty

K-12 and college instructors might cringe a little when the first question out of students' mouths regarding a writing assignment is, "How long does it have to be?" However, I use the

following participant accounts to argue why educators might reconsider a gut-reaction to cringe at the sound of the question. Especially when students face unfamiliar writing experiences and uncertainty about how they will perform in new writing contexts, it may be that students ask how long a writing assignment should be because they are simultaneously trying to understand how they will meet both genre and audience expectations. In this chapter, we will see a lot of questioning from students that starts with questions about the quantity in writing, but through that questioning, I argue that these participants are actually demonstrating rhetorical savviness to better understand college-level writing—a writing context with which they are, so far, uncertain about. Take for instance, Charlotte, who in Chapter Three demonstrated rhetorical approaches constituted by self-beliefs crucial to her preparedness, like having confidence in her ability to learn in new environments and even learn from failure. In the current chapter, Charlotte provides insight on her feelings of uncertainty and her perceived unpreparedness, which, different from how she accounted for uncertainty in Chapter Three, embodies some apprehension about meeting audience expectations at the college level through her writing In what follows, Charlotte will express this apprehension by questioning how achieving page length requirements might be different between high school and college-level writing.

The following commentary from Charlotte also illuminates the sources from which she learned about college-level writing that may have so far represented college-level writing in a certain light. As she describes the uncertainty she has about college-level writing, Charlotte grasps onto ideas that she has garnered from friends already at college, her parents, and what she has seen on television. One of the examples she uses to describe her expectations, based on what she's learned from the noted informants, is the difference in quantity of writing:

> I have a lot of friends who graduated last year. They were saying how hard college is. My parents are always talking about like there are twelve-page papers in college. I'm like, "How do you write a 12-page paper? How is that possible?" Just like thinking about what I've written, I don't know. Like professors are scary, reading your stuff. It's probably just like what I've seen on TV and stuff about like college. I don't know. That's like where I like get scared. I don't know how like different it is from like an AP class.

Charlotte's questions also depart from how she talked about navigating possible failure and interacting within new rhetorical situations of college-level writing in Chapter Three. The questions from Charlotte, I suggest, are ways of thinking about actual practices of writing at the

college level. While achieving page length is used as a clear example to help Charlotte talk about her expectations for college-level writing, I argue that her attention to quantity of writing (e.g. "How do you write a 12-page paper?") actually surfaces what Charlotte believes she is capable of and the ways in which college-level writing is represented to her. Charlotte is listening to her teachers, the clues she has picked up from TV, her peers, and her parents. Charlotte's ability to listen to those who indicate what it could be like to write at the college level is reminiscent of how Hawhee (2012) describes the process of invention-in-the middle, through which the act of listening becomes productive and transformative. Charlotte's questions above, while grounded in uncertainty and concerns for achieving page length, are productive ones and I argue could serve as generative questions that help Charlotte to move beyond her uncertainty and garner more information about what exactly college-level writing entails.

Charlotte's question of "how do you write a twelve-page paper?" importantly points to the more complex questions of what Charlotte is thinking about in terms of audience expectations and what the actual process—the *how do you*—of writing something like a twelve-page paper entails. Further, based on what she has learned from her peers, family, and media sources, Charlotte indicates the kind of writing she believes representative in broader contexts (e.g. high school v. college-level writing)—that writing is going to be harder, yes, but that perhaps the breadth and depth of what her "scary" professors are expecting might also be different. Consequently, while Charlotte uses quantity of writing as an example of what she perceives will be different between high school and college, Charlotte is also mindful of the audience for which she will write at the college level, without fully knowing who that audience is. Her simultaneous awareness and uncertainty of audience implies another question: How do you write when you don't fully know your audience? In the excerpt above, Charlotte is trying to figure this question out. As both Chapter Three and the current chapter demonstrate, uncertainty plays into Charlotte's expectations for college-level writing, perpetuating the idea that the transition seem like it will be a daunting experience for her. However, similar to how Charlotte has expressed feelings of vulnerability in other chapters of this dissertation, I argue here too that through this vulnerability, Charlotte is setting herself up for productive uncertainty and to engage with important questions about how she will navigate the potential differences of college-level writing. Just as Charlotte, in Chapter Three, showed important rhetorical approaches to better understand new rhetorical situations of college-level writing, it is likely she will be equipped

with similar capabilities to develop helpful rhetorical and genre awareness when it comes to the actual act of writing for college-level settings.

Because individuals have the capacity to consider the significance of certain events and organize information into beliefs about what leads to what, individuals also have the ability to demonstrate agency in new and unfamiliar contexts (Bandura 1982, 2001). I argue that Charlotte's questions are agentic in that they demonstrate her willingness learn more information. Charlotte's questioning above suggests that she is trying to parse out the information she has (e.g. media sources, what's she heard, AP writing experiences), to identify similarities and differences between high school and college writing and then determine what she believes she could be capable of writing at the college level. In Chapter Three, I also suggested that the self-beliefs that constitute rhetorical approaches can also become ways of inventing and arranging participants' writerly selves into future rhetorical situations. Similarly here, though perhaps not as abstract, Charlotte's questioning and parsing also resembles rhetorical arrangement (rhetorical disposition) of the knowledge she has garnered about writing practices at the college-level and how that knowledge could play out when she eventually writes for the "scary professors." Charlotte might start with surface-level thinking, which can be easy for instructors to dismiss when trying to turn students to more complex issues of writing. However, I cannot so easily dismiss her initial concerns for page length when she also demonstrates her current understanding of writing expectations as represented to her by peer, family, and media sources, and that her initial questioning also provides insight to reasons for her perceived preparedness. Charlotte did not necessarily have easier writing experiences in high school, and in other moments during her interviews, she expressed the challenges she faced. For example, Charlotte described her Freshman Honors English course as "the hardest class [she's] every taken," where she "literally, like, failed [her] first three papers." But then, Charlotte explained that, "I got, like, I learned skills. I didn't really know what a thesis was going into freshman year, then like I learned a lot of skills… I think like over time, I got a little bit better." Later in the interview, Charlotte also reflected on both her writing development and her perceived preparedness to write at the college level. She explained:

> I feel like I've definitely learned a lot in my writing paths. I feel confident that my teachers are doing the best they can to prepare me for college…I feel like they did

> a really good job teaching me what I need to know and giving me the basic outlines.

So, just as she argued in Chapter Three, it is not as though Charlotte believes she is completely unprepared, and in fact she believes her teachers have, so far, prepared her as best they can. And here, Charlotte points to specific ways of writing that she has learned from teachers and her own writing experiences—even through failing her few papers earlier in high school. Charlotte expresses comfort with the skills she has developed over time including writing theses. By naming the thesis, it is possible that Charlotte has had experience crafting arguments and making claims. Writing theses also require substantiation of claims with specific evidence and examples. We cannot know here to what extent Charlotte has been exposed to in terms of argumentative writing or research-based writing, but Charlotte does indicate that she has been exposed to kinds of writing that require making arguments. This is important to note, because Charlotte shows that she is equipped with language around writing that will be useful to her at the college level. Additionally, by suggesting she has been "given the basic outlines" by teachers, Charlotte indicates that she has learned fundamental skills to build upon when she arrives at college. We learned from Charlotte in Chapter Three that she is equipped with rhetorical approaches that embody a willingness to learn more, and Charlotte indicates here that she knows she has the "basic outlines" to at least attempt something like a 12-page paper, but then develop the foundational writing skills she has garnered from there to effectively craft a 12-page paper.

We learned more from Moon in Chapter Four—that not only does she believe college-level writing is going to be more challenging, but that, when it comes to her unpreparedness, Moon is not sure she has had all the experiences she could have had to fully prepare her for college-level writing, especially because she did not take AP Lang during her junior year. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, Moon is not alone in having feelings of both preparedness and unpreparedness as she faces the transition into college-level writing, and in what follows, I examine how Moon's attention to quantity of writing might actually serve as a way for her to think about the importance of analysis and conveying significant meaning through writing.

Moon's Insecurity

In Chapter Four, while comparing herself to her peers, Moon worried that she might not be able to produce writing fast enough, and that the task of creating that product might not come

as easy to her, especially compared to those students who took AP Lang. Along with this concern, Moon also worried about her inexperience with writing in larger quantities and explained during our conversation below:

> Moon: I think lengthwise, word length. We have not done that, and I think seven to ten, six to eight—that is so much to write. That is so much to have to—'cause at that point you don't know if you're just repeating yourself over and over again or if you're actually saying something meaningful. Because I think within a six to eight page essay, how much meaning can there really be for you to write that much? I think that's something that's gonna be that's—I'm not prepared as well for….I mean I think seven to ten is a little extreme. 'Cause in here [in high school] it's three to four, right?
>
> Ann: That's a jump.
>
> Moon: It's quite a jump.

From where Moon stands, it is difficult to fathom writing anything beyond four pages without repetition. Especially when students are expected, at the high school level, to write clearly and concisely, often within constraints of writing for standardized testing, doing so within ten pages would seem daunting, or as Moon puts it, "extreme" and maybe even unnecessary. At the same time, however, in talking through her concerns for achieving page length, Moon turns to thinking about what the content could possibly be that fills those pages. By considering where the line is drawn between "just repeating yourself" and "actually saying something meaningful" Moon suggests that it is not only important to meet page requirements, but that the content within those pages should convey a message that is meaningful and not redundant. In talking through her expectation to write more pages for college, it is possible that Moon might actually be more concerned about how her writing practice will show that she can delve into and draw out meaning that achieves the rhetorical goals of a given assignment.

As she continued to express her concerns about meeting page requirements, Moon turned from thinking about how she could meet expectations to what the proverbial college instructor might expect of her at the college-level. Moon continued:

> I mean when you're in college, I guess, we saw that coming…I mean the biggest thing would be what do you [college instructors] really expect? I know I keep using that example, and I know not everything and every writing is like that.

> Writing seven to ten pages is—are you really gonna read all of that? How do you know I'm not just babbling the same thing over and over again? Because I feel like I do that now sometimes. I'm repeating myself. If we're connecting ideas, of course, I'm gonna be saying the same things over and over again. How much is there that I have to include that is good enough for me to pass?

On the surface, Moon expresses concern for writing seven to ten pages, but the questions she asks around that example of how she expects college-level writing to be different from high school writing also surfaces more of a productive uncertainty and ways in which she is trying to figure out the kinds of audience expectations she will encounter at the college level. Moon also seems to be questioning the purpose of page length expectations. Especially because she has not had much experience in writing longer essays, Moon is questioning the kind of writing practice that not only generates appropriate page length, but also creates meaning without "just babbling the same thing over and over again." When she asks, "What do you really expect?" Moon seems to be directly invoking a future audience to better understand how her performance will be judged. *What kind of audience are you?* Trying to figure out her audience and its expectations shows a concern for how her performance will be judged, which leads to thinking about writing analysis and writing practice.

Moon perceives that a larger quantity of writing is likely the next step of advancing from one level to the next, even if it does entail more of what feels like "quite a jump" for Moon. In various instances during her interviews, Moon seemed to fixate on the concrete example of writing quantity, but in talking through those concerns she also surfaced crucially important thinking about meeting audience expectations, writing analysis, and writing practice. What is more, Moon seems to also have an awareness of how the current context of her writing at GLHS shapes and perhaps constrains the amount of writing she practices. When I asked her to reflect on her preparedness in writing, she wrote, again with attention to quantity, but also with an emphasis on exposure to writing that high school students do not always necessarily receive in K-12 contexts. Ironically, when I asked Moon to complete the final writing task for the second interview, her first response was, "Does it have a length requirement?" I assured her it did not have a length requirement, but still when she finished the writing task, she apologetically cautioned, "Okay. I mean I didn't write that much." Moon almost seemed hesitant to share with me her writing, perhaps because she believed it wasn't enough. However, in the paragraph Moon

shared with me, she provided further insight onto what she expects from college-level writing and important deeper-thinking about how context and exposure to writing can shape writing practice, and specifically, Moon's perceived preparedness. Moon wrote:

> From my high school and middle school writing experiences, I think that writing at the college level is best based on the idea behind how much exposure a student has to writing. I think that when taking an average student, kind of like myself (although I believe that even I have had more exposure to writing on my own than most of my peers) it is difficult to give an assignment that requires them to write a 7-20 page essay on. Writing at the college level will require a level of depth and analysis that most high school students are not exposed to, making it quite difficult for them.

Even though Moon makes sure to express her expectations of having to write longer essays at college, she importantly makes a shift in her response toward acknowledging prior writing experiences and the significance of writing development. In a sense, being more prepared for college-level writing means having more exposure to writing, something which Moon believes she is lacking.[49] Recall that self-efficacy is also developed by other underlying sources, including mastery experience (direct experience with certain tasks) and vicarious learning (learning how to do something from others through an individuals' observation of others or modeling by peers and experts, like teachers) (Bandura, 1986). Moon suggests that she has had little mastery or vicarious opportunities and thus, she expresses lower self-efficacy beliefs regarding her capability to write at the college level. Despite her concern of having to write longer essays when she arrives at college, the fact of the matter is, that Moon and other students like her, have not necessarily been exposed to the college-level kind of writing expectations she is anticipating. This lack of exposure to larger writing assignments could be the result of a number of reasons ranging from the on-demand, timed writing students are expected to practice frequently in high school, to the time constraints teachers may have to grade essays, to the idea that shorter writing assignments might be more developmentally appropriate for high school students (Applebee & Langer, 2011). In some ways, Moon, through writing about page length, surfaces the importance of writing practice. In order to write at the college-level, she needs to practice more kinds of

[49] Although, Moon employs the phenomena of social comparison here to express that while she is feeling less prepared, she knows others have had even less exposure to writing experiences.

writing. Thus, I argue that by asking the questions she does and acknowledging the need for more exposure to writing practice, Moon is engaging with productive uncertainty to make knowledge of the currently unknown (Lucaites et al., 1999). By suggesting that most high school students might face difficulty because they have not been exposed in-depth, analytical writing to which she believes she has not been exposed to, Moon is suggesting that she, and possibly other high school peers, cannot write what they do not know how to write. Moon also seems to be indicating that through more exposure to writing and practice of different kinds of writing, it is possible that Moon and other students can develop their analysis skills, meet audience expectations, and learn how to write various genres.

Moon also raises some important questions about what writing knowledge and skills college-bound students are equipped with when they transition into college-level writing. If she believes they do not have enough exposure to writing, how do college-bound students account for that perceived lack of exposure when they arrive at college? Or in the exposure to writing they have had, albeit lesser according to Moon, how are students like Moon still equipped to successfully navigate the transition to college-level writing? It may very well be that Moon will struggle with writing longer pages in college. It might also be the case that Moon will write shorter writing assignments in college, dispelling her assumption that college-level writing will simply be longer. At any rate, Moon shows that she already knows that to be really prepared for college-level writing one has to have "a higher level of depth and analysis that," as she suggests, "most high-schoolers just don't really have." And actually, through the way Moon reflects on her understanding of quantity in writing, she and her peers might have more to offer than she initially thought.

Similar to Moon and Charlotte, Tangerine shares her concerns about not being equipped with enough writing knowledge to successfully transition to the college level, and in a different way seems to show some resistance to the idea that she could be successful at the college level. Of course, just as the reflections from Charlotte and Moon reveal important ideas about their writing practice, expectations, and perceived preparedness, even through her resistance, Tangerine demonstrates an important, rhetorical understanding of genre awareness and writing development.

Tangerine's Resistance

While Tangerine shared similar concerns about quantity of writing and perceiving her transition to college-level writing to be more of a jump compared to other participants, Tangerine was somewhat of an anomaly. Out of all of her peers, her physiological state in response to her perceived preparedness for college-level writing seemed to be a significant underlying source for her self-efficacy beliefs. She had similar writing experiences to those of her fellow participants, and while she did not take AP Lang, she was enrolled in GLHS's college writing course to learn more about college writing expectations.[50] Tangerine also noted in her first interview that she received A grades. It would seem that Tangerine was provided the appropriate resources to help her feel more prepared to write at the college level. However, when I asked Tangerine, on a scale of 0-100, how confident she was in her preparedness to write at the college level, she responded, "Zero. Absolutely zero." Many of the participants certainly felt unprepared in some ways, but often reconciled those feelings through moments of productive uncertainty by reflecting on prior experiences, personal qualities, and writing skills that they believed ultimately prepared them to write at the college level. Tangerine had a harder time reconciling her perceived unpreparedness. To further explain her zero level of preparedness, Tangerine, like other participants in this chapter, also fixated on the quantity of writing she expects to write at the college level. She explained:

> I understand what's needed in a professional writing paper. I mean, I know that I need an introduction. I know I need discussion. I know the build of the paper that it needs to be. It's just that I don't think I could write that long, and I don't think I could get all of my information on a paper the way I want it to look. I mean, my dad, he's a [college professor], and so every weekend he comes home with papers that his students give him, and they're twenty pages long. I just look at that, and I'm like, I can barely write two pages. I don't understand how I would be able to progress.

[50] GLHS offers a one trimester course for college-bound students who are interested in learning about and practicing research and writing that meet university expectations (as defined by the high school instructor). Only a few participants noted taking this course, and while they found it useful, it was not as salient an experience as AP Lang was for other participants.

Even though Tangerine shows resistance to the idea of her being able to write something that is twenty pages long, she starts her reflection on her unpreparedness by expressing what she already knows about writing. In a contradictory way, Tangerine demonstrates that she might be more prepared for college-level writing than she believes. Different from other participants, however, she expresses less confidence in her knowledge and abilities. So, while it is easier for me to suggest that other participants might acknowledge means of productive uncertainty, Tangerine, while still demonstrating productive uncertainty, is less apt to draw on what I perceived as strengths or move beyond her resistance. First, Tangerine outlines the necessary features to what she calls a professional writing paper. Instinctively, Tangerine knows that this kind of writing should have certain components and organization that include an introduction and discussion. Her identification of the discussion and "build of the paper" also suggests that Tangerine is thinking about how writing can be developed within this kind of essay. Further, what Moon suggests students are lacking in terms of exposure to writing, Tangerine suggests that she actually has outlets of writing exposure beyond her GLHS writing experiences when, for example, her professor-dad brings papers home to grade. Tangerine is collecting data, so to speak, about what college-level writing might look like, and while she is resistant to the idea that she can actually produce a longer essay, she is astute in demonstrating what she already understands about certain kinds of writing.

While talking to Tangerine, I was admittedly perplexed by her seemingly resolute belief that she was unprepared, yet seemed to demonstrate important writing knowledge and was receiving A grades. So, I asked Tangerine to help me better understand and she offered the example of a paper she wrote for her college writing course at GLHS. For this paper, Tangerine did not believe she wrote the actual paper well, but she believed she had interesting ideas—ideas that resulted in an A grade. By talking about this particular assignment, Tangerine seems to suggest that her kernel of an idea does the work of engaging readers, while prompting them to critically think about the theme of friendship. She figured, "I think it's the depth of the theme of the paper. The message that I'm trying to send in the paper is in depth, but the overall quality of the paper isn't that great. I feel like the message overshadows the quality of the paper." As she described her work, Tangerine seemed really proud of what she had written and also noted that she not only received an A on the paper, but also congratulatory feedback from her teacher. Still, Tangerine worried about the quality of her work, even if she had tapped into a theme that carried

thought-provoking, deeper meaning. Crucially, though, Tangerine shows that she can generate interesting ideas and is likely more motivated to write about topics that she finds interesting, like in this case, friendship.

Tangerine also suggests the importance of writing development. She has the ideas, and now it is a matter of conveying those ideas in a meaningful and organized fashion. What Tangerine knows she was able to achieve for this particular paper is to write about a theme that is accessible and interesting to a broader audience. At the same time, Tangerine also seems to demonstrate self-awareness for what she still needs to work on to help her convey effective and meaningful ideas. Tangerine reflected on her writerly self:

> I've always had trouble trying to sound sophisticated. I mean, in person I feel that I'm more mature than some of my peers, but on paper it seems that I'm ten years old. I don't know why that is, but it's just very hard for me to form all of what I have in my head…I mean, I don't have a mind that thinks of things so in depth. I mean, I have friends who say, "Do you ever wonder why we're on Earth or why this and why that?" I mean, actually, no, I don't. I just think about what I wanna do in the future. I don't think about why do I wanna do that.

Tangerine acknowledges a real struggle to practice critical thinking and see beyond her high school writing capabilities. But this acknowledgement is significant in that by identifying what she believes she does not currently have, Tangerine also recognizes that there is more about her writing to develop. Tangerine seems to know how she is as a writer and thinker right now, but that does not mean she will not change. Especially because she understands the importance of deep-thinking and analysis in writing, while she might not be there right now, Tangerine is thinking about what that deeper-thinking entails, albeit with a little resistance. When individuals exert a negative physiological state, like Tangerine's resistance, perceived self-efficacy levels can be lessened (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007). The resistance Tangerine presents here might also be a matter of attitude in that Tangerine carries lower writing self-efficacy which affects the way she perceives her writing capabilities and how her prior writing experiences inform what she will be able to do in the future. Not only is Tangerine transparent about the lack of confidence she has in her writing abilities, it also seems easier for her to count on what she believes she cannot do than what she might actually be able to accomplish with more exposure to writing experiences and time spent with writing.

While other participants acknowledged a sense of unpreparedness in their interviews, they, unlike Tangerine, usually reconciled this sense of unpreparedness with, as Chapter Three identified, their qualities to practice adaptability, as well as specific skills or writing experiences they have that they believe have effectively prepared them for college-level writing. Most participants mustered self-beliefs to determine that, while it might be challenging, they are prepared and will likely be successful at the college level. I briefly turn to Alex, who articulates an idea about attitudes and astutely explained, "It's hard to write a paper if you're constantly telling yourself you don't know how to write it." To add, from Chapter Three, we know that despite Charlotte's reservations about completing the daunting task of a twelve-page paper, she carries more confidence in her willingness to learn and contribute other writing skills she believes she has mastered. Moon also resolutely states that she is willing to "at least try." These participants demonstrate self-beliefs in their ability to adapt, show a willingness to learn, and take responsibility for their learning—qualities that Tangerine may have not yet fully developed. For many of these participants, success at the college-level, no matter the similarities or differences, has a lot to do with how they have made sense of writing in different contexts and how they believe they will navigate those contexts with the writing knowledge they already have. Importantly though, while Tangerine might not be quite there yet, even through her attitude of resistance, she still reveals a keen sense of what good writing entails, and the deeper-level thinking skills she might need to work on to more effectively convey important meaning through her writing. Ultimately, Charlotte, Moon, and Tangerine acknowledge their uncertainty and in some cases feelings of insecurity, fear, and lower self-efficacy as they anticipate making the transition from high school to college-level writing. However, the accounts these participants provide illuminate the developing knowledge they have about writing at the college level, which educators, aware of this developing knowledge, could work with students to continually foster.

In the next section, I examine accounts from three more participants who still use page length as a concrete example to demonstrate their expectations for how college-level writing will be different from that of high school. What shifts in the way Julia, Maya, Sarah, and Swimmer talk about their belief in their ability to write more pages are the higher levels of confidence they demonstrate, and in some cases, their attitudes toward completing college-level writing tasks. Differently, participants like Julia, Maya, Sarah, and Swimmer offer examples of contrasts between high school and college-level writing still associated with quantity and surface-level

features, but use those examples to demonstrate an interdependency between their prior writing knowledge and developing writerly independence. I define writerly independence as a facet of participants' writerly selves. Writerly independence encompasses rhetorical awareness of a given context and executing appropriate writing practices. With writerly independence comes the ability to synthesize information and make informed choices about writing, without strict guidance from an instructor. Writerly independence also embodies individuals' ability to establish their unique voice while also meeting genre expectations. Out of this interdependence emerges participants' rhetorical awareness of new contexts and an awareness of how prior knowledge might serve them well in those new writing contexts to further develop their writing practices.[51]

Working toward Writerly Independence: Making Informed Rhetorical Choices and Establishing Voice in Writing

Julia and Maya: Writing development on a continuum

The remainder of this chapter turns to participants who focused on the differences in the amount of writing between high school and college-level writing, but expressed less uncertainty and initial physiological states as underlying sources of their writing self efficacy. Additionally, my analysis of the participants in the remaining sections of this chapter are informed by Bandura's more recent work (1989; 2001; 2011) that suggests an individual's agency emerges through the processes of navigating certain contexts.. For instance, I will examine participants' developing knowledge and the ways in which they articulate what they believe their writerly selves are capable of, based on what they have learned already and what they believe to expect at the college level. Different from the feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, and resistance Charlotte, Moon, and Tangerine initially express in this chapter, Julia does not necessarily express those same kinds of attitudes about the differences between high school and college-level writing, but

[51] For the sake of clarification, writerly independence is related to the act of writing, and the rhetorical awareness and choices students practice while writing. The ways in which I take up rhetorical approaches in Chapter three, that do involve qualities like taking responsibility for writing, are important to writing experiences, but are not directly part of the act of writing. For example, Charlotte demonstrates a rhetorical approach to take responsibility for her writing by learning about new audiences and contexts in which she will be writing. She might also use skills like questioning to learn more about how she can meet expectations. In this chapter, I take up writerly independence to show how students are developing their own voice and making rhetorical choices through their actual writing practices.

she still uses examples of quantity and surface-level features to demonstrate what she expects to be significantly different. When I asked Julia about her expectations for college-level writing, she first began with concrete examples of what she imagined to be different:

> I feel like, with high school level writing, they like, are more accommodating or like accepting of things that might not like, fly so well in college, like if you use the same sort of like intro every single time or if you're like writing, if your sentence structure isn't very varied, I feel like they're more lenient about that in high school than they will be in college. And, if you know, if they say like, write, you need to write 3 pages and you write 2 and almost 3 that in high school, they'd be like, say it's close enough, and in college they won't.

Julia not only expects that page length expectations will be different at the college-level, but that she will no longer be able to depend on the more explicit guidance and leniency she believes she received from her high school writing experiences. However, this is not to say that Julia believed that in their possible leniency, her college teachers will let her off the hook in her writing. Rather, what Julia also reveals through the examples above is that while she might need to demonstrate more independence in her writing, she also considers how her prior knowledge will still be useful for college-level writing. Further, by describing her high school teachers as more "accommodating or accepting" of shortcomings in writing, Julia actually seems to be illustrating her expectations of a gradual release of responsibility for her learning experiences to establish her writerly independence. While Julia starts with examples of difference in page length and surface-level features like sentence structure, she demonstrates an awareness for writing for a new audience as well as important writing strategies that show growth and nuance in writing. I asked Julia, why college-level instructors might not have the same "close enough" approach to writing. She elaborated:

> I feel like when you like you are actually in a class you want to take because it pertains to the major that you want to go into, I feel like they're expecting more from you because they expect you to like what you're studying. And also because you're paying to go to school there, I feel like they won't tolerate slacking as much.

Julia gives even more attention to her future audiences and also expects that she will practice writing outside English classes. While Julia has been previously developing important writing

skills in high school, it is likely that Julia is drawing from prior writing experiences in her English courses at GLHS. These perceptions support research that suggests most writing for school happens in ELA classrooms, and the writing that does occur is sometimes limited to literary analyses and responses, as well as defined by test preparation (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Scherff, L., & Piazza, C., 2005, Yancey 2010). Alternatively, Julia indicates that she expects to write for audiences in different disciplines, where for her, the stakes might be higher in that, through her writing, she believes she will be expected to demonstrate her expertise in her academic field. So again, while Julia started with examples of quantity and surface-level features to talk about the differences between high school and college-level writing, these examples served as a starting point to think through and demonstrate rhetorical and audience awareness. Without knowing exactly what college-level writing will be like, Julia, similar to Moon, is already demonstrating thinking about what writing college-level instructors might want her to practice—who is my audience and how can I write for them? Julia does this thinking though, with a consideration for what she has already learned in high school and how that knowledge will serve as a stepping stone for her to do well when she arrives at college.

During her second interview, Julia and I talked about the first year writing examples I shared with all participants.[52] When asked about how the assignments met her expectations for college-level writing, if at all, Julia responded, "I think they kind of like proved them to be a little bit wrong. 'cause I thought that we were gonna have to write everything in APA format. Or it was all gonna have to be these super extensive, in-depth, really long papers. Then you have to write in MLA format, or just like six to eight pages—or this one's like seven to ten—which is a little bit longer, but it's not terrible." In this moment, Julia realizes that she might not have to exactly toss everything out the window that she has learned from her high school writing experiences. I am not inclined to suggest that by merely sharing these assignments with Julia, Julia's expectations have been completely disproved and she now has a better idea of what college-level writing will entail. Rather, in reviewing these assignment examples, Julia's expectations are complicated in the sense that she might already have some foundational knowledge about and experience with completing the assignments in front of her. Indeed, I argue

[52] While it was noted in Chapter Two, I find it necessary to note again that while I offered three first-year writing assignments to students as examples of what college-level writing assignments can look like in first year writing courses, I emphasized to each participant that these assignments are only three examples of college-level writing, and that, depending on the institution, college-level writing can look different.

that this is a similar instance to what I found of participants in Chapter Three, in which Julia seems to be open to engaging with invention in the middle (Hawhee 2012). Julia sees value in what she has learned, but also shows a willingness to continually build on that knowledge. What is more, beyond simply understanding that Julia seems open to continually inventing and (re) inventing, Julia also indicates writing skills and tasks—drawing on MLA knowledge and the experience of writing shorter essays—she could possibly use and build upon. Julia may be pleasantly surprised to learn that not all college-level writing assignments are as long as she thought or that sometimes, she will still be able to use MLA. Julia initially stated that some things that happened with high school writing will just "not fly" in high school, but Julia continues to demonstrate more complex thinking that perhaps it is more complicated than saying "this is high school writing" and "this is college-level writing." Quantity and surface-level features, like using correct citation styles, still seem to function as an important component of Julia's expectations for college-level writing, but more importantly, quantity and surface-level features lead her to think more about the relevance of her prior writing experiences and that she might actually call on her prior writing knowledge to further develop her skills, rather than discount previous writing experiences altogether.

Even if Julia does suggest that there might be less "hand-holding" or explicit instruction at the college-level, and that simply put, the numbers of pages might be more in college, the experiences she garnered in high school still inform her perceived preparedness. When I first asked Julia to explain what she believed it meant to be prepared for college-level writing, she invoked her high school writing experiences, but also nodded to how she anticipates her writing will develop beyond what she has learned already:

> I think it's like if you know the teacher asks something of you that you can utilize the skills you've learned in high school to write it cause like in college I think they expect you to already have like a predisposed notion of what it means to be a good writer, and they expect like a sort of high level of writing from you. So if you can apply what you already know from high school then that like, could make a really good you know, college writer, when you're just learning more and more in college on top of what you already know.

Julia began talking about differences between high school and college-level writing by acknowledging distinct differences between what will and will not "fly" at the college-level. At

the same time, through her reflection above, Julia does not expect to be a blank slate, and that in fact, her prior writing experiences have set her up to "be a good writer", or demonstrate writerly independence, and practice a "high level of writing," that she has already been working on and developing throughout her K-12 writing experiences. For Julia, writing development happens on a continuum. Julia does not expect that she will be a static writer either and that "on top of what you already know" she will continue to learn more and develop her writing skills. Certainly, Julia finds value in her prior writing experiences and believes they will be useful when she transitions to college-level writing, but she also knows that writing does not entail a "one size fits all approach." In fact, in her second interview, we revisited the idea of what it means to her to be prepared for college-level writing, and she wrote:

> [Preparedness] means being able to step into any writing situation, familiar or not, and being able to effectively tackle whatever the task is. You also shouldn't be afraid to ask or seek information if you need help because part of being prepared is allowing yourself the tools for success.

As we have already learned from Julia, she expects less guidance when she transitions to college-level writing, but what she believes she is prepared to do is rhetorically savvy, and an approach to writing that instructors across K-12 and college-level writing instructors often try to nurture. Julia importantly demonstrates rhetorical awareness for different writing situations. Part of being rhetorically aware also means figuring out the expectations of specific writing contexts, which often means demonstrating further awareness for writing elements like audience and genre awareness. Julia speaks to the proverbial "you," but she also seems to acknowledge possible uncertainty, and even in the face of the uncertainty when audience and genre expectations are not yet known or understood, Julia argues that the important thing to do is ask questions and garner more information. "Tools for success" are crucial to Julia's preparedness for college-level writing, and Julia demonstrates, through the various excerpts above, that she has a sense of what college-level writing *could* be by starting with examples of page length and surface level features. At the same time, Julia also demonstrates that she knows what she needs to do in order to learn and practice what college-level writing actually *will* be. Specific to her actual writing practice, though, Julia furthers her ideas to think about how writing will most likely be different, but how her prior knowledge and rhetorical awareness for context, audience, and genre are all "tools for success" for college-level writing.

Another participant, Maya, also identifies what she believes are her tools for success for college-level writing. Recall from Chapter Three that reading and writing skills did not come easily to Maya, and that from an early age, she had to overcome academic challenges. These self-beliefs for her resiliency, as we learned in Chapter Three shaped the way Maya will likely practice rhetorical approaches to new rhetorical situations at the college level, even if much of what college-level writing entails is still uncertain. Further, in Chapter Three, I argued that Maya's rhetorical approaches also embodied invention in the middle enabling her to adjust, revise, and continually develop according new rhetorical situations. The following accounts provide even more insight to how Maya is thinking about the development of her writing practices, and that, with specific regard to the transition to college-level writing, Maya sees a pathway to college-level writing that has much to do with what she has already learned about her writerly self and writing practices, and how she will continue to develop what she already knows at the college level. In illuminating her pathway to college-level writing, Maya used page length as an example to not only identify a major difference between high school and college-level writing but to consider how she expects to build on her analysis skills:

> I guess similarities mostly just the basic of what you're doing is you're trying to convey your ideas through your writing. I think on a basic level that's what really connects them. I guess to talk about the differences it would be that I think we don't—maybe the length of the papers. I get three or four pages, and that's pretty much it. I know my brother and sister both complain about having to write pages over ten—or papers over ten pages long. Then also just the level of analysis, I think, we—we, as high schoolers, do a pretty good job of analyzing and when we're doing text or anything else like solving problems and things. I think at college the difference is you have to—it's not just about stating—just plainly stating—making statements. You have to really go in depth about what you're saying and add a lot of detail.

Crucially, Maya immediately sees a relationship between the writing experiences she has had and the writing skills she will continue to develop, which involves the fundamental practice of effectively conveying a message through writing. Maya proceeds to acknowledge that she and her peers may not have had real experience in writing more than four pages, but she perceives strength in the skills she and her fellow GLHS students have already learned. Certainly, the age-

old question of "how many pages does it have to be" might be a familiar one for Maya and other participants, and as Maya indicates with the example of her siblings, the question does not necessarily go away when students move on to college.

Based on what she has learned from or observed of her siblings, it is also possible that college-level writing has been represented to Maya with features like writing quantity—simply put, college=more writing. However, while Maya is looking ahead and using her resources to learn what she can about college-level writing, she is also considering how her writing has developed over time and how that prior knowledge informs her transition into college level. Further, by highlighting the example of page length, Maya surfaces the importance of conveying complex messages or arguments through writing. For example, in those ten (or more) pages, Maya, by explaining that "it's not just about stating," and that "you have to go in depth about what you're saying and add a lot of detail," Maya seems to demonstrate an awareness for making informed arguments through which claims are supported by purposeful detail. Perhaps in her acknowledgement of not having written beyond four pages, Maya also recognizes that there is more to practice, and more to learn. Unlike Julia, Maya does not necessarily suggest that college-level writing will require more writerly independence, but what Maya does in the excerpt above is demonstrate confidence in what she has learned and how she expects to grow even more as a writer by further developing her analytical skills to convey and substantiate her own ideas.

So far in this chapter, some participants have expressed attitudes of fear or resistance when talking about their expectations specific to the difference in page length expectations, while others are eager to establish their voices and gain more writerly independence. At whatever stage in their writing development they are, however, the participants in this chapter demonstrate more complex and rhetorical thinking about how their writing practices will continue to develop. I thus argue that these participants have also demonstrated a developing awareness for the different audience and genre expectations they anticipate encountering at the college level, and are on their way to making important connections between their prior knowledge and subsequent writing experiences, even if they start with a seemingly simple question of page length. To further support this argument, I offer another example from Sarah, who not only demonstrates her attention to important analytical skills, but also how to effectively situate her own voice within a broader, complex issue through her writing.

Sarah: Situating Herself in the Broader Conversation

Together, Sarah and I reviewed the three examples of first year writing assignments during her second interview. Like all participants, I asked Sarah to explain what looked familiar or unfamiliar to her about the assignment examples, while also considering her prior writing experiences. To Sarah, the social significance assignment (see Appendix C for the assignment description), looked familiar because she practiced writing in a similar way when she took AP Lang last year. She reflected:

> This looks familiar, the assignment description. In this stuff, it talks about how you have to present your personal experience, while also arguing about a larger issue. That is familiar to me, because my teacher last year for AP Lang always told us that we had to keep our argument central. First you had to write about your experiences, and then add in all of the other stuff. You had to have your own argument, which is what this is saying, using your experience to argue a larger topic, so that's familiar to me.

During their interviews, some participants struggled with the idea of writing about themselves, especially in the context of an academic paper. Sarah indicates here that AP Lang provided opportunities for her to craft an argument while drawing connections between her experiences and academic research, and different from other participants in this chapter, both Maya and Sarah are comfortable with the experiences they've had. Importantly, Sarah sees the relevance in the writing experiences she has already garnered from AP Lang, and for this particular genre, Sarah demonstrates an attention to how personal experience is an avenue for establishing ethos and crafting an effective argument, and as Sarah put it, "keep [her] argument central." The purpose of the social significant assignment seems familiar for Sarah as well as the particular writing practice of synthesizing personal experiences with relevant research to convey a unique argument that reaches a broad audience. Interestingly, however, the quantity of both page length and resources for this assignment do throw Sarah off a bit. She explained during the following interaction:

> Sarah: The research requirements are familiar, but it seems weird that you're only allowed to use three sources.
>
> Ann: Why is that so weird?

Sarah: Well, the teachers usually have a minimum, but I feel there isn't—they don't really have a maximum of how many you can use. I just feel throughout high school, my teachers have been like, "Oh, the more sources, the better." I guess. Yeah, this is familiar to you; combine your personal experiences and your source materials in a way that show your personal—how your personal experiences are socially significant. That's familiar to me from last year, because we wrote some essays that are similar to this, and it relates to keeping your arguments central, like I already talked about. The sources that add substantiality to your argument, that is what teachers in high school have told me, 'cause they don't like it when people use a random statistic, but don't explain it really.

Ann: Your high school teachers don't like that?

Sarah: No. They want you to have relevant examples. I think that the six to eight full pages is different for me, because I feel that would be hard with only three sources, but I don't know. That's the same essay our teachers have us write here.

At first, it might appear that Sarah suggests that, based on her prior writing experiences, and what her teachers have told her, the more sources the better. So, it should seem odd to Sarah that there be a restriction on how many sources she uses in her research to support her argument. However, in the exchange above, I asked Sarah to clarify what her high school teachers actually said, because it seemed that what her teachers were conveying to Sarah might actually be similar to what is written on the assignment, even though Sarah seems to be surprised by the resource requirement. Through her surprise, though, Sarah is on her way to making important connections between what she learned from her teachers and how that instruction might actually be similar to what is expected of her at the college level. For example, as Sarah continues to reflect on the requirement of sources in the social significant argument, she also notes that her teachers have instructed that any source used for research and writing, should be used with purpose, and not just for the sake of using sources in a research essay. Importantly, Sarah is mindful of her high school teachers as her audience and she offers a clue to what students like Sarah have been taught about writing in the high school classroom and how this college-level writing assignment might actually be requiring students to build on what Sarah's teachers have taught her about using relevant examples to support her argument using analytical and synthesis writing skills.

> They want you to have relevant examples. I think that the six to eight full pages is different for me, because I feel that would be hard with only three sources, but I don't know. That's the same essay our teachers have us write here.

When Sarah reflects that "six to eight full pages is different for me, because I feel that would be hard with only three sources," she might start with the quantity of pages and sources to help her imagine what she is capable of writing, but this might also be a way for Sarah to think through how she can establish and maintain a compelling argument. For anyone, writing can seem a little less daunting when we can use multiple sources to support and expand our work. For Sarah, it might initially seem that six to eight full pages is no big deal if she can use all the sources in the world that will help her to substantiate her argument. The twist for Sarah, and what disconfirms her expectations for college-level writing in this moment, is the lesser quantity of sources to use for a longer essay. But she resolves, "That's the same essay our teachers have us write here." The expectations and process might look a little different at the college level, but Sarah also indicates here, that while it is important to utilize sources that effectively substantiate a claim, it is even more important to ensure that those examples are relevant to the argument at hand and further, support the crafted argument, so that Sarah's voice and intervention are clear. Thus, while Sarah seems to be surprised by the three-source limitation, from what she has learned from her teachers, she demonstrates an interest in understanding and thinking through the requirement of the social significant assignment as a way to synthesize research and personal experiences, in a methodical way that encourages critical thinking, rhetorical awareness, and metacognitive thinking.

Swimmer on Finding Her Voice

The notion of writing with one's own voice can seems like an abstract idea for some students, but what participants like Sarah and Maya seem to be recognizing is that it also prompts them to take ownership of their writing practices and demonstrate their writerly independence. Similarly, Swimmer is eager to embrace new expectations at the college level and as she will explain, establish a new independence and writerly independence over her writing. That independence, for Swimmer, goes beyond the quantity of writing, and involves a writing process that allows her to establish her voice within the content of her writing.

Out of all the participants highlighted in this chapter, Swimmer demonstrated the most certainty and excitement for college-level writing. With the first year writing assignment examples in front of her, Swimmer honed in on their length requirements, but unlike other participants, did not express as much concern for how the college-level writing assignment page requirements were different from high school writing assignments. She explained, "The length of the assignments was something that didn't necessarily scare me, but was different. I feel like the typical high school essay is probably about four to five pages, and these assignments, like this one was six to eight. I believe this one was seven to ten pages, so the length of that was different than what I'm used to. I feel like it could be a little bit of a challenge, but again I think, those who have their own voice in writing will be able to achieve that." Whereas Sarah struggled a little with considering how she might stretch resources over a certain amount of pages, Swimmer prioritizes a writer's voice as a way to achieve page length, but Swimmer also sees her voice as a vehicle to demonstrate deeper thinking. Swimmer elaborated further:

> I know that I said that the length was something that I'm not used to, but I don't think the longer length surprised me. Because I do think colleges will expect that deeper thinking, that personal voice in your writing, more than high school writing does… It didn't really shock me that theses assignments were longer, and they were six to eight pages, seven to ten pages. It didn't surprise me that they had research elements to them, because most of the pieces that I've worked on throughout high school have had some sort of research element to them.

Similar to the connections other participants make between their prior writing experiences and what they expect to write at the college level, Swimmer also sees value in what she believes her experiences have prepared to her do in the future. For example, while Swimmer acknowledges that a typical high school writing assignment might not extend beyond four or five pages, recall that Swimmer and her fellow AP Lang students were expected to complete a synthesis or the "Biggie." Swimmer, when talking to me about the kinds of writing she enjoys, described her experience with the "Biggie," and explained, "In AP Lang last year, we got to write a piece called 'the Biggie.' It was the biggest essay of the year. Everything that we did led up to that essay. I chose to do mine on electronic cigarettes within GLHS. I actually did interviews on people that I know that used electronic cigarettes. I got to basically write a fifteen-page exposition piece. That was really fun for me." Swimmer continued to explain that because

students were able to choose the topic they researched and wrote about, she had more fun taking on the challenge of writing an essay of that length and having more autonomy over and choice in her writing. For the synthesis essay, students were given about two weeks to gather research through interviews, online databases, and any other resources they believed useful to their research. Writing that amount of pages certainly was an accomplishment for Swimmer, but Swimmer also emphasized what she believed producing that quantity should entail: gathering resources and conducting interviews for research, and an extensive amount of time to produce those fifteen pages. Swimmer, in her description of the process of writing the Biggie, suggests that scaffolding was implemented to guide students through the assignment and that the biggie did not suddenly appear as a product. It was AP Lang experiences like this that participants like Swimmer also believed effectively prepared them to write at the college-level, especially if they expected they were going to have to write longer essays for college.

Swimmer's experience with writing the Biggie also suggests that she not only had some atypical writing experiences, compared to other participants in this chapter, who did not take AP Lang, but that she is carrying different experiences that she believes have better equipped her to take on college-level assignments. If she could conquer the Biggie, then what's stopping her from successfully writing at the college level? As participants in Chapter Four indicated, this sort of attitude seems to be a consensus. However, in this particular moment, when Swimmer is talking about her own writing and how it has developed and what she believes she is equipped to do, Swimmer takes a different affective stance toward her writing practice and expectations for college-level writing that other participants in this chapter have not necessarily demonstrated. More positive attitudes about writing increase motivation to practice writing (Jeffery & Wilcox, 2014; Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007; Palmquist & Young, 1992; Smagorinsky & Daigle, 2012. It is possible that Swimmer garnered an appreciation of the writing process and an interest in not only crafting a central argument in a piece of writing, but also an appreciation for writing in a way that centers her voice. For Swimmer, it is more important to establish voice than it is to achieve page length, a challenge to be sure, but a worthwhile one to makes sure she has a voice in her writing.

While Julia, Maya, Sarah, and Swimmer, compared to the other participants in this chapter, all seem to have a more positive outlook and express more confidence for how they will fare with writing at the college level, they talk about their expectations for college-level writing

by starting with the basic differences between high school and college-level writing, namely, the quantity of college-level writing. Importantly, Julia, Maya, Sarah, and Swimmer use these more basic examples as a touchstone to think about how their writing will continue to improve and how they will effectively situate themselves—their voices—within what they write at the college-level. These participants seem to envision writing as a continuum in that they have some prior writing knowledge to call upon, but they know that by writing more (more pages, more drafts, etc.), that they will also practice in-depth writing that requires them to demonstrate connection-making between the details they add to their writing, as Sarah and Maya noted, and to write compelling arguments while demonstrating writerly independence by drawing on their experiences and exerting their voices.

Conclusion

When participants shared with me how they compared high school writing to college-level writing, they offered examples of length, because simply put, it is what they know. Yet, underneath that proto-knowledge are concerns that they might not necessarily be able to articulate yet. Each participant, even if they expressed uncertainty, were still able to reflect on what they are currently capable of and what they believe they are capable of in the future, indicating their self-efficacy to write at the college level (Bandura, 1986). Through that reflection, students voiced important developing knowledge that they may not even be aware is important for writing at the college level. The participants' questions about quantity and length in writing are legitimate concerns around audience, genre, voice, and writing in-depth, complex arguments. Even though all of the participants highlighted in this chapter seem to initially fixate on concrete differences between high school and college-level writing, that had mostly to do with page length and the amount of writing participants believed they would be expected to write, I argue that these participants are actually developing important proto-knowledge to talk about and practice writing. With this proto-knowledge, students are, like Charlotte, Moon, and Tangerine, engaging with productive uncertainty and on their way to making important connections between what they have learned and what they will likely be expected to demonstrate for college-level writing. Even if they demonstrated uncertainty, insecurity, or resistance, Charlotte, Moon, and Tangerine, through talking about their concerns, demonstrated an understanding of responding to audience expectations in their writing and an interest in knowing how to write a variety of genres.

The participants highlighted in this chapter suggest that college-level writing has been represented to participants as mysterious and unclear territory, which is why uncertainty, insecurity, and resistance might play into the expectations of participants like Charlotte, Tangerine, and Moon. It also might be the case that when students face any new writing context without much guidance or explicit instruction, students are left to develop their own strategies to situate themselves within that context. Rather than cringing at students' questions about page length, I suggest that it might be more useful to engage more thoughtfully with students when they ask this question. The questions that participants pose about length is part of their thought processes—thought processes that contain more complex ideas about writing. For example, by talking through their concerns about page length expectations at the college level, the participants are also questioning how and where length is relevant, which demonstrates their ability to engage with rhetorical awareness by trying to understand what specific genres should look like in a particular context.

In Chapter Three, I argued that participants, through certain rhetorical approaches that embody vulnerability, adaptability, and responsibility, demonstrated important proto-knowledge that indicates their understanding on how to navigate new writing experiences without actually engaging with the act of writing. In the current chapter, I argue that even though they had different attitudes about their writing expectations, participants showed proto-knowledge for actually practicing writing and demonstrating skills like rhetorical and genre awareness. Furthermore, starting with quantity or length as an example to talk about the differences between college-level writing was a way in for them to talk about the importance of connection-making and depth in writing, as well as building unique arguments by establishing their voice within their writing.

Because participants know high school and college writing contexts will be different, participants like Maya, Sarah, and Swimmer especially illustrate how their writing has developed over time and the expectations they have for continuing to develop their writerly selves. Through processes of invention-in-the middle one writes and is written (Hawhee, 2012). The participants in this chapter demonstrate not only what they believe writing could look like at the college-level, but how they imagine themselves engaging in writing practices at that level, constantly shaping and (re) shaping their writerly selves and practices. Beyond demonstrating proto-knowledge for college-level writing, participants are demonstrating necessary skills to practice

metacognitive thinking by reflecting on what they have already learned and demonstrating a sense of how they will build on prior knowledge while also practicing writing in different ways in new contexts beyond their high school English courses. Maya, Sarah, and especially Swimmer, are less focused on surface-level features. Instead, they are interested in engaging with iterative processes and writing complexly. Writing for them is not a linear process. Rather, writing entails more of an involved process of gathering and synthesizing resources, practicing deeper thinking and analysis, and establishing one's voice to convey an interesting argument. Swimmer, through her emphasis on voice, independence in her own writing, and the process she recognizes as important to creating a piece of writing, suggests that the more one is exposed to writing experiences, the more confidence one can feel and as a result, establish authority and voice within the writing practice. Similarly, even though Moon showed apprehension toward the transition to college-level writing, she also argued that more exposure to writing contributes to preparedness for college-level writing. Ultimately, the participants in this chapter anticipate that their writing experiences will be different when they arrive at college, but for some of them, it is hard to say, right now, what those differences will entail, beyond page requirements and the amount of writing they have to produce. Still, they also know that exposure to more writing experiences can not only help them build confidence to write in new contexts, but can also help them navigate various genres of writing. Findings highlighted in this chapter afford K-12 and college educators the opportunity to consider what we value about the writing process and how what we perceive as important to the writing process can effectively translate into our classrooms. These questions extend into the final chapter of this dissertation, which considers the key findings and implications of this study and ultimately, how educators across K-12 and college-level institutions can support students as they transition to the college level.

CHAPTER SIX
Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

One of the more disturbing things I witnessed in my teaching experiences was when I observed a college-level writing instructor solicit information from her students about what they learned from high school, wrote their responses on the board, and then wiped the board clean with the eraser while saying, "Now, forget all that." Of course, it is not uncommon that some students walk into college-level writing classrooms, like first-year writing, overconfident about how they will fare in the class, based on their prior writing experiences. However, the participants in this study revealed important developing knowledge that educators would be remiss to figuratively wipe from the chalkboard. Further, participants in this study indicated that, even if they do not fully understand or know what to expect about college-level writing, they are all drawing on significant writing experiences and self-beliefs that inform their ideas about college-level writing and ways in which they feel prepared to write at the college level. I therefore argue that the experiences and knowledge students already carry with them could thus be acknowledged and fostered by educators rather than automatically dismissed when students transition into new writing contexts. For instance, what if the instructor noted above had taken more time to understand the significance of what she wrote on the board, based on her students responses? Or, what if the instructor had, instead of erasing everything from the board and moving on abruptly to new information, taken more the time to talk through each piece of information on the board and discuss *with* her students why the noted prior knowledge was actually useful or how the ideas students provided might shift or change based on the expectations of her first-year writing course? The instructor seemed to initially create a moment ripe with opportunities to get to know her students and their developing knowledge about writing—a moment to articulate how they could, together, build on this knowledge and learn even more through the course of her semester. Instead, the instructor wiped the chalk board clean and possibly erased an opportunity to fully understand where her students were coming from.

While this study had a small sample size, it offers a thick description to help educators, policy makers, and other stakeholders more flexibly understand college-bound students' expectations and perceptions *before* they transition into college-level writing. By studying this one moment in time, findings emerged from my study that suggests students are not coming into our college-level writing courses as blank slates. And in fact, some students have very particular

ideas about their preparedness and what college-level writing could like, while others are not so sure but have important developing knowledge and strategies that we as instructors could work with students to leverage as they face new challenges. Regardless of whether students' perceptions of their preparedness seem fixed or flexible, it is imperative for educators to acknowledge the expectations students carry with them as they enter new writing experiences. It should not be a question about whether students' perceptions and expectations are right or wrong, but rather, it should be a question for K-12 and college-level educators of how we can support students in developing their knowledge and learning how to navigate new writing contexts. The findings from this study show that participants had varying levels of self-efficacy for college-level writing, but regardless of whether they were overconfident or less confident, they all highlighted a range of peer and teacher interactions, and academic challenges and successes that inform their preparedness and developing knowledge for college-level writing. In any K-12 or college-level classroom, prior experiences should be surfaced and validated, rather than erased from the chalkboard, so to speak.

By inviting students to articulate their ideas about what college writing is and how they have come to those ideas, this study can help educators understand the multiple dimensions that contribute to college-bound students' beliefs about and expectations for college writing, both of which could also contribute to students' perceptions of preparedness for college-level writing. Again, instead of erasing everything from the board and instructing her students to "forget all that," what if the instructor above would have validated the information on the board and continued to facilitate a conversation with her students about how they could specifically build on and adapt that prior knowledge in her class? This conversation, for any instructor, could be drawn out by identifying course goals and explicitly identifying how prior knowledge identified by students is already in line with goals and expectations or might shift in different ways, based on new information students might learn in the course. Conversations about how prior knowledge can be continually developed as well as how writing is an iterative process can help students to better understand not only the relevance of what they have already learned but how they can continually adapt, develop, and improve as writers. For example, and as I argued in Chapter Three's conclusion, talking about rhetorical approaches that embody invention and arrangement might be a way for educators to help students determine how to continually invent,

(re) invent, arrange, and (re) arrange themselves in new writing situations, building on what they know, but also being able to adapt and adjust to write for various contexts.

Contributions from the Study

The framework I discuss in Chapter One offers a way of understanding the reciprocal interactions between student and context, and how those interactions inform students' perceptions and expectations for college-level writing, which were the central questions that drove this dissertation project—what do college-bound students expect about college-level writing? In what ways do they feel prepared to write at the college level? Within those broader questions I also wanted to learn more about what, if anything, participants believe they already know about college-level writing, where they garnered that information, and the underlying sources that contribute to both their knowledge about college-level writing, but also their writing self-efficacy, perceived preparedness, and expectations for college-level writing. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and self-efficacy theories were most helpful in creating space to look at students' perceptions and expectations from different angles. For example, as students reported their experiences and perceptions, I was therefore able to pay close attention to the ways in which they talked about their self-beliefs, the writing experiences they have already had, and the way they talked about the influence of environmental factors on their ideas about their preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Thus, it is important to highlight that participants' writing self-efficacy, perceived preparedness, and expectations for college-level writing were nuanced and complex. For example, this began with a self-efficacy survey, which served as a useful entry point to understand students' perceptions about their capability to perform writing skills and tasks at the college level. This study contributes a reflective and complex approach to self-efficacy research by exploring qualitative interview responses that nuance the survey results students initially provided. Recall from Chapter One, like Bruning et al., 2012 and Pajares & Johnson, 1996, have, in their own work on writing self-efficacy, recognized a need to understand holistic writing experiences with both quantitative and qualitative data. While this study focused on qualitative interview data, it still created space to consider how qualitative and quantitative data can speak to each other to understand the broader writing experiences of college-bound students. Ultimately, participants in this study voiced more about their writing self-efficacy, which was not initially represented by their survey responses.

For instance, the students we learned from in Chapter Three expressed more confidence in their ability to navigate uncertainty than the levels of confidence for completing writing skills and tasks on the survey. Participants' accounts contribute to a central question that asked about college-bound students' expectations for college-level writing. Some participants, especially those highlighted in Chapter Four, believed they knew exactly what to expect about college-level and expected they would do well with writing at college. These students drew from specific and for them, seminal, writing experiences in AP Language and Composition. In Chapter Four, I suggest that students like Stewart, Alex, and Emma, when describing the "SAT Incident," seem to have a "fixed" sense of preparedness, based on how they associate their AP Lang experiences and preparation from that course with their expectations for college-level writing. My description of their fixed sense of preparedness is not meant to disparage these participants or suggest that they will be wrong about their expectations when they transition to college-level writing. Rather, the participants in Chapter Four show that they have very particular ideas about what college-level writing could be, based on their writing experiences. In aiming to understand students' experiences as informing their expectations, I started this project with the question: What, specifically, do college-bound students believe they have learned about college writing from their prior and current experiences? Clearly, prior experiences like taking the AP Lang course made a significant impression on students highlighted in Chapter Four and informed their knowledge about college-level writing. This knowledge, even if instructors might see it as problematic, should not be discounted, but understood as the kinds of knowledge students who have similar experiences might be carrying into our classrooms.

As noted in Chapters Three and Five, the expectations of other participants seemed to embody more uncertainty. At the same time, these participants, in conversation during their interviews, did not stop at their uncertainty. Rather, some participants talked through their uncertainty to reflect on and reveal what they already know and what they hope to learn or experience when they make the transition into college-level writing. Recall from Chapters Three and Five that students seemed to be demonstrating the likeness of what Miller (2016) identifies as productive uncertainty—or the ability to move past feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty, with the interest of coming to an understanding of a new context, like college-level writing, or making new knowledge. Findings of productive uncertainty among participants in this study directly respond to a few of the research questions that began this study. First, by asking what

college-bound students' expectations for college-level writing, I learned from some students that they actually do not know what to expect about college-level writing. At the same time, asking about the underlying sources of college-bound students' writing self-efficacy also prompted me to understand that even if some students are unsure about college-level writing, they are drawing from underlying sources, like important self-beliefs to practice rhetorical approaches to at least imagine themselves as writing at the college-level. Students, we learned, are also making knowledge from other underlying sources such as environmental factors, or institutional representations, that offer certain messages to students about what college-level writing could be. Additionally, I was also able to ask about what students believed to be different between high school and college-level writing, and in Chapter Five, we especially get a sense from students that they are expecting to write a lot more—and as Stephen put it, so much more that "your hand hurts at the end of it." We learn in Chapter Five that, even if students start with seemingly simplistic ideas about the difference between high school and college-level writing in terms of page length, participants in that chapter were actually thinking more complexly about how to achieve the task of writing enough pages.

Again, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, this study hones in on a moment in time when students are anticipating the transition to college-level writing, and I was able to ask research questions to better understand the perceptions and expectations of students in that moment. From this study, we have learned from participants that they are drawing on prior writing experiences and self-beliefs, and are thinking about their preparedness in more nuanced ways than current academic and popular discourse might suggest. This finding gives educators a sense of the underlying sources that students draw on to think about their own preparedness and expectations. Better understanding these sources, from the perspective of these 15 participants, provides K-12 and college-level writing instructors a sense of how preparedness and college-level writing can be represented to students and how students take up these messages, but also make agentic decisions based on their own self-beliefs. I suggest that information garnered from this study should prompt educators across K-12 and college spaces to consider the conversations they have with their students and the ways in which they represent preparedness and college-level writing to their students.

My experiences working on this dissertation project illustrates the practical and theoretical challenges that accompany the interdisciplinarity of fields. To self-efficacy and social

cognitive theories, I added, especially in Chapter Three, rhetorical theory to my conceptualization of this study, when patterns and themes emerged that largely suggested many of the participants were not only interacting within environments, but rhetorically interacting with their current environments and rhetorically imagining *how* they would navigate new environments. Rhetorical theory, especially explicated in Chapter Three, prompted me to ask questions of how students were thinking about their interactions with future and new contexts. Chapters Three and Five take the angle of how students are looking within (understanding what they are capable of and what they know and do not know) to look outward (imagining themselves at the college level). While tapping into rhetorical theory added theoretical depth to this dissertation, doing so further allowed me to consider different angles the reciprocal interactions between student and context. Considering the rhetorical nature of students' interactions also provides shared language for writing educators to further consider in efforts of building bridges across K-12 and higher education spaces. It was my hope that learning from student voices would be one way to bridge the gap between these spaces and help educators better understand how to better support students as they navigate the transition from high school to college-level writing. Learning from some participants that they are engaging with rhetorical knowledge in AP English classes and other participants who are practicing rhetorical approaches suggests that rhetorical language is not and does not have to be limited to college-level writing curriculum. Rhetorical theory could thus also be further developed and used as shared language between high school and college instructors to discuss the knowledge students might already have as well as shared language instructors might already have to talk about supporting students as they make the transition. It was a happy surprise to realize that the rhetorical nature of my participants' accounts might be another "way in" to build bridges, especially as rhetorical theory is already common to college-level writing curriculum and gradually becoming more a part of K-12 writing curriculum. For example, rhetorical theory often informs college writing curriculum and is gradually being drawn upon more to develop writing curriculum and assessment at the college level. College writing program administrations, for instance, draw on guiding frameworks like the *WPA Outcomes and Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, both of which heavily emphasize the importance of rhetorical knowledge and assignments, to inform curriculum for college-level writing courses. Even if a rhetorical essay on the SAT is not the same as rhetorical essay assignment in a writing classroom, we learned from participants in

Chapter Four that rhetorical language at least exists in a class like AP Lang. Further, *CCSS* now includes rhetorical language in its reading standards. Again, while the use of rhetorical theory at the K-12 level may not be pervasive or even adequate, the use of it is becoming more frequent, which may serve as way to first harness the common language used across K-12 and college spaces and build more communicative bridges. Ultimately, for K-12 teachers and college instructors, this framework offers a lens for understanding the holistic student and the experiences they carry with them into our classrooms. This framework also offers a lens for potentially fostering prior knowledge and rhetorical approaches students have been developing over time and can continue to develop, with the guidance of their educators, to successfully navigate new writing contexts.

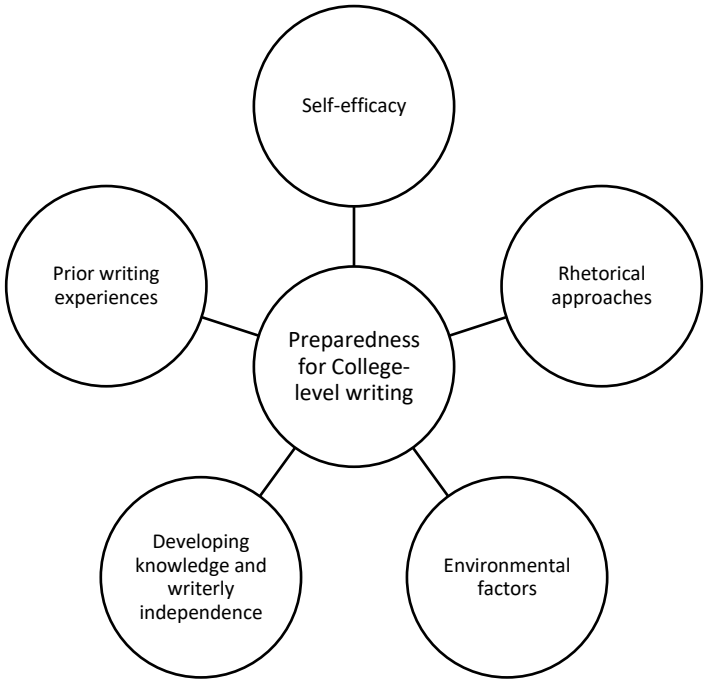
Reconceptualizing Preparedness

By and large, findings from this study offer a new way for educators and policy makers to think and talk about college preparedness. Current conversations around preparedness draw on a culture of standardized assessment that is very much present in K-12 schools across the nation (Barnes, Slate, & Rojas-LeBeouf, 2010; Duncheon & Tierney, 2014). Essentially, standardized testing is taken as the primary way to measure preparedness. If this discourse dominates learning contexts, students might not always be given opportunities to be curious and passionate learners, but merely good test-takers, if the discourse suggests that standardized testing is the primary way to determine preparedness. In some ways, the participants described in Chapter Four, who used their high SAT scores to determine their preparedness, corroborate the notion from popular discourse that preparedness can be quantified. However, we also know that the realities of writing experiences in most classrooms require more than performing on a test, because writing requires reflective and critical thinking that is revised over time. Alternatively, most participants in this study talked about their preparedness in a way that does not fit the mold of a test-taking culture or the current discourse around preparedness.

I started this dissertation by conceptualizing preparedness as embodying more than academic skill, but also the influence of environmental factors (e.g. teacher and peer interaction). Based on my findings, I argue that preparedness is an even more capacious concept. Between drawing on existing scholarship and learning directly from the fifteen participants, I argue that preparedness also embodies beliefs about future knowledge or courses of action. It is also perhaps influenced by environmental factors that inform students' self-beliefs about their

perceptions of their future successes in writing. I also want to note that I am not suggesting that the characteristics of the preparedness noted in Figure 6.1 are the only determining factors of preparedness, but rather, depending on each student, their perceptions of their preparedness might look different. Based on the findings of this study, however, I consider the following characteristics as ways of informing students' preparedness, as well as characteristics that educators could consider when engaging with preparedness discourse.

Figure 6.1 Reconceptualizing Preparedness



The above figure is representative of what seemed to contribute to participants' perceived preparedness, which was illuminated in the major findings chapters. Bandura's definition of self-efficacy was useful to consider what participants believed they were capable of accomplishing in terms of completing writing skills and tasks at the college level, his self-efficacy research, as discussed in Chapter One, draws much attention to students' capability to complete writing skills and tasks. To a certain extent, participants' responses did talk about their belief in their ability to complete skills and tasks at the college level, but participants' account also disconfirmed some of what is noted in current literature as self-efficacy for students, the ways in which they talked about their writing capabilities, seemed to be broader than giving strict attention to discrete writing skills. To add, when I first began this study, I expected students to talk about their

preparedness as being shaped by interactions with peers and teachers, as well as their prior writing experiences. And, indeed, environmental factors remain an important component that can possibly shape preparedness for college-level writing. I did not, however, anticipate the ways in which participants identified the rhetorical approaches, which I discuss in Chapter Three, as being a key component to their preparedness. For example, recall in Chapter Three that Charlotte, Maya, and Alice all reported lower self-efficacy on the initial survey, but expressed more confidence in self-beliefs on which they drew to imagine themselves navigating college-level writing. Drawing on self-beliefs of adaptability, resourcefulness, and resilience, to name a few, seemed crucial to these participants' ability to especially navigate potential uncertainty about new writing contexts at the college level. Thus, I argue that students' self-efficacy to write at the college level is an important component of their preparedness. However, we must consider self-efficacy in broader terms in that some participants not only considered their capability to perform writing skills and tasks, but also their ability to draw on self-beliefs and navigate new writing contexts through strategies like practicing rhetorical approaches.

Also illustrated in Figure 6.1 is the idea that environmental factors inform perceived preparedness for college-level writing. First, for all fifteen participants, vicarious learning (e.g. observations and interactions) served as a means for developing expectations for college-level writing, and in some cases making decisions about their level of preparedness for college-level writing. Second, some participants, especially those highlighted in Chapter Four, indicated that environmental factors like teacher talk or messages from AP curriculum informed their ideas about preparedness. Remember from Chapter Four that I argue institutional representations serve as environmental factors and bore down on ways in which students, for example compared themselves to one another. What is interesting from what students reported in that chapter is that they, based on circulating institutional representations, made decisions about their own preparedness. So while Stewart, Alex, and Emma "bought into" the idea that AP Lang prepared them for college-level writing more than their peers who did not take the course, others like Rosy perhaps recognized that AP Lang was an important influence within the halls of GLHS, but made the decision that that course was not influential or necessary for her ability to be prepared to write at the college level. "It's the job of any class," Rosy posited "to prepare you for college." Nevertheless, students highlighted in Chapter Four seemed positioned to have to make decisions about their preparedness based on the messages they were receiving and it is thus important for

educators to consider not just our students' capabilities to perform writing skills and tasks when considering their level of preparedness for college-level writing, but also the messages students might be receiving that inform their own ideas about their preparedness.

Whether students, in their accounts, drew on their individual self-beliefs or popular messages that circulated throughout GLHS, it was clear that participants' prior writing experiences informed their feelings of preparedness. It was also clear that students considered what they already knew (e.g. developing knowledge) to consider ways in which they were prepared. I suggest too that even if students believed they were less prepared, some participants still expressed developing knowledge that educators could more fully recognize to talk with students about ways in which they are actually more prepared than they might believe. For instance, even though Tangerine rated her own preparedness as "zero, absolutely zero," and expressed concerns for writing bigger papers at the college level, Tangerine articulated important knowledge about the necessary components of writing essays and also, in talking about an essay for which she received a high grade and positive feedback, the importance of delivering a meaningful and relatable message to her audience. Tangerine and others gave significant attention to the audience needs and context expectations. Ultimately, findings from this study offer a new way for educators to think about how we might structure communication and conversation around student preparedness for college-level writing These key findings show that students are not coming into our college-level writing courses as blank slates. And in fact, some students have very particular ideas about their preparedness and what college-level writing could like, while others are not so sure but have important developing knowledge and strategies that we as instructors could work with students to leverage as they face new challenges. Regardless of whether students' perceptions of their preparedness seem fixed or flexible, it is imperative for educators to acknowledge the expectations students carry with them as they enter new writing experiences. It should not be a question about whether students' perceptions and expectations are right or wrong, like the instructor who erased everything from the board, but rather, it should be a question for K-12 and college-level educators of how we can support students in developing their knowledge and learning how to navigate new writing contexts.

Considering Uncertainty, Vulnerability, and Rhetorical Approaches in the Classroom

The rhetorical approaches students are constantly developing and might see as imperative to their perceived preparedness provide an opportunity for educators to foster confidence. For

example, participants like Charlotte, Maya, and Alice expressed uncertainty and a sense of vulnerability as they talked about entering new writing contexts. This vulnerability though, prompted these participants to talk about how they would ask questions, seek out resources, and as Charlotte described it, "absorb" new writing situations to fully understand the characteristics and expectations of college-level writing. K-12 and college-level writing instructors could usefully facilitate discourse with students about their own preparedness that includes conversation around skills and strategies to navigate new writing contexts with the resourcefulness and rhetorical awareness that many of the participants in this study demonstrate. Again, and as illustrated in Figure 6.1, preparedness for college-level writing is shaped not only by environmental factors and broader writing experiences, beyond academic skills and content-specific knowledge, but preparedness also has to do with the confidence students have in their ability to adapt, take responsibility for their writing, and act on feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty by practicing skills like questioning and locating supportive resources.

I argue that practicing rhetorical approaches positions students to gain a better understanding of new writing experiences when they are willing to learn more about and adapt to new writing purposes, genres, and audience expectations. In Chapter Four, we learned from participants that they receive certain messages, depending on their learning contexts, about college-level writing and preparedness that they must negotiate. Chapter Three raised questions of whether participants like Charlotte, Maya, and Alice might be more apt to negotiate the varying messages they receive and take on future academic challenges, to, for example, learn from failure. Further, Chapter Five illustrates how students engage with rhetorical and genre awareness when talking about the actual act of writing. While students in our writing classes might initially be concerned with issues of page length for writing assignments, participants in this study demonstrate that those concerns could also be a useful starting point to develop more understanding of genre, audience, and purpose in writing. Participants in Chapter Five illustrated their recognition of the importance of continually building on their prior experiences in order to develop more ways to practice writing skills that allow them to write in-depth and establish their voice.

At the same time, while participants in this study demonstrated developing rhetorical approaches that might help them to navigate new rhetorical situations like college-level writing, participants importantly showed that they trust very much in the guiding forces of their learning

context, which can include teacher talk, peer interaction, and the ways in which preparedness and college-level writing are represented on a local and global level. Findings from Chapters Four and Five raise important questions about how rhetorical awareness of writing practices is related to the rhetorical approaches for new writing contexts these participants demonstrate. For instance, how is students' self-efficacy for their preparedness connected to what writing instructors teach about the rhetorical situation? How can educators support both students' transition to new writing contexts and their writing development of skills and tasks on a macro and micro level? In other words, how might we teach rhetorical awareness in relation to writing, even if rhetorical approaches like demonstrating a willingness to learn and resourcefulness are not always directly related to writing practices? Educators thus might consider talking with their students about skills and traits useful to writing that do not always have directly engage the practice of writing (e.g. flexibility, productive uncertainty, etc.) Acting on questions like the ones posed here requires students to be aware of their writing contexts, and teachers to be keenly aware of how writing expectations can change from one context to another. I argue, especially because students' preparedness can be shaped by local and global representations of preparedness and college-level writing, that teachers consider the rhetorical situation of their teaching practices and how they convey meaning and purpose about writing to their students.

Responding to Global and Local Institutional Representations of Preparedness and College-level Writing in Classrooms, Curriculum, and Assessment

As I explore in Chapter Four, the ways in which students compared themselves to others to think about their preparedness was also informed by how certain ideas around preparedness and college-level writing were represented to them. Unlike the participants highlighted in Chapter Three, who drew on self-beliefs to muster confidence in order to navigate college-level writing, participants in Chapter Four drew on specific writing experiences (e.g. AP Lang) and messages they were receiving from institutional representations to consider their ability to navigate future writing experiences at the college level. Critically, their perceptions also seemed to be informed by how AP courses are represented to these students by GLHS, their teachers, and the College Board. Chapter Four illustrates the student "buy-in" to how other individuals and institutions represent preparedness for college-level writing. It is possible, then, that students, depending on their specific interactions and coursework related to writing, leave high school feeling overconfident or not confident enough about being able to write at the college level. In

Chapters Three and Five, we also learned from students their concern for not knowing what to expect at the college level and feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, and resistance that contributed to some participants' perceived preparedness. The ways students think about their preparedness could be addressed through more conversations between teachers and students by considering not just the skills and tasks necessary for writing at the college level, but ways in which students can interact with instructors, their peers, and resources to move beyond their uncertainty (e.g. ask questions, be open to new ideas about writing, embrace revision, build on what you already know). The attitudes and confidence level students have as they anticipate the transition into college-level writing holds crucial implications for how educators, educational organizations, and other stakeholders in education talk about preparedness and establish expectations for college-bound students.

In Chapter Four, participants also identified negative consequences of comparing themselves to others in that, in some cases, social comparison increased their anxiety and lowered their confidence. However, the social comparison participants demonstrated also revealed positive ways GLHS is encouraging an environment where students are continually developing their preparedness and working to meet high academic standards. Recall from Chapter Four that Frank perceived significant differences between his prior academic experiences at a different school and what he was experiencing at GLHS. Despite doing well and even taking a dual-enrollment course while at his prior high school, Frank saw his GLHS peers as more prepared, and saw GLHS teachers as important resources to his preparedness. Recall from Chapter Four that students were receiving and making meaning of messages that informed their perceptions on a local level. The attitudes and interactions put forth on a local level by GLHS educators could be translated to other high schools. It is important to remember too, that GLHS is a high-performing school with a wealth of resources to prepare its students. Not only do the findings I offer need to be considered in context, but the support that educators might offer to students across the nation, will likely look different, based on their experiences. There are, of course, other factors like parent support and financial resources that create school environments and student support. However, it seems reasonable that teacher attitude as it was reported by participants at GLHS could be put forth by teachers across schools and districts. This dissertation holds implications for taking up global representations of preparedness and college-level writing, while at the same time fostering a local environment in which students are simply told by

teachers that they have value and that, if they want to, they can go to college. There is a crucial need, then, to build structure and culture in any school that fosters confidence, rather than taking it away through means of standardized testing. GLHS students certainly felt the pressure of standardized testing, but teachers and structures were in place to build student confidence and help them face any challenge. It is therefore crucial for educators across K-12 and college spaces to consider the messages students might be receiving locally, from their teachers, parents, and others they interact with, as well as how messages not local to their learning contexts, might be still circulating. It seems especially important that local stakeholders understand what students observe, who they are interacting with, and what educators who are directly interacting with these students on a local level do to support students in their learning experiences.

It is likely that much of how college-level writing and preparedness are represented in the K-12 classroom is shaped by how policy makers, legislators, and educational organizations establish national expectations for their students. To offer just one example of these influences, recall that Stewart, in Chapter Four, called the College Board the purveyors of preparedness. Whatever the College Board sold, Stewart bought, with the expectation that he would be successful at the college level. Third party organizations like College Board and Advanced Placement often dictate how curriculum looks in the classroom. Educational policy also affects what teachers do in the classroom and therefore what students learn about writing. What's more, the language of educational policy often excludes teachers and students in the actual classroom. Consequently, students and teachers are made to feel less agentic in the classroom especially when the discourse of preparedness is driven by high-stakes assessment and "internationally benchmarked standards" without much concern for what is happening locally in the classroom itself. (Gallagher, 2011; McKenna and Graham, 2000). At the same time, there have been times when teachers have been asked to contribute to the design of standards and guiding frameworks like CCSS (one teacher was asked to contribute) and the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing.* It should also be possible, then, that educators and policy makers could consider student voices and actually involve students in more intentional ways to develop curriculum, assessment, professional development, and policy efforts, giving agency back to students and teachers—those who are on the front lines of preparedness for college-level writing.

Transparent Practices for Rhetorical Awareness at the Classroom Level

This dissertation's findings also importantly show how students situate themselves in writing contexts, and navigate various interactions with their teachers, peers, and institutional representations, to make informed decisions about their perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Indeed, Chapter Five illustrates that students are developing strategies and language for writing at the college level. While at first glance, it might seem that participants were fixated on things like the difference in length of pages they would have to write at the college level, compared to their previous experiences, a closer analysis reveals that these participants are actually demonstrating knowledge of things like audience, genre, and context. Indeed, my study suggests that students are equipped with both proto- and meta-knowledge when they walk into college-level writing classrooms. While teachers might grow tired of the question, "how many pages does the essay have to be?" if we don't listen carefully and engage these kinds of questions, educators might actually be missing important development of writing knowledge that could provide opportunities to guide and foster that knowledge. In Chapter Five, Moon drew our attention to the importance of exposure to writing when she asserted, "From my high school and middle school writing experiences, I think that writing at the college level is best based on the idea behind how much exposure a student has to writing." Participants suggest that at GLHS, regardless of whether they took AP Lang, they had exposure to various writing opportunities. Further, participants demonstrated that, through their exposure, they are developing important knowledge and language that, I argue, can be further fostered at the college level. Participants in this study showed a capacity to adapt to new writing contexts, and K-12 and college instructors can respond to these kinds of capabilities by guiding students' transition into college-level writing through exposure to different kinds of writing for various contexts coupled with an understanding of the prior knowledge students already carry with them (Anson, 2016).

The findings from this study show that participants had varying levels of self-efficacy for college-level writing, but regardless of whether they were overconfident or less confident, they all highlighted a range of peer and teacher interactions, and academic challenges and successes that inform their preparedness and developing knowledge for college-level writing. In any K-12 or college-level classroom, prior experiences should be surfaced and validated, rather than erased from the chalkboard, as the instructor at the beginning of this chapter did. If it is the case that

students will learn ideas about college-level writing that are going to be drastically different from their prior writing experiences or the assumptions they have made about college-level writing, teachers can still be more transparent about the rhetorical awareness of writing different genres, so that students do not have a false sense of what college-level writing should entail. For example, even if students have experience with writing a rhetorical analysis for the SAT or in an AP course, it is likely that the genre expectations will look different at the college level. Preparing for tests is a common aspect of K-12 students' literacy experiences. This does not mean that preparing for standardized assessment has to be taught in a vacuum. Discussing the genre of test-taking can be useful for students to understand the purpose of writing assessments and how writing for assessments looks different from other kinds of writing across contexts.

Teachers at any level can draw on what students already know about writing and build on that knowledge while also emphasizing rhetorical approaches like a willingness to learn and open-mindedness so that students' expectations are not fixed and so that they are more apt to navigate academic challenges. For example, in rethinking practices in both K-12 and college writing classrooms, instructors might consider how they engage with vulnerability. In Chapter Three, Charlotte, Maya, and Alice all confronted vulnerabilities of not knowing something, but showing a willingness to learn through observing peers and asking questions. Through teacher and student interactions, teachers could share their own stories of struggling with writing and the revision process through modeling. Being transparent about our own productive uncertainty might provide students with tangible examples of how to navigate uncertainty and productively learn new ways of writing. In a culture of preparedness that is based largely on standardized assessment, there is a lot of pressure to push students ahead quickly. Critically, while standardized assessment is likely not going away anytime soon, it is possible to incorporate into the discourse of preparedness the purpose of what we teach in the classroom and why we teach what we do. Instead of pushing college-bound students to be college ready to the point that they believe they are fully prepared and know exactly what to expect about writing at the college level, it is crucial for K-12 instructors to be transparent about how writing genres and expectations can change from one context to another (e.g. the genre of an essay for a standardized test is not the same as the genre of a college essay).

Chapter Four identifies participants who see themselves as highly prepared to write at the college level, solely based on their prior experiences in AP Lang. What these participants might

find difficult is adjusting to potential moments of failure or completely different ways of writing outside of what it was like to write in AP Lang. College-bound students who carry these kinds of experiences also need to be recognized and accommodated in the classroom. For example, in K-12 settings, instructors can explicitly model how writing skills in a course like AP Lang serve as one way to practice effective writing and communication skills. At the college-level, instructors can work with students to draw on the writing skills they have come to value and work with those students to show them how those skills still hold value, but can be developed as well. Some participants in this study were so sure that because they learned how to write a rhetorical analysis in AP Lang and successfully wrote one for the SAT, that they were going to have similar success writing a rhetorical analysis genre in college. They might be right. But they will likely encounter writing courses in which a rhetorical analysis requires more in-depth writing, multiple revisions, and deeper thinking than can be performed on an on-demand test. Furthermore, because college-level writing instructors have different kinds of training, disciplinary backgrounds, and research interests, it is very possible that students may never write a rhetorical analysis at all, but write other genres like the literary analysis instead. Because writing expectations and conventions can change from context to context, it is crucial for any educator to ensure that their students are confident in their ability to learn about and adapt to those new writing experiences. These conversations can help students to not only prepare for new writing experiences but might also help students to develop life-long skills that help them to rhetorically adjust to any new writing challenge in and outside of the classroom.

In some ways, the students who showed more confidence in their abilities, not necessarily for certain writing skills, but for their abilities to adapt and have an open-mind, might find a more successful transition and development in their writing. As highlighted in Chapters Three and Four, it is possible that being too confident or taking on a stance of expertise, without being a novice first, can lead to missteps in learning including over practice of skills and genres and reification of ineffective writing skills. Anson (2015) calls this kind of disposition entrenchment, when students become stuck in their ways, so to speak, without being flexible to new ways of writing). Addtionally, Sommers and Saltz (2004) suggest that if students never shed their novice stance, they can encounter similar challenges without moving forward in their writing development. Even more important, then, might be how educators build confidence among their

students to understand how their prior knowledge is relevant and constantly evolving, while practicing specific rhetorical approaches to help them transition into new writing contexts.

The important moves that many of these participants in this dissertation made were to acknowledge their prior writing knowledge as important to developing new knowledge, with the idea that they were going to navigate new writing contexts with rhetorical approaches that required them to practice adaptability and take responsibility for their learning. Thus, through transparent teacher talk, it is also imperative that educators discuss with their students the rhetorical approaches students take to learn about new kinds of writing and writing contexts. For instance, while it can be useful to demonstrate rhetorical approaches that embody vulnerability, perpetual vulnerability will likely create static, ineffective rhetorical approaches. The goal is for students to move from vulnerability to asserting responsibility for their learning in order to grow in their writing. If educators facilitate rhetorical approaches that foster a combination of vulnerability, adaptability, and responsibility, it is possible that students by, first acknowledging their uncertainty, can create space for deeper metacognitive thinking that leads to practical application of knowing when and how to apply certain writing knowledge (Negretti, 2012). I suggest that many participants, highlighted across chapters, are constantly iterating their writing experiences; they take into account what they have learned and how their prior writing knowledge will inform their future writing experiences. If students' feelings of preparedness are more rigid and fixed (e.g. I know I will be successful or I know I will not be successful), then I suggest it is possible these students might move forward with less of a sense to practice rhetorical approaches, that were outlined in Chapter Three, when faced with challenges or failure. Still, what all fifteen participants illustrated in this study is that they have important developing knowledge about college-level writing and some are equipped with writerly independence and strategies to navigate future challenges. In my own teaching, I have learned from these participants to not take lightly the perceptions and expectations they carry with them into my classroom. As I move forward, the ways in which I design and implement my curriculum will be informed by questions of how I can support students who are uncertain of what to expect, but willing to learn. My practice will also be informed by students who believe they know exactly what to expect and have very particular ideas about their preparedness. Taking stock of our students' individual perceptions—regardless of whether those perceptions seem fixed or flexible—is crucial to supporting students in their writing experiences.

Future Directions

Through a qualitative interview study with fifteen college bound students, I collected information from the participants as they anticipated their transition into college-level writing. Gathering their accounts in this moment of transition allowed me to see how their prior writing experiences and other environmental factors (e.g. peer and teacher interactions) shaped their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Though it might be useful to talk to students after they have transitioned into college-level writing and had some time to reflect and compare their high school and college-level writing experiences, this approach, which looks at one moment of transition, paves the way for other approaches to understand how educators can support students in their transition from high school to college-level writing. For example, following college-bound students into their college experiences through a longitudinal study could usefully help educators to understand how student perceptions shift, if at all, as they move from high school writing experiences to those of college. Longitudinal studies could also reveal how the rhetorical approaches participants in this study, for instance, actually put them into practice when they encountered college-level writing.

Additionally, in this study, I chose to focus on qualitative data collection and analysis, though I did use a self-efficacy survey as a recruitment tool and starting point to understand how students might initially perceive their preparedness to perform writing skills and tasks at the college level. The interplay of the survey and interviews allowed me to practice a more nuanced approach to garner students' perceptions of their preparedness and I was able to raise the question of what preparedness for college-level writing means to the study's participants. Future research could employ mixed-methods approaches that more intentionally and systematically compare quantitative data to qualitative data. These kinds of approaches could help educators understand correlations between students' perceptions of their preparedness and their actual performance, for example. Other studies that involve teacher perceptions could complement my study which focuses on student perceptions, by getting a clearer sense of teacher talk and student-teacher interaction that shapes students' perceptions of preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

Finally, studies that explore different student populations or a comparative study that compares perceptions of students from different courses, schools, or populations could provide

an even richer sense of student perceptions and the ways in which discourse around preparedness can be most effective. I turn here to two participants—Rosy and Moon—who in their own reflections pointed to the need for future research about the varying perspectives of students with different backgrounds and writing experiences than theirs'. Because this study is about student voice, and because Rosy and Moon articulate the need in better ways than I ever could, I conclude this section with their voices as way to point to the need for other approaches to this work. In this study, participants Rosy and Moon astutely wanted to make me aware that their experiences are not all students' experiences. When I asked Rosy if she wanted to say anything more about her preparedness for college-level writing, instead of looking inward, she looked outward:

> I hate to say this, but, everyone in our school, pretty much—it has to be a crazy number. Eighty-five percent of students here do go to college, and, they do prepare for college. The teachers, pretty much their goal here is to prepare students for college. If you asked other students that weren't on that track for writing, you would probably get different answers. Students that aren't in AP classes. 'Cause I feel, if they're taking another English class that wasn't meant for preparing them for college, they probably would have a different answer. Maybe different schools would even have different answers, 'cause, what if they don't even have AP classes? Then, they don't really have that experience, so, it'd be different.

In Chapter Four, Moon expressed concern about not taking AP Lang and noted the importance of exposure to writing in order to be fully prepared for college-level writing. Moon also questioned the consequences of students arriving at the same college writing course without having the same previous writing experiences:

> Not all of us are exposed to the same things. Some of us didn't take AP Lang. Some of us didn't—and if we're all put in the same class, are our grades gonna be sufficiently different just based on how—just based on our high—and the other thing is we're all from different high schools. We all learn different things. If we're all going to different—we're going to different colleges, and if we're all in the same college, what—I don't know. I guess I don't know. *[Laughter]* How much were we supposed to be prepared, I think. Was there more outside of school that we should have done or something like that?

Rosy and Moon importantly illustrate that this study cannot speak to the experiences of *all* college-bound students. What this study does show, however, is that context matters and can crucially shape college-bound students' preparedness for college-level. This study also leaves space to ask more questions about how college-level writing instructors can accommodate the varying experiences of their incoming students. Additionally, other participants in this study noted the context of GLHS as a high-performing, wealthy, and suburban school. It is possible that self-efficacy levels for their preparedness is higher based on the support and resources to which they have access. Thus, future research could usefully take up similar work to understand the varying writing experiences and perceived preparedness of students in different kinds of schools and regions (e.g. low-performing schools, schools in lower-income areas, students in "regular" courses vs. AP courses).

Final Thoughts: Ann Invitation to Build Bridges around Student Voices

My research began with questions about how educators can communicate better across K-12 and college contexts to support their students as they move through the transition from college-level writing. Early projects of trying to figure out how teachers can communicate better simply reified what White (2010) identifies as different worlds of teaching: "The high school world is more constricted, particularly by the ever-present competency tests that inevitably emphasize form. The college world is less structured, even more chaotic, and teachers there are able to value thoughtfulness and originality in ways that high school teachers cannot" (2010, p. 296). Here, White illustrates that context matters and can often shape the different writing experiences students will likely encounter at the high school and college level. Similarly, some participants in this study also demonstrated their attention to the influence of context on their learning experiences, and that yes indeed, college-level writing is different from high school writing. At the same time, it is not enough to say that high school and college-level writing are different. Participants in this study complicated this binary in a couple ways. First, some participants, especially those who took AP Lang, *did* believe their high school writing experiences were equivalent to what they anticipated college-level writing to entail, and that perhaps the worlds of high school and college-level writing were not so different. Second, other participants revealed qualities about themselves that perhaps build bridges between these worlds in an effort to foster rhetorical approaches and writing knowledge that college-bound students

are possibly already developing in high school. I argue that these participants were developing language and rhetorical approaches about writing in their high school that will be useful to hone at the college-level; this honing could further be facilitated by college-level writing instructors.

It should also be made clear that I am not suggesting that educators need to *ease* the transition for students, or that curriculum across K-12 and college-level writing should be aligned. In fact, individuals who only experience frequent and easy successes are less able to cope with failure (Pajares 1997). Alternatively, self-efficacy research shows that individuals with high-self efficacy levels can productively learn from failure and setbacks, and then adjust accordingly in order to improve in the future (Bandura, 1994; Pajares, 1997). This scenario might be the case for some participants highlighted in Chapter Four who were resolutely certain about their future success and what they believed college-level writing will entail. Alternatively, participants in this study talked about resiliency and independence as ways to garner more writing expertise. Participants in this chapter, for the most part, expect college-level writing to be different; some of them expect to make some mistakes as they move forward. What I am arguing here is for educators and policy makers to recognize the rhetorical approaches and writing knowledge students understand as necessary to their preparedness and to recognize how institutional representations can shape not only what students expect about college-level writing but whether they believe they are capable of successfully writing at the college-level. I concluded Chapter Three with a nod to "invitational rhetoric" (Foss & Griffin, 1995). I revisit this concept to suggest that some participants in this study demonstrated a willingness to acknowledge their vulnerabilities and learn more about college-level writing in order to meet college expectations and ultimately find success. In some ways, participants have offered an invitation to learn more about and do well in new rhetorical situations of college-level writing. Chapters Three and Five illustrate how some participants are open to engaging with productive uncertainty and listening carefully to their teachers, peers, and others from whom they can learn more about college-level writing. I reassert here that educators, in order for something like invitational rhetoric to play out, must respond to the invitation. I argue that instructors, by trying to understand the rhetorical approaches students might be practicing and the developing knowledge they already have, can receive and respond to their students by leveraging key knowledge and practices students carry with them.

Participant accounts surfaced their attention to context and how a specific environment can shape writing experiences, especially through peer-to-peer interaction and peer-teacher interaction. While this study is about students and their perceptions, what many of these participants reported suggest they trust in their teachers and school to effectively prepare them to succeed at college-level writing. For a moment, put aside the debate of whether AP courses effectively prepare students for their college courses, to recall that most participants in this study clearly trusted that their GLHS teachers, especially Mr. Chesley and Mrs. Gerard, were preparing them to succeed at the college level. Yet, despite this trust, high school teachers, in "water cooler talk" or teacher blame game, are not often revered as the experts of their own students, or experts about what good writing should look like.

During this study, I was especially mindful of how the participants from this dissertation study demonstrated so much trust and appreciation for their high school teachers—Mr. Chesley and Mrs. Gerard—and that it is very possible, as argued in Chapter Five, that high school students are learning so much more about writing from their K-12 teachers than current conversations about student preparedness suggest. Ultimately, findings from this study suggest that college-bound students are developing important language around writing that might support them in their transition into new writing experiences, even in K-12 classrooms in which teachers often encounter constraints of standardized testing, have to ensure enough time for reading and writing, and have to account for other classroom issues, like discipline, on their capacity to teach writing. In this case, and to White's point, these high school teachers are managing different dynamics of the classroom. Indeed, participants disrupt the blame game that generally suggests that high school teachers are not teaching them well or the "right" things about writing. Educators across K-12 and college serve a critical role in the transition and writing experiences of their students and the voices of these participants give us even more reason to bridge the gap and finds ways to talk to each other in a way that is not necessarily hierarchal so that, for example, college instructors are always seen as the experts and high school teachers are positioned to always be asking questions about how they can do better to prepare their students.

These conversations can include different stakeholders ranging from K-12 and college teachers to students to policy makers. Organizations like the National Writing Project, regional education service agencies, and college writing program administrations already are and can more intentionally and systematically facilitate professional development, community meetings,

and workshops that consider how curriculum can foster confidence in students to navigate their expectations for and the realities of college-level writing. My dissertation shows that individual writing experiences can be shaped by outside influences beyond the classroom. Knowing this, it is even more crucial for stakeholders in local communities to collaborate so that preparedness for college-level writing is not woefully misrepresented to students. Finally and most crucial, this dissertation shows that students should be invited to contribute to these conversations to talk about their own preparedness and expectations for college-level writing to help educators and policy makers better understand how we can support students in their transition from high school to college-level writing.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Biographies

Participant Biographies

Ever since she was very little, **Alice Carroll**, who identifies as a 17-year-old white female, has played softball and participated in travel softball. When she goes to college, Alice Carroll hopes to be a walk-on for the college's softball team. She also likes to read, watch movies, and bake. Alice Carroll has been accepted to a few colleges—some in Michigan, another down South. Wherever she ends up, Alice Carroll shared with me during her first interview, "I want to study audiology because I'm deaf in my left ear, so I wanted to stay in that field." In fact, during her second interview, Alice Carroll predicted that in college, because she wants to go into audiology, she'll be doing more research writing. For now, while she finds elements of research writing like navigating and utilizing secondary sources challenging, Alice Carroll enjoys, as she described it, "finding unique things, and thinking oh, I wonder if anybody's thought of that." Alice Carroll's perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level, based on her survey responses, places her in the lower self-efficacy group. During her second interview, however, Alice Carroll exerted more confidence when she explained that in terms of her preparedness for college-level writing, "I guess, in terms of preparedness, I think I was, maybe, a little bit more worried before I was not even a senior, where now, as a senior, I'm just like, 'It's gonna happen,' so I'm like—I just have to go with what I know. I think I've been prepared pretty well. I think I'll know what I'm gonna be doing. My teachers, they try to help us get ready, and I think that helps. Yeah, I think I'm just at the point where it's like, 'I have what I know, and I think it's pretty good.' I think I'm gonna do okay."

Charlotte James identifies as a 17-year-old black and white female. Charlotte hopes to attend a private research university where she can be part of its pre-physical therapy program. Charlotte's survey responses placed in her the group who responded with lower perceived self-efficacy levels. When I interviewed Charlotte James she was keeping busy with school and two jobs—as a dog walker and a nanny. "I walk a dog, and I also like nanny this kid. I've like

worked at Bob Evans and Pinkberry and dog kennels, you name it, I've worked there. I'm the head photographer for yearbook, so that's like a huge time requirement." When she's not working or doing homework, Charlotte likes to journal, and tries to do so every night as best she can. Charlotte journals for a range of reasons from clearing her head to organizing her thoughts. When it comes to writing in school, Charlotte explained to me, "When I'm writing for school 'cuz I take up a lot of space when I write. I cannot like type on the computer. I like planning it out. My outlines don't look like A, B, C, like 1, 2, 3. They're like it's a bunch of random lines and arrows. That's just how I like plan things. I like turn them into Mrs. Gerard, and she's like, 'I've never seen this before.' I'm like, 'that's just how I see things.'"

Frank N. Stein is a transplant to GLHS. When asked if he was enjoying his time at GLHS, he explained, "It's different, but I like that there's things to do here, because anything up there, the nearest thing was 40 minutes away, north and south." Frank identifies as a 17-year old, Caucasian male. Frank enjoys reading and drawing, and when he was at his previous high school, he enjoyed running track. There, Frank also took a dual-enrollment English course at a local community college, which was a topic of conversation throughout both interviews. At the time of the interviews, Frank was unsure of where he was going to go to college, but wherever he does go, he hopes to go into a program related to product design or user experience design. When asked about what kinds of writing he enjoys, Frank responded: "For writing what I enjoy, I guess I like—okay, for reading, same thing. I like to read fictional sci-fi fantasy and stuff like that. For writing I actually prefer writing when I can just use my imagination, but that doesn't really help me very much on school assignments because that's not as useful." Frank further explained that he finds analyzing a text and making a claim from that analysis most difficult, based on the experiences he has had: "I'm not, I wouldn't say, terrible at it, but it is—and also I think that might partly be because where I came from. His previous high school didn't have AP classes...I could get by doing a lot less there." It was apparent through the interviews that Frank's prior experiences before GLHS were an important part of his experiences at GLHS as well as his perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing.

Maya Wilson identifies as a 17-year-old female and Greek. Maya plays field hockey and lacrosse and she was a captain for field hockey for two years. Maya enjoys reading in her spare time, but she explained "When I was a freshman I used to read all the time, but now I feel like it's mostly for school. I still try to. I still go to the bookstore. I have stacks of books in my room

that I just haven't gotten to read yet." When Maya gets to college, she hopes to study sciences, perhaps something like biology or neuroscience, and pursue medical school after college. Maya, during the first interview, also expressed that she might consider a double major in English. When I asked her why major in the sciences and English together, she responded, "My parents are probably gonna hate this, but the English is more just for my own pleasure. I don't know if maybe I would take that and just take it on my own anyway, and maybe just do writing in some way." Maya enjoys creative writing, although she used to do creative writing a lot more when she was younger. Maya recalled, "I had journals full of just random stories. Sometimes now, it's more like random thoughts I have. Just write them down. I like doing that." In terms of other kinds of writing, Maya explained, "I know people in class probably hate writing a literary analysis, but I actually really like them. I like analyzing literature and other texts and comparing them and things." When it comes to research papers, though, this task is a bit more difficult for Maya: "I guess it's just difficult, sometimes, to get all of the—all the research that you have to do and all the facts that you have to incorporate and then citing them. I find that very difficult." After explaining to me why writing research papers are difficult, Maya finished with the thought, "I can get through it." Based on her survey responses, Maya was in the lower self-efficacy group, but in conversation, she talked about how she is confident that while she might not know exactly what to expect about college-level writing and she does sort of fear the unknown, she has faith in her ability to adapt and do well. In fact, Maya used the word "resilience" to describe her ability to adapt and learn and knows she has had to work hard to do well academically, and will continue to work hard when she goes to college.

Tangerine identifies as a 17-year-old White female. She is an avid golfer and plays on the GLHS golf team. In her spare time, Tangerine loves to watch movies, read, and spend time with her friends and family. Her parents are both university professors. When her interviews took place, Tangerine was applying to three public universities. At that time, she wasn't exactly sure what she wanted to do while at college, but she expressed interest in psychology and English. Tangerine enjoys creative writing and explained to me that, "Sometimes in my spare time, I just feel the need that I need to write something down, writing something creative down like a poem or a song or a story." When it comes to writing, Tangerine can write a narrative "easy as pie" and knows how to convey a scene to a reader. Based on her survey results, Tangerine's perceived self-efficacy level is lower compared to other students. Tangerine gets good grades in her classes

but when asked about her level of confidence in her preparedness to write at the college-level, Tangerine responded "zero, absolutely zero."

Alex identifies as a 17-year-old agender Asian American and Alex's survey responses are in the middle self-efficacy group. When we started the first interview, Alex asked if they could write some things down in their planner/journal, as they couldn't forget some things on the to-do list.[53] They insisted they're good at multitasking between listening, responding, and writing. This notion of multitasking and resourcefulness came up throughout Alex's interviews and seemed to be important elements of their character. At the time of the first interview, Alex was applying to art colleges and plans on going into the art field. When I asked Alex about what kind of writing they like to do, they explained, "I hated writing essays. They were the worst thing that ever happened to me. I used to do creative writing, but that's dwindled away because of time constraints and stuff. Now, after taking AP Lang, I actually enjoy writing essays because I actually know what I'm doing." In the second interview, Alex later described themselves as a "very sarcastic person in nature" and that most people would find them to have a big personality, at least when they're around their friends. And perhaps that's a part of why Alex enjoys writing essays more now as they find they've learned to maintain their own writing voice while doing academic writing: "I realized last year near the end of it that suddenly instead of just having a purely academic tone that sounds like it could be from a textbook, my essays started soundin' like it was actually written by me, or it wasn't a textbook-like thing, I guess. Maybe it's the creative mindset thing. I mean, I am going to art school. That's all about using your own voice to convey stories and stuff."

Julia, who identifies as a 17-year-old White female, plays water polo and works as a waitress at a retirement home. Usually, she works at the retirement home every day after school. On Sundays, Julia volunteers with the children's ministry at her church. All in all, Julia is pretty busy with school and other commitments. Julia hopes to go into elementary education when she goes to college. She attributes her volunteer experience with the children's ministry to wanting to become a teacher. Julia is part of the middle range group of overall self-efficacy scores. In terms of writing, Julia mostly enjoys narrative writing. In her first interview, Julia explained to me, "I feel like it's easier to write about myself than it is to like analyze literature or something like

[53] When discussing Alex, I will use the singular they and its variations as the singular "they" is Alex's preferred personal pronoun.

that…and I don't feel like I have to follow like, a strict like, format for it. 'Cause it's just all my own ideas." When describing to me how she sees herself as a writer, Julia stated, "I think I'm a pretty, like proficient writer. There's still some things I struggle with and things that I ask questions about, but overall, if someone were like to ask me to write about something, I could give them a pretty solid end product."

Moon identifies as a 17-year-old female Indian American. A former swimmer, Moon also plays the violin, participates in choir, and sings outside of school. Moon likes to read and really likes to watch TV shows including medical drama shows, and sitcoms like *The Office* and *Parks and Rec*. Moon wants to go to college for something in the medical field and thinks she might want to become a physician. Moon enjoys writing from her own perspective. She explained to me during her first interview, "I actually really like, kinda like what we do in AP Lit, where we write like journal entries kind of; sort of writing from my own perspective. A lot of college essays are like that, which is kinda nice, 'cause it's kinda just like expressing yourself in who you are and what you're doing. That's not something that I think about, usually, so writing about it is pretty cool, I think." Moon's perceived self-efficacy, according to her survey results, places her in the middle self-efficacy group. When asked to elaborate on her confidence level (on a scale of 0-100) for her preparedness to write at the college level, Moon explained, "Probably like an 80 or something…Just [because of] all the experiences I've had writing papers in high school, and the reason it's not like 100 is because I'm just not sure what they're looking for, I guess."

Stephen Burbassa identifies as a 17-year-old White male. His survey responses also placed Stephen in the middle group of perceived self-efficacy. Stephen wants to make video games for a living. He explained, "I've been playing video games for a lot of my life and I'm interested in making them." When he goes to college, Stephen hopes to learn about game design, computer science, and general mathematics to help him achieve his career goal. At the time of his interviews, Stephen saw himself as being decent at analyzing texts and writing about them, as well as writing research papers. Stephen attributed much of his confidence in practicing those kinds of writing to his AP Lang experience, and most recently, his debate course. During his first interview, Stephen expressed that he was really enjoying his debate course and when I asked whether Stephen had to do much writing for debate, he emphatically replied, "Oh yeah. For debate you have to draft entire outlines, and that's just the class...With the debate team, it's like

separate from the class with the specific research that you're doing. You're doing twice the amount of research. I did well enough to be drafted into the ethics club, so it's like I have to do even more research with stuff like that as well."

Zach Skoneki identifies as a 17-year-old white male and according to his survey responses, is in the middle perceived self-efficacy group. Zach described himself as having a big passion for the environment and, because of this passion, he thinks he might consider going into environmental engineering when he gets to college. He explained that using something like engineering to help with environmental issues is something he'd be interested in. At the time of the first interview, Zach had applied to a few engineering schools in-state and outside of Michigan. He seemed to be deep thinker even though he is drawn to structure and clear answers. When I asked Zach to talk about himself as a writer, he reflected on how he has changed as a writer from being more of a "straightforward thinker and less, maybe nuanced" to finding more balance between subjects like math and English. He attributed some of this writing development to his experience with AP Lang and explained, "I think before, I probably wouldn't have admitted it, but I was more maybe straightforward. I wasn't as open in getting that balance. Obviously, it's tough to describe, but I think it's more of a reasoning type of thing. When I hear arguments, when I see, even politically, who's elected president and stuff, I feel more thoughtful on some of the things and more considerate of both sides than I was before. Zach shared that he didn't realize this change in writing until his dad, who is an engineer, pointed it out. "He said I started using a different part of my mind."

Emma identifies as a White female. She reflected that she might be a little bit young for her grade as she was 16 when she was interviewed for this study. Emma is into theater and sings. She also plays soccer and volleyball. Outside of extracurricular activities, Emma helps out at her family's restaurant in a neighboring town, where she and her family live. Emma elected GLHS as her school of choice: "I go to GLHS because it's a better school than where I live." At the restaurant, Emma puts in about 10-15 hours a week during the school year and 30 hours or more per week during the summer. At school, Emma doesn't consider herself much of a math person, but more of a literature person—AP government is one of her favorite classes and she enjoys literature, language, and the social sciences. Emma applied to a number of top schools, including two Ivy League schools. When talking about her application to top schools, Emma stated, "I think I can make it." Emma wants to go into political science and then get a law degree. She

explained, “I really like politics, so I’d like to get involved in a higher-up position, like in the senate or the house, or even a state legislature position. Or I could just go into actually doing law.” Emma seems to be on top of things in managing all her responsibilities while planning for her college and career. Emma did express that navigating all of this “can get rough,” but she shared with me that when she was younger, her mom used to tell her to “just power through stuff.” She acknowledges that school work comes pretty easily to her, with the exception of AP calculus. Otherwise, Emma further explained that she’s not one to “waste time goofing off”: “I’m not the type of person who will watch TV while doing their homework because—or even have a TV on, or no noise, because I know that that will distract me very easily….Then I also have this whole method of I’ll get through one set of things—like I’ll do my physics homework, and then I’ll go for a jog, or I’ll go practice piano, or I’ll go do something to take my mind off of school. Then I’ll move on to the next subject. I’ll do my homework until my homework’s done.” Emma’s work ethic might contribute to her perceived self-efficacy levels reported on the survey for this study. Emma was resoundingly part of the higher self-efficacy group.

Rosy Potter identifies as a white female and she just turned 17. Rosy is interested in a variety of academic subjects like English and psychology. Additionally, Rosy is also part of a local fiddlers group and participates in orchestra. Rosy plans to attend a four-year public university for speech pathology and to minor in guitar. Rosy explained that speech pathology is “what my mom does. I’ve shadowed her a lot and I love it. It just seems really interesting. Also, I’m really into anatomy so that helps with that.” As for the minor in guitar, Rosy enjoys music and has been playing the guitar since kindergarten. “I do classical guitar, so it’s a little different than just the stereotype chords, electric and whatnot.” When I asked her how she envisioned her work in speech pathology and guitar working together at college, Rosy responded, “I think that music, you can apply it in many different ways. Just like learning, even just from practicing, you learn rehearsal skills and just the importance of self-discipline.” Rosy is in the higher self-efficacy group. During her interviews, Rosy compared herself to her peers and noted that she counts on them for support. Ultimately, Rosy feels relatively prepared to do well at the college level. She might not know it all or know what to expect about writing at the college level, but she feels confident that she can take on the unknown. She also talked about her writerly self as improving and understanding that there will be more gray areas with college writing, as opposed to structured, hard and fast rules.

Sarah identifies as an 18-year-old Caucasian female. Sarah hopes to attend a four-year public university and possibly major in Education with a specialization in English and history. Sarah is in the higher level self-efficacy group, and on the survey, her levels of confidence were strikingly high. When asked to talk about her level of confidence to write at the college-level during the interviews, Sarah credited much of that confidence to what she has learned about writing thus far from classes like AP Lang and the writing strategies she's developed on her own. She explained to me in her first interview, "What I've learned is just, not really getting stressed out. I just need to get all of my distractions away from me, and just put in some headphones. Then just write until I can't think of anything else anymore." Sarah would say she's pretty formal when she writes, and to that end, prefers to write formal essays or different kinds of writing like creative writing because creative writing she told me, "is about myself, I have to think really hard. Creative writing is a lot harder for me." Alternatively, the writing process for formal essays comes easier to Sarah: "You just take information from books, or other things I've read or researched, and you can use that information just to write about it. It's easier because I don't really have to think about it off the top of my head."

Stewart identifies as a 17-year-old Caucasian male. He enjoys subjects like social studies or English, and especially enjoyed AP government and history. Stewart is with the Governor's Honor Guard. He plans to go to law school and at the time of my study, he was thinking about getting a degree in history or political science. Stewart applied to a long list of universities and had already been accepted to one university's direct admission into law school. In high school, Stewart took honors and AP courses for a range of subjects, including English. He enjoys writing rhetorical analyses and looking at speeches and other authors' writing. He explained to me in his first interview, "I like being able to analyze [speeches and other authors' writing] and look at the techniques and be able to write about that sort of thing." Based on his survey results, Stewart's perceived self-efficacy level is higher compared to other students. Stewart attributes much of his perceived self-efficacy for college-level writing to his experiences in AP Lang during his junior year in high school.

Swimmer is a member of the varsity swim team and chamber choir. At the time of the interviews, Swimmer was deciding between five universities. Wherever she decides to go, she hopes to study secondary English Education. Swimmer identifies as a 17-year-old white female. Swimmer's survey responses indicate higher perceived self-efficacy levels to write at the college

level. Swimmer really enjoys exposition writing and the experience of having to write a 15-page exposition piece in AP Lang during her junior year was fun for her. Alternatively, Swimmer finds creative writing more challenging, and she attributes it to family dynamics: “Actually, I guess, it’s probably because expectations in my family particularly have been high creative-wise. My sister has always been the more creative one in the family and my mom. My dad and I have been more the, I guess, straight shooter people.” If she’s not the creative one, Swimmer thrives under pressure to write topics she’s interested in. Outside of her classes, Swimmer is a part of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and writes pieces for the organization.

Appendix B: Survey Protocol

Demographic and college plans information survey
Please provide written responses to the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers, and all information will remain confidential.

1. Do you plan to attend college in the next year?
2. What colleges are you applying to?
3. How old are you?
4. What gender do you identify with?
5. What ethnicity/ies or race/s do you identify with?
6. Are you interested in participating in two sets of interviews—the first lasting about 45 minutes, the second set lasting about 20-30 minutes. (Participation is voluntary, which means you can stop participating at any time. For participating, you will receive either a $15 gift card of your choice or a University of Michigan t-shirt.)

If you are interested in participating, please provide your name and e-mail below.

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Working self-efficacy scale for college writing
Adapted from portions of Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Jones, 2008; Massengill, 2015) and Bandura's "Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales" (2006)

I. Writing tasks scale instructions: Based on your writing experiences, how confident are you that you can perform the following writing tasks? Answer on a scale of 0 (not confident at all) to 100 (totally confident).

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Not confident at all					Fairly confident					Totally confident

- I can write a good paper for a college English professor.
- I can write a good paper for a professor in any course I will take in college.
- I can write an essay that develops an idea by making connections among a variety of sources.
- I can write an essay that provides a critique or analysis of another essay.
- I can write a persuasive essay that incorporates text sources representing points of view different from mine.
- I can write a summary of a long essay that effectively captures the essence of it.
- I can write an essay that persuasively analyzes the causes or effects of a particular event, concept, or belief.
- I can write an essay that compares and contrasts two authors, events, pieces of art, or concepts in order to reach a larger conclusion about that subject.

II. Writing skills scale instructions: Based on your writing experiences, how confident are you that you can perform the following writing skills? Answer on a scale of 0 (not confident at all) to 100 (Totally confident).

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Not confident at all					Fairly confident					Totally confident

- I can proofread my essay for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.
- I can write with concise, clear sentences that "flow" together.
- I can write using words that are appropriate and effective in an academic essay.
- I can come up with a thesis that integrates a variety of information and many perspectives.
- I can organize a lot of material into well developed and clearly arranged paragraphs that have a clear focus.
- I can use MLA format correctly to format my paper and cite sources.
- Based on my writing experiences, I can correctly use other citation styles like APA to format my paper and cite sources.
- I can create introductions that engage the reader and conclusions that pull all my thoughts together effectively.
- I can write in a way that meets academic guidelines yet still conveys my own voice.
- I can use library and internet resources, like scholarly journals, to find information that will help me develop and support an idea in an essay.
- I can read and analyze various texts to synthesize information and form an academic argument.
- I can write in multiple environments with both traditional pen and paper and electronic technologies.
- I have a writing process that I feel confident will lead to effective essays.
- I can think complexly about audience and purpose and write multiple genres.

(Continued on next page)

III. Preparedness for college writing scale: Based on your writing experiences, how confident are you that you are prepared for the following? Answer on a scale of 0 (not confident at all) to 100 (totally confident).

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Not confident at all					Fairly confident					Totally confident

- I am prepared to write for different courses and professors when I get to college.
- I know what kinds of writing to expect at the college level.
- I will be successful with writing at the college level.
- I know I will be able to use what I have learned about writing so far in college.

Appendix C: Interview Protocols

Interview #1 Protocol

Overview of interview process: Thanks for taking time to sit down and talk with me. This interview will help me understand your plans for college, your experiences with writing in and outside of school, and your sense of what college writing could look like. I'll also ask you questions about your preparedness to write at the college level, and we may revisit your survey results. There's no right or wrong answer and if you need any clarification or have a question as we go along, feel free to interrupt me. The interview should take about 45 minutes. First, I'll ask you talk a little bit about your background and then I'll ask you to talk about what your plans are to graduate and then will talk a bit more specifically about writing. Do you have any questions? Okay, I'll start the recorder now.

Getting to know you: Introduction, writerly self, knowledge about writing

1. Tell me about a little about yourself.
2. What kinds of things do you like to do?
3. What are your favorite subjects?
4. What are your plans for college?
5. Okay, now let's talk about writing.
6. What kinds of writing do you like to do?
7. What kinds of writing do you find challenging?
8. Where do you write most often? And in that place, what kinds of writing do you do?
9. Would you say you write more in school, out of school—what makes you think that?
10. What do you think good writing looks like?
11. From what experiences do you think you've learned about writing the most?
12. What were you like as a writer freshman year?
13. How have you changed since then?
14. You've explained how you've changed as a writer over the past few years, can you explain a little more how you see yourself as a writer?
15. Given the way you see yourself as a writer, do you think your "writerly self" is prepared to write at the college level? Why or why not?

Expectations for college writing and Preparedness for college writing

1. What types of writing have you practiced in high school so far? Can you name specific genres? Ways of writing?
    a. What have you practiced about writing in high school that you think will prepare you for college writing?
2. What do you imagine writing at the college level to be like?
    a. How have you come to your ideas about college-level writing? For example, has anyone told you what it's like to write at the college level? Who? And what have they said? Have you participated in classes or workshops about college writing? Read materials about college-level writing?
3. On a scale of 0-100 how confident do you feel that you are prepared to write in college? You can look at this chart to help you answer. 0 would indicate very unprepared and 100 would indicate very prepared.

    a. Talk to me about why you chose X. What makes you think you're unprepared/sort of prepared/prepared for college writing?
    b. If you answered with a higher level of confidence, what experiences make you feel strongly prepared? If you answered not confident at all, what sort of experiences do you think you need to have to feel more prepared?
4. When you took a survey in September, you indicated that you felt XXX amount of confident to perform these kinds of skills, can you talk to me about whether you still feel that way and why? [Will repeat this question according to skills, tasks, and preparedness items of interest as necessary and depending on the student and their survey results]
5. What do you think it means to be prepared to write at the college level?
6. When you compare yourself to other students, do you think you are more prepared or less prepared to write at the college level? What makes you think that way?
7. What do you expect writing to be like in college? Do you think it will be similar or different to what you've written in high school? You can talk about types of writing you imagine, time dedicated to college writing, etc. Explain why you have these expectations.
8. What do you think might help you feel more prepared to write at the college level?
9. In your own words, can you define "preparedness for college writing" for me?

Thanks so much for talking with me today. I'll see you back in [teachers' name] class, and I'll be in touch about doing another interview in January.

Interview #2 Protocol

Overview of interview process: Hi again! Thanks for taking time to sit down with me for a second interview. This interview is a follow-up to make sure I got everything right about what you said in the first interview. I'm also going to ask you to do an activity where we'll look at college writing assignment examples. I'll ask you what you're thinking about those assignments as we look at them. This interview will also be a good opportunity to get your final thoughts on your preparedness to write at the college level. There's no right or wrong answer and if you need any clarification or have a question as we go along, feel free to interrupt me. The interview should take 20-30 minutes. Do you have any questions? Okay, I'll start the recorder now.

1. In the first interview, you said X and I wrote it up in my findings as XXX, does that look right to you? What should stay the same or look different?
2. In the first interview, you said X, can you help me understand what you meant by that with more explanation?
3. Other member-checking questions may be asked depending on the participant and their initial responses.
4. Let's look at some of your survey responses that you took way back in the fall. We talked about some of these in your first interview. For instance, let's look at XXX, you indicated [a certain level of confidence] about [this item]. Would you still answer this same way? Explain why or why not. [This could be repeated, depending on the initial survey and interview data for each participant].
5. Okay, now I'm going to ask you to do some reading and think aloud as you look through these handouts. These are samples of writing assignments that are often taught in college writing courses. These assignments come from a public, four-year college and are examples of what college-level writing can sometimes look like. This isn't necessarily what all college-level writing looks like, but I'd like to look at these examples. As you think aloud, tell me what looks familiar or unfamiliar to you. And then think out loud about whether you think you'd be able to write assignments like this.
    a. Do you think you can write assignments like this? Why or why not?
    b. Put the assignments in order from what you think is easiest to hardest, and explain to me why you're putting them in that order.
    c. How does this prompt surprise you, when you think about college-level writing?
    d. How does this prompt meet your expectation of college-level writing?
6. Based on what you've learned so far about writing and based on what you're seeing in front of you, take some time to write a couple sentences about what you think it means to be prepared for college writing. We'll talk about what you wrote together.
7. What have you learned about writing that you think will help you to be most successful in writing at the college level? Who or where did you learn that from?
8. What am I not thinking about in terms of preparedness for college writing? I'm not a teenager, and I'm not applying to college, so what else is on your mind about your preparedness to write at the college level?
9. If you could ask your future college professors about writing at the college level, what would you ask them?

Thanks so much for your participation, I've learned so much!

Appendix D: College writing assignment examples for Interview 2

English 125: Writing and Academic Inquiry

Major Writing Assignment #1: The Social Significance Argument

Assignment Description: You will write a descriptive, well-organized narrative about a personal experience and connect this experience to an issue of larger cultural importance. Your task in this essay is (1) to present your personal experience story in a compelling manner and (2) to use your experience to argue about a larger issue of local, national, or international interest by integrating outside sources. Ultimately, your essay should argue for the importance of your issue and/or your solutions and integrate research to support your argument. You will discover that public arguments usually stem from issues of personal importance.

Research Requirements: To fulfill the research component of this essay, you will need to locate, read, and reference a minimum of **two** and maximum of **three** sources. Both traditional sources (books, journal articles, periodicals, magazine articles, reference works, etc.) and non-traditional sources (personal interviews, music lyrics, advertisements, movies, brochures, internet sources, etc.) are appropriate as long as they are clearly relevant to your personal experience and to the argument you are making.

Writing Suggestions:

- ❑ First, work on describing your personal experience. We will discuss potential narrative, descriptive, and reflective techniques in class.
- ❑ Notice how the authors we read (Rodriguez and Bordo) choose two or three key personal incidents to raise an issue or illustrate a problem. Do the same for yourself, building your essay around specific events, anecdotes, stories that make your experiences concrete for a reader.
- ❑ Then, show how you have gained knowledge out of those experiences by connecting those experiences to larger issues of importance to others. Use source material to show that others share your concern for these issues.
- ❑ Once you have begun to articulate your argument, combine your personal experiences and your source material in ways that show how your personal experiences are socially significant.

Evaluation Emphases:

When I evaluate your essay, I will be especially concerned about the following elements:

- ❑ An argument that makes a *clear* connection between your experience and the larger issues that you are addressing
- ❑ Detailed examples or evidence to support your argument both from your personal experiences and from source material
- ❑ Source use that adds substantially to your argument and is well integrated into your surrounding argument
- ❑ Structure and organization that makes the connection between personal experience and public issues clear to your readers
- ❑ Six **FULL** to eight pages
- ❑ MLA documentation style: 12 pt, Times New Roman font, 1" margins, typed, double-spaced, stapled, numbered pages, name as a header.

English 125: Writing and Academic Inquiry

Major Writing Assignment #2: Process Log

Assignment Description: This will be a series of posts to the course blog in which you track your writing process throughout the completion of the Social Significance Argument. You will describe and reflect on portions of your writing process that occur outside of class. This process log will provide evidence for your later Arguing About Process writing assignment.

Writing Requirements: Each entry should be posted to the course blog and should consist of 500-700 words. You can also add media, such as images, sound, or video, to help you describe and reflect on your writing experiences. In your posts you should reflect on in-class exercises and your own out-of-class drafting in order to compose a process log post weekly throughout the SSA for a total of four scheduled posts. You should also produce two self-prompted posts at any point in those four weeks. This means, on at least two occasions you should simply freewrite about your process in general or specifically about whatever stage in your process you happen to be experiencing at the time. These self-prompted posts can be about your writing in English 125 or any other writing you are currently engaged in for your other courses, your extracurricular activities, your job, or your personal life. You will have a total of six process log entries (four prompted, two self-prompted).

Writing Suggestions:

- In your posts, refer to and describe specifically the writing assignment that you are currently working on (your Social Significance Argument or otherwise).
- Try not only to describe your writing experiences, but also to reflect on them and make some meaning out of them. For example, is this experience similar or different from previous writing experiences? Do you think you will continue to use this strategy or write this way in the future? Did you enjoy this writing experience? Was it easy? Was it difficult? Why?
- Keep up with your process log entries throughout the first weeks of the semester as they appear on the syllabus. This will give you a more accurate account of your writing processes than if you wait and try to remember your writing experiences later in the semester.

Evaluation Emphases:

When I evaluate your process logs, I will be especially concerned with the following:

- Quantity. Do you have four prompted entries and two self-prompted entries?
- Length: Does each post meet the 500-700 word requirement? Do your posts include any other media besides written words?
- Description: Have you referred specifically to your current writing assignment and your stage in approaching that assignment?
- Reflection: Have you reflected and made meaning from your writing experiences in addition to describing them?

ENGLISH 125

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT #3: Analytic Argument

This assignment stresses both critical thinking and analysis. Your task is to construct an argument using two primary sources, a scientific argument and a literary text, using an idea from the scientific argument (Group One) to illuminate or deepen your understanding of a literary text (Group Two). At its most basic, your thesis question might be something like "How does idea X help us understand something new about text Y?" Objectives and key parts of this paper include:

(1) Demonstrate your understanding of and critical perspective on a scientific argument (may not be as simple as it seems)
(2) Apply your understanding of that scientific argument in a new context
(3) Produce an insightful close reading / analysis of the literary text
(4) Prove the strength and usefulness of the connection between your two sources (scientific & literary).
(5) Craft an original argument using 2 sources and write clearly about conceptually difficult and critically intensive subjects.

REMEMBER: This is **NOT** a compare and contrast paper. Your job is to produce a concrete, evidence-based analysis/close reading of a literary text that is made more original, more sophisticated, and more illuminating through the addition of concepts borrowed from a scientific argument. **CHOOSE ONLY ONE TEXT FROM EACH GROUP BELOW**.

REQUIREMENTS: Write a 7 to 10 page paper, following the standard MLA format, double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point Times New Roman font

March 27th – Bring three copies of your rough draft to class, one for each member of your group, and one for me
April 1st – Small group peer review day, bring the printed copies of feedback memos with you to class
April 7th – Submit your paper by 5pm on Ctools and a paper copy in my box

TEXTS:

GROUP ONE: (scientific arguments)
Charles Darwin, From *The Origin of Species* (258-267)
Thomas Henry Huxley, "On the Physical Basis of Life" (273-276)
George John Romanes, From *Mental Evolution in Man*
Herbert Spencer, From *Principles of Biology* (285-289)
Charles Darwin, From *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex (*308-312)

GROUP TWO (literary texts)
George Eliot, From *The Mill on the Floss* (267-272)
Thomas Hardy, From *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (290-292)
Emily Pfeiffer, "Evolution" and "To Nature" (299)
Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" (305)
Jane Austen, From *Pride and Prejudice* (306)
Henry Rider Haggard, From *She* (312-316)
Thomas Hardy, From *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (318-324)

SUGGESTIONS & ADVICE:

- Choose your two texts wisely: there are innumerable combinations that will work brilliantly, but a few might not work at all.
- The literary texts and many of the scientific texts are excerpts from larger works (except the poems). You should refer to them as such within your paper. To address this, you may read a summary of the overall text (if you plan to refer to the entire piece), or treat the excerpt as a whole (but still at least mention in the intro of your paper that this comes from a larger piece).
- Don't expect the most useful connections to jump right out at you. It will require substantial critical analysis of both the scientific and the literary text. So, plan ahead; get started early. And don't forget to analyze the scientific text! One mistake often made is to expect that the important ideas in a scientific argument shouldn't require intense critical analysis to access. In many cases they do (especially for the texts above).
- Be sure to understand the whole of the scientific argument, but look for your "transportable idea" in the finer points of the argument. Concentrate your analysis on those details. This will accomplish two things: (1) Make your analysis deeper and more specific (2) Make your writing process more efficient.
- Stay concrete. Resist the impulse to be overly abstract. Close reading, close reading, close reading! If you're not getting into the nitty gritty details of both texts, you need to narrow your focus.
- Please feel free to include extra scholarly research (bonus points for doing so)—but please cited properly.
- This is an academic analytic argument. Your audience is then an academic one, so be sure to develop an appropriate tone.

Appendix E: Consent, Assent, and Permission Forms

The University of Michigan

INFORMED Assent -- Interview Study

Who is doing this study and why?

My name is Ann Burke, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. I have also worked there as a college first year writing instructor in the English department. My faculty advisors for this project are Dr. Anne Ruggles Gere and Dr. Melanie Yergeau. They are professors in the School of Education and the English department at the University of Michigan.

I'm inviting you to participate in a dissertation study about what college bound students believe about their preparedness and why. I want to figure out how students' experiences with writing influence their beliefs, and expectations for college writing. This research is important because what you have to say on this topic is really important as we (educators) still have a lot to learn about how to help students transition from high school to college writing.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to be part of the research study, you'll take a brief survey about your beliefs in your ability to perform college-level writing skills and tasks. This survey will take no more than 30 minutes. I will invite all students enrolled in Mrs. Gerard's AP sections to take the survey if they are willing. From the survey results, I will then select 10-15 students who are willing to participate in two sets of interviews. If you are selected for the interviews, your parents give you permission, and you are willing to participate, I will then sit down with you for two sets of interviews. We'll schedule those interviews to take place in October and November and then January, 2017. For each set of interviews, I'll ask your permission to audio record. The first interview should last no longer than 45 minutes and the second interview should last no longer than 30 minutes. In those two interviews, I'll ask some questions to understand your experiences with writing and your ideas about college writing. Throughout this interview, you can ask for clarification, choose not to answer certain questions, or tell me if anything confuses you and I'm happy to explain more!

How will this benefit you?

A couple ways. First, I hope the survey and interview themselves will be fun and interesting! This is not a "right answer" situation at all, and it can be really interesting to think about the issues involved in this study. Ultimately, I want to learn from you. There isn't a lot being said by educators about what high school students think about their own writing experiences. This will be a great opportunity to have your say, and I definitely want to learn from you how I can improve this study even more. You're the expert.

Will there be any tokens of appreciation for participating?

Yes, as a small token of my appreciation, you will receive your choice of a $15 gift card or a University of Michigan t-shirt after each interview for the time spent talking about these questions with me.

Are there any risks?

There shouldn't be much risk associated with this study. Of course, I can't guarantee participating will be totally risk free. For one, being recorded can certainly make anyone feel nervous. I'll try to make you as comfortable as possible. You can skip any question you don't feel comfortable with, and we can even stop the interview whenever you want and/or destroy any answers you've already given. All your information will be anonymized and kept confidential.

To keep your information safe, I will store the audio, and written recordings on a computer that is protected by a password. I will keep the audio long enough to write down what you say. After that (in about two months), I will destroy the recording.

Is this study voluntary?

Yes. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. If you are under 18 years of age, your parents have given you permission to participate, but participation is still *your* choice. Also, even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences from your school or on your grade in the class.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Ann Burke (acburke@umich.edu) or my faculty advisors Dr. Anne Ruggles Gere (argere@umich.edu) and Dr. Melanie Yergeau (myergeau@umich.edu)
at any time. You are ***always*** welcome to ask any question you might have.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 2800 Plymouth Rd. Building 520, Room 1169, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800, (734) 936-0933, or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign your name in the space provided below; you will be given a copy of this form for you to keep. Thank you for considering participating in this study!

I agree to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Printed Name **Signature**

_____

Date

I agree to allow my interview to be audio recorded.

_____ _____

Printed Name **Signature**

_____

Date

The University of Michigan

INFORMED Consent (Student) -- Interview Study

Who is doing this study and why?

My name is Ann Burke, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. I have also worked there as a college first year writing instructor in the English department. My faculty advisors for this project are Dr. Anne Ruggles Gere and Dr. Melanie Yergeau. They are professors in the School of Education and the English department at the University of Michigan.

I'm inviting you to participate in a dissertation study about what college bound students believe about their preparedness and why. I want to figure out how students' experiences with writing influence their beliefs, and expectations for college writing. This research is important because what you have to say on this topic is really important as we (educators) still have a lot to learn about how to help students transition from high school to college writing.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you'll take a brief survey about your beliefs in your ability to perform college-level writing skills and tasks. This survey will take no more than 30 minutes. I will invite all students enrolled in Mrs. Gerard's AP sections to take the survey if they are willing. From the survey results, I will then select 10-15 students who are willing to participate in two sets of interviews. If you are selected for the interviews and willing to participate, I will then sit down with you for two sets of interviews. We'll schedule those interviews to take place in October and November and then January, 2017. For each set of interviews, I'll ask your permission to audio record. The first interview should last no longer than 45 minutes and the second interview should last no longer than 30 minutes. In those two interviews, I'll ask some questions to understand your experiences with writing and your ideas about college writing. Throughout this interview, you can ask for clarification, choose not to answer certain questions, or tell me if anything confuses you and I'm happy to explain more!

How will this benefit you?

A couple ways. First, I hope the survey and interview themselves will be fun and interesting! This is not a "right answer" situation at all, and it can be really interesting to think about the

issues involved in this study. Ultimately, I want to learn from you. There isn't a lot being said by educators about what high school students think about their own writing experiences. This will be a great opportunity to have your say, and I definitely want to learn from you how I can improve this study even more. You're the expert.

Will there be any tokens of appreciation for participating?

Yes, as a small token of my appreciation, you will receive your choice of a $15 gift card or a University of Michigan t-shirt after each interview for the time spent talking about these questions with me.

Are there any risks?

There shouldn't be much risk associated with this study. Of course, I can't guarantee participating will be totally risk free. For one, being recorded can certainly make anyone feel nervous. I'll try to make you as comfortable as possible. You can skip any question you don't feel comfortable with, and we can even stop the interview whenever you want and/or destroy any answers you've already given. All your information will be anonymized and kept confidential.

To keep your information safe, I will store the audio, and written recordings on a computer that is protected by a password. I will keep the audio long enough to write down what you say. After that (in about two months), I will destroy the recording.

Is this study voluntary?

Yes. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Also, even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences from your school or on your grade in the class.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Ann Burke (acburke@umich.edu) or my faculty advisors Dr. Anne Ruggles Gere (argere@umich.edu) and Dr. Melanie Yergeau (myergeau@umich.edu)
at any time. You are ***always*** welcome to ask any question you might have.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 2800 Plymouth Rd. Building 520, Room 1169, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800, (734) 936-0933, or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign your name in the space provided below; you will be given a copy of this form for you to keep. Thank you for considering participating in this study!

I agree to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Printed Name **Signature**

_____

Date

I agree to allow my interview to be audio recorded.

_____ _____

Printed Name **Signature**

_____

Date

The University of Michigan

Parent Permission Form -- Interview Study

Who is doing this study and why?

My name is Ann Burke, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. I have also worked there as a college first year writing instructor in the English department. My faculty advisors for this project are Dr. Anne Ruggles Gere and Dr. Melanie Yergeau. They are professors in the School of Education and the English department at the University of Michigan.

I'm inviting your child to participate in a dissertation study about what college bound students believe about their preparedness and why. I want to figure out how students' experiences with writing influence their beliefs, and expectations for college writing. This research is important because what your child has to say on this topic is really important as we (educators) still have a lot to learn about how to help students transition from high school to college writing.

What will your child be asked to do?

If you give permission for your child to participate in the research study, he or she will take a brief survey about his or her beliefs in their ability to perform college-level writing skills and tasks. This survey will take no more than 30 minutes. I will invite all students enrolled in Mrs. Gerard's AP sections to take the survey if they are willing and you give your child permission. From the survey results, I will then select 10-15 students who are willing to participate in two sets of interviews. If you give your child permission and your child is selected for interviews, I will then sit down with your child for two sets of interviews. We'll schedule those interviews to take place in October and November and then January, 2017. For each set of interviews, I'll ask your child's permission to audio record. The first interview should last no longer than 45 minutes and the second interview should last no longer than 30 minutes. In those two interviews, I'll ask some questions to understand your child's experiences with writing and their ideas about college writing. Throughout this interview, your child can ask for clarification, choose not to answer certain questions, or tell me if anything confuses you and I'm happy to explain more!

How will this benefit your child?

A couple ways. First, I hope the survey and interviews themselves will be fun and interesting! This is not a "right answer" situation at all, and it can be really interesting to think about the issues involved in this study. Ultimately, I want to learn from your child about his or her experiences with writing, preparing to write at the college level, and what they know about college writing. There isn't a lot being said by educators about what high school students think about their own writing experiences. This will be a great opportunity for your child to contribute to the conversation.

Will your child receive any tokens of appreciation for participating?

Yes, as a token of my appreciation, your child will receive his or her choice of a $15 gift card or a University of Michigan t-shirt for the time spent talking about these questions with me.

Are there any risks?

There shouldn't be much risk associated with this study. Of course, I can't guarantee participating will be totally risk free. For one, being recorded can certainly make anyone feel nervous. I'll try to make students as comfortable as possible. Your child can skip any question he or she doesn't feel comfortable with, and we can even stop the interview at any point and/or destroy any answers your child has already given. Additionally, you have the right to see the questions I will ask your child, and I am happy to provide those upon request. If you would like to see those questions, please contact me via e-mail or phone (see below), and I will provide those to you through whichever method is most convenient for you.

To keep your child's information safe, I will store the audio and written recordings on a computer that is protected by a password. I will keep the audio long enough to write down what your child says. After that (in about two months), I will destroy the recording. The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study.

Is this study voluntary?

Yes. Providing permission for your child to participate in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you give permission, your child may still choose not to participate and also may change

his or her mind and stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences from the school or on your child's grade in the class.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me, Ann Burke (acburke@umich.edu), or my faculty advisors Dr. Anne Ruggles Gere (argere@umich.edu) and Dr. Melanie Yergeau (myergeau@umich.edu) at any time. You are ***always*** welcome to ask any question you might have. If you have questions about research participant rights, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 2800 Plymouth Rd. Building 520, Room 1169, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800, (734) 936-0933, or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

If you agree to give permission for your child to participate in this study, please sign your name in the space provided below and send it back with your child. Please keep the duplicate copy of this form for your reference. Thank you for considering your child's participation in this study!

I give my child permission to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Parent Printed Name **Student Printed Name**

_____ _____

Parent Signature **Date**

I agree to allow my child's interview to be audio recorded.

_____

Parent Signature

Appendix F: Codebook

Category	Codes	Definition of code	Example from interview transcripts
Writerly selves	Challenges	Any instance in which participants identify or describe writing skills or kinds of writing they find challenging to practice	"…if it's not on a subject that I find interesting, it's like oh my gosh, I don't want to write another word." --Emma
	Strengths	Any instance in which participants identify or describe their writing strengths	"…I can write a narrative easy as pie. I mean, I know how to imagine things the way I want them to be, and I know how to convey a scent a reader…" --Tangerine
	Writing preferences	Any instance in which participants identify or describe what they like to write or what works for them most when they write (e.g. preference to write certain kinds of writing, preference of learning to write a certain genre by example/modeling, preference to use a specific writing strategy)	"When I'm writing for school 'cuz I take up a lot of space when I write. I cannot like type on the computer. I like planning it out. My outlines don't look like A, B, C, like, 1, 2, 3. They're like it's a bunch of random lines and arrows. That's just how I like to plan things. I like turn them into Ms. Gerard [pseudonym] and she's like, 'I've never seen this before.' I'm like that's just how I see things." –Charlotte James
	Writing strategies	Any instance in which participants indentify or describe writing strategies they have learned or used	Ann: Do you have strategies to sort of take on those challenges and to make sure that you are successful in the end? Moon: Yeah, like what I—I think what I tried, I don't know, for some reason, once I have—like outlines and stuff really help, I think. Cause I think you can figure out what each paragraph is going to be composed of and how to—and what to write in each one. I use that a lot, actually, for a lot of my essays, like writing out outlines and stuff.
	Writing development	Any instance in which participants describe or evaluate their writing development	"I think mostly how I've changed is I've become a much more independent writer. That happened a lot my junior year. I became much more independent. I learned how I wanted to write things while still staying within an organized and scholarly, I guess, way to write." –Swimmer
Self-efficacy to write at the college level	Writing skills	Any instance in which students describe or evaluate their confidence in their ability to complete certain writing skills at the college level	Ann: Okay, mm-hmm. Speaking of doing research, gathering resources, I saw that you had 100 range of confidence here in terms of using MLA, and also other citation styles, like APA. Moon: Yeah. Ann: I'll tell you, actually, other students have talked about their confidence in MLA, you know similar confidence that you have; and APA is starkly different, for the most part. I'm curious to know what your experience is with other style citations. Moon: I mean, I think for that there's—I think it's 'cause we have the Internet. We have Internet access to it, so we can literally search up how to format stuff, and it's available to you so that's why I put 100. Because it's

			not like something—I mean, if there is somethin g that I had to memorize, going about and studying is different, but it's all open access now so.
	Writing tasks	Any instance in which participants describe or evaluate their confidence in their ability to complete certain writing skills at the college level	Ann: Then the item "I can write an essay that provides a critique or analysis of another essay, is a bit lower, in the 70 range. Can you explain that difference? Stephen Burbassa: I've never really been good at peer editing, 'cause I just never see oh this is what is wrong. Usually I can see that, oh yeah, this is wrong, but I can't necessarily pin down what exactly would be right.
Sources of self-efficacy for college-level writing	Prior writing experiences in courses AP Language and Composition	Any instance in which participants describe ways in which prior writing experiences in specific courses contribute to their performance contribute to their perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level.	Ann: Then for the rest of the items, pretty close to high level confidence here. The first two, "I can write a good paper for a professor in any course I will take in college. Can you explain maybe what contributes to that 80 range of confidence? Stephen Burbassa: Well, just the AP Language, and AP Literature now, I guess. I guess basically everything that I've said already, just allows me to do it.
	Writing experiences in school	Any instance in which participants describe ways in which prior writing experiences in their general school experiences contribute to their performance contribute to their perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level.	"I think I'll know what I'm gonna be doing. My teachers, they try to help us get ready, and I think that helps. Yeah I think I'm just at the point where it's like, 'I know what I know, and I think it's pretty good.' I think I'm gonna do okay." –Alice Carroll
	Performance /Mastery Experience	Any instance in which participants describe ways in which their performance (e.g. successful experiences, failures/challenges, grades, assessment scores) contribute to their perceived self-efficacy to write at the college level.	Ann: …on a scale of 0 to 100, how confident are that you are prepared to write at the college level? Swimmer: Probably close to 80. Ann: Okay. What contributes to that sense of confidence do you think? Swimmer: I think mostly AP Lang as well as taking standardized test such as the ACT. I got a higher than average score on the writing and English section.
	Resourcefulness	Any instance in which students explain the process for how they'll overcome a challenge or a face a new situation (e.g. new kind of writing)	Ann: Okay. Let's say you do [inaudible 17:26] writing in your science courses at the college level, and you're feeling maybe, a little less prepared compared to your other courses. How do you approach that sense of unpreparedness? What do you do in that situation? Stewart: First thing I do, especially in a science class is I have all of my labs from AP Chemistry. That's one thing our AP Chem teacher told us to do is keep all your labs. Because a lot of them are similar, or the same to ones you'll be doing in college. Because the college board gets all of their mandatory labs from professors at major institutions. Ann: Right.

			Stewart: That's nice. The internet is, of course, a great resource. The other thing is go in during professors' office hours. That's always a great resource.
Expectations for College-Level Writing	Comparing high school and college writing	Any instance of participants describing perceived similarities or differences between high school writing and college-level writing (could include kinds of writing, level of challenge, length or amount of writing, instructor/institution expectations).	"I mean, in a high school classroom like Mrs. Gerard's [pseudonym] gives us time to prepare for in-class essays and stuff. She'll have like, yeah, you're assignment for tonight is to write an outline for tomorrow's in-class essay. That's not gonna happen in college. You're gonna be expected to know the material, sit down and just go for it. I'm ready for that. I think I could prob'ly do that. –Emma
	Sources of Information	Any instance in which participants identify a person, place, or thing that have informed their expectations of college-level writing (e.g. teachers, peers, family members, college-prep assessment, college-prep curriculum standards).	Stewart: That was one of the things Mr. Chesley[pseudonym] really focused on in AP lang. He said, "We're preparing you not just for the AP test in May but also for college," because we were always told that in college the difference between an okay student at college and a great student is the great students are the ones who can form a coherent sentence. Ann: Mr. Chesley said that? Stewart: Yeah, Mr. Chesley said that. Ann: Okay. Then what sorts of—I mean, did Mr. Smith say, "In college, you'll do this with writing"? Stewart: Yeah. A lot of it was in college you're going to have to write these rhetorical analyses. You're going to have to write these synthesis essays very frequently. He would always bring up the example of—I think it was his master's thesis that it was just this huge, ridiculous synthesis essay, essentially, and so that was always the example that he brought up that this was a useful skill we were learning, that and it will help us in college.
	Anticipated writing experiences	Any instance in which participants describe anticipated writing experiences at the college level (could include kinds of writing, level of challenge, length or amount of writing, instructor/institution expectations).	Ann: Do you have any ideas about what college-level writing could look like? Moon: I feel like, I mean, depending on the class and I could—I feel like it would be really research based in college. I feel like I'll be writing a lot of research papers. Just 'cause I feel like that's everywhere. Like if you get science classes, or I guess mostly science classes, or a lot of the literature classes, stuff like that. Ann: Do you mean like in college? Moon: Yeah, in college. Because it does depend on the class, I feel. Yeah, I feel like I'll be writing a lot of research papers. I feel like I'll be writing a lot of analytical papers, and that's why I think it'll just be harder, you know. Yeah.
	Physiological state	Any instance in which participants describe stress, mood, or anxiety in regards to their expectations for college-level writing.	"Like professors are scary, reading your stuff. It's probably like what I've seen on TV and stuff about like college. I don't know. That's like where I like get scared. I

			don't know how like different it [college-level writing] is from like an AP class." – Charlotte James
Characteristics of Preparedness: Any instance in which students describe or define preparedness for college-level writing in general, othered terms	Knowledge of writing skills	Any instance in which participants identify or describe writing skills they believe necessary to demonstrate preparedness for college-level writing	Stephen Burbassa: You need to have a specific writing style to be able to have something worth submitting and then you need to know what you're gonna be dealing with when it comes to the assignments that you're gonna be given; otherwise you might see something like the social significance argument and be daunted by that. Then I wrote something about MLA formatting… Ann: What did you write there? Stephen Burbassa: "MLA formatting's the most important of all; do not forget that.
	Knowledge of writing tasks	Any instance in which participants identify or describe writing tasks they believe necessary to demonstrate preparedness for college-level writing	" You need to be able to know how to write a rhetorical analysis, like a synthesis essay, and something that—argumentative I guess is what I can say. Or a creative style, if that's what the teacher requires. Should be able to do that. Should be able to make it interesting to your reader. Because it's very easy to say okay, well I gotta write an essay about this, and it's just gonna be boring. People don't wanna read that. Your professor doesn't wanna read that. I'm sure 80 percent of your class just wrote that." --Emma
	Non-cognitive qualities	Any instance in which participants identify or describe non-cognitive qualities they believe necessary to demonstrate preparedness for college-level writing	"Also, being prepared means that you're accepting the fact that you're not gonna get an A on every paper, and that you still have a lot to learn because I think having unrealistic expectations of excelling right away in college means that you're unprepared." Charlotte James
Perceived preparedness for college-level writing: Any instance of participants describing their perceived preparedness to write at the college level in self-reflective or self—centered terms	Self-efficacy (to write at the college level)	Any instance in which participants evaluate or reflect on their level of confidence to perform certain writing skills and tasks at the college level. Students may also describe their level of confidence in their overall preparedness to write at the college level.	"I know what kinds of writing to expect at the college level. I know I'll have to write a lab report. I know that I'll have to do all of these other things. I'm confident that I'll be successful at it, because I'll know that, with a little bit of guidance, I'll be able to get it easily." --Emma
	Prior writing experiences	Any instance where students attribute and describe prior writing experiences in and outside of school serve as reasons for their perceived preparedness	Ann: …what do you think you've practiced about writing in high school so far that might prepare you to write at the college level? Moon: You know, stuff like citations. I'm already formatting. What else? Like ABCDE paragraphs. I don't know how they're used, but I think they're probably useful for what we're gonna do in college.
	Performance	Any instance where students describe or reflect on their individual performance and explain how it relates to their perceived preparedness (e.g. measured performance like grades or assessment scores)	Ann: …do you think that your writerly self is prepared to write at the college level? Frank N. Stein: I'd say that I'm not gonna get "E"s. I'm not gonna fail, but I'm not sure that I'm totally prepared to succeed

			really well, because just the fact that I came from [a different high school] and now coming here and I see I'm—cuz I thought I was pretty good up there and then I came down and I'm like, "I'm not as good as I thought I was." Ann: Mm-hmm. Frank N. Stein: I've just seen that now. College is obviously going to be even more demanding. I don't know. I don't know. Ann: Yeah. You came here and you're seeing other students. Frank N. Stein: Mm-hmm. Ann: What do you think is the difference? Frank N. Stein: I think just the fact that they've been challenged longer. They've met the challenge and now they can continue at that level, whereas now I'm just—my old school, it was a lot easier for me. I don't really know how to explain it, but I'm—maybe it was the way they taught or whatever., but I didn't really try very hard and I could get "A"s. Here I have to actually work for it.
	Comparing to peers	Any instance in which participants explain or evaluate their perceived preparedness based on how they compare themselves to their peers	"I think just reflecting back on AP scores and looking at—or even ACT and SAT—the writing sections, seeing how well you do compared to other students, and just knowing that that's where you're at compared to how you should be for college, and if-- I was doing well in that, so I feel pretty good." –Rosy Potter
	To feel more prepared	Any instance in which participants make inquiries about what college-level will be like or any instance in which students express what they believe they need to feel more prepared at the college level.	Ann: What do you think you would need to feel even more prepared? Frank N. Stein: Definitely continuing with Miss Gerard's class, getting feedback from her has been helpful so far. I know what to work on with my writing and just having more chances to do that. I guess that's what we're doing, pretty much, every book we write an essay on. As, quote/unquote,annoying as that can be, having to write all the time, it is helpful. Having more practice to do that is definitely helping and just, yeah, getting the chance to practice my skills and then getting feedback on what I need to work on so I do better.
Stand alone codes	Good writing	Any instance in which students describe what they believe "good writing" should look like	Ann: What do you think good writing looks like?

			Zach: I think good writing is being—I split it into two things. There's, for me, the technical aspect of your grammar, your spelling, your sentence structure, how that flows together, and then your actual analysis or descriptions. I think, obviously, the best writers can mix those together and can step out of tone when they're talking about someone else and use their type of language, like when it's a novel or something. Ann: Mm-hmm. Zach: I think balancing those two is what makes good writing.

Appendix G: Alignment Matrix

Research questions What do I need to know?	Theoretical framework features that help me answer the research question	Data collection methods that will help me answer these questions	Protocol questions
What are college-bound students' expectations for college-level writing?	-reflecting on prior experiences; developing thoughts, beliefs, and forethought about what students have learned and what they will learn (guiding actions as they anticipate future)	-Preparedness for college writing subscale -Two sets of interviews	-Subscale: I know what kinds of writing to expect at the college level. I will be successful with writing at the college level I know I will be able to use what I have learned about writing so far in college -Interview 1: What have you practiced about writing in high school that you think will prepare you for college writing? What do you expect writing to be like in college? Do you think it will be similar or different to what you've written in high school? You can talk about types of writing you imagine, time dedicated to college writing, etc. Explain why you have these expectations. What have you practiced about writing in high school that you think will prepare you for college writing? How have you come to your ideas about college-level writing? For example, has anyone told you what it's like to write at the college level? Who? And what have they said? Have you participated in classes or workshops about college writing? Read materials about college-level writing? Interview 2: Okay, now I'm going to ask you to do some reading and think aloud as you look through these

			handouts. These are samples of writing assignments that are often taught in college writing courses. As you think aloud, tell me what looks familiar or unfamiliar to you. And then think out loud about whether you think you'd be able to write assignments like this. a. Do you think you can write assignments like this? Why or why not? b. Put the assignments in order from what you think is easiest to hardest, and explain to me why you're putting them in that order. c. How does this prompt surprise you, when you think about college-level writing? How does this prompt meet your expectations of what college-level writing might be?
In what ways, if any, do college-bound students differentiate writing in high school from writing at the college level?	-Vicarious and direct learning (environmental cues) -Agency in self-beliefs: students determine the similarities and differences between high school and college writing, based on what they have come to know -writing self=efficacy: students, in determining the differences between high school and college-level writing, might consider their perceived capability to perform writing skills and task at each level	Interview 1	Interview 1: -What do you expect writing to be like in college? Do you think it will be similar or different to what you've written in high school? Explain why you have these expectations.
What, specifically, do college-bound students believe they have learned about college writing from their prior and current experiences?	SCT sources of information Vicarious experiences (e.g. modeling, social persuasion)	Interview 1 Interview 2	Interview 1: -What do you imagine writing at the college level to be like? How have you come to your ideas about college-

			level writing? For example, has anyone told you what it's like to write at the college level? Who? And what have they said? Have you participated in classes or workshops about college writing? Read materials about college-level writing? Interview 2: What have you learned about writing that you think will help you to be most successful in writing at the college level? Who or where did you learn that from?
In what ways do college-bound students perceive high school writing experiences as preparing them to write at the college level?	-Self-efficacy as mediating mechanism between prior and subsequent experiences -Self-efficacy is domain and context specific—so students will be prompted to reflect on *writing* self-efficacy in high school and college contexts-drawing connections between the two -Agency in self-beliefs: students determine the specific experiences that are/are not preparing them to write at the college level, as they perceive those experiences -vicarious learning: social comparison	-Survey subscales 1, 2, and 3 -Interviews	All subscales ask students to indicate level of confidence to perform skills and tasks at the college level. The third asks students to indicate their level of confidence in their preparedness for college-level writing. These items are all answered with the stem, "Based on your writing experiences," in mind. Interview 1: -What have you practiced about writing in high school that you think will prepare you for college writing? On a scale of 0-100 how confident do you feel that you are prepared to write in college? You can look at this chart to help you answer. 0 would indicate really unprepared and 100 would indicate very prepared. A. Talk to me about why you chose X. What makes you think you're unprepared/sort of prepared/prepared for college writing? B. If you answered with a higher

			level of confidence, what experiences make you feel strongly prepared? If you answered not confident at all, what sort of experiences do you think you need to have to feel more prepared? -When you compare yourself to other students, do you think you are more prepared or less prepared to write at the college level? What makes you think that way? Interview 2: -Okay, not I'm going to ask you to do some reading and think aloud as you look through these handouts. These are samples of writing assignments that are often taught in college writing courses. As you think aloud, tell e what looks familiar or unfamiliar to you. And then think out loud about whether you think you'd be able to write assignments likes this. A. Do you think you can write assignments like this? Why or why not? -What have you learned about writing that you think will help you to be most successful in writing at the college level? Who or where did you learn that from?
About which, if any, college-level writing skills and tasks do college-bound students have a sense of self-efficacy?	-Self-efficacy as mediating mechanism between prior and subsequent experiences -Self-efficacy is domain and context specific—so students will be prompted to reflect on *writing* self-efficacy in high school and college contexts-drawing connections between the two	-Survey Subscales 1 and 2 -Interview 1 -Interview 2	Survey Subscales 1 and 2: e.g. Based on my writing experiences, I can writing a good paper for a college English professor (subscale 1) and Based on my writing experiences I can proofread my essay for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors Interview 1: - When you

			took a survey in September, you indicated that you felt XXX amount of confident to perform these kinds of skills, can you talk to me about whether you still feel that way and why? [Will repeat this question according to skills, tasks, and preparedness items of interest as necessary] -Interview 2: RE: college writing assignment prompt→Do you think you can write assignments like this? Why or why not?
What are the underlying sources of college-bound students' writing self-efficacy?	Underlying sources of self-efficacy : mastery experience, vicarious experience(social persuasion and social comparison), and physiological state	Interviews	Interview 1: -What have you practiced about writing in high school that you think will prepare you for college writing? - On a scale of 1-6 how prepared to write in college do you think you are? You can look at this chart to help you answer. 1 would indicate really unprepared, and 6 would indicate very prepared. Talk to me about why you chose X. What makes you think you're unprepared/sort of prepared/prepared for college writing? -From what experiences do you think you've learned about writing the most? -When you compare yourself to others students, do you think you are more prepared or less prepared to write at the college level? What makes you think that way? Interview 2 -What have you learned about writing that you

			think will help you to be most successful in writing at the college level? Who or where did you learn that from?
In what ways, if any, do college-bound students' sense of their writerly selves influence their perceived preparedness for college-level writing?	SCT self-concept: this study will also pay attention to how students see themselves as writers	Interview 1	Interview 1 -Given the way you see yourself as a writer, do you think your "writerly self" is prepared to write at the college level? Why or why not?

Appendix H: Description of Pilot Study Research

The methods design of this dissertation study was revised based on pilot study research, conducted at a local International Baccalaureate (IB) school in July 2016. For the pilot study, I surveyed 21 rising senior students enrolled in a college writing workshop. From the survey data, 5 students were selected to participate in a focus group to discuss the design of the survey and one semi-structured interview. Like the participant selection criteria used for this dissertation study, I selected students to participate in the pilot study who represented a cross section of race and gender. I also aimed to select participants who represented a range of self-efficacy levels. This kind of selection was slightly problematic as the 21 students who took the survey indicated that they were fairly to mostly confident across the board, with few exceptions. The mean of the responses to the questions in each category showed that students were, on average, more than "fairly confident" in their abilities to perform college-level writing tasks (M = 4.59) and skills (M = 4.98) and preparedness for college-level writing (M = 4.36). Interestingly, the mean for preparedness was smaller compared to the means for writing tasks and skills, and only the mean for the second item in the preparedness category—I know what kinds of writing to expect at the college level—was less than 4.0 representing "mostly not confident" in all the questions, and this will be something to pay close attention to for the dissertation study. Additionally, there were few to no responses indicating that students were totally confident or totally not confident to perform writing skills and tasks at the college level. This may be because students were asked to indicate their levels of confidence on a 6-point Likert-like scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Totally not confident	Not confident	Mostly not confident	Fairly confident	Confident	Totally Confident

The 6-point Likert-like scale offers a smaller range of confidence indicators, which Bandura (2006) suggests results in less variance of self-efficacy levels. Taking Bandura's advice, the pilot study survey was revised to include a 0-100 scale for the dissertations survey:

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Not confident at all					Fairly confident					Totally confident

This revision to the survey scale resulted in more variance of students' perceived levels of self-efficacy to perform certain skills and tasks at the college level. Finally, the focus group participants also suggested that some terms used in the survey items either be revised or defined. The item that the focus group pointed to most was item 14 in the first subset: I can engage with rhetorical awareness to write multiple genres. This item was revised for the dissertation study to read as: I can think complexly about audience and purpose and write multiple written genres. Audience and purpose are possibly more familiar to high school students, and important to enacting rhetorical awareness. Qualifying genres as written, might also help to clarify for students that genres do not mean "books" as was mostly interpreted by the participants.

Notable findings from survey and interviews

Overall, the survey served as a nice backdrop for the interviews when I talked one on one with each participant. Throughout the interview it was useful to look at the participant's results with that participant and reflect on why that student indicated a certain level of confidence for various items. Their survey responses were useful touchstones to prompt students to explain their thinking more and provide specific examples. To make sure I use the survey as a tool consistently with each participant, each interview protocol includes a question explicitly about the survey (Interview #1, question 4; Interview #2, question 4). Space is also created to repeat these questions for multiple items, and the survey might function as a follow up question to student responses. For instance, during the pilot study, one student described writing as having "good flow." Interestingly, she had indicated that she was "mostly not confident" to write concise, clear sentences that "flow" together. When the student associated good flow with good writing, this signaled to me that I needed to learn more about her level of confidence to write sentences that flow together and what that meant for her perceived preparedness for college-level writing. Moments like this were also important to draw out during the interviews for the dissertation study.

Of the 21 students surveyed, 8 students responded that they are totally confident they will be able to use what they have learned in college, but less were that confident that they know what to expect at the college level. This came through in the interviews as well. During the interviews, even though students stressed that they don't know exactly what to expect of college-level writing, they still indicated that they have some ideas, and they still feel confident that they

can write at the college level. This finding was particularly interesting to me as it seems to indicate that students feel confident that they have been prepared to write at the college level, even if they are unsure of what college-level writing actually entails. In explaining their rationale, students often called on what they learned about academic writing already, which is an important of moment of showing how students' prior writing experiences are influencing their expectations for college-level writing.

Related to the ways in which students acknowledge their uncertainty about college-level writing will be like, some of the interviewed students talked about their perceived preparedness with a sort of tolerance for uncertainty. For example, when asked to define preparedness for college-level writing, a couple students talked about knowing content, practicing skills, and tasks. These responses did not surprise me and echoed the popular and academic discourse about preparedness as noted in this proposal's literature. However, the other three talked about preparedness as acknowledging that we learn and grow, and we adjust. This seems different from how preparedness is defined in popular and academic discourse as indicated in my literature review. For the dissertation study, I decided to add what was an enlightening exercise for me to ask each student to define preparedness for college-level writing. This question provided some rich information that contributes to the current discourse about students' preparedness for college-level writing.

Throughout the pilot study interviews, these students acknowledged that they learn about writing and specifically college-level writing from their peers, family, and teachers. While in an early draft of my proposal for this dissertation I highlighted elements of social persuasion through vicarious learning (e.g. modeling and feedback) as an important concept to understand this study, I did not focus so much on another element of vicarious learning—social comparison. During the interviews, student noted that they compare themselves to their peers to determine their level of preparedness. For instance, one student explained how she talks with her soccer teammates about what they are learning at their respective schools. Based on what her teammates reported, this student determined that not only were they learning about writing differently, but that what she was learning at her school, as compared to her peers, was preparing her more effectively. After hearing multiple accounts of social comparison from these interview participants, the concept garnered more focus in my dissertation work and is discussed in the

theoretical framework section of this dissertation, and a question in the first set of interviews will address the phenomena of social comparison (see Appendix B, question 6).

Finally, I ended each interview with the standard question: Is there anything you'd like to add about your sense of preparedness and expectations for college-level writing that I haven't covered? While this is sometimes a formality for qualitative interviews, it is an important question to make sure participants have their say and that their voices are honored. In the pilot study, 4 out of the 5 participants said they didn't have anything more to say. As a result, I eliminated that question, but hoped I could draw out more responses with two questions in the second set of interviews: 7. What am I not thinking about in terms of preparedness for college writing? I'm not a teenager, and I'm not applying to college, so what else is on your mind about your preparedness to write at the college level? 8. If you could ask your future college professors about writing at the college level, what would you ask them? By asking these last two questions, participants in my dissertation study did indeed provide more responses and more insight about their perceived preparedness and expectations for college-level writing. Ultimately, I learned a lot from the pilot study participants, not only about their perceived self-efficacy, preparedness, and expectations for college-level writing, but also about how I could, in turn, make the dissertation study all the more effective in the fall of 2016.

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