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Entering an academic discourse community: A case study of the coping strategies of eleven english as a second language students

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ENTERING AN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE COMMUNITY: A
CASE STUDY OF THE COPING STRATEGIES OF ELEVEN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS

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This dissertation written by Cheryl Benz and entitled ENTERING AN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE COPING STRATEGIES OF ELEVEN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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The dissertation of Cheryl Benz is approved.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To my husband and best editor, Stephen, who encouraged me through out this process and actually read the whole thing, and to my children, Rachel, Nathan, and Steve, who weathered this storm with me.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
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This case study follows eleven non-English speaking students as they adapt to community college, content courses. The three classes examined are required freshman classes-- Humanities, Social Environment, and Individual in Transition. In order to cope with the demands of these classes, students must penetrate the academic discourse community and have effective relationships with their instructors and their peers. The results of the study are based on interviews with eleven non-native speaking (NNS) students and their instructors and on an analysis of student writing assignments, course syllabi, and exams. Three general areas are examined: (a) students' first-language (L_1) education, (b) the requirements of their content classes, and (c) the affective factors which influence their adaptation process.

The case of these students reveals that: 1. Students draw on their L_1 education, especially in terms of content, as they

cope with the demands of these content classes. 2. In some areas L_1 educational experiences interfere with students' ability to adapt. 3. The content classes require students to have well developed reading, writing, oral, and aural skills. 4. Students must use higher level cognitive skills to be successful in content classes. 5. Affective factors play a role in students' success in content classes. The discussion section includes possible implications of this data for college level English as a Second Language courses.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter introduces the scope of this doctoral dissertation. It includes (a) background on the problem which precipitated this study, (b) the purpose of the study, (c) the research question, and (d) the possible significance of the data.

As an opening note to the reader I would like to state that this is a qualitative study. Qualitative studies are usually written in first person because the researcher is the primary data-gathering and data-processing instrument (Stake, 1988) . This dissertation will follow the <u>American Psychological Association Publication Manual</u> (APA) guidelines on the use of first or third person in the reporting of data. In the section titled "Third person" APA (1994) states: "Writing 'The experimenter instructed the participants' when 'the experimenter' refers to yourself is ambiguous and may give the impression that you did not take part in your own study" (p. 29). In these cases, APA suggests that data are best presented in the first person to reduce ambiguity. Any use of the first person in this dissertation is not meant to compromise the formality or the objectivity of this document, rather it is meant to paint a clear and honest picture of the processes to the reader.

Problem

The two principal objectives of English to speakers of other Languages (ESOL) courses at Miami-Dade Community College in Miami, Florida are to assist students in acquiring proficiency in English and to develop their language skills. Additionally, ESOL classes attempt to prepare students for success in "regular" college

classes. Adequate preparation for success in academic situations requires students to develop several language skills. Effective use of these skills allows non-native speaking (NNS) students membership in the "club" of academia--to become participants in the **academic discourse community**. Blanton defines the academic discourse community as "a collective of individuals (teachers, researcher, scholars, students) dispersed in time and space but connected to the academy in some way, individuals who value written language over spoken language" (1994, p. 3). According to Blanton's definition, then, effective reading and writing for academic purposes are essential skills for NNS students who wish to become part of the academic community.

This written language may be valued over spoken language in academic settings, students also need to develop competent oral and aural skills to be used as a vehicle for obtaining effective reading and writing skills; in other words, they need to know how to interact with the teacher and their peers in a college classroom. NNS students must use appropriate transactional and interactional aural/oral skills, and use culture-appropriate strategies for interacting in American academic settings. Therefore, developing academic oral skills is also important for student success.

Reading and Writing

In order to gain membership in an academic discourse community, students must not only read and write texts effectively, but they must also (a) interact with, and learn from, the texts they read and write; (b) use reading and writing as a means to discover

meaning; (c) be aware of the purpose of text they read and produce; (d) identify biases in texts they read; and (e) consider the audience they are writing for. These factors are further complicated by the demands of specific classes. Although there are some general commonalties in academic writing for all fields, each discipline has its own discourse community (the skills and specialized vocabulary necessary for reading or writing a lab report in chemistry class are different than those needed to read or write an analysis of a poem). Moreover, each instructor emphasizes particular aspects of a discourse community. No two instructors teach the same class in exactly the same way. One teacher may emphasize participation in class discussion; another may prefer to lecture. Writing assignments could emphasize objectivity or require that students integrate their personal opinions and experiences. The possibilities are endless.

Transactional and Interactional Aural/Oral Skills

Effective aural and oral strategies are also essential for students to be successful in an academic discourse community. According to Brown and Yule (1983) language functions can be divided into two main categories: language for a **transactional** purpose or language for an **interactional** purpose. Transactional language conveys factual information and focuses on content. It is usually one-way language--the speaker provides the information, the listener processes the information. An academic lecture typifies the transactional language function--the teacher tells the student what information is important and the student takes notes.

Interactional language, on the other hand, is used for the social function of language. Students would need interactional language to interact with professors and other students and to take part in class discussions or group projects.

Academic Acculturalization

Besides having the language skills to be able to succeed in an academic discourse community, students must become acculturated. They must learn the norms of the community; they must abide by its mores, and they must understand their expected role in the community.

While the demands of becoming "academic" are complex for all students, they are especially burdensome for NNS students. Many times NNS students bring with them skills, background knowledge, communication styles, academic expectations, academic culture, and writing styles that differ significantly from their native English-speaking (NES) peers. Past studies of NNS and NES students have examined many of these issues separately, but none has examined the dynamic of how these factors interact with each other.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to chronicle the processes that NNS students go through in order to enter an academic discourse community--to discover how they make their way. I am interested in observing which factors contribute to or hinder their success. I hope to discover when they make correct guesses about the requirements of academia and understand why

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they have misconceptions about its nature. My expectation is that the information gained from the experiences of these students will be useful for other students who plan to go through the same process and the faculty who work with those students.

This study also serves a pragmatic purpose. One of my responsibilities at Miami-Dade is developing the curricula for the highest level of ESOL reading and writing classes. These courses have been designed so they not only enhance students' English proficiency, but also prepare them to be competent participants in the academic discourse communities of various academic disciplines. Up to now, I have based the design of the reading and writing classes on my own experience as a college freshman, which was in a different type of academic setting (a four-year liberal arts college) and is badly out-dated. Therefore, there is a legitimate need to have accurate information about what is required of Miami-Dade Community College students in order to be successful in their specific academic discourse community.

Besides my own pragmatic reasons for attempting this study, I hope that it will serve as a source of information and model of analysis for other instructors in academic ESOL programs. There have been two previous studies similar in part to this study. Currie's 1993 study of the cognitive demands of a business administration class on NNS students and Leki's 1995 ethnography of NNS writers as they write for content classes both offer some insights to academic demands on ESOL students. Yet the scope of this study is broader and attempts to look at a multiplicity of factors which

influence students as they progress. One cautionary note as to the applicability of these findings to other teaching situations: as with any qualitative study, the expert instructors will have to decide for themselves to what extent the data gathered and analyzed in this study is generalizable to their teaching situation.

Research Question

The overall research question is: **How do NNS students become successful members of an academic discourse community?** Ideally this question requires an exploration of all the possible discourse communities NNS students could encounter; however, this topic is too broad to be covered by one study. Therefore, I will focus on typical, required, freshman courses, specifically, those courses covered by the State of Florida Gordon Rule. Hence, I propose to address the question: **How do NNS students successfully meet the demands of Gordon Rule classes?**

In order to answer this main question, I need to address several sub-questions: 1. What are the cognitive demands of Gordon Rule classes? 2. How important is correct English language usage to success? 3. What are the mores of the different academic discourse communities? 4. How well do students understand the nature of these communities? 5. What types of reading, writing, aural, and oral skills are necessary for these courses? 6. How do NNS students' academic backgrounds affect their success in Gordon Rule classes? 7. How are the students' first language academic cultures similar to or different from U.S.

academic culture? 8. In what ways do these factors interact with each other?

Propositions

I propose to frame my research in light of six propositions: 1. A student's first-language academic experiences, comfort level with the American educational system, and his/her familiarity with content in the first language will facilitate his/her success in the Gordon Rule class. 2. I will be able to identify some elements of discourse that are characteristic of the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and humanities. 3. Professors of Gordon-Rule classes will assign writing tasks which require grammatical correctness, higher-level cognitive processes, effective writing processes, and familiarity with the demands, conventions, and specific vocabulary of their specific academic discourse community. 4. Students who have effective oral/aural strategies will be more competent in Gordon Rule classes. 5. All of the aforementioned factors interact in a dynamic manner. 6. A successful student will rely on his or her areas of strength in order to compensate for his or her weaknesses.

Definitions

Gordon Rule classes are those classes specifically regulated by Florida State Law, which mandates that students write a minimum of six pages of college level text (with a grade of "C" or better) during one academic semester. At Miami-Dade Community College, Gordon Rule classes include: Individual in Transisiton, Social Environment , and Humanities. These are the three classes that will be investigated in this study. For the purpose of this study, I

will define a student as successful if he or she receives a grade of "C" or higher in the Gordon Rule class.

<u>Limitations and Delimitations</u>

As stated before, I will limit the scope of my investigation to three specific Gordon Rule classes. Further, the subjects will be limited to 11 students who have taken ESOL classes at the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade Community College and are currently enrolled in freshman courses.

I will specifically not limit other aspects of this study. Unlike most quantitative studies, in this qualitative investigation I will not attempt to control for environmental factors. Not controlling these factors is central to this study because it is the academic environment and the effects of that environment on the students that are under scrutiny. I hope to describe how different environments affect students with different backgrounds. Additionally, while the questions I pose to students will certainly focus on their responses on certain topics and possible factors for their successes or inadequacies, I will not attempt to limit the number of potential factors that could affect student success. Indeed I anticipate that this study will reveal emerging factors which I have not foreseen that could help to explain students' success or failure.

Possible Significance of Data

The most pragmatic use of the data gathered in this study is that it would allow instructors to make informed choices in planning the curricula and selecting materials for the final level of ESOL

reading and writing at the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade Community College.

Another possible implication would be to address a controversial question in the field of second-language writing instruction. Presently, the field is divided into two distinct camps, those who believe that writing instruction should focus on a general, academic community and those who believe that writing instruction should focus on the various discipline-specific academic discourse communities. The generalists (Benesch, 1995; Spack, 1988; Zamel, Raimes, Brookes, Land, Spack, White, & Taylor, 1995) argue that: 1. The general freshman-level courses do not demand discipline-specific knowledge; therefore, students do not need to learn to write for discipline-specific discourse communities immediately after ESOL classes. 2. ESOL teachers cannot be expected to know about the discipline-specific demands of writing in diverse disciplines; this is the realm of the experts in each discipline. 3. When discipline-specific genres are removed from their original academic settings to writing classes and analyzed as text, they are no longer a vehicle for communication; they are, at best, simulations of the real thing.

Conversely, the discipline-specific camp (Braine, 1988; Horowitz, 1986,1988; Johns, 1988, 1995; Swales, 1990) contends that: 1. The generalist writing classes are not meeting the "real" needs of the students because they ignore differences in academic discourse communities. 2. The generalists tend to depend solely on the personal essay as a way of developing students' academic

writing skills; this genre has limited applicability to academic contexts. 3. ESOL teachers do not need to be experts in every discourse community; they only need to provide students with tactics for identifying characteristics of texts in the students' specific discipline.

The polemics over this issue have occupied a significant portion of the Forum and Dialogue sections of the professional journals (specifically TESOL Quarterly and The Journal of Second Language Writing) from 1988 until the present, and have made for heated debates at professional conferences. So at least one of the issues addressed by this study would be on the cutting edge of the field of second-language writing.

Still another implication of the data would be to gain a clearer insight into how much and what types of knowledge and processes can be transferred from a student's first-language. This may also lead to a better understanding of how a student's first-language facilitates his/her success in academic settings (positive transfer) and to what degree his/her previous academic experiences cause miscommunication, misunderstanding, and confusion in his/her second language-experiences (negative transfer).

Finally, I expect that this study will reveal a clearer and more accurate picture of the actual processes NNS students go through in order to enter the academic discourse community although, the generalizability of the results of this study to other educational settings is left to the reader.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter reviews theories and empirical studies pertinent to non-native speaking students' processes of adaptation to academic settings. The two studies that are most similar to the focus of this study are Currie (1993) and Leki's (1995) qualitative studies of students as they dealt with the challenges of academic discourse communities.

Currie's (1993) study examines the "intellectual or conceptual activities" necessary to write for an introductory business class. Her study was based on interviews with NNS students and their professors. She also collected students' writing assignments and drafts of those assignments. Finally, she actually wrote the assignments herself in order to better understand the conceptional difficulty of each writing task. Currie found that ESOL students face a uphill battle in "regular" classes. "They must become pragmatically competent, by developing the requisite skills, abilities, and knowledge necessary for participation in a given community. Further, because of individual differences among the disciplinary communities, they must develop this competence in each of the disciplinary cultures they encounter" (p. 101). Besides this, she contends that the academic demands of writing are complicated by tacit requirements which students have to somehow figure out. She found that most of the writing assignments for the business class required abstract conceptual skills that were not explicitly outlined in the assignments. In other words, without previous experience

writing these types of assignments, students had no way of knowing how to approach the writing tasks.

Leki (1995) studied five students, two undergraduate and three graduate students, as they wrote for content classes. Her research was based on interviews with the students and professors, class hand-outs, students' writing assignments, and drafts of those assignments. Leki examined the students' strategies for "negotiating the exhilarating and sometimes puzzling demands of U.S. academic life" (p. 235). In her study she found that the students used 10 different types of strategies to complete written assignments. Those strategies are:

1. Clarifying strategies
2. Focusing strategies
3. Relying on past writing experiences
4. Taking advantage of first language/culture
5. Using current experience of feedback
6. Looking for models
7. Using current or past ESOL writing training
8. Accommodating teachers' demands
9 Resisting teachers' demands
10. Managing competing demands (p. 240)

It will be interesting to see if the students in this study exibit the same strategies. Because they touch on aspects of this dissertation, both Currie and Leki's studies have had an important influence on portions of this study. Currie's (1993) study prodded me to explore the cognitive difficulty and tacitness of the

assignments in Gordon Rule classes and Leki (1995) prompted me to look at the coping strategies of the students as they met the demands of the various discourse communities. However, the characteristic that makes this study different from Currie's and Leki's is that they focused specifically on writing while this study attempts to look at students' coping strategies dynamically and holistically. Still, I do not intend to ignore the individual factors that past studies have found consequential to students' success--these are established and helpful frameworks for analyzing data. Moreover, it would be dishonest to maintain that I went into this study without any knowledge of theoretical frameworks and studies that had come before. In fact, I did a fairly extensive review of the literature and a pilot study before attempting this study.

Because this study covers the domain of several past studies, no single framework will be explored in depth, rather, I will try to discern how each of these factors contributes to the whole. I will examine my data in light of the following etic frameworks: a) second language acquisition; b) the effect of social environment on students' attitudes towards education; c) theories on the development of higher level cognitive skills and how those cognitive skills affect second language acquisition; d) theory and research in academic writing; e) theory and research in academic reading; f) theories on the relationship between reading/writing; and h) theories on oral academic language.

Second Language Acquisition

Because the subjects in this study already have a fairly good grasp of the English language (by virtue of their completing the ESOL program), it may seem unnecessary to review language acquisition theory. However, I have decided to include second language acquisition (SLA) theory for two reasons: first, because these students certainly have not accomplished full mastery of the English language--they are still acquiring it--and second, because the type of language they acquire in content classes can be vastly different from what they learned before. The students in this study are in the process of acquiring the specialized language of a specific academic discipline as well as English.

There are several theories on how people become articulate in a second language (L_2). Some SLA theorists make a distinction between language acquisition and language learning (Krashen, 1982). Language **acquisition** happens subconsciously as a result of participation in natural communication. The focus of natural communication is meaning rather than grammatical correctness. **Learning** on the other hand, is the result of the conscious study of the formal properties of the language, i.e., the grammar, semantics, and lexicon.

Another fairly widely accepted concept of second language acquisition theory is the idea of an **affective filter** (Dulay and Burt, 1977; Krashen, 1982). The affective filter has to do with the level of anxiety a person feels while trying to acquire a second language. It controls how much input the learner comes into contact with, and

how much of that input is retained by the person who is attempting to learn another language. It is labeled the "affective" filter because its strength correlates with the learner's motivation, self-confidence, or level of anxiety. Learners with high motivation and self-confidence and low anxiety have low affective filters and so assimilate more of the target language (TL) input and are able to use that input to gain knowledge about the target language. Learners with low motivation, little self-confidence, and high anxiety have high affective filters; therefore, they receive little TL input and assimilate even less. In this respect the affective filter is somewhat analogous to a defense mechanism. It can be the barrier that keeps TL out and keeps the language from being useful to the learner, or it can facilitate language acquisition.

Social Aspects of Second Language Acquisition

The Acculturation Model.

John Schuemann proposes that second language acquisition is one component in the process of becoming acculturated into the TL culture. For Schuemann, "... second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language" (1978, p. 34). Therefore, Schuemann postulates that a language learner's degree of acculturation is a determining factor in his or her ability to acquire a second language successfully. Schuemann contends that the degree of acculturation is determined by the **social** and **psychological distance** between the learner and the TL culture.

<u>Social Distance</u>.

The factors which are germane to a person's social distance have to do with that person's first language (L_1) group affiliation. Social distance factors are those which influence the learner as a member of one social group (L_1 group) in contact with another social group (the TL group). On the other hand, the factors which determine psychological distance are related to the particular affective factors which influence each learner as an individual.

Ellis (1994) synthesizes Schuemann's views on the social factors which encourage group acculturation into seven main points:

1. The target language and the L_2 groups view each other as socially equal.

2. The target language and L_2 groups are both desirous that the L_2 group will assimilate.

3. Both the target language and L_2 groups expect the L_2 group to share social facilities with the target language group.

4. The L_2 group is small and not very cohesive.

5. The L_2 group's culture is congruent with that of the target language group.

6. Both groups have positive attitudes towards each other.

7. The L_2 learner is part of a group that envisages staying in the target language area for an extended period. (p. 305)

Schuemann believes that these factors spawn "good" language acquisition situations which optimize individual potential for acquiring a language. In his view, there can be varying degrees of

acculturation depending on how the different factors come into play. For Schuemann, then, an optimal language learning environment depends on equity between the L_1 and TL groups and positive attitudes towards the TL culture.

Psychological Distance.

As noted before, the psychological factors identified by Schuemann are affective in nature and influence each individual differently. They include:

1. Language shock--where the learner may experience confusion or doubt when using the L_2.
2. Culture shock--disorientation, stress, or fear as a result of differences between L_2 and L_1 culture.
3. Motivation--the desire that moves one to a particular action.
4. Ego boundaries--the defenses which protect one's ego.

According to Schuemann, social and psychological distance affect language learning because they determine the amount and quality of the contact a second language learner has with the TL culture. His concept of social distance is similar to Dulay and Burt's theory of the affective filter in this respect. Further, Schuemann's social and psychological distance influence how open the language learner is to interact with the target language culture, which in turn influences the usefulness of the L_2 input the learner receives. According to Schuemann, social learning situations which encourage acculturation enhance learning potential. Conversely, in social situations which are "bad", i.e., where L_1 and L_2 groups do not have the kind of relationship described in Schuemann's social

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factors, the potential for learning a second language is decreased and may be hindered.

Alienation.

Stevik (1976) contends that SLA is controlled not only by assimilation into the TL culture, but also by the degree of alienation from the person's L_1 culture. For Stevik, language learning is an innately alienating and uncomfortable experience. The feelings of alienation arise from the defenses built up by the learner. These defenses do not facilitate learning; they hinder it. Therefore, Stevik would argue that the affective barriers which are inherent in language acquisition are constantly working against individuals who want to acquire language.

Schuemann's Acculturation Model of second language acquisition and Stevik's theories on alienation have implications for this study. First, I will attempt to discern the social distance the subjects feel towards the culture of American academia. If the subjects have positive attitudes towards their adopted educational system and they feel as though they are socially equal, they should find it easier to assimilate. The assimilation process, and thus the second language acquisition process, should be smooth. Moreover, if the students find the academic situation alienating, it might have a strong effect on their simulation processes.

Age.

There are distinct differences in the ways that children and adults learn a second language. There is a critical period for acquiring a second language. The critical period seems to be under

the age of 15 (Chambers & Trudgill, 1980), although some believe it is as young as 10 (Penfield & Roberts, 1959). Generally, those who learn a language before puberty do it with less obvious effort than adults who may never completely master the second language. In one of the earliest studies on the effect of age and language acquisition, Penfield and Roberts (1959) maintained that children learn a second language better because their brain still retains plasticity. However, the idea that children are actually better language learners is a matter of dispute among linguists. Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1979) found that adults acquire language faster than children initially because they already have some knowledge of how language works. Nevertheless, children seem to have the advantage in the long run.

Adults and children seem to use different strategies to acquire a second language. As Ellis (1994) notes:

> Adolescents and adults possess more fully developed cognitive skills, which enable them to apply themselves studially [sic.] to the task of learning an L_2. This is likely to give them an initial advantage over children, but may not be sufficient to guarantee high levels of L_2 proficiency. (p. 493)

From this we could infer that adults may have an initial advantage over children because they learn a language as well as acquire it.

The greatest difference between children's language acquisition and adult language acquisition is that adults are more likely to reach a plateau and just stop acquiring vocabulary and grammar structures. This phenomenon, known as **fossilization**,

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seems to happen to adults who do not totally assimilate into the TL culture. Schuemann's description of Alberto (1978) as he acquired English was an early attempt to explain the phenomenon of fossilization. Alberto simply stopped acquiring new forms and vocabulary. Schuemann believes this is because he chose not to integrate himself into the culture of his second language. He learned enough English to communicate basic needs in a rudimentary way and had no motivation to perfect his language.

Another basic difference between children's SLA and adult's SLA is that adults have a much more difficult time attaining "standard" pronunciation (Long, 1990; Singleton, 1989). Those who acquire a second language as adults find it very difficult to rid themselves of the accents of their L_1.

Affective Factors Which Affect SLA

Because the affective factors which influence SLA are ambiguous and can differ greatly from individual to individual, they are difficult to define and elusive to study; however, they seem to have an immense effect on the success of the language learner. Brown (1988) explores some of the psychological factors mentioned by Schuemann in even greater depth. Besides motivation and ego boundaries, he also identifies inhibition, risk taking, anxiety, empathy, and extroversion as affective factors which influence second language acquisition.

Motivation.

Brown defines motivation, generally as "an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action"

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(1988, p. 366). All of the studies I have reviewed show that there is a positive correlation between motivation and success in learning a language. Still, researchers are not positive that high motivation causes successful language acquisition. It could be that because a language learner is successful in acquiring a language, he or she is motivated to acquire more. Ellis (1994) suggests that there is an interactive relationship between motivation and achievement:

> A high level of motivation does stimulate learning, but perceived success in achieving L_2 goals can help to maintain existing motivation and even create new types. Conversely, a vicious circle of low motivation = low achievement = lower motivation can develop. (p. 515)

Because motivation plays an important role in SLA, I will examine motivation in light of two different continuums. One continuum has instrumental and integrative motivation at its extremes and the other compares intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Instrumental and Integrative Motivation.

The first motivation continuum is especially helpful for understanding why students are motivated to learn a second language is the difference between instrumental and integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Examples of instrumental goals for NNS students include learning a second language for specific purposes such as studying a particular career or reading technical materials. This kind of motivation is usually prevalent in English as a foreign language (EFL) settings. For example, medical students may be motivated to learn English so that they can read

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English medical journals. When I was teaching EFL in Guatemala, instrumental goals seemed to be the most prevalent. The most frequent reason students gave for wanting to learn English was so that they could understand cable TV programs.

Integrative motivation on the other hand, is characterized by the language learner's desire to integrate him or herself into the target language culture. Integrative motivation is similar to Schuemann's theory of social distance. If Schuemann's theory is true, integrative motivation should be the only type of motivation that is effective. However, in Lukmani's (1972) study of Marathi-speaking Indian students, those with higher instrumental motivation scored higher on language proficiency tests.

Brown (1988) believes the differences in conclusions in studies of instrumental and integrative motivation are not necessarily contradictory.

> They [studies of instrumental and integrative motivation] point out once again there is no single means of learning a second language: some learners in some contexts are more successful in learning a language if they are integretively oriented, and others in different contexts benefit from an instrumental orientation. (p. 368)

The research into the differences between integrative and instrumental motivation suggest that if students do not have integrative motivation (or in Schuemann's terms if they do not acculturate), they will need to have strong instrumental motivation, e.g., strong career goals that motivate them to master English.

Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation.

An aspect of the differences between integrative and instrumental motivation is the source of that motivation: is it extrinsic or intrinsic? Intrinsic motivation comes from inside the learner while extrinsic comes from something outside. The integrative/ instrumental and intrinsic/extrinsic continuums are not mutually exclusive.

Integrative motivation can be intrinsic. Immigrants to a new country usually have integrative, intrinsic motivation. They want to learn the language in order to integrate into the society. At the same time integrative motivation can be extrinsic. This is when an outside force wishes someone to learn a language so that they can integrate into a culture. Teenagers in other countries who learn English so they can listen to American music and fit in with their peers is an example of this type of motivation. Intrinsic-instrumental motivation is when someone learns a language in order to achieve their career goals as in a doctor learning English in order to read medical journals. An example of extrinsic-instrumental motivation is when a company requires its employees to learn a language for business purposes. Brown (1988) found that each of these four types of motivation are effective in encouraging students to learn a second language. The study will examine which of these motivational factors influence the students in this study.

Other Motivational Factors.

Nelson and Jakobovits (1970) examined an exhaustive list of factors which they felt might contribute to motivation of second

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language learners. They found that the factors which had the greatest influence on learners' motivation were intelligence, aptitude, perseverance, learning strategies, and self-evaluation. While this list might be helpful in identifying students that are predisposed to be motivated, Brown (1988) contends that instead of focusing on the characteristics of motivated students, more important questions about motivation need to be answered. For example, he asks: "Why do some students persevere? How can teachers encourage intrinsic motivation?" (p. 367). The answers to these questions are yet unexplored.

    <u>Self-esteem.</u>

    According to Coopersmith (1967), self-esteem "...indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy...it is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds toward himself" (pp. 4-5). Self-esteem can be divided into three types: global, situational or specific, and task. Global self-esteem is found in most healthy, mature adults--they have a general feeling of self-worth. Situational self-esteem is apparent in life situations such as work, home, school, or second language acquisition. Specific self-esteem is manifested in personality traits such as gregariousness, intelligence, and empathy. The third level, task self-esteem is pertinent to specific topics such as writing or speaking.

    While it is important that NNS students in this study have global self-esteem, it is essential that they have situational self-

esteem in academic circumstances; that is, they need the personality traits which facilitate their adaptation. Specific self-esteem includes characteristics such as a lack of inhibition, the ability to take risks, and empathy towards the culture of the TL. Students who lack situational self-esteem in academic settings could have difficulties coping with academic situations.

Studies of the importance of self-esteem such as Brodkey & Shore (1976), Gardner & Lambert (1972), and Heyde (1979) have examined how the learner's level of self-esteem contributes to success. None of these studies generated decisive statistical proof that self-esteem was a significant factor in students' success; however, Brown (1988) observes that the results of these studies: "...revealed that self-esteem appears to be an important variable in second language acquisition, particularly in view of cross-cultural factors of second language learning" (p. 357). It could be that the results of the studies are inconclusive because self-esteem is difficult to define and measure or, as Brown muses, because it is a classic 'chicken or egg' question: "does high self-esteem cause language success or does language success cause high self-esteem" (p. 357)?

In any case the level of situational and task self-esteem that the students in this study feel could be significant. Of interest in the situational realm will be how capable, successful, and worthy they feel about studying an academic content class in English. At the task level their feelings about their abilities to write, read, comprehend, and interact in academic settings will be critical.

<u>Inhibition.</u>

Each person constructs defenses to protect his or her ego. This is what Schuemann has termed ego boundaries (1978). Brown observes that: "...those with weaker self-esteem maintain a wall of inhibition to protect what is self-perceived to be a weak or fragile ego, or lack of self-confidence in a situational tasks" (p. 357). Inherent in learning a second language is making mistakes; however, putting oneself in the position of inevitably making mistakes is definitely a threat to one's ego. Language learning, then, exacerbates a person's natural inhibitions.

Guiora, Beit-Hallami, Brannon, Dull, & Scovel (1972) show the relationship between inhibition and language acquisition by identifying the **'language ego'**. Guiora et al. claim that successful language learners actually take on a new identity when they learn a new language. The language ego manifests itself in several ways. For example, bilinguals often report that they have a different personality depending on the language they speak. They also assert that an adaptive language ego enables learners to lower their inhibitions, and therefore, increases their ability to learn a language. The 1972 study (Guiora et al.) and a 1980 study (Guiora, Acton, Erard, & Strickland) showed that lowering inhibition facilitates language learning. In the 1972 study, students who consumed moderate amounts of alcohol did significantly better on a pronunciation test than the control group. In the 1980 study, students given Valium had similar results. While the researchers do not suggest that students should come to class intoxicated or

drugged, these studies showed how natural inhibition can affect a language learner's success.

Risk-Taking and Extroversion.

Related to NNS students' inhibitions in using a second language is their willingness to take risks. Rubin (1975) identifies willingness to guess as a characteristic of a good language learner. However, Beebe (1983) distinguishes high risk-takers and moderate risk-takers. She found that students with high motivation to succeed are moderate risk-takers. Moderate risk-takers don't take, wild, frivolous risks. They don't blurt out strings of verbal garbage, but are willing to take educated guesses.

Extroversion is similar to risk-taking in its relationship to language acquisition. Extroverts seem to be better at acquiring the type of language necessary to carry on a conversation in a second language more quickly than introverts. At the same time there is evidence that people who are extremely extroverted suffer similar consequences to extreme risk-takers. Brown hypothesizes that extremely extroverted people may "behave in an extroverted manner in order to protect their ego" (1988, p. 365). They depend on ego enhancement from others to feel good. This dependency may actually slow the language acquisition process.

Introverts, on the other hand, exhibit an inner strength of character and may not need affirmation from outside. Busch (1982) found that introverts did significantly better on a pronunciation test than people identified as extroverts. So, while it is easy to assume that extroverts are better language learners, it is not always true.

Important to the scope of this study will be how willing the subjects are to take-risks and to identify students who may be high risk takers. In addition, it will be interesting to see which students exhibit introverted or extroverted behavior in the class.

Anxiety.

Individuals who are permanently predisposed to being anxious are said to have **trait anxiety**. In contrast, **state anxiety** is related to a particular event or act. A person who is predisposed to being anxious would probably find language learning difficult because language learning itself is a high anxiety activity.

Scovel (1978) makes a distinction between debilitative and facilitative anxiety. Debilitative anxiety is the notion that learners who are too anxious about learning a language will be unable to receive input in the TL or unable to make any sense of it. In this, it is similar to the idea of a high affective filter. Facilitative anxiety is at the other end of the continuum. It is the assumption that without a little bit of anxiety, learners have no reason to learn; therefore, the anxiety actually facilitates learning. Bailey (1983) found that facilitative anxiety has a positive effect on language acquisition. Brown (1988) suggests that "a little nervous tension in the process is a good thing" (p. 361). Therefore, both too much and too little anxiety may hinder the process of successful second language learning. In this study it will be assessing the role of anxiety.

Empathy.

Brown (1988) identifies empathy as a necessary component of successful language learning. In Brown's mind, empathy is not

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synonymous with sympathy, but has to do with understanding the affect of another person. To be a successful language learner, a person must be aware of affective and cultural messages that native speakers are transmitting and guess at what the speaker is thinking and feeling. For example, sarcasm is a characteristic of American English that often does not transmit across cultural boundaries. It is difficult for language learners to understand that a speaker's actual message is the opposite of his or her words.

Social Factors Which Influence Students' Success in Educational Settings

Other social factors which could influence students' success in education are the students' family, educational environment, and peers. This next section explores each of these factors and their potential implications for this study.

Family

Family factors seem to have the most powerful influence on students' success. In fact, the educational level of parents has been identified as the factor that has the most influence on students' success in academic settings (Hess, 1970; Stevenson, Parker, Wilkenson, Bonnevaux, & Gonzalez, 1978). These studies reveal that students' success in school correlates with the level of their parents' education. The more years of education the parents have obtained, the greater the chance that their children will be successful in academic settings. Moreover, teachers believe that parents' educational background is consequential to student success. Laosa (1982) studied teacher attitudes and found that

teachers associate parental interest in education and positive parental attitudes towards education with parents who have obtained higher levels of education. Generally, parents who are well-educated value education and expect their sons and daughters to be well-educated.

Another family factor that seems to have a strong influence on students' success is their **cognitive environment** (Clark, 1983; Gottfried, 1984; Sigel, 1985). In a family with a stimulating cognitive environment, parents and/or other persons in the household model intellectual activities or encourage intellectual stimulation frequently, and at length, in ways that are likely to bolster thinking (Brophy, 1977; Hess & McDevitt, 1984). Intellectual activities that can be modeled include reading newspapers and books, participating in social or political organizations, and visiting zoos, museums, and other educational settings. In addition, labeling objects and events, explaining causal relationships, discussing future activities in advance, and accompanying discipline with instructions containing information as well as demands have been identified as behaviors which encourage intellectual stimulation (Good & Brophy, 1990). For my analysis in this study, it will be meaningful to know how significant education and educational goals are in the students' family environment. Likewise, the nature of the cognitive environment they were raised in could also come into play.

Educational Environment

The students in this study will most likely have L_1 educational experiences that are very different than the American educational

system. Factors such as preferred teaching and evaluation methods, student/teacher relationships, discipline and educational resources could vary vastly from typical American educational experiences. Moreover, other factors such as government ideology also have the potential of influencing students' expectations as to what an educational system should include (this is especially true for students from countries where ideology permeates the educational system, as in Communist countries).

Peers

During adolescence peer relationships become more important while parental and teacher influences become less important. Attitudes towards education can then be more of a reflection of students' peer groups. In addition, some cultures tend to be more cooperative. In these societies, students are encouraged to work together. Students may learn to depend on their peers for help.

The importance of peer relationships may be further strengthened by the fact that in many countries students are tracked together as a group. In other words, they may spend four or more years taking all of their courses with the same group of students. Strong and binding relationships usually come out of these experiences. Developing strong peer relationships could help ESOL students cope with the demands of the academic discourse community. Smoke (1991) attributes the success of the Chinese student in her four-year case study to her development of a community of allies who provided assistance in writing, advice about

academic problems, and support. I hope to address two questions with regard to students' peer relationships. First, it will be important to know if peer relationships were important to their first language education. Second, if they were important, I will want to know if they use the same peer strategies in American academic situations.

Theories on the Development of Higher Level Cognitive Skills

The two theories on the development of higher level cognitive skills that I find most pertinent to this study are Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Difficulty (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1977) and Cummins' Iceberg Metaphor (1992).

Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Difficulty

Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive difficulty is a seminal treatise on the cognitive difficulty of certain tasks (1956). In the latest edition of this taxonomy, Bloom and Krathwohl (1984) have arranged the difficulty of cognitive tasks that students are asked to do in academic situations in a hierarchy of six major categories.

The taxonomy begins with concrete processes and progresses to more abstract processes. Bloom identifies six levels of cognition; they are in order from concrete to abstract: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The first three categories are considered lower level cognitive skills while the last three categories are considered higher level thinking skills (see Figure 2.1).

Evaluation

Synthesis

Analysis

Application

Comprehension
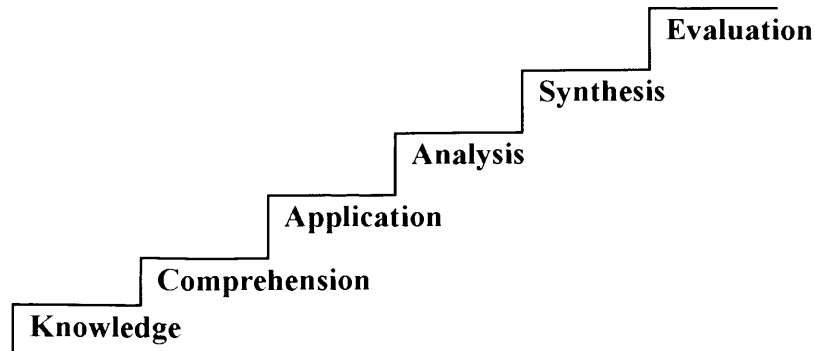
Knowledge

Figure 2.1. A hierachical display of Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Difficulty (Bloom and Krathwohl, 1977)

Bloom and Krathwohl define knowledge as: "those behaviors and test situations which emphasize the remembering, either by recognition or recall, of ideas, material, or phenomena" (p. 62). Bloom's knowledge category includes the knowledge of terminology, specific facts, conventions, processes, or sequences. In addition, he includes knowledge of classifications or categories, criteria, methodology, principles, generalizations, and theories of structures.

Bloom's second level of cognition, comprehension, is an "understanding of the literal message contained in a communication" (p. 89). He identifies three types of comprehension behavior: translation, interpretation, and extrapolation.

Application, which is similar to comprehension, is the ability to apply knowledge in an appropriate situation. The difference between the two, according to Bloom, is this: a student who comprehends a process and shows that he **can** use it when told to use it is processing at the comprehension level. On the other hand,

application is demonstrated if a student **will** use a process correctly in an appropriate situation without being told what to do.

Analysis is the process of breaking down material into its "constituent parts and detecting the relationship of the parts and of the way they are organized" (p. 144). This proceedure includes recognizing the parts of a whole, perceiving the relationships of those parts, and discerning organizational principles.

Synthesis involves the opposite process of analysis. Bloom defines it as "the putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole" (p. 162). However, synthesis is more than just combining parts. It is a higher level cognitive skill because a true synthesis involves combining diverse elements in an original manner--a manner not clearly apparent before the synthesis.

Bloom's final category is evaluation. While Bloom recognizes that evaluation is associated with affective behaviors, the difference for Bloom is that the affective behaviors of liking or disliking are usually highly egocentric while evaluating is a cognitive activity. In order to evaluate something, it is necessary to develop a set of criteria and values about what is good and important before prejudging it as good or bad.

In my study I hope to analyze the assignments that the students must complete in light of Bloom's Taxonomy. I intend to break the assignments down into their cognitive components in order to understand the level of cognitive difficulty of these assignments in order to better understand the cognitive demands of Gordon Rule classes.

<u>Cummins' Iceberg Metaphor</u>

Cummins (1983) contends that students' academic background in their first language is significant to their success in their second language. He theorizes that language has two different modes: the communicative and the academic. The communicative mode is generally context-specific. For example, in a conversation between a cashier and customer in a supermarket, the two participants might exchange pleasantries and talk about specific items and prices. The conversation is bound to be very specific and focus on the context. The participants would be more likely to discuss the price of a loaf of bread than an abstract concept like freedom. Cummins labels the type of language required for this exchange as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). He defines BICS as the "the manifestation of language proficiency in everyday communicative contexts" (Cummins, 1992, p. 17). BICS are basic in the sense that they develop naturally as a result of language through communication. Since they are the type of language skills that second language learners use to engage effectively in face-to-face interaction, BICS involve the mastery of context-embedded (as opposed to context-reduced) uses of language in communicative tasks that are relatively undemanding (Ellis, 1994, p. 694). In summary, BICS are the skills required for oral fluency and sociolinguistic appropriateness.

On the other hand, the language used in many academic situations is less apt to depend on context. It is based on conceptional linguistic knowledge (Cummins, 1992, p. 17). As an

knowledge and literacy skills required for academic work. "In particular, CALP involves the ability to communicate messages that are precise and explicit in tasks that are context-reduced and cognitively demanding" (Ellis 1994, 696).

Cummins, borrowing from an earlier work by Shuy (1977), illustrates the interaction between these two types of languages with the analogy of an iceberg (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Cummins Iceberg Metaphor shows the relationship between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and (CALP Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency)

In this model, the BICS are the portion of the iceberg that is above the water; they are the surface fluency. Because BICS are context-embedded, they are conspicuous. It is usually easy to tell if participants in a conversation of this type are understanding each other because of the context and extra-linguistic cues such a gestures and props. BICS are easy to measure. CALP, on the other hand, is the submerged portion of the iceberg hidden from view and not readily apparent. It is decontextualized language. For example, one person's concept of freedom may differ from

another's. This makes it more open to misconceptions and misunderstanding between speakers.

Chamot (1981) suggests that the BICS/CALP distinction can be related to Bloom's Taxonomy. She links BICS with the knowledge, comprehension, and application categories of Bloom whereas, analysis, synthesis and evaluation can be associated with CALP. This relationship is shown in Figure 2.3.

Knowledge
Comprehension
Application

BICS

Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

CALP
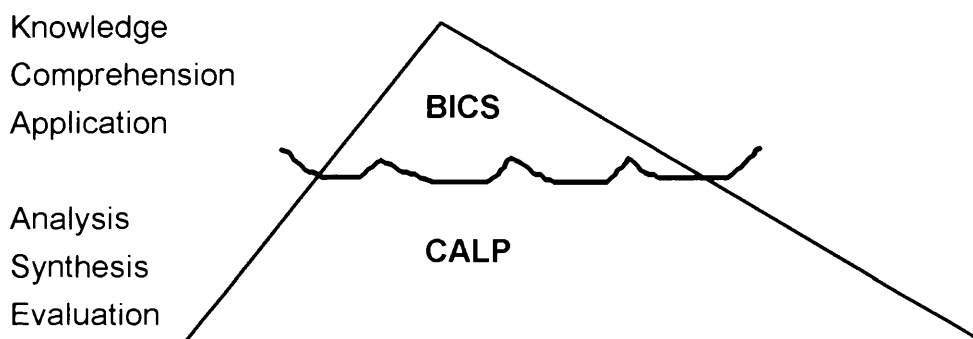
Figure 2.3. Chamot (1981) demonstrates the relationship between Cummins' Iceberg Metaphor and Bloom's Taxonomy.

Cummins argues that when learners acquire a second language, they must, of course, add a another set of BICS. The person must learn the names of items in that second language and be able to communicate successfully with persons who speak the language s/he is trying to learn. This happens fairly easily. Although there may be some concepts that are impossible to translate from one language to another, the person does not have to relearn the same concepts in the TL. With slight differences in nuance, freedom, *libertád* and *liberté* have basically the same

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translate from one language to another, the person does not have to relearn the same concepts in the TL. With slight differences in nuance, freedom, *libertád* and *liberté* have basically the same meaning. The bilingual person simply learns a different way of saying the same thing. Cummins illustrates this with the dual iceberg metaphor (Figure 2.4).

First Language   Second Language

BICS   BICS

CALP   CALP
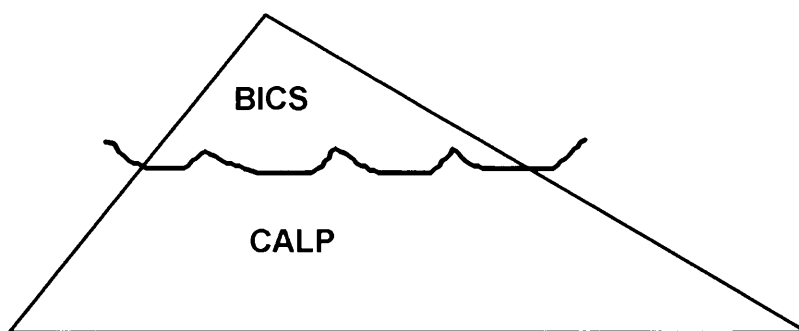
Underlying Proficiency
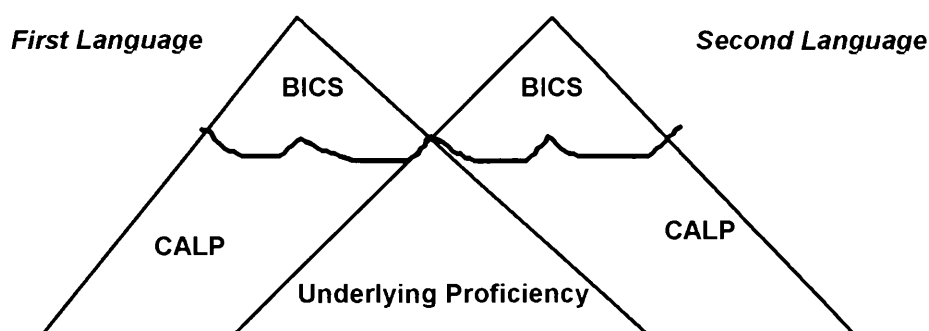
Figure 2.4. Cummins' Dual Iceberg Metaphor shows the relation-
ship between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills)
CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) for bilingual
persons. Underlying language proficiency is the common
knowledge shared by both languages.

The overlapping concepts that are common to both languages Cummins terms "underlying language proficiency." (1992, p. 23) It is this proficiency that makes students' language adjustment to new academic situations easier. Studies such as those done by Carpintenia Unified School District (1982), Cummins (1981), and San Diego City Schools (1982) support Cummins' theory. These studies show that immigrant students require an average of five to seven years to approach second language academic grade norms (CALP), but show peer appropriate L_2 BICS in two years with or without language instruction. BICS are obviously more easily and

quickly acquired than CALP. Moreover, the age at which CALP is acquired can also affect students' success.

Collier (1992), in a study of 400 students in grades 4, 6, 8, and 11, found that students arriving in the U.S. between the ages of 8 and 11 were the highest achievers in a test of their academic skills, while students who arrived in the U.S. between the ages of 12 and 15 were the lowest achievers. Even after 4 to 5 years in the United States, the 12- to 15-year-olds still averaged below grade level in all academic skills except for mathematics. These findings would also seem to support Cummins' hypothesis because 12-to 15-year-olds would have more CALP to make up. In this study I will gather information on students' first language academic background knowledge. If the students have some corresponding underlying proficiency in the concepts of the courses they are enrolled in, they should be able to use this to their advantage.

Reading

Because students entering a Florida community college are required to have a high school diploma, the NNS students in this study are all literate in their L_1; therefore, questions of literacy will not be addressed in this section. Rather, I will focus on academic reading or "reading-for-the-purpose-of-learning" (Dubin & Bycina, 1991, p. 195) and the reading processes that make students efficient academic readers.

Academic Reading

The cognitive demands of academic reading are more difficult than the demands of pleasure reading. While both depend on

comprehension of text, academic reading requires that the readers a) add to their knowledge through reading, and b) apply what they learned from a text (Williams & Snipper, 1990).

Dubin and Bycina call the first aspect of academic reading, **reading-to-learn**. Reading to learn is concerned with the text under consideration and stresses the comprehension of the content presented in text. Students must be able to "make texts their own" (Dubin & Bycina, 1991, p. 200). This encompasses several complex skills such as (a) analyzing and summarizing texts, (b) inferring from texts, (c) detecting main ideas and examples of comparison and contrast or cause and effect, (d) following an argument in a text, (e) understanding implied meanings, and (f) determining which facts are relevant to the their needs.

The second type of reading is **learning-by-doing** which involves activities that require the reader to use the ideas presented in the text. This form of reading "takes the learner beyond the text into some kind of reformulation of the facts, information, and concepts found in it" (op. cit., p. 200). Readers manipulate the data in order to gain more experience with the language and to get more experience with the underlying organizational systems presented in the material. Dubin and Bycina identify peer discussion activities as vital to this process.

Social Aspects of Academic Reading

Although it may not seem so at first glance, reading has been characterized as a social activity. As a person reads, he or she is engaged in a dialogue with the author. In Goodman's words, the

"reader reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display" (1971, p. 135). Academic reading can be seen as even more than a one-on-one conversation; it is a communal activity. Further, Brown and Yule (1983) contend that there is a public dimension to text meaning. A reader is able to understand a text because he or she is a member of the discourse community of that text. However, if a reader is not a member of the discourse community of a text, that text will most likely be unintelligible to the reader. For example, articles in educational journals are not difficult for me to comprehend because I know the genre well and read those sorts of texts frequently. However, a textbook on nuclear physics would probably be incomprehensible to me because I have no experience with that genre. I am a member of the education academic discourse community but not a member of the nuclear physics academic discourse community.

Dubin and Bycina (1991) recommend that in order to help students become better academic readers, they must be encouraged to find a partner or small group with whom they can discuss the ideas presented in a text. They believe that peer interaction gives students opportunities to relate the information and ideas in reading passages to what they already know and check out how well they have comprehended a passage. These peer interactions should not only focus on what was in the text, but also on how the text could be applied to a variety of circumstances. With this students would be using peers to help themselves gain access

to an academic discourse community and at the same time explore the social nature of academic texts.

The Cultural Aspects of Academic Reading

The cultural dimension of academic reading is a potential barrier to comprehension for NNS readers. It is important to note that a NNS student does not come to reading texts as a *tabula rasa*. They have values, beliefs, and attitudes which reflect their own cultural background; these could potentially aid or alternatively interfere with their reading comprehension. An obvious example of a point of possible interference is American literature; it is filled with themes such as individualism, gender conflicts, and adolescent rebellion that students from other cultures may find difficult to comprehend because these themes could be in direct opposition to their own norms, value systems, and experiences.

Dubin and Bycina point out that another potential point of difficulty for NNS students is differences in attitudes towards books and their content. In China for example, texts are revered and it is believed that it is better to read one book 10 times than read 10 books (Matalene, 1985; Mohan & Lo, 1985). Furthermore, in some cultures texts are seen as sacred, not to be doubted or discussed, whereas in America the idea of challenging textual authority is seen as acceptable, valued and even required.

The Reading Process

There are four basic models of how the reading process works--the bottom-up, top-down, integrative, and the schema theory models. Each of these are summarized in the following sections.

Bottom-up Processing.

In the bottom-up view, phonemes (the individual sounds that are represented by letters) give meaning to morphemes (the smallest part of language that has meaning), which give meaning to words, which give meaning to phrases, which give meaning to sentences, which give meaning to paragraphs, which give meaning to whole texts. While it seems logical that phonemes are the building blocks of text, this hypothesis may be more true of other languages than English because there is not a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds in English. As an illustration, the words *through*, *thought*, *though*, and *enough*, all contain the letters *-ough*. However, the letters *ough* represent a different sound in each case. English spelling can be more of a hindrance than a help to NNS students who try to build textual meaning from the bottom-up.

Top-Down Processing.

The second view, top-down processing, holds that the meaning of text is derived more from syntax, context, and knowledge about how the world operates than from individual words or sounds. The top-down theorists see reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game (Goodman, 1967). How well readers comprehend a text depends more on the conceptional knowledge they bring to that text. Top-down processing, also known as the psycholinguinstic model of reading, characterizes reading as an active, rather than passive process. Goodman was among the first to put forth a psycholinguistic model of reading in his

seminal article, *Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game* (1967).
He argues that successful reading does not reconstruct meaning
using only graphophonic representations from the text, rather:
"...more salient to successful reading is being able to guess what
the author will say next by confirming predictions related to one's
past experience and knowledge of the language" (Dubin and
Bycina, 1991, p. 200).

This active process is often called **hypothesis testing**. Williams
and Snipper (1990) describe the process this way: "When reading,
we formulate certain hypotheses regarding the meaning of a text
and then test those hypotheses against the text itself" (p. 18).

Those who give credence to the psycholinguistic model of
reading contend that readers need to practice skills such as
guessing the meaning of words from the context, previewing before
reading in order to be able to make better guesses about its
content, and actively engaging in predicting where the text will lead
them. Perhaps most important, top-down processing stresses
reading as rapidly as possible in order to understand the overall
theme of a passage.

<u>Interactive Theories.</u>

The most recent theories on reading process, suggest that it
is neither exclusively bottom-up nor top-down, rather it is an
integrative process. In fact, these processes are dependent on
each other. A reader is constantly switching from one process to
the other depending on the difficulty of the text, the reader's
background knowledge, and the reader's purpose.

The theory that reading is an integrative process comes mostly from recent descriptions of readers' eye movements as they interpret the written word. Instead of stopping on every word on a page, proficient readers cluster texts into groups of three to seven words, depending on their verbal fluency and the difficulty of the text (Clark & Clark, 1977; Gibson & Levin, 1975; Smith, 1972). Williams and Snipper detail this process:

> The eyes make sweeping arcs across the page, usually pausing at what are called 'constituent boundaries,' which we can think of not only as the ends of sentences, but as places where clauses and phrases come together in sentences. Skilled readers, however, often show additional, sometimes random, patterns of eye movement; they will characteristically skip sentences, read sentences backwards, and loop back from one sentence to an earlier one. (1990, p. 19)

If the text is dense, as for example some technical manuals or science texts tend to be, readers will cluster words into smaller groups, read more slowly, reread sentences, or stop on particularly difficult words, and thus use more bottom-up processing. Likewise, if readers have insufficient or misconceived background knowledge, they may also switch to more bottom-up processing techniques. Finally, if the reader's purpose is to extract specific details from a text, she or he will also be likely to give it a closer reading.

Schema Building.

Schema building is similar to interactive theories of reading processes in that it characterizes the reading process as both top-

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down and bottom-up. Rumelhart (1977) suggests that schema and similar concepts such as scripts are the cognitive processes underlying the reading process. Schemata are used in the processes of: "...interpreting sensory data, in retrieving information from memory, in organizing actions, in determining goals and sub goals, in allocating resources, and generally, in guiding the flow of processing in the system" (p. 34). There are two types of schema. The first type is the background knowledge that the reader brings to a text. This is called **content schema**. The second sort of schema is **formal schema**, the knowledge relative to the formal, rhetorical organizational structure of different types of texts.

Formal schema is the framework which helps individuals organize their ideas and represent beliefs about objects, situations, and sequences of events or actions. In the process of attempting to understand new information, readers use both. They use what they already know about how people and things act logically and what they know about how text works. Readers do not have to reconstruct the entire world each time they read. If what they are reading agrees with their current schemata, readers have no difficulty comprehending the text. On the other hand, if the reader does not have a content schema for a text or has an incomplete or erroneous formal schema, comprehension will be troublesome.

In a 1984 study of intermediate NNS students, Carrell found that content schemata affected reading comprehension to a greater extent than formal schemata. This has obvious ramifications for this study and can be related to Cummins' idea of underlying

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proficiency. If Carrell's findings hold true, it would seem that the students with greater background knowledge should have greater success in content classes.

When readers have trouble understanding a text because of a lack of schemata, they tend to switch into a bottom-up processing model. In fact, it is through bottom-up processing that new schemata are built, corrected, or added on to. Rummelhart (1980) maintains that effective readers process text from the top-down and the bottom-up simultaneously. While new information is being assimilated into the schema through bottom-up processes, top-down processes facilitate their assimilation. Bottom-up processing ensures that readers will be sensitive to information that is novel or does not fit with ongoing hypotheses, while top-down processing resolves ambiguities (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1987).

Challenges of Academic Reading for NNS Students

Coady (1979) observes that there are two ways that L_2 reading differs from reading in a native language. First, a great deal of mechanical information about reading is easily transfered from one language to another in the same way that BICS are easily transfered. However, there is a potential pitfall. The fact that L_2 readers seem to transfer these skills easily may lead teachers to believe that students are reading with native-like proficiency. Coady submits that a closer analysis shows this is not the case. The second difference between NNS and NES readers is that the former lack the formal schema in English which facilitates reading for NES students.

While the more mechanical aspects of reading transfer almost automatically from one language to another, the background knowledge and cultural and psycholinguistic domains of reading can create problems. Besides the cultural nature of reading texts which I elaborated on earlier, students lack of schemata and knowledge can present a significant barrier to NNS their comprehension of texts. One difficulty for NNS readers is that they do not have enough information about the language initially to make accurate guesses about the reading texts. Because of this they must rely more on bottom-up processes, especially when they are beginning to read in a second language. However, as they gain more experience with the language, students learn how to take advantage of more abstract process strategies.

MacNamara, (1970) and (1972) Shuy, have shown that NNS students have about the same number of eye fixations as NES students when reading the same text; however, the fixations are on average longer for NNS students. Coady contends that they are relying too heavily on bottom-up processing:

> ...they do not extract large numbers of samples from the text but rather spend more time on either the sampling of the text or the reconstructing. Since we do not see satisfactory comprehension, the additional time is evidently not being spent on putting in the information gained into memory. Indeed, the comprehension loss seems to be attributable to a poor use of process strategies. (p. 10)

The over-reliance on bottom-up processes slows the readers down, and slow reading inhibits readers from developing their content schemata.

In addition, Johns (1993) notes that ESOL students seem to have ineffective reading strategies, which include being over dependent on bilingual dictionaries and reading in short phrases rather than trying to understand text more globally. As Coady puts it "...by learning the word, they have lost the sentence" (p. 11). Johns suggests that these problems can be partially solved by teaching students how to use cognitive organizers like concept webs and explaining more effective reading strategies.

Writing

The skills that are necessary for college students to become academic writers are not clearly defined. Even composition teachers disagree on the nature of college writing. In her succinct review of the prevalent debate in writing pedagogy, Lindemann (1995) explains how ideas about the nature of college writing depend on one's perception of whether it is seen *"primarily* as a product, a process, or a system of social actions" (p. 289).

The traditional, and probably still the most prevalent, view is "writing-as-product." Product-centered classes focus on composition as a content course, and the content is texts. Students read, analyze, discuss, and write about texts and the structure of texts. In composition classes this is usually literature. The product-centered class emphasizes what writers **know**, not what writers **do**. Teachers assume the role of expert and correct students' grammar,

mechanics, and spelling; in short "they generally focus on forms, formulas, terminology, and rules" (Lindemann, 1995, p. 293).

In contrast, the writing as a process perspective is concerned with what individual writers **do** rather than what writers **know**. Process theorists believe that by understanding and imitating proficient writers' processes, students can develop their own proficiency. In fact, studies have shown that proficient writers share certain commonalties in their writing processes; they all plan, generate ideas, design texts, and edit their compositions in a recursive manner (Flower, 1993). Processes theorists believe that writers approach writing tasks as individuals, "with unique cognitive abilities and strategies for solving the problem a writing task presents" (Lindemann, p. 293). In this view, writing is decidedly an individual, cognitive task. Central to this approach is individual creativity and invention. A teacher's role is to facilitate students' self-exploration through their writing and to collaborate in the writing processes.

The most recent innovation in writing theory sees writing as a system of social actions. This approach was developed from an effort to understand how people write in "real" situations (outside of the freshman composition course). Instead of seeing writers as isolated individuals, this view contends that writing is essentially social interaction which cannot be divorced from its context. The role of teachers is to "empower writers to membership in various discourse communities" (Lindemann, p. 296). In order to do this, they encourage students to analyze the artifacts of the diverse

"discourse communities" they encounter. Social theorists contend that developing an understanding of the way language is used in specific contexts is the rite of passage for those who aspire to participate in those communities. If these outsiders become proficient enough to become members of the communities and strive to make their mark on them, social action theorists hope that the outsiders will eventually learn to use language to breathe fresh life into each discourse community. In anticipation of this, teachers who advocate writing as a social action prompt students to collaborate and create their own community of writers.

While she contends that each composition teacher has a preference for one of these views, Lindemann acknowledges that these three views are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Aspects of all three are essential for students to be successful writers; each of these aspects enhances the others. Taken together, they represent the complexity of writing and the formidable task that students face in learning to write for college courses. Students, and indeed all members of the academic community, must attend to the writing product, to their own processes for writing, and to the discourse community for which they are writing. Two of these aspects, writing processes and writing as a social action, are discussed in more detail in the next sections.

Writing as a Process

In the past 20 years or so, the emphasis of composition theory has begun to change from a focus on product (the texts that students produce) to a focus on process (how students produce

those texts). Hairston (1982) has identified 12 characteristics of the writing as a process movement. The characteristics of the process movement are:

1. It focuses on the writing process; instructors intervene in students' writing during the process.
2. It teaches strategies for invention and discovery; instructors help students to generate content and discover purpose.
3. It is based on rhetoric: audience, purpose, and occasion figure prominently in the assignment of writing tasks.
4. Instructors evaluate the written product by how well it fulfills the writer's intention and meets the audience's needs.
5. It views writing as a recursive rather than a linear process; the activities of pre-writing, writing, and revision overlap and intertwine.
6. It is holistic, viewing writing as an activity that involves the intuitive and non-rational as well as the rational faculties.
7. It emphasizes that writing is a way of learning and developing as well as a way of communicating.
8. It includes expressive as well as expository writing modes.
9. It is informed by other disciplines, especially cognitive psychology and linguistics.
10. It views writing as a disciplined, creative activity that can be analyzed and described.
11. It is based on linguistic research and research into composing processes.

12. It stresses the principle that writing teachers should be people who write. (p. 82)

There are two major schools of process writing theory, the Expressivists and the Cognitivists. Peter Elbow is the primary apologist for the Expresivist school which focuses on "sincerity, integrity, spontaneity, and originality in composition classrooms; students are encouraged to 'discover' themselves through language" (Reid, 1993a, p. 12).

The Cognitivist School of Process Writing.

The primary focus of the Cognitivist school is to examine the processes of good writers. Taking its inspiration from psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology, the cognitivists analyze and describe the writing processes of good writers and try to identify characteristics common to good writers. Then they attempt to teach developing writers the processes that expert writers use.

Linda Flower (1993) has found that most effective writers have common characteristics in their writing processes, namely they plan, generate ideas in words, design for a reader, and edit. Flower identifies the components of planning as exploring the rhetorical problem and making a plan. Generating ideas in words involves generating new ideas and organizing ideas. Designing for a reader requires the writer to know the needs of the reader and transform writer-based prose into reader-based prose. Finally, editing incorporates reviewing the purpose of the text, editing the language, and editing for connections and coherence (p. 63). Figure 2.5 illustrates these components.

Plan
Explore Problem
Make Plan

Generate
Generate Ideas
Organize Ideas

Design
Know Reader's Needs
Reader-Based Prose

Edit
Edit for Purpose
Edit for Language
Edit for Coherence

Time
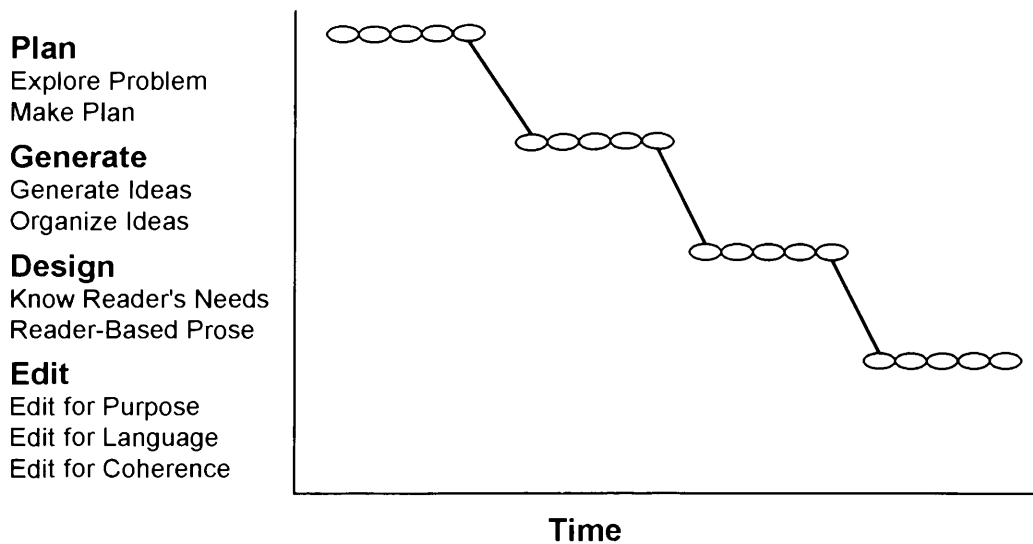
Figure 2.5. Flower's model of a simple-minded writing process shows an over-simplified representation of the writing process. (Flower, 1993, p. 64)

However, writers do not use these tactics in a linear manner. Moreover, cognitive processes are unique to individual writers. This can be demonstrated graphically by comparing different models of writing processes. The first (Figure 2.5) Flower terms the "simple-minded" model of the composing process; the other she calls the "normal composing process" (Figure 2.6) (p. 64).

Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

Time
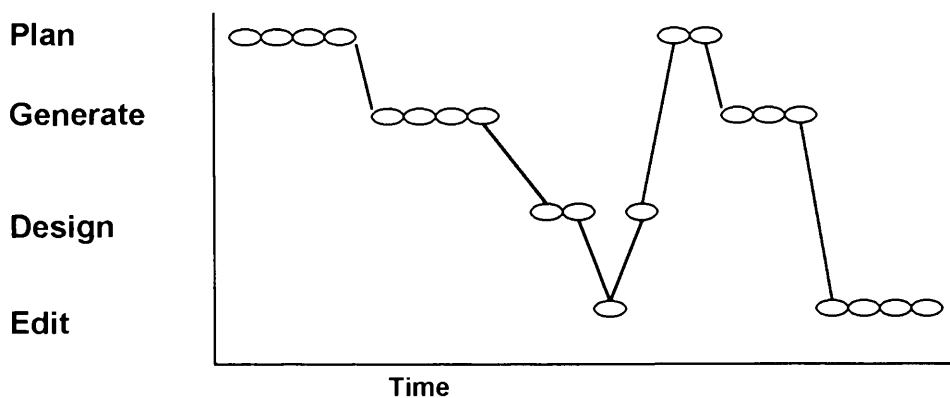
Figure 2.6. Flower's model of a normal composing process is a more realistic representation of writers' processes (Flower, 1993, p. 64).

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A more recent study in writing processes has identified differences in preferred individual writing processes (Harris, 1989). This study describes differences between multi-draft writers and single-draft writers. Multi-draft writers use strategies such as freewriting, drafting, and re-drafting. They usually make radical changes from one draft to another. For multi-draft writers the purpose of writing is to sharpen their thoughts and improve the quality of their texts. Single-draft writers, on the other hand, plan intensively before they write. They report "seeing" words, sentences, and paragraphs in their heads.

One of the goals of this study is to analyze the students' composing processes on at leas₍ one writing assignment. By this I hope to get a better understanding of the strategies they use to write their required assignments.

Theories on the Social Nature of Writing

Bizzell (1982) and Bruffee (1984) each have examined how the situation and the social context in which writing processes are performed affect those processes. They have determined that knowledge is socially constructed and that cognitive processes are conditioned by social and historical forces. Bizzell and Buffee believe that writing, no matter how personal it might seem, always grows out of previous text and contexts, situations, and experiences. Therefore, previous texts, and the communities that cultivate those texts, determine the writing norms for each discourse community. Both Bizzell and Buffee conclude that texts are constructed differently depending on the context in which they are

written. As an illustration a person writing about a car accident would probably create a different text depending on the writer's intended audience. A report to an insurance company would be different from a letter to his or her family describing the accident, which would differ from an account of the accident written for a freshman composition course.

The Academic Discourse Community.

Each of these different texts would be written for a different **discourse community**. "The term discourse refers to multi-sentence chunks of language; a **community** is a group of people with similar values, aims, aspirations, and expectations" (Reid, 1993a, p. 11). The specialized discourse community of the university is known as the **academic discourse community**. According to Bizzell (1982) most of the problems of deficient writers can be attributed to their unfamiliarity with conventions of academic discourse or to their ignorance that discourse communities exist.

Blanton (1994) identifies three defining characteristics of the academic discourse community. First, she presupposes that it is a 'real' (rather than metaphorical) social community, a "collective of individuals (teachers, researchers, scholars, students) dispersed in time and space but connected to the academy in some way" (p. 3). Second, she assumes that these individuals "value written language over spoken language" (p. 3). In other words, the business of an academic discourse community is texts and interacting with texts. Third, she contends that it is "a fluid (rather than static) expression of individuals--their thoughts, experiences and discoveries" (p. 4).

This fluidity is a result of dialogue between individuals and a result of individuals interacting with texts they read and create. Moreover, because the academic discourse community is constantly being modified by its members, it is a dynamic rather than stagnant community. Spack (1993) would agree with Blanton's description. She contends that although academic writing may seem dry and uninspired, it is not as detached and impersonal as some academic writing products would suggest: "...it is an engaging and personal-- sometimes exuberant--process of seeking knowledge and understanding. Academic writing presupposes concern, curiosity, commitment, and need to know, a need to tell" (p. 185).

Literate Behaviors.

Blanton (1994) believes that since written language is valued in an academic discourse community, one of the values of that community is that its participants interact with texts. To get at the root of academic behaviors, Blanton suggests that we pose a question "What do academic readers and writers do?" (p. 6)

Based on the ideas of Heath and Mangiola (1991), Blanton suggests that there are eight essential literate behaviors. She is careful to distinguish these **literate behaviors**, which are necessary for participation in the academic discourse community, from **literacy skills**--reading and writing. Literacy skills are "mechanistic abilities that focus on separating out and manipulating discrete elements of text" (p. 8). Literate behaviors, on the other hand, are what academic readers and writers specifically do; they are the norms of the academic discourse community. Eskey (1993) characterizes

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literate behavior as that which actually uses the reading and writing of texts for some meaningful purpose.

What are these literate behaviors? In Blanton's view, academic readers and writers:

1. Interpret texts in light of their own experiences and their own experience in light of texts;

2. Agree or disagree with texts in light of that experience;

3. Link texts to each other;

4. Synthesize texts, and use their synthesis to build new assertions;

5. Extrapolate from texts;

6. Create their own texts, doing any or all of the above;

7. Talk and write about doing any or all of the above;

8. Do Numbers 6 and 7 in such a way as to meet the expectations of their audience. (1994, p. 8)

Discipline-Specific Discourse Communities.

Reid (1993a) identifies three common attributes of all academic writing. First, academic writing assignments are usually carefully controlled both in topic selection and in rhetorical organization by the instructor. Second, they rarely deal with personal or expressive writing. Third, they often call for some kind of research (p. 37-38). Still each of these attributes is molded by the sub-community to which it belongs.

While Bridgeman and Carlson (1984) and Swales (1987) acknowledge that the academic discourse community has the characteristics put forth by Blanton, they believe that it is not one

entity but a group of sub-communities--content-specific communities--that have a language and culture of their own. They assert that the written form, vocabulary, and cognitive skills necessary for reading or writing in different sub-communities are fundamentally different.

In support of this, Bartholomae (1985) observes that college students are:

> ...challenged by thevarious discourses of our community, since it is in the nature of a liberal arts education that a student must learn to try on a variety of voices and interpretive schemes--to write, for example, as a literary critic one day and as an experimental psychologist the next. (pp. 134-135)

Differences in Writing Tasks for Different Discourse Communities.

In fact, studies have shown that there are differences in discipline-specific discourse communities. For example, Swales (1987) identified and analyzed the types of writing tasks that are typical to specific disciplines; he calls these "key genres." Examples of these include case studies in business, legislative documents in law, lab reports in science, and disease-descriptions in medicine and agriculture.

Horowitz's (1986) qualitative study of professors' writing assignments adds still another perspective from which to examine academic student writing tasks. By collecting information on writing tasks from professors in several different disciplines, Horowitz is able to identify seven basic genres of academic writing. These

include: (a) summary of and reaction to reading, (b) annotated bibliography, (c) report on specific participatory experience, (d) connection of a theory and data, (e) case study, (f) synthesis of multiple sources, and (g) research reports. Currie (1993) believes that Horowitz's study makes progress toward "demystifying the nature of the writing required, and thus providing a more useful taxonomy" (p. 102). Yet, Horowitz himself admits that this classification system does not account for possible differences in requirements of individual professors or the wide-range of academic discourse communities.

Challenges of NNS Students in an Academic Discourse Community

Exactly what defines the academic discourse community is still being negotiated. Bartholomae suggests that any student who enters academia, even native speakers of English, grapple with defining its parameters:

> Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion--invent the university, that is, or a branch of it, like history or anthropology or economics or English. The student has to learn how to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding and arguing that define the discourse of our community. (1985, p. 134)

If it is difficult for native English speakers to decipher, or in Bartholomae's words, "invent" the academic discourse community, it can be a conundrum for non-native speakers. NNS students not only lack "the awareness that the academic community has cultural,

social and rhetorical expectations" (Reid, 1993a, p.11), but also many of the specific language skills necessary to participate in that community.

NNS Students' Writing Product.

Silva (1993) examined 72 empirical research reports and attempted to summarize what is known about the differences between NNS and NES writers. The research falls into two main categories: (a) differences in features of written texts which include among other things, fluency, accuracy, quality, and structure, and (b) differences in composing processes which include the sub-processes of planning, transcribing and reviewing.

Silva's review revealed several emerging trends in the results of these studies. With concern to the written product, NNS students were, not surprisingly, deficient in several areas. They tended to write fewer words, be less complex and not as stylistically appropriate, use fewer synonyms, and make more lexical and grammatical errors than NES students. The structure of their texts often reflected organizational patterns of their first language rather than common English patterns of organization.

Contrastive Rhetoric.

This problem of inappropriate organizational patterns has a significant impact on how native speakers perceive the quality of NNS writing. Kaplan's (1966) seminal study in contrastive rhetoric identifies differences in rhetorical patterns of what he terms different language groups: English, Oriental, Romance, Russian, and Semitic. Kaplan compared compositions of writers in each of these

Semitic. Kaplan compared compositions of writers in each of these groups. Then he graphically represented each of these rhetorical patterns as illustrated in Figure 2.7.
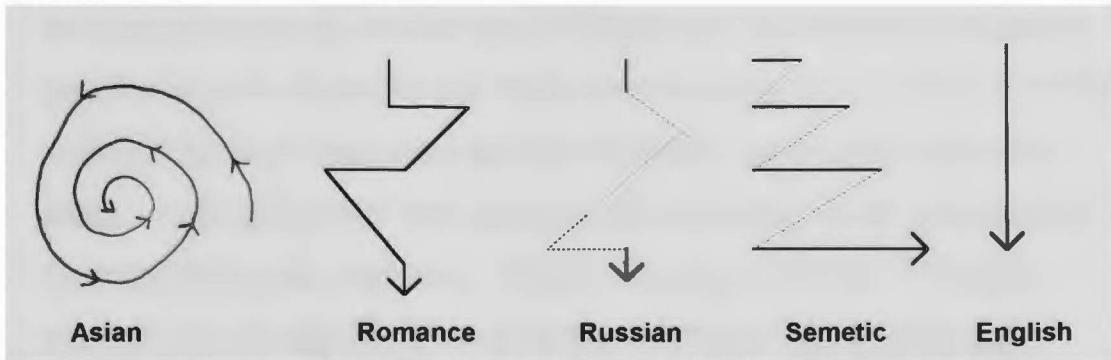
Figure 2.7. Kaplan's illustrations of the rhetorical conventions of five different language groups (1966).

In brief, he found that Oriental writers tend to write circuitously. He characterizes them as writing around the topic, presenting it from many "tangential views" (p. 6), but never addressing the main idea directly. To come out and say exactly what the main idea is would be a disservice to the reader because it would imply that the reader was not intelligent enough to figure out the thesis. On the other hand, according to Kaplan, writers in Romance languages like French, Spanish, or Italian, tend to be more straightforward, stating the main idea up front. Still, their rhetoric differs from English patterns in that they are allowed, and even encouraged, to digress, complying with certain conventions of the language and niceties to the reader. This explains, in part, the "flowery" descriptions characteristic of Romance language writing. Kaplan's Russian model is similar to that of the Romance

languages, although the diversions are not as readily connected to the main idea. In fact, he points out that Russian writers are especially proficient in amplifying subordinating ideas. Semitic languages such as Arabic and Hebrew use positive and negative parallelisms to illustrate the main idea presented. It is the "not this, but this" type of discourse familiar to most Westerners from the Bible. The rhetoric of the Sermon on the Mount is an example of Semitic rhetorical patterns. Finally, Kaplan's model of English rhetoric is a straight line. He contends that English writers are straight-forward in their presentation of ideas, and digressions and straying from a topic are discouraged.

Recently, Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric has been criticized, first because it can be considered ethnocentric--English is represented by a straight line while other languages are depicted as "weird" circles and zigzags. Second, proponents of using a process orientation to teaching writing criticize its focus on the writing product. They contend that contrastive rhetoric ignores students' individual writing processes. Third, critics contend that Kaplan's models are not necessarily descriptive of all genres of writing. For example, business writing is bound to have a different rhetorical style than academic writing or journalism no matter what culture is being represented. Fourth, contrastive rhetoric ignores aspects of student writing that could be attributed to language development rather than language diversity. Students who do not have well-developed literacy skills in their first languages will not be able to write in their second language (Mohan & Lo, 1985). Finally, Kaplan

has been criticized because his models over-simplify the complexity of language.

With all of these criticisms it may seem best to eliminate Kaplan's framework altogether. However, there is merit in his theory. Leki (1993) cites studies such as Carson's 1992 study as proof that "it is clear that reading and writing are complexly and variously inscribed in cultures" (p. 130). Further, she contends that contrastive rhetoric is not only concerned with the shaping of students' writing products, but rather focuses students on the expectations of their audience. Put simply, American university professors expect student writing to reflect the American university discourse community. Moreover Reid suggests that:

> One way to begin raising students' awareness of U.S. academic prose is a frank discussion among teachers and students about rhetorical differences between English academic prose and the rhetoric--the presentation of written material--in the students' native languages. (1993a, p. 212)

For the purposes of this study, then, it is important to find out if any of the participants in this study diverge from the expectations of the academic discourse community in ways that are influenced by their first language rhetorical style. In any case, the theory of contrastive rhetoric has had such an important influence on the study of second language writing that it cannot be ignored.

NNS Students' Writing Processes.

Studies by Jacobs (1982) and Neilson (1983) suggest that NNS students face cognitive overload because they have difficulty

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adjusting their writing processes to different genres. Even though students may create grammatically correct and coherent prose for one kind of assignment, their proficiency declines when asked to do a different kind of task. One of the earliest studies of NNS composing processes was Vivian Zamel's 1983 study of the composing processes of eight proficient ESOL writers. Zamel found that these proficient writers used many of the same strategies as NES writers.

All of the students in Zamel's study mentioned that some background knowledge of the subject facilitated the writing process. They singled out class discussions as especially helpful in developing background knowledge necessary for proficient writing. The students also reported using writing as a means to clarify their thoughts and generate new ideas. "These students talked about writing down ideas, rethinking them and then writing some more, not exactly sure of what would next appear on the paper" (p. 271). Further, they described the recursive nature of their writing processes. The students often revisited what they had written they "left their writing and come back to it again and again and reread it in order to go on" (p. 271). The writing process for these students was time-consuming and complex.

Since Zamel's research, several other studies have explored the differences between NES and NNS students' writing processes. Silva's (1993) review of the research on composing processes indicates that while the composing processes of L_1 and L_2 writers had similar patterns, composing was generally more difficult for L_2

writers. This is partly because NNS students tended to spend less time planning. Also, their generating processes were less fluent and less productive. NNS writers more often referred to dictionaries and outlines than NES writers. L_2 writers also tended to review their texts less often, and when they did review, they tended to focus on grammar or surface structures of their writing.

In regard to writing processes, Johns (1993) found that there is a large discrepancy between students' and faculty members' perceptions of what processes are required to complete academic tasks. This difference in understanding of assignments often prevents students from planning how to approach tasks effectively.

Challenges of the Academic Discourse Community.

Presently, experts in second language writing are divided into two distinct camps, those who believe that writing instruction should focus on a general, academic community, and those who believe that writing instruction should focus on the various discipline specific academic discourse communities. Spack (1993) characterizes this as a continuum with one side emphasizing general knowledge and the other emphasizing local knowledge. The generalists (Benesch, 1993; Spack, 1988; Zamel, Raimes, Brookes, Land, Spack, White, & Taylor, 1995) argue that: 1. The general freshman-level courses do not demand discipline specific knowledge; therefore, students do not need to learn to write for discipline-specific discourse communities straight out of ESOL classes. 2. ESOL teachers cannot be expected to know about the discipline-specific demands of writing in diverse disciplines; this is the realm of the experts in

each discipline. 3. When specific genres are removed from their original academic settings to writing classes, and analyzed as text, they are no longer a vehicle for communication; they are, at best, simulations of the "real thing".

Conversely, the discipline-specific camp (Braine, 1988; Horowitz 1986, 1988; Johns, 1988, 1993; Swales, 1990) contends that: 1. The generalist writing classes are not meeting the "real" needs of the students because they ignore differences in academic discourse communities. 2. The generalists tend to depend solely on the personal essay as a way of developing students' academic writing skills; this genre has limited applicability in some academic contexts. 3. ESOL teachers do not need to be experts in every discourse community; they only need to help students identify characteristics of texts in the students' specific discipline.

Carter (1990) contends that the continuum of general and local knowledge is a false one. She notes that "performance is a complex interaction of general and local knowledge" (p. 271). Therefore, both are at work at the same time. As in schema theory, students use what they already know about the general discourse as they add to their knowledge about local discourse.

Discipline Specific Challenges for NNS Students.

Reid (1993b) suggests that academic writing tasks tend to be controlled both in topic selection and in rhetorical organization by the instructor, rarely deal with personal or expressive writing, and often call for some kind of research. This would suggest that academic discourse communities are not only discipline specific,

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but also instructor specific. In addition to these factors, Johns (1993) notes that academic tasks require both reading and writing and most demand that student work at higher cognitive levels. This would also suggest that students need specific information about specific discourse communities because the reading and writing would be within a specific discipline.

Generalists.

Spack (1993) contends that students must first acquire general knowledge about writing before they can move to the other side of the continuum to the local knowledge of the discipline specific genres. Students should be initiated into academic prose by the writing teacher. "Only then can they learn to think like the humanists, social scientists, scientists, and technologists they will become" (p. 185). Moreover she argues that freshman and sophomore courses in colleges are core or introductory courses. It is through these courses that students will enter their discipline-specific discourse community. Introductory courses are specifically designed to help student gain membership in these communities.

Theories on the Reading/Writing Relationship

Reading and Writing as Complementary Processes

Research and theory in reading and writing have, until recently, developed independently of each other. Still, as Reid (1993b) observes the trends coming out of this research and theory have shadowed each other.

Both writing and reading are processes of making meaning, both involve similar patterns of thinking and similar linguistic

habits, both are multifaceted complex processes that involve many subskills, and both depend on individual past experience. Furthermore, both writing and reading activate schemata about the language, content, and form of the topic, and both lead to the exploration of those schemata in discovering meaning. (p. 43)

The Social Dimensions of the Reading/Writing Relationship

Eskey (1993) explores reading and writing as social behaviors. He cites Frank Smith's (1978) "creation of worlds" theory. Smith argues that reading and writing are more than just information processing and in this Eskey concurs. Further, he believes that readers and writers not only process new information, but also use this information to create new worlds. Readers and writers interact with the text they read or write to create new meaning. What makes human beings human in their use of language is the creative use of the system they employ in turning ideas and feelings into meaningful discourse.

Another link between reading and writing is the social nature of text. Text is where reader and writer meet, mingle, and interact. Traditionally, reading has been perceived as a receptive skill and writing as a productive skill. Eskey believes that these lines are arbitrary when we look at reading and writing as social behaviors. As readers read, they interact with the writer and thus can produce new meanings. In the same way, when writers write, they are interacting with a reader trying to make their ideas clear. Thus reading and writing are both cognitive and social processes. Eskey

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believes that to deal with text as meaningful discourse, writers and readers must combine their prior knowledge with the information to create "new expanded pictures of the world" (p. 224), using both literacy skills and literate behavior.

Nelson (1993), like Eskey, explores the social relationship between reading and writing. Nelson's underlying thesis is that literacy not only includes cognitive and social dimensions, but that during the reading and writing processes these dimensions interact with each other. To begin with, Nelson demonstrates how the cognitive approach to literacy concentrates on psycholinguistic processes as unique and individual. Cognitive researchers in literacy emphasize the interaction between the individual and text. They view reading and writing as a solitary act and focus on the students' individual thought processes. Nelson also contends that many of the elements of the cognitive approach, for example, the concept of the psycholinguistic guessing game, are centered on the processes of the individual.

On the other hand, she characterizes the social dimension of literacy as centered on the context of the reading and writing. Each skill is "embedded in context", and has "a multilayered social dimension" (p.317). Advocates of social perspectives see reading and writing as tools or learned technologies which are meant to be used in a specific context. In other words, learning to read and write for the sake of reading and writing is fruitless. It is akin to learning to use a saw and hammer yet never building anything. To the advocates of the social nature of reading and writing, literacy, like a

saw and hammer, is meant to be used, and used for a real purpose and in a social context. The different social contexts of literacy may each require different reading and writing skills and that these skills be used in divergent ways. The variety of discourse communities can create a variety of literacy subcultures (an academic discourse community, for example). Different types and levels of literacy are required to be a participant in each of these subcultures. At the same time, individual readers and writers bring with them unique perspectives based on their background experiences. Because of this, each subculture is constantly being shaped by its individual members.

Nelson goes on to explain how the cognitive and social dimensions of literacy interact. She presents the three possible relationships between context and cognition. The first possibility is that "context is mediated by the cognition of the reader/writer; cognition is the agent" (p.320). In this framework, an individual's peculiar cognitive processes of literacy interpret the social discourse context. The evidence for this framework is that students of similar backgrounds can interpret and carry out reading and writing tasks in vastly different ways within the same context. In other words, while they are working within a social context, readers and writers use decidedly individualized processes to complete the same task. The direction of this relationship according to Nelson is:
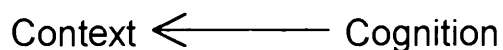
Context ←——————— Cognition

The second possible relationship according to Nelson is that context shapes cognition. A cue from the context prompts the reader/writer's thinking. In this case the context triggers a cognitive process specific to that context. That relationship would look like:
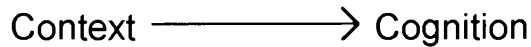
Context ————————→ Cognition

Another possible relationship is that the mediating power of cognition and the directive cues of context work together. In this case, the context influences cognition while not controlling it. The cognitive processes of the reader/writer aids in making sense of the context. This suggests that "neither cognition nor context is static; they continually react to and change the other" (p.321). This relationship would look like this:

Context ←————————→ Cognition

For Nelson, (1993) only the third model represents a true picture of reading and writing. She asserts that it is the best model because it depicts the "inextricable and reflexive" nature of reading and writing tasks.

A typical writing assignment demonstrates how cognition and context are woven together in the writing process. A teacher assigns students a writing task (context); students interpret the writing task (cognition); students' interpretation of this task is shaped by past schooling and experiences (context); students think about ideas and begin to write, organize, evaluate, rewrite, reorganize, and edit (cognition). Many of the decisions they make in

these processes are influenced by their knowledge of the topic, their past writing experiences, and their projected audience (context). Finally, Nelson (1993) suggests that the interrelated nature of cognitive processes and social aspects of reading and writing call for a "*new way of thinking*" (her italics) about the reading/writing relationship which recognizes their connectiveness, and the context which gives them purpose and form.

Theories on Oral/Aural Academic Language

<u>Transactional and Interactional Aural/Oral Skills</u>

Effective aural and oral strategies are also essential for students to be successful in an academic discourse community. According to Brown and Yule (1983), language functions can be divided into two main categories: language for **transactional** purposes or language for **interactional** purposes.

<u>Transactional Skills</u>

Transactional language conveys factual information and focuses on content or concepts. It is message-oriented and often abstract. In this, it can be related to Cummins' concept, CALP. It is usually one-way language--the speaker provides the information, the listener processes the information. Transactional language is usually used to do things like instruct, give directions, explain, describe, relate information, check on the accuracy of details, and verify that something has been comprehended (Morley, 1991). An academic lecture typifies the transactional language function--the teacher tells the student what information is important and it is up to

students to process that information or to ask questions if they are unsure.

Interactional Skills

Interactional language, on the other hand, is used for the social function of language; it is listener-oriented rather than message-oriented. Interactional language is essential to establish cordial social relationships. Students would need interactional language to interact with professors and other students and to take part in class discussions or group projects.

Challenges of Oral/Aural Academic Language

Similar to reading and writing, oral and aural academic tasks demand that students interact appropriately in order to receive and process information and to be able to participate effectively in academic situations. Benson's (1989) ethnographic study of a Saudi student's (Hamad) listening strategies in an academic setting shows how complex those demands can be. From an analysis of Hamad's notes, Benson found that:

1. Fewer notes were taken during interaction than during lecture-style teaching.

2. General statements formed the bulk of Hamad's notes.

3. Examples, metaphors, and so forth were omitted, and vocabulary could be a problem.

4. Compared with the notes recorded by a proficient L_1 student, Hamad's lacked completeness but were strong on human participation. [They included many of Hamad's own opinions]

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5. A Saudi Arabian viewpoint was evident.

6. Hamad, like the rest of tne class, carefully noted down any series, lists, and so forth offered.

7. Testability was a major consideration. [His criteria for making written notes depended on if he thought it would be tested or not.] (p. 436)

Although this is the study of only one student and is not meant to be generalized to a whole NNS population, Benson's characterization of Hamad's note taking has some important implications. First, it would seem that Hamad, and probably most NNS students, valued what the professor said over discussions by other students in the class. Benson speculates that this was because Arabic education was generally transactional--with the teacher as information giver--and that Hamad's primary motivation for taking notes at all was to pass the test; therefore, teacher talk was of utmost importance. Another implication of this study is the seemingly incompleteness of Hamad's notes. By omitting examples and metaphors, he may have omitted the very information he needed in order to comprehend and clarify difficult concepts.

Summary

At the beginning of this chapter, I said that my purpose was to look at NNS student's coping strategies dynamically and holistically. From this hodgepodge of theories and studies the reader may not have a clear picture of how these different aspects fit together. In part, the purpose of this study is to describe the dynamic of these factors as they play themselves out in the students' assimilation into

the academic discourse community. Bringing together the 60-some pages of theories and studies is a difficult task (for both the reader and the writer). In order to facilitate the synthesis process, I have created a diagram which is my representation of how these various factors may interact (see Figure 2.8).
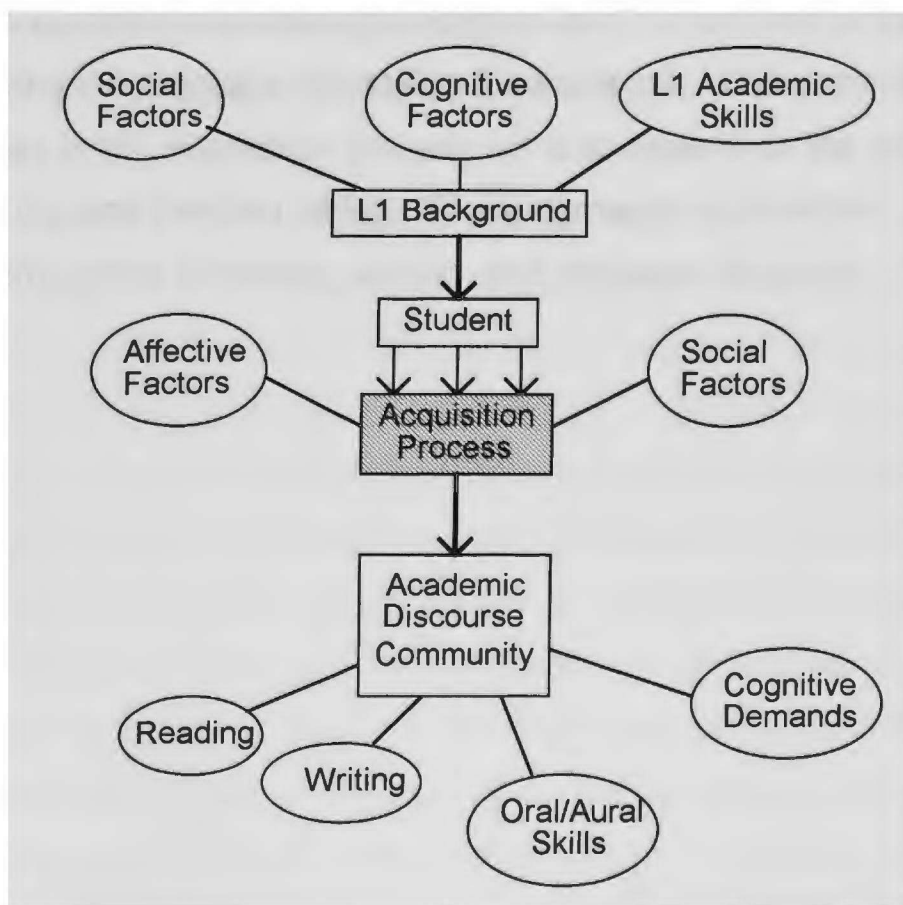
Figure 2.8. A possible model for how the factors interact with each other. The students' background knowledge is filtered through their acquisition process as they attempt to cope with the demands of the academic discourse community.

The students' first language background, including the cognitive and social factors in their L_1 education are what NNS students bring with them as they confront this new academic

experience. These factors have the potential of either facilitating or creating a barrier to the students' adaptation to the academic discourse community. This L_1 background knowledge is filtered through the social and cognitive factors which influence the students' acquisition process. This acquisition process includes not only acquisition of a language--English--but it is also the process of acquiring the language necessary for academia. The students' success in this adaptation process will also depend on the demands of the classes they are taking. These demands include the academic skills of reading, writing, and oral/aural language.

Chapter 3 · Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study and the rationale for choosing those methods. It includes sections on: (a) the design of this study and the rationale for a qualitative study, (b) a description of the sampling method, (c) a description of the setting and participants, (d) the role of the researcher, (e) the data collection techniques, and (f) the data analysis techniques.

Rationale for a Qualitative Study

I hope to answer the research questions through a qualitative, phenomenological study which chronicles the case of 11 non-native speaking students as they attempt to enter a discourse community.

My research question: **How do NNS students become successful members of an academic discourse community?** includes several sub-questions: 1. What are the cognitive demands of Gordon Rule classes? 2. How important is correct English language usage to success? 3. What are the mores of the different academic discourse communities? 4. How well do students understand the nature of these communities? 5. What types of reading, writing, aural, and oral skills are necessary for these courses? 6. How do NNS students' academic backgrounds affect their success in Gordon Rule classes? 7. Which language skills practiced in ESL classes help students to be successful in academic settings? 8. How are the students' first language academic cultures similar to or different from U.S. academic culture? 9. In what ways do these factors interact with each other?

These are ideally answered by qualitative research techniques. First, qualitative techniques, especially case study and ethnography, are invaluable when the goal of the research is to describe a phenomenon. Qualitative techniques are most commonly used to describe (a) individuals, (b) processes, and (c) social situations. Each of these are elements of this study, which hopes to describe (a) the challenges and successes of individual NNS students, (b) their coping strategies, and (c) the social reality of the academic community in which they must participate. Another advantage of qualitative methods for this study is that rather than trying to minimize the effect of environment on the participants as quantitative methods do, they are intended to help a researcher understand the effects of the context on the participants. This also fits the needs of this study because the social context of the 'academy' and the social context of the discourse communities is certain to affect how students cope.

Still another advantage is that the qualitative procedures are especially well-fitted to "documenting the multiple influences that may impinge upon the phenomenon being studied and identifying those characteristics that are most relevant to the research problem or issue" (Davis, 1992, p. 606). In other words, qualitative methods allow for the possibility of studying a phenomenon holistically, documenting the wide variety of factors that can influence the phenomena instead of focusing narrowly on one or two factors. This method is also in accord with my goals because I seek to explore the dynamics among the different elements that influence

student success and to reveal the relationships between these factors.

Finally, qualitative methods, especially, case study and ethnographic research, are widely used in several fields touched on in this study. These include: second language acquisition (SLA), the ethnography of communication, sociolinguistics, writing processes, and contrastive rhetoric (Davis, 1995). Qualitative methods are employed in these fields for two reasons. The first reason is because they are all complex processes, and the second is that when studying people of different cultural backgrounds, it is important to understand the participants' actions in light of their own frames of reference (Johnson & Saville-Troike, 1992). At any rate, qualitative research is becoming more widely accepted in the field of teaching English as a second language. In fact, the main professional organization in the field, Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), dedicated a recent issue (Autumn, 1995) of their juried journal, TESOL Quarterly, to qualitative research and issues concerning qualitative research in TESOL. I believe this gives further legitimacy to qualitative research as a growing force in the future of the field.

Challenges to Qualitative Studies

Keeping all of these reasons for choosing qualitative research methods in mind, I realize that qualitative methods, while becoming more prevalent, are not the most common research methods employed in educational settings. The most widespread criticism of qualitative studies is that they are not generalizable to populations

outside of the study community. Yet, as Davis (1995) points out:
"...[A] strength of qualitative studies is that they allow for an understanding of what is specific to a particular group, that is, what can not possibly be generalized within and across populations" (p. 441). In other words, not all studies are meant to be generalized. Moreover, Lazaraton (1995) details how generalizability is also a problem to much of the quantitative investigations:

> ...[G]eneralizability in research is more than a matter of counting. Quantification of any set of data does not ensure generalizability to other contexts, nor does a large sample size: population characteristics must be carefully considered when selecting a sample from which to make statistical inferences. Although the vast majority of the published studies in applied linguistics may employ quantification of data, a much smaller number can be considered to have used a large sample size, and even fewer still randomly select and assign subjects to treatment conditions, the traditional prescriptive requirement for generalizability to some population at large. (p. 465)

So, even though quantitative data is considered by many to be more generalizable than qualitative data, few studies in the field rigidly adhere to protocol for random sampling. This makes their claim of generalizability dubious. In the end, Davis concludes that qualitative research may be more straightforward in its claim (or non-claim) of generalizability because it is the reader who ultimately

decides if the study is applicable beyond the particular situation of the study. "Essentially, the onus is on the reader of an interpretive qualitative study to determine whether and how the grounded theory described in one study applies to another situation" (p. 441). In other words, if the qualitative study has enough 'thick description' readers will be able to make their own decision on how generalizable the data is to other situations. Adelman, Jenkins, & Kemmis (1976) would agree with this evaluation of the generalizability of qualitative research, especially in regard to case studies. They claim that because case study is 'strong in reality', the research is best verified or refuted by practitioners in similar situations. It is these practitioners who are best able to decide which elements of the study can be generalized to their own situations.

Rationale for a Case Study

Specifically, I have chosen to investigate students' coping strategies through the qualitative methods of case study which grow out of the tradition of psychology. Because the standardization of case study techniques is still fairly recent, there are different ideas about what case study research entails. In fact, Nunan (1992) cites at least six extended definitions of the case study. Nunan goes on to conclude that "case study is not a term for a standard methodological package." Further, he points out that "it is probably easier to say what a case study is not rather than what it is" (p. 74).

The first problem with case study is defining "case." An individual language learner is certainly a case, but it becomes more

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unclear if a case is defined as the coping strategies of several students as it is in this study. Adelman et al. (1976) submit that case study is the study of an instance in action. It is one instance selected from the class of objects and phenomena that is studied in its natural context. The problem with this conceptualization of case study is, as Nunan points out, that it is not much different than ethnography. "[T]he case study resembles ethnography in its philosophy, methods, and concern for studying phenomena in context" (p. 75). Still, there are differences between the two. First, case study is usually more limited in scope than an ethnography. Second, the primary concern of ethnography is cultural context and cultural interpretation of a phenomena, and while culture is important in case study, it does not hold the same weight as it does in ethnography. So it is with this case study. While the social reality of academia is of interest to this study, it is the adaptation process and coping strategies of the students which is the primary focus. Yin (1989) provides the most concise and clearest definition of case study: "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with in its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23).

While recognizing the difficulties of defining a case study, case study is particularly well-suited to my research needs. Adelman et al. (1976) identify some of the advantages of case study methodology. First, because case study is strong in reality, it allows

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practitioners (in this case other tertiary level ESOL teachers) to identify with the issues and concerns raised. Case study also has the advantage of representing a multiplicity of viewpoints; therefore, it is not limited in the same way some quantitative studies are. Another pragmatic advantage of case study is that it can be put to immediate use for a variety of purposes. In this study, the findings can be used to make immediate changes in the college ESOL curricula.

Study Design

Because my 'case' is the coping strategies of NNS students in Gordon Rule classes, this study will require a single case (embedded) design (Yin, 1989). The single case being studied is students' coping strategies for Gordon Rule classes. The multiple units of analysis are: (a) the student-participants' first-language background (including knowledge, cognitive processes, social conventions, and schooling), (b) the demands of the Gordon Rule classes (including linguistic, cognitive, and social elements), (c) the different requirements of the three academic disciplines represented in this study, and (d) the interaction amongst these factors.

The Pilot Study and How It Shaped the Study Design

The pilot for this study was done two semesters before the actual study. It was more narrowly-focused on one Gordon Rule class, Humanities, and included only two NNS students and their instructors. The pilot study followed a Haitian male and a Mexican female as they coped with the demands of their humanities classes. As in the dissertation study, I gathered information through

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interviews with two student-participants and their humanities teachers, as well as through an analysis of student writing assignments, course syllabi, and an exam.

In the pilot, I examined the students' coping strategies in light of four categories, (a) students' first-language education (L_1); (b) the type of writing required in humanities classes; (c) the cognitive skills necessary for writing in humanities classes; and (d) the social context (ways in which students must interact with texts) in humanities classes. In the course of this study I found that: 1. Students' L_1 education helps the students in their humanities class, especially in terms of content. 2. The type of assignments required in humanities classes varied notably depending on the instructor. 3. Students must use higher level cognitive skills and effective writing processes in order to be successful. 4. Students must exhibit literate behaviors, especially the ability to relate their personal experiences to texts in humanities classes. The results of the pilot study helped me shape the line of inquiry for my dissertation study and refine my questions and interviewing techniques. It also helped me identify emerging themes that I had not considered when approaching the study. For example, the pilot study was primarily focused on the writing and reading requirements of the humanities classes. However, by focusing in on writing tasks, I missed a chance to gather information on other academic and coping strategies that the pilot study participants could have given me information on. The primary influence of the pilot study on this dissertation research is that it broadened the scope. It is also

significant to note that none of participants in my pilot study participated in the dissertation study, so the pilot study participants are another potential source of data in this study.

Sampling Method

Sampling of Student-Participants

Initially, I had planned to choose a minimum of 3 student-participants for each of the 3 Gordon Rule courses with a total of 10 students. *Ideally*, I wanted to have an even number of males and females, from a variety of linguistic and educational backgrounds and different age groups. The participants were to be volunteers who had taken English as a second language classes at Miami-Dade Community College. I realize with such a small number of student-participants (10), it could be difficult to find participants from all of these categories. Therefore, I used the qualitative sampling method suggested by Stake (1988). First, I chose a student-participant that I thought would be an excellent source of data. Then, I chose the remaining student-participants on the basis of qualities they had that made them unique from the first student and each other.

The most important criterion for insuring diversity was to consider the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, I chose students that represented the ethnic diversity of the composition of the student body at the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade. By far the largest group of ESL students, linguistically, at Wolfson are Spanish speakers. More than half of the students, about 52% of the total student population at the Wolfson Campus,

speak Spanish as their first language. By far the largest number of Spanish speakers come from Cuba, and then from a variety of Caribbean, and South and Central American countries. (Miami-Dade Community College Fact Book, 1994-1995, p. 46). The second largest linguistic group at Wolfson Campus are Haitian-Creole speakers, followed by Russian speakers. Therefore, there are four Spanish speakers in the study (two males and two females), two Haitian-Creole Speakers (one male and one female), and two Russian speakers (one male and one female). The remaining NNS students at Miami-Dade come from a wide assortment of linguistic backgrounds and I wanted as many of these as possible to be represented. After native language, I felt it was important to include students from a variety of ages, lengths of residency in the United States, and previous educational experiences.

As I gathered data for this study, I realized that the reader could be confused by the large number of student- and instructor-participants--it could make this study as difficult to follow as the characters in a Russian novel. To compensate for this I have tried to build in a mnemonic device to aid the reader. I had planned to give each student a pseudonym beginning with the same letter as their native country so the reader could more easily follow the study; however, this created a problem because this study includes Haitians and a Hungarian and Cubans and a Colombian. In the end I decided to keep the alliteration, and clarify the relationship for the reader by making the pseudonyms plausible names for people from

that country. Further, I think I have been able to keep the Cubans and Haitians separate from the Colombian and Hungarian by giving the former male and female forms of the same name. Thus, the Cubans are Carlos and Carla and the Haitians are Henri and Henrietta. Figure 3.1 presents a summary of the demographic data I gathered about each of the student-participants.

Pseudo-nym	Sex	Age	Nationality	Native Language	Other Languages	University Ed. in L1?	How long in the U. S.?
Angela	F	58	Argentine	Spanish	---	no	15 years
Beatriz	F	21	Brazilian	Portuguese	Spanish	no	1.5 years
Carla	F	42	Cuban	Spanish	French	no	32 years
Carlos	M	21	Cuban	Spanish	---	yes	7 months
Cesar	M	23	Colombian	Spanish	---	yes	1 year
Henri	M	28	Haitian	Creole	French	no	7 years
Hennrietta	F	28	Haitian	Creole	French	no	4 years
Hugo	M	24	Hungarian	Hungarian	German	no	2 years
Raisa	F	23	Russian	Russian	Hebrew	yes (Israel)	2 years
Ruslan	M	20	Russian	Russian	Hebrew	no	2 years
Salaam	M	33	Sudanese	Nubian	Arabic Hungarian	yes (Hungary)	3.5 years

Figure 3. 1. A summary of the demographic data of the student-participants.

The student-participants are evenly divided between males and females and range in age from 20 to 58, with most of the students between the ages of 21 and 28. The range of ages reflects fairly accurately the population of the college as a whole where 45% of the population is between 21 and 30 years old (Miami-Dade Fact Book, 1994-1995, p.19).

The study includes, besides the two Cubans and two Haitians, an Argentine, a Colombian, a Brazilian, two Russians, a Hungarian, and a Sudanese. The first student I chose was Carlos, a 23-year-old Cuban male. He was my first choice because he liked to talk; moreover, he was readily available. I knew this be true because he came to my office often before the beginning of the term asking for my assistance in choosing classes. I thought he would be an excellent source of information. The other students were chosen because they had characteristics that made them distinct from Carlos and from each other.

I attempted to include as many students as possible who were in their first or second semester of regular college courses. Except for one student who is in her third semester and another who is in his fourth semester, I was able to accomplish this. Although they were not beginners in this process, the experiences of the third and fourth semester students were beneficial because these students were also able to give some perspective on their first semesters in the regular program and what they had learned from these experiences.

Also important to the diversity of the students in this study was their English proficiency when they came to the United States. This was a little more difficult because most of the NNS students at Miami-Dade who matriculate into the regular program enter the ESOL program at the higher levels, usually levels five and six. I was able to find one student (an anomaly in the program) who entered ESL classes with no English and two students who began on the third of six levels. Finally, I had hoped to include students with a wide assortment of career goals. While a diversity of career goal are represented, many of the students expressed interest in health care careers.

Two weeks into this study, after my first interview with the students, I found that one of the students, Angela, had already dropped humanities. Obviously Angela was still a valuable source of information because I wanted to understand the reasons why she dropped this class at such an early point in the semester. I decided to add another student to the study because, including Angela, there were only three participants enrolled in humanities. Although I felt I already had a good understanding of humanities classes because of my pilot study, I had added many areas of inquiry to my dissertation study that were not in my pilot. It seemed to me that with Angela withdrawn from her humanities class, humanities might be under-represented in this study. Instead of looking for another student with characteristics similar to Angela (which might have been difficult because Angela is 58 years old), I took this opportunity to add another student that was different from the other 10 in the

study. I choose a Haitian male, Henri, who was enrolled in a humanities class. Thus, I actually gathered data from 11 students. Figure 3.2 shows additional demographic data gathered from the participants.

Pseudonym	Study Class(es)	1st Level of ESOL	Semester in Fresh-man Classes	Major
Angela	Humanities	3	2nd	undecided
Beatriz	Psychology	4/5 split	2nd	Chemical Engineering
Carla	Psychology Social Environment	6	1st	Hospital Administra-tion
Carlos	Psychology Humanities	6	1st	Pre-Medicine
Cesar	Humanities	6	2nd	Business Administra-tion
Henri	Humanities	4	4th	Political Science
Hennrietta	Psychology	5	1st	Nursing
Hugo	Psychology Social Environment	1	2nd	Hospitality Mangement
Raisa	Psychology Social Environment	4	1st	Fashion Design
Ruslan	Social Environment	4	3rd	Pre-Medicine
Salaam	Psycnology Social Environment	3/4 split	1st	Biology

Figure 3. 2. Student-participants' courses and majors.

<u>Instructor-Participants</u>

The instructors whom I interviewed and observed teaching were chosen because they happened to be the faculty assigned to teach the students in the study. They are a mixture of full-time and adjunct faculty. Although I knew some of the instructors by name and face, I had never had more than superficial interactions with any of them before this study. (One of the side benefits of this research project has been that I have been able to establish a friendly relationship with each of these colleagues.) The only exception to the superficial relationship was Ms. Durant, Ruslan and Carla's Social Environment instructor. She is an adjunct faculty member at Miami-Dade, but she is also enrolled in the same doctorate program as I am. Ms. Durant and I have studied four courses together and occasionally discussed educational issues and classroom practices specific to the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade.

All of the instructor-participants in this study have at least a master's degree in their field. Full-time faculty at Miami-Dade teach five courses each full semester and two courses in either of the six-week spring or summer semesters. Adjunct faculty usually teach one or two courses each semester. Besides their teaching load, full-time faculty also must have 10 posted office hours a week. During this time they must be available to students.

In order to clearly differentiate student-participants from instructor-participants, I have chosen to identify the instructor-participants by surname pseudonyms. Because there are also 11 instructor-participants, I decided to create a mnemonic device to

help the reader distinguish between them. First, I grouped the instructors by their academic discipline. Then I gave each the name of a well-known practitioner of each of these disciplines. So for example, the psychology instructors in this study have the pseudonyms of Mr. Freud, Ms. Piaget, Ms. Skinner, and Dr. Jung. Since all of the Social Environment teachers are historians, I named them after famous historians. They are Dr. Gibbon, Dr. Hegel, and Ms. Durant. The three humanities teachers are all trained in different fields. One is a philosopher, the second an artist, and the third a musician; they are named Dr. Plato, Mr. Picasso, and Ms. Mozart, respectively.

This naming system seems to work well except for one small glitch. One of the instructors teaches both Social Environment and Psychology. However since this woman is a sociologist by training, I named her Dr. Mead. Figure 3.3 shows the instructor participants, the classes they teach, their employment status, and the student participants that were in their classes.

Professor	Class(es)	Sex	full-time/ adjunct	Student Participants
Dr. Mead	Social Environment Psychology	F	full-time	Salaam
Mr. Freud	Psychology	M	full-time	Beatriz Raisa
Ms. Piaget	Psychology	F	full-time	Henrietta
Ms. Skinner	Psychology	F	adjunct	Carlos
Dr. Jung	Psychology	F	full-time	Hugo Carla
Dr. Gibbon	Social Environment	M	full-time	Hugo
Dr. Hegel	Social Environment	M	full-time	Raisa
Ms. Durant	Social Environment	F	adjunct	Carla Ruslan
Dr. Plato	Humanities	F	full-time	Angela Cesar
Mr. Picasso	Humanities	M	adjunct	Henri
Ms. Mozart	Humanities	F	adjunct	Carlos

<u>Figure 3. 3.</u> Instructor-participants' demographic data

Setting and Subjects

<u>The Setting</u>

The Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade Community College, where this study takes place, is very urban. It is located in the center of downtown Miami, and has a very diverse student body, even by Miami standards--68% of the students are Hispanic, 15% Black non-Hispanic, and 59% of the students are female. A significant number of these, 27%, are enrolled in ESOL classes (<u>Miami-Dade Fact Book, 1994-1995</u>, p. 46).

Physically, the campus is generally safe and well-maintained. The classrooms are also usually well-lit and conducive to learning. The Wolfson Campus is entirely a commuter student campus. There is no student housing, and except for a few student athletes, most students do not live within walking distance to the Campus. The Campus is accessible by car, bus, and metro-rail train. Most of the students live in neighborhoods near the campus. These neighborhoods include: Overtown, Coconut Grove, Little Haiti, Little Havana, Northeast Miami, and Miami Beach.

The ethnic population of these neighborhoods is very diverse. Overtown and parts of Coconut Grove have large African-American populations. Little Haiti is primarily composed of the most recent immigrants and political refugees from Haiti. Little Havana has many recent Cuban and Nicaraguan immigrants and political refugees. Northeast Miami and Miami Beach have very ethnically-mixed populations. In addition, there is a large group of Russian-Jewish political refugees living on Miami Beach.

Requirements for an Associate Degree.

Both Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees require five core courses. They are English Composition (ENC 1101), Humanities (HUM 1020), The Social Environment (ISS 1120), Natural Environment (PSC 1515), and The Individual in Transition (PSY 1000). These core courses are the focus of this study. In addition, students must take seven distribution courses in a variety of disciplines. The remaining eight courses are electives that students must take in their major.

College Preparatory Courses.

Students who enter the college academically under-prepared in writing, reading, or algebra skills must take college preparatory courses before they can take regular college classes. A majority of the students who matriculate into Miami-Dade enter deficient in one of the skill areas. In fact, in 1993 59% of entering students were deficient in one or more of these skills and 22% were deficient in all three areas (Miami-Dade Fact Book 1994-1995, p. 27). Students enrolled in college preparatory classes do not receive transferable college credit for these courses nor do they receive letter grades. Students are given a grade of "S" for satisfactory, "P" for progress is being made, and "U" for unsatisfactory. Students must repeat a course with a grade of "P" or "U."

There are two college preparatory reading classes: Preparatory Reading 1 and 2. These classes concentrate on developing literal and critical reading comprehension as well as vocabulary and study skills. There are also two college preparatory

writing classes: Preparatory Writing 1 and 2. The goals of these classes are to improve students' skills in basic grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure and to help students develop unified, coherent paragraphs. There are four preparatory mathematics classes: Basic Arithmetic, Preparatory Arithmetic, Integrated Algebra and Arithmetic, and Preparatory Algebra. The first two classes focus on developing basic computation skills as well as fractions, percents, proportion, and measurements. The third course is a seven-credit class which combines Basic Mathematics and Beginning Algebra, and the fourth course is an introduction to algebra.

Transitional Courses.

Besides these college preparatory classes, there are transitional classes in each of these skill areas that allow students to receive elective college credit even though they are not considered college level courses. These courses are College Reading 1 (REA 1105), Introduction to English Composition (ENC 1130), and Intermediate Algebra (MAC 1030). College Reading 1 requires students to demonstrate college level literal and critical comprehension, vocabulary, and study skills using a variety of reading materials. Intermediate Algebra prepares students for college level algebra classes. Introduction to English Composition focuses on essay writing. Figure 3.4 summarizes the developmental, transitional, and required courses in these three basic skill areas for students who are working towards an associate degree.

	Math	Reading	Writing
Prepraratory	Basic Arithmetic Preparatory Arithmetic Integrated Algebra and Arithmetic Preparatory Algebra	Preparatory Reading 1 Preparatory Reading 2	Preparatory Writing 1 Preparatory Writing 1
Transitional	Intermediate Algebra	College Reading	Introduction to English Composition
Required	Students choose among several math courses depending on their major.		English Composition 1 English Composition 2 Advanced English Composition

Figure 3. 4. Summary of prepraratory, transitional, and required class for 3 skill areas.

Placement.

Students are placed in 'regular' college or developmental levels either through their scores on the SAT, ACT, or CPT. Of course, the SAT and ACT are recognized placement tests that are used at most institutions of higher learning in the United States. The CPT (Computerized Placement Test) is an institutionally-created placement test which students can take on campus at no cost. The CPT tests in three skill areas: reading, English usage, and mathematics.

ESOL Program.

Six levels of ESOL classes are offered through the English Language Institute. Four courses are offered at each of the six levels; these include English Grammar, Speaking/Listening, Reading, and Writing. The students must also take a lab class with their Speaking/Listening classes and Writing classes. Therefore, a student enrolled full-time in ESOL classes takes a total of 12 semester credits in course work and 2 semester credits in lab. A student at 'zero' level in English entering the program needs at least six semesters to complete all ESOL classes. The focus of the ESOL classes, especially at the four final levels, is academic. The hope is that these courses will prepare students for the challenges of 'regular' college classes.

Placement for ESOL Program.

The college uses the English Placement Test, which is a test of students' knowledge of English grammar, as an initial screening device to place students in ESOL classes. In addition, each student

is asked to give a writing sample and go through an informal oral interview. On the basis of these measurements students are placed in one of the six levels. From time to time, students come to the program with different abilities in grammar, writing, or speaking in English. In these cases, students can be placed in 'split' levels. In other words, they are placed in a different level for reading and writing than for grammar and speaking. Almost without exception, split level students are placed in a lower level for reading and writing than for grammar and speech classes.

Humanities.

The humanities class (HUM 1020) is a three-semester-hour class which is an introduction to the humanities as a multicultural, interdisciplinary study. It includes the study of creative ideas, works and accomplishments of various cultures from art, architecture, drama, music, literature, and philosophy (1995-1996 Miami-Dade Community College Catalog). It is a general core course which is meant to contribute to the quality and value of life of the individual student. One humanities teacher describes it as:

> The one little tiny ice floe left of the liberal arts education where we're not teaching students 19th century expectations that you have to be compliant workers, that you have to show up on time, and that you have to serve the needs of whatever industry. (Benz, p. 13, 1995)

The Social Environment.

The Social Environment (ISS 1120) is an interdisciplinary course that emphasizes the cultural, political, and global dimensions

of societies. Its main objective is to promote knowledge of contemporary and historical forces that shape our social environment and to engage students in a life-long process of inquiry and decision making (<u>1995-1996 Miami-Dade Community College Catalog</u>).

The Individual in Transition.

The core psychology course required of all students is the Individual in Transition (PSY 1000). It is a three-credit interdisciplinary course that emphasizes understanding of oneself as a unique individual who, as a part of a global community, is responsible for decisions affecting his/her psychological, social, environmental, and physical well-being. The main themes of this course include personality and self, society and culture, development and the life cycle, and the maintenance of physical and psychological health (<u>1995-1996 Miami-Dade Community College Catalog</u>). In this study, I will sometimes refer to it as Psychology, or PSY 1000.

The Gordon Rule.

An integral part of the three classes I focus on in this study, Humanities, the Social Environment and the Individual in Transition is the writing requirement. In fact, students are required under Florida State Law, the so-called "Gordon Rule", to write a minimum of 1,500 words for all three of these courses. The work must be written at a "C" or higher grade level (as determined by the instructor), in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of the material presented.

Besides these three classes, the Gordon Rule covers four other courses. In three of these courses, English Composition 1 (ENC 1101), English Composition 2 (ENC 1102), and Advanced English Composition (ENC 2301), students must write a minimum of 6,000 words of "C" level prose. The final class covered by the Gordon Rule is also a core course. It is Energy in the Natural Environment, which like the first three courses, requires 1,500 words of "C" level writing.

For this study I have chosen to focus on the first three courses, Social Environment, Humanities, and the Individual in Transition. I choose these classes for two reasons. First, because I wanted to study students' coping strategies for different academic discourse communities, I eliminated the composition courses. I choose not to study the fourth content area course, Energy in the Natural Environment, because students can substitute a lab science such as Chemistry or Biology for this course; as a result, many fewer students enroll in Energy in the Natural Environment.

Student Participants

As is true for most Miami-Dade students, the majority of the students in this study work at least part-time in addition to their studies. Although the college has a very large enrollment in evening classes, all of the students in this study are 'day' students-- they take classes in the morning or afternoon. The sole exception to this is Angela, who took her composition course at night at one of the Campus's outreach centers closer to her home. I realize that the over-representation of day students may reduce the

generalizability of this study; however, including students who took evening classes was impractical for several reasons. Foremost among these is that because students who take evening classes tend to work full-time rather than part-time jobs, they have less time available to make the kind of time commitment necessary to participate in the extensive interviews required for this study.

Angela.

Angela is a 58-year-old, divorced Argentine woman whose first language is Spanish. In my ESOL classes she often asked questions and requested clarification on some points. When concentrating on what was happening in class, she often squinted, asked for things to be repeated or strained to hear, suggesting that she may have problems with her sight and hearing or listening comprehension. Despite her difference in age, Angela gets along well with the other students in her ESOL classes, although she usually related to one or two older female students in the class most. Her English is fairly heavily accented and contains many grammar mistakes, making the transcription of her interviews more difficult than other students. Moreover, during the interviews she occasionally misunderstood my questions. Angela first came to the United States in 1966. She lived in California for 14 years then returned to Argentina where she lived from 1980 to 1992. In 1992 she moved to Miami and began English classes in the third level of ESOL at Miami-Dade in the fall of 1993.

Angela started ESOL classes at Miami-Dade in the third of six levels. She has been taking regular college courses for two

semesters. Angela began the semester taking 12 credit hours at Miami-Dade. These classes included College Preparatory Arithmetic, Introduction to English Composition, Humanities 1120, and Accent Improvement 2. The English composition course is considered a transitional level and her mathematics course is at a developmental level. Within the first two weeks of courses, Angela had withdrawn from her humanities course. Towards the end of the term she also withdrew from her arithmetic course. In the previous two semesters she has also taken the following courses: Accent Improvement 1, Preparatory Reading, Introduction to Micro-Computers, and College Reading. In addition she has attempted the English Composition course 1130 twice before, but had withdrawn from each attempt.

In addition to her course work, Angela also has a part-time job as a student assistant in the college library and keeps house for her adult son. Angela is the only student in the study who listed her major as undecided and her primary goal for the future was to speak English fluently.

Beatriz.

Beatriz is a 21-year-old, single, Brazilian woman who has been in the United States for a year and a half. Beatriz's first language is Portuguese, although she also reads and understands Spanish (Portuguese speakers generally can understand Spanish; however, Spanish speakers do not usually understand Portuguese). Beatriz never participates in class discussions unless she is called on or has something very important to say; however, it is easy to tell

from her body posture that she is engaged by class discussions. She sits erect in her desk and leans slightly forward. She turns her head to listen intently to the teacher and her classmates. When she does answer a question in class, it is usually because the teacher has asked her something directly. As she answered questions during the interviews for this study, she always paused and thoughtfully considered her answers before beginning to speak. It is obvious that these pauses are to collect her thoughts rather than to monitor her English. She speaks fluent English in a high, small, quiet voice. She hardly ever makes grammar mistakes and her accent is barely detectable. This may be due to the fact that she has an American boyfriend.

When she arrived at Miami-Dade, Beatriz was placed in ESOL Level Four for reading and writing classes and Level Five for grammar and speaking classes. This is her third semester in regular college courses. Currently she is enrolled in General Chemistry 1040 and Chemistry Lab 1040L, Engineering Graphics 1111, English Composition 1102, and Psychology 1000. Her psychology class is designated as an honors class, which means that she is required to do extra work and perform at a higher level than 'regular' classes. During the other two semesters that Beatriz studied in the regular program, she completed the following classes: English Composition, 1101, Humanities 1020, Social Environment 1120, Pre-Calculus Algebra 1140, Introduction to Micro-Computers 1060, Introduction to Engineering 1001, Calculus and Analytic Geometry I 2311, Calculus and Analytic Geometry II 2312, and Jazz

Dance I 1500. Beatriz lives with her parents. Besides taking 15 credit hours, she also works a part-time job. It is apparent from this rather ambitious schedule that Beatriz has rather high career goals. Her major is chemical engineering and she eventually hopes to be a researching chemical engineer.

Carla.

Carla is a 43-year-old, divorced, white-Cuban woman whose first language is Spanish. Carla entered the United States as a political refugee; however, she is presently a U.S. citizen. In class, Carla listens carefully to the teacher and other classmates. She leans forward in her desk and squints when she is listening intently. She is certainly not afraid to participate in class. She is animated but not overbearing when she speaks or asks questions in class. She is particularly adept at relating her myriad of personal experiences to the topic being discussed. If the discussion topic interests her, she will often break off from the class in a little "side-discussion" with a student sitting near her. However, these side-discussions do not degenerate into personal discussions; they remain on the topic that is being discussed with the class as a whole. She recognizes the fact that she is older and has more experience than most of her classmates, yet she relates with them as peers in a very natural way. Her English is fluent with only the slightest hint of an accent.

Carla first studied at Miami-Dade in 1971, but lasted only one semester. She quit school to get married. Her second attempt at college did not come until 24 years later. She said that she decided

to return to school because of her divorce and because she was unable to get a high-paying accounting job without an accounting degree. Carla told me that the precipitating event that caused her to return to school was the fact that she was doing most of the accounting for the firm that employed her; however, she was unable to advance in the company or get a salary increase because she lacked a degree.

Carla began ESOL classes in the sixth and final level. She is presently in her first semester of college courses. Her class load includes Psychology 1000, Social Environment 1120, English Composition 1130, Reading 0002, and Principles of Business 1011. Her reading course is considered developmental and the English composition course is considered a transition course.

In addition to her 16 semester hours of college classes, Carla also has two children, one of whom is still living at home. She holds down a part-time job as a bookkeeper and is active in the PTA at her son's school. Carla's career goal is to complete a business administration degree. She would like to work in hospital administration.

Carlos.

Carlos is a 21-year-old, single, white-Cuban male whose native language is Spanish. The most recent newcomer to the U.S., Carlos had only been here for seven months at the time of the study. Because Carlos is working three part-time jobs as well as taking a full course load at Miami-Dade, he sometimes looks as though he is deprived of sleep. He speaks with a lisp, but is always

confidant and animated. He tends to dominate one-on-one conversations and crowds the listener; he has a Latin rather than English sense of space. His English is fluent, moderately accented, and usually grammatically correct, but he often gets stuck in the middle of a thought because he lacks adequate vocabulary to express his ideas. Carlos is not shy in class; he contributes with enthusiasm. In fact, in many ways Carlos is Beatriz's opposite. He sometimes speaks before he has completely formulated his thoughts. He realizes that he has this tendency, which he calls his "babbling". A characteristic of Carlos that certainly affects his course work is his barely decipherable handwriting (he cannot read it himself at times).

When Carlos left Cuba, he had completed the first two years of university study as a medical doctor. He entered the United States as a political refugee. When he arrived at Miami-Dade, Carlos' English proficiency was quite good, especially in reading and writing. Because of his lack of vocabulary, he did have a little difficulty speaking fluently at first because his oral skills were not on par with his literate skills. Nevertheless, he matriculated into the sixth and final level of ESOL. Carlos is in his first semester of studying 'regular' college classes.

His classes include Psychology, Humanities, Pre-Calculus Algebra (MAC 1140), Introduction to Micro-Computers 1060, and English Composition 1101. None of these classes is considered developmental. Carlos is taking 16 semester hours at college. Carlos' only family in the United States is his brother. When he left

Cuba seven months before the study, he and his brother were separated from their parents. One of his goals is to bring his parents to the U.S. and reunite his family. His career goal is to become a medical doctor and specialize in hematology.

Cesar.

Cesar is a 23-year-old white Colombian male who describes himself as "the man of the house," a title that he takes as a serious responsibility. His parents are divorced and Cesar is responsible for taking care of his mother and his high school-aged brother. Since he is the only person in the family with a driver's license, he must drive his mother and brother where they need to go. His mother works for the Colombian Embassy, and his legal status in the United States is as the dependent of a diplomat. Over and above these duties, he also occasionally has part-time work at promotional exhibitions such as the home show. Cesar has a very serious personality; he hardly ever jokes. He speaks English fluently with little or no accent and few grammar mistakes. Cesar was not shy about sharing his ideas in ESOL class. He converses easily if somewhat long-windedly--sometimes it takes him a while to make his point.

Cesar's first language is Spanish. He has been in the United States for one year. Cesar's educational background differs from the other students in this study in that he went to elementary school for two years in the United States while his mother was working in New York. When he returned to Colombia, he had native-like

English, but was behind his Colombian classmates in Spanish skills. Because of this he repeated the sixth grade in Colombia.

He began ESOL at Miami-Dade in the sixth and final level in January 1995. He is in his second semester of regular college classes. Presently, Cesar is enrolled in Humanities 1120, Macro Economics 2013, College Algebra 1033, and English Composition 0020. The English composition course is considered developmental. The previous semester that Cesar was in regular courses was a short, six-week summer semester; he took two courses: Social Environment, and College Preparatory Algebra. The latter is considered a developmental course.

After his obligatory military service in Colombia, Cesar studied business administration for one year at a university in Colombia and plans to eventually complete a degree in this same area in the United States. His long range goal is to have his own business.

Henri.

Henri is a 28-year-old African-Haitian male who has been living in the U.S. for seven years He speaks Haitian-Creole and French and reads and writes French. (In Haiti, Creole is the language most people speak, and although it is changing, most educated Haitians read and write French because Creole as a written language is fairly new.) Henri lives with his mother and at the time of the study, he was not employed.

Henri was not shy about participating in ESOL classes even though he speaks English very quickly and tends to mumble. This coupled with his heavy accent, spotty oral grammar, and French

intonation make him very difficult to understand at times. Although he knows it is difficult for native speakers of English to understand him, Henri always actively listened to others and expressed his opinions when he was in ESOL classes.

Henri has some unusual twists to his educational background. He did not begin in ESOL classes at Miami-Dade because he transferred to the college from community college in New York which he attended for one semester. Because he transferred from a U.S. institution, he was not immediately identified as an ESOL student. When he first began classes at Miami-Dade in January of 1992, Henri took the CPT, which is the placement test for native speakers. That semester he enrolled in English Composition 0020 and French 2201. The English composition course is considered a developmental level. He did not make satisfactory progress in the composition course, so the next semester he took an even lower level of English Composition 0002, and College Reading 1105. He passed the composition course, but did not pass the reading course. After making little progress in the regular program for two semesters, Henri took the English as a second language (ESOL) placement test and was placed in the fourth of six levels of ESOL classes. He began ESOL classes in January of 1993 and took a full year (three semesters) of ESOL courses. I first met Henri as a student in the reading and writing classes I taught for the final level (six) of ESOL. Although it is unusual for students to enter the regular program and then move "back" to the ESOL program, Henri's path is not totally unheard of among Miami-Dade students.

When he began his studies, Henri intended to study a medical career, but has since revised his plans. He recently changed his major to political science. Henri is in his fourth semester of regular classes, the longest of any student-participant in this study. He has taken and successfully passed Social Environment, History of the United States until 1877, English Composition, Reading, International Relations, Introduction to Speech Communication, American Federal Government, and English Composition 1. Presently Henri is enrolled in English Composition 2, World History to 1715, Macro Economics, and Humanities. He is repeating the humanities and English composition courses.

Henrietta.

Henrietta is a 28-year-old married female. She is African-Caribbean, and holds dual Haitian and Bahamian citizenship. She completed 14 years of schooling in Haiti before her family moved to the Bahamas for approximately one year. She has been in the United States for four years and began taking classes at Miami-Dade in August of 1994. Henrietta speaks reads and writes both Haitian-Creole and French. Unlike many Haitians, she reported that students were taught to read Creole in her school.

Henrietta's spoken English is quite fluent and her accent is not as strong as most Haitian-Creole speakers. She attributes this to the fact that her mother is Bahamian and that she went to high school for one semester in the Bahamas after she had completed high school in Haiti. However, she said that this high school experience in the Bahamas was not very helpful. She was the only

student in her class that did not speak English. She said she did not understand most of what was going on in the class, and that the teacher never called on her because the teacher knew she couldn't answer. In class Henrietta is quiet and reserved and participates only when called on. She is well-liked by her other classmates and interacts with them easily.

When she enrolled in Miami-Dade, Henrietta was placed in the fifth of six levels. She studied ESOL courses for two semesters. This is her first semester taking 'regular' college courses, although two of these courses, her reading and English composition courses, are considered developmental. Her course work includes a developmental reading course (REA 0002), a transitional composition course (ENC 1130), College Algebra (MAT 1033), and Individual in Transition (PSY 1000). Henrietta's career goal is to study nursing. Besides her school responsibilities, Henrietta also works part-time as a hostess at a restaurant and takes care of her husband and young daughter.

Hugo.

Hugo is a 24-year-old Hungarian male. He is the student-participant who had the lowest level of English proficiency when he arrived in the United States. He told me that he only knew three words in English when he stepped off the airplane in Miami: "I love you." He began in the first level of ESOL; nevertheless, Hugo proved to be a fast learner. He skipped two levels (the third and the fifth) by studying for the classes on his own and taking challenge exams. In the spring of 1995, Hugo was honored as a top ESOL

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student in the Honor's Day Ceremony because he had been able to complete the entire ESOL program in four semesters with a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

Hugo is generally shy; he does not speak in class unless he is called on and is timid when interacting with his classmates, but he does work well with other students in small groups. He has mastered English very well, especially considering where he started from. He speaks fluently and makes few grammar mistakes, but does have a fairly strong Hungarian accent. Hugo's native language is Hungarian, but he also speaks, reads, and writes German. In addition to those languages, he studied Russian in school, but says he does not remember any of it.

Hugo's career goal is to be the owner of a restaurant or hotel. After he finishes his A.S. degree in nutrition, he plans to go on to the Hospitality Management program at Florida International University. In Hungary he went to a special secondary school for persons seeking careers in restaurant operation, where his major area of concentration was champagnes and wines. During the semester of the study, Hugo was enrolled in four courses: Psychology 1000, English Composition 1 1101, Social Environment 1120, and College Algebra 1102. This was his second semester in regular college courses. In the previous semester he took: Reading 1105, English Composition 1130, Introduction to Micro-Computers 1060, and College Algebra 1033. The reading and composition courses are considered transitional. In Miami, Hugo lives with his aunt and uncle in a rather exclusive neighborhood. His aunt works

for the Hungarian Embassy and his uncle is an American lawyer. Outside of his course work, he also works part-time as a student assistant for the audio-visual department and cooks and shops for his aunt and uncle. In contrast to the other students in this study who are U.S. citizens, resident aliens, or political refugees, Hugo is an international student.

Raisa.

Raisa is a 23-year old Russian Jew who has been the U.S. for 2 years. Before coming to the United States, Raisa lived in Israel for one year. While she was there, she studied Hebrew at the university, and so speaks, reads, and writes both Russian and Hebrew. Her immigration status is that of a political refugee. She seldom volunteered information when taking ESOL classes, but willingly participated when called on. Occasionally she looked tired or bored in class. For this reason, her personality seems shy and pensive. However, I noticed that she spoke quite animatedly with other Russian students in her own language and during the interviews for this study, I got a very different impression of Raisa. She was quite vivacious when talking one-on-one and seemed comfortable and confident talking to me. Her English is fluent and for the most part grammatically correct, although her Russian accent is prevalent.

Raisa began ESOL classes at Miami-Dade at the fourth of six levels in May of 1994. She is in her first semester taking regular college courses at Miami-Dade. She is presently enrolled in English Composition 1101, Social Environment 1120, Psychology 1000, and

Russian 2201. All of Raisa's classes are considered 'regular' college level courses; moreover, her Psychology and Social Environment classes are designated as honors classes, which means that she is required to do extra work and perform at a higher level than 'regular' classes. In addition, Raisa took one college class, Introduction to Micro-Computers at the same time that she was enrolled in her ESOL courses. Aside from her course work, she also has two part-time jobs and helps out her family with household chores. She lives with her extended family--her parents, sister, and niece. Occasionally, she takes care of her young niece.

In Russia, Raisa attended a special high school/college for fashion designers. Her particular interest was designing theater costumes. She completed the high school portion of this program; however, her family left Russia before she could complete the university portion. Her hope is to continue to pursue this career in the United States.

Ruslan.

Ruslan is a 21-year-old, single, Russian male who has been in the United States for 2 years. His native language is Russian, although he also speaks Hebrew and some Spanish. A Russian-Jew and political refugee, Ruslan learned Hebrew during two visits he made to Israel. He learned some Spanish from the people he works with in the computer lab at Miami-Dade. Ruslan lives with his mother (who is also a student at Miami-Dade). His father lives in Israel. Ruslan is confident, smiling, and friendly and punctuates his speech with a quick bow of his head. He speaks English fairly

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fluently, although he has a rather small vocabulary, so the construction of his sentences is usually very simple. The lack of complexity in his sentence structure could give the listener the idea that he doesn't have deep thoughts. In ESOL classes he seems to fade in and out of class discussions, although he never loses his smile. He gets along well with other students who speak other languages. Outside of class he tends to socialize with other Russians.

Ruslan entered the ESOL program at Miami-Dade in the fourth of six levels. This is his third semester enrolled in regular courses. Currently he is enrolled in four courses: Social Environment 1120, English Composition 1130, Reading 0002, and Russian 2201. The reading course is considered developmental and the composition course is considered transitional. The Russian language course is to fulfill a humanities distribution requirement which necessitates mastery of a language at the sophomore level. Often ESOL students will take courses in their native language in order to fulfill this three-credit requirement.

Other regular college courses that Ruslan has taken in the two previous semesters include: Reading 0001, English Composition 0020, Introduction to Micro-Computers 1060, College Survival Seminar 1101, Keyboarding and Typewriting 1100, and Weight Lifting 1131. The Reading and English Composition courses are considered developmental.

Apart from his college course work, he works part-time in the computer lab on the Wolfson Campus. In Russia, Ruslan studied

economics and business for two years at the university. Since coming to the United States, his career plans have changed. When he completes his A.A. degree at Miami-Dade, Ruslan plans to continue his studies and hopes to eventually study dentistry.

Salaam.

Salaam is a 33-year-old, African-Muslim, Sudanese male. His native language is Nubian, an African language that has no written form. Salaam's first school language is Arabic, which he reads, writes, and speaks fluently. In addition to Arabic, Salaam also speaks reads and writes Hungarian because his mother is Hungarian and he studied at the university in Hungary for three and one-half years.

His English grammar and vocabulary are well-developed; however, he has a strong Arabic accent. Salaam seldom volunteers information in class discussions; however, when he does, he always has something thoughtful to say. He is well-liked and gets along well with his other classmates. Salaam entered Miami-Dade in May of 1994 and was placed in the third level of ESOL for writing and in the fourth level for grammar, speaking, and reading.

Presently Salaam is studying Social Environment 1120, Psychology 1000, Pre-Calculus Algebra 1140, and English Composition 1130. The composition course is considered transitional. Besides his course work Salaam also works 50 to 60 hours a week at a warehouse. He works nights and comes straight from work to take early morning college classes. He sleeps in the

afternoon. When he was taking ESOL classes, he sometimes had to work late and this caused him to be late for classes in the morning. Salaam needs to work so many hours because he supports a younger brother and sister who are going to school in Sudan.

This is his first semester in regular college courses; however, he did take two algebra courses while he was enrolled in ESOL classes. They are Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033) and College Algebra (MAC 1102). In Hungary he was studying a pre-medicine degree and hopes to continue this tract in the United States.

Instructor Participants

Dr. Mead.

Dr. Mead is an Assistant Professor at Miami-Dade. She is an African-American woman who has been teaching at the college for several years and completed her doctorate degree in sociology within the past year. She teaches both the Social Environment class and the Individual in Transition class. Dr. Mead is the instructor of Salaam for both his Social Environment and Psychology classes.

Dr. Mead is a soft-spoken woman with a melodic voice. She begins each class by playing a tape of soft jazz music. Then she writes an outline of her lecture notes for the class on the board and the students copy the outline as the music plays. The outline is taken principally from the reading text which students were assigned to read to prepare for the class. She goes through the points of her lecture notes adding examples to illustrate the points

she has made. She seems to have a calming effect on the students; certainly the affective filter of students in her class is low. One of Dr. Mead's principal goals is to make the students in her class, no matter what their race or language background, comfortable enough to participate in her class. When I asked her if students ever seemed apprehensive about their spoken English she responded:

> Well, you see a student told me that [he felt apprehensive]. I give them a little speech about that at the beginning of the semester. I told them about this beautiful lady that was in my class. She spoke Spanish. At the end of the semester she did a beautiful report and she blew us all away. I asked the lady why she had never said anything in class and she said because of her accent, that she felt out of place. She felt that she wouldn't be adequate, that she felt that she might be laughed at. I give them this little speech about 'your accent does not bother me'. I have to make them feel comfortable. I promise them that I will not hold their accent against them. I like difference; that's what makes life interesting.

<u>Mr. Freud.</u>

Mr. Freud is a white male who has been teaching full-time at Miami-Dade for many years. He holds the rank of Full Professor. Mr. Freud teaches an honors section of the Individual Transition that both Beatriz and Raisa are enrolled in. Mr. Freud's area of specialty is counseling. Mr. Freud is very straight-forward. He has always been friendly when I meet him on campus by chance, and it is

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obvious that he is interested in his students and his discipline; however, he does not mince words. He characterizes his teaching style as interactive:

> I do not strictly lecture, but I don't have students stand up and just do reports. In other words, I usually try to present a certain amount of material and then have a discussion, but it's an informal discussion where the students are still at their seats, so they don't necessarily have to have real good oral skills, just the ability to express an opinion.

In addition, Mr. Freud often uses the strategy of playing the "devil's advocate":

> I have a personality that doesn't mind being sarcastic or silly or hamming things up. I'll often play the devil's advocate and see if I can agitate something of critical thinking. Some students love it, some hate it and others don't understand what's going on [laughs]. For example, I said to my students today: 'You all are a bunch of robots. You don't have any human worth, any human dignity, anything.' Some of them kind of looked at me, and others were smiling because they knew what was happening. But I was trying to explain Skinner's attitudes as expressed in his book Beyond Freedom and Dignity. Now, I could have simply walked in and said B. F. Skinner believes that humans do not have any dignity and they would have written down: Dr. Skinner believes that--but, I don't believe that that would catch them. They may try to memorize it, they might say 'I wonder if this will be on the

test?' So that by playing the devil's advocate, I was seeing if I could get a response from them, seeing if I could get them involved in what was going on. It worked with some and it didn't work with others.

I would characterize Mr. Freud's teaching style as dry but interactive. He presented the material in a pretty traditional, straight-forward manner, but allowed for student input. For the most part the students seemed to be engaged in the lecture/discussion; however, this was an honors class and so I would have expected the students to be engaged.

<u>Ms. Piaget.</u>

Ms. Piaget, a Hispanic female, is a full-time instructor of the Individual in Transition class that Henrietta is enrolled in. She has been at Miami-Dade for two years as a full-time instructor. Ms. Piaget's area of specialty is Early Childhood Education. Ms. Piaget enjoys teaching the Individual in Transition course because she feels that the content offers students not only an understanding of psychology, but information that helps the students analyze their own lives.

It's [Psychology 1000] not that easy of a course, but it is interesting; I love it. Individual in Transition, I think that it is a gorgeous course. I think that most students enjoy it. But they **enjoy** it more than they **like** it, in the sense of having to pass it, because it is a core course for just about anything they have to do here. But at times it is very common sense, it's

very growth-oriented. They see a lot of what they are going through [in their own lives] in the course.

Ms. Piaget was one of the less-experienced teachers in my study and the most apprehensive about being interviewed and observed. However, I found her classes to be quite engaging. She peppered her lecture/discussion class with real-life anecdotes and humor and the students seemed to be genuinely engaged in the topic.

Ms. Skinner.

Ms. Skinner is a white female and a practicing psychological counselor who teaches two Individual in Transition classes as an adjunct. At the same time she is also working on her doctorate degree in social work at a local university. This is her second semester teaching the Individual in Transition class. Carlos is a student in Ms. Skinner's class. Ms. Skinner speaks quickly and seemed to anticipate some of the questions I was going to ask her. At least she answered many of my questions before I had a chance to ask them. Like Ms. Piaget, Ms. Skinner sees the Psychology 1000 course as important not only in content, but essential for students to analyze their own behavior and lives. Her principal goal is to get students to apply the concepts they learn in her class to their lives. She puts it this way:

I look to see if they have a general handle on the subject matter, so they can apply it to their daily lives. If they can demonstrate that they understand, there are different ways to look situations and at different transitions that people go

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through, identify them either in themselves or their peer group or their family system, we've made progress. My goal is to get them to take those concepts [the concepts learned in her course] and apply them.

Ms. Skinner tries to encourage maximum participation in her classes by mixing lecture with small group and dyad activities and student presentations. I noticed that she related easily to the students, who seemed comfortable in her class. On the day I observed her class, some students were making oral presentations. This could be a very high active filter activity; however, the students I observed seemed comfortable standing in front of the class. While one student was presenting, the other students and Ms. Skinner were taking notes because the students knew they were to be tested on the material from these presentations.

Dr. Jung.

Dr. Jung is a Hispanic female who has been a full-time member of the faculty for several years. She is a Full Professor at the Wolfson Campus. She specializes in counseling. Dr. Jung is the instructor of the Individual in Transition course for both Hugo and Carla, although they each are in different sections of the class.

Dr. Jung is incredibly dedicated to the needs of her students. Not only does she teach her classes, but during her office she also holds individual counseling sessions for students who are having personal problems. In fact, it was somewhat difficult to get an appointment to interview Dr. Jung because she had almost every hour of her "free" time blocked orf for individual counseling

sessions. This is how she describes how these counseling sessions come about: "Oh, they keep coming to my office, that is important for me. Of course from their papers personal problems begin to arise and I do counseling for them. I'm booked solid; I'm full". Later, she elaborates on these counseling sessions:

> I do it because they don't realize the problems they have.
> Because of what I teach, I get an insight into their problems,
> and it's mind boggling. I was talking to someone the other day
> and he said if I were their age, I couldn't handle the problems
> they have. If I don't do it [counsel students], chances are that
> they aren't going to get it. They don't realize how serious it is
> what they have going on.

At the same time, Dr. Jung's concern for students' personal problems does not interfere with her academic goals for the students. She describes her classes as demanding and interactive:

> I like the interaction with them. I'm always asking:
> 'Comments, questions, agreements, disagreements?' I
> always hated it when I was in college, and I'm telling you now
> what I tell them, the teacher thought he had **THE TRUTH** in
> capital golden letters. I tell them that nobody has the truth but
> God. I say we can have glimpses of the truth. So you can
> disagree with me you can ask, whatever.

Another distinguishing factor of Dr. Jung's courses is that she doesn't use a textbook; rather she writes key words on the board and dictates most of the content of the course to the students. The concepts she relates to the students are illustrated by real-life

examples. When I observed her class, I noticed it began with a casual conversation about how one of the areas the students had been studying related to a current event. However, when she got down to business, covering the new material for that day's lesson, the students wrote what she said, word for word. She repeated each concept several times.

Dr. Gibbon.

Dr. Gibbon is a full-time faculty member who has been at Miami-Dade for five years. He is a white male and an Associate Professor who specializes in history. Dr. Gibbon is the Social Environment instructor of Hugo. Dr. Gibbon speaks in quick staccato phrases. He is a well known as a historian throughout the community and he has the special gift of bringing history alive through anecdote. He offers his students opportunities to relate what they are learning to the community by taking them on field trips to different historical locations in downtown Miami and to institutions such as the Media History Center. One of his most interesting field trips uses the Miami public transportation system of automated trains which loop around the downtown area.

It seems that Dr. Gibbon has had the most diverse teaching background of any of the instructor-participants in this study. Where most of the instructors have had the majority of their experience in community college or high school, Dr. Gibbon began teaching at universities. Initially this caused him some difficulty at Miami-Dade:

I was used to teaching in a college environment where discipline was unheard of, but here, it's an open door school

and it's kind of a bridge from high school to college. I was astounded my first semester or so here by the kind of students that are here. I just couldn't believe it, but it's become a whole lot easier. I'm much more relaxed about it now, and I just make it clear at the outset that's not the proper way and it's worked out so far.

For me, the most remarkable characteristic about Dr. Gibbon was to observe his teaching style. The day I observed him, the class was engaged in a sort of lecture discussion. Dr. Gibbon was constantly walking back and forth between the rows, and going back and forth between the chalk board where he would write a key word. To stress an important point or ask a question, he would stop in front of a student's desk at random and get down at the eye level of the student. I could not help but be engaged by his style. Students would contribute by asking questions or making observations from their own experiences. Moreover, for Dr. Gibbon it is important to capture students' interest by using a variety of teaching methods:

I think that it's important in a class like that as they go along, more and more so that you give them a greater variety of instructions and tactics. We'll look at a film sometimes, we'll have a speaker, sometimes we'll have a tour. I try to use Miami as a kind of microccsm of these bigger issues. I think it's important class to them, I really do.

Dr. Hegel.

Dr. Hegel is the chairperson of the Social Science Department. He is Hispanic and a Full Professor; he has been at

Miami-Dade for many years. His area of specialty is the History of Ideas. He is the instructor for Raisa's honors section of Social Environment. Dr. Hegel speaks quite quickly, and because of his administrative responsibilities in addition to his teaching responsibilities, my most vivid impression of Dr. Hegel is seeing him rushing to catch an elevator. Indeed, he was the most difficult instructor-participant to get an appointment with for an interview. Dr. Hegel characterizes his approach to the Social Environment class as stressing the religious and philosophical aspects of the social sciences:

> Definitely I get into more the area of religion, culture, and the area of philosophy than some of the other professors who are probably more into political science and international relations. I do all those areas too, but I enjoy asking them [students] or forcing them to utilize philosophical concepts to analyze the social sciences.

One of the strategies Dr. Hegel uses to maximize student participation is to introduce controversial topics into class discussions. Another important way that Dr. Hegel draws students into the subject matter is to get them to relate it to their personal experiences. He does this by openly sharing his own experiences with students and illustrating how they relate to the topic in question.

> For example, when we talk about the family I always talk about the fact that I grew up in an orphanage. Some people might think that being in an orphanage is disaster. I think it is the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I try to show

them that what is important is a sense of hope and a sense of expectation that you can achieve and that you can master things. That you can be born anywhere and if you have a certain amount of security and love and encouragement, you can achieve. So I'm relating my personal experience to the issue of education or the issue of family unity.

Ms. Durant.

Ms. Durant is white female and an adjunct faculty member who has been teaching at Miami-Dade for three years. She is a historian, specializing in Women's History. She is currently working on her doctorate degree in Education. Ms. Durant is the Social Environment instructor for Carla and Ruslan, who are enrolled in the same class. Ms. Durant enjoys teaching the Social Environment class, although she admits in some cases the sheer scope of the course may be confusing for students:

This is an introductory course to the social sciences, and it's really confusing in a way. We cover too much. We talk a little bit about anthropology, a little bit about economics, and a little tiny bit about history. They have one chapter in their book, Chapter 4, which has like the whole history of the world in a chapter [laughs]. This is true.

Ms. Durant's goal in this class is to get students to relate what they are learning to their own lives and things that are happening in their community. When I observed Ms. Durant's class, I found that she was doing just this. Students were engaged in a discussion on economics. Ms. Durant asked the students to provide examples

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from their own lives to illustrate points that she had made or she asked students to describe government agencies that she referred to.

<u>Dr. Plato.</u>

Dr. Plato is white female who specializes in philosophy and drama. She is a full-time humanities instructor that has been teaching at Miami-Dade almost since the college began. She is well-respected on campus because, although she has had many years of experience teaching, she has not rested on her laurels. She continues to update her skills and has authored a humanities text and computer programs to help students develop their critical thinking skills. She is the humanities teacher of Angela and Cesar. She was also Henri's humanities teacher on his first, failed attempt at humanities.

Dr. Plato has an interesting speaking voice and changes her tone to emphasize what she is saying, although she tends to speak quite quickly. In the classroom she is animated and it is obvious that she likes what she is teaching. In her syllabus Dr. Plato describes her goals of the humanities course as follows:

* To recognize that the art of being human involves more than basic survival.

* To recognize one's own inner resources for practicing the humanist's way of life.

* To identify in the ideas of the great philosophers some enduring questions worth considering.

* To become familiar with characteristics of recognized works of art, music, literature and drama that are encountered during the course.

* To apply critical thinking to events and issues.

It is these critical thinking skills that Dr. Plato finds especially lacking in students. "What I have to work on more than anything else with the critical thinking is to encourage people to describe." She notices that students struggle with being able to make a difference between objective and subjective.

Mr. Piccaso.

Mr. Piccaso is a white male. He is an artist and film critic. Presently he is working on his doctorate degree at a local university. He is an adjunct faculty member who has been teaching at Miami-Dade for one year. He is Henri's humanities teacher. Mr. Picasso's approach to the humanities is very different than Dr. Plato's. His goal is to pique students' interest in the humanities and to encourage students to see the importance of the humanities in their present lives:

I think the greatest difficulty about humanities courses at Miami-Dade is to get students to be interested in it and to get them to understand that it is something that they can think about. So on the very first day, I ask them what they think about humanities as a course and what they think they should learn from it.

More than this, Mr. Piccaso believes the students should be let in on the debate over what the humanities is; they should understand that even the supposed experts are deliberating on its definition.

> If they just study a lot of names and dates, that's not what the humanities are about--I think at a cultural level we are no longer convinced that humanities are important and a sort of reflection of that is the disintegration of the single humanities cannon. Among teachers there is no longer a consensus. I think that among teachers we are obligated to honestly confront that and represent that to the students. Humanities is an issue that is under discussion rather than an issue that is written in stone; that's why there's so much variation among courses.

In this way Mr. Piccaso, like Dr. Plato, is asking students to be critical thinkers; however, his primary objective is to get students to ask why study the humanities and how they are relevant.

Ms. Mozart.

Ms. Mozart is a white female who is also a musician and Carlos's humanities instructor. This is her second semester teaching humanities at the Wolfson Campus, although she had taught the same course on another campus of Miami-Dade for several semesters. During the interviews, Ms. Mozart spoke very quickly, yet when I observed her class she spoke a little more slowly and engaged students in a discussion. She asked for volunteers and also called on students by name.

Ms. Mozart believes that humanities is an important course because: "It's a way of helping them [the students] understand themselves and how they look at the world." Later, she elaborated on this idea:

> We're trying to give them skills for life that will help them function better in the world, that will give them some idea of how to control their life a little bit, to whatever extent we have some control over our lives. Some of these skills are critical thinking and creativity, and the ability to have insights, and then to instill them so other people can understand them.

She more than the other humanities professors integrated music into her humanities courses. She encouraged students to share different types of music with their classmates and analyze the music according to the themes they were covering in the humanities classes. In addition to the regular classes, Ms. Mozart also offered two "make-up" classes a semester for students who had missed a class. This showed me that despite the fact that she was an adjunct faculty member, she really cared about the students and her subject. She was willing to go the extra mile without compensation.

Role of Researcher

<u>My Role</u>

According to Creswell (1994): "The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines" (p. 144). In this case study I am that data collection and analysis instrument. Therefore,

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it is important for the reader to know my biases and values going into this study.

<u>Familiarity with the Setting</u>

First, as I have already stated, I am responsible for developing the curricula and choosing the textbooks for the final level of ESOL reading and writing. The only restraints on this are that the curriculum has to fulfill the college-wide competencies and the other instructors who teach this class must be satisfied with the curriculum I develop. In my role as level coordinator, I have a vested interest in knowing what students will face when they leave my class so that I can better prepare them to face these challenges.

Of course I am very familiar with the physical setting of the study because it is my place of employment. However, I was not familiar with exactly what content classes were required of students before I began this study, nor did I have any idea of the requirements of these studies. I did not have any preconceived judgments about these classes, except for maybe because I have a Bachelor's Degree in history, I had a positive attitude toward social science classes.

<u>Relationship with Participants</u>

All student participants except for Angela had been in ESOL Level Six reading and writing courses (this is the highest ESOL course) that I taught. Angela was my student in a Level Six speaking class. I realize that because the students and I have a "history," this may cause a bias or discomfort in the interviews. In fact, as I discuss later in the ethics section, this history with the

students did cause a slight dilemma because I was empathetic to the situations of both the students and the teachers in this study. However, I think that the advantages of interviewing former students outweighed the potential bias. First of all, I had already built a rapport and a set of common knowledge with each of these students; they felt comfortable with me and they knew that my motive for asking them about their experiences was to try to improve ESOL classes for future students. The second advantage of choosing students with whom I was familiar was that I knew these particular students well enough to be sure that they would provide rich interviews--most of the subjects were active participants in my classes. In all cases, I felt that the students were forthright in their answers.

Compensation for Participants

As Davis (1995) suggests: "Participants are entitled to some kind of return for the time and effort they contribute to the study" (p. 443). The student-participants in this study gave up two to three hours and agreed to be interviewed and provided me with papers and assignments they had written for their courses so that I could photocopy them. The instructor-participants gave up their time, shared exams with me, and allowed me to observe their classes.

In order to compensate the student-participants, I treated them all to a fast-food lunch and offered my services to help them proofread any papers for their classes. Only one student, Carlos, took me up on the offer of proofreading, although three of the student-participants have asked me to give recommendations for

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them. I gave Henrietta a recommendation for a job and wrote a scholarship recommendations for Beatriz and Raisa. For the professor-participants I could only offer a memo of thanks.

Familiarity with the Topic

My area of expertise is teaching English to non-native speakers. Therefore, I was fairly well-versed in the fields of second language acquisition and the problems of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in a second language. I consider my special area of expertise second language writing instruction, which I have written an article on and presented several papers on. For the purpose of this study, I did a rather extensive review of the literature in order to bring myself up-to-date on the latest studies in these areas.

Ethics

Research on Human Subjects

Before beginning, I submitted an overview of this study including my methods and interview questions to the Florida International University committee for review of academic research. They approved the study. In addition, each participant in this study signed an informed consent form, which explained the purpose of the study, the risks involved to the participants, and the time limit of the study. It also explained that the participants' real names would not be used in the reporting of the data. This stipulation provided the participants with anonymity. Further, I maintained the confidentiality of data, by storing it in a safe place in my home. The informed consent form also allowed participants to withdraw from participation at any time.

<u>An Ethical Dilemma</u>

During the course of this study, at least one ethical problem, which I feel merits explanation, arose. As Nunan (1992) points out, one common ethical problem that often occurs in clinical case study research is that "it may be considered unethical to withhold treatment from subjects during certain phases of the research" (p. 84). I was faced with this very dilemma in my study. In my first interview with Henrietta, I was asking questions about the writing required for her psychology course. Our conversation went like this:

Cheryl: Do you have to write anything?

Henrietta: We take notes.

Cheryl: Do you have to write any papers or reports?

Henrietta: No. We had a test, but she didn't give it back to us.

Before this conversation, Henrietta had given me a copy of the syllabus for her psychology course. In the syllabus there was about a half a page of information about a research paper the students were required to write. Obviously, Henrietta had not read her syllabus very carefully and had no idea that she was going to be required to write a research paper. Perhaps the ethical thing to do at that time would have been to point out the fact that a research paper was required in her psychology course, but instead I choose to be the neutral researcher and did not point it out. This caused a slight tinge of guilt when I found out that Henrietta did not successfully complete her psychology course. Although as we will see later, there were many other factors which lead to her withdrawal from the class.

As I mentioned before, throughout the study the main ethical problem that I struggled with was my dual role as researcher and confidant of the students and professors in the study. Because I had had a relationship with all of these students before, I really cared about them and found myself wanting them to be successful. This research project may have contributed to some of the students' success in this respect. I think that the mere fact that I asked the student-participants to reflect on their experiences made them more aware of the processes they were going through. This may have actually had a positive effect on how well they coped.

Similarly, when I was with the instructors, I could empathize with the difficulties that they went through trying to meet the special needs of a large number of students without compromising the integrity of their own academic disciplines. All of this is to say that it is difficult for one to be an impartial researcher and empathize with the plight of the teachers and students.

Data Collection Techniques

For this study I used several data collection techniques. These included interviews with both the student- and instructor-participants, gathering documents from the participants, and observing the instructor-participants teaching.

<u>Interviews</u>

To gather information for this study, I interviewed 11 former ESOL students and their Gordon Rule teachers. I employed the interview guide approach as described by Patton (1990):

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An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. An interview guide is prepared in order to make sure that basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate the particular subject. Thus the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to work questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style--but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. (p. 283)

I developed four different interview guides, three to be used at different times during the semester with the students and one to be used with instructors. I had planned to interview the students three times, the first time gathering demographic information, information about their education in their native country, and their initial reactions to the Gordon Rule classes. The second time I asked questions concerning their Gordon Rule classes. The final student interview came after the students had completed the course; it focused on students' reflections concerning the courses. Each of the 11 student-participants were interviewed 3 times, with the exception of 2 students, Henrietta and Angela, who dropped their Gordon Rule classes early in the study. For these two students, I asked the final interview questions during the second interview

because they were no longer enrolled in the classes. This gave me a total of 31 student interviews.

I audio-tape recorded and transcribed all of the interviews verbatim. To increase the accuracy of the transcripts, I strove to transcribe the recordings as soon as possible after the interviews. I was able to transcribe most interviews within two or three days of the interview. In all cases interviews were typed within a week of the recording.

I also interviewed the Gordon Rule instructor of each student. In these interviews I focused on the writing, reading, aural, and oral expectations these instructors had of students and their perceptions of how well students generally performed in these areas. This gave me a total of 42 interviews.

At this point I think that it is important to note that while the student-participants generally have adequate control of the English language, they made mistakes with the language. I tried in all instances to make the transcripts as accurate as possible; therefore, there is some irregular English language usage in the interview transcripts, especially in the student interviews. However, if the usage mistakes were so gross as to interfere with the communication of the idea a participant was trying to express, I tried to clarify the precise meaning at the time of the interview with probing questions. Occasionally, gross errors went unnoticed at the time of the interview. In these cases I made slight revisions in the transcripts so that the transcripts would be faithful to the ideas the participants were trying to articulate. This is why it was important to

transcribe the interviews as soon as possible after they actually took place.

Audio-taping and transcribing as a method of data gathering worked very well except for one glitch. I had a technical problem with the tape recording equipment in one of the instructor interviews. About 15 minutes of that interview was not audio-taped. Fortunately, I also took notes on the interviews as the participants were talking and was able to reconstruct the ideas that Mr. Piccaso proffered. Although the that transcript is not verbatim, I feel that it is an accurate reflection of what he said concerning his philosophy on teaching humanities courses.

Writing Card Sort

In addition, I asked the students to do a card sort activity. Each student was invited to reflect on a set of 3 x 5 cards. Each card had a different academic task or teaching strategy on it. Then, I asked the students to evaluate the cards in terms of their education in their native country and their Gordon Rule class. After students excluded any tasks or strategies that were not applicable to their situation, I asked them to add any that they found missing and then arrange the cards in order of importance, from most important to least important for success in their education. In order to avoid confusion, I asked the students about tasks in their native countries during the first interview session and questions about their Gordon Rule classes during the second interview session. I asked the instructors to do the same activity, considering the types of strategies and tasks they employ in their Gordon Rule classes.

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<u>Documents</u>

Additionally, I gathered from student- and instructor-participants syllabi, competencies, tests, writing assignments, and directions for writing assignments. These helped me to evaluate the cognitive demands and social nature of the required tasks.

<u>Classroom Observations</u>

I observed at least one class of each teacher-participant in this study. It is important to note that during the data gathering process, I was also teaching five classes of my own. When possible, I tried to observe the student-participants in their Gordon Rule class; however, this was sometimes impossible because these classes met during the time I was teaching.

During the classroom observations, I sat in the back of the class and tried to be as inconspicuous as possible; however, some of the instructors acknowledged my presence and some even explained my purpose to their students. I took notes on what the teachers and students where doing and saying. If the student-participant was in class, I paid special attention to how he or she behaved in the classroom setting. The classroom observation was an important check on the interview information I gathered from both the instructor- and student-participants, as well as helping me to characterize the general ambiance of each instructor's class.

In addition to the observations, I have also included observations of the students as participants in my classes. This is meant be another point of insight into the students. As Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988) note, observation in qualitative research

goes beyond description and should include 'thick' explanation, which for them includes analysis, interpretation, and explanation (p. 76). In this regard I have made attempts to analyze, interpret, and explain the student and instructors actions.

Rationale for Data Collection Techniques

I choose to use several different data collection techniques in order to get information from different sources. Student interviews are the most obvious source of data for a study such as this, which is trying to characterize students' coping strategies. The advantages of interviews are that the informants could provide historical information about their first language educational system that would be impossible for me to observe. Additionally, interviews allowed me more control over the line of questioning. I could not have gathered all of this information with observations alone.

Still, the students should not be considered a totally reliable source of data in this case. As Creswell (1994) says, "[The] researcher's presence may bias responses" (p. 150). The students obviously wanted me to see them in the best light. For this reason I tested the integrity of the students' responses with teacher interviews, observations, and several papers collected from the participants. Moreover, when possible I compared students' descriptions of their first language education with published information about each educational system.

Data Analysis Procedures

<u>Data Analysis</u>

The analysis of the interviews was the most time-consuming process of this study. As Creswell (1994) suggests, one of the elements that differentiates a qualitative study from a quantitative study is that data analysis is conducted simultaneously with data collection. Preliminary analysis of the interviews began during the interviewing and transcribing process. As I interviewed participants and transcribed interviews, I took notes on themes that I saw emerging and used this information to add to, and adapt, my interview questions. For example, when it became apparent both from the student and teacher interviews that oral skills and affective factors had a notable effect on students' success in classes, I expanded my probing questions in that area.

Making changes to interview questions during the study could be seen as compromising to the data; however, it is a technique that is prevalent in qualitative studies which strive to identify emerging themes. As Davis (1995) observes:

> Another methodological issue that must be considered in designing and conducting a study is the cyclical nature of the interpretive qualitative research enterprise. Many research approaches follow a linear progression in which data are collected, analyzed, and then reported. However interpretive studies assume a cyclical process involving collecting data, conducting data analysis through which hypotheses are formed, testing hypotheses through further, more focused

data collection and so on until redundancy is achieved. (p. 444)

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggest that analytic induction is the most fruitful approach for analyzing qualitative data. This involves reading and rereading the transcripts and/or documents several times searching for salient or recurring themes. In my case some of the themes grew out of the specific questions I asked and thus were shaped by me. Other themes emerged from the data. For example, on the basis of my pilot study and my assumptions coming into this study, I felt that the students' literate behaviors (reading, writing, and thinking critically about the content of the course) would play a significant role in their success in their Gordon Rule classes. During the course of the interviews, I gleaned information from both the student and the instructors that their oral/aural skills and the language acquisition, and affective and social factors which influenced the Gordon rule classes were equally as important to student success as their literate behaviors. Therefore, after a fairly extensive examination of the research on literacy skills before the study, I felt as though I had to return to the body of research concerning these additional factors.

After all the interviews were transcribed, I read through each transcript twice, checking them for accuracy. If I had any questions about the accuracy of the tapes, I went back to the audio-tapes to clarify discrepancies. I printed out the interviews on 22 different colors of paper, one color for each participant. Then I read and reread each interview several times doing some preliminary coding.

Using the themes I had identified early on and the emerging themes that I found after a closer examination of my data, I took scissors and cut the interviews into sections by theme. Then I rearranged the interviews, grouping the quotations by theme. The rainbow of paper scraps gave me the advantage of being able to recognize immediately who had contributed what bit of information.

When it came time to weave the interview quotes into a text, the computer proved to be a useful tool. If I wanted to insert a particular quote into the text, I would search for a key word from that text in the computer file which contained the quote I was looking for. Then the quote could easily be cut from the interview document and pasted into the written text.

I examined the data gathered from the syllabi, student papers, hand-outs, and classroom observations in a similar manner, arranging them by theme and scrutinizing the data closely for emerging themes.

Data Reduction

Next, I studied the data for patterns and themes and attempted to arrange the data on matrices and to use semantic maps to show the relationships between topics. The matrices and semantic maps make it possible for the reader to get a better sense of how the various themes relate to each other.

Methods for Verification

Issues of Validity and Reliability

Creswell (1994) observes that qualitative researchers have no single stance or consensus on addressing traditional topics such as

validity and reliability in qualitative studies (p. 157). Nunan (1992) points out that there are at least two different basic positions on the issue of validity in case studies. The first perspective is represented by Stake who believes that while it is essential to have internal validity in a case study, external validity is irrelevant: "In the case study, there may or may not be an ultimate interest in the generalizable. For the time being, the search is for an understanding of the particular case, in its idiosyncrasy, in its complexity" (Stake, 1988, p. 288).

Yin (1989), on the other hand, believes that reliability and validity are just as important for case study research methods as they are for quantitative research methods. Yin believes that a case study can have external validity if the researcher establishes the domain or population to which the findings of the study can be generalized. For this study I prefer to take a sort of middle road to the issue of external validity. Although I have discussed the scope of my research with several other instructors who have observed many students in situations similar to those in this study both at my own institution and others, I do not feel as though I am an expert in the applicability of my research to other situations. Rather I would hope as Adelman et al. (1976) suggests that there is enough thick description in this study for instructors in similar situations to determine for themselves how the findings can be generalized to their own situations. However, it is construct validity--establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied--that Yin (1984) argues is the most difficult challenge for case study

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researchers. This is because case study researchers use subjective judgments to collect the data. In other words, because the researcher is the primary data collection tool, and the interpreter of that data, the findings can be skewed. The way that most case study research avoids this threat to construct validity is through triangulation.

Triangulation

As Patton (1990) points out triangulation, or "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena" (p. 187), is an essential check on reliability and validity in qualitative studies. In the case of this study, I used triangulation of qualitative data sources, that is I cross-checked the consistency information of the I gathered at different times and by different means within qualitative methods (Patton, 1990, p. 467). For this study that meant comparing the data I collected from class observations with data collected from interviews, and comparing different perspectives of the student-participants and the instructor-participants. As Leki (1995) suggests an extensive amount and variety of data sources "ensure triangulation of the information gathered to contribute to a more complex, richer, and thicker description than might be possible through the examination of a single data source" (p. 239).

Of course the danger in triangulation as Patton (1990) points out is that these qualitative data sources "seldom lead to a single, totally consistent picture" (p. 467). Even though the different types of data collected lead to contradictions in the data, this does not necessarily mean that these data sources are invalid; rather it

signifies that "different kinds of data have captured different things and so the analyst attempts to understand the reasons for the differences" (Patton, 1990, p. 467).

Summary

I should reiterate that because I am "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Crestwell, 1994, p. 144) in this study, all of the information has been filtered through my biases and background knowledge. I have attempted to lay open those biases as well as my research methodology and my rationale for choosing those methods. I believe that I have established a justification for using qualitative methods and particularly case study as a vehicle for answering my research question.

Chapter 4 - Introduction to the Data Presentation
Results - L_1 Education

The purpose of the next three chapters is to report the results of the research. Chapters Four, Five, and Six describe the factors which may have had an influence on the final grades of the students. In order to indicate how each of these chapters work together as a whole, Figure 2.8 from Chapter Two (the possible model for how the factors interact) appears at the beginning of each chapter. In each diagram, the shaded portion represents what is to be covered by that chapter.

Chapter Four consists of an overview of the students' success in their Gordon Rule courses. It also includes the final grades of each student and information about each students' first-language educational experiences and includes the social, cognitive and academic influences of their education in their first language. Chapter Five focuses on the requirements of the Gordon Rule classes, including the reading, writing, oral/aural, and cognitive skills necessary for the students to be successful in those classes. Chapter Six covers the students' acquisition and adaptation processes--how well they are able to understand the requirements of the classes and cope with those requirements. This section includes an analysis of the social and affective factors which affect their success.

Overall Student Success in Gordon Rule Classes

Of the 11 students in this study, 8 passed their Gordon Rule classes with grades of "C" or better. As mentioned earlier, one

student, Angela, withdrew from the class within the first two weeks. Henrietta withdrew from the class in the middle of the semester. Cesar withdrew late in the semester (in fact on the last possible day to withdraw).

Angela cited anxiety over her ability to communicate effectively with the teacher, her deficient English vocabulary, and her lack of time to do the required reading as her reasons for withdrawing. This is how Angela explains her difficulty:

Angela: I dropped humanities because I don't have time.

Cheryl: What made you decide to drop humanities?

Angela: Because I had to read a lot. I understood the teacher, but she asked about one picture. I can't say because my bank of words is limited. I thought I could explain better.

Henrietta also gave a lack of time to prepare for the class adequately as her primary reason for withdrawing. At the beginning of the semester she got a new job and did not have enough time to study for her Psychology class:

Because at the beginning it was a little bit difficult, but I was going to go with it. I had that job, it takes a lot of time. So I had to drop one of my classes, so I choose to drop this one [Psychology]. I was going to school until about 1:00, then I had to go to work. Then I went home and my little girl, she's three years old, she wouldn't leave me alone. So, I couldn't study at night. Forget about it.

Cesar was actually passing the class when he withdrew with a "C". However, his advisor in the business department convinced him

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that the "C" would hurt his grade point average and could keep him from getting into a university:

> I had to do my schedule for next term and that's when I went to the advisor in business administration center. I had a long talk with her because we were trying to arrange the courses and everything so that I could finish as fast as I can. That day, the 15th of November I dropped it because it's real important for me to have a high grade point average to finish my B.A. My advisor thought it would be better if I dropped it. I've got to get my grade point average around 3.0.

With a very cursory examination of the students' own reasons for withdrawing from the classes, it would seem that a lack of sufficient study time might be a major cause of the students' inability to complete the courses. In fact the lack of time to prepare properly for the demands of the class was referred to by not only by those students who withdrew from the courses, but other students also. The attitude that there was not enough time to properly complete the requirements of the class might be caused, in part, by the students' expectations of student life. In their native countries students did not usually work and go to school at the same time. Another factor which could have attributed to the students feelings of anxiety over the amount of available time could be students' tendency to over extend themselves and take on more than they could realistically accomplish.

The two students who dropped their Gordon Rule classes because they could not handle the course load. Angela and

Henrietta, had responsibilities outside of their classes yet, their responsibilities were not among the most demanding in the study. In fact, they were about in the middle. Considering outside demands on the students' time, they basically fall into three groups: (a) those with heavy demands on their time, (b) those with moderate demands on their time, and (c) those with little responsibility besides their class work.

Three students fall into the first category. Salaam and Carlos had the greatest work demands on their time outside of the class; both worked at least 50 hours a week. Carla had similar demands on her time because she was not only working about 20 to 30 hours per week, but was a single mother besides. Students with moderate demands on their time worked 10 to 20 hours a week and/or had some family responsibilities. This group includes Angela, Cesar, Henrietta, Hugo, Raisa, and Ruslan. The students with no outside responsibilities were Henri and Beatriz. This is not to say that the students in the second and third groups were not under the pressure of time. Raisa is a good example. In the middle of describing how she was developing her research paper she suddenly remembers that she has to return her library books:

> By the way I have two books and they have already the date, I mean they are due at the library. Oh, I think it's the second of November. I have to bring them tomorrow. [Laughs] With those papers, I forget so many things because everything I have this in my head. This never happen to me before; I always remembered about my library books.

Therefore, although a lack of time to study effectively seems at first glance to be a common denominator in the students' difficulities in coping with their Gordon Rule classes, a careful study shows that there were other factors that made the classes arduous. In the following sections will be devoted to examining these factors. Figure 4.1 indicates the final grades for each student in their Gordon Rule classes.

Student	Class(es)	Grade
Angela	Humanities	W [a]
Beatriz	Psychology (H) [b]	A
Carla	Psycholgy Social Environment	A A
Carlos	Psychology Humanities	A A
Cesar	Humanities	W
Henri	Humanities [c]	B
Henrietta	Psychology	W
Hugo	Psychology Social Environment	B C
Raisa	Psychology (H) Social Environment (H)	B B
Ruslan	Social Environment	C
Salaam	Psychology Social Environment	A

[a] W Student withdrew from the course
[b] (H) Honors classes
[c] Student is repeating the course

Figure 4.1. Students' grades in their Gordon Rule classes

English Language Skills

These students needed a fairly high level of English proficiency in order to be successful. While I personally did not measure the student's language proficiency on any kind of standardized exam, all of the students in this study were placed in their writing classes on the basis of the results of their CPT exams. This standardized test gives an objective evaluation of the students' English language and reading skills at the time they matriculated into regular freshman courses. Besides this objective information, I had access to other more subjective information about the students' English language skills. First of all, I had first-hand knowledge of how these students had performed, and what their study ethic was like because each had been a student in a class I had taught. Second, I had writing samples which reflected the students' current writing skills. Finally, the interviews themselves reflect the students' English language oral proficiency. One of the reasons I chose not to eliminate students' language errors in the interview quotations is so that the reader could judge for him- or herself the language proficiency of the student-participants. On the basis of these sources of information, I was able to make an educated evaluation of each student's English language proficiency.

The raw scores for the CPT test are between 30 and 120. Scores above 71 in reading and 77 in English are considered college level. Because some of the students have been enrolled in regular classes before this semester, I have provided information about the students' current reading and writing courses, thus

making it easier to compare the students' current skills. The students in this study are enrolled in four different writing classes. ENC 0020 is a developmental composition course. ENC 1130 is a transition composition course. ENC 1101 and ENC 1102 are college-level composition courses. One student, Cesar was in a developmental writing classes. Five students were in ENC 1130. This group includes Carla, Salaam, Ruslan, Henrietta, and Angela. Five students were enrolled college composition course, Carlos, Beatriz, Henri, Hugo, and Raisa. Three students, Carla, Henrietta, and Angela had underdeveloped reading skills and are enrolled in reading classes. Figure 4.2 shows the raw reading and writing scores for each student and their current language skills classes.

Student	Reading		Writing	
	Raw Score[b]	Current Class	Raw Score[b]	Current Class
Angela	58	REA 0020[a]	104	ENC 1130
Beatriz	105	---	112	ENC 1102
Carla	67	REA 0020[a]	86	ENC 1130
Carlos	110	---	113	ENC 1101
Cesar	101	---	57	ENC 0020[a]
Henri	72	---	87	ENC 1102
Henrietta	54	REA 0020[a]	83	ENC 1130
Hugo	79	---	86	ENC 1101
Raisa	90	---	93	ENC 1101
Ruslan	78	---	77	ENC 1130
Salaam	78	REA 1105	88	ENC 1130

[a] Developmental courses (considered below college level)
[b] Computerized Placement Test (CPT)

Figure 4.2. Students' English language skills

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This information suggests and writing samples confirm that Beatriz and Carlos had the strongest English skills and that Raisa was close behind them. The students with weak skills as they matriculated into freshman classes were Angela, Carla, Cesar, Ruslan, and Henrietta because either their reading or writing skills were lower than college level. In the middle somewhere are Hugo, Salaam, and Henri. Yet these placement scores are somewhat deceiving, notice that Angela has fairly high English skills score even though she has struggled in her composition classes. This is probably due to the fact that the English skills test, which places students in writing class, is a multiple choice test based on grammar and usage. Therefore, if a student has a grasp on the rules of grammar and usage in English, he or she can get a high score on the exam. Yet, writing classes require that students not only know the rules of grammar, but be able to produce text. This mismatch between the test and the requirements for the class caused problems not only for Angela, but also for Henri. It took Henri two attempts to pass the transition writing course, two attempts to pass the College Composition 1, and he is now on his third attempt to pass College Composition 2. In the same way Angela has struggled with her transition writing course; she is now on her third attempt. Judging from the sample of Henri's writing that I read and from the fact that he has really struggled to pass the English composition classes I would also put him in the group of students with weaker skills.

Another factor which plays a role in the students' skills is their diligence as students. The three students with the stronger language skills, Beatriz, Carlos, and Raisa, were very diligent in my classes. They had consistent attendance, came prepared to class, were willing to take suggestions from the teacher, and often did more than what was required of them. Two other students, Carla and Hugo, were also especially diligent. They tried to make up for a lack of English skills by studying extra hard. I have already explained that Hugo took challege exams for two levels of ESL. He was able to do this because while he was enrolled in one level of ESL he was studying for the next level on his own. When Carla was a student in my class, she was constantly writing extra assignments so that she could refine her writing skills.

The students' oral language also gives insight into their English language proficiency. For example, even though Carla's reading skills were lower than most student in this study, her spoken English was quite fluent and native-like. On the other hand, Angela's oral English was riddled with mistakes in grammar and inappropriate vocabulary choices.

Taking all of this information together, I would classify the students in four different groups according to their academic skills and dedication to learning. The most skilled and dedicated group was Carlos, Beatriz, and Raisa. The next group consists of students who had adequate skills and exceptional diligence as students. This group includes Hugo and Carla. Even though Carla's reading skills were underdeveloped, I have put her in this

group because her oral skills were stronger than most students in the study and she was an exceptionally diligent student. The next group is students who had adequate skills; this includes Salaam and Henri. The final group had underdeveloped skills in one or more area; this group includes Ruslan, Cesar, Henrietta, and Angela. As you can see the students with stronger skills were successful in their Gordon Rule classes (Beatriz and Raisa were enrolled in honors classes). Of the four students with underdeveloped skills, three withdrew from the classes. This data suggest that English language skills played an important role in the students' success. Indeed, I would have been suprised if Raisa, Carlos, or Beatriz were unsuccessful in their Gordon Rule classes. Yet two of the students with underdeveloped English skills, Carla and Ruslan were successful in their Gordon Rule classes. This suggests that there are other factors which may influence students' success.

Students' First Language Background

This section begins with an overview of the student-participants' educational experiences. It then presents themes in the social and cognitive aspects of their first language education that have an effect on their adaptation processes. Finally, this section identifies the academic content and skills the students have developed in other languages and analyzes how the content and skills affect the students' coping strategies. Figure 4.3 is my concept of how these components are related.
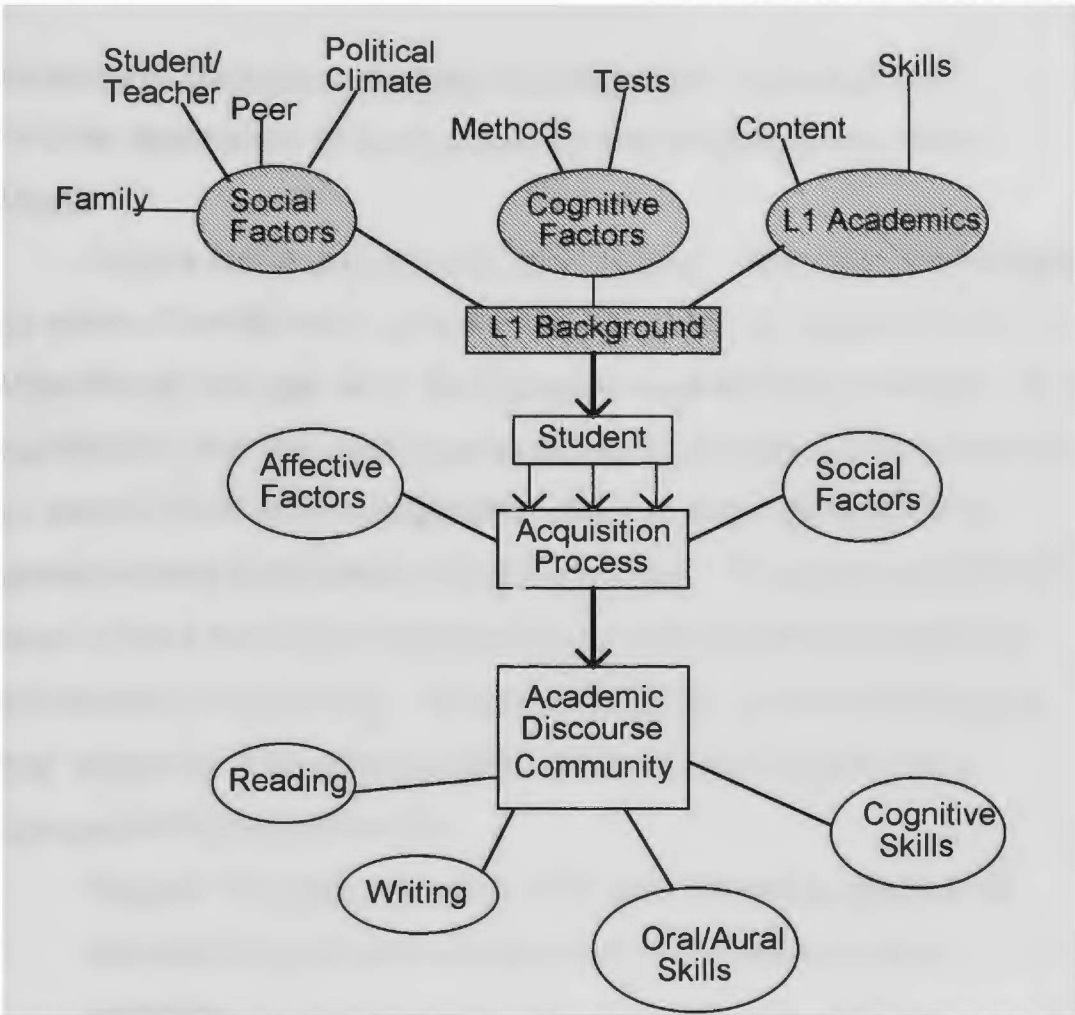
Figure 4. 3. A possible model for how the students' first-language background, acquisition process, and the demands of the academic discourse community interact with each other. This section focuses on students' first language background.

Notice that the top of the figure has been expanded somewhat from Figure 2.8 in Chapter 2. This is to further clarify how the sub-topics presented in this section relate to the whole.

Participants' Previous Educational Experiences

Each student in this study, of course, had a different educational experience in his or her native language. Because these experiences are unique and reveal a wide range of

educational backgrounds, I feel it is important to give at least minimal description of each student's first language education.

Angela

Angela has a unique education history. After she finished her six years of compulsory, elementary education at a public school in Argentina at the age of 17, she stayed out of school for a year. She explained to me that girls usually did not study beyond the required six years at that time in Argentina. After a year, she went to a special school sponsored by the Red Cross. There she studied two years to be a nurse and later continued her studies to became a technician in hematology. She described her nursing career as a "big" program. I eventually determined that this meant it was rigorous and comprehensive:

Angela: The teachers was strict and we had to study a lot because the career we were studying was big for the students.

Cheryl: You mean there were a lot of students in your class?

Angela: Yes, I think there were more than 20. But it was a career with a lot of information to learn. Each teacher had between 20 and 30 students. The Red Cross, the studying was hard too because the program was big, and many assignments. When I tried to revalidate my papers in California, I sent all my papers to Sacramento and they answered me that I had to complete only two courses that I didn't do in Argentina; it was oncology and psychology.

Besides the classroom studies Angela's nursing degree also included a practicum.

After she returned to Argentina from California, Angela decided to go back to school at 42. She went to a special school for adults which offered the Argentine, five-year, university preparation, high school diploma in three years. This degree is called a "*bachelarto*". She describes the degree this way:

> Three years before I came [back to the U.S.], I studied in the high school. But it's not high school, because in my country it's like college and high school. We have three different periods in the study. We have the elementary; it's the first grade until seventh grade. The second period it's the bachelors, it's five years, but I made three years because I take the program especial for adults person. In 1988, I studied the secondary because I always wished to do that class because we learned many things about history, mathematics, geography, grammar of the language in my country.

She completed this program and graduated second in her class. Angela was obviously very proud that she was able to finish this degree; however, she admitted that it was a struggle: "I think I am not very intelligent. The tests was hard for me. I studied hard. Many times I studied the assignment by heart because my memory is no good and I can't retain."

<u>Beatriz</u>

Beatriz attended a public elementary school and a private Catholic high school. She said that many of her high school teachers were nuns. She describes her high school as very academically-oriented; in fact she says that much of what she has learned in math and sciences at Miami-Dade has been a repeat of her high school classes.

> High school? It was tough. Well, I think, basically, I took chemistry, physics, math, the sciences. It was tough. I haven't seen anything new here. Yeah, chemistry for example, it's been just a review for me. In math when it comes to calculus, then it's different. It's new to me, but before calculus it was just a review for me we had all that.

Her language and social science classes focused on Brazilian history and "a little bit of world history" and Portuguese literature and composition. She describes herself as a "good, but not excellent student." Most of her grades were A's or B's.

<u>Carlos</u>

Carlos calls the Cuban educational system very strict, which he thinks makes it better than the American system. This is because the course work is "mandatory, you have to make all the credits they demand; you can't select which one you want to take." Since all schools in Cuba are government sponsored, Carlos went to a public school, but was accepted at a "special" school which stressed academics during his high school years. The special school seemed to be a kind of advanced program for academically-

oriented students. In order to be admitted to this school, students had to take a rigorous entrance exam. In addition, students had to specialize in an academic area. Carlos specialized in math. The program was rigorous and the academic day was long: "We had to study about 12 hours a day and then at night we had to study more 2 hours to study for the next day." After he finished high school Carlos began studying medicine at the university. He had completed his first two years of medical school before he came to the U.S. as a political refugee. Carlos describes himself as a "very good" student. "I think I was very good. Yeah, well don't take it as I'm too proud. I had very good grades in Cuba. Yeah, and I feel very confident about myself." An unusual characteristic of the Cuban education system which Carlos described is the required field service, which is literally done in the fields. High school students must spend up to six weeks a year working in the countryside planting and harvesting crops or weeding fields.

Carla

Carla began school at a Catholic elementary school, where she remembers the nuns changed her from being left-handed to right-handed. Her education was interrupted by the Cuban Revolution in 1959 when she was in fourth grade.

> That is when the Castro revolution took over and the Catholic school had to close down because of the whole deal. Then my parents didn't send me to school for at least two or three years. What I had was a tutor at home; she used to give classes at the Catholic school, she was not a--How you say?

Not a priest, but a nun. She was not a nun, but she used to teach in the Catholic system. So, she gave me classes. One day they [her parents] realized that I couldn't continue like this, so I took a sixth-grade test so I could be transferred to, like, they say junior high in our country.

Carla's education was not only provided by schools and tutors. Her parents' home was a sort of refuge for intellectuals.

I have a lot of culture because we used to live in a place, where, let's say the high school was right here and my father's business was right here [indicates two adjacent locations]. It was right on the corner, it was a coffee factory. But since it was a coffee factory. When you live in a little town, and stuff like that, every one knows each other and the professors used to go all the time to drink coffee with my parents. They have something called, I don't know if you have this word in English, it's like when a group of intellectuals get together and they start chatting and interchange ideas. I learned a lot because I was always around and I was always listening to them. Even if I didn't understand everything.

Through these family friends, Carla also learned French and how to play the piano. Like Carlos, Carla also had to do field work in the country. She describes her field work experience like this:

Carla: Working in cane, sugar cane fields, cleaning the plants [laughs]. I'm sorry, but now I have to laugh when I think, when you were young and you enjoyed it, but it wasn't funny. OK, but you have to clean the plant and around from bad weeds.

What else? Then they give you like little pieces of sugar cane sticks and you have to. How do you say? You know put them in the ground.

Cheryl: Planting them?

Carla: Yeah, planting them. That was once. The other one I was in the onion field. In the onion field we did the same thing, clean around the plants or pick up onions, it depends. Then at night we had like some classes.

Cheryl: How long did you have to do that?

Carla: It was supposed to be like two months, but it was shorter than that for me because my parents always had an excuse to bring me, either 'She has a sore throat.' or 'She's throwing up.' or 'She's in her menstrual cycle.' and things like that. They always tried to get me back home because, let me tell you, now that I think about it, it was scary. You get on top of trucks with your legs out. Here we see all kinds of safety precautions, there we didn't have it.

Carla came to the U.S. at 17, a year before she had completed her high school in Cuba. Her family had planned for her to finish her education at a Catholic school in Miami; however, things did not go as planned.

So, then my parents decided to send me to the U.S. They sent me over here. I was supposed to receive money from Spain because my parents are from Spain so I could go to a private Catholic school here. Even I had a letter from a Catholic priest in Cuba, so I was supposed to have my doors

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open. But then the money never appeared. I was living with some relatives over here, my sister was in Spain.

At that time there were no provisions for students in Carla's position. She was too old to start high school in the U.S., so she enrolled in an adult ESL program through Dade County Public Schools.

Since I came at that age of 17, right there they didn't accept me in high school here in a regular high school because at that time you had to have a certain age or you can't go there. So, I went to the English Center, which it was an adult center. I learned English there, but I was sick and tired to be around old people. I was very spoiled at that time, because it was my environment. So I went to college at Miami-Dade with some money that I earned because since I came here I worked. I passed that test that they used to give. Mathematics I was good, and English I was not so good, but enough. But I started there, but it was hard, not so hard but different.

Carla believes that she had difficulties in college on her first attempt because she was just too immature to start college at that time. She didn't attend classes regularly and was not very dedicated to her course work. Finally she took what she calls "the easy way out" and got married. "I had my boyfriend. So, I decided to get married and I dropped everything because it was, it was easier." Carla describes herself as an "OK" student in high school.

Cesar

Cesar graduated from a private, Catholic, bilingual school in Colombia. His educational background differs from the other

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students in this study in that he went to elementary school for two years in the United States while his mother was working in New York. When he returned to Colombia, he had native-like English, but was behind his Colombian classmates in Spanish skills. Because of this, he repeated the sixth grade in Colombia.

> Then I moved back to Colombia, but it was really a problem because I couldn't speak Spanish real fluently. I couldn't write. My grammar was terrible. It was real hard for me to adapt to school in Colombia. Anyway, I was used to seeing like 6 or 7 subjects when I was in school and in Colombia I was started seeing like 15 subjects in a year, in like a year term. So it was like real hard, so I entered sixth grade again because they turned me back because I failed the course. Then I failed sixth grade at the end of the year and I had to go over sixth grade because during that period of time I learned to write, I learned to speak Spanish better. I improved my grammar a little, because now still my grammar in Spanish is not good enough.

Sixth grade was a pivotal year in the Colombian education system because it is a review of the first six years. Besides being behind in his Spanish skills, Cesar also missed classes in Colombian history and culture.

Cesar's high school courses included geography, civics, natural science, chemistry, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, physics, philosophy, economics, and business administration.

Students took up to 15 courses a year (not every course met every day) and the course work was difficult:

> I almost always had to go to bed at like 10 or 11 in the evening. So it was really hard. For every seven or eight classes you probably have four hours homework every day, so you have to do all your homework every day. Sometimes you don't do **all** [laughs]. There's no time. Sometimes I had like one or two in the morning doing homework.

As a student in high school Cesar considered himself average; this had to do with his involvement in athletics:

> [I was] not bad, but not good. But I haven't told you that probably, when I was in school I was more focused in playing soccer than going over my courses. But I liked it [his school work], I liked it especially business. That's probably why I am more focused in business. But I was in those days more concerned about playing soccer. I really loved to play soccer. I was in a league to play soccer, and I played soccer at school. All my friends were soccer players. Anyway, the soccer coach and his assistant were the physics and calculus teacher. So there was more of a relationship between calculus, physics, and soccer than the other subjects. Because there was like a more close relationship with the soccer coach. It was like if you do OK on the soccer game, you'll do OK on the test.

<u>Henri</u>

Henri attended private schools both for his primary and secondary education; he reported that Catholicism was an important part of his education in both schools:

> Well, the first one was a religious school; it was St. John the Baptist. It was a religious school, a Catholic school. The second one was a school, a high school; it wasn't really Catholic but our director, the founder of the school, was a very religious person. So he used to make it look like a very religious school. Sometimes the priest comes and teaches us about the Catholic doctrine. They used to do like a church ceremonies.

Henri's high school classes included French, Latin, math, history, geography, chemistry, and physics. He describes his course work as difficult; he stressed the fact that there was always a lot of information to memorize. He reported sometimes studying into the early morning hours.

When he came to the U.S., Henri first went to New York where his father lives. There he attended a community college for one semester before moving to Miami to live with his mother. Henri describes himself as an "OK" student although not the best in Haiti. One of the reasons why he left Haiti was his failure to pass the entrance exam for university in there.

<u>Henrietta</u>

Henrietta was born in the Bahamas; however, she began school in Haiti. She attended both public and private, single-gender

schools in Haiti. Besides the typical academic subjects, she also had to learn cooking and sewing in elementary school. Henrietta also reported that there was a lot of homework in her high school, sometimes as much as four or five hours of homework a night. All teachers gave homework every night. She said that chemistry was the most difficult subject.

After she finished her high school education, she went to college in the Bahamas to try to learn English. For Henrietta this was not a very positive experience.

> I went to like a college. They said it was like a college. They just put you in the class, you're there and the teacher is doing everything with the college students. If you don't know anything, me personally, they did not ask me anything. They know that don't know anything; they know I cannot hear them. They just don't care.

Henrietta identifies herself as a little above average as a student: "I was in the middle, like I wasn't high-high and I wasn't that bad. I was like a "B".

Hugo

Hugo went to a state-sponsored elementary school in Hungary and he went to what could be categorized as a vocational high school for his secondary education. This is how he explains it:

> This is like a college. But in Hungary when you go to college, you don't study like the general subjects. This is only just like the theme that you want to study, specifically for that. After elementary school if you want to, you have three options to

get a degree like restaurant operation. First is the lowest. Afterwards there is a school in which you can get a degree with a major plus high school degree. There is the third one in which you get only a high school degree. This school is only for students who want to learn more and more. So, to go to university [after high school]. So, I went to the second one which was I got a high school degree plus a major. My major was wine and champagne making. So, they taught me how to make wine and champagne. I went there because my father was working in this field. He invented a soda actually, which was famous. After he died, he in his will he said: 'I would like one of my sons to do the same thing,' and I was the son. But afterwards I realized that it's not for me. I didn't have problems in the working in the school in general subjects like history, physics, chemistry, and plus my major.

In addition to the academic subjects listed above, Hugo was also required to study two foreign languages--German and Russian. His German was "okay," but he says that his Russian was "very bad," He admitted that in Russian class he basically wrote Hungarian grammar with the Cyrillic alphabet. Although he was at a vocational school, he found that his academic courses were very challenging: "The general subjects, we covered more than other places in the world. I mean, I think in whole Europe students don't learn more. I can't really compare it to America."

His characterization of the Hungarian educational system as the most rigorous in Europe is probably biased; however, I do

believe that his course work was difficult because he had well-developed cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) when he arrived in the U.S. I should remind the reader that Hugo was the student who was at a zero English proficiency level when he came to the U.S. and was able to complete the two-year ESL program at Miami-Dade in one year and one semester.

School in Hungary was challenging, yet Hugo felt the Communist system did not encourage students to work hard in school, they just were not motivated. Hugo identifies himself as a very bad student. When I asked him how he rated his success as a student in Hungary, his response was:

> Very bad student. Because of the idea in Hungary the school is just go there and be there and come home. Every-- 95% of the students were like this, unfortunately. Then the Communist system: go to elementary, go to high school, but just for a major and afterwards work. That was the Communist system. Even when I think in kindergarten they taught this idea. So I went there, I was there, and I came out. I was a very poor student.

Raisa

Raisa's high school experience was similar to Hugo's in that she went to a high school where students could also get a professional degree. Raisa went to an art and theater school; her particular interest was in costume design. "I went to this special school for fashion design. All subjects that went to high school I did at this special school. Besides my professional subjects, I took high

school subjects too." Other students at this high school studied to be make-up artists, set and prop designers, and puppet makers. Her professional subjects included art and sewing classes. Raisa explained that upon completion of her course work she was qualified to be a costume designer or an art teacher. Besides these professional classes she also studied 'regular' high school subjects like mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, literature, philosophy, Russian, and English. Raisa describes her course work as rigorous. When I asked her about homework she replied:

Oh, it was really a lot. I was very busy, very busy in my profession especially at this school. Because besides our requirement homework, we were supposed to do assignments for our professional skills too. If you were practicing with fabric samples how to do this stitch and how to do that stitch, we had to do so many stitches. So we were practice a lot. We had practice time during college and we used to have practice laboratory time like four or five hours and it wasn't enough. When I was coming back home, I still practiced and then I was doing hours and hours. I could do it to 12 or 1 o'clock in the morning and still wasn't finished with 1 sample. It was hard. They required from us to do good work because they prepared us to be specialists. We worked a lot, and the thing that holds me to do this is that I like the job a lot. For me, it wasn't that hard for me, even though it takes time. I was busy so much that I sometime was forgetting about going out [laughs]. Well, even though we were busy we used to go

to theaters because it's our profession, to watch the costumes and everything. We were going like two or three times a week. We'd stay after classes. We had classes to seven, maybe eight o'clock and then we would go, even though we were tired, we would go to the theater.

Raisa describes herself as an enthusiastic student and modestly admitted that she usually got good grades. Because of her political status, Raisa has never been able to complete a degree although she has attended school in Israel as well as Russia. Even though she is a bit disappointed at not completing these programs, she is glad to be studying.

Ruslan

Ruslan's Russian educational experience was more like a typical American academic tract. He characterizes the Russian educational system as "really strong."

I don't like math and such subjects, but here [at Miami-Dade] it wasn't hard for me. Like here when I took the CPT test, I got a low score for English, but for math I go almost the highest score. I got 115 and they told me the maximum was 120.

Besides math, Ruslan also took English, chemistry, biology, astrology, physics, and humanities courses; the latter were his favorites. "I always preferred such subjects like literature, history, such things like that. I don't know how you call those in English, not those that are scientific, and numbers [but] those subjects where you can read." After high school, Ruslan when to college for one

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year to study what was called an industrial, pedagogical degree. He characterizes it as a kind of business or economics major. During that year he took some required courses such as psychology, math, and writing. He left college after only one year because he immigrated to the U.S.

Salaam

Salaam's educational experience is unique in that has been educated under two very different systems before coming to the U.S. He went to school in his native country, Sudan, and went to the university in Hungary. Moreover, his first language, Nubian, is not a written language; therefore, he had to learn Arabic when he went to school. Then he had to learn Hungarian when he went to the university in Hungary.

His elementary and middle schools were all male schools, but his high school was co-ed. High school and middle school were a little more difficult than elementary school, and the teachers were better trained. His high school curriculum was academically-oriented. During this time his favorite subjects were mathematics and biology. Other subjects included geography, history, chemistry, and religion (Islam) classes. He didn't like the religion classes very much; however, he believes that the geography classes were very helpful in his social environment classes. He characterizes himself as a good student even though his elementary school teachers were not well-trained.

Social Factors

The social factors which had negative or positive effects on the students in this study where influences from their families and peers, the relationships between students and teachers, and the political climate of the larger society. This next section details these influences and examines how they affected the students as they tried to adapt to the American educational system.

Family Influences

All the students except for Angela reported that their families supported their academic aspirations, although this support was to differing degrees. As one would predict, the students with the strongest familial support seemed to have the most success. The most extreme example of familial support for education was Raisa's mother who quit her job so she could invest time in her two daughters' education. She checked their homework nightly and spent a lot of time taking them to additional educational activities. In Raisa's words:

> All the time since I was small, my mom spent a lot of time with education. For my parents that was really important, education. When I came home from school, I knew I didn't have free time. Right away I had to read, do homework. I was very good because my mom, she knows math very good. She put all the force on me. Then, after, I participated in the high school competitions [in math], I was exempt from the final exams. . .[Her mother's influence was] Not just at school. She gave us a lot of time when she went with us to activities,

because I went to some evening gymnastics. My sister went to dance. Then I started to draw and my mom was taking me to art class. Besides regular school I would go to art school too. Besides regular school homework, I would do art school homework too. I was always busy. I knew that I had to study.

Another extreme example of family interest in education is, of course, Carla's family, which paid for her to have a private tutor after the Cuban revolution and opened their home as a kind of meeting ground for intellectuals. Besides this, Carla had private French and piano lessons in her home and her parents sent her to one of the "little schools in houses where they teach you how to type and how to take shorthand and things like that."

Many families sacrificed for their children's education by paying for them to go to private schools. This is the case of Beatriz, Carla, Cesar, Henri, and Henrietta. Other students, Carla, Carlos, Hugo, Raisa, Ruslan, and Salaam, reported that their parents helped them with their homework. In Salaam's case his father tried to make up for an underprepared middle school math teacher:

My father helped me a lot. He believed that mathematics is the most important subject. If you don't know it, you don't going know nothing. For this reason, he started taking care of us in mathematics and I think all my family, they like mathematics. Every day he spent about two hours teaching us mathematics at home. He always complained about our books what we read from. He used to give us more information. I think he really helped me a lot.

Still other families supported education either by providing their children with extra educational opportunities. Besides Raisa and Carla, this group also includes Beatriz, who went to a language center to study English after school.

Another way that families supported education was by example. In these cases the students' parents were well-educated professionals and so it was assumed that these students would persue high academic goals. These students included Beatriz, Carla, Carlos, Hugo, Raisa, and Ruslan. Carlos illustrates this attitude of assumed professionalism when he describes his family's attitude:

> It's the most important thing in my family, is education.
> Because everyone in my family is professional. Both of my
> parents are physicians, my grandmother is a professor, my
> grandfather was a lawyer. All the people in my family are
> professionals.

In contrast, other participants in this study did not have a familial support system. In the case of Henri and Henrietta, although their parents paid for them to go to private schools, their parents never helped them with homework. Henrietta said that this was because she never asked her parents for help. However, in Henri's case, his parents were not well-educated enough themselves to help him. After explaining that his parents did not help him with his homework, Henri told me: "They [his parents] are educated, but they are not advanced. My father was reaching the middle, but he was not advanced, but they are not illiterate."

In contrast to all of these examples of familial support, Angela reported that she pursued her education even though her family was actually opposed to her continuing her education. As mentioned before, at the time Angela completed elementary school, very few girls went on to complete secondary school. Even Angela's chosen vocational career did not please her family: "My family, my grandmother, was very disappointed because the profession of a nurse was not very good at this time. But my mother didn't say nothing." Instead of family encouragement, it was her mother's illness that attracted her to nursing as a career:

> When I was a little child my mother had do that treatment because she was sick. Every day, we went to the hospital and a nurse, a man, injected her in the vein. I was, I have curiosity for that. I remember the man told me that when you grow up you can be a nurse. I don't know, but when I grew up my idea was always to study nurse, but not nurse only for helping the patient. I like to be a technician. I liked to be in the laboratory working with blood.

If it was not enough to be discouraged by her family, her ex-husband also did not encourage her to study. Angela only went back to school in Argentina after she was divorced and this was with the blessing of her adult son: ("My son was very happy that I went to school. Now he is very happy too, because I come and take a class here. He said, 'Oh, mommy, you can go the university when you finish.")

It is premature to draw conclusions from a sample of only eleven students. However, this study seems to support the findings of Brophy (1977), and Hess & McDevitt (1984). They found that families with a stimulating cognitive environments, and parents or other persons in the household who model intellectual activities or encourage intellectual stimulation frequently are likely to be more successful in school. Even though Angela has the support of her son in her pursuit of education, she lacked familial support early in her academic career. This could be one of the factors which has lead to her spotty success as a student at Miami-Dade. At the other extreme is Raisa who is now taking honors classes at Miami-Dade. Her mother was bent on exposing her to different intellectual activities and making sure that she took advantage of all the educational opportunities available to her. Even Raisa's attitude towards education reflects a belief that learning is to be valued. In her own words: "I like studying."

Student/Teacher Relationships

One factor which affects how well students cope with the demands of Gordon Rule classes could be differences in the academic ambiance between their first and second language education. In order to discover where these differences might lie, I asked the students about the relationships between students and teachers and students and students in their first language education. While all participants in this study reported that students showed more respect towards teachers in their countries, the role of teachers in the students' native countries ranged from severe

authoritarian to encouraging advocate. Three main categories of typical student/teacher relationships emerged from the students' descriptions.

Beatriz, Henri, Hugo, and Raisa reported that their teachers were authoritarian and strict. Henri told me that even in high school teachers used corporal punishment on students who did not memorize the required lesson. "Sometimes the instructor carry a big ruler and he can beat you once with the ruler or sometimes how many words that you miss is how many times that they hit you." Likewise, Hugo said that teachers mostly controlled their classes with fear and intimidation:

> Hugo: The teacher wasn't like a god, but we had to be afraid of her or him because of the political situation. That was it. In Hungary, the stereotype of the teacher is she had to be tall, thin, old, and smoking a cigarette. I had a bad experience the first time I came to class on this campus. There is an older Cuban teacher; I don't remember her name. I saw her and I went 'Oh, no!' [She looked just like his stereotype of a Hungarian teacher.]
>
> Cheryl: Was she different than your teachers in Hungary?
>
> Hugo: Yes, because here every teacher is open for a question when you have no idea. But in Hungary that isn't the way, no. You would not think to do something like that.

The fear and intimidation group seem to be the extreme cases; most of the participants including Carla, Carlos, Cesar, Henrietta, Ruslan, and Salaam, recounted that the student/teacher

relationship really depended on the teacher and his or her personality. For Henrietta, the teachers could either be Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde. They were either warm, helpful, and understanding or authoritarian:

> Some of them come to the class and teach you and leave. You don't ask them any questions, but some of them, they take more care of you, they stay after class and you can ask them some questions and even at their home. They give you their home phone. They can arrange an appointment to go and study with them.

Cesar's response is a typical description of the range of student/ teacher relationships:

> Some teachers are those that are respectful and the others are like students; they are 'ike us, we are the students. There is a big difference. I think maybe it depends on the subject. For example in Spanish, they [authoritarian teachers] are the ones who know and understand everything and the students are the ones who have to learn. But for example, in history or geography, the mood is more like casual. They were concerned about us and concerned about the way we think.

> Angela reported that she had some teachers that were very concerned about her progress and very supportive. Angela describes one of her teachers this way:

> When I returned to school after many years and not being very young, it was hard and I was very nervous because I thought I couldn't do it. I thought. But we, my friends, we

were very lucky because the teacher for languages was a very good teacher. She had four kids and [was] the principal in the school. She gave the first level in the language because she said that she was like a big mother [laughs]. The students, I don't know how to said it, the students feel very good with her. She gives warmness and that made me comfort and think, OK, I can do it. Because the first teacher I met was good, so I was successful and confidence.

In the pilot study for this dissertation, I found a Mexican woman, Marisol, whose experience of "friendly" student teacher relationships was even more extreme than Angela and Henrietta's. I include her description in this study because one assumption I had when I began this project was that almost all students educated in a foreign country were used to authoritarian teaching styles. Marisol's contribution, I believe, illustrates the wide range of experiences that NNS students have in their relationships with teachers:

> The teachers were supposed to have like a contact very friendly. We had once a week to talk with one of the them, go out from a class and talk with them and it was like 'So, how are you doing?' 'How's your boyfriend?' We didn't have any like the type teacher and the student relationship. It was like more than a friend. I mean, we could talk like everything and they push you to do this. At the end of this time a friend of mine started dating one of the teachers. (Benz, p. 19, 1995)

It is interesting to note that even students from the same countries had different experiences in their student/teacher

relationships. As an illustration, Raisa reported that her teachers were very strict and that she was afraid of them most of the time, whereas Ruslan reported that the student/teacher relationship depended on the teacher. This may be due to the fact that Raisa was in a very rigorous and specialized school. Henri and Henrietta also had different encounters with teachers. In fact, Henri portrayed teachers as extremely authoritarian in contrast to Henrietta, who found some of her teachers very accessible.

As a final note about the relationship between students and teachers, I found that at least two students, Carla and Salaam, lacked confidence in the knowledge and ability of some of their teachers. In Carla's case she felt that some of her teachers were underqualified because of the Castro government's attempt to put teachers in the classroom that agreed with Communist ideology even though they were not properly prepared as teachers.

> You can't really say they [the teachers] were strict because, well, it was different. There was like BC, we had before Castro and--You see the problem was because those teachers [after Castro], were not teachers. I remember my history teacher was like, she was a lady who never went to school. She just went to a special Castro school for some training. She didn't even know the Spanish language well. She didn't pronounce well. It was funny to us. But like the math teacher was OK. But, like the language arts was bad.

In the same manner, Salaam believes that the Sudanese public educational system was lacking especially at the lower levels. He

reported that the elementary and middle school teachers needed only a high school diploma to qualify for a teaching position.

> I think some of them, they didn't even like the subjects that they were teaching, for this reason I took low grades. In math, when I was in middle school because he didn't care about the students and I think he just teaches it because this is a job and he has to do it. But in high school they are better than in elementary school and I think they are more educated in high school and elementary and middle school.

This section has attempted to portray the diversity of student experiences related to student/teacher relationships that students encounter in their native countries. In most cases, the students seem to have adjusted to the more casual attitude concerning student/teacher relationships in the United States by the time they reach their regular classes. This is probably due to the fact that they have already had some experience with teachers' attitudes towards students in their ESL classes. However, this does not mean that they are comfortable with this relationship in all cases. For example two of the students who were not successful in their Gordon Rule classes, Angela and Henrietta, did not seek out their professors for extra help or clarification on the requirements for the class. This suggests that they were uncomfortable with student/teacher relationships or that they did not realize that teachers expected them to ask questions. The third student who withdrew from his class did feel comfortable enough to go to his instructor for help; however, Cesar chose to ignore her advice.

Henri seemed uncomfortable relating to his instructor for another reason. He reported that he liked his humanities teacher, yet was leery of him because he was "cool".

Henri: You know those classes where they are very **cool** they are dangerous.

Cheryl: Which ones?

Henri: Any class when the instructor is cool they are dangerous, because when they are cool, you take attention and you might think everything goes. They come after. There are a lot of students who don't know. They don't realize that.

Cheryl: In the class you have now?

Henri: Yeah, that's why it's not cool for me because he asks for it and he says other things, that's why he is tricky. There are some students who take notes and there are others who don't take notes. The ones who are very clever take notes, but the one that doesn't take notes, he will not do well. How are they going to do well? They have to take notes, you cannot remember everything that he says.

From this exchange, I can guess that what Henri means by "cool," is teachers who have a relaxed class atmosphere. This may be because they rely more on discussion than lecture, or in the case of Mr. Picasso's class, do not have rigorous academic demands.

Other students, Raisa and Hugo for example, went to see their teachers during their office hours or after class because it was less threatening for them to talk to their teachers one-on-one than it was to ask a question in front of the whole class. For example,

when I asked Raisa if she participates in her psychology class, she replied:

> I know this is a problem, but not just me sits quiet. I can't say that the whole class participates. You know what I do? [laughs] Because I feel--not really shy, but because I feel the barrier with my English sometimes. I just come to the teacher and start talking to him [laughs] in his office. But this trick, I don't know this is not really a trick, but this is the way that I can talk to him. Without being at risk. Yeah, because inside I don't want really to be quiet. I have something to say, but I. Then when I talk to him he said something like, 'Say it in the class.' 'Come here and whenever you have a question about Psychology or when you need help come to my office. I would be very glad,' he always says to everybody. When he said like 'come and talk to me' and I said 'I like to talk very much, but not in the class' [laughs].

By employing this "trick", Raisa is able then to use the more informal student/teacher relationships she has encountered at Miami-Dade to her advantage without risking her language ego.

Perhaps the student that is the most comfortable with the informal relationship between students and teachers is Carla. This could be attributed to the facts that she is older and the student-participant who has been in the United States the longest. In fact, she feels comfortable enough to go to Dr. Jung for a counseling session and discusses her personal problems with her. The final theme that emerged from this examination of student/teacher

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relationships is that the students must have confidence in the knowledge and abilities of their teachers. Salaam and Carla's negative experiences illustrate this point.

Peer Relationships

Most students reported that their relationships with their peers were significant to their high school experiences. The sole exception to this was Carla, who explained that because of the political tensions after the Cuban revolution, her parents did not allow her to associate with her classmates for fear that someone in her family might be arrested.

> I didn't really have relationships with them [her classmates]. First, at home they wouldn't allow me to have any kind of relation. The situation was like so hostile, so hostile. They were afraid that those people would talk to government officials. Our family was a closed group.

Furthermore, all of her peers that her parents had allowed her to associate with before the revolution had already gone to the U.S.

> My friends in the neighborhood started coming here [to the U.S.] and you [she means herself] feel isolated. I had friends, but it was hard; there was so much turmoil and all my friends came to the United States. I was in the last group to come.

For the rest of the student-participants, the social aspects of their peer relationships were important. In addition, many students reported that they formed study groups with their peers and helped each other out academically, as well as depending on their classmates as social contacts. Angela, Carlos, Cesar, Henri,

Henrietta, Hugo, Ruslan, and Salaam studied either formally or informally with their peers. Beatriz and Raisa each explained that many of their classmates studied together, but they preferred to study by themselves, although now Raisa sometimes employs the strategy of studying with others to her Miami-Dade classes:

> Here I started to study with someone because I understand through all my practicing, I can preparing for all of my exams and my assignments. So I can practice English. If I practice with an American person, so I can get a better answer or understand my answer better. But there I didn't have that many difficulties with my language, Russian. So I could study by my own.

Henri's study group was quite organized. He describes it like this:

> I used to have like a big blackboard and I used to invite some students. They used to do some work on the board, so if they are having problems with the math or physics problems, so we put it on the board, one helping each other. If I don't know how to do it, they explained to me how to do it. If I know, I explained to them how to do it.

> Five of the participants in the study, Angela, Beatriz, Hugo, Raisa, and Ruslan remarked that they had problems adjusting to the American university educational system because in all their previous educational experiences, they had studied with the same group of students for many years. Angela remarked that:

> I think study two person is better than one. Because, for example, maybe if I have some trouble to understand

something, maybe she can explain and I understand. At EMPA [the adult school she went to in Argentina] I had one friend and former classmate and we studied all the time.

Beatriz said that she got "very close to those students" in her class. Even though she didn't study with them, Raisa reported that those peer relationships made her educational experience in Russia much different than in the U.S.:

The environment in the class was different because you were going through the whole study process with the same classmates. It wasn't like here: every class you have different classmates or different semesters you have different people. If you take from the very first beginning of the college, you take first semester, second semester, you go through the whole college five semesters, you're going have the same classmates the whole time.

Ruslan reinforces the importance of studying with the same group of students for his success in education: "It's easier to get to know all the people if you have all the classes with them. It's just like one team, but here I take Social Environment with one group and English with another group." Hugo, who characterizes himself as very shy, seems to have had the most difficult time adjusting to the fact that there are different students in every one of his classes. About his classmates in Hungary, he says:

We went to year after year the same classes with the same people. So, in high school after the fourth year we had a group, I mean that was a class that everybody knows each

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other and everybody know what his or her problem or what he likes. That was a group. It was very nice because, we knew if we are sick, we can call him or her or anybody and she or he would tell you what were the assignments.

This lack of continuity of classmates actually caused a crisis in Hugo's life in the middle of the semester. He became depressed and considered dropping out of school. This crisis came out in a later interview as I was asking Hugo about his performance in his classes:

Hugo: There was a time in a month ago when I felt terrible. I mean, I am tired of everything. I wanted to quit actually. I was talking to my mother and my whole family in Hungary was--[he cuts off].

Cheryl: What happened, were you homesick?

Hugo: No, I wasn't homesick, I didn't have any problem with school. Just a problem with my every day life. I don't have-- I have only one good friend, but I can't call him friend, but he's not a real friend. I was like alone.

Cheryl: Is that a big difference between here and Hungary?

Hugo: It's a big difference, a big difference because in Hungary, I go to class with the same people all the time. I don't feel like I have any social life [here in the U.S.]. I mean my first semester here, January 1993, my teacher told me that I can jump a class [take a challenge exam for the next level] and I like my class [he means the students in the class], and I say to myself, no, no, no, no. I stay in this class. I know

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everybody, I stay here. Even I made a test and they said go to Level Three, don't go to Level Two and I said no, and I will go to Level Two. I was so disappointed. In Level Two on the first day of class I knew only 2 students of the 35. All the others were different. No, I wanted the same class. Then afterwards I jumped two [ESL] classes after I saw that.

In fact, at this time I realized that something was wrong with Hugo because in trying to reach him to do another interview, but I could not contact him anywhere. He had stopped going to school and work and there was no reply to the messages I had left him on the answering machine at his home. It was a major crisis in his semester.

The shock of having many different students in all classes might be less at Miami-Dade than it is at other institutions because usually students take their ESL classes in a group. This difference in systems seems to have hit Hugo especially hard because he tested out of several classes and did not have the continuity that other ESL students might experience. Hugo's crisis reveals the very profound alienation that students face when they come from an educational system which tracks students to a commuter community college where students come to class and leave with very little interaction with their classmates.

Political Influences on Students' Education

One of the patterns that emerged from these student interviews that I had not anticipated in advance was how the political climate of the students' native countries influenced their

educational experiences. This was especially true for students who came from Communist and former Communist countries. Because Carla was in Cuba at the beginning of the Communist revolution, she seems to have been exposed to the strictest Communist doctrine and had the most problems because of it:

> By that time [after the revolution] they had changed the history
> and the geography too. But the rest was the same. I had a lot
> of problems because I can't keep my mouth shut. I used to
> debate a lot. Then my parents decided to send me to the U.S.

This problem was very difficult for Carla because she was a good student, not only was Communist history taught in her high school, but the better students were required to take a course called "Materialistic Theology." She explained that this was the government's attempt to replace Catholicism in Cuba. Carlos had a similar experience of Communist doctrine permeating his history class in Cuba:

> Actually you have certain subjects like math and chemistry,
> you could be creative and even literature. But history, for
> example, the teacher had to be really straight. He couldn't
> give you something else, nothing about Cuban politics. It has
> to be like follow the line [raises his eyebrows].

Both Hugo and Salaam found that Communist propaganda permeated their educational experiences in Hungary. Hugo explained it in this manner:

> The West was pictured like the dying West, that was the
> translated exactly what they taught us. Also Lenin and the

Communist ideas were the leader. The classes had stars--
Lenin stars. In the history class, we didn't learn too much of
the West. From the 1940's to our days we learned only about
the Communists and before everything happen. They didn't
teach the real history. They taught that version, the
Communist version.

Salaam found the Communist propaganda intrusive because he
was in Hungary to study science and he had to pass political
classes before he could take any science classes. The
intrusiveness of the propaganda gave him an initially negative
outlook on "required" courses at Miami-Dade.

First when I came here and they told me to take general
requirement courses, I thought that it is unnecessary. I was
feeling like going back to Hungary, and I was mad when they
tell me I had to take those courses. But now I am taking them
and I see it is very, very important for me to take those
courses. I think it is not bad to take those courses.

In Russia, Raisa and Ruslan went to school during the time
that the Communist government was loosening its grip on the
educational system. They reported that there was more free
discussion about politics at that time; however, they still felt as
though they had to be careful about what they said in school.
Ruslan illustrated it this way:

While I was in Russia, I learned like five or six different kinds
of history. But all the time it was changed, and people, like
the teachers and the students had like completely different

opinions. Some didn't like it when people started talking bad about something. The teacher would say not to mention it [makes a slashing gesture across his throat].

The other students whose education was affected by the political situation in their country were the Haitians. In the same way that the students from Communist countries felt that they could not be open with their political beliefs, Henrietta said that many Haitians were intimidated and not allowed to express their opinions.

Yeah, we talked about politics, but you don't really talk about politics. I'm from Haiti, you can't really talk about politics you don't know who's who. You cannot say **everything**; you don't know who you are talking to.

The political situation in Haiti had an even more profound effect on Henri's life. In fact the year that Henri took the entrance exam for the university, access to higher education was one of the political grievances that was being brought before the government. This caused a disruption in the exam process:

They overthrew Jean Claude in '87? It was around there, it was just the beginning, so it didn't affect me that much as other people. Only once there was problem in the exams, when I was in the last part of high school. Some students, they was trying to boycott the exam, so they cheated. Anyway it was a political problem situation. I was there, but I said I'll wait for the second, for the August exams. But then I had to come here in January. I moved to New York.

It is obvious that the political atmosphere was of consequence to the students who came from Communist and former Communist countries and countries that were in political turmoil. We can probably assume these students did not always agree with the political content of the classes in their own countries; after all many chose to leave their countries for political reasons. Salaam's admission that he resented taking required courses at Miami-Dade because he equated them with the socialist propaganda he was required to study in Hungary may give an insight into students' preconceived ideas about the function of those required courses. Finally, students who are not accustomed to sharing their opinions on controversial issues in class may be apprehensive about speaking in class.

Cognitive Factors

For the most part, the teaching methods, tests and required assignments that the student-participants were exposed to in their native countries required them to work at the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Ruslan's characterization of the focus on lower level cognitive skills is typical of the participants in this study: "In Russia, the education is very strong. They made us memorize a lot." Carla blames this focus on memorization on the Communist system when she says: "What I learned in Cuba was very distorted and very rational. OK, it's not the word--rational. Everything can only be one way--the way they say it is. It is like this and you don't have critical thinking." As noted in the section which described the political influences on students' education, Carla's observation was fairly

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common among the students who were schooled in countries with authoritarian governments. Critical thinking was not encouraged if it conflicted with official state doctrine.

This next section describes and analyzes the methods, tests, and assignments students were required to do in their first language and analyzes the cognitive difficulty of those elements.

<u>Teaching Methods</u>

The majority of the students in this study reported that lecture was the most common teaching method employed in their countries. From these lectures students took notes and simply had to restate their notes on the exams or memorize text and reproduce it exactly. Henri and Henrietta reported that their teachers required them to do a lot of memorization in Haiti. For example, Henri reported that his oral exams required rote memorization. If students were not prepared, they could be given corporal punishment: "In Haiti they are much more focused on oral recitation. Also here they don't beat you [if you don't learn the lesson]; in Haiti they beat you".

Raisa also found the differences in cognitive demands a little disorienting especially when it came to writing her research paper. In the initial interview I asked her if she did research papers in Russia. She replied that she did and described her Russian research papers like this:

> For example, in biology or zoology, we had like to take to
> describe some animal or describe some part of some country,
> so we took some pictures from some magazine and we wrote
> like where this place locating and what advantages is.

Raisa described this as a very teacher-directed process, especially when it came to topic selection: "They give you a topic, you go to the library and you can pick one book or many books, and you write everything about this." In the final interview when I ask Raisa to compare research papers in Russia and the paper she did for her psychology class, she admitted:

> I don't know. I cannot really say that I really did some research papers [in Russia], but it was something on research basis. Basic like. Like they give you a topic and you looking for the topic in the encyclopedia, maybe something so just kind of say you have to say it in your own words.

Only Cesar reported that class discussion or what he called "round tables" were widely employed. Still, he claims that the advantage of round tables was that it made it easier for students to memorize what was important from the lesson. Cesar explains the organization of these class discussions like this:

> When I was in seventh grade, they decided to change like the whole teaching program and they tried to adapt new systems [for the students] to be able to analyze. So we started to work in round tables and tried to discuss and having our own conclusion about the theme we were studying. There was always a person, a student that he had to study the theme we were talking about, and he had to like organize and give the work to ones who wanted to talk. It was like, what was it like? It was like moderating for speech. He, well the person, had a background about what we were talking about and then the

teacher would discuss the general ideas and then we would
have like discussions. It worked, it was like the best way
because you can really memorize and get into the real thing
and be interested.

While lecture is also the most frequently used method of teaching in
the students' Gordon Rule classes, it is important to note that many
of the teachers I described in this study employed a wide variety of
teaching methods that could be unfamiliar to the students. For
example, except for Cesar, students reported that they had never
done group work until they began studying at Miami-Dade.
Similarly, very few students reported that they were required to
apply their personal experiences to the content of the courses they
were learning. In addition, none of the students had ever kept
reflective journals.

Even in subjects that we might think of as "hands-on," like
science labs, students were not allowed to participate directly. For
example, Henri recalls his high school science class:

We had experiments, yeah, I remember when I was 15,
whatever the class we used to go to lab, so they used to do
the experiment in front of us, but we don't do it. You just
watch it and write down what they say.

From Henri's recollection it is obvious that the principal lesson of
these science classes was that it was important to write down the
correct answer as determined by the teacher. Hugo's experience
seems to be typical of the educational experiences of the other
students in this study--being a good student meant telling the

teacher the expected answer. In other words, students worked primarily at the knowledge level of Bloom's taxonomy.

<u>Types of Exams in Students' First Language Education</u>

The most common type of test for the student- participants in their first language were written, essay-type exams. All students reported taking these types of exams more frequently than any others, although the written exams were not always as open-ended as those these students have taken at Miami-Dade. For example, Henrietta and Henri were required to memorize their answers exactly as they were written in the book or told to them by the teachers. Henri describes written exams in Haiti this way: "Sometimes they asked you to write down the whole book. If you missed one word, you were in trouble. We had to write it from memory." Most of the students reported that their written exams were more open-ended, yet they still had right or wrong answers.

I was surprised at the number of student-participants who reported that they were routinely given oral exams, although it seemed that these exams differed in their formality and in their cognitive difficulty. Hugo describes oral exams in Hungary as high anxiety, but informal:

In every class some students would have to go in front of the class. The teacher had the role which was a huge book, red color, because of the Socialists--Communist color. She'd open it. Every page had three names. She was turning the pages and afterwards. 'OK, you [points]. Come here and tell about the lesson.' I was always on the first page [his last

name is at the beginning of the alphabet]; so once she turned the page, I was, whew, whew [a sigh of relief].

Still another perspective on oral exams is Raisa's description of Russian oral exams, which is distinct from Henri or Hugo's experiences, yet similar to Carla's version of oral tests in Cuba. Raisa describes her oral exams like this:

> In history you have like your final test. You have certain questions, and you prepare those questions that you discuss during your class. You come for your test. For example, my class was a very little class, just 12 girls. I think three or four people come into the room and a teacher gives you like tickets, and they're numbered so you don't see the number and just pick one. There are some questions and you just pick one, but you don't know what it is and you take time if you need time to think. They give you time. I don't remember, like 10 minutes. Sometimes if you know the material very good, so you can go straight. You don't need time for preparation. You answer the question. So this is the test.

Carla and Raisa recounted that they also had oral exams for mathematics. They were required to go to the chalk board and write out the answer to a problem and explain their work as they wrote the answer.

Only three of the students in the study, Angela, Beatriz, and Cesar, reported having multiple choice tests in school, and they said that these were rare. Inexperience with multiple choice tests seems to have created difficulty for some students. For example, when I

asked Hugo if he ever had multiple choice exams in Hungary, he replied:

> Never, never. True and false never. It's kind of funny. Today I had my first test in social science [Social Environment]. I couldn't imagine how it's going to work because I had the idea that you had to tell about the first human beings [the content of the first test]. You had to write and write, not that there would be four options and you have to choose them. I think it's harder and easier. It's harder because, for example, there are four options. One is completely wrong, right? The second one is wrong if you study it. There are two good ones; you have to choose the best one. [On the other hand] If you write down these things, the teacher can interpret it or he knows what you mean. But, with the computer test, no [you cannot do this].

Both Hugo and Carlos expressed their preference for written exams over multiple choice exams even though they are apprehensive about their language ability. This exchange with Hugo illustrates his point:

> Hugo: I thought multiple choice exams are easy, but it's difficult. I would rather take an essay exam than a multiple choice.
>
> Cheryl: Even in English?
>
> Hugo: Even in English. Because teachers are tricky [smiles]. They can put answers that are similar. If you write, them you can write more and you can show that you have studied for

the test. But, maybe these were just answers that didn't click in your mind, this expression or something. So this multiple choice for me is something very difficult.

Likewise Carlos explains:

It's just that you [in the U.S. educational system] use very multiple choice questions. Teachers in Cuba, they use development questions, so you have to write a lot. You have to explain a lot--everything. Well, I wouldn't argue for American teachers to use that on me now because I'm not really used to English yet. But it's much better if you want to develop a person's explanations and all that.

Even though Cesar had taken multiple choice tests in Colombia, he found the multiple choice humanities tests baffling:

I spoke with my advisor and she told me that you have to understand that this is a different system. In South American countries you are used to writing like essay exam. So you have to be real flexible to change to another system. But I told her that I can take my economic test and it's also like a multiple choice test. I did it and I did very good. I don't see the difference between one and the other because if one is a multiple choice test and the other is a multiple choice test, it's no reason for me to be so bad [in humanities].

While Cesar was familiar with multiple choice tests, he did not think that multiple choice tests were the best way to evaluate the content of humanities class.

Philosophical ideas should be like: understand by yourself. You can't make a general statement about one idea and either a specific statement because I think that in philosophical things and general humanities, you can't make someone else think the way the book makes you think. As I told, it's critical thinking. I think that is what the course is about. You can't be a critical thinker if I tell you what to write. That's what I don't agree with. Well, for me, I don't know. But in economics it's different because there is no change. If it's demand, it's demand; if it's supply, it's supply. Even like in the multiple choice test, you have four very similar answers about the question, so it's like humanities, but there is only one that matches with the question. In humanities I believe that it can't be that way because it's what you think, what you understand, what you feel like.

Both multiple choice and written exams seemed to give students in this study difficulty, although for different reasons. Multiple choice exams were difficult because they were unfamiliar to students and written essay exams were difficult because students were unsure of their language abilities and because students were used to written exams that required them to memorize verbatim. In Cesar's case, he found it difficult to take a multiple choice exam for a subject that he considers subjective.

It appears that Hugo was able to adapt to multiple choice exams. At least he had the idea that the right way to approach these exams was to eliminate answers that were obviously wrong so that he could make an educated guess about the correct answer. Still the "tricky" teachers could write answers similar to the right answer and thus confuse the student.

Content of First Language Education

When asked if any of the content of their first language education had helped them in their Gordon Rule classes, students fell into two main groups: (a) those who felt that the content of their Gordon rule class was similar to what they had learned in their first language, and (b) those who found the content of their Gordon Rule classes entirely novel. Whether a student fell into one of these two groups seemed to depend more on the course than the students' first language education.

All of the students who were enrolled in Social Environment reported that they studied content similar to what they were learning in their classes, especially when it came to geography. Yet only three of seven students in psychology, Carlos, Salaam, and Henrietta, reported that they had ever been exposed to any of the topics covered in their Individual in Transition course. For Carlos, this was a part of his medical training in Cuba. For Salaam and Henrietta, their sole exposure was an introduction to the philosophy

of Sigmound Freud. In Salaam's case, this study was done on his own, outside of his school requirements:

> Salaam: It [psychology] wasn't new because I before I came here I heard about Freud and I read some books.
>
> Cheryl: You just read these books on your own?
>
> Salaam: Yeah, because you know it's important. I read a little bit, but not that much. I knew something about it, but not that much. But in school we haven't learned about psychology.

The other students that were in psychology classes, Beatriz, Carla, Hugo, and Raisa, informed me that they had never had a class like it before.

In Social Environment classes, students reported that they felt familiar with the content because they had been exposed to similar topics in their first language. Beatriz, Cesar, Hugo, Raisa, Ruslan, and Salaam felt especially confident about their knowledge of geography. One of the requirements of the Social Environment class is that students must take a computerized exam covering the names of all the countries in the world. Students can take this exam as many times as necessary; however, they must get at least 70% to pass. Ruslan explains how his knowledge of geography helped him to get a perfect score on the geography test: "I took the maps test and I got 100 because we learned a lot about geography in Russia." Yet, while Ruslan, Carla, and Hugo said that much of what they learned in their Social Environment class was similar to what they learned in their country, all said that many of the topics

they covered were taught from a "different perspective." This was Carla's experience:

> In Cuba I studied Karl Marx. There he was like a hero and everything was perfect. But about his personal life, he was divine. He used to live a perfect personal life and his family and everything. OK, I just finished reading about him [for Social Environment class] and he had a very distorted personal life. He didn't take care of his family or anything.

Another example of this is Hugo's experience. When I asked him what he had learned in Hungary that was repeated in his Social Environment class, he replied, "Everything. So I had to just translate. We studied economics, government, the politics." However, he admitted that much of what he learned came from a different perspective that what he had learned in Hungary.

> But because Hungary was an ex-Communist country, I learned under the Communist system studying under the Communist system. A couple of things are different. We learned that the Communist system is a very well-organized system. Now [what] I just learned a couple of days ago is the worst thing is that the government holds everything in common. There was a different perspective.

These students' observations that history was taught from a different perspective could be attributed to their exposure to the Communist system which controlled their educational experiences.

When asked about their previous exposure to the content of humanities classes, the students' responses were diverse. Beatriz,

Carlos, Cesar, Henri, Henrietta, and Hugo said that they had taken courses in philosophy before. Much of the content of those courses was repeated in their humanities classes; however, the integration of arts and philosophy was new to these students. According to Henri, "We took philosophy, but it wasn't like humanities here. In Haiti, we didn't focus on the Arts " Carlos reported that not only his background in philosophy, but his exposure to literature assisted him in his humanities classes. He cites his previous knowledge of the Greek tragedy <u>Oedipus Rex</u> in Spanish as a positive influence on his success in his humanities class.

The student who seem to struggle most with the content of the humanities class was Cesar. While Cesar reported that he had studied philosophy in Colombia, sometimes found it difficult to understand the examples that Dr. Plato gave in class because he felt that he lacked the cultural background that native-speaking students had. Cesar puts it this way:

> What I've seen also is that my cultural background is not as well as the Americans, well, for these people who have been here for a long time. Because they talk about for example movies or opera or about plays. The examples they use in class are American examples, and I'm lost when they talk about, like say for example, a movie like say five years ago that was really like important. I'm out of this world because the persons, their cultural background is like different.

All in all, it seems that the students who were more familiar with the content of the classes were more successful in these classes.

First Language Academic Skills

When asked what they learned in their first language had helped them in their studies at Miami-Dade, Angela and Cesar initially identified skills rather than content as the most important contributions. For Angela it was the development of her writing skills and for Cesar it was his note taking skills. This next section covers how the students L_1 academic skills have had both negative and positive effects on their academic experiences.

<u>First Language Writing Instruction and Rhetorical Style</u>

Some of the study participants reported that composition instruction was included in their first language education. In most cases this was a part of the students' literature classes. Carlos' description of his literature class in Cuba was typical. When I asked if he had composition classes in high school, he replied:

> Yes, in literature class. They joined Spanish and literature in one. For example, on Monday, you had to write something about what every she wanted. The other day you were supposed to analyze from a classic, or a subject you were going to take.

Beatriz pointed out differences in the way students were taught to write in Portuguese:

> The compositions, we don't have really a very strict order [of development in Portuguese]; it's very free, so you can write the way you want. You still have to be clear and tell the reader what you want to say, but you didn't have to have-- introduction, paragraphs, and conclusion. It's a lot more free.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it can go around in circles. I think what they [her teachers in Brazil] think is important is if you are creative. They think you have a lot of talent.

As Kaplan (1966) has observed, several students remarked that there were significant differences between their rhetorical style in their first language and English. For Raisa the most significant difference between writing in English and writing in Russian was the role that propaganda played. "In Russia there has to be a little bit like propaganda coming in. Yeah, it wasn't really saying truth, but we would convince you using propaganda." Propaganda for Raisa was the set phrases of Communist ideology which permeated the every aspect of life.

Although Henri believes that the basic form of written composition of French is similar to English, there are some differences in writing styles that he finds confusing:

They teach you like the introduction, but it's different. Like in Haiti they tell you to put like a general opening before you hit the point, but here you just go straight to the point. That's why I always get confused when I'm writing.

Henri's point about the importance of a very general introduction is very familiar to me. I have seen many essays and other texts written by Haitian students that begin with the phrase "From the beginning of time there have been..." This seems to be the standard beginning of just about any type of written discourse for Haitians. Moreover, I have observed, and this is confirmed by Kaplan's study of contrastive rhetoric, that students who speak

Romance languages make use of what English speakers may perceive as a flowery, elaborate style. Henri identifies both of these factors as frustrating differences between writing in French and writing in English. "I try to put general, and to talk beautiful before I say what I want to say, and here you just go straight to the point. It's different." In Henri's case his first language writing instruction is interfering and has actually made it more difficult for him to hone his writing skills in English.

In contrast to the confusing interference that Henri has from his first language, Hugo and Salaam confided that they had never been taught to write in their first language. When I ask Salaam if he had composition classes in Arabic, he replied:

> You know it's up to you what you write. For example, you have only one topic that the teacher used to give all the students and you have to write it, as you want. We don't have topic sentence and conclusion and some things like that. You write it out in your home and he corrects the composition not according to--it's grammar I think, most of it is spelling.

Although he was required to write essays for almost every class in Hungary, Hugo felt that he did not have effective composition instruction. Hugo was not really sure what made good writing in Hungarian. He was baffled by the grading system and unsure how to improve his writing.

> We got three grades [on writing assignments]: one is for grammar, one is for understanding, and the third one it is style. For the style I always got an "F." I didn't understand

> why. We asked the teacher at the end of the term at the end
> of the year. 'The style is individual?' I thought that. She said
> 'No. The style you have to write as I want you to.'

However, Hugo went on to say that the teacher never explained to the students what good style was. Interestingly enough, Hugo reported that because there was "not really a form in Hungarian" learning to write in English has influenced how he now writes in Hungarian. In fact it was difficult for him to recall how he wrote in Hungarian because "now I'm completely different in Hungarian."

Similar to Hugo, Carlos believes that learning to write in English has affected how he writes in Spanish. He said that before he took English composition courses, his writing in Spanish was:

> Crazy. Have you read Garcia-Marquez? It was exactly like
> that. It's like you have an idea, and suddenly you remember
> something and you go back, and suddenly, you start talking
> about that idea and suddenly you remember the first one and
> you go back. You make a lot of examples of this one and go
> back again. I don't know. Are you getting the idea? We use
> many good words. We are very metaphoric, I mean the
> people who actually know how to writing in Spanish. I wasn't
> bad, but I wasn't so good. I was middle. Yeah, they [Spanish
> writers] don't tell you straight. They tell you, but you have to
> try to imagine what they're trying to say. The way I used to
> write and the way that most of my friends that they were very
> good writers they used to write like that.

However, recently Carlos found himself using English structure when he writes Spanish.

> Well, I've changed it a lot since I learned English. I think so because I was writing a letter and I looked at it and I said 'Oh, my God, this can't be me' [laughs]. I was very messy and now I'm I'm very straight for the structure.

Like Carlos, Cesar's describes his rhetorical style in Spanish as quite elaborate. Cesar describes a typical Spanish writing assignment:

> It starts with a general idea of what you are going to talk about. Let's say we're talking about a specific thing characteristics and then I give some others, but one is most important. Keeping the idea, I can write other examples that take you back to the general idea. Then comparing and going back. You don't have to have a particular order. It's not like the first paragraph has to be like this and this. You can even talk about different topics. For example, in an essay in Spanish, you're giving not especially examples but characteristics of what we are talking about. Give your personal point of view for everything you're talking. That's practically the whole essay. If you don't give your point of view, that's the wrong structure.

With the exception of Henri, all of the students said that they were able to keep the rhetorical style of their first language from influencing their English rhetorical style, although Carlos and Hugo admitted that English style had influenced their style in their first

languages. At least with respect to rhetorical style, most of these students seem to have adapted to American-English conventions.

<u>Required Assignments in First Language Education</u>

Almost all of the students in this study reported that taking notes and essay exams were the most common activities in their first language education, although for Salaam taking notes was more common in his Hungarian educational situation than in Sudan. He said that many teachers in Sudan did not allow students to take notes, rather they wanted to be sure that they had the students' full attention.

> Sometimes they [the teachers] just ask you to be still and pay attention to what they say and don't take notes--not write in your notebook. When they are done, you go to your book. Sometimes I didn't like that. They just lectured us and that's it for 45 minutes and then they go. Some of them don't even allow you take notes.

Ruslan, on the other hand, reported that he usually did not take notes because the teachers' lectures came right out of the text. He explained that he would rather read the text at home.

> Taking notes, you could do it, but everything was in the book. So if you didn't want you didn't have to. I usually used my book because a lot of teachers were like too fast. I could think like naaat, I have my book and I can do it at home.

In fact Ruslan's lack of experience taking notes may have had a negative effect on his success in his Social Environment class. When I observed him in this class, Ruslan was not taking notes as

frequently as the other students in the class. In fact, it seemed as though he only wrote what Ms. Durant wrote on the board. Without explanation or examples, the words would not have been very helpful for Ruslan when it came time to study for the exam.

Summary

Several elements of the students' first language educational experiences seem to influence students' coping strategies in their Gordon Rule classes. The following are the some of the themes I have gleaned from my data:

1. Some students were uncomfortable with the fast pace of student life in the United States and had problems juggling their studies and work and family responsibilities or they are unrealistic about their commitments and take on more responsibilities than they can realistically accomplish.

2. For the most part, the students in this study have strong familial support for their education. This had a positive effect on their ability to cope with the demands of the class.

3. Some students are uncomfortable approaching their teachers for help, while others are uneasy with the casual relationship between students and teachers.

4. Many students are accustomed to studying with and building their social relationships around the same group of students through out their educational career. Students find it difficult to form relationships with their American peers and find it disorienting to have different students in all of their classes.

5. Students who come from countries which are controlled by an authoritarian political system might be apprehensive about sharing their opinions in class because sharing those opinions had dire consequences in their native countries.

6. Most of the assignments and tests that students encountered in their first language required them to work at the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Many of these students not only had to learn a language, but also learn how to think critically.

7. While many of these students seem to have better background knowledge than their English-speaking peers in some area, they lack knowledge in others. Moreover, some students observed that the content was taught from a different perspective than in their native countries.

8. A few students in this study seem to have been hampered by poor academic skill development in their first language, thus making it even more difficult for them to learn. Conversely, those students who have strong academic skills in their first language found it easier to adjust to the demands of their Gordon Rule classes.

9. At least one student found it difficult to adjust their rhetorical style to the typical English pattern, while others believe that their newly-acquired English rhetorical style has had an influence on their texts in their first language.

10. Students with strong English language skills and diligence as students had more success in their Gordon Rule classes.

Chapter 5 - Requirements of Gordon Rule Classes

As Currie notes, "to help students succeed at university, the objective of practitioners and researchers in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is to determine what students will be required to do and how we can best prepare them to do it" (p. 102). This chapter focuses on the requirements of the Gordon Rule classes and the students' and instructors' perceptions of these requirements. First, the general requirements of the Gordon Rule classes are identified and the similarities and differences within the different academic disciplines are examined. Next the reading, writing, oral/aural, and critical thinking skills necessary to complete the requirements for the Gordon Rule classes are analyzed. The conclusion of this chapter summarizes the academic demands. Figure 5.1 indicates how these academic factors relate to the whole adaptation process. The shaded portion of Figure 5.1 represents the areas covered by this section.
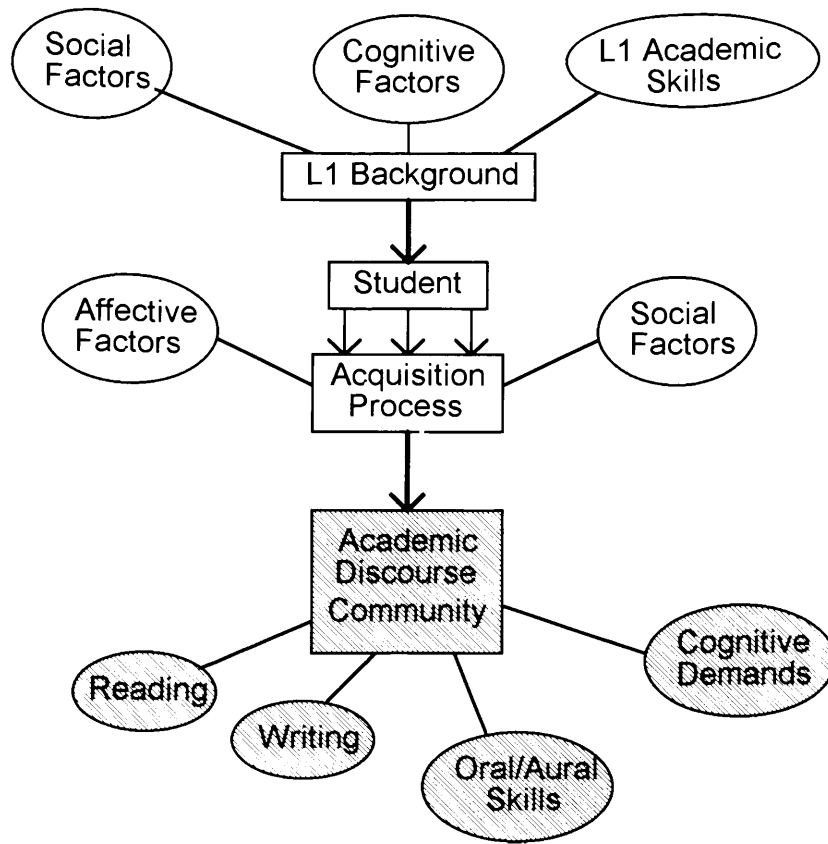
Figure 5.1. A possible model for how the factors interact with each other. The shaded area is the portion covered by this chapter.

General Class Requirements

As I pointed out in Chapter One, Blanton defines the academic discourse community as "a collective of individuals (teachers, researcher, scholars, students) dispersed in time and space but connected to the academy in some way, individuals who value written language over spoken language". (1994, p. 3). Even though the academic discourse communities that I scrutinized in this study all had oral elements, the students' grades for the classes depended primarily on exams and written assignments, in other

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words, on their ability to comprehend and use written language effectively.

One of the questions that I had hoped to answer from this study is: What are the characteristics of the specific discourse communities in this study? Similar to Bridgeman and Carlson's (1984) study I discovered that while there are a few characteristics that can be identified from each discipline, the characteristics of the classes, even within the same discourse community, varied significantly. I hypothesize that this is primarily due to two factors, or the combination of those factors. The first factor is the differences in teaching styles, expertise, and pedagogical philosophies of the individual instructors in this study. The second is that because these courses were introductory freshman courses-- their purpose was not to make the students full-fledged members of this discourse community, but to introduce them to the community.

In the humanities courses some of the differences were caused by the fact that each of the professor's expertise was in different areas: Dr. Plato, philosophy and drama, Ms. Mozart, music, and Mr. Picasso, art. Another distinction was caused by the two different textbooks used in the classes. One is historically-oriented and the other is thematically-based.

The humanities faculty's variety of expertise is similar to the diversity in the faculty of the Social Environment class. Dr. Mead is a sociologist, Dr. Gibbon and Ms. Durant are historians, and Dr. Hegel describes himself as "a multi-disciplinary type of guy who was lucky enough to have a lot of history and philosophy."

The psychology instructors are probably a little more similar in their background and training; however, as Mr. Freud observes: "Some teach the course [Individual in Transition] a little more academically and some a little more growth-oriented." In the end, most of the professors seem to agree that these differences are positive because they give the students a full spectrum of experiences. Ms. Skinner makes this observation about the psychology course:

> I think it's a human science and the person who instructs is going to have their own flavor. It's like a clinical experience, if you have a million therapists addressing the same issue, you do a million different things. I teach very much with my heart; it's very much a relationship experience and the class reflects who I am.

What the courses do have in common is that they are based on the same campus-wide competencies. Therefore, the basic content of each of the courses is dictated. There are similarities within disciplines also. The assignments and exams for the Social Environment class seem to focus more on an objective perspective of the various social science disciplines. On the other hand, the psychology class requires students to integrate their personal experiences with the content of the course. The humanities class lies somewhere between these two perspectives.

The next section examines each of these disciplines in detail showing how the professors are similar and different in their approaches to these courses.

Psychology

     All of the psychology instructors except for Dr. Jung use the text <u>Psychology and Effective Behavior</u> as the primary text in their classes. Dr. Jung uses <u>The Road Less Traveled</u>.

     The writing assignments for these classes are either objective or subjective, depending on the professors. Two of the professors, Ms. Skinner and Mr. Freud, require students to write traditional research papers to fulfill their Gordon Rule writing requirement. Additionally, Ms. Skinner's assignment has an element of subjectivity because she expects her students to add a one-page personal reflection to their research paper. Dr. Mead requires student to write a short paper which she calls a "Psychological Profile." To fulfill this assignment, a student researches the life of a famous person and evaluates the person's character based on the criteria of effective behavior that he or she has learned. The remaining two professors, Dr. Jung and Ms. Piaget, require students to write more subjective papers. Dr. Mead's second writing assignment is also subjective.

     Dr. Jung requires students to write three essays in which they relate their own experiences to the concepts they have learned in class. The topics of these essays are: (a) discipline, (b) self-concept, and (c) moral development. Ms. Piaget's assignment is a growth experience paper. She described it to me thus:

     This is not a research paper; this is a growth experience.

     They need to think of a decision-making situation that they are either going through or will be going through, or have recently

gone through. They are going to put that on paper--the
process--from defining the task to actually making that
decision, analyzing and evaluating all the alternatives that
they came up with.

Similarly, Dr. Mead's second written assignment is "an activity that
is anchored in self-development and personal growth." Students
must take on a new activity that will contribute to their development
as an adult demonstrating effective behavior. On the paper
describing the assignment, Dr. Mead lists some possible activities
that students can participate in. They include: finding or changing
jobs, establishing a new relationship, or improving or changing their
behavior.

All the psychology instructors evaluate their students using
exams or quizzes. Ms. Skinner and Mr. Freud use short answer
type tests. Ms. Skinner gives students eight to ten quizzes on the
content of their reading and a final exam covering the content of the
students' oral presentations. Mr Freud gives students four short
answer exams. Dr. Jung and Ms. Piaget give students a
combination of essay and multiple choice exams, and Dr. Mead
gives students two essay exams.

All of the psychology professors use lecture and discussion as
their primary teaching strategies, and Dr. Jung, Ms. Piaget, and Mr.
Freud supplement this with films. Dr. Mead and Ms. Piaget use
both small groups as a teaching method, though in different ways.
Dr. Mead requires students to do a small group research project
where they find some information about one of the topics covered in

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the text. Ms. Piaget usually uses small groups to create study groups. She puts students together and asks them to review their notes in the class before an exam. Ms. Skinner requires students to make an oral presentation on the topic they have investigated for their research paper. Figure 5.2 summarizes the requirements of the psychology classes.

	Jung	Skinner	Mead	Piaget	Freud	
	<u>The Road Less Traveled</u>	<u>Psychology and Effective Behavior</u>	<u>Psychology and Effective Behavior</u>	<u>Psychology and Effective Behavior</u>	<u>Psychology and Effective Behavior</u>	Text
	• 3 Reaction Papers	• Research Paper • Oral Presentation	• Psychological Profile • Chapter Outlines • Psychological Development Paper	• Personal Reflection Paper on Effective Behavior	• Research Paper	Assignments
	• 4 Exams (essay and multiple choice)	• 8-10 Quizzes on reading assign-ments (short answer) • Final Exam (essay)	• 2 Exams (essay)	• 4 Exams (multiple choice) • 3 Quizzes (essay)	• 4 Exams (short answer)	Tests
	• lecture • discussion • films • counseling sessions	• lecture • discussion • Student oral reports	• lecture • discussion • group projects	• lecture • discussion • small group work • films	• lecture • discussion • films	Strategies

<u>Figure 5.2.</u> Requirements of Psychology Classes

Social Environment

The four Social Environment professors in this study all use the same text--Social Science: An Introduction to the Study of Society--although, Dr. Hegel supplements the text with about 100 pages of reading handouts that he has created. Every student enrolled in Social Environment must pass a computerized exam testing the students' knowledge of the political geography of the world. In order to satisfy this requirement, students must name at least 70% of the countries correctly, though their score on this exam does not count as part of their grade for the class.

To fulfill their Gordon Rule writing requirement, the instructors have a variety of assignments. Dr. Gibbon and Dr. Hegel require students to write one to three essays. The topics of these essays depend on the students' interests and the content of the course. Ms. Durant requires students do a detailed timeline of a historical period. She also expects students to research an issue of social importance summarize three articles or a book about that topic, and add their reflections on the topic. Dr. Mead requires students to read a book and write a book report. She provides students with a three-page list of books acceptable for this assignment.

Dr. Gibbon and Dr. Hegel rely on multiple choice exams for the greatest portion of their evaluation of the students. Dr. Gibbon gives five multiple choice exams and Dr. Hegel gives four exams with 100 questions on each exam. Ms. Durant gives students three exams which combine multiple choice items and essay questions. Dr. Mead gives students two or three essay exams.

All of the Social Environment professors use lecture and class discussion as their primary teaching methods. Dr. Hegel punctuates his lectures with overhead transparencies of maps and other visual aids. Ms. Durant and Dr. Mead engage students in group activities, although each admit that they use them in a limited way. Ms. Durant and Dr. Gibbon use films. A unique teaching strategy is Dr. Gibbon's use of off-campus experiences or field trips. A noted expert on local history, Dr. Gibbon takes his class on walking tours near the campus. He explains how he uses these tours to teach students about social science concepts:

> I take my classes on tours. What's so convenient now is the Metro Mover [public transportation train]. I can take them in sort of a loop and get off at each platform and talk about that and get back on the next train or two trains later. We look at architecture and history, current development, certain sections of town, how economics has changed things, preservation; there are so many things you can address with touring.

Figure 5.3 summarizes the requirements and activities of the Social Environment classes in this study.

Durant	Gibbon	Mead	Hegel	
Social Science: An Introduction to the Study of Society	Social Science: An Introduction to the Study of Society	Social Science: An Introduction to the Study of Society	Social Science: An Introduction to the Study of Society 100+ pages of reading handouts	Text
• Map Exam • Time line • Summaries of 3 articles on the same topic	• Map Exam • 1 3-4 page essay	• Map Exam • Chapter Outline • Book Report	• Map Exam • 2-3 Essays	Assignments
• 3 Exams (multiple choice, essay)	• 5 Exams (multiple choice)	• 2-3 Exams (essay)	4 Exams (100 multiple choice questions)	Tests
• Lecture • Discussion • Films • Group activities	• Lecture • Discussion • Films • Field trips	• Lecture • Discussion • Small Group Activities	•Lecture • Discussion • Maps and other visual aids	Strategies

Figure 5.3. General requirements for Social Environment classes

Two of the three humanities professors, Dr. Plato and Ms. Mozart use the same textbook: <u>The Art of Being Human</u> and have similar assignments. Dr. Plato requires students to write two essays, an anecdote, and a plot summary, and Ms. Mozart requires students to write three essays for which she gives very detailed instructions.

The written assignments for Dr. Plato's class include: (a) an essay on the Apollonian and Dionysian aspects of themselves or others; (b) an anecdote contrasting the figuratist and literalist interpretations of an incident; (c) an essay which analyzes a moral choice based on the philosophies studied in class; and, (d) a critical summary of an art film. For Ms. Mozart's class, the students have to write three essays. She wants these essays to be creative: "I'm asking them to do three creative papers, personally creative papers, not just factual." The topics include: (a) an essay on how art effects students' lives; (b) an essay discussing fate versus human will as it is manifested in the play <u>Oedipus Rex</u>; and, (c) an essay speculating on ways to improve the educational system so that students are better prepared for college.

Dr. Plato and Ms. Mozart are also similar in their methods. Both use lecture, discussion, and group work; Ms. Mozart relies more on group work than Dr. Plato because Dr. Plato finds it is not always productive. Dr. Plato uses this strategy when she wants students to consider moral dilemmas:

Sometimes I do the recommended breaking up into small groups, but not often, but when I do that I give them a sheet in which there is a clash of developers versus environmentalist or something like that. I get them to give a report. Usually what happens is that somebody dominates it and they know who the good student is and they say, "I'm with her."

Both Dr. Plato and Ms. Mozart also use a variety of audio visual aids including film, art slides, and musical recordings. Ms. Mozart uses these audio visual aids to encourage her students to discuss certain themes:

They watch the films; then afterwards I give them a list of discussion topics and they break up into groups of five and they discuss these topics. They each choose two or three topics and then I ask a member of the group to stand up and report and then these discussion groups interact by responding to each other's answers.

Dr. Plato does not like to use films too often because she finds that some students tune out. After she shows a film, she often asks her students to quickly answer a simple question about the film. She showed me some samples of student responses to one of these questions:

I played a [video] tape because we are doing art and it had Eastern art in it. It had a narrator talking about what Buddhists believe: [she reads some of the responses to me] "Buddhists believe that life just happens." Fine, fine, fine. Then one of them says: 'I honestly did not pay too much

attention to the movie, and therefore I am at fault for not being able to accomplish the work.' Well, the video lasted about 14 minutes. He used those 14 minutes to just drop out.

Mr. Picasso has a completely different approach to the humanities class. He shows the students a series of films and asks them to relate these films to greater life questions about the state of the humanities. The success of his class depends to a great extent on student participation in the discussions. One third of the students' grade is derived from "the instructor's evaluation of class attendance, participation, and student effort." I asked Mr. Picasso what films he uses and what he expects students to learn through those films:

I don't use long run, feature films. I use mostly art films and foreign films as vehicles for getting the concepts across. Well, I start out with Greenway's <u>The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover</u>, first of all to kind of shock them. It makes them see that this humanities course is going to be different than others. Second for them to see that the characters in the film, their roles, what they say about things about our society and how we view the humanities. We talk about how the lover and the wife represent the intellectual and artistic aspects of our society today while the thief represents the baser side of our society. He is kind of representative of the way we've lowered ourselves. He seems successful because he's got everything, but he's really empty inside. So I start with the film Greenway's <u>Cook and the Thief</u>. It's about

the fate of the humanities. I use it as a way of getting them to look at an art object that deals with that issue so we're learning by talking about the films. We're learning how to talk about issues, but also how to read art texts with film as an example of one kind of art. Then I have been showing the films Hiroshima and The Atomic Cafe, looking at those two events as things that have changed history. They are sort of ruptures in history that have made the world different. That it's necessary to understand those to understand who we are today--what the world is today. So we watch the films and then talk about them in class. We talk about what the different roles represent. We do Hiroshima and The Atomic because I see them as pinnacles of human suffering. They are like art as therapy for the society.

Besides these films, Mr. Picasso also included Miracle Mile, Schindler's List and parts of Shoah in his curriculum.

The greatest portion of students' grades in each of these classes is their exam grades. Dr. Plato gives four exams which are composed of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Mr. Picasso and Ms. Mozart each give two essay exams, a midterm and a final. Figure 5.4 summarizes the requirements of these three humanities classes.

Plato	Picasso	Mozart	
The Art of Being Human	Culture and Values (not required)	The Art of Being Human	Text
• 2 essays • 1 anecdote • 1 critical plot summary • Extra Credit: Description of a work of art	• Participate in discussions	• 3 2-3 page papers	Assignments
• 4 exams (multiple choice, short answer, essay)	• Mid-term and Final (essay)	• Mid-term and Final (essay)	Tests
• lecture • discussion • films • small group work	• lecture • discussion • films	• lecture • discussion • films • art slides •music recordings • small group work • field trips	Strategies

Figure 5.4. General requirements of humanities classes

Reading

The amount of required reading and the ability to adequately comprehend texts emerged as the two greatest reading challenges for students in this study. The reading load required for these classes was probably a little lighter than average for college classes, yet students were challenged by the amount of reading that was required. Ms. Mozart observes: "My experience is that either they read very little or they understand little. I think it's a matter of time management; they just don't have time to read it."

Reading Load

The amount of reading required in each of these Gordon Rule classes varies from almost none to approximately two chapters a week, with about one twenty to thirty-page chapter per week being the average. Most of the instructor-participants required their students read one book during the semester and augmented these texts with hand-outs and other supplemental reading selections. A few students had to do library research outside of the class which also required reading. By-in-large, the teachers required the students to read the text before class so that they could come to class prepared to discuss the content of the text. Dr. Mead also required that her students outline the material presented in the text. Finally, while most teachers reported that they tested students on the content of their reading assignments, it was rare for them to test students solely based on what they had read. Usually, the instructors had also discussed the topic in class.

A few instructors differed from this norm. Although there is a text listed on his syllabus, Mr. Picasso, did not require students to read the textbook at all. He reported that he had tried teaching the course with a text and with the New York Times Art Magazine, but he felt as though neither this approach nor the textbook were engaging the students nor encouraging them to think critically. For this reason, he now bases his course entirely on lectures and art films. At the other extreme, Dr. Hegel reports that he intentionally gives students an overwhelming amount of reading:

> What I do is give them reading assignments. It is really a lot of material. Even the older students find themselves asphyxiated sometimes. My purpose is to overwhelm them. It's really conscious. I really give them a broad range of topics. The idea is to expose them to almost everything that they can be exposed to in the field because I feel that as they go through the college, they get to become more specialized.

In fact Angela gives the reading load as one of ther primary reasons for dropping the humanities class. She told me she dropped the class "Because I don't have time. Because I had to read a lot."

Reading Comprehension

Several instructors singled out comprehension of the textbook as one of the most difficult aspects of their classes for students. Indeed, some of the instructors tried to compensate for the students' deficient reading skills by giving them instruction or presenting techniques meant to strengthen students' reading comprehension. Dr. Mead, Ms. Skinner, and Dr. Plato each use different techniques

which they feel help students focus in on and improve their reading skills. Dr. Mead teaches students how to outline their textbooks. She begins by outlining some chapters for the students; then she gives them partial outlines and finally, she requires the students to outline the chapters on their own. Ms. Skinner encourages students to keep up with the required reading by giving frequent unannounced quizzes on the reading assignments. Dr. Plato has still another strategy. She frequently begins her class by asking students to write a short answer to a question about the reading assignment they were to have prepared for class. She allows the students to use their textbooks, but only permits them a few minutes to jot down the answers. She demonstrated this technique to me by explaining an example of the type of question she asks and showing different students' responses:

> Open your book to page 60, which is on impressionism, and find five words which describe impressionists paintings. I do this just as though it was as automatic as taking the role. I like to do things like that every once in a while.

From the results of this quick exercise, Dr. Plato can evaluate which students are struggling with the reading assignment.

> I've now circled five names here where I've indicated that they have some problems. Because if you read this [she indicates the section in the textbook], read the first paragraph, and you'll find that the first paragraph is about what came before impressionism. The reading assignment had been given a couple of days ago; they were supposed to have read all of

this. I was looking for "subjective, psychological, vivid colors" that's OK [she shows me one student's answers]. But if I get "realistic, realism, impressionism, narrative," it is totally off [reads another student's answer]. So here's somebody who, with the book open, can't understand what the book said. I think it's fairly straight-forward. But some students couldn't figure out that this is the introductory paragraph. They didn't even know what they were talking about.

Dr. Jung takes another approach to her reading assignments in an attempt to make the content more manageable for the students. While she requires the students to read a book, she does not require them to read a traditional textbook; instead, she uses Scott Peck's <u>The Road Less Traveled</u>, a popular self-help book. I asked Dr. Jung how the students responded to that text:

They love it; they love it! The first time I used it, this was a few years ago, I almost had a riot in my class. 'But, nobody requires that book!' I said, 'Well, change classes.' Some of them left. But the ones that stayed, at the end, and I'll never forget this, without one single exception, they said, 'Thank you for making me read that book.' Especially the part on discipline, which they loved it. Oh, yeah, the reaction is fantastic. Like I said, there is the occasional student who just gets angry when he sees this because, my guess is that what ever their life style is doesn't agree with this and they are just going to get angry. But that's really the exception, like one maybe in four years. But it's really overwhelmingly good.

Carla seems to agree with Dr. Jung's evaluation of how students react to the text. "The book is easy too because it's just every day life. It's just reassuring what you already know, and what you do not admit to know [smiles]."

Ms. Durant puts forth a similar observation to Dr. Plato's. She believes that many students lack the general ability to understand the text and manage the reading load. She does not believe the textbook used in her class is too difficult ("The vocabulary is not overwhelming, it's probably written at about twelfth grade level."); however, she says it is a struggle to get students to do the reading assignments with any consistency. She said that students complained to her that the text was "boring."

Schema.

Some of the professors identified the students' lack of sufficient content schema as a principal problem for them. Dr. Gibbon agrees with Ms. Durant that the Social Environment text may be difficult for students to comprehend; however, he finds lack of schema as the primary contributing factor for this difficulty:

It [the text] is difficult for them to read. I think it's real manageable, but lot of them don't know the background information, so it is all new to them. What I try to do is lecture and just follow the text in my lecture and I try to draw them into discussion in the lecture too.

The lack of content schema is also Mr. Picasso's justification for not requiring students to read a text.

Generally students are very deficient in their knowledge. That's why I don't think that they can do a humanities course with a traditional cannon. You just can't cover all the historical events. They don't have enough knowledge to do it.

Ms. Durant sees the development of the students' schema as one of her obligations: "I don't like the term cultural literacy, but I think it is really empowering to them if they learn the right vocabulary, that they have the vocabulary of an educated person."

Ms. Mozart also found the students deficient in the content schema necessary for success in their humanities class. When I questioned her about what she perceived to be the most difficult aspect of humanities for students, she answered without hesitation:

They are very poorly read, and their history is terrible. They don't have a sense of history. When I choose to do the textbook that [Dr. Plato] wrote [this text takes a thematic rather than historical approach to the humanities], I choose that thinking that they wouldn't need the history; that they could just deal with the concepts. But I think they really do need the history. They don't understand the times. They don't have a sense of the progression of mankind and the development of the humarities. They don't know how to link that to the social, political, and religious developments through the ages. Also they haven't read any literature.

Some of the students were perceptive enough to understand that this lack of schema made the course more difficult for them. For example, Cesar expressed frustration about his lack of

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background knowledge especially when it came to American cultural references in his humanities class.

> The teacher gave us many examples of books that the students had read in the past like <u>Huckleberry Finn</u> and some other books, and I was like "Oh, my God! I have to read them all." So that was like the most shocking part.

Similarly, Hugo found himself in the library trying to look up every concept that he didn't understand in his social environment text.

<u>Reading Strategies</u>

Besides content schema, Hugo struggled with formal schema--how best to process the text. One difficulty he had with his Social Environment class was to ascertain the best way to comprehend the dense content presented in the textbook. He began attacking the text with a bottom-up approach, trying to understand each word. Soon he realized that this bottom-up approach was inefficient and time consuming--it was not really necessary for him to understand every word. Eventually he realized that it was more important for him to get the gist of the reading assignments:

> We started to study a lot of material--the Enlightenment, Middle Ages and it's in one chapter and that's a huge chapter and so the first time I started to study in every piece of information in every sentence. Tried to look it all up. I went to the library. Suddenly I realized I don't need this much because it's not a history class. Then I was studying from the book which is enough.

Although Hugo had told me earlier that Social Environment was a repeat of what he had studied in Hungary, he seems to realize what Dr. Gibbon also observed, that students do not always have the background knowledge or schema necessary to comprehend every aspect of the text. After a very frustrating and time-consuming beginning, Hugo switches tactics during the third week in the semester. His new strategy was to read, take notes, and then reduce his notes to the main ideas in each chapter:

> While I am reading I take notes next to it. For each 10 pages I have 3 pages of notes. After words, from the notes I make a shorter one page [summary of his notes] and I study these three. First I study the smallest one [the one page summary] and then I go back to the others.

It took some experimentation; however, Hugo eventually figured out an efficient system for comprehending and learning the required reading assignments.

Writing

In this section demonstrates how the writing requirements of the Gordon Rule classes necessitate attentiveness to: (a) the surface level conventions and structure of writing, (b) effective writing processes, and (c) literate behaviors. This next section details how each of these aspects manifests itself in Gordon Rule classes.

I began examining the writing requirements of the Gordon Rule classes by classifying the assignments that were required by genre. I did this by arranging the writing assignments according to the categories identified by Horowitz in his 1986 survey of college writing assignments in content classes. He identified seven categories of academic writing. These included: 1. summary of and reaction to reading, 2. annotated bibliography, 3. report on specific participatory experience, 4. connection of a theory and data, 5. case study, 6. synthesis of multiple sources, and 7. research reports. With the exception of annotated bibliography, all of these types of discourse can be identified in the types of writing assignments the instructor-participants required. While connection of theory and data was the most common type of writing assignment, each professor differed in the type of writing he or she required--there does not seem to be much consistency within disciplines in what types of writing are most common.

1. A Summary of or Reaction to Reading.

Although she calls it a "term paper," Ms. Durant requires summary of and reaction to reading to fulfill the Gordon Rule writing requirement. She describes the assignment like this:

> What I assign them for their term paper is that they are supposed to find three articles that interest them on a social issue. They, all three articles, have to be related. They are supposed to summarize the article; then they are supposed to give their own thoughts and reactions.

Also in this category are the three reaction papers required by Dr. Jung. These papers require students to reflect on the concepts students have been learning in class and react to their applicability to their own lives. In this case, then, the emphasis is on the students' reaction to the concepts. In order to complete the assignment, students must also summarize those concepts. Dr. Mead's students must summarize reading assignments both in Psychology and Social Environment classes and she requires that students make extensive outlines of chapters in the book.

3. Report on a Specific Participatory Experience.

For Horowitz, a report on specific participatory experience includes lab reports and similar writing assignments. While none of the instructors in this study asked students to do a laboratory experiment, several required students to take part in experiences outside of the class and either discuss or write about those experiences. This type of discourse was most common in humanities classes where students visited art galleries or theater productions and wrote about or discussed these experiences. In Mr. Picasso's class students discussed performances they had seen at a small local theater. Dr. Plato gave extra credit to students who wrote short descriptive papers of art exhibits they had visited. However, it was Ms. Mozart, among the humanities instructors who employed this type of discourse most often. First, she took students to two art exhibits. She admits that the students found it difficult at first to articulate the meaning of different works of art; however, eventually they seem to understand.

We went to the art exhibit in the gallery. It was called <u>Murder</u> and I asked them to go around in groups and just discuss everything they saw in the painting, everything they noticed. They are very shy, basically they did much better than they thought they would. They hadn't really realized that they could see so much. They kept saying, but what does the artist want us to see? I said it's irrelevant, say what you see. Otherwise, you go to a gallery and you look at that and you say, "Oh, yeah. That's bright red. Well, I don't understand that."

Besides the art exhibits, Ms. Mozart had other participatory writing assignments. In one she asked students to listen to different types of music from different historical periods and write about the music.

In Ms. Piaget's class, videos are one participatory experience that she requires her student to write about: "I do have number of just simple assignments--if they see a video, write an essay on what you got out of it." In addition her principal writing assignment, the growth experience paper, also grows out of a specific participatory experience. In this case it is an account of the individual student's attempt to make a decision.

Dr. Mead requires a similar assignment concerning effective behavior in her psychology course. To fulfill this requirement, students report on an attempt to "undertake a <u>NEW</u> activity that will contribute to their development as an adult." Not only do students have to describe this process in writing, they also have to provide documentation that they have satisfactorily fulfilled the assignment.

4. Connecting Theory and Data.

Connecting of a theory and data is by far the most common writing requirement of the classes in this study. This type of writing is most often manifested in essay questions. Dr. Mead, Ms. Durant, Ms. Piaget, Ms. Skinner, Dr. Jung, Mr. Picasso, and Dr. Plato all require students to do this type of writing on essay exams. A typical example of this is one exam question from Mr. Picasso's mid-term exam which asked students to explain the "spiral of unfulfilled desires" with examples from the art movies the students had seen and discussed in class. Dr. Jung observes that most students are not prepared to write these types essay exams. "Let me tell you the first test is a big shocker for most of them."

A few instructors made the connection of theory and data their primary writing assignment. For example, Dr. Gibbon expects students to use data from their textbook to exemplify a theory of government. This is how he explains the assignment:

> Their one writing assignment might be to elaborate on an important element in the book. For instance, there is a long part on different kinds of government and I ask them to write a long essay which is graded on a type of government. Or I might ask them to explain the Declaration of Independence, what were the ideas behind it, what was Thomas Jefferson writing about.

5. Case Study.

Although there was no evidence of case study as a genre in the required assignments, I did find one instructor required students

to do case studies in the pilot study. The description of that assignment is included here. While this genre was not common in Gordon Rule classes, it did appear. The instructor, whose pseudonym is Monica in the pilot study, requires students to write an oral history. This is how she explained the assignment:

> I set that part up so that they feel like their writing is really important because they're writing for posterity. I encourage them to interview an old person, [which] is defined as somebody who was an adult before they were born, whenever that was. I encourage them either to make it a member of their family, so that it has the potential of becoming a family heirloom or to interview someone who is important to Dade County's history, in that it has the possibility of being archived either in the Florida Collection of the public library, or in the Black Archives, or in the Dade County's Historical Association's Archives. (Benz, 31, 1995)

6. Synthesis of Multiple Sources.

The most obvious examples of synthesis of multiple sources is in the traditional research papers that were required by Mr. Freud and Ms. Skinner. These will be examined in more detail in the next section. In addition, Dr. Mead's psychological profile assignment requires students to synthesize sources. Dr. Mead explains:

> They [the students] have to do psychological research on somebody famous, living or dead, to pull up some information. Then they should apply it to the chapters we have done. They construct a psychological profile using the five parts [of

effective behavior]. That means that they have to read their books in conjunction with the book that they select: a biography, an autobiography or whatever kind of book or magazine that will tell them about the character of the person.

7. Research Reports.

Only two of the instructors required students to do traditional research reports, Mr. Freud and Ms. Skinner. Mr. Freud only required a research paper from students enrolled in honors psychology. These research papers were relatively short, 8 to 10 pages, yet very difficult for the students who were required to write them. They required that they do library research, synthesize different sources, include proper citations and a bibliography.

Surface Errors in Writing Product

The instructor-participants agreed on one point, Miami-Dade students in general and NNS students specifically have many problems with surface level writing errors: spelling, grammar, language usage, and mechanics. Ms. Mozart believes that this is the most difficult aspect of humanities for many of the students:

> Ideally everybody would come with English writing skills that they don't have. They would know basic grammar and sentence structure. They would know how to put a term paper together, how to create an outline, how to develop the outline, how to have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Some instructors complained to me about the student's lack of writing skills, and others described how they tried to correct this problem. Yet, most instructors reported that it was students' ideas

rather than grammatical correctness they paid the closest attention to when evaluating student papers. I asked Dr. Mead about this:

Dr. Mead: Some of them are not doing well with the spelling. But sometimes they have problems with the sentence structure. What I'm looking for more is content. Sometimes I have to dig deep to see their idea reflected in what they do.

Cheryl: How do you deal with grammar mistakes?

Dr. Mead: I grade them down very little, very little. I'm looking for content. They don't get graded off in my class on punctuation or grammar or spelling. There's no penalty for that at all. All I wanted were ideas and if I found the ideas, then they would get credit. That gave them a lot of latitude with their deficiencies in the English language, which most of them are deficient in the English language.

The problem of grammatical correctness creates a dilemma for Ms. Skinner. She vacillates between requiring students to rewrite their work to correct the surface errors, in other words more of a process-oriented approach, and giving a final grade on the product that students hand in: "Before teaching here I went back and forth. When I was teaching high school, I spent much of my time circling and marking and giving it back and re-do and everything." In the end she feels that because these students are in college, and because of the large number of students in her class, she does not have the time for a process approach:

I struggle with that with this class. I'm not their English instructor, yet I am part of the academic process so they need

to be at a certain level. So they [surface level mistakes] get highlighted, it gets pointed out, but they will not fail a paper for poor sentence structure or poor grammar or poor spelling. They know that because I'm the worst speller in the world and the last one who wants to fail because I didn't spell correctly.

In fact, Ms. Skinner did ask Carlos to rewrite his paper for a higher grade because he made several surface level mistakes.

Other instructors were disheartened not only by the quantity of grammar and other surface level mistakes they had to wade through, but also the students' seeming inability to follow directions on writing assignments. Ms. Mozart is frustrated that even the most explicit directions on the correct form for her writing assignment were misunderstood or ignored by some of her students:

I think that following directions is very hard for them. I asked them to give me a header in the very specific way. I told them that if they didn't give me the header in this specific way, I would take off points. In the assignment I printed an example of the header, exactly how it had to be, yet many students didn't do it. I would say they got the form about 90% right.

Conversely, Dr. Plato is annoyed by the students' tendency to focus in on the nit-picky requirements of an assignment:

There is a timidity, there is a fear of getting something wrong that extends to wanting to know exactly how many words or how many pages. On an essay question or a part of a test, I'll say write a page or write a paragraph. Again I get very picky questions about margins and such.

Several instructors developed strategies to help students minimize surface language mistakes. Ms. Piaget tries to help students avoid grammar mistakes on essay exams by allowing them to research the questions before the quiz. She gives the students 12 possible questions and then chooses 10 of those questions for the exam. Her hope is they will practice writing those questions and thus reduce the number of surface level mistakes:

> They have an opportunity to go home and work on those sentence structures and work on the spelling. They don't do that; I'm disappointed. I usually give them twelve questions to work on for the test and I pick ten. I understand where, sometimes, they might have difficulty, but I feel that they should be able to do better on the test if I give them the opportunity of having the questions because I understand that some people do have problems [with English usage], but if I give them the essay questions in advance they have a chance to work with those questions.

Mr. Freud approaches the problem of poor language skills by using the college-wide reading service that is available to all professors. This service employs outside readers to check papers for surface structure errors, leaving the professor free to read the papers for content. Although the papers are read for grammar mistakes, Mr. Freud does not lower the students scores if they make mistakes. Because he only requires this research paper in honors classes, he withdraws the "Honors" designation from students whose language usage and mechanics are inadequate:

The only thing that would happen in the honors course if it [the research paper] were really, really bad is that I would not accept it. But I don't count off the grade. You don't get an "H" in the course if you don't do the research paper right.

Dr. Jung approaches the problem in a different way. She does correct the students' grammatical mistakes; however, most of her written feedback is on the ideas that the students express.

Well, I just correct their writing and to be perfectly honest, the feedback I give--I do give them a lot of feedback--but it's mostly on a personal level. They write things they have done or problems they have been through. Usually, I make comments about the content because that is what I focus on, not the grammar, but I do correct it.

However, while she corrects the students' mistakes, she does not take off credit for these mistakes, "not unless it is very bad and then I recommend that they go to a lab somewhere and get some help."

In her main writing assignment, the paper about effective behavior, Ms. Piaget approaches writing problems before students begin working on their papers. In her initial directions on the paper she tells them:

I will concentrate on content, but that I would really appreciate well-written work. Because they are in college, they should really plan their time in such a way that those--especially those who have problems with English--that they finish with enough time that they can have someone look over their work.

This is very similar to the bent that Ms. Durant has:

Before we ever start, I discuss some common mistakes, some things that seem not professional. I talk to them about, that it's very important when they present themselves in writing that they do their very best because they'll be judged by that later on. They do want to sound very educated and professional in their writing. I do go over their writing and correct it. I don't count off for it.

This strategy worked for many of the students in her class; however, it does not work for Ruslan. Ms. Durant told me that Ruslan did not follow the directions she gave for writing the paper and had trouble with language usage. This could be because Ruslan wrote this paper the same way he had done papers in Russia. I asked Ruslan to describe the difference between the research papers he has written in Russia and the papers he had written here he replied: "It is more or less the same. I think in Russia it was longer than here."

Dr. Plato is the only instructor who not only corrects students' language problems, but also lowers their grades because of improper language usage:

I mark the errors, but the most basic ones, run-ons and fragments, spelling. I don't write nasty comments, but I won't give an "A" to someone who has those kinds of errors. It's not the kind of thing that I mark every time they put the apostrophe in the wrong place, just to show that they don't know it. Once is enough to show your point. It is a part of their grade. I believe in literacy.

While writing in English seems to be difficult for almost all of the students these instructors encountered, some professors noted that NNS students seemed to have specific difficulties with English on top of this: When I asked Dr. Gibbon specifically about ESOL student writing he responded:

> You can tell right away, incomplete sentences. They leave out a word or verb or something. Style can be difficult too. There is no logical flow, on their part. They don't really develop an idea, they just sort of clunk at it right away and everything else is downhill after that.

Ms. Durant was another instructor who said that she identified certain types of mistakes with ESOL students:

> Ms. Durant: The Haitian students have a difficult time keeping their sentences together--sometimes they go way off.
>
> Cheryl: How do you mean?
>
> Ms. Durant: Well, sometimes I've had a few students that by the time I reach the end of the sentence, I forget what is at the beginning of the sentence.
>
> Cheryl: So they're like big run-on sentences?
>
> A: They have some trouble with run-on sentences.

<u>Writing Processes</u>

This following section includes explanations and diagrams of each students' writing processes and an evaluation of how the students' writing processes affected their success in their writing assignments. The data gathered in this section is self-reported, that is, the students themselves recounted the steps they went through

to create the texts. In this section the students are grouped in three categories: (a) those with complex writing processes, (b) those who had a writing process imposed on them, that is students who were required to write more than one draft of their text by their professors, and (c) those with simplistic writing processes.

From my analysis of the students' writing processes, it seems that those students who had more complex and recursive writing processes and those who did not procrastinate were better able to meet their teacher's expectations. However, it was not always easy to compare the writing processes of the students because they wrote many different kinds of texts. Even though writing is a state-mandated requirement for these courses, some students did not have significant writing assignments. Other students withdrew from their classes before they attempting a writing assignment. If the students did not write or were not required to write for their Gordon Rule class, I asked them to describe their writing process on an assignment for another class, usually their English composition class. In some respects to compare these two different types of assignments may be like comparing apples and oranges. Still, I thought it was important to include a sameple of each student's writing process.

An obvious factor which influenced the complexity of the students' writing processes was the complexity of the writing tasks. For example, traditional research papers written by Beatriz, Carlos, and Raisa and Salaam's psychology self-development paper were lengthy and required outside research, and one would assume a

more complex writing processes. Each of these students exhibited a complex process. Yet while Ruslan's research project for his Social Environment class was quite complex, he used a simplistic process which probably was a factor in his lack of success on the paper. In contrast, one might guess that Hugo's and Carla's two-page reaction papers might require less complexity in their writing process, yet both students exhibited elaborate writing processes.

Students with Complex Writing Processes

Flower (1993) found that proficient writers use a variety of strategies as they write; they all plan, generate ideas, design texts with the reader in mind, and edit their compositions in a recursive manner. Flower (1993) outlines the components of each strategy thus:

PLANNING

　　Explore the Rhetorical Problem

　　Make a Plan

GENERATING IDEAS IN WORDS

　　Generate New Ideas

　　Organice Your Ideas

DESIGNING FOR A READER

　　Know the Needs of Your Reader

　　Transform Writer-Based Prose into Reader-Based Prose

REVISING FOR EFFECTIVENESS

　Review Your Paper and Your Purpose

　　Test and Edit Your Writing

Edit for Connections and Coherence (p. 63)

I looked for these characteristics as I examined students' writing processes. Included in the group of writers with complex writing processes are Beatriz, Raisa, Hugo, Carla, Salaam, and Carlos. The processes of theses students will be presented in the order above. Beatriz and Raisa describe their processes on the same assignment--their research report for their psychology class. Likewise, Carla and Hugo report on the same assignment--one of the three reaction papers that they were required to write for their psychology class. The requirements of Salaam's paper are a little different than those eight mentioned above. Carlos' process is presented last because we will see that in some respects Carlos straddles this group and the group of students for whom the writing process is imposed by a teacher because he is asked to make revisions to his paper.

Beatriz.

The research paper that Beatriz wrote for her psychology class was her first research paper in English. Although it was a successful venture (she received an "A" for the paper), she found the processes of writing it very frustrating. Her main difficulty seems to have been with choosing a topic appropriate to the requirements, that is, it was to be 8 to 10 pages long. Mr. Freud reported the mistake that students most often make in these cases is to choose a topic that is too broad; Beatriz made just the opposite mistake. Her initial criteria for choosing a topic was that she wanted to do something different from the "typical" topics.

I was looking for a different topic because abortion and all that stuff everybody always writes about. I was looking for something different and interesting. I though about masochism. I thought it would be interesting because I haven't heard about it that often. I think it would be interesting to research. Then I found out that there were two kinds of masochism and I had to choose between them. I choose self-defeating behavior as opposed to sexual masochism.

Notice that Beatriz chose to do something that she was not familiar with at all. This may have been one of the causes of her frustration:

I didn't find many things. It was hard to find sources. I had to go to UM [University of Miami] to get the primary sources and it was kind of difficult because I couldn't take the books out. I had to do a lot of copies. I had to drive back and forth a lot; it took me some time. Then I found out it was kind of boring and I really didn't like it. I read a lot of things that I didn't understand. I had to read them like three, four times and I just couldn't understand. I just lost a lot of time. It wasn't a good experience.

When she felt as though she had done her best at collecting journal articles on her topic, she began to underline important points. As she read them, she wrote down what she thought was important. "I wrote down a lot of quotations. Most of them I didn't use, but I wrote them down as a reminder of what the text was about."

Beatriz was frustrated with the limited amount of information she was able to find. At this point, she went to her psychology

teacher for help. Mr. Freud suggested that she choose another topic. This topic might be too narrow. However, she was already vested in her topic. "I didn't want to change. I'd rather make what I had better than change." She decided to continue with the same topic because Mr. Freud reassured her that it was quality that he was most interested in.

> After I found out it was going to be like difficult to make a long paper. Because the subject was very narrow. He [Mr. Freud] said it was OK because the quality is what was important, not the length. I said 'OK, I'll try.' I did; I tried hard. Well, now let's see what happens. I don't want to see this paper again.

After she had taken notes she made an outline in her mind. Then she wrote down the outline and I tried to follow it.

> Then I changed it, the outline. At the end I was going to talk about the origins, like how it [self-defeating behavior] starts, how a person becomes like self-defeating. I wanted to write about different view points--different psychological models. But then I didn't find enough sources and basically they all talked about the same thing with very slight differences that I really couldn't understand that well, to write about it. So, I just wrote about one, and that's it, the major thing.

After adjusting her writing plan to fit the information she could find, Beatriz said that she "just sat down and wrote it." She wrote only one draft; however, she made several changes in the draft as she wrote and after she wrote it. "I guess it was like one draft and I revised and revised it." Next she typed the paper and corrected the

grammar. Finally she gave the paper to her boyfriend to read. Beatriz said that her boyfriend, a native English speaker, made corrections in the spelling, "Even the things that were right, grammatically right, but didn't sound good. He would change it." Although using a native speaker to proofread her paper was an effective strategy--one which I encourage NNS students to use-- Beatriz seemed embarrassed that she had gone to her boyfriend for editing help. She asked me not to tell Mr. Freud that her boyfriend had proofread her paper.

An analysis of Beatriz's writing process shows that she uses all of the strategies identified by Flower (1993). She plans, generates ideas and text, designs text to meet the needs of her reader, and edits. Still, she she does not write in a linear manner; she changes strategies frequently. Figure 5.5 is Beatriz's self-reported writing process for her psychology paper.

Choose topic

Different than typical topics

Criteria

Unknown

Research

M-DCC library

UM library

Too late to change topic

Underline copies

Read articles 3-4 times

Outline

Write draft

Topic is boring

Discuss problems with instructor

Narrowed topic

Revise 3-4 times

Boyfriend reads, offers suggestions on language
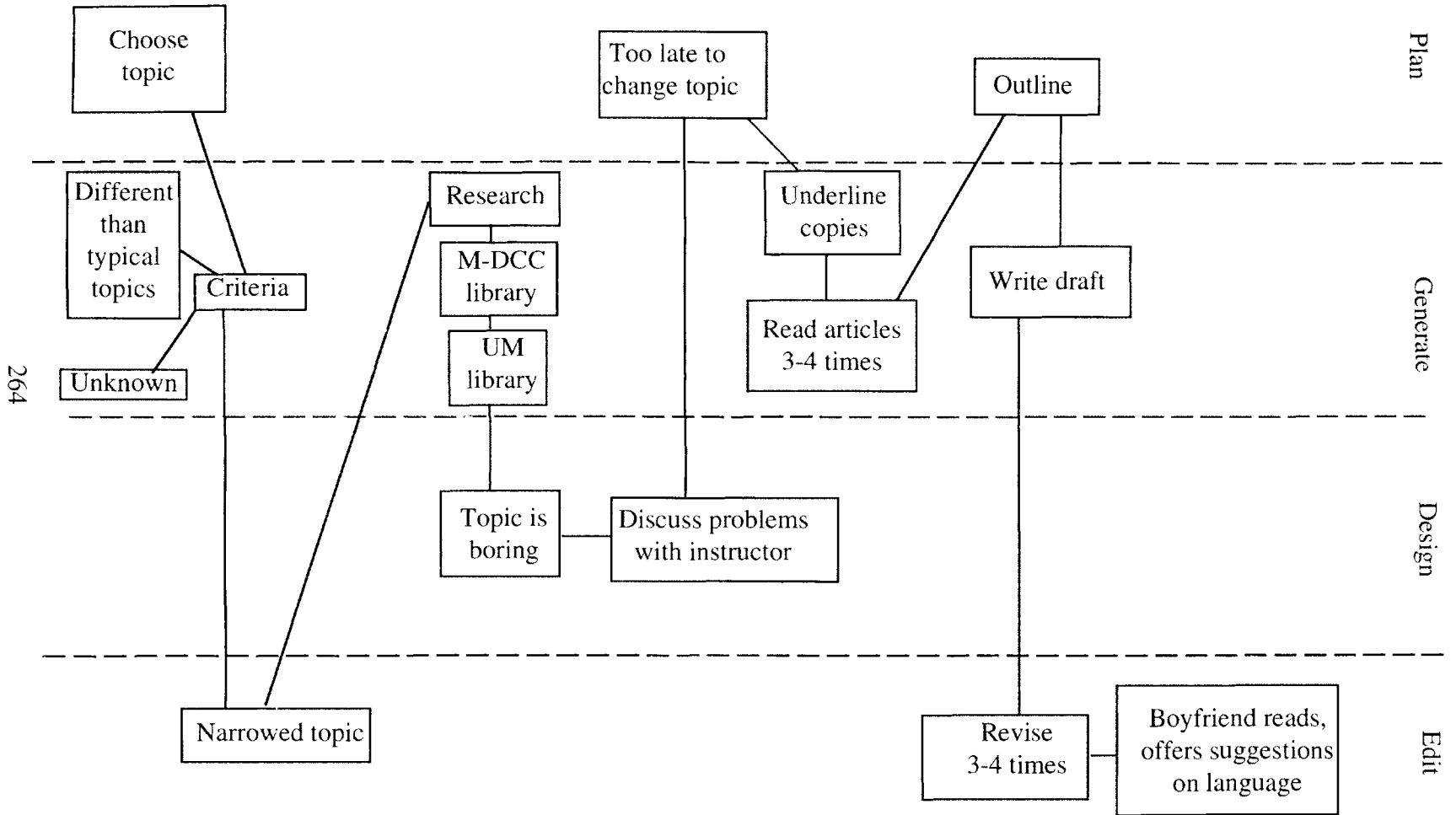
Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

Figure 5.5. Beatriz's process of writing a research paper for psychology

Notice that while Beatriz expended most of her energy generating, that is generating ideas and organizing those ideas; this was probably due to the difficulities she had with her topic. Beatriz also had to write a research paper for her advanced composition course. She felt as though she had learned a lot from the baffling experience of writing her psychology paper. Her composition teacher made very few suggestions for changes to the first draft of her research paper for the composition class. She earned an "A" for this paper and an "A" in her composition class.

<u>Raisa.</u>

Raisa described her process for writing the same assignment as Beatriz, the research paper for her psychology class. Raisa found her process of choosing of topics a little easier than Beatriz's experience, probably because she chose a topic that she already had some knowledge about and yet she was not too familiar with:

> So, after month, two months I thought about what I'm going to make a research paper about and then I choose this topic. I wanted first to do something about family, and then I thought about divorce, but it's too broad and so I picked the children.

After she had narrowed the topic she went to see Mr. Freud and to discuss the topic with him and get some advice on what sources might be available for her:

> I talked to him about materials, how I have to organize and everything. I went there to get a consultation. He said that there's not a lot of material on that topic. He just knew two psychologists that have worked on those--childrens and

behavioral situations. Then he gave me the names, so I can look for those two psychologists. But they didn't have it in our library, of course. So I went to the public library and I found those psychologists. I didn't really find the material that I wanted at first they just general explained about divorce, but I wanted more about children.

At this point, Raisa became concerned that she was not going to find enough information on her chosen topic:

So I took just one book and then I don't know, about references. He didn't say how many references he wanted us to use. I think if I will use three or five references I can. He said to me himself that it is very hard to find material, so he knows. Then he said what is important is the quality of material, not how many pages did you going to write.

Next Raisa read the photocopies she had of the magazine articles and highlighted the portions she thought would be important to her paper. Then she reread the information again and decided which information went in which section: "Then, I on the paper, I put like stars. One star it is like introduction, two stars I wrote like statistics. I put every page in every magazine that I am going to use for my research and that's it." Next she put the information in the order she was going to write about it and worked on the connecting paragraphs--the glue that would hold the research paper together. Creating a smooth flowing paper seemed to be Raisa's primary concern. She considered different techniques to make the paper flow. She thought that one way to create this connection was to

write a question as a subtitle to each section. She believed that it would was easier to write each of these sections separately and then find ways to connect the texts after she had written each section. Next she wrote the conclusion. Then she typed the paper from her notes from the photocopies of the journal articles and the connecting paragraphs. However, the paper did not feel complete to Raisa.

> When I come to conclusion, I felt that I need to create something more. I felt I needed to make example, like to close the research by giving an example from the life or something. Then, actually my boyfriend helped me. He gave me an idea, <u>Mrs. Doubtfire</u> movie, if you remember the end of the movie he is on talk show and he answered the letter of one girl. So I took the movie and I write everything down and I put as a conclusion this letter and the answer of Mrs. Doubtfire. So that's it. I just put everything together. At the end I put references; I had like six, seven references.

Raisa then proofread the text and asked a friend who worked as a writing tutor to read her paper for her. "She helped me little bit with English." Then she gave it to her family members to read:

> I just gave to my family to read because it was my first research paper, so I wanted some critics. My niece, she liked it very much, especially idea with Mrs. Doubtfire. First she noticed how beautiful the way I had put it on the computer. She said, 'Oh, it's so beautiful.' 'You put so nice the frame and the introduction and every title, it's so beautiful' I said 'I

won't get grade for that.' I'm a college student, so I have to do like it's supposed to be.

Raisa was very proud of how this paper turned out. Although this assignment was difficult for her, Raisa had a more positive experience writing her research paper than Beatriz did. Like Beatriz, Raisa' writing process was complex and like Beatriz her boyfriend's input and suggestions from others facilitated her process. Throughout this process Raisa stressed the fact that she felt it was important to start this research paper early and that she was constantly thinking about how to improve her paper.

The research paper that was required for the honors psychology class that was the most difficult writing assignment required of any students in this study. Mr. Freud acknowledged that this was a difficult task. He devoted a whole class period to explaining the research paper and explained how he helped students as the paper was in progress.

> I tell them that I'm there to give them as much help as they think they need. Mostly what I see my job as is getting them to cut down their topics. Something that can be handled in a small space of time.

Beatriz and Raisa took advantage of the fact that Mr. Freud was available to help them and the fact that they had American boyfriends. Figure 5.6 shows Raisa's writing process. Like Beatriz, she employed a wide range of strategies, in a non-linear manner. Also similar to Beatriz, Raisa spends the most effort on generating text. She has a little more complex editing process than Beatriz.
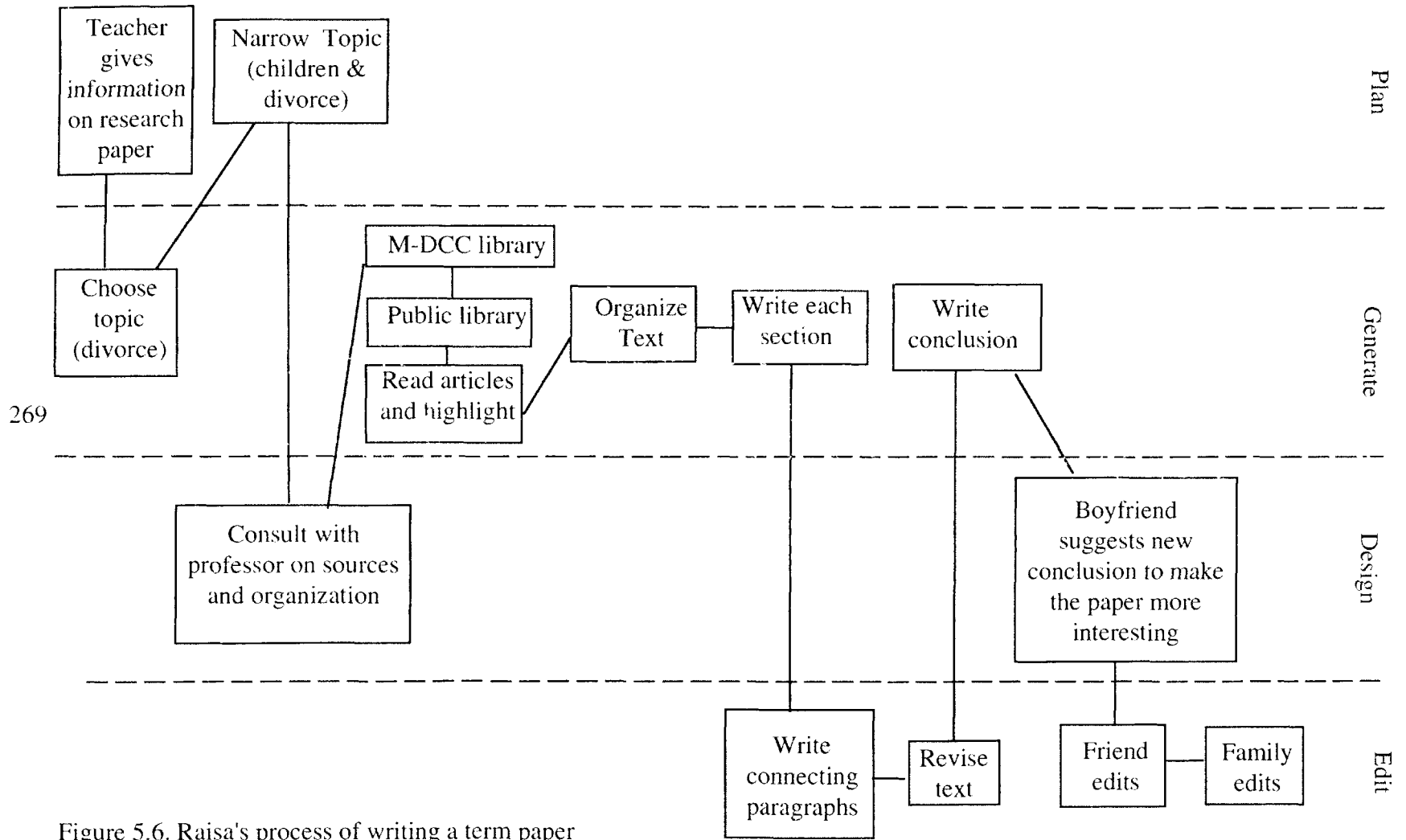
Figure 5.6. Raisa's process of writing a term paper

<u>Carla.</u>

Carla is another student who had a complex writing process. She described her process in writing a reaction paper for her psychology class. For this paper the student was to choose a topic or topics that had been mentioned in class and write a reaction to that concept using examples from his or her own experiences to illustrate the concept. Carla said that this topic must be: "Something you really react to. Something really honest."

Carla choose to write about the topic of unconditional love and her relationship with her daughter. She was compelled to write about that topic as soon as Dr. Jung mentioned it: "Of course I had to jump at that topic. I got home and I started writing little notes about what I wanted to say and then I put the whole idea together in paragraphs, in chronological order." After the fast and furious initial writing, Carla reread her paper and then wrote a conclusion. Next, she typed the paper, edited it, and rewrote it three or four times. Carla said that during the two weeks that she was working on the paper, she returned to it often; it was constantly on her mind. Her revisions were not just about surface level mistakes. She often made significant changes in the body of the text:

> Sometimes I'm cooking something little and I'm thinking. I should put this instead of that. I come back and I'm writing. Yeah, when I'm doing something, I concentrate in what I am doing and I have it [the paper] in back of my mind until I finish. Every time I thought of something I changed it. I changed words, I added new ideas. I just tried to make it my best. To

do my best impression, I changed ideas and words even paragraphs completely. I changed the order of the paragraphs. Because sometimes you think it is that way and then something comes up to your mind and you say: 'I forgot to say that.' 'This is more important.' 'This should go first.' You have to change the paragraphs.

Carla did her own editing of surface level mistakes before she handed in the paper.

Carla's writing process exibits complexity and non-linearity. However, the true complexity of Carla's writing process lies in the fact that even though some students might consider her paper finished, it was constantly on her mind. In fact, the most obvious characteristic of Carla's writing process is the amount of effort she puts into generating ideas. She was always willing to make significant changes in the text. While Carla's writing process does not look as complex as Raisa's or Beatriz's at first glance, it must be remembered that Dr. Jung's writing assignment was much less complex than Dr. Freud's. Figure 5.7 reveals Carla's complex process.

Lecture notes

Choose topic

Write notes to herself

Develop Paragraphs

add new ideas

Organize ideas

Write conclusion

type

Think of new ideas

Develop a criteria for choosing topics

delete ideas that do not fit

Read 3 or 4 times

Check grammar
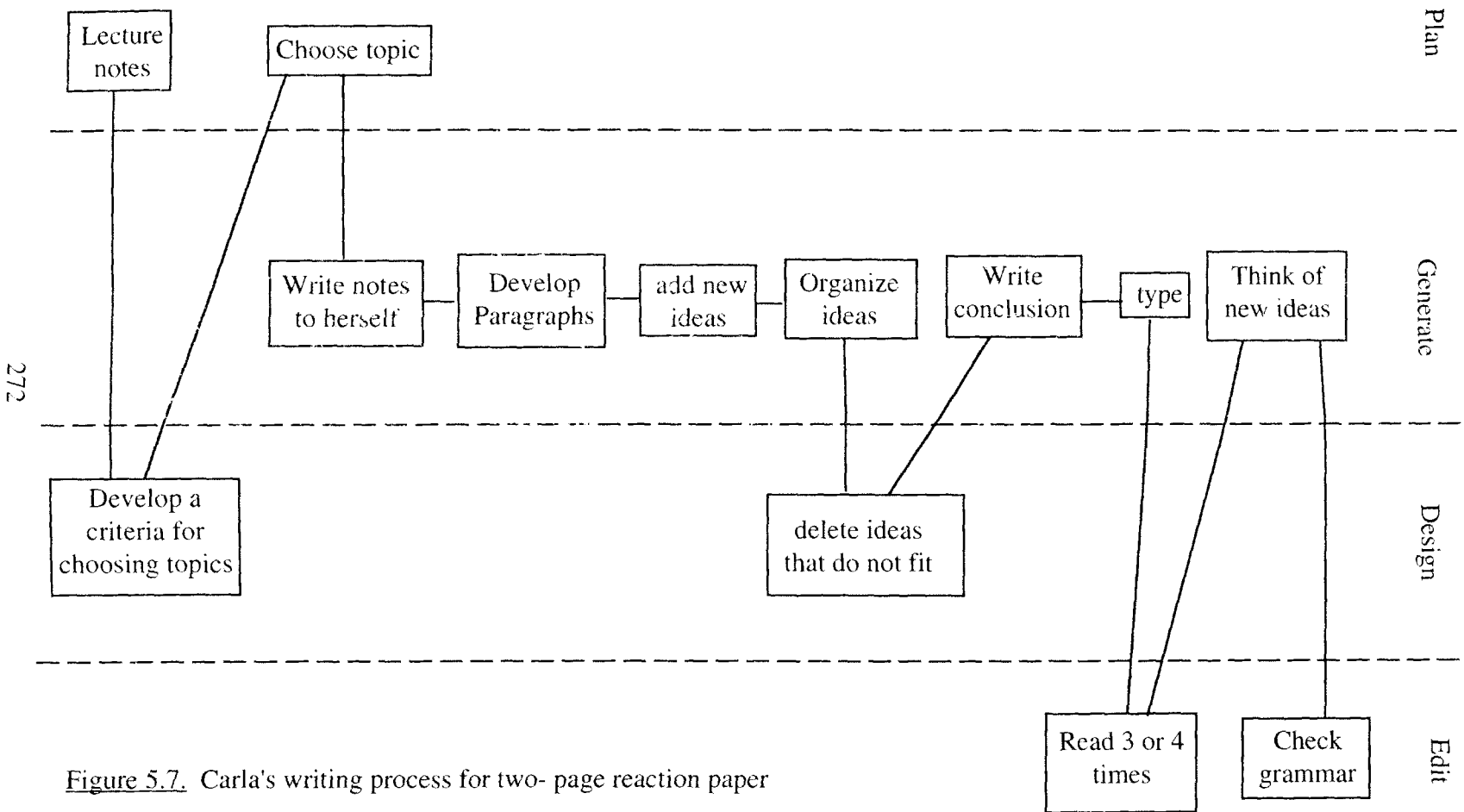
Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

Figure 5.7. Carla's writing process for two- page reaction paper

<u>Hugo.</u>

Hugo described his process of writing the same assignment as Carla, his two-page reaction paper for his Individual in Transition class. Because the topics that Dr. Jung assigns for the reaction paper are the same topics that the students are tested on, Hugo begins the process of writing his paper by studying the concepts that will be on the exam. As he reviews his notes, he considers how these topics relate to his own experiences:

> For example, the last time we were studying about self-concept. Then I just thinking about me and how I reacted to these problems. For example, the low self-concept and I realized that I do have low self-concept. How can I change it?

Hugo explained that during the time that he is writing, he is constantly thinking about the topic and organizing his ideas.

> Organizing the ideas is different than when I study. When I study, I sit down and study. When I organize my ideas, I do something else. My favorite thing is cooking. I do something and I'm thinking about the subject. I think about the concepts. That's good because if I get frustrated or I get stuck, I just forget it and after ten minutes, fifteen minutes, I go back I try to figure out something else.

Hugo needed to be doing "something physical" as he organized his ideas. "I am running or something. Definitely not at the desk."

Although he usually writes his reaction papers as a letter to his teacher, he finds himself falling back on the comfortable form of a traditional five-paragraph essay:

I always follow an essay form. Actually this reaction paper I write as a letter, but still I have the thesis, I have the first introductory paragraph because I like it this system. It's very easy. Then I always try to find two reasons or two concepts and I just write. First I write them and afterwards typing.

Hugo has a very complex editing strategy; after he writes his paper, he puts it aside for a day. "I don't touch it for a day. Then the next day, Oh, my God [laughs]! Huge mistakes and I try to fix them." He rereads his paper and makes some corrections and then both his aunt and uncle edit his paper:

I am very lucky because my aunt and my uncle, they care about my studying a lot. First my aunt, she's from Hungary, she reads it. She corrects it, 'This is not good.' or 'You can say it, but it's not correct.' My problem is my sentences are grammatically correct, but English people don't say that. They don't say it this way. Afterwards I look at it and she corrects it and then after my uncle, who is a native speaker, then I hate that time because he changes the paper completely.

Hugo's uncle concentrates not on his grammar mistakes, but his vocabulary and tone. "He says: 'Use another word.' He doesn't give me the word. He says just 'OK, here's this word. Use another one.' 'Think about this sentence, how can you change it." After he makes all of these corrections suggested by his aunt and uncle, he retypes the paper and shows it to his uncle again.

Still he can find some mistakes. My uncle is a lawyer. He makes contracts. So if he makes a mistake he--I mean, he

was telling me that after he graduated he made a comma mistake and it cost, this comma cost, I don't know a couple of hundred thousand dollars to the company. "So don't ever do that." I didn't think it makes a difference. I mean, he says if I don't do it I may get a "B", not an "A." I was thinking that I will still get an "A" [laughs]. But he is very exact.

While his own writing process is complex and time-consuming Hugo also depends on his aunt and uncle to fine tune his paper so that it is more native-like. Hugo received A's on all of his reaction papers.

What is remarkable about the way that Carla and Hugo approach their reaction papers is their similarities. Even though they are only writing a two-page reaction paper, they have very complex writing processes. In addition, both are constantly revising their papers, working on ideas and organization schemes during the time that they are writing their papers (they both even like to cook as they do this). In fact, they both recognize that the ideas flow more freely when they are doing something else.

Hugo desplays the same wide range of strategies and non-linearity that the other complex writers used, although a quick glance at his self-reported writing process does not show as much attention to designing text to meet the needs of the reader. At the same time a close examination of Hugo's paper reveal that he does write with the reader in mind. Remember that he writes each paper as a letter addressed to his teacher. Figure 5.8 displays Hugo's writing process.

Plan

Generate

Design

Edit
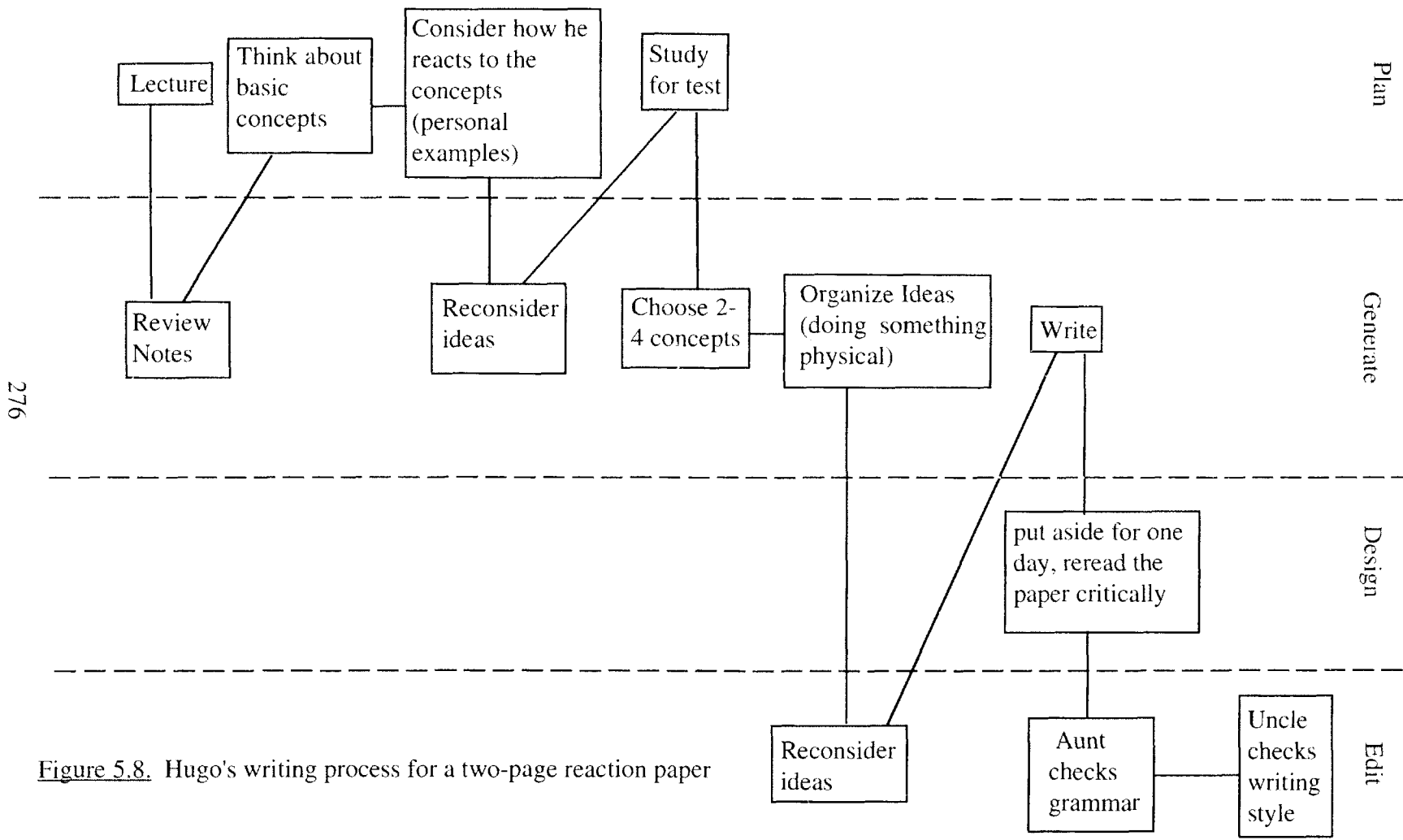
Figure 5.8. Hugo's writing process for a two-page reaction paper

Salaam.

Another example of a student with a complex writing process is Salaam. He described his psychology paper, which required him to describe his own psychological development in a decision-making process. He chose to write about a conflict he had experienced because of his openness to people of other religious beliefs.

> You know I am Moslem? OK, what I am writing about [for his psychology paper] a Christian organization here in the United States. They feed American kids and also other kids in outside of America. I used to work with them and donate to them. I asked my brothers from Sudan [fellow countrymen] to donate some money for this organization. They refused because they are Moslem. I tried to show them that there is no difference between Moslem and Christian, except in how they teach us. How they teach Americans about Islam and how they teach me about Christianity, it was totally wrong. I tried to solve this problem among my community first. Also, we can show Christian people that there is no difference, that we can work together. This is what I want to do. I tried, but sometimes I have a lot of hard time from others because of lack of education. They cannot understand that all religion comes from one God. We worship the same God. But for example, if you come here you take a different road--I take another road. I come by a different road, you know? But our destination is one.

Salaam chose an experience with strong, personal emotions connected to it to write about. He chose this topic not only because of the struggle he was having to convince his Moslem "brothers" that it was acceptable to donate money to a Christian organization, but also because he felt that he could inform Americans in his class about his own culture and religious perspective.

> I decided what I was going to do because my culture is a little bit different. OK and what I know here from a lot of people, not just here in the United States, but I've met a lot of foreigners, for example, who don't belong to my culture. They misunderstand our society, our culture. This is a chance for me at least to let me speak about who we are.

After Salaam had decided what he was going to write his paper on, he began collecting information on that topic. He began by reading passages from the <u>Bible</u> "because I know mine already." He compared the <u>Bible</u> to the <u>Koran</u>. He discovered that: "About 90% of what is written on there is the same. We're only fighting about 10% and we forget that 90%, the majority. I think that we have to forget the 10% and work on the 90."

> He read this along with some other psychology texts then he began organizing his ideas. He began by comparing Moslem ideas to Christian ideas and choosing what he felt were the best from each. After he had developed this thesis and written out his ideas, he read the paper to see if there were any important ideas that he had left out or extraneous information that needed to be deleted. He believed that this flexibility was an important characteristic of his

writing because: "Life is changing, you can change your mind easy, too." Then he gave the text to two different people to read, to check for the clarity of ideas--a Moslem and an American--and incorporated their ideas into his text because he wanted to make sure that both perspectives were represented fairly. Then he read the paper two or three more times checking for language mistakes. Finally, he typed the paper.

Salaam's complex writing process is a little different from the other students in this category because he is most concerned with designing the text to fit the needs of his reader. In fact, his impetus for this paper is to educate both Christians and Moslems. Figure 5.9 is an illustration of Salaam's writing process.

Choose a
topic with
personal
significance

Combines his
knowledge of
his religion with
'book-knowledge'
of Christianity

Develope
a thesis

Write

Type

Choose a topic
he feels could
educate Moslems
and Christians

Moslem

Christian

Looks for
input on ideas
from outside
readers

Delete
extra ideas

Consider
new ideas
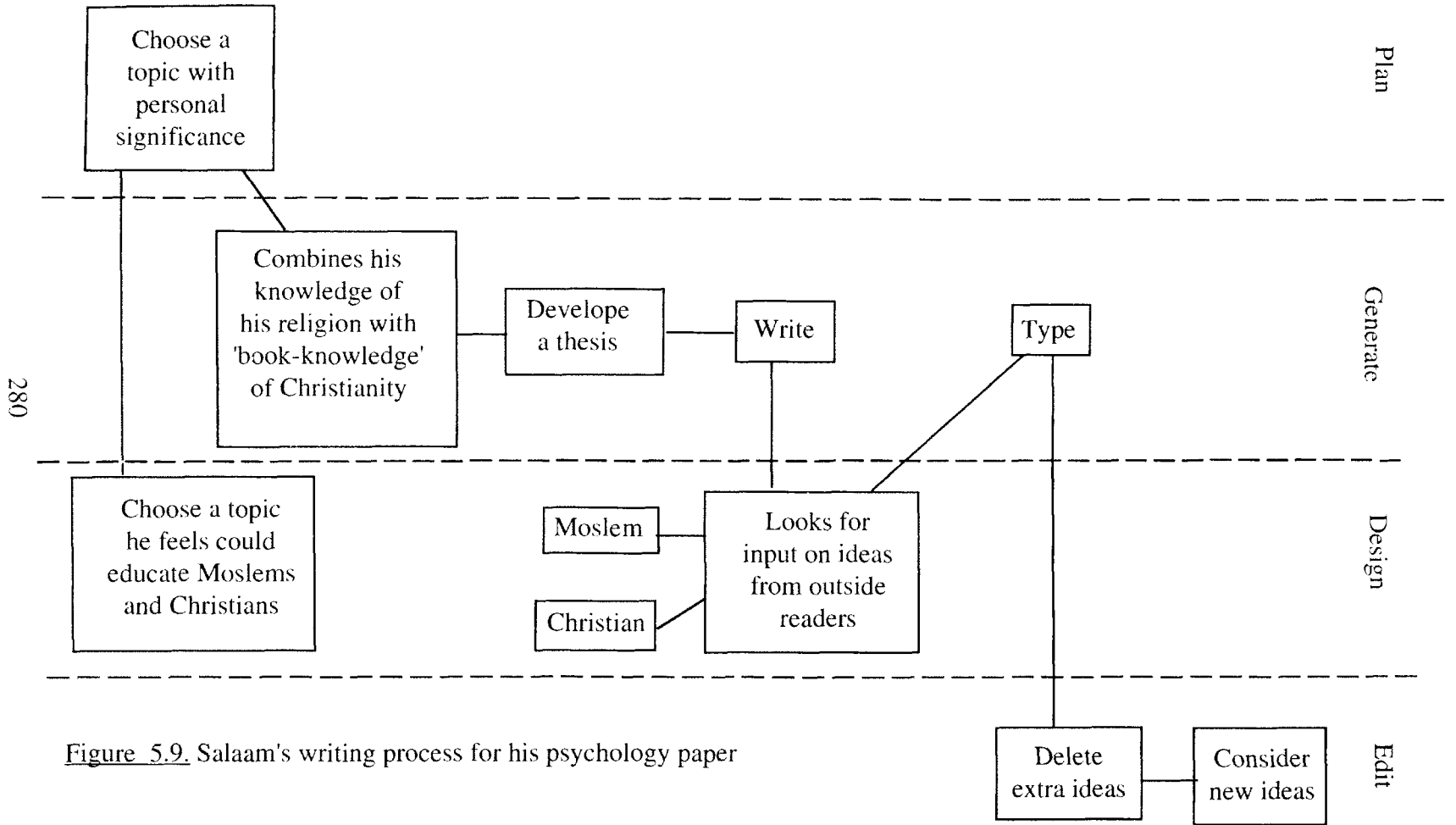
Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

Figure 5.9. Salaam's writing process for his psychology paper

<u>Carlos.</u>

Although Carlos' writing process is very complex, he made some surface level mistakes which caused Ms. Skinner to ask him to revise the paper and resubmit it. His writing task was very similar to Beatriz and Raisa's. He was to choose a topic from the content of the class, research that topic, and write an eight-page paper. Carlos took his inspiration for his psychology research paper topic from a class discussion:

> We were having a sexuality class. The teacher was speaking about homosexuality and the class reaction was "Whoa!" People hated it. I mean they were so homophobic, the students in the class. I was upset; it is so incredible that this society is so open and it has such people because that is the point of being in a democracy--being different and respecting others' beliefs. I saw they were not like that, I mean they were really homophobic.

What is interesting about Carlos' shock over his classmates' intolerance of people who are different is the fact that he is a recent Cuban immigrant, yet he seems to understand the democratic ideal of tolerance better than his American classmates. There was another student in the class that was just as shocked as Carlos at the students' reaction:

> Me and my next classmate, we both were startled when they started doing that [giving an intolerant reaction to a discussion on homosexuality]. Because she [Ms. Skinner] said purposefully that homosexuality was orientation and not a

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matter of choice, and she even repeated it twice. She asked for the same question on the quiz and 80% of the people said it was a matter of choice. So that's what we chose [the other classmate who agreed with him]. Because for example, he wrote his paper on being homophobic and I made it on the biological aspects of homosexuality.

Carlos continued to collaborate with this student who had a similar opinion to his. They shared sources and discussed their progress with each other. Early in the semester Carlos went to the library and look for information on his topic.

I went to library. I found the two books that I am using so far. There was not so many information about what I wanted to write. So, I left and in three days I went again and I asked for magazines and reports. That's where I found most of the information because in books there was only one chapter about biology and sexuality.

He made photocopies of these articles and reports. Next, Carlos culled through the information and decided which articles were most useful for his purposes. He had a rough idea of how he wanted to organize the paper and searched for specific information that would fill in that plan. Carlos made a rough plan for his paper. He he believes that this facilitated the process.

I knew that I wanted to clarify the concept. I wanted to make some historical review. That's why I started in Greece and then related it to Christianity and then jumped to the different

speculated causes and then developed my own theories about it. I writing was fast because I had thought about it.

As he read through the articles, he underlined the information he thought would be useful and excluded extraneous information by cutting up the photocopies and throwing away the portions of the article that he didn't need:

> I started choosing the important information. I cut the photocopies and I threw it [unimportant information] away and that's how I did that. Now I have all these small pieces of each article. Every time I found something, I just underlined what I was going to use and I scratched over what I wasn't using. I knew I wasn't going to talk about that anymore. I found 20 studies. All that information comes from that and even I had to throw away some of it because there was so many.

Next he read the parts of the articles he had cut out several times and then synthesized the information: "I read those papers like let's say four times. I created my own interpretation of the data. Some parts are taken exactly from the text. Then, I just started typing." He composed at the keyboard, linking the texts into a coherent whole. While Carlos had never composed at the keyboard before (computers were not available to him in Cuba), he told me that it was much easier than writing his text longhand because his handwriting was so bad that he had difficulty reading it sometimes.

Next, Carlos brought a rough draft of the first part of his paper to me so that I could give him suggestions on it and proofread it for

mistakes. I noticed that Carlos had underlined some words and phrases in the text. I asked him why he had chosen to underline these particular words: "Those were good words in Spanish, so I wanted the equivalent in English." Most of the phrases were acceptable in English; however, Carlos realized that when he was unsure about how to craft a phrase in English, that he fell back on Spanish construction. He wanted to be sure that he had written acceptable phrases in English.

When I review Carlos's paper, it was also obvious that he had made at least one significant mistake. His paper was supposed to be eight pages in length. The main body of the paper was to be a traditional research paper and the last page was supposed to be his personal reflection on the topic and the process of writing the paper. Carlos showed me seven and a half pages of single-spaced text-- the research portion of the paper. The first thing I did was to ask him to see the directions for writing the paper. As I thought, the paper was supposed to be double-spaced. Carlos already had almost twice as much written for the research portion of his paper than he needed. My first suggestion was for him to reduce the text by half. Carlos found this difficult to do on the spot. We talked about where he might make cuts and discussed some of the more obvious surface mistakes. Carlos then took the paper home to trim and rewrite the research portion and add his personal reflection. He felt that this final portion of the paper was the easiest because: "I'm not going to have any quotations and I'm not going to have to develop somebody's ideas, just mine."

Carlos did not show me the paper again before he handed it in to Ms. Skinner. He admitted that it was more difficult than he thought it would be to shorten the report. In the end, he produced a 10- instead of an 8-page report. He cut very little from his original draft, rather he set the spacing at one and a half rather than double spaced and he drew out the right and left hand margins. Ms. Skinner handed the paper back to Carlos and asked him to make some revisions, but not in his margins. There were several grammar and sentence construction mistakes in the final portion of the report (the part that I had not read) and he had not done his bibliography in the correct form. Carlos then rewrote the paper another time incorporating the revisions that Ms. Skinner had suggested. He did finally get an "A" on his paper. Carlos, like Salaam is prompted by his potential audience to design a text that would argue his point and like all of the other students in this group he has a complex writing process that moves from one strategy to another. Figure 5.10 represents Carlos' writing process in this assignment.
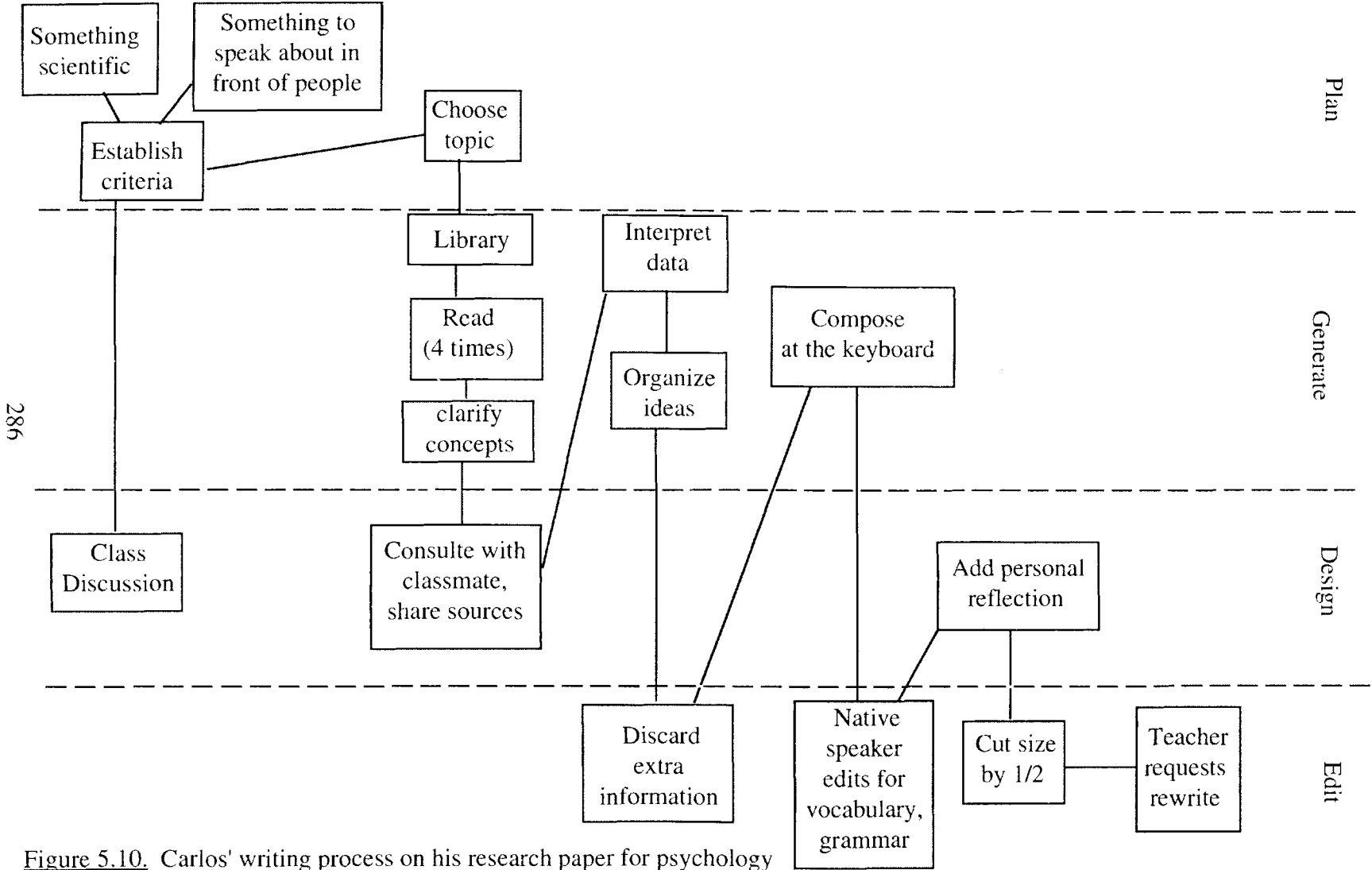
Figure 5.10. Carlos' writing process on his research paper for psychology

The diagram contains the following boxes, organized by phase (Plan, Generate, Design, Edit):

Plan
- Something scientific
- Something to speak about in front of people
- Establish criteria
- Choose topic

Generate
- Library
- Interpret data
- Read (4 times)
- Compose at the keyboard
- clarify concepts
- Organize ideas

Design
- Class Discussion
- Consulte with classmate, share sources
- Add personal reflection

Edit
- Discard extra information
- Native speaker edits for vocabulary, grammar
- Cut size by 1/2
- Teacher requests rewrite

Students Who Had a Writing Process Imposed on Them

This group includes two students, Angela and Henri, who were required to write multiple drafts. Carlos may be considered part of this group because he rewrote his paper. Also Ruslan was also required to rewrite his paper for his Social Environment class, but because of a misunderstanding or an unwillingness to redo the assignment, this never happened. Another commonality between Angela and Henri is that the writing tasks that they described were not part of their humanities classes; they described essays they had written in their composition classes. In this respect it might be unfair to compare them to the other students and more natural to include them in a group of their own.

Angela.

Angela withdrew from her humanities class early in the semester and did not write for the class. Still, I wanted information about her writing process, so I asked her about the last essay she had written for her composition class. She said that her third attempt at the transitional composition class (ENC 1130) was a better experience than the previous attempts because she was enrolled in a class with computers. Angela said that she usually spent one class session studying examples and developing ideas.

> Thursday the teacher talk about the essay we will write the next Tuesday, for example if the essay is the contrast and the comparing or is the narration. She explains us, she reads some essays from the book. I like it that way because she reads and she explains. She says you, 'For the next class,

think about one essay for narration' and she gives the topic, maybe she gives like three or four topics. When begins the next class, we have something in mind. If you want to bring something in draft or you can only think about it if you want.

Angela said that she usually wrote a draft at home. The next class, the students typed their drafts and handed them in to the teacher. The teacher gave the students feedback on the papers and asked them to revise their papers. Angela likes this system, yet she seems confused by the comments the teacher writes on her paper.

The teacher corrects the first draft and then we make the revision and she changes the score. I think maybe she looks at more if the student puts more attention on the first essay with her errors and changes with the second. I don't know what it changes. I want to ask about my last essay because I write one expression. She write 'poor expression.'

Angela liked to use the computer because she didn't have to worry about spelling. Still she felt as though she was under time pressure and was frustrated that the computer could not correct all of her mistakes: "Sometimes I was think about the time, that I had to write quickly. When I made the speller, the speller didn't say you used the wrong verb for the third person." An analysis of Angel's writing process reveals fewer steps. In addition, she neglects to design a text to meet the needs of her audience. Her teacher's ask her to focus entirely on surface level mistakes. Angela's writing process is reflected in Figure 5.11. This process was entirely guided by her teacher.
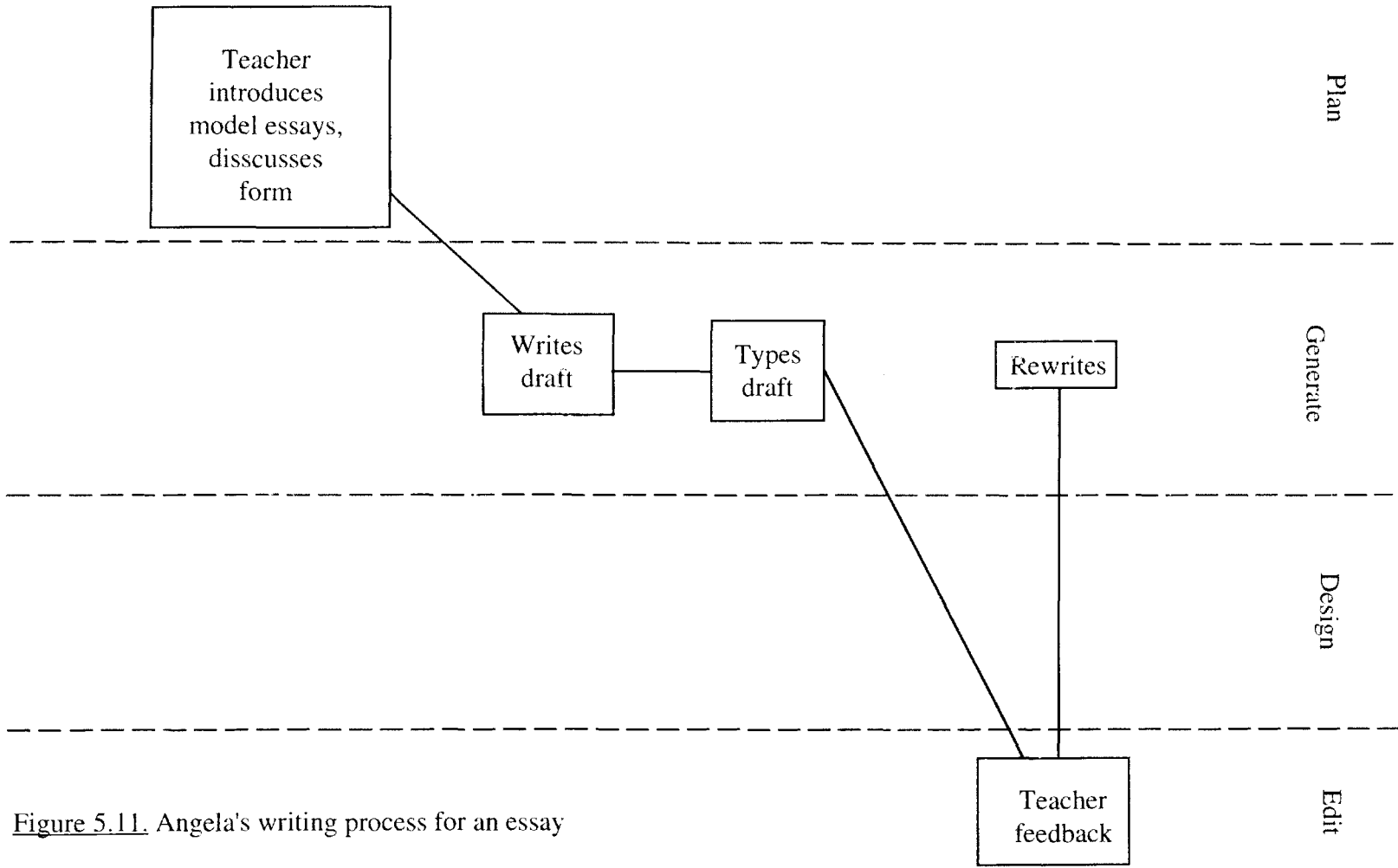
Figure 5.11. Angela's writing process for an essay

<u>Henri.</u>

Because Mr. Picasso did not require any writing assignments except for essay exams I asked Henri to describe his process in writing a composition for his advanced composition class (ENC 1102). He described an essay that he had written about a short story he had read as preparation for class. He explained that he read the story and underlined portions of the text that he thought would be important to his essay. He told me: "I used to write, I used to have a pattern or outline. Now I try to get it without the outline because it was taking too much time. So I just write."

Henri approached the writing task according to the formula for a five-paragraph essay: "I tried to make my thesis. I put the thesis and the paragraphs, first and second and third. My thesis should have my topics. One, two, three topics." Henri told me that usually the next step after the composition was written was for him to check his grammar; however, he admitted that: "Sometime I'm getting lazy about grammar. Sometimes I don't check it. But sometimes I do--I rewrite it again. Because sometimes I see my language, it is bad." Henri was frustrated by his attempts to write for composition class. He felt that he could never satisfy his professors, yet he seemed to ignore their advice on how to make his papers better. He said that one teacher was always telling him to "rewrite, rewrite, rewrite."

For this particular assignment, he disagreed with his professor's interpretation of the story. In fact, he spent much of this interview session trying to convince me that his interpretation of the story was correct. He said that the teacher's comments on the first

draft of his paper were: "I don't understand. "D" and that's it." He rewrote the paper and returned it to the teacher. On the second draft Henri reported that the teacher gave him this feedback: "She said: 'No. There are some more mistakes; there is no improvement you can't stay with the same mistakes."

Henri was compelled to rewrite his paper because of the process writing system imposed on him by his teacher; however, he seems to believe that rewriting is a complete waste of his time. He ignored his teacher's suggestions and is unwilling to change his change his point of view about the ideas he is discussing. In this he exibits a behavior similar to what Leki found in her study--resisting teachers' demands. Henri's writing process lacks complexity. His energy is focused on generating ideas and text and only with his teacher's prompting does he consider editing the text. Moreover, he neglects to plan or design the text for the needs of his audience. His process is reflected in Figure 5.12.

Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

```
┌──────────┐        ┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────┐
│  Read    │        │  Underline   │        │          │
│  Story   │────────│  important   │────────│  Write   │
│          │        │  portions    │        │          │
└──────────┘        └──────────────┘        └──────────┘
                                                   \
                                                    \
                                                     \
                                                      \
                                                  ┌──────────┐
                                                  │ Teacher  │
                                                  │ feedback │
                                                  └──────────┘
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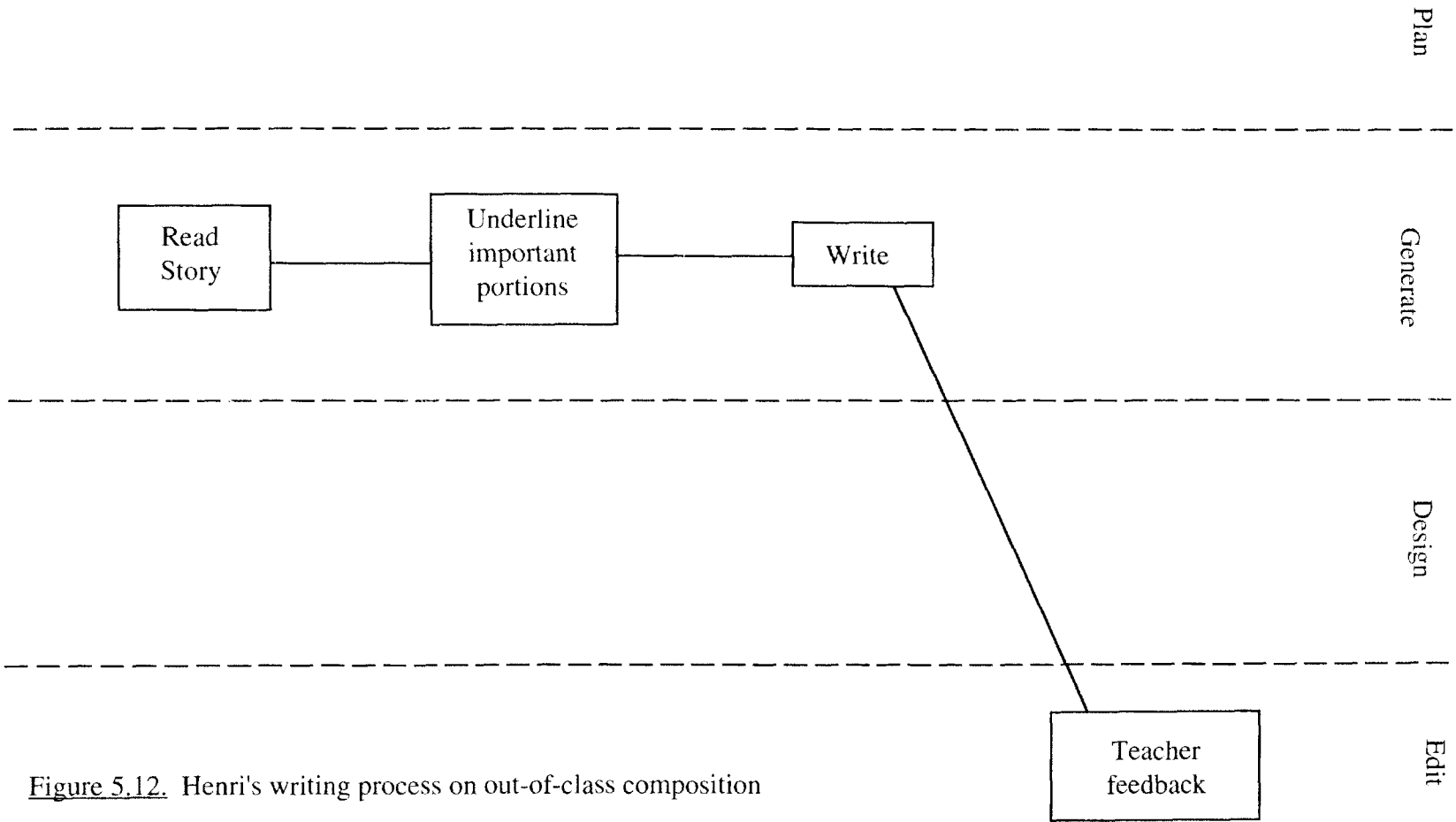
Figure 5.12. Henri's writing process on out-of-class composition

<u>Students with Simple Writing Processes</u>

Although the last three students exhibited some of the steps that Flower (1993) attributes to proficient writers, they lacked the recursiveness and complexity of the previous student-participants. Ruslan and Cesar did not allow sufficient time to develop their writing completely. On the other hand, Henrietta, describes her process of writing in her composition class, where she basically writes timed compositions. She finds the time restraints restrictive-- they simply do not allow her to develop an effective writing process.

<u>Ruslan.</u>

Ruslan seemed to take a nonchalant approach to writing his paper for Ms. Durant's class. One week before the paper was due, I asked Ruslan how the paper was progressing. He had not started his paper, nor could he remember exactly what topic he had chosen as this exchange illustrates:

Ruslan: Well, we have to do one research paper and we have to turn it in next week. I choose this topic, children what is it? Not punishment, it starts with an "A" like children's behavior, like the way to behave.

Cheryl: Child abuse?

Ruslan: Right, that's what I choose. We have to make a paper of four pages. First we have to find three articles, two books or three articles and write about it.

Cheryl: Have you started writing it?

Ruslan: Well, I'm going to go to the library today. But I already choose the topic.

Notice how Ruslan has procrastinated. One week before the paper is due and he tells me he is going to the library today. I am sure that he did not understand the complex process involved for producing the paper. Ruslan believed that this process would be simple: "I choose a topic, then I find the articles, read them and then I express my feeling them, if I agree or not." As he read the articles, he highlighted the most important details. Then he read it a couple of times to "make sure everything is clear." He asked his Russian friends to check it--to read the paper and give their opinions on it.

Ms. Durant reported that Ruslan was not very successful in this attempt. In fact he wrote something totally different than she had expected. Ms. Durant returned the paper to him and asked him to rewrite it. Either because he misunderstood Ms. Durant's request or because he ignored her, he did not rewrite the paper. An analysis of Ruslan's writing process, shows something similar to Flower's simple-minded writing process (1993) (see pg. 54). He plans, generates ideas and text, and edits. Notice that he also ignores designing text to meet the needs of his audience. Figure 5.13 shows Ruslan's writing process on this assignment.

Consider topics — Choose topic

Find articles — Read — Write — Add personal feelings

Give to friends for editing
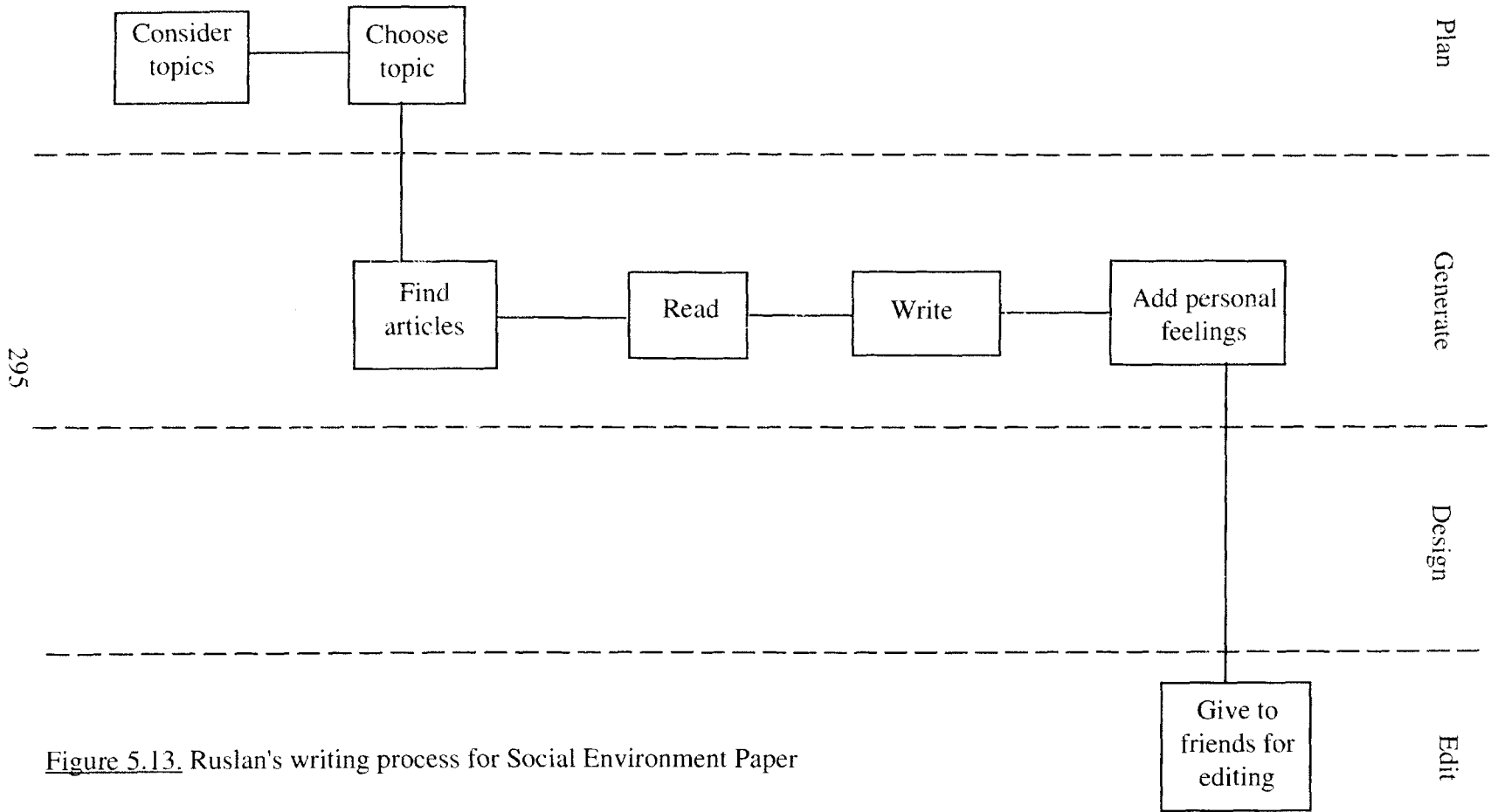
Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

Figure 5.13. Ruslan's writing process for Social Environment Paper

<u>Cesar.</u>

Cesar recounted his experience in writing a description of artwork for his humanities class. He described a painting that was in an art exhibit at the Colombian Embassy. Cesar had learned that good descriptive writing included the use of all of his senses. However, this formula may not have been the best choice for this particular assignment. First, Carlos examined the painting closely. "I used my whole senses. What did I see? What did I smell? What did I touch? What did I feel? Especially the senses because I thought it was the best way to describe."

However, Cesar was disappointed at Dr. Plato's reaction to his paper. For her part she was incredulous that he had actually touched a work of art.

> When I was expressing the sense of touching because I had the chance that I could go and touch it and I could feel the brush strokes. She didn't believe me. She said that I wouldn't be allowed to touch the picture.

Cesar also believed that good description included metaphoric language.

> Well, for example here, what could I taste; it's real hard to say how a picture tastes. I wrote I didn't really taste it, but as I have said, the artist has set me in a world of what he want to express with this picture. If I would have to compare in the sense of taste, I would say that it tasted as a drink of whiskey.

At the gallery he took notes on these sensual experiences, then that night, Cesar composed his description on the word processor using

his notes: "When I went to the typewriter, I took the theme [the senses] and I remember the picture. I just decided to write it."

As he wrote, he adjusted sentences that he thought had problems. Next he reread the entire text and made some surface level changes, though Cesar admitted that these changes were very few and that his editing process was very quick. "As I was writing, I went back and read and made a few changes, but it was like 11, 12 o'clock at night. So it's real hard to go back." Not only was Cesar's writing process rushed in this assignment because he had procrastinated on the assignment, but he also seems to have made the mistake of approaching this assignment in a formulaic manner. He used an inappropriate formula for this writing task. Like Henri, Cesar's writing process has fewer steps than the processes of the students in the first group and he, like Henri and Ruslan, ignored the reader's perspective. Cesar's writing process is reflected in Figure 5.14.

Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

Choose a painting; examines it closely and takes notes

Teacher gives an example of another student's work

Decides to use senses as an organizing idea

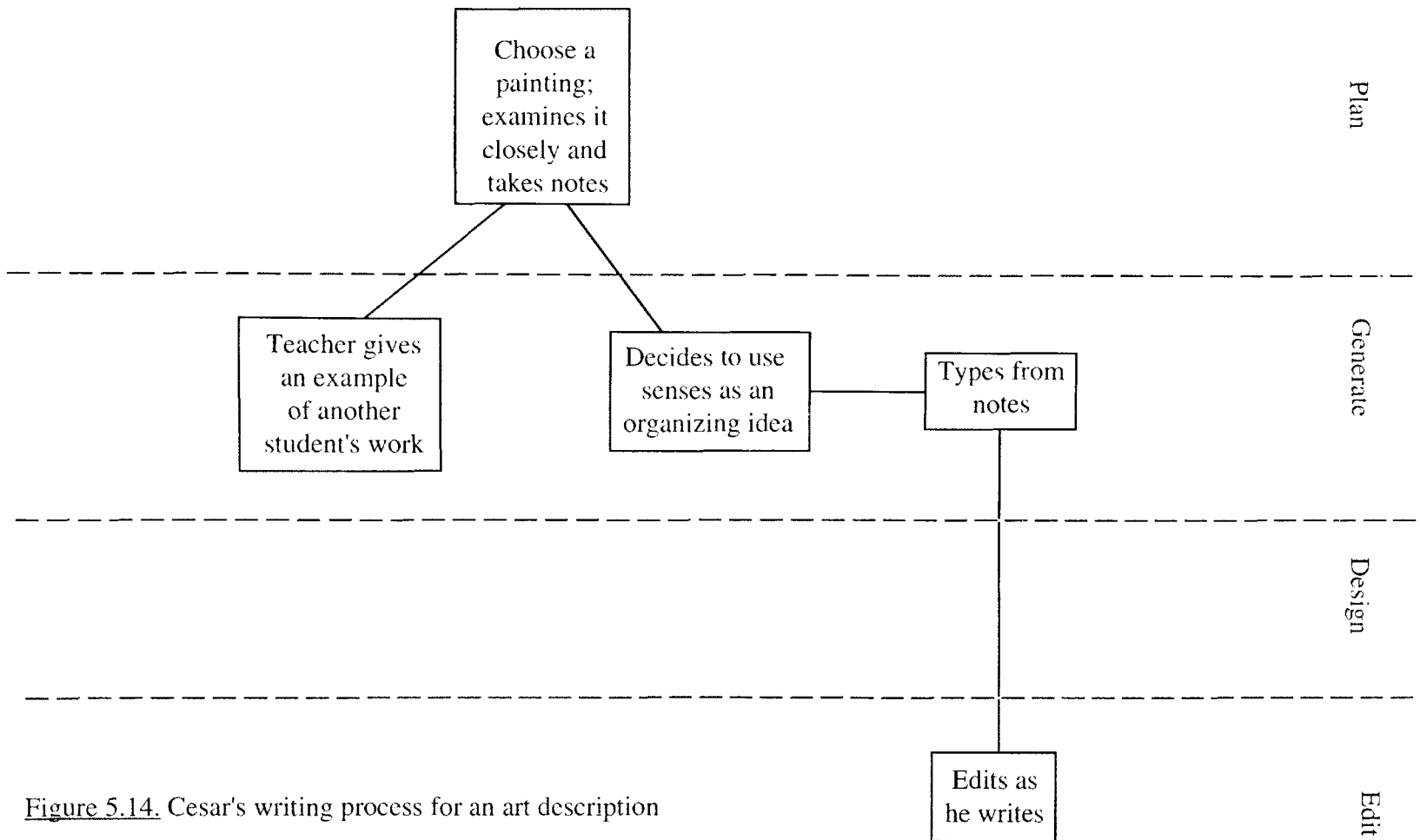Types from notes

Edits as he writes

Figure 5.14. Cesar's writing process for an art description

<u>Henrietta.</u>

I was also unable to examine Henrietta's writing process in her psychology class because she withdrew from the class before she had done a writing assignment. She described her process for writing an essay in her composition class:

> I get a topic. I take like three to five minutes and think about it
> and I can have like a big point of view we could say about
> what I'm going to write and then I can think of some details.

Henrietta said that she uses this initial time to jot down ideas that she wants to talk about and adds new ideas to this list as she writes. However, she finds herself stymied when the topic is unfamiliar to her: "But sometimes they give me some kind of topic that I don't have any idea on it; I try. I try to do it, but sometimes I can't even find the little details to put. That's when it's hard." Because of the time restraints on the essays she writes for her 1101 class, Henrietta feels that she does not have time to proofread her text for grammar mistakes. She tries to correct theses mistakes as she goes. "It's only 50 minutes; sometimes we don't even have 50 minutes when the teacher comes it takes like five minutes to write the explanation. I never have time to proofread; it's too short." Timed writings are Henrietta's nemesis: "I don't think really fast when I'm writing. Even in French, I can't think really fast." She believes that if she had more time, she could change her writing and make it better. Henrietta admits that these timed writing assignments are difficult for her because she is trying to attend to several levels of detail at the same time.

I don't want to make any mistakes. I'm trying to do everything right. It's not my language. I don't really have a lot of problem thinking when it's inside my head, but when I have to put it on paper and make everything right, it's a little bit hard. Because there are too many things to think of. Too many things to do together.

Henrietta's frustration with the complexity of the task is identified by Currie: "[I]t is possible that NNS students may have too much to attend to: The attention required by the many aspects of a difficult task may leave them little spare capacity for implementing more sophisticated executive proceedures" (p. 104). Moreover, Henrietta believes that her writing processes is necessarily simplified by the time constraints of the essay writing tasks she is required to do in her composition class. She believes that if she had more time to manage the complex skills she needs to write effectively, she would be a better writer. Moreover, she finds it much more difficult to write when the topics are limited. Figure 5.15 shows Henrietta's writing process. Her editing process is set off from the other portions of her writing process. Although she prefers to edit her papers, she feels as though the the timelimits prevent her from doing so. Henrietta's writing process on this timed assignment is also reminiscent of Flower's model of a simple-minded writing process.
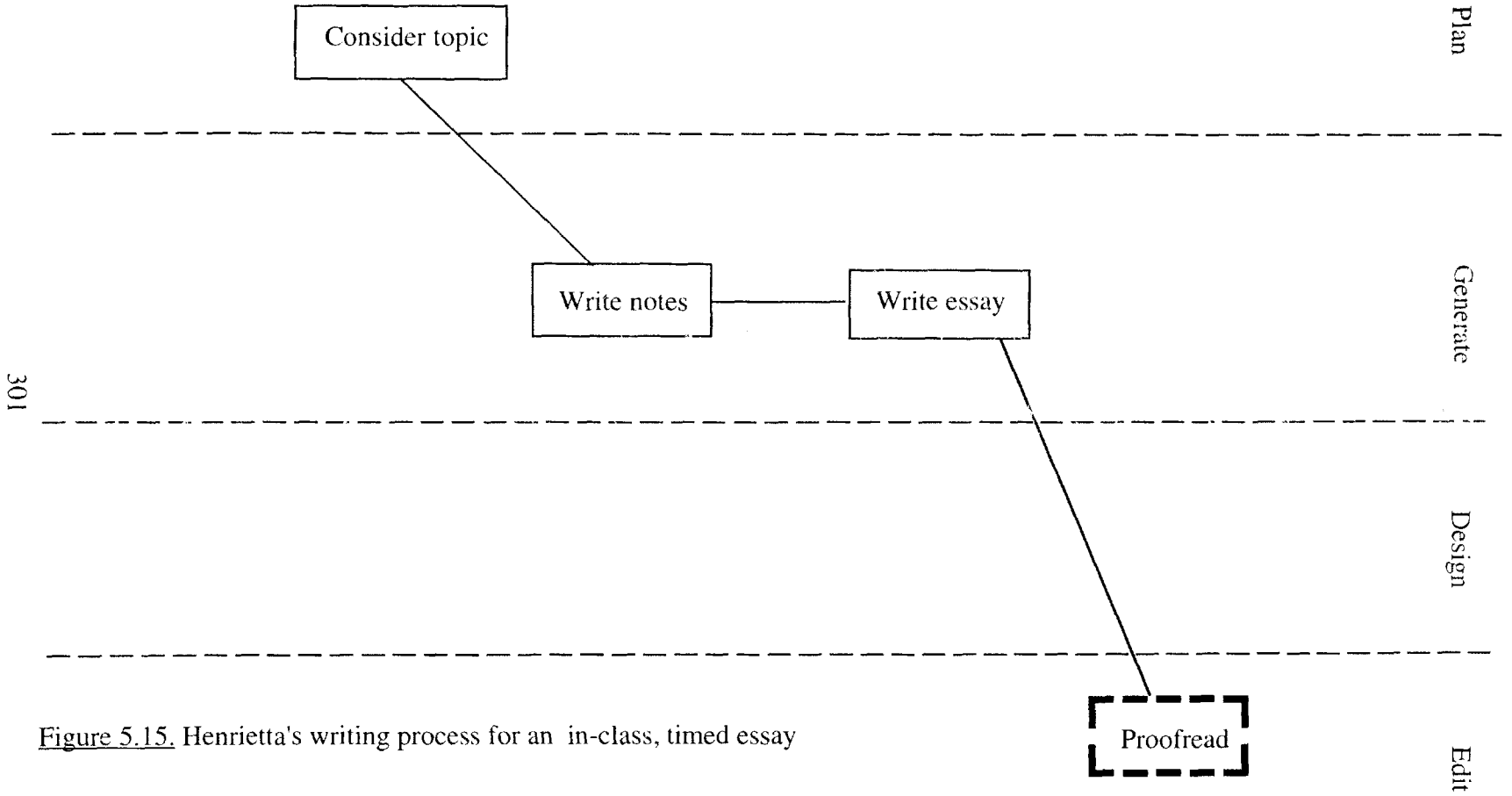
Consider topic

Write notes

Write essay

Proofread

Plan

Generate

Design

Edit

Figure 5.15. Henrietta's writing process for an in-class, timed essay

Summary

An effective writing process seems to play a significant role in the participants' success in meeting the writing requirements of their Gordon Rule classes. Budgeting sufficient time to complete the task seems to be the first important step. Henrietta's frustration with timed writing assignments are evidence of this. Ruslan's procrastination and lack of understanding of the complexity of the writing task may have contributed to his poor result. In fact, when I asked Raisa what advice she would give to a student writing a research paper, she replied with out hesitation:

> I advise to make a research paper on time, don't start like last week. I started, I cannot say I started like right away after he said to start, that we have to do papers. But I started like maybe a month before to gather information. I know the other classmates [laughs]. Many students I asked, 'How's your research paper?' Many students said, 'Oh, I have to type everything because I have everything written down.' I don't like this rush. You can be depressed and you can make a lot of mistakes. Everything happens at one time when you doing every late. The typewriter could be broken or something could happen and then you couldn't have time.

Students who used others to help them with their editing or generating ideas also seemed to be more successful. Hugo used his aunt and uncle as outside collaborators, Beatriz and Raisa used their boyfriends, Carlos used me. Salaam looked for advice on designing a text for a specific audience, asking a Moslem and a

Christian for their input on his ideas. On the other hand, students who were not very successful writers also collaborated with others, for example, Angela, Ruslan, and Henri. I believe that there are significant differences between these two groups. First, Angela and Henri were required to use process writing techniques--their teachers obliged them to write drafts. Except in the case of Carlos, it seems that teacher intervention in the writing process did not have an observable effect on the quality of the writing or the writing processes. Second, Ruslan and Henri neglected to or refused to take their instructors' advice on subsequent drafts. This suggests that it is not enough to collaborate for an effective writing process, but also the writer has to be willing to look at his or her own work critically, take feedback, and make changes when they are suggested.

Another theme that seems to have emerged from this section is that the topic that the writer chooses seems to have an effect on the process. Carlos, Salaam, and Raisa all chose topics that they found personally intriguing and that held their attention throughout the writing process; however, as Beatriz herself said, "It wasn't a good experience." This was probably caused by the fact that she did not have a personal connection with the topic and did not know anything at all about it before she began her research. Other less successful students, Angela, Henri, Henrietta, wrote on topics required by their instructors. Henrietta finds instructor-generated topics one of the most frustrating aspects of her writing class. She would like more autonomy over choosing writing topics.

<u>Coping Strategies</u>

In her study, Leki found that students used 10 different strategies to complete written assignments in content classes. Those strategies are:

1. Clarifying strategies

2. Focusing strategies

3. Relying on past writing experiences

4. Taking advantage of first language/culture

5. Using current experience of feedback

6. Looking for models

7. Using current or past ESL writing training

8. Accommodating teachers' demands

9 Resisting teachers' demands

10. Managing competing demands (p. 240)

This section compares the strategies that the students in this study used with the students in Leki's' study. Several students worked to clarify the topics they were writing about and get understand the required task. Hugo's struggle to clarify the concepts for his psychology paper are typical of this. When I asked Hugo what was the most time consuming aspect of writing his psychology paper, he replied: "The thinking. I mean I have to think about the subject. I spend a whole lot of time just thinking about that. Even when I am walking on the street I am thinking." For Hugo, thinking meant getting a clear grasp of the abstraction ideas presented in class so that he complete the written assignments.

The most obvious example of focusing strategies were exhibited early in the writing process by the students who attempted to narrow their topics. Beatriz, Raisa, Carla, and Hugo each did this. In contrast, Carlos' inability to focus in on his topic may have been one of his difficulties with his paper. One reason why his paper exceeded the page limit is because his paper lacked focus.

One strategy that Leki found that the students in her study used was to rely on past writing experience. Her students did this by borrowing organizational techniques from their first language. With the exception of Henri, the students in this study did not use organizational techniques from their first language, rather they relied on strategies they had learned in their ESOL or composition classes. Far from helping Henri to meet the demands of his writing classes, the techniques borrowed from his first language actually seemed to interfere with Henri's success in writing in English.

The best example taking advantage of first language or culture as a writing strategy was employed by Salaam. The paper he wrote for his psychology course addressed differences and conflicts between his cultural and religious background and that of his classmates. The paper was empowering for Salaam because he wrote on a subject that he was an authority on. On the other hand, some students' attempts to use their first language backfired. This happened most often when students translated directly from their first language. Most students admitted that they relied on translation as a last resort--when they could not express their meaning in English. Moreover, they said that translation sometimes

interfered with their ability to get their meaning across. This exchange with Beatriz illustrates this point:

Cheryl: Do you ever translate ideas from Portuguese?

Beatriz: Always, always.

Cheryl: What kinds of things do you translate?

Beatriz: Sayings, like sayings. Those pre-made phrases that you always say in Portuguese, and sometimes I try and translate them, but it doesn't work.

Raisa also admits that translation creates difficulties in her writing:

It's [translation] my big problem. My teacher wrote to me, structure--good, and I have some good ideas, but words. The Russian sentences she didn't understand clearly. She understands, but it is hard because I translated. She couldn't advise me about something to work on. She sent me to the lab. But they gave me exercises on how to make up the sentence--where to put verb, where to put predicate. That's very easy for me. I don't need to practice that. Many of my problems are like idiomatic expressions or they're like my thoughts. She feels like I translate from my language.

Of the 10 strategies Leki's students used, the only one that the students in this study did not employ was looking for models. This is meaningful because models most likely would have helped these students. Still, at least two of the professors, Dr. Plato and Dr. Mead, presented students with models as they explained the directions for their assignments. This strategy might have been

helpful especially to Beatriz and Raisa as they wrote their first research papers.

Although the students in this study were not enrolled in ESOL classes at the time of the study most mentioned ways that they found their ESOL training helpful. Several students remarked that the most useful aspect of their ESOL training was the development of their writing skills. Carlos was among these students. He remarked that the most helpful thing that he learned in ESOL classes was: "the structure of writing and even though I had a terrible time in English [composition]. Once I got there, at least I was oriented in the way I should put things and organize ideas." Others cited specific content that they had been exposed to in their ESOL class that they saw again in their Gordon Rule classes as helpful. For example, Raisa recalled how a chapter from her Level-Six ESOL reading book was similar to what she was studying in her Psychology class. "We studied in the sixth level of ESOL something that helped me because we are studying now about stress. So everything I studied ESOL I remember, so I feel very good now."

Several of the students in this study were bent on accommodating their teacher's demands. Carlos' final rewrite of his research paper is an excellent example of this. Other students, Beatriz, Cesar, and Raisa for example, went to their teachers outside of class time. They sought clarification of the teachers' demands or reassurance that they had fulfilled those demands. Still, many instructors complained that they were disappointed in

students' efforts to fulfill their demands. Dr. Plato lamented that the students have poor note taking and writing skills. Ms. Piaget complained that students do not take advantage of the fact that she allows students to prepare the answers for questions in advance of the exam. Ms. Mozart complained that students do not follow the most explicit directions on how to write a header on their papers. It seems that many of the students are attempting to comply with the teachers' demands, yet something is being lost in the commuication process.

Henri is the best example of a student who resists teachers' demands on writing assignments. I have already relayed how he spent a great deal of time trying to convince me that his interpretation paper he wrote for his composition class was better than his teacher's interpretation. Henri's resisting behavior is not only limited to writing. In the section on student/teacher relationships in Chapter Six, presents further examples of how Henri resists the advice of teachers.

Probably the best example of a student trying to manage competing demands is Carlos' paper for his Psychology class. Carlos is compelled by the intolerance of his classmates to write a paper on the biological roots of homosexuality. He has strong feelings about the topic and wants to change his classmates' minds on the subject. At the same, time his paper must meet the objective requirements of the assignment. That is, he must keep his paper within the page limit and use appropriate English. This proves to be an overwhelming task for Carlos.

Literate Behaviors

An analysis of the assignments and syllabi revealed that the student-participants had to exhibit literate behaviors as defined by Blanton (1994). Literate behaviors include students' ability to:

1. Interpret texts in light of their own experiences and their own experience in light of texts;

2. Agree or disagree with texts in light of that experience;

3. Link texts to each other;

4. Synthesize texts, and use their synthesis to build new assertions;

5. Extrapolate from texts;

6. Create their own texts, doing any or all of the above;

7. Talk and write about doing any or all of the above;

8. Do Numbers 6 and 7 in such a way as to meet the expectations of their audience. (p. 8)

I found that all of these behaviors were embedded in the writing assignments of the Gordon Rule classes. The following paragraphs demonstrate how these behaviors apply to these participants.

1. Interpret texts in light of their own experiences and their own experience in light of texts

For these entry-level freshman, the ability of students to interpret texts in light of their own experiences appears to be the literate behavior required most often. I would speculate that this is because the bulk of the students who usually enroll in these classes are first-time entering freshmen. It seems reasonable to assume that the instructors in freshman classes would rely more heavily on

students' experiences than other texts or their background knowledge of the subject area. Quite simply, it is to the instructors' advantage to make connections between class content and the students' real-life experiences. Making connections between text and personal experiences is more likely to engage students and pique their interests. Additionally, complex concepts are easier to learn if students can relate them to concrete experiences.

The psychology instructors used this strategy most frequently. All of the psychology instructors, Ms. Skinner, Dr. Jung, Ms. Piaget, Dr. Mead, and Mr. Freud, required students to interpret the concepts present in the course in light of their personal experiences. Ms. Skinner sums up the importance of this literate behavior to students' success in the psychology class. When I asked if it was necessary for students to integrate their personal experiences in the class, she replied: "I think because of the nature of the class, absolutely. It's really hard not to have that happen." Dr. Jung calls this connection "vital" for the students in her classes.

> For my class its very important. I don't know about other classes, but for my class it is vital. I tell them that if psychology will not help them to live happier, what good is it? So, for me it's extremely important. One of the things that they always write in their essays is that it's so relevant to their lives, and for me that's vital.

Dr. Jung guarantees that students will reflect on their personal experiences as they pertain to the content of the course through the two-page reaction papers that students are required to write for her

class. After Dr. Jung completes a unit of instruction covering three or four weeks, students must write a reaction paper in which they illustrate one or more of the main concepts taught in the unit with experiences from their lives. This paper has the dual purpose of encouraging students to see how the concepts can be applied to their lives and helping students to study for exams. On the same day that the students hand in their essays, they take an exam on the content of that unit. Dr. Jung explains her system this way:

> They write things they have done or problems they have been through. Mostly it's how they can apply it, because PSYC 1000 is applied psychology. Most of what I ask them is how what I have been teaching in that span, for that test, what has helped, what can they relate to themselves, and if they have applied it at all.

Ms. Piaget also uses the required writing assignment as the vehicle for encouraging students to interpret their personal experiences in light of the text.

While all would agree that this behavior is necessary for success in the psychology class, Mr. Freud believes that interpreting text in light of experiences is not easy for students. In fact, he identifies it as the most difficult element of the psychology class for students as this exchange illustrates:

> Cheryl: In your experience what is the most difficult thing for students about Psychology 1000?
>
> Mr. Freud: Probably, trying to see any way that it relates to their own lives. The purpose of the course is to have a

relationship to their own life. Some students see that kind of quickly. For other kids, it might as well be, just another course in archeology or something. It's just like I go here three out of seven days a week for an hour and I find out about this or that, but they don't connect it anywhere. So I'd say that is the thing that I probably have the most trouble getting across.

Cheryl: How important are their own personal experiences to their success in the class?

Mr. Freud: Well, I don't think you can understand this course unless you can relate at least some of the content to your personal experiences. If it was strictly a course where you had to learn the names of psychologists, this is an IQ test, and this is what heroin is like, then I think the course would kind of miss the boat. So I think for it to be an effective course, it's got to hit home at least some places. If they don't get that then either they've missed something or the text didn't cover it right or I didn't make the best presentation in class or something.

It seems that the very nature of the psychology class requires students to interpret their experiences in light of texts; however, Social Environment classes demand the opposite--students must interpret text in light of their own experience. Moreover, this literate behavior is not as widely applied in Social Environment as it is in psychology. Another difference between these two classes is that where many of the psychology instructors required their students to write papers which required students to interpret their own

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experience in light of texts, the Social Environment instructors favored integrating texts and experiences in oral class discussions. Dr. Mead makes a point to create an ambiance that develops students' ability to interpret text in light of their own experiences and also share these experiences, even though the topics of these discussions may be controversial. She works hard to make students feel comfortable enough to share these experiences so that their classmates can benefit from them:

> Before I teach, I always ask: What does this have to do with anybody, what does this have to do with them? If people can see themselves in the problem, they are interested. Their eyes light up they want to participate. They want help.

Like Dr. Mead, Dr. Gibbon uses discussions as a vehicle for encouraging students to interpret texts in light of their own experiences. He revised his teaching techniques in order to accommodate students and encourage them to develop this.

> When I first started teaching here, I was just so used to the lecture format. At other, previous teaching assignments, I would just walk into the room and just lecture and leave and that was it. But I realized early on here that I was going to need a lot more than just lecturing because of the students. So I try to catalyze discussions and I love to ask the kinds of questions where they can call on personal experience. Today, for example, in class we were talking about culture how it is the great educator for people. I asked them: What elements of your culture that you are familiar with are

American contributions to culture in general? People said, fast food and aspects of music and baseball. They were throwing out things that they were familiar with. Things that they had experienced themselves. These just aren't book-savvy people, so if you're going to get answers from them in class or engagement in class it's going to have to come from their own experiences, it really is.

Likewise, Dr. Hegel said that it was important for students to interpret texts in light of their experiences; however, I was unable to determine how this was done in his class. When I asked Dr. Hegel for an example of how students do this, he described an example from his own life that he made to illustrate a point in his lecture. When I observed his class, this seemed to be the norm. Dr. Hegel illustrated his points with his own personal experiences; however, students rarely contributed their own experiences. In all fairness, I only saw Dr. Hegel teach one class. In contrast, I did observe Ms. Durant exhibiting this behavior. She asked students to contribute their experiences to illustrate the points she made in class. For example, Ms. Durant was explaining aspects of American governmental institutions. She asked students who were from other countries if they had similar institutions in their native countries. This led to a discussion of comparative governmental systems.

To a lesser degree humanities instructors also required students to interpret texts in light of their own experiences. Mr. Picasso acknowledges that students usually come in to the

humanities class with the preconceived idea that what they are going to learn has nothing to do with themselves as individuals:

> I think that the students' expectation of humanities is that, they are about memorizing dates and names, and that it's going to be boring and have nothing to do with their lives.

Dr. Plato requires at least two written assignments that ask students to interpret texts in light of their experiences. She describes one of these assignments:

> One writing assignment is after they've had described to them two main features, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, they can write about themselves. For example, I tend to be orderly, and Apollonian, and very good about planning things, and on the weekend, I'm Dionysian. Those turn out to be very good papers and they love it that they are using very big words. We have the things here that have about different personal temperaments.

2. Agree or disagree with texts in light of that experience

Although it is not as evident as the first literate behavior, I also found evidence that some students were required to agree or disagree with texts in light of their experiences. For Dr. Hegel's writing assignments this is an essential skill: "When they write assignments, it will be about an event that is taking place. I want to see their position on it. I want to see them argue a point of view." Ms. Mozart comments that this is perplexing for some students. Her first writing assignment prompted students to describe certain works of art, and the artist who created them and asked them to give their

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own opinions on these works based on their own experiences. Students found this last element troublesome.

> There are almost no mistakes that you can make in this paper [because it was based on personal opinion]. They were very worried about the content. But I said it is an essay there is no wrong, so just express yourself.

3. Link texts to each other

Ms. Durant's primary writing assignment was the most obvious example of a task which required students to link texts together:

> What I ask them to do is go to the library and use the Social Issues Resource series where they have journal articles on different topics of social interest. They have journal articles on elderly, human rights, defense, crime, the environment, special topics. They, the students, are supposed to choose three articles on topics of their interest, summarize them, and then write their own reactions to the articles.

Dr. Mead's psychological profile assignment is another example of how students are required to link texts. Students must link the psychological concepts they have read in their textbook with the biography of a famous person.

It seems to me that the most obvious way in which academic writers link texts together is in writing a research paper. Of the 11 instructors in the study, only Mr. Freud and Ms. Skinner required students to do a traditional research paper. Dr. Hegel explained that he had discontinued assigning research papers because he

was frustrated by the amount of plagiarism that he found. "I don't give them papers because most papers are cheated. They copy it from somewhere. So I have gone away from that."

Both Mr. Freud and Ms. Skinner stressed that one of the difficult elements of writing a research paper for students was, as Dr. Plato had observed, persuading students to write more objectively. In other words, this type of writing assignment required students to link texts together rather than to express their opinions about text. This concept of a research paper was novel to Raisa. When I asked her what was the primary difference between the research papers she wrote in Russia and her psychology research paper she found this to be a significant difference: "Our teacher said that...we, our knowledge is not high enough to like express our opinion about some psychological topic. We have to use what the experts say."

4. Synthesize texts, and use their synthesis to build new assertions

Synthesizing texts requires students to use cognitive skills beyond linking texts. It is not a literate behavior that was required frequently by the instructors in this study; however, it was evident. The psychological profile assignment for Dr. Mead's class is a very good example of this. Students are asked to synthesize the psychological principles they have learned with the biographical facts about a famous person. From this synthesis they must speculate on the psychological character of the famous person. This is Dr. Mead's description of that assignment:

This is the paper that they do in psychology [shows me an example of a student paper]. This is a sample of a student who did her psychological profile on a famous Mexican artist. This is a psychological profile. The first part was effective behavior, so she talks about this artist's effective behavior. I tell them that I don't want biographies; this is what some of them will try to do. I don't want to do some reflective work. I want them to make it psychological. Then we have how the biology and environment influenced what they did and their cognitive and emotional development and personality. Then, after I teach them [about effective behavior], they have to show me what they know by using a real live person.

Another writing assignment that requires students to synthesize texts and build new assertions out of those syntheses is Ms. Skinner's research paper. She asks the students to:

Write the first part of the paper as an academic exercise in research, and then at the tail end [in the final pages], put your personal suggestions or thoughts and feelings.

Her aim in this case is to lead students into contributing their own insight to an otherwise objective research paper and adding a personal perspective to synthesize the ideas. She explains to the students that in the second part of the paper, they should:

Do a little of your own work where you say, this is maybe why I picked the topic, how it applies, how it fits, what I learned, what I didn't learn or what my experience has been.

5. Extrapolate from texts

Extrapolating from text is a literate behavior that is in demand in many of these courses. All of the instructors except for Mr. Picasso require students to glean meaning from texts. Most students believed that they were able to do this with minimal effort when they were reading their text books. However, the students who wrote research papers needed to extrapolate from specialized, discipline-specific texts. These proved to be more difficult for the students. Beatriz remarked that it was not difficult to understand her psychology textbook; however, she found wading through psychology journals very strenuous. She explained that after she was vested in the topic she had chosen for her paper, she became disillusioned about the topic and frustrated by the text in the psychological journals:

> Then I found out it was kind of boring. I really didn't like it. I read and I read a lot of things that I didn't understand. I had to read them like three, four times and I just couldn't understand. I just lost a lot of time. It wasn't a good experience.

Dr. Plato noticed this same tendency by students in her class. They are frustrated by the complexity of texts or concepts and are unable to extrapolate meaning from the texts: "I think that they are baffled by the amount of interpretation that is possible to do. That is, they read at something and it seems either incomprehensible or not worth bothering."

6. Create their own texts, doing any or all of the above

It is obvious from this extensive section on the writing requirements of Gordon Rule classes that students must be able to create their own texts. All of the student-participants expressed a certain amount of frustration with their ability to write in English. These three students are representative of the all participants' responses on this point. Carla says: "I can't express myself like I express myself in Spanish. I can't. It frustrates me. Like you see me writing something and then I'm erasing and then I go back and do it again."

Angela describes herself as:

Frustrated. I like to write in Spanish, but in English, it's very hard because the idea you have to put in the paper a different way. In Spanish we think like we write; as we are thinking we are writing. But in English, I think it's changed, it's more, more complicated. I don't know maybe when the language is strange it's not easy, but the teacher said for her it's hard to understand my thoughts.

Salaam concurs:

Oh, it's difficult, very difficult for me. I think it's because I don't have enough vocabulary to express myself. What I know is very limited and I have to limit my opinion on that. Sometimes I have to say things before I have the idea and this is my problem. It's hard for me to keep the ideas in my mind when I'm thinking of the words, yeah, yeah. It's confusing.

Sometimes I'm never satisfied with my writing, until today, I am never satisfied with what I am writing.

7. Talk and write about doing any or all of the above

Several teachers said that they spent as much as one class period explaining a writing assignment. Ms. Skinner asks students specifically to reflect on their experience of writing a research paper and describe what they learned from the experience and to share what they have learned with their classmates.

In addition, Beatriz reported that a few of the students in her psychology class shared their the ideas from their research paper with the class:

We have been talking about the research paper because that was something that was going on and there are some interesting people, like there are some artists. Some very interesting artists in the class. So, it is interesting to talk to them. They always present their work in class. Yeah, we had very nice presentation today by a girl who paints.

8. Do Numbers 6 and 7 in such a way as to meet the expectations of their audience

Meeting the expectations of the audiences appears to be a literate behavior which is more difficult for these students. In this respect some of the students were successful while others had difficulty. Henri struggled to understand how his composition teacher wanted him to approach the task of writing. On the other hand, Hugo connects very well with his audience. He writes his reaction papers in the form of a letter to his psychology teacher,

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thus making the paper personal. At the same time, he understands that the letter is a facade; he writes the letter in the form of an essay using the specific vocabulary Dr. Jung used in class.

Probably the notable audience faux pas is made by Cesar. The first line of his first essay for Dr. Plato's class begins: "I really haven't had time to buy the book yet, but I will try to write this essay." Oops! Perhaps Cesar thinks that Dr. Plato will be impressed by his honesty; however, even if this were true because he has only been in the class for a couple of days, he cannot be sure that this sentence will have this effect on Dr. Plato (the author of the book that he had not had time to buy).

Dr. Plato finds that her students struggle with adjusting their tone and thought processes to their audience. For example, for one of her written assignments which grows out of a chapter on morality, she requires students to: "Give an example of an incident which you've experienced or observed in which somebody had more than one choice to make." Next, students are required to analyze the dilemma as different philosophers would. "I'd like them, on a higher-level, I would like them to see this would be utilitarian and this would be what Kant would recommend. I expect that would be hard to do for many people." However, Dr. Plato finds that students struggle with finding an appropriate experience to illustrate a moral dilemma:

Now the easiest thing is to be honest or not to be honest about finding a treasured object. But, sometimes they give

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examples in which there is only one right answer which anyone would want to choose.

Therefore, it seems that interpreting texts in light of experiences and experiences in light of texts is an important behavior for students in introductory classes. However, although the students' inability to generate a satisfactory moral dilemma troubles Dr. Plato, what troubles her more is the students' insecurity when it comes to determine which assignments require them to interpret texts in light of their experiences and which do not.

I also find that it's very hard to get the inadequate writer, or let's say the person who's uncomfortable about writing, to write about something without putting himself in it. Instead of saying this picture has a lot of green in it, they say, 'As I look at this picture I see--green.' Well, was the green there without you? Or if you say summarize this or tell what a certain author has said they'll say, 'In my opinion.' 'It seems to me.' 'I believe that.' 'The way I look at it...' I cross all that out. They just have to say the author is in favor of something. I don't know if they're padding it in order to reach the word level or those introductory phrases are signs of discomfort.

Summary

While each of these literate behaviors is consequential to students' success in the Gordon Rule classes, this section reveals that the first behavior--interpreting text in light of experiences and experiences in light of text--is essential to each of these disciplines. I would speculate that this is primarily because the instructor-

participants do not expect students to have a great deal of book knowledge when they enter their classes. Even though Mr. Freud identifies this as a difficult element for students, the students in this study did not believe that it was difficult, except for the fact that including personal experiences was not a widely-used form of discourse in their first language. The students who did report including personal reflections in written texts they produced in their first language remarked that they did so very infrequently.

Because this kind of personal writing is widely used in other classes that the students have taken at Miami-Dade, namely their ESOL and composition classes, it seems that they have become proficient at this type of writing. However, Dr. Plato's observations reveal a difficulty with this. She believes that it is difficult for students to recognize what kinds of assignments call for the integration of personal experience and which assignments do not. This could be due to the fact that students have become accustomed to personal writing in English or that they do not read the writing prompt carefully or do not understand how to approach the writing task. This second explanation could also account for the other difficulty that Dr. Plato remarks on: it is difficult for students to choose appropriate examples from their experiences to illustrate the concepts presented in the text.

Oral/Aural Skills

Transactional and Interactional Language

Several instructors indicated that while they often give lectures in their classes, they also encourage students to participate

in class discussions. Mr. Picasso and Dr. Plato even give students guidelines for class discussions. Mr. Picasso explains why students need these guidelines:

> I want everyone to discuss what we are looking at. Of course not all of them participate, but it's important for them to listen to the discussion because what we discuss in class is on the essay exams. They don't all talk, and I don't force them to, but I try to make it interesting and safe enough so that students don't feel intimidated. I think that everyone who wants to say something does. As the semester progresses I think they learn how to discuss, they just aren't very good at it in the beginning. I have to talk about what makes a fair discussion. They just don't know how to discuss. At the beginning we have to set up guidelines for what makes a good discussion.

Dr. Plato goes a step further. She gives students written guidelines for class discussions. Still, she finds that most students are reluctant to participate.

> I like people [students] who participate. I even have another sheet indicating what is a good participation. Just coming in with just anything that pops into your head is not useful. Now sometimes I have a student who is worried about a grade, and I'll say I'd love to see some evidence that you are listening to what your classmates are saying.

However, Dr. Plato reports that students just do not seem to be tuned-in to the class. She finds that many students do not even listen to simple directions very carefully:

> I think that ability to listen so we don't have to repeat it so often, is very important. If you say 'hand in your papers,' or 'there is going to be a test Friday,' or whatever it is, you don't want people to suddenly stop being comatose, and "What did she say?" You want people to get it the first or second time.

Like Dr. Plato, most of the instructors found only a few of the students actively participate in whole class discussions. Mr. Freud finds this to be a dilemma:

> Well, I have to make a decision. I can let it go and I'd say out of about 40 students maybe a half a dozen participate frequently. I can just let them participate or I can simply call upon those who don't participate and ask for their contribution. I usually make a judgment on how sensitive I think a student is. If I think they are really painfully shy, I won't call on them. If I think they are only sort of shy, I'll call on them.

Some instructor-participants deal with this problem by encouraging students to first discuss the topics in small groups. For Ms. Mozart class participation is essential; she uses group activities to insure that even the shiest students get an opportunity to interact. She explained how this is accomplished:

> We went to the gallery to see the exhibit [art exhibit] called Murder. I thought that was one of the best things they did this semester so far. Because of that we will also do a field trip to

look at the poetry installation. We'll do the same thing--we'll travel in groups and will kind of discuss it. I'll work with the groups around the gallery and then when we go back to class, we'll discuss it a lot, and I'll ask people to say what they think.

To a lesser degree, Dr. Plato, Ms. Durant, Ms. Piaget, and Dr. Mead use small group idscussions Ms. Durant uses small groups for simulation games and specific tasks she describes one of the these tasks like this:

We have discussion where they do a simulation. They have to envision a new ideal society on Mars. They have free rein to create any society they want. They do a report. It's just a few groups. Then the class chooses which society they would prefer to live in.

Other professors do not make participation optional. Ms. Skinner requires all students to participate. When I asked her if there were students in her class who were too shy to participate, Ms. Skinner said emphatically:

Not in mine. It just doesn't work, it isn't OK, not to participate. I work real hard at making it O.K. for them to participate at whatever level they can. Some of them I have to really draw out with a lot more effort. But at this point in the semester, it would be real hard to get in and out of there without saying anything. There is non-verbal participation as well as verbal, but by and large they chime right in. It gets loud.

Ms. Mozart feels that she is able to accomplish a high degree of participation by making it "safe" for the students to express their opinions:

> I'm always encouraging people to say what they think without any consideration whether it's right or wrong, that is, they are so used to the education system that says: 'What's the answer, right or wrong?' In this case it's just an opening for a discussion, it's just a topic for a discussion so nobody feels as though they are going to get slammed down. I'm really hard on students who slam on each other. They are so eager to say that's the wrong answer, see. I say 'big deal'.

Making students feel comfortable in expressing their opinions was important not only to Ms. Mozart, but also to Dr. Mead and Ms. Skinner. Dr. Mead explains how she encourages participation:

> A large part of the class is discussion and after I present a chapter, I'll open it up for class discussion. There are people who don't say much in class. They talk to me after class about what we did. But until yesterday, they did a report. But I kind of set it up, I facilitated it. Yesterday was our relationship *party*. Everybody brought things that were close to them about people that they love. So everybody had to speak yesterday. So I do that, like the first day of class and somewhere in-between and the last day. That everybody gets in a circle and when it comes to you, it is your time.

Ms. Skinner believes that because of the nature of the psychology class which requires students to relate their personal experience to

what they have been studying, students gradually become more open about sharing their experiences and feelings:

> It starts out stiff for the first maybe the first five weeks when everybody is still posturing and figuring out where they are at. But clearly begins to be a group process right after that sometime. There is a lot of sharing that goes on, particularly when they have to do those presentations [each student is required to do an oral presentation in Ms. Skinner's class]. They bring up a lot of issues that are either relevant to them or that bother them about society or about their classmates or-- People who are in recovery get up and share as if it were an AA experience: 'I'm ten years clean, and this is my story, and this is why I wrote about it.' That is powerful stuff. You don't hear a noise. That makes me feel good because that says that there is a level of comfort and trust in the classroom even though there are large numbers. That we've made it safe.

Note taking

Taking accurate notes was another area where the instructors felt that students were lacking in skills. Ms. Skinner considered this one of the skills that many students lacked proficiency in. When I asked her how students were, Ms. Skinner replied:

> In need of formal direction (laughs). They could really benefit from instruction on maybe how to set the page, maybe how to maybe do the technique where they put half on one side and then they comment on the other side. Those kinds of skills. When I taught LD [learning disabled students] that's how they

were taught. This is how to take notes off the board. This is how to take notes from an oral discussion. These people [the students in her class] either write everything that you say. including the humor that you throw in and side stories that get added in. They just get lost.

Ms. Skinner felt that this was especially difficult for NNS students. She gives the example of a student that was in her class last semester.

I had a Chinese student who tried to write everything with his Chinese dictionary translator book in his lap. Really, really, really, he struggled and I think that language conversion particularly is so difficult. He did OK, but had he been proficient in English, he would have been outstanding because he was a bright young man.

In a similar way, Dr. Plato has encountered deficiency in students' note taking skills. However, she finds that these difficulties conspicuous not only among ESOL students, but almost all the students in her classes. When I asked her if students were obligated to take notes on films, she replied:

Oh, please. They don't know how to take notes. If I see one person in an honors class taking notes, I'm surprised, happily. A lot of times I take notes. If the film is an educational film, while it's on, I'm putting words on the board. So then I stop the film before it's over if it's a short, unless it's a work or art that would be sacrilege to stop it. I'll say what did he say? Two minutes after you start a film, if you stop it, you'll find that

they don't know what he said. So I'll say OK, let's rewind it, and I'll rewind it. Listen this time. So they're not making the connection, a lot of times they don't know how to spell it, so I say "Look, you don't have to worry about it, I'll write it." But then I'll ask what did he have to say about it or what were the two main this's or that's.

Other instructors also realized that students really struggled with their note taking skills. In fact, Dr. Gibbon spends a portion of the first class meeting teaching his students how to take notes. He believes that if the students took better notes in class, it would improve their reading comprehension of the Social Environment text.

Taking notes is a very important part of it because if they take notes it will be much easier to get through that book. I really encourage them to do that. On the first day of class, I talk to them about the art of note taking. I don't really have a book on it, but just to give them some ideas. Don't worry about every single thing, don't get bogged down in the minutia, don't worry about the dates if you miss them. Bring in a Dictaphone if you need one. But taking notes is a very, very integral part of the course. I think taking notes is very important for them, because for some of them, it's the first time they have taken notes. They are going to be taking notes in a lot more classes before they finish their four years of college and thereafter, so those are definitely important.

It is Dr. Jung's teaching methods that seemed to place the most emphasis on taking notes. Dr. Jung admitted that almost all of what was tested in her class did not come from a textbook, but from her lectures. When I observed Dr. Jung's class, the students seemed to be writing down almost verbatim what she said. She explained her teaching technique this way:

> They are required to buy a book that is supplementary reading and they are supposed to take very good notes [in class]. I tell them that they can bring a tape recorder if they want to. In fact with a student that he said he has financial problems I got a standing tape of the class that he can use. I tell them at the beginning of the class, you have to take good notes.

For Hugo taking good notes was one of the most difficult aspects of the psychology course. He had a difficult time managing skills necessary to successfully take in all of the information presented. When I asked Hugo what was difficult about psychology, he answered:

> It's hard because the teacher lectures; we don't have a book and I have to take notes and approximately I have five or six pages in every class. I have it this thick [gestures about three inches with his index finger and thumb], my notes and it's a lot of material and then you have to memorize. She said, 'I'm not going to leave out anything.' 'You have to memorize it.' So that's what makes it hard because it's all oral.

Dr. Jung explains that she attempts to make the note taking load more manageable by encouraging students to exchange notes and collaborate with their classmates:

> In fact, I encourage them at the beginning of the class. I do a little exercise at the beginning of the class where they can talk to others that are sitting next to them. Then I encourage them to exchange--to interchange their notes and cross reference their notes so they make sure they get everything.

Carla reiterates the importance of notes in Dr. Jung's class; however, unlike Hugo she finds the task manageable because she collaborates with her classmates. When I asked her what advice she would give to an ESOL student who was taking psychology, this exchange resulted:

> Carla: Make a lot of notes and read your notes every single day. Because she [Dr. Jung] is hard. But you learn from her. That's it, take a lot of notes and go to all the classes and you won't have any problems if you do that.
>
> Cheryl: Did you have any problem keeping up with her?
>
> Carla: She dictates a lot. OK, that's very good for us. I didn't have any problem, but probably I missed a few words, but then when I checked my notes, reading them, I sometimes compare it to the other students' notes in the class.

While Carla took Dr. Jung's advice and collaborated with other students, Hugo characterizes himself as "really shy." He told me that there is only one student in his classes that he had had any conversations with, and even though he had noticed that this

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student was taking exactly the same classes as he was, it took Hugo three weeks to initiate a conversation with her. Still it doesn't seem that he studied with her, but rather when he found out she was from Portugal, they talked about the differences in European and American educational systems.

Ms. Piaget also encourages collaboration among the students. One strategy she uses for going over the exams after they are returned to students is to have them discuss the right and wrong answers in groups. She allows students to do this in whatever language they are comfortable in, thus ensuring that students ultimately understand the content. Ms Piaget explains:

> One thing that that helps a lot is that they go over their tests in groups. They learn about the test and you are using covert teaching at the same time. Especially when you have ESOL students in the same group. They might even speak in their own language. I don't care as long as they understand why they made that mistake, as long as they make the connection.

Two students, Raisa and Henrietta, tried to compensate for their deficiency in note taking skills by tape recording class sessions. They had opposite results. Raisa found the tape recordings very helpful. When I asked her what advice she would give a ESOL student, Raisa replied:

> Buy a recorder--because it helped me a lot. First of all I was very panicked because I couldn't take notes really fast and I couldn't memorize all everything he would say. Then I bought a recorder and I started to record. It helps a lot for my

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Psychology and Social Environment courses. Especially for

Psychology. He basically was giving us tests based on his

lecture. So I should have all the notes from his lectures.

Then I felt really comfortable when I got the recorder.

Henrietta on the other had did not find the tape recorder helpful as

this exchange illustrates:

Henrietta: In the psychology class I was started to tape record

it. I didn't get anything out of it.

Cheryl: The tape recorder didn't work?

Henrietta: It did work. I didn't even--I listened to it, but when

she give the test, I didn't get the same thing like that I should

have put. I didn't get good notes and I felt it doesn't work, so I

don't use it anymore. So it doesn't work. I have to do

something that works. This one doesn't work.

Oral Presentations

While only one of the instructor-participants required her

students to make a formal, oral presentation on the same topic as

their research paper, in my pilot study, one of the two humanities

teachers I interviewed required students to memorize a poem and

recite it orally. So, while formal oral presentations were infrequent,

they were not unheard of. Ms. Skinner said that, initially, making an

oral presentation makes the students apprehensive about her class.

There is an oral presentation that they have to deliver to the

class. For most of them it's their first time having to stand up

in front of a group and having to present something in a

professional manner. So that tends to be--sometimes that's

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the straw that put them over the edge: 'Well, I'm dropping this.' I mean, there are a million of us that teach the course and they find someone who doesn't require a presentation, so verbal skills are real important.

Although Ms. Skinner observed that the oral presentation was intimidating to some students, it didn't seem to faze Carlos; he seemed very comfortable. On the other hand, Hugo had to make an oral presentation not in his Gordon Rule classes, but in his composition class. This caused the shy Hugo a great deal of anxiety:

> Everybody had to give a speech. It was tough, tough. We had to find a subject and talk about it for ten minutes. We were able to use an outline only, and there wasn't enough air when I spoke, but I did well.

He came through the experience, and what is more, he learned that by having some audio visual aids and humor, the experience went a little more smoothly. When I asked him what he gave his oral presentation on, he replied:

> Shark attacks, so the best thing for an ESOL student is to use something, use audio-visual. I couldn't find a tape which we could find shark attacks, so I used transparency sheets. The best thing was I made photocopies from the book and then make transparencies. I had to find a sea lion because that's the sharks favorite food and I couldn't find one so I drew one. That was famous [laughs]. I saw everybody was asleep and I

put it on and oops! [he acts out a startled waking up]. So that make the talk easier.

Critical Thinking

"We leave concrete thinking at the door, and they still come in," says Ms. Skinner. The other instructors in this study concur-- higher-level critical thinking skills are paramount for a student's success. Ms. Mozart calls critical thinking "a life skill" and goes on to explain "that's why we're teaching that in the humanities, it's something that will help you everywhere." Likewise according to Mr. Picasso: "Critical thinking skills are essential--that's what the humanities are all about."

One difficulty with the cognitive level of the requirements of Gordon Rule classes could be, as Currie (1993) found in her study, the salience of the assignments. In other words, how obvious are the cognitive demands of the assignments? For the most part, the instructor-participants went to great lengths to explain what students needed to do in order to successfully complete these assignments explaining to the students when an assignment required personal input, or what preliminary steps were required to complete the assignments successfully. Moreover, all of the instructors were available to give students help on these assignments if they required it. If the students who started working on the assignments early, took the time and care to follow their instructors' suggestions, and ask their instructors for individual help, they were able to cope with the cognitive demands of these classes.

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The instructors' willingness break down more difficult cognitive tasks and take the students through the steps necessary for these tasks was probably due to the fact that these were introductory freshman courses taught at a community college with a high percentage of under-prepared students. In other words, the professors expected that students would have trouble with the cognitive difficulty of the assignments and so, compensated for it.

The fact that students had this extra support on their assignments may have also compensated for their lack of experience with higher-level cognitive tasks in their first language. In addition, there is some preliminary evidence that the students were able to apply what they had learned from the assignments in their Gordon Rule classes to other situations. For example, Beatriz reported that her research paper for her psychology class was a "very bad experience". Even though she got an "A" on the paper, she found the experience frustrating. However, she reported that the second research paper that she wrote that semester--the paper for her composition class--was much easier: "I had less trouble finding information. I didn't have this back and forth with the teacher. I just chose the topic; I just did it." By going through the process for her Gordon Rule Class, she had solved the puzzle of research papers.

Gordon Rule classes did not only require higher-level cognitive skills. An analysis of the exams students were required to take shows that especially the multiple choice exams questions were knowledge questions, asking students to recall basic facts

from their reading or class discussion, although some of these questions required students to apply these concepts. It was in the class assignments and other activities that I found evidence of the importance of higher-level thinking skills.

Students' Difficulty with Higher-Level Cognitive Tasks

While higher-level critical thinking skills are important for students in Gordon Rule classes, several instructors reported that many students did not come to class with sufficiently developed skills. Ms Mozart remarked "They are OK with factual answers. They're not OK with abstractions. They're not willing to go out on a limb." Similarly, Dr. Jung finds that critical thinking skills are lacking among the students in her psychology class. Her principal frustrations seem to be that students cannot evaluate a situation objectively, rather they accept the ideas of others without thinking through the implications of those ideas. In the end she is not really sure how to compensate for this deficiency:

> What I find is that they [the students] are quite unprepared to think critically and they will just go with their own ideas taken from the radio or the TV or someone popular or something like that. I don't want them to think critically that way; I want them to develop some solid ideas first. In fact, at the beginning of the semester I was just asking myself that question, 'How can I do this?' I just don't have the answer.

Dr. Jung has tried to encourage critical thinking through discussion in her class, yet she still feels that students are not adequately prepared for these discussions because they have not thought through the implications of their opinions and choices. She finds that these discussions tend to solidify the students' superficial opinions rather than induce them to look at an issue objectively.

I encourage discussions to a certain degree because I don't want a purely superficial, uninformed discussion going on. I try to get an opinion in their reaction papers or their discussions in class, but the problem is that, their ideas are so, superficial. Many of them, the ones that discuss the most, have really different points of view and really they have no basis for that other than they like it.

Dr. Plato expresses a similar opinion to Dr. Jung. She also finds many students dependent on preconceived ideas and unable to analyze objectively.

What I have to work on more than anything else with the critical thinking is to encourage people to describe. Before they indicated an opinion, they seem to jump in right away with personal reminiscences. Which I understand, but it's not objective, it's all 'in my opinion--', and 'I believe--' and 'I feel--', and when I say describe something, and see if you can do it without indicating whether you like it or not. A description requires close attention and the personal messes it up. An opinion may not even be necessary.

Lower-Level Cognitive Skills

Knowledge.

All of the courses required students to build their knowledge base--to memorize basic facts about the subjects they studied. Several instructor-participants based a significant portion of the students' grades in the class on knowledge-based multiple choice

tests. The most extreme of these was Dr. Hegel whose five multiple choice exams each consisted of 100 questions.

Comprehension.

The ability to understand abstract concepts was the primary manifestation of comprehension in the classes I studied. In the humanities classes this had to do with concepts like Apollonian and Dionysian and fate and free will. In psychology class they were abstractions like effective behavior and self-concept. Social Environment explored concepts like economic trends and technology and its impact on society. More than any other component of these classes the comprehension was discipline-specific.

Higher-Level Cognitive Skills

As I alluded to earlier, the higher-level cognitive skills predominate in the class assignments. Figures 5.16 through 5.18 are analyses of the cognitive difficulty of the requirements of the Gordon Rule classes: Psychology, Humanities, and Social Environment. This analysis is based on the syllabi, tests, student and instructor descriptions of these assignments, and completed student assignments. To create these figures first I separated the assignments into their component parts and then analyzed the cognitive difficulty of these components. In each of these figures I have marked the higher-level thinking skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation with boldface type. This shows the prevalence of higher-level cognitive skills in these assignments.

Assignments	Component skills	Cognitive Level	
Research paper	• choose a topic from the concepts discussed • library research • narrow the topic • choose information that pertains to the topic • synthesize information from all sources • reflect on the process of writing the paper • integrate experiences with information on the topic • evaluate the validity of the "expert's" research	• knowledge • **application** • **analysis** • **analysis** • **synthesis** • **analysis** • **synthesis** • **evaluation**	Skinner
Oral report	• summarize information gathered in research paper and present it orally	• **synthesis**	
Psychological profile	• understand the concepts presented in class • research biographical information on a famous person • illustrate concepts with events from the person's life	• comprehension • **application** • **synthesis**	Mead
Chapter outline	• choose main ideas and synthesize information	• **synthesis**	
Psychological devel-opment paper	• understand information from textbook and other sources • decide what behavior to change and how • write a narrative of the experience • describe how the experience changed the writer	• comprehension • **application** • **synthesis** • **analysis**	

Figure 5.16. Cognitive difficulty of assignments for psychology classes

Assignments	Component Skills	Cognitive Level	
• Essay: Apollonian & Dionysian aspects of themselves	• understand concepts • apply concepts to life experiences	• comprehension • **application**	Plato
• Anecdote contrasting figuratist and literalist	• understand concepts • compare concepts • apply concepts to an experience	•comprehension • **analysis** • **application**	
• Analysis of a moral choice	• understand different philosopher's positions on moral choice • apply one of those positions to their experience	• comprehension • **application**	
• Critical summary of an art film	• summarize movie • evaluate movie according to a criteria	• **synthesis** • **evaluation**	
• Class discussions on movies	• analyze themes • apply themes to concrete examples • evaluate movies • relate themes to life experiences	• **analysis** • **application** • **evaluation** • **application**	Picasso

Figure 5.17. Cognitive difficulty of humanities assignments

Assignments	Component Skills	Cognitive Level	
• Essay: Effects of art on students' lives	• describe elements of art works • describe the relationship between art and life	• **analysis** • **application**	
•Essay: Fate v. Free Will	• read and understand <u>Oedipus Rex</u> • connect the play and the theme of Fate v. Free Will • give their opinion on the topic	• comprehension • **synthesis** • application	Mozart
• Essay: Improve Education	• describe personal experience • evaluate the educational system • suggest changes	• knowledge • **evaluation** • **application**	

<u>Figure 5.17.</u> Cognitive difficulty of humanities assignments

Assignment	Component Skills	Cognitive Level	
• Map exam	• memorize locations of countries	• knowledge	All
• Time line	• choose the most important historical events	• **analysis**	Durant
• Article summaries	• choose a topic relating to the social sciences • find 3 articles related to this topic • choose information that pertains to focus of report • synthesize information from all sources • integrate experiences with information on the topic	• knowledge • **application** • **analysis** • **synthesis** •**synthesis**	
• Essays	• identify important themes • illustrate themes with concrete examples	•**analysis** • comprehension	Gibbon
• Essays	• take a stand on a controversial subject • give concrete examples to support their view	• **evaluation** • **synthesis**	Hegel
• Book reports	• summarize text • describe what they have learned from the text	• **synthesis** • **application**	Mead
• Chapter outlines	• summarize text	• **synthesis**	

Figure 5.18. Cognitive difficulty of Social Environment assignments

By simply listing the requirements of Gordon Rule classes as I did in Figures 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4, it seems as though there are more differences than similarities among Gordon Rule classes. However, Figures 5.16 through 5.18 show that they are indeed similar in their cognitive difficulty. The cognitive demands of the Gordon Rule classes all involve higher-level cognitive skills. While all of these required some basic knowledge, they each also encompass the higher-level skills: application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The research papers seem to involve a combination of the most complex skills. Ms. Skinner's assignment is especially difficult because it asks the student to combine objective and subjective skills. Other manifestations of the higher-level cognitive skills are discussed in the next section.

<u>Application.</u>

All of the classes in this study required students to use higher-level critical thinking skills. By far the most common of the higher-level critical thinking skills required was application. Ms. Skinner puts it quite simply:

> That is one of the most important things that I am looking for in their papers, the application of something. In other words, what would that mean in this other situation; they have to be able to apply it differently.

For the most part, application for the instructor-participants meant the students' ability to associate concepts and theories to concrete examples and life experiences. I have previously presented numerous examples of how students were required to

apply concepts and theory to their experiences. In the section on literate behaviors, I have shown how students are required to interpret texts in light of their own experiences and their own experience in light of texts.

Analysis.

An illustration of analysis in the Gordon Rule classes is presented by Dr. Gibbon; he wants his students to be able to analyze concepts and events and speculate on them. A significant part of his discussion questions induces students to analyze:

I am constantly asking things like: 'What is the nature of this?' 'Why did this happen?' 'Can you give me reasons for this?' 'Could it have been done another way?' That's a constant refrain from me.

Dr. Gibbon admits that students are not always able to analyze effectively and respond to his questions: "Sometimes I engage in a monologue, unfortunately. They just don't know how to come up with the answers."

Synthesis.

Mr. Picasso asks students to go beyond applying concepts or theories to concrete ideas. He urges students to synthesize these concepts:

The students have to think about things to relate the conceptual level to the examples that they see in the movies. That's what the class is about: to get them to make relationships between ideas. I try to get them to view films not just for their surface features, but to look at them and society

as a whole from a psychological, social analysis. I want them to push below the surface and try to discover the nature of things.

Evaluation.

Dr. Mead strives to get students to effectively evaluate the validity of different ideas. To do this she teaches students that they cannot be quick to jump to conclusions, they have to suspend their emotions and examine matters from many different viewpoints:

> As sociologists we [herself and the students] have to look at things from five, six points of views. What are the layers? We were talking about O.J. Simpson and several themes come up: domestic violence, justice, racism, race problems, just so many things. So we can't look at life from one view. We have to look from so many different perspectives; that's where the critical thinking comes in. It's not just one way. There are like five, six, seven.

Ms. Skinner agrees that objective evaluation is very important: "They have to be able to look at a set of facts and deduce from that their own opinions." Dr. Hegel encourages students to evaluate more objectively by challenging students' opinions. When I asked him how he encouraged critical thinking among his students, he replied:

> I think the best way is to introduce them to controversial topics, especially topics that they have a stake in so they have more likelihood of getting involved in expressing their viewpoints. I think that the main way I can help them is to get

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critical. To establish a Socratic dialogue in the classroom where they know whatever they say I'm going to come at it, in a gentle way, but where I have a right to address it and to criticize it or take it to its logical consequences and show them the contradictions in their statements in a friendly manner. I think it is the best way to do it. So you have to be critical yourself, not cynical, but to be able to argue a point and to be able to see the different ways of looking at it.

Most students in this study seemed to meet the cognitive demands of these classes with little difficulty, although lack of cognitive development could have been one of the factors that lead to Angela's downfall in her humanities class. When Dr. Plato asked her to interpret a line in a poem, she was not up to the task: "I don't know what a poem means. The words was significant things, but you have to understand the meaning very well, because not everybody can understand the determination."

Summary

What seems obvious from all of this information that I gathered about the Gordon Rule classes is that students must exhibit a wide variety of academic skills in order to be successful. Yet the degree to which any one skill is necessary depends on the instructor. Some instructors required a balance of skills, while others emphasized one skill over another. For example, success in Dr. Hegel's class depends to a great extent on a student's ability to assimilate a large amount of written text. In Dr. Jung's class, students' note taking and listening skills are paramount. In classes

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where students wrote traditional research papers, an effective writing process and the ability to handle complex cognitive tasks were a must. This rather lengthy discussion of the requirements of the Gordon Rule classes exposes several emerging themes:

1. The requirements of the Gordon Rule classes vary not only by discipline, but also according to the instructor's expertise and teaching style.

2. This three disciplines did exhibit the characteristic of an academic discourse community as identified by Blanton. Written language was valued over oral language, especially when it came to the evaluating what students had learned.

3. The amount of reading required for these classes was overwhelming for some students. Others found it not only overwhelming, but also difficult to understand. The instructors noticed that students lacked well-developed reading skills necessary for success and tried to compensate for this through several different strategies.

4. The students' lack of schema makes the classes difficult for them, especially when the background knowledge that was called for was taken from American cultural examples (Cesar's problem is an example of this).

5. The genre of writing required in Gordon Rule classes varied; however, connection of theory and data was the most common genre.

6. Surface errors in writing were identified as a significant problem of their students by all of the professors in this study, yet

grades were not usually lowered because of surface errors (Dr. Plato is the exception here). Instead, students were required to rewrite their assignments if the errors were too gross.

7. Students with complex writing processes were more successful on writing assignments.

8. It was important for students to budget sufficient time to complete writing assignments.

9. Students who collaborated with others or used others to help them complete their writing assignments were more successful than those who did not collaborate or those who had collaboration forced on them.

10. Students who chose writing topics that they were personally vested in seemed to have an easier time completing writing tasks.

11. Students use a variety of coping strategies in writing for content classes.

12. Students need to exhibit literate behaviors to be successful in Gordon Rule classes. The ability to interpret text in light of their experiences and their experiences in light of text was especially essential in these courses. This is probably due to the fact that those courses were introductory, freshman classes and the instructors assumed that the students did not have a lot of "book knowledge" in the discipline.

13. Professors used class discussions frequently and used a variety of strategies to encourage students to discuss thoughtfully

and fairly. Some instructors also went to great lengths to create an atmosphere conducive to discussion.

14. Taking effective, accurate notes is a skill that professors believe is difficult for students. Tape recording the class might or might not help students compensate for their weakness.

15. Students may be required to give formal oral presentations.

16. Many Gordon Rule instructors broke down difficult cognitive tasks into their component parts. If students followed their suggestions, they were able to meet the demands of Gordon Rule classes.

17. Gordon Rule courses require students to use their higher-level cognitive skills. Application is the most common higher-level skill used.

Chapter 6 - Acquisition Process

  This final chapter of data presentation examines the affective and social factors which influenced the students' adaptation processes. The affective factors include students' motivation and language self-esteem. The social factors include their relationships with their peers and their instructors and their ability to acculturate into the academic discourse community. Figure 6.1 reveals how these affective and social factors temper the students' background knowledge and influence how they approach the demands of their Gordon Rule classes.
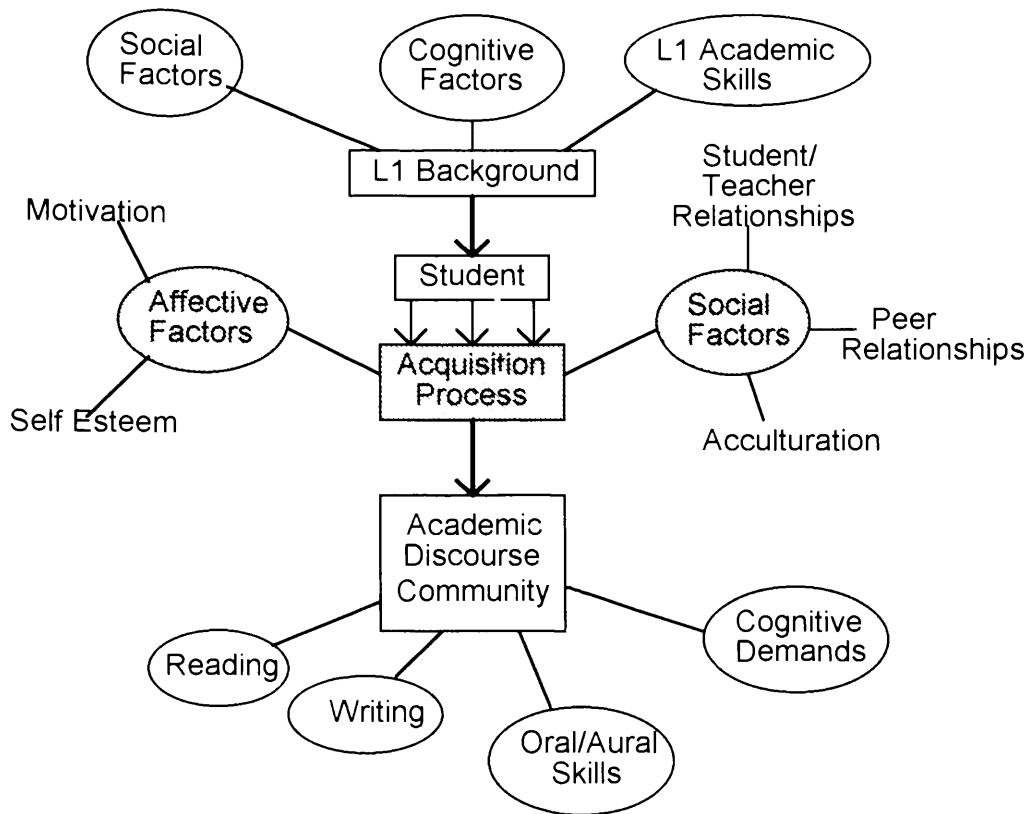
Figure 6.1. A possible model for how the factors addressed in this section interact with each other. The students' background knowledge is filtered through their acquisition process as they attempt to cope with the demands of the academic discourse community. The shaded portion of this diagram will be covered by this chapter.

Affective Factors

Instrumental and Integrative Motivation

The fact that all of the student-participants except for Angela have clear and specific career goals suggests that instrumental motivation had a positive effect on the students' success. Moreover, Cesar, one of the students who withdrew from his Gordon Rule course, did so with the understanding that a "C" in humanities would be detrimental to his career goals:

I went to the advisor in Business Administration Center. I had a long talk with her because we were trying to arrange the courses and everything so that I could finish as fast as I can. That day, the fifteenth of November, I dropped it because it's real important for me to have a high grade point average to finish my BA. My advisor thought it would be better if I dropped it. I've got to get my grade point average around 3.0.

The focus on career goals was also important to Carlos' response to a question about what motivates him to learn English was typical of the opinions expressed by the other students in the study.

Cheryl: What motivates you to learn English?

Carlos: Because I want to get a scholarship. I want to study. My family's always put a high level of value to study and I just want to get into school again, because I was studying and I had to interrupt my studies and I want to get into medical school. That's it.

In contrast, Angela did not seem to be aiming toward a particular career or educational goal. The classes she had taken to that point were either general classes required of all A.A. and A.S. candidates or classes which were not required for any degree. For example, she was enrolled in Accent Improvement, which is a self-improvement class for NNS students who wish to have more native-like pronunciation. Moreover, Angela told me that she laughed at her son's suggestion that she might one day continue her education at a university.

However, while most of the student-participants were instrumentally motivated, there is little evidence that integrative motivation played a significant role. There may be several reasons for this. For some students, while they certainly wanted to "fit in," becoming entirely integrated into American society was not their goal. Cesar, Hugo, Salaam, Henri, and Henrietta each indicated that he or she intended to eventually return to his or her native country. In the case of Carla, she had lived in the U.S. for such a long time that she probably already was integrated into the society. She was probably culturally more American than Cuban at this point.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

All students in this study were enrolled in these Gordon Rule classes because they were "required." One might assume that these students would be entirely motivated by extrinsic factors, especially grades. Although the students initially perceived the classes as unnecessary for their career goals, during the semester some of the students began to see their Gordon Rule classes in light of the value that they brought to their lives. They may have initially enrolled in these classes for extrinsic reasons; however, they became intrinsically motivated by the content of the classes or the instructors. For example, Ruslan thought that Social Environment was a "very useful course. Especially for foreigners. Most of them don't know much about American government." Yet it was the psychology course, Individual in Transition, that most student-participants found intrinsically motivating--all but one of the

students, Henrietta, said that it gave them new perspectives on their own lives. The transformation in attitude from being extrinsically motivated to intrinsically motivated was greatest for Salaam, who began the semester resenting the fact that he had to take these required courses. He equated them with the "unnecessary Socialist" courses he had been required to take in Hungary:

> But, still they [in Hungary] have a lot of unnecessary subjects. Like me for example, I had to study about Socialists and somethings that I don't really care about in my field. It was important for all of us to study it and to pass this examination, too. We have to pass this exam or we cannot be acceptable in the second semester. I thought required classes in the U.S. were the same.

Yet, almost from the beginning Salaam changed his mind about the importance of his Social Environment and psychology classes. He felt as though he was really learning important information. About Individual in Transition he said:

> Yeah, I think it's going to help me a lot to find out a lot of things. I never think about my personality, for example, and how the others look at me in the world and who I am. Or actually I didn't care about it. But now I started thinking about it. This is very important to know. After I took my psychology class and I never thought I was going to think like this. For this reason I come back again; now I say general education courses are very important, very important.

By the end of the course, Salaam is considering continuing to study psychology beyond what he has already learned in the Individual in Transition course: "Maybe I'm going to take just an additional [psychology] course for myself--to know a little more about it. It made me interested."

Although their change in attitude was not as dramatic as Salaam's, Carla and Hugo also found that their Individual in Transition courses had benefits beyond the classroom. Hugo realizes that psychology class had implications for his life when he says:

> It's [psychology class] really about me. Everything that I learn I try to think about how these ideas apply to me and then myself, that I didn't know before. I started to understand my-- not my feelings, maybe my feelings, but how I live. For example, my self-concept. I think that I am the shiest person in the world, so maybe I ask why. How can I work on that? How can I change it.?

Psychology has had just as profound of an effect on Carla's life as this exchange illustrates:

> Carla: You know that I have had a lot of problems, but the psychology class teaches about life. Everybody says that we stop learning when we die. It is the teacher--she is fantastic--I have to give her a lot of credit--she is strong in her points and she makes you think about it and the topics. The whole course is, the meaning of the course is very good.
> Cheryl: What meaning does it have?

Carla: How to--your attitudes towards life; how you have adjusted and grown, your growth in life.

In contrast to these three students, some students found their Gordon Rule classes to be 'requirements' that had to be painfully tolerated. Humanities is the class that students complained about most frequently. Cesar says of his humanities class: "I think that I don't really need that course, well, it's a requirement, I have to do it." Henri echoes this when he says:

It's a requirement. That's how I see it. In real life I don't see how you are going to use it. Nobody uses humanities. It teaches you how to appreciate beautiful art. You see how it is. Like when someone sees a beautiful picture and you know how to appreciate it. You show that you are educated, you understand the meaning of it. All right, that's what it's for. I don't see what else it's good for.

While there seemed to be a consensus that humanities is impracticable, Henrietta is the only student who did not see psychology as useful as this exchange illustrates:

Henrietta: If I didn't know something or understand something, it [psychology class] **could** be good for me.

Cheryl: But, you think you know most of the things?

Henrietta: Yeah, I think so.

Henrietta felt that she already knew everything that she was going to learn from her psychology class. Henrietta's seeming lack of interest in psychology is surprising because her career goal was to

be a nurse. Apparently Henrietta does not realize that psychology is an important component of nursing.

In comparison to these extremes, Beatriz has mixed feelings about the value of Gordon Rule courses. Because Beatriz was the one student in the study who had had experience with all three of these classes, she was able to give her evaluation of all of them. Beatriz's least favorite class was Social Environment:

> The psychology class, I find it interesting. The other classes like humanities, it was a little interesting. But the social science class it was just like a requirement. Humanities was like more interesting because we would get into arts and all that. But psychology, I think is the most interesting, from the requirements [laughs].

At least with this group of students, those who expressed signs of intrinsic motivation seem to have had more success. Two of the three students who withdrew from their classes saw their Gordon Rule classes as 'requirements'. Henri, who also felt that his humanities course was forced on him, only passed humanities on the second attempt. On the other hand, those students who reported that they became intrinsically motivated, and engaged in the topics of their classes were successful. Still, intrinsic motivation does not seem to be the sole factor which led to student success. For example, Raisa concurs with Beatriz; she finds her social environment a class necessary evil.

> I don't like to study about politics, about history. Well, history I like to study, but not in terms of wars and stuff like that. I like

to study more about the history of costumes or architecture or something like that, like history of the world, something like that.

Although she does not seem to be intrinsically motivated to study, the satisfaction of studying may be Raisa's intrinsic reward for taking in Social Environment:

Some of my friends they told me take this subject [Social Environment] with different teacher, it's going to be easy. It's going to be "A" for sure and something like that. Of course, if you study just to get "A." I know I study now and it's not like easy to get this [high grades]. Those grades [her grades] are after I study and study very, very hard.

I take this statement to mean that if she just wanted to get A's, she would have made sure that she enrolled in classes with teachers who had a reputation for being lenient when it came to grades. It is not the grades that make Raisa satisfied, it is the fact that she accepted the difficult challenge of taking an honors class with native-speaking students and did her best at it. This idea is what seems to motivate her to study and try hard.

Self-esteem

Perhaps more than any other factor, the students' self-esteem and confidence in their oral English skills made it difficult for them to cope. The most obvious examples of this are Angela, Henrietta, and Hugo. Angela cites her poor oral skills as her primary reason for dropping her humanities class. During one of the first class meetings, Dr. Plato asked Angela a question about a painting in her

book: "I understood the teacher, but sometimes--she asked about one picture. I can't say because my bank of words is limited. I thought I could explain better." Then, during the next class the teacher asked her to interpret a line from a poem.

> Oh, yeah, and the next class she asked me about one poem about what the author wanted to say in this sentence. Oh, was, was, the poem, it was not easy, I think. Some writers write easy, but another no. There are a more--I don't know what a poem means.

Angela withdrew from her humanities class directly after this second question was directed at her. Her low level of confidence in her English, unwillingness to take risks with the language and insufficient oral language skills were the precipitating causes of her withdrawing. What is more, she withdrew without talking about this problem with her instructor. In fact, Angela reported that even if she does not understand what is going on in class, she will not ask the instructor a question during the class although sometimes she will ask a question after class. When I asked her if she ever asked questions in class, she replied:

> Angela: No, I never, because my English is very bad. I don't speak in class because I feel embarrassed because my English is no good--this is my problem. Many time if I don't understand I don't ask either because I feel embarrassed about my English.
>
> Cheryl: Do you ever talk to the teacher outside of class?

Angela: Yes, I wait. (laughs) Sometimes when I don't understand, maybe when they [the teachers] say about some homework. I don't understand the directions, I ask. But other thing I try to read in my book and understand if I am lost.

Henrietta had a similar attitude towards speaking out in class. When I asked Henrietta if she participated in class discussions this exchange resulted:

Henrietta: No, not really. I don't. Sometimes after class I ask questions. But I don't ask questions in the class.

Cheryl: Why not?

Henrietta: I don't know, it's just because. At the beginning I felt like I don't get started right. I said, well maybe anything that I said is not going to be good.

Later, Henrietta told me that this was very different from how she had behaved in class in Haiti: "Maybe I should talk more in class. I always talk in Haiti; I participated in class. I talked to my friends and we studied together. You even can call the professor on the phone and ask questions [in Haiti]." Ruslan also reported that talking in class was difficult for him at Miami-Dade, although he had been a confident participant in Russia. When I asked him if he participated in class discussions, he replied:

Ruslan: I try. Sometimes I just feel embarrassed, not because of my ideas, because of my English. Like most of them, most of my classmates, they are either like Americans or they have been here for a long time. There are like a few that have been here for a short time. They speak so well, like fluently.

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So, sometimes I feel embarrassed. But, basically my classes include lectures; there is not too much discussion. It's mostly lectures and taking notes. Sometimes, very seldom, she asks something. I participate as much as I can.

Cheryl: Do you think it is hard to participate?

Ruslan: No, in Russia, I was one of the most talkative in classes. But now because of my English--sometimes, I feel-- What if they don't understand what I mean?

Beatriz also reported that she seldom participated in class; however, she attributed this to a natural shyness rather than a lack of confidence in her language skills. When I asked her if she participated in class, she replied "No, I'm a quiet person. I just like listening to other people." In contrast to Ruslan and Henrietta, Beatriz reported that she never participated in class in Brazil either.

Like Beatriz, Hugo characterized himself as a naturally shy person. When I asked Hugo if he ever contributed to discussions in his content area classes, he said emphatically, "No." When I asked him why he did not participate, he relayed an incident that had happened in his composition class during the previous semester when he had attempted to ask a question in class:

He, the teacher, didn't understand. I repeat it and still didn't understand, repeat it, and **still** didn't understand [laughs]. I feel so embarrassed I swear I will never again ask a question in class. That was last semester in my writing 1130 class [Intermediate Composition]. Oh, that was so embarrassing. It was terrible.

I feel that it is necessary to interject here that Hugo does not have an exceptionally difficult accent to understand, rather I think his problem may have been that he has a Hungarian, rather than a Spanish accent. A Spanish accent is more common among students at Miami-Dade. I would guess that the unexpected difference in his accent was probably what made it difficult for his professor to understand him. What is more important, this one incident took an already shy person and made him resolve to never speak in **any** class again.

On the other hand, while Carlos and Carla said that they felt a bit apprehensive about participating in class, it did not seem to stop them. When I observed their classes both were among the few students who were actively engaged in discussion. It is not difficult to see why Carla would participate so freely; she has only a slight accent and, after all, she has lived here for over 20 years. She is much older than most of the other students, and so has multiple experiences to relate to the topics being discussed in class. Although her time in the United States and experience may shed some light on Carla's success in class discussions, it raises questions about Angela's feelings of intimidation and terror at the thought of class participation. Angela has lived in the States almost as long as Carla and has had even more life experiences. Yet she cannot bring herself to participate in class.

In contrast to Angela and Carla's extensive experience with English, Carlos has every reason to stay in the background. He is the most recent immigrant; he speaks with a slight lisp and his

vocabulary often fails him. Yet he exuded confidence when I observed his humanities class. He was an active participant and other students listened to his comments. At the same time Carlos recognizes the limits of his abilities in class discussion in his psychology class. This exchange illustrates this point:

> Carlos: In psychology I can say short words or phrases because of my English, because most of the students in that class speak very fluently and I can't compete with them. So I prefer to close my mouth and do good on the test.
>
> Cheryl: Are you afraid to participate?
>
> Carlos: No, I'm not afraid. But, every time that I'm speaking, it's got to be, let's say, I have to say something that's true, I mean, not to babble, because I have babbled and she [Ms. Skinner] doesn't like it [laughs]. I was very good at babbling in Spanish, but it's very hard to babble in English.

This exchange suggests that Carlos is developing the kind of empathy for English speakers outlined in Chapter Two. He is becoming aware of the appropriateness of his comments in different contexts.

In contrast to these other student-participants, Cesar and Salaam seemed to have little apprehension about participating in class. Both gave me long accounts of discussions in which they had actively participated in their classes. In fact, when I asked Cesar if he participated in class, he said: "I'm not shy to talk because I believe that in some cases my English is better than

some people. They're not afraid to talk." He felt this way even though he knew that his English was not flawless:

> I know I have a little, few tenses problems, grammar problems, but I can speak. The other thing is that I what I told you last, that I hear myself like speaking and I just like FWIT [makes a reeling in gesture towards his mouth] want to take it back in and fix it. That's what I've been doing. I'm not shy.

In fact, Cesar found it difficult to fathom how some NNS students could be so apprehensive about participating in discussions. He gave the example of the International Student Club meeting that he had recently attended:

> Last Friday at the International Students' Club, not anyone wanted to talk, not even the president and she speaks real good English. She's from Haiti, I think. She's been here for like 17 years, but nothing to talk about and she was the president!

Salaam was another student who was confident about participating in class discussions. He told me how he had made an important contribution to a class discussion on the assignation of Itzak Rabin. He felt as though he was particularly qualified to give insight on this topic because he had first hand knowledge of Arab-Jewish relationships and culture. In this case, he acted as an expert on the topic. Salaam's participation might have also been encouraged by the atmosphere of Ms. Mead's class. As I described previously, she was especially interested in cultivating and learning from the diversity of the students in her classes.

Angela's lack of success in the class could also be attributed to her poor pronunciation skills. As I noted before, she makes frequent grammar mistakes and her pronunciation is sometimes difficult for even me to understand. Yet, another student who actively participates in class discussion is Henri. Not only is Henri's pronunciation difficult to understand, but he mumbles. I was constantly asking him to repeat what he had said. Yet unlike Angela or Hugo, this did not seem to embarrass him nor stop him from participating in class discussions.

This evidence taken together may suggest that individual traits such as confidence and self-esteem have more to do with Carla, Carlos, Salaam, and Henri's successes than their length of exposure to the language or native-like pronunciation.

Social Factors

Peer Relationships

As I noted earlier in the discussion of the students' first language education, many students felt as though the lack of significant relationships with their peers made their studies in the U.S. much more difficult. The students seemed to understand that this is partly due to the fact that Miami-Dade is a commuter campus and the students have many other responsibilities. For example, when I asked Cesar why he did not study with his classmates, he replied:

> It's not that I prefer to do it on my own, but once it's like 12:50 everyone's dismissed and you don't even get to talk to them. They just leave. So there's no chance to go like 'Hey, would

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you like to go to study?' No one. Like in this term it's more like isolated because I think that a lot of high school students came to college. Every one is like real shy, apart from the others, and I think like they are a real afraid of college. So, compared this term to last term, this term has been more like anti-social. I haven't studied with no one.

Carlos attributes the lack of interaction with his peers as a cultural difference and the fast pace of American life. When I asked him why it was more difficult to develop relationships with his peers at Miami-Dade, he answered:

People is like--they have more privacy. I have been trying to make friends and it has been a little more difficult than I am used to because I was very good at making friends in Cuba. So far, I haven't been able to make very many friends here. It's like life is more complicated here. They have to work; they have their own lives, their own friends and everything. They're not interested in making new ones.

Salaam had a different twist on his lack of interaction with his peers. He realizes that this exchange was important to his education, but he found it impossible. This was not because he felt that his peers did not have time to interact with him, but because he did not have time to interact with them. When I asked him if he ever studied with his classmates, he replied:

Salaam: No. I study by myself.

Cheryl: Do you prefer to study like that?

Salaam: No, I don't prefer. But I don't have that relationship

yet. Because sometimes I just have to run. I have to go home or go to work or somewhere or something like that. I don't have time to spend after class. I need to be with them to change my ideas to study together with Americans. It's going to help me.

Although Carlos and Salaam were very successful in their classes despite the fact that they lacked relationships with their peers, two other students who were very successful in their classes reported that they had studied for exams with other students. Raisa made a conscious effort to meet with her classmates and study for the first exams. She felt that this gave her confidence and helped her in these exams when she was not sure what to expect:

Yeah, once I practiced for the first psychology test. I sit with one girl and we got some time before the test and we studied together. We went over the questions and asked each other some and write some down. Because it was the very first test and I thought I didn't know how to study right for the test. The second test I went to the library to study and I met there the boy and we studied together for the Social Environment the same class. I mean, I am very social like for people, that's not the problem for me. I asked him some questions. But now I feel like I don't want to study with anybody. Because I'm not used really to it, and I study more productively by myself. It was because it was the first test. So, but for the first test it helped me to get my confidence that I could study for myself.

Carla was another student who used her peers as a resource. She reported that she had a group of friends who sometimes studied together, but more often they offered encouragement to each other.

> I study with some classmates. We have a challenge who does the best grade. Between three or four people, different ages, but we are all in the same boat. We enjoy the challenge with school. It's not that we come to school because our parents want us to come to school. There's three or four. Sometimes people get together for a reason and we are in the same position. We work together, 'What notes did you take that I couldn't take, that I don't have?' Even, 'How did you do on the test?' 'Let me see your grade. Next time I'm going to do better than you.' It's like a support group. We call it like that it's a support group.

Carla's "support group" occasionally included Ruslan:

> Sometimes I study with that Cuban woman, the one you interviewed. Before the test we get together, like we get the test review before each test and we discuss if we are missing anything right before the test. But basically, I don't have too many friends in class. I study from my notes. I mean if you make all the notes, you won't miss anything. Whatever she says in her lecture, it's going to be in the test.

Acculturation and Alienation

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, Schuemann believes that one of the determining factors in a person's acculturation process is the amount of social distance that separates language learners from the

people who speak the language they want to learn. If both groups have positive attitudes towards each other and view each other as equal, assimilation is more likely to take place.

As I discussed in the previous section, some of the student-participants felt themselves unequal to their native-speaking classmates because of deficient language skills. Surprisingly, in some cases the participants had slightly negative attitudes towards their American classmates. Three students mentioned that they did not think that American students were serious about their studies. Hugo observes that some of his classmates do not seem to be taking full advantage of their educational opportunities. When I asked him what he thought about his classmates, he explained his attitude this way:

> Hugo: I play golf in my free time and there was a popular famous player. He said that every player can break par. Do you know this expression, break par?
>
> Cheryl: Sure.
>
> Hugo: Can break par if he or she applies himself intelligently. So I think it is that way, that everybody had the same condition, the same brain. That's up to the human, up to the person. So maybe they [his classmates] are lazy. I don't want to say they are lazy, I don't really know them.

Carlos agrees with this evaluation, he also calls some of his classmates "lazy." Further he believes that they are not really ready for the rigors of college. This exchange illustrates his attitude towards his classmates:

Carlos: People are really lazy. [laughs]

Cheryl: Which people?

Carlos: The students.

Cheryl: They're not doing their work?

Carlos: I think maybe they are doing their work, but I believe that...She's [his psychology instructor] very good because she makes you motivated for the class, but I don't think they [the students] are up to it in psychology. Because it feels like those people were in thirteenth grade, because they don't act like college people, I mean most of them, because I don't want to generalize. Yeah, because I'm used to seeing people in college, I was in one for three years and I know how they are suppose to react, and they just don't care many of them.

Salaam seems to echo this sentiment when he says: "In the United States is the best education system I have found. I feel sorry for some Americans who don't take advantage of that." Even Angela, who might be considered the least successful student in this study, believed that she had more knowledge of basic literacy skills than some of her classmates. "The other student, they don't know how to write or read, but they are born in this country and went to high school. They can speak fluently." This is not to say that their characterization of their fellow classmates as "lazy" and unskilled is not partially accurate. As I stated before, about two-thirds of the students at Miami-Dade are there because they are under-prepared for college.

As a matter of fact, it does seem that students who felt as though their peers were interested, engaged, and motivated were also motivated. For example, Beatriz believes that one of the reasons why she enjoyed her psychology class more than her other Gordon Rule classes was because it was an honors class. About her psychology class she says, "It's an honors class and it's fun. You know, you get to, like, participate." By this I do not think she meant that she participated directly in the class because Beatriz characterizes herself as very shy and did not even participate in classes that were conducted in Portuguese in her native country. Rather, she means that the class discussions actively engaged her. When I asked her what was the difference between honors students and students in regular classes she replied: "There's a lot more participation. Yeah, people, there is more freedom in class I think." Motivated peers helped Beatriz to become motivated in a "required" class.

The fact that she was enrolled in an honors class had the opposite effect on Raisa. She feels intimidated by the level of her classmates. Here she describes discussions in her psychology class:

> Actually I feel very strange because I am taking an honors course. Some of the guys there, they already took psychology and they understand more and they feel like it's something that belongs to them. But for me I feel interest in that, but I feel a big complex inside. For example, even if I understand the thing and I can make bunch of examples from my own life,

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or something that I have read. I can't express myself the same way that they express themselves. So that's why sometimes I should keep quiet because I'm afraid to say something.

Student/Teacher Relationships

The students in this study can be divided into three main groups when it comes to how they describe their relationship with their instructors. Most held their instructors in high regard and recognized the importance of using their instructors as a resource; yet, others were intimidated by their teachers and did not ask them any questions. A third group asked their professors for advice, but then completely disregarded their advice.

The students who sought out their teachers included Beatriz, Carla, Carlos, Cesar, Henri, Hugo, and Raisa. Beatriz and Carlos used their instructors for help with their research papers, although both waited until they were well-vested in their topics to ask for assistance. In this exchange Beatriz describes part of the frustrating process of writing her first-ever research paper. When I asked her if she had asked her instructor for help she replied:

> Beatriz: Yeah, I did. He gave me all the options for topics, but then it was too late to change. I didn't want to change. I'd rather make what I had better than change.
>
> Cheryl: At what point did you talk to him?
>
> Beatriz: After I had gone back and forth [several trips to the library]. After I found out it was going to be like, difficult to make a long paper because, especially because the subject

was very narrow. He said it was OK because the quality is what was important, not the length.

Even though Beatriz went to her professor late in the process, she was reassured by her professor that what she was doing was acceptable. Carlos only went to his teacher for advice on his psychology research paper after she gave it back to him and asked him to rewrite it.

Carla, Cesar, Henri, Hugo, and Raisa each asked their instructors about the content of the class or went to the instructors for suggestions concerning their progress in the class. Hugo and Raisa used this as a strategy to let the teachers know that they were actively engaged in the class without having to take the risk of asking a question in front of the whole class, thus saving themselves from possible embarrassment. Hugo describes interactions with the instructors like this:

Cheryl: Do you talk to teachers after class?

Hugo: I like to go after class. I always talk to them after class.

Cheryl: What kinds of questions do you ask?

Hugo: I always ask them about the course, about some kinds
of questions that I don't understand. Always about the course.

Raisa's strategy is similar; however, she calls this strategy her "trick." She is able to call attention to herself and let the professor know that she is engaged in the topic by asking him questions or making comments after class or during his office hours when she is not concerned about what other students may think of her accent.

Even though Mr. Freud told her directly that she should bring up some of her points in class, she continued to use her "trick."

In fact, the lack of class participation by NNS students is a problem recognized by several of the instructor-participants in this study. Dr. Plato reported this to be one of the principal problems of NNS students in her class. She said that her advice to these students includes:

> Not to be afraid, not to be afraid to speak in class or ask a question in class. They [NNS students] are timid students who I hear only when they answer a roll or when the come up to apologize, or explain why they can't take a test or why they didn't come to class. I say how can I hear your voice another time. I'd like to hear it when I say: 'Does anybody ever ---?.' 'What did you think of----?' There's silence.

Other students were so intimidated by their teachers that they did not ask them any questions. These include Angela and Henrietta. When I asked Angela if she asked questions in class she replied: "No, I never, because my English is very bad. Sometimes I don't speak in class because I feel embarrassed because my English is no good." When I asked Henrietta why she did not ask Ms. Piaget questions, she said: "I don't know, it's just because. At the beginning I felt like I don't get started at the right. I said, well maybe anything that I said is not going to be good." Henrietta was so intimidated by her teacher that she could not bring herself to ask Ms. Piaget about even the logistics of the class. She reported that: "I did not understand the way she's goina talk with the class. What

she's going to do. How she's going to go with the test and the quizzes. How's she's going to do everything. I didn't get it." Yet, she did not ask Ms. Piaget about any of this. Instead, she tried to understand the elements that were difficult for her by recording the classes, hoping that if she listened to the recording at home she would catch what she had been missing. Henrietta's unwillingness to ask Ms. Piaget questions was especially remarkable because when I visited Ms. Piaget's class, I found the atmosphere to be relaxed and open. Ms. Piaget used examples from her own life to illustrate points and joked with the students.

Finally were the group of students who sought out advice from their instructors, but ignored their advice. In this group is Henri and Carlos. The first time Henri took humanities with Dr. Plato, he did poorly on the exams. He went to Dr. Plato to ask her for advice. "Then I go [to Dr. Plato's office] and she tells me there is a study guide for it, so I buy the study guide." However, Henri admitted that he didn't really use the study guide. In fact he blamed his failure to pass humanities the first time on the teacher:

> The first time, I tried to do my best to understand it, to catch it. But I didn't understand it; it wasn't me. I didn't understand it because she didn't want to cooperate with me, when the teacher is like that what ever she said--. They don't want to cooperate so you can not follow it to study good.

Cesar also did not follow Dr. Plato's advice when she suggested that he drop the class because his writing class was at too low of a level. Like Henri, he blamed Dr. Plato for this:

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So, what she asked me was what was my English level because she could identify that I was an international student. I told her that I was in 0020 [a developmental writing course], and she said that she couldn't understand why 0020 students were in her class because the English requirement was even more than 1101 [English Composition I], so she didn't understand why the computer will accept low English level for a high English level, that's humanities. So I spoke about that with her and she told, keep on working hard or drop, and I don't agree with drop because it's like a lost of time.

However, finally it was his business advisor and not Dr. Plato that convinced Cesar that is was better for him to drop his humanities class.

Ruslan also ignored advice from his instructor, Ms. Durant, although this may have been caused by a miscommunication. Ms. Durant asked Ruslan to rewrite his research paper because it was not done according to the directions she had given in the assignment. Ms. Durant later told me that he had smiled and nodded his head when she explained that he had to rewrite it, but he had never turned in a revised copy. When I asked Ruslan about his research paper, he said that Ms. Durant had the only copy of it.

Besides the differences in how the students related to their teachers, there were cultural aspects of the student/teacher relationship that caused problems for Raisa and Henri. At the end of the term Raisa went to ask Mr. Freud about her final grade in the class. She was puzzled by her conversation with him and she

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asked me what I thought Mr. Freud meant. Here is how she recounted that conversation to me:

I still don't know my grade yet, on psychology. I think my teacher is, he is like so, I don't know, I don't want to say funny, but when I came yesterday to get my research paper, I didn't know the grade or anything and I didn't know the grade of my final exam. He said to me, 'Please, help yourself.' There's a bunch of papers and I should find [mine] myself. I saw the grade [the grade was an "A"]. He said 'OK, did you like it?' I asked what about final grade and he told me add all your exams and this is your final grade [laughs]. Like: 'Do it yourself.' I left; I felt uncomfortable. When I left, I realized that I don't know grade from last test and then I came back, and I make an excuse because I feel like I'm interrupting him. I asked about this test, but he gave the test, after the final he had a class but just for those students who didn't do some test and were suppose to come to make a make-up test. He told me if you don't need, it's OK it's up to you. He didn't tell me he was going to bring the test result. He brought the test and he leave on the table, so who was in the class picked up the test. Then finally he asked me, 'What do you think you deserved in the class?' 'I don't know according to my test' "B", because three of my tests were "B." But I didn't know about fourth test and fifth test he counts the research paper so fifth I know was "A." I should have been saying maybe "A", but I felt like. Because he asked me, 'What do you think you deserve?'

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I said, 'maybe"B," he started laughing so much. 'Oh, yeah,' he said, 'I'll give you "B," so congratulations with your "B." Then I thought maybe I should have said "A." [She received a "B" in the class.]

The informality of student/teacher relationships also caused Henri to be apprehensive. He characterized Mr. Piccaso as a "cool" teacher. Yet, Henri who probably had the most authoritarian first language education, was not comfortable with his "coolness." This exchange reflects his attitude:

Henri: You know, those classes where they [the teachers] are very "cool" they are dangerous.

Cheryl: Which ones?

Henri: Any class when the instructor is cool, they are dangerous because when they are cool you don't pay attention and you might think everything goes. They come after. There are a lot of students who don't know that they don't realize that.

Because he was most accustomed to authoritarian teaching styles, Henri seemed to be a little uncomfortable with Mr. Picasso's seeming lack of authority in the classroom. I understood that he characterized "cool" teachers as "dangerous" because for Henri, they were unpredictable.

This uncertainty of how to relate to instructors could be a result of one of Schuemann's psychological factors which influences language acquisition--culture shock. Certainly the differences in

student/teacher relationships were puzzling and disorienting for Raisa and Henri.

Summary

These affective and social factors played a greater role than I had anticipated. To be honest, I went into this research project with the belief that the strength of the participants academic background and skills would be enough to explain their success or lack of success in Gordon Rule classes. I think these are the generalities that can be gleaned from this chapter:

1. The fact that all of the students except for Angela had strong instrumental motivation at the onset of this study, goes a long way to explain Angela's lack of success--it did not really matter if she was successful because passing the class was not connected to any greater goals.

2. Intrinsic motivation, while not enough on its own to insure students' success, seems to have strengthened their success. Henrietta's lack of intrinsic motivation may have contributed to her lack of success in the class.

3. Language self-esteem also seems to play a role in the success of these students. While two of the students with low language self-esteem, Angela and Henrietta, struggled with the class, the two of the students with high language self-esteem, Carlos and Carla did very well. However, I do not think that language self-esteem on its own can explain student success. Hugo and Beatriz, who had very low language self-esteem, were

successful, while Cesar, who had high language self-esteem, was not.

4. Peer relationships were almost non-existent for the students in this study. I could not find evidence that students had social relationships with their American peers (unless you count the fact that Beatriz and Raisa have American boyfriends) and peer relationships in the academic sense were barely present. While some students lamented the fact that they had no significant relationships with their American peers, others put this down to cultural differences and the fact that Miami-Dade is a commuter campus.

5. The limited peer contact seems to have created a sense of alienation among the participants.

6. Some students seem to have little interest in becoming acculturated in the community college community. They see themselves as better prepared and more motivated than their American peers.

7. Some students feel comfortable relating to their teachers, while others feel intimidated by their teachers. This may be due to the fact that they are used to more authoritarian teaching styles. Still others are uncomfortable and unsure about how to relate to teachers with "cool" or informal teaching styles.

Chapter 7

The purpose of this chapter is to draw some conclusions from the data presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six and speculate on how that information can be best used to serve the needs of students in the future. Any conclusions drawn from a qualitative study are tenuous, to be sure. Ultimately, any conclusions I draw here can only be applied to these students, who were enrolled in these specific classes an one point in time. Yet, I believe these conclusions are not without value; they can be used to help inform the curriculum in my own teaching situation.

First Language Background

For the most part these students seemed to have sufficient language skills to handle the demands of the Gordon Rule classes, although many admitted that they still struggle with the language. The interference or negative transfer from the students' first language was minimal. The exceptions to this are Henri's struggle to shed French rhetorical patterns and Angela's fossilization of grammatical errors.

The students' first language education, for the most part, helped them cope to the demands of these classes. With a few exceptions they seemed to have at least as strong of an academic background as their American community college peers, although this differed depending on the content of the class they were enrolled in. As far as academic knowledge and skills were concerned, Angela probably had the weakest skills. The students determined that the Social Environment class was the one for which

they had the most background knowledge from their first language, while psychology was the most unfamiliar to them.

It is also obvious the students' family background had a significant influence on their success. Those students who came from families with educated parents who valued education for their children had more success than those who did not.

The one skill area that seemed universally deficient in their first language education was higher-level cognitive skills. In their first language cognition was, for a large part, memorization. This contrasted with the fact that Gordon Rule classes required many higher-level cognitive skills suggest that this is an area that ESOL instructors need help NNS students with. At the same time, the first-year college courses in this study seem to be designed to help students develop those cognitive skills. So these introductory classes are also trying to help students build their higher-level cognitive abilities.

The differences in the social aspects of education in the United States seemed to be troublesome for some of these students. These aspects included the typical lifestyle of American college students. Even those students who had attended universities in another country were disturbed by the typical American experience. They were accustomed to concentrating solely on their studies without the complications of jobs and family responsibilities. Student/teacher relationships were another source of discomfort. Accustomed to formal and authoritarian teachers, some of the students in this study had difficulty finding their place in

a social order which blurred the lines dividing students and teachers. The students who came from authoritarian political systems had other reasons to be apprehensive about the openness of the American system. They were used to a society where, even in school, the walls had ears and expressing an opinion contrary to the teacher was not tolerated. In contrast, in their Gordon Rule classes they found instructors playing the devil's advocate and discovered that even written texts were to be thoughtfully challenged.

One challenge of the American educational system for these students was peer relationships. Many of the students were accustomed to having the same peers in all of their classes throughout their educational career. They depended on those peers as a social and academic safety net. Several of the students, most notably Hugo, felt a profound sense of alienation in the American classroom. The students were no longer a part of a group; they were only anonymous faces in the crowd.

Demands of Classes

I speculated in Chapter One that I would be able to paint a clearer picture of the actual process student go through in order to enter an academic discourse community. In some ways, this study has made students' adaptation processes a little muddier rather than clearer. It seems that there is no one route to success. However, I think this study highlights some of the characteristics of successful coping strategies. First, similar to Smoke's (1991) results, I found that a successful process involves collaboration; this

means either using the teacher, other students, or other persons outside the class (friends and family members). Second, success involves effective study skills. What study methods are effective depends on the student and the requirements of individual classes, but it takes students a certain exploration time at the beginning of the class to figure this out. Third, it requires students to adjust to the mores of the class--to try to understand what the teacher requires. Also the student needs to, as Ms. Skinner puts it: "posture"--find their place in the social order of the classroom. Part of this includes students' use of some of the strategies that Leki (1995) identifies specifically the strategies of accommodating or resisting teachers' demands.

If nothing else, this study has shown that ESOL students need to be adequately prepared for the rigors of Gordon Rule classes. Not surprisingly, students who have a certain amount of background knowledge and well-developed CALP seem to be better equipped for success. Equally apparent is the fact that students need to have sufficient academic skills. Reading, writing, effective note taking, oral, and aural skills are essential for student success, although different instructors require these skills in a different balance.

Students need to develop strategies for managing the reading load and understanding reading text. NNS students need more time than NES students to comprehend text effectively; they read more slowly. In addition students need both content and formal schema in order to assimilate text effectively.

While I assumed that NNS surface level writing mistakes would be the undoing of the students in this study, they were not as important to the instructor-participants as I would have expected. What does appear more important to students' success on written assignments is that they have an effective writing process. However, I believe that my study of students' writing processes also revealed that teacher intervention in the writing process, at least the way that these teachers intervened, may not be the most effective way of teaching students how to be competent writers. Those students who did have intervention by their teachers during their writing processes seemed to become dependent on that intervention. Both Henri and Angela were not very successful writers and both demonstrated very simple writing processes. Instead of spending more time with their writing, adding or deleting ideas, or working on surface level mistakes, they depended on their composition teachers to make those corrections for them. This possible negative effect of teacher intervention has made me rethink the role of teacher-as-collaborator in writing. Not that collaborating is necessarily harmful to student writing, but it may be necessary to rethink what kind of intervention is most appropriate for developing students' writing processes.

The more effective writers in this study did collaborate with others on their writing assignments. This is not surprising because very few developing writers, in fact very few good writers, can refine a text with out discussing the ideas with others and/or sharing the

text with outside readers. The fact that this dissertation is being written with input from a committee is an illustration of this.

One thing I do not think that this study settles is the debate over what is the best way to teach ESOL writing, that is to focus on a general, academic community or a discipline-specific discourse community. Both sides have merit. Because much of what students had to write for these classes required them to relate their life experiences to the concepts they learned in class, it seems that Benenesch (1995) and Spack (1993) are correct. Their generalist approach, which attempts to develop students' general writing abilities, would be the most beneficial in this case. However, the students in this study reported little difficulty in this general kind of writing in their content classes. Where they struggled the most was in the discipline-specific writing assignments and with being able to identify what type of writing is necessary for a particular assignment. Beatriz's frustrations with her research paper and Ruslan's inability to write the kind of paper that Ms. Durant required are examples of this.

The importance of students' ability to interpret their experiences in light of the concepts presented in class is probably due more to the fact that these are first-year college classes. The instructors seemed to rely on this literate behavior over the others because they do not believe that the students have sufficient background knowledge in their discipline and because integrating students' life experiences piques their interest in the academic discipline. The students in this study bear them out: Salaam even

considers taking another psychology class because he is drawn to understanding himself better through the content of his psychology class.

Well-developed transactional and interactional oral skills are necessary for student success in these classes. In regard to transactional skills, students need to be able to take effective notes or develop strategies such as tape recording class lectures that ease the transactional burden. It also should be remembered that although it might be an effective compensation strategy, tape recording lectures and listening to them later makes is very time-consuming. Here again NNS students need to plan more time to study.

Interactional oral skills come into play when students work on small group projects, participate in discussions, or need to ask questions of their instructor in class. None of the students reported much difficulty working in small groups, but class discussions and asking questions during the class was very painful for some students because they felt deficient in their oral English. The most novel approach to this problem of English-shyness was Raisa's "trick." She sought out her professor outside of class, during his office hours, and asked him questions or expressed her ideas about a topic. This way Raisa avoided the embarrassment of speaking English in front of her peers and at the same time made her professor aware that she was intelligent and engaged by the class.

One thing that I came to realize from this study is that students need effective strategies for asking appropriate questions

and making appropriate contributions to content classes. Students often approach this quite clumsily. Most teachers are annoyed at questions such as, "Is this going to be on the test?" or "Is this important?" I would suggest that these are students' awkward attempts distinguish the significant from the trivial. Students need to find more appropriate ways to address this need.

Gordon Rule classes require students to use complex and higher-level cognitive skills. Most students in this study seemed to be able to do this satisfactorily, although lack of cognitive development could have been one of the factors that lead to Angela' downfall in her humanities class. Still this would suggest that higher-level cognitive skills is an area that needs to be addressed in ESOL classes. If students do not have well developed critical thinking skills, they would be apt to drown in Gordon Rule classes.

In the process of analyzing this data, I also found that the instructor/student pairing had an effect on the students' success. For example, Dr. Mead's teaching style and philosophy of education seemed an exceptionally good match for Salaam. Dr. Mead took advantage of the fact that Salaam had a very different cultural background than the other students in the class. He was the expert on Moslem culture. This and the fact that Dr. Mead worked very hard to create a safe atmosphere opened Salaam up and simulated his interest. In the same way Dr. Jung was a good match for both Carla and Hugo; they were each dealing with interpersonal problems that Dr. Jung's counseling and growth approach helped them understand. Another example of a good match is how Ms.

Skinner's objective writing assignment appealed to Carlos' scientific mind. An example of a bad match is Henri's first attempt at humanities. Dr. Plato certainly would have no sympathy for his 'humanities isn't very valuable' attitude, yet his reluctance towards the class fit right in with Mr. Picasso axiom that by questioning the validity of the humanities, students would come to understand them. This point might be obvious: students are more successful if their learning styles mesh with the instructor's teaching style. However, I do not know that this point should be carried out to its logical conclusion, that is; students should look for teachers whose teaching style matches their learning style. This could be dangerous because it means that students would only have one kind of learning experience. The question here, then, is: what are the implications of this fact?

Affective Factors

As I have suggested before, the most unexpected result that this study has revealed is the crucial role that affective factors played in the success of students in this study. This was unexpected because I had no inkling of the importance of affective factors in my pilot study. The two students I studied in the pilot felt no alienation nor did they hesitate to participate in class discussions. One of my committee members asked me an important question in this regard: "Are there any differences between the pilot students and the study students?" As I reflected on this, it became clear that the differences were caused by my sampling method. I had chosen the students for my pilot study

because I knew they would be a good source of data--they were talkers. Although their language skills were not better than the students in the dissertation study, they both had language self-esteem. Because the dissertation study had more students in it, I was able to interview a greater variety of students with diverse personalities. The wider scope of this study brought out some issues that had been missed by the pilot. I believe that there are several significant themes that emerged from the study of affective factors. First, instrumental motivation was important for the success of the students in this study. Intrinsic motivation seems to fortify students chances to be successful.

Language ego also seemed to play a significant role in student's success. For Angela this proved to be the precipitating cause of her withdrawal from her humanities course--she lacked the confidence in her language skills. At the same time students like Raisa and Ruslan seemed not to have been adversely effected by their lack of English self-esteem or attacks on their language ego. Raisa even figures a creative way around this problem. Hugo, who describes himself as naturally shy, was hampered by his lack of English self-esteem. Yet Beatriz, who also described herself as naturally shy, did not seem adversely affected.

While acculturation was not essential for students' success, a sense of alienation seems to have a strong negative effect on students. The feeling of utter loneliness and separation caused Hugo to drop out of life for more than a week. He felts as though he just does not fit in anywhere. There were reasons why Hugo might

have felt more alienated than other students in this study. Besides the fact that he is naturally shy, he did not have the cultural escapes that many of the other students in this study have. Miami has large communities of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries, Brazil, Haiti, and Russia. Even Salaam has a group of Moslem friends that he can share his culture with. All of the rest of the students in this study have opportunities to retreat to something known when the pressure gets too great for them. Hugo has almost no opportunity to do this even at home.

As an epilogue to this story, Hugo came to my office three months after the end of this study and announced that he was returning to Hungary. This surprised me because he had already invested three and a half years in learning a language and getting an A.A. degree in an American institution and was within a year of going to the university to complete nis career goals. He explained that he had found a similar program through a British institution that would allow him to study in Hungary; however, he said that his main reason for leaving was: "I just never fit in in Miami." The sense of alienation drove him back to his native country short of his career goal. Hugo's premature departure lead me back to a question Ellis asks in connection with his discussion on motivation: "Why do students persevere?" (1994 p. 510) I think that this study has raised this question again.

Students' Success

This leads me back to the main research question from the first chapter. How do NNS students successfully meet the demands of

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Gordon Rule classes? This study has shown as that students' success depends not on one factor, but on many, and students do take advantage of their strengths to compensate for their weaknesses.

It is also true that the students who were not successful in their Gordon Rule classes fell short not because of any one factor; it was a combination of factors that caused their downfall. Poor Angela was plagued by a myriad of woes from the beginning. She had no real career goals. She had little or no family support for her education and no peer support. She lacked academic preparedness in her first language and confidence in her English skills. To a lesser extent the same is true of Henrietta. She lacked peer support in her psychology course. She had low language self-esteem and did not have the interactional and transactional oral skills to ask her teacher questions and take effective notes. Add to this the fact that she decided to take on a part-time job during this semester and you can see where she would have problems. While Cesar is a borderline member of this group--he was actually passing his humanities class when he dropped it--he also had several problems. He had poor writing skills, a simplistic writing process, and lacked the specific cultural background necessary to assimilate the material. Perhaps Cesar's greatest down-fall was his lack of awareness of audience in his writing and just plain common sense. I cannot imagine Dr. Plato's response to an essay which began: "I haven't really had time to buy the book yet."

This said, I do not want to leave the reader with a negative impression of students' ability to cope with the demands of Gordon Rule classes. Although this study has tended to focus on the factors which might prevent students from being successful in content classes, I want to point out that for the most part, the student-participants were successful. Eight of the eleven students did earn a "C" or better in their classes. There were seven "A's" and three of the classes were in the more difficult honors program. As a group, I would say that these students were very successful.

Suggestions for Implementation

While ESOL teachers cannot control the students' first language background, there are several steps that could be taken to smooth their transition into content classes. Students need strong academic reading, writing, and speaking/listening skills. Not only do students have to exhibit effective reading comprehension strategies, but they also had to read long texts, do library research, and make connections between texts. One way to approach this might be to use authentic texts in ESOL instruction and teach students how to outline those text or map them using schematic organizers. This would involve taking chapters from the actual texts used in the Gordon Rule classes and helping students to develop strategies for working through those texts. Nevertheless, increasing the complexity and length of reading text in ESOL classes is bound to be unpopular with students.

The information that I gathered about writing requirements suggests that students have to continue trying to eliminate those

surface errors which distinguish them from native speakers. This can be accomplished by raising students' awareness of the kinds of mistakes they make as well as encouraging them to find a native speaker who will edit their texts. This study also revealed that students were required to write a wide variety of texts; both personal and more objective of papers were required. This suggests that students should be exposed to a wide variety of writing assignments. Beyond the five-paragraph, personal essay students also have to write more objective types of essays and research papers. Having students analyze student models may be a beneficial approach to this problem.

A complex and recursive writing process plays a significant role in students' success, yet this study has raised questions about how best to teach this process. Perhaps modeling appropriate writing processes may be more effective than forcing students to work with in a teacher's concept of how to write. It also occurred to me that the diagrams of student writing processes that I made for this study may be an effective teaching tool. They would be a graphic way of showing students the complexity of the writing processes of effective student writers. The students that were most successful in their writing collaborated with outside contributors at different times throughout the writing process. The effective writers bounced ideas off of others--classmates, boyfriends, or ex-teachers--or asked for help in choosing and narrowing a topic. They did not use the outside collaborators only for help with surface level

mistakes. This suggests that collaborative peer groups or other kinds of writing groups might be beneficial.

Effective note taking skills is another area that students must develop. Students need to establish criteria for what is important to write down and they must be taught to include examples and other clues that will help them remember the significance of the notes. Perhaps video recordings of actual lectures could be a good source of practice for these students. Also modeling good note taking skills might be helpful to the students.

While compensating for natural shyness might be beyond the domain of behaviors that can be taught, students need to be aware of appropriate strategies for asking questions and participating in discussions. These skills might be developed through role plays or by discussions focusing on appropriate strategies.

It is the affective factors that are especially difficult to address. How can a teacher motivate students or give them language self-esteem or combat the feelings of alienation? Because instrumental motivation seems to be such an important factor in student success, perhaps the teacher could expose students to a unit requiring them to better define and understand their career goals, thus heightening students' instrumental motivation. Low language self-esteem is probably due in a great part to deficient language skills, so by augmenting these skills the students' language self-esteem is bound to increase. In addition, teachers may attempt to put students in situations where their English self-esteem is reinforced.

Alienation is another matter. The students in this study felt less alienation in their ESOL classes because all of the students were in the same position--they were from different cultures and were trying to learn English. Perhaps students should be encouraged to join clubs or explore other social opportunities related to the college community. Certainly encouraging them initiate study groups with their peers would help.

Questions for Further Study

As with any study this one seems to raise more questions than it answers. This study cannot be generalized to the whole population of NNS students at Miami-Dade because it focuses on the experiences of eleven students. This suggests a whole line of quantitative and qualitative research studies to confirm, refute, or add to the scope of the findings of this study including: (a) a quantitative study of the requirements of all Gordon Rule classes, (b) a quantitative study of the elements of Gordon Rule classes that NNS students find difficult, (c) a quantitative study comparing the experiences NES and NNS students in Gordon Rule classes, (d) a quantitative study examining the skills that are already addressed by the curriculum of the ESOL classes, (e) a quantitative study to determine the most influencial factors in students' success, (f) a qualitative study on what makes some students persever when others do not and, (g) a qualitative study on how students acquire an effective writing process. With all of this in mind I do still believe that this study can be used to make informed choices in the curriculum.

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