

2023

Andragogical Methods and Teaching Strategies Used in Community College Composition Courses

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Octavia Thorns-Jackson

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Walden University

2022

Abstract

Andragogical Methods and Teaching Strategies Used in Community College

Composition Courses

by

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MA, Southern New Hampshire University, 2015

MS, Walden University, 2013

BA, Indiana University, 2007

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2022

Abstract

A midwestern community college utilized a corequisite model to accelerate students' developmental education that allows adult learners to take developmental writing and English composition simultaneously. First-year composition instructors had no formal training at the college on andragogical methods and teaching strategies to foster successful completion in developmental and first-year composition courses. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the andragogical methods and teaching strategies of six successful full-time and adjunct developmental writing and first-year composition instructors as well as what these instructors need to improve their approaches with these students. The study was grounded in a conceptual framework including Knowles's theory of andragogy, Tinto's work in persistence, and models related to professional development. Deductive coding was used to group the instructors' responses to interview questions about best practices for building relationships, determining students' strengths and challenges, connecting students to resources, integrating learners' prior experience and motivation, adapting instruction, bolstering critical thinking, and giving students feedback. Faculty also acknowledged three main areas as a need for their practice: a balanced workload, support, and a community. Once best practices and needs were identified, they were used to create a professional development program for new and returning faculty in the discipline. This study contributes to positive social change by providing more faculty with access to andragogical methods and teaching strategies that reach a larger portion of the marginalized student population, thereby giving those students a more equitable educational experience.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to every person who stood with me as I completed this work. It was through their consistent inquiries about my progress, words of encouragement in my distress, and celebrations of every milestone that sustained me throughout. It is dedicated to my family who watched, waited, and exhibited extraordinary patience through the entirety of the process. Without them and God, this document would not exist.

Acknowledgments

Taking my writing from the initial idea to this final project study has been a long and challenging task. The institution made sure that as a researcher I had the resources necessary to complete this work. It was the chair of my committee, Dr. Jamie Patterson, who was essential to my success throughout the process. She was always available to encourage, provide direction, and continuously show me the steps as I was taking them, so I would not stop moving forward.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Community colleges support and educate approximately 12 million students, and more than half of those students are required to complete developmental courses (Barhoum, 2017a). Institutions across the country have administered developmental education in different ways over the years. At one time, learners would take one or more developmental courses to prepare them for college-level work, but pressure from state legislatures to equip students more quickly for the workforce has led school administrators to accelerate the developmental education process (Kater, 2017; Woods et al., 2019). Corequisite programs that allow students to take the developmental writing and English composition course simultaneously have been adopted by institutions across the country, improving persistence rates for students through composition (Anderst et al., 2016). Accelerated programs, while effective, still have some issues with student completion rates, which caused governing bodies to recommend yet another change to developmental education. Many institutions have begun placing learners who require additional development directly into college-level courses (Barhoum, 2018). Instructors have seen success in preparing adult learners who have specific needs and bring varied and valuable experiences into the learning environment (Knowles et al., 2015); however, these students face challenges without careful consideration of the curriculum.

Presently, a Midwestern community college (MCC; a pseudonym) had over 75,000 students enrolled across the statewide system in a fall semester (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019a). The student population includes 72% White, 12% Black,

6% of unknown race, 4% Latinx, 4% identifying as two or more races, 2% Asian, and 1% nonresident/alien, and they range in age from 18-65+ years old (National Center for Education, 2019b). According to a department chair, within MCC, persistence rates for developmental learners in first-year composition courses are low. The gap in practice at the local level and the problem prompting the study was a lack of professional development (PD) for teachers of first-year composition courses. Specifically, per the English department chair at MCC, there was currently no formal training on andragogical methods and teaching strategies developmental writing instructors use to foster successful completion of developmental and first-year composition courses. An improved understanding of developmental writing instructors' andragogical methods and teaching strategies used in developmental and first-year composition courses could eventually contribute to ameliorating persistence rates for developmental learners in first-year composition courses within MCC.

Rationale

MCC has followed the national practices applied to developmental education. The corequisite model currently used at MCC allows students to take the developmental course and college-level course in the same semester, but faculty must be prepared for the possibility that the corequisite model could be eliminated as well. According to a department chair, the local campus has seen some success, but there remains a segment of students in both developmental and first-year writing who are not finishing or passing the courses. Xu (2016) determined that students who tested on the lowest end of reading and writing were less successful than those who tested at the fringe of developmental and

college ready. Xu's findings suggested that there is little other research available to determine what additional interventions were necessary to increase student success. Students of color and linguistically diverse students are significantly affected by methods used in developmental writing classrooms (Anderst et al., 2016). Anderst et al. whose study focused on this population, suggested that more research is necessary to determine methods that will better serve students of color and linguistically diverse students and prepare them for college-level writing and other courses. It is necessary to identify and understand the best andragogical methods in the classroom to ensure that all faculty are adequately prepared to engage with developmental writing students.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore developmental writing instructors' andragogical methods and teaching strategies used in developmental and first-year composition courses at MCC as well as what these instructors need to improve their approaches with these students. An increase in understanding of the strategies provides broader developmental writing instructor access to approaches (Barhoum, 2017b, 2018). Instructors have the expertise in the writing content area, and they work directly with the adult learners in the courses, so they were able to offer the depth of information needed about the variety of instructional methods they use in the course and were also able to identify where they need more support to improve their approaches. Qualitative researchers should interview individuals who can provide the most insight into the topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Identifying the andragogical methods and teaching strategies that developmental writing instructors use as well as elements the instructors feel they need to improve could help to fulfill the need for a formalized PD program for

instructors, which could eventually lead to improving persistence rates for developmental learners in first-year composition courses.

Definition of Terms

Corequisite: Concurrent courses in which students enroll in both the developmental course and the college-level course in the same semester. Typically, both courses are taught by the same instructor. The goal of the corequisite is to shorten the time it takes for students to complete remedial coursework (Anderst et al., 2016).

Developmental writing: Writing designed to prepare students for the rigors of college-level writing (VanOra, 2019). Historically, this type of writing has also been known as basic or remedial writing. A perpetual debate exists over the appropriate name to use to prevent negative connotations or stereotypes of students. The primary focus of educators in developmental writing is on the students' needs without assumptions (Parisi, 2018).

Persistence: A student's continuous enrollment from term to term with completion of coursework toward a certificate or degree (Tinto & Cullen, 1973). Persistence is the result of a combination of factors including parents' educational levels, socioeconomic status, financial aid (Astin, 1975), household support, social interaction within the institution, college commitment to the student, and student self-perception (Baker et al., 2020).

Professional development: Training designed for new and experienced faculty. Originally PD came out of a need to provide quality instruction for a more diverse student population along with providing ways to increase faculty effectiveness and to

meet accountability requirements set by state funding bodies (Watts & Hammons, 2002). Over time, the purpose of professional development for faculty began to focus on student-centered teaching methods, establishing and promoting community among faculty, and sharing institutional practices (Kalman et al., 2019). Development of faculty also includes workshops, discipline-specific discussions, peer observations, and conference attendance (Beaumont, 2020).

Significance of the Study

Instructors in developmental writing courses prepare for the students' multiple skill levels. Instructors manage their time; choose the appropriate evaluation methods for essay writing; and depending upon how the institution has implemented their developmental writing courses, collaborate with instructors who are teaching the courses with them (Saxon et al., 2016). Instructors need regular opportunities to engage with each other and participate in PD to navigate the challenges associated with developmental writing courses (Saxon et al., 2016; Severs, 2017). Once faculty have access to the andragogical methods and teaching strategies that best support developmental learners, faculty would be more effective when preparing learning experiences. The original contribution of this research study is that the findings could help instructors understand best practices for their student demographic in developmental writing and composition courses.

Students who require remediation come from all demographic areas, but low-income learners, students of color, and first-generation college students make up a more substantial portion of that overall group (Barhoum & Wood, 2016; Boatman & Long,

2018). Developmental writing courses are primarily comprised of students from these marginalized populations, which also includes second-language learners (Valentine et al., 2017). In a diversity report released by MCC, within the statewide community college system, there are approximately 46,000 students who receive state or federal financial aid based on income and over 26,000 students of color, as well as first-generation college students and second-language learners. This study contributes to positive social change because more faculty will have access to andragogical methods and teaching strategies that can be used to reach a larger portion of the marginalized student population, thereby giving them a more equitable educational experience. Access to quality education will help students persist through their courses and place them on the path to empower themselves to improve their lives, families, and communities.

Research Questions

The research suggests that though there has been moderate success with the corequisite model for adult learners who require additional development to complete composition courses, there are still students who are not successful (Emblom-Callahan et al., 2019). Further, more information is needed to determine what other techniques could be applied by instructors to increase persistence among the adult learner population. I designed the overarching research questions to discover and understand the andragogical methods and teaching strategies used by instructors of adult learners in developmental writing and composition courses. Understanding the methods instructors use to meet the needs of adult learners led to the creation of PD that will enrich the methods and practices of the composition and developmental instructor population at the local site.

Instructors are the content experts who know the methods they have used in class that have helped a variety of students to be successful. I captured instructors' narratives of their experiences in the classroom along with their perceptions of strategies that proved successful. The qualitative approach provided the structure for engaging with the instructors to understand how they view their experiences in the classroom (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What andragogical methods and teaching strategies do developmental writing instructors use to foster successful completion of developmental and first-year composition courses?

RQ2: What do developmental writing instructors need to be more successful within developmental and first-year composition courses?

Review of the Literature

I conducted the review of the literature using the Education Source, EBSCO, SAGE Journals, Proquest, Google Scholar, and Arts and Humanities databases and search engines. Various combinations of the following search terms were used to locate research literature: *basic writing, developmental writing, academic persistence, student learning, community colleges, faculty development, professional development, remedial instruction, accelerated education, andragogy, adult learner, educational innovation, best practices, composition, first-year writing, higher education, adult education, adult basic education, and teaching methods*. The sources included in this review are most relevant to the conceptual framework of andragogy and persistence along with the

broader problem of PD for instructors of developmental and first-year writing courses at community colleges.

Conceptual Framework

In the review of the literature, I sought research that focused on the intersection of faculty teaching methods with the needs of adult learners who were enrolled in developmental writing courses and first-year composition. Knowles's (1970, 2015) theory of andragogy is a framework for methodologies most appropriate for adult learners. Tinto's (1973, 1997, 2000) work in persistence also provided guidance for approaches to aid the persistence of community college writing students in coursework beyond the first year. The research of Bakker and Darrouiti (2008) and Guskey and Yoon (2009) on PD provided the basis for educational designs that could provide faculty with access to ideas and methods that could add to their repertoire of andragogical approaches and teaching methods when engaging with learners in developmental and composition classrooms.

Andragogy

Community college developmental writing students represent a diverse group of adult learners who have varying levels of experience in life and academia. The learners range in age from new high school graduates to retirees returning to school for various reasons. Adult learning theory, or andragogy, has the flexibility to be utilized for creating significant learning experiences for this wide range of adults. The theory was originally presented in four tenets but was later expanded to six (Knowles, 1970; Knowles et al., 2015). Faculty can apply the tenets to make concepts relevant, use prior experience,

foster self-direction and decision-making, guide learners through increasingly complex concepts, problem solving, and trigger motivation to help them achieve their goals (Knowles et al., 2015).

Many practitioners in higher education readily use pedagogy as the terminology for how instruction is delivered; however, Knowles (2015) expressed that there is a clear distinction between pedagogy and andragogy. Instructors who use pedagogical approaches address information about and skills for the content; however, andragogical instructors offer resources and procedures that will aid students' acquisition of information and skills. In research on the origins and uses of andragogy in other parts of the world, Loeng (2018) also makes this distinction between andragogy and pedagogy. Pedagogy is analogous to andragogy with andragogy explicitly aimed toward the process by which adults learn and instructor facilitation occurs. Loeng also stated that Knowles's application of andragogy was not as broad as European practices to that point, but the tenets Knowles presented were practical and easily applied.

When facilitating learning using andragogy, the instructor's role changes from lecturer to facilitator who creates increased opportunities to establish relationships with the students (English & LaCroix, 2020). These relationships help the instructor to have a more in-depth understanding of the experiences the students bring into the learning environment and what their motivations are to learn. The instructor is more focused on individual students and the group as a whole, thereby establishing a more thorough assessment of students' needs. The needs assessment leads to opportunities for including

students in the planning of learning experiences and connecting them with resources that bolster their learning and encouraging self-direction (Knowles et al., 2015).

Persistence

Over the years, there have been myriad approaches applied to help students in developmental and first-year writing courses persist through the first year. Tinto (1973) recognized that certain conditions must be met for students to persist. Students must find their values reflected in the values of the institution they attend. Students who have a goal in mind for their educational achievement are more likely to persist. Social engagement inside and outside of the classroom is also necessary for students to persist.

Social interaction within the classroom was a key component of this study. Tinto (1997, 2000) emphasized the importance of students having positive learning experiences infused with opportunities to engage with their classmates. The bulk of this engagement would be focused on the various assignments and activities that are given in the classroom. Moreover, the relationship between students and faculty in and out of the classroom is another critical element to helping students persist in the classroom. Tinto also recommended faculty provide a supportive environment and include students in their development of learning opportunities. In this way, students see their learning process from the initial stages of acquiring content to critical thought and application of the content. The faculty member provides the space, guidance, and support to encourage that growth, strengthening the students' persistence through the course and beyond (Palmisano, 2021).

Tinto (2000, 2012) determined that the unique student population of the community college added another challenge because these students commuted to campus and only had their class times as the primary opportunities for social interaction. This circumstance describes the community college students who must enroll in developmental writing courses. Connecting with the students early in the course and often is essential to student persistence. Tinto (2000) expressed that the structure and facilitation of classroom experiences mold the students' engagement with their classmates and the faculty. Using the right approach determines the strength of the interactions between students and faculty within the classroom and the potential for students to seek interaction with faculty outside of class. Some characteristics of the faculty's approach include collaborative learning and problem-solving activities, which promote student-to-student engagement and college-level critical thinking. Faculty also provide timely assessment and feedback so students will continue to grow intellectually in their educational experiences. Finally, new faculty should participate in PD so that they can have more tools to help them deliver content, interact with students, and gain skills in curriculum and assessment, particularly for those who will work with students enrolled in developmental courses (Dwyer, 2017; Tinto, 2012). The combination of all these practices leads to higher persistence throughout the first year.

Professional Development

Faculty in developmental writing courses, particularly those who teach within a corequisite model, require an extra layer of preparation for course facilitation. Not only do students enrolled in these courses have varied backgrounds and experiences, but the degree of their skill in academic writing can also be broad (Barhoum, 2017b). To give new and current faculty access to resources and teaching approaches that aid in student engagement and persistence, PD programs led by the department are valuable (Emblom-Callahan et al., 2019). Bakker and Demerouti's (2008) model for work engagement and Guskey and Yoon's (2009) recommendations for PD provided the appropriate foundation from which I built PD for faculty in developmental writing and composition in this project.

For instructors to be engaged in their work, they need social support and interaction with their peers and administrators, constructive feedback, opportunities to advance their skills, independence, and PD. Workers of any kind who have access and positive interactions in these experiences are more motivated to perform. Employees who know they have control over the work they do, feel valued, and receive recognition maintain positive engagement in their work. Additionally, resources that are personally and professionally beneficial, such as setting goals, seeking promotions, positive self-evaluations, self-efficacy, and resilience, can help employees engage positively in their work. Individuals who experience this will engage positively with other members of their teams who also engage with work in this way (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Guskey and Yoon (2009) determined what would be necessary for PD that would promote student persistence. They found that PD should focus on content that is specific to the discipline; be delivered on-time; and be thoughtfully developed, implemented, and assessed. If the development opportunity comes in the form of a workshop, it should include research-based teaching methods, active learning for participants, and practices that can be applied to the individual instructor's classroom experience. Utilizing internal presenters in these workshops can be ideal for understanding experiences unique to that institution, but Guskey and Yoon recommended incorporating experts from outside sources as well. Combining internal and external expertise is a more efficient and well-rounded approach to PD with the outside professionals working with the internal professionals on the implementation of teaching methods, which is generally not done in one session but over approximately 30 hours to support comprehension, implementation, and evaluation. The researchers stated that there was not enough research to support the use of only internal or only external sources for successful PD that improves student learning.

Professional development for faculty must be consistently evaluated from conception to completion to ensure that it is designed from trustworthy, scientifically valid research (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). The facilitators of the workshops, coaching sessions, or summer-long institutes need to critically assess and evaluate the experience while also including evaluation from the participants. This process allows for the improvement of the PD and provides the instructors with a chance to speak about what does and does not work for their needs as they proceed through implementation and

evaluation of their teaching practices with the newly added skills included (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). The instructors' input is invaluable and necessary at all stages to create buy-in for the PD process and to determine the effectiveness of the new tools on the persistence of students in their developmental and first-year writing courses.

I conducted this study to determine the andragogical approaches and teaching methods used by instructors in the developmental writing and first-year composition classroom. It takes a clear understanding of adult learning theory to recognize how instructors apply the theoretical tenets that form andragogy because community college students are adult learners. Developmental writing courses are designed to help learners persist through first-year composition and beyond. Knowing the techniques previously and currently being used to promote persistence is vital to the continued development of instructors who will work with students in developmental and first-year writing. The PD in which instructors participate must be created and administered in the most beneficial and sustaining ways, so that faculty feel valued, included, and that they are contributing to their success and the success of the students they serve.

Review of the Broader Problem

Many community colleges are open enrollment educational facilities for individuals who want to continue their education. Anyone who has a need or desire to continue education is accepted. The open-access designation puts community colleges in a unique position to provide quality educational experiences for a diverse student population (Hwang, 2020). More than 40% of all students attending college attend a community college, and these institutions include adult learners of all ages and types,

including international students, students from low-income areas, and large populations of Black and Latinx learners (Finn, 2018).

Acknowledging that adult learners in the community college setting bring with them myriad experiences and have a variety of learning needs can help them to feel more connected to the learning community (Suh & Shapiro, 2020). Because adult learners in community college systems can range in age from the legal adult age of 18 years old to over the age of 65, the kinds of life and previous educational experiences they bring to the classroom vary considerably (Barhoum, 2017a). These learners will also have a wide range of reasons why they are continuing education. Many students will be pursuing education as what they perceive to be the natural educational progression from high school directly into college, while others who may have gone to work after high school could be returning because of changes in their home lives, jobs, or they merely want to add to their knowledge base in a formal educational setting (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). Community college administrators and educators have the challenging and rewarding task of providing educational environments and learning experiences that will meet the needs of this diverse array of adult learners. Making adjustments to best suit the needs of the diverse student population contributes to students' success and persistence (Rodriguez & Rima, 2020).

Student Placement

Remediation practices in writing have undergone several transformations over time. Generally, the first step in the community college entrance process for students determines if learners are ready for college-level courses or if further development is

required (Allen et al., 2017). Placement into courses is a critical part of the students' experience and can make the difference in whether they will need developmental courses and even the number of developmental courses. Some community colleges use placement testing, such as Accuplacer or Compass, for the discovery of the reading and writing level of the entering student (Boatman & Long, 2018). Most community colleges primarily use the standardized placement test to determine if students are college ready or require further development (Barhoum, 2017b). Using a single measure for reading proficiency could misidentify a student as needing too much or not enough development, which could create a negative experience for the student or even cost the college. The same is true for those colleges that may use only a writing exam to place students (Finn & Avni, 2016). A more ethical approach to placement into developmental or college-level courses is needed (Crank et al., 2019). The process might include a combination of high school grade point average, standardized tests, proficiency, student self-placement, and writing exams so that students do not incorrectly placed in developmental courses (VanOra, 2019).

Students often associate enrollment into developmental courses as a negative reflection on themselves and potentially carry that stigma with them into the classroom, which could impact their motivation and performance (Finn, 2018). While many learners discover that their time spent in the course was useful for them, it is only after they have had a positive experience with the faculty and the content (VanOra, 2019). It is critically important for placement into developmental courses to occur correctly, so faculty will have a better understanding of the needs of the students they will serve in each class (Hodara & Xu, 2018). Further, faculty, who are often excluded from the decision-making

process, must be included when curricular or program changes are needed or mandated by administrators and stakeholders because faculty are the content experts, and they have direct interaction with the diverse student populations (Ostergaard & Allan, 2016).

Developmental Writing Courses

At one time, students could be assigned to one or more developmental courses for which they would receive no college credit before they could enter the college-level composition course (Allen et al., 2017). Close to 60% of students entering the community college need developmental courses; subsequently, only 20% of those students go on to complete the college-level course (Woods et al., 2019). Administrators had to reconsider not only how students were placed in developmental writing courses but also the best way to get students to persist through first-year composition. Faculty and students bear the weight of the added pressure of persistence through developmental courses with less time and fewer resources (Finn, 2018), so it was necessary to find a model that could effectively bring about results that benefitted all involved.

Woods et al. (2019) noted that the conflicting results of various remediation models and added pressures from state legislatures to improve persistence rates has led to the reduction in the number of developmental courses that students have to complete. Additionally, the terms remedial or developmental have been identified by some research groups and educational funding organizations as a detriment to the success of students and specific work has been done to eliminate it from practice (Saxon et al., 2020). Parisi (2018) also recommended the need for care in labeling students in such a way that could lead to misrepresentation of those students, suggesting that the focus should be on

ensuring their development, not on marginalization. Stakeholders' pressure combined with negative naming associations (Saxon et al., 2020) led some institutions to allow students who may need remediation to enroll directly into first-year writing courses (Barhoum, 2017a). Woods et al. (2019) found that when students were given a choice to bypass remediation and enroll in first-year composition, 47.5% chose to go directly into first-year composition. This trend appears to be growing in institutions around the country, but many institutions are still using some developmental models that are beneficial to students who need and want further development (Barhoum, 2017a).

Developmental courses in the language arts are often separated into the skills needed for reading and/or writing. Allen et al. (2017) found that students' overall literacy was vital to student persistence in composition as well as all other courses the learners will take during their college careers. Further, students who speak English as a second language have been identified as having greater success in composition and other college courses when both reading and writing are included as a part of their developmental course work (Hodara & Xu, 2018). Students of color, second language learners, and learners who come from low-income families make up 75% of the student population who are enrolled in developmental courses (Barhoum, 2017a). It is of great necessity to provide a developmental model that will meet the varied needs of these learners, including those needs that may extend beyond the classroom (Saxon et al., 2020). Some of those models include supplemental instruction, modular learning, learning cohort groups, and accelerated learning through corequisite instruction (Barhoum, 2017b).

The corequisite model, developed by the Community College of Baltimore County, has been one of the most widely adopted models in developmental education. It has seen some success (Sides, 2016). In this model, learners who require development in writing or math take the developmental course while enrolled in the college-level gateway course (“What is ALP?,” n.d.). This form of acceleration through developmental courses prevents the students from adding additional time to their educational journey. Also, students who complete corequisite instruction have greater success than students who are in traditional models of developmental courses, and the corequisite learners experience higher rates of persistence (Barhoum, 2017b). Boatman and Long (2018) offered caution for institutions that adopt the corequisite model because of the potential to exclude those students who may benefit more from learning in foundational courses.

Approaches in Developmental Writing Courses

Institutions and instructors have initiated different approaches outside and within the classroom to help students in developmental writing and composition courses persist throughout their academic careers. With so many students who attend community colleges that have experienced lack of access to resources, negligible support from family or friends, and feelings of isolation (Yue et al., 2018), creating meaningful college and learning experiences can be a challenge. Colleges need to not only be prepared to address students’ needs within the classroom, but they also need to be better prepared for the students’ various emotional issues, confidence levels, financial inequities, and even their degrees of maturity (Barhoum, 2017a). New students need opportunities to build their confidence as writers in academic settings (Tedrow, 2020). Barhoum (2017b) suggested

that colleges need to apply greater emphasis to the services that they provide for students, including an information sheet with important office locations and phone numbers and providing in depth campus tours. The practice of consistently talking about the services available should also occur within the developmental English classroom. Students are more likely to utilize the additional resources that are available that will only help improve their overall college experience and aid in persistence throughout all of their courses (Hatch-Tocaimaza et al., 2019).

Within the developmental writing classroom, the courses must be based on learning theory with committed and experienced instructors at the forefront (Pierce, 2018). To take it a step further, the learning theory should be andragogical because community colleges educate adults of all ages (Barhoum, 2017a). The learning activities that faculty design and deliver should combine contextual, collaborative, and active learning techniques, and the students should gain an increase in intrinsic motivation, self-awareness, efficacy, and perception (Pierce, 2018). Students of color benefit significantly from collaborative and active learning activities thereby increasing their persistence and success rates (Barhoum & Wood, 2016). The assignments that learners complete should apply to their daily lives and should draw from the students' experiences (Barhoum, 2017a). Learners in the developmental writing classrooms should be a part of small class sizes to reduce individual student's fear, to make individualized instruction easier for the instructor, and to create a sense of camaraderie among students and strengthen relationships between the learners and the instructor (Barhoum, 2017b). A key component to student success is building relationships with instructors (Edenfeld &

McBrayer, 2021). Faculty would then be able to act as advocates with and for their students (Parisi, 2018). Instructors must provide necessary encouragement for students to complete and value their work while creating challenges that allow students to learn and appreciate their own efforts. Critical feedback given consistently aids in students' success because it allows learners and instructors to identify weaknesses and strengths early in the course (Barhoum, 2017b). Baker et al. (2021) noted the need for this to be a two-way relationship, with students taking the initiative to engage with the reviews by asking questions about their work to receive further feedback on areas identified as needing revision. Building a strong relationship through this feedback cycle between faculty and students improves student grade point averages (Parnes et al., 2020).

While there are several curricular practices that are generally applied by many instructors in developmental writing, less is known about those techniques that are derived from andragogical learning theory. Identifying those approaches in the classroom may help to create better learning experience for adult students in developmental writing and first-year composition (Barhoum, 2017b).

Professional Development for Writing Instructors

Many professors in community colleges have not been trained in how to teach students who need developmental courses. With the variety of students and challenges that occur in the developmental writing and first-year composition classroom, and the number of new and part-time faculty who are assigned to teach these courses, PD opportunities are critically important for instructors to stay abreast of the most current andragogical approaches and teaching methods (Barhoum, 2017a). Training that focuses

on current research in composition and successful approaches utilized by other peers within the institution and the field creates a more well-rounded instructor who can be confident in their interactions with developmental and first-year composition students. Even when the training is for instructors to reflect on successes and failures, colleges have seen improved outcomes (Barhoum, 2017b). PD can also lead to well-developed integrated reading and writing courses which are often a part of corequisite developmental writing courses (Pierce, 2018). In best case scenarios, instructors, particularly adjuncts (Bolitzer, 2019) need to be in paid and intensive training sessions that provide them with exposure to the various techniques available for teaching students enrolled in developmental writing courses (Barhoum, 2017a).

PD is a valuable tool for ensuring instructors in developmental and first-year writing will serve their students well. Instructors are considered, by many researchers, to be “the single most important factor in improving student success and completion” (Lane, 2018, p. 20). Building PD programs requires critical thought and input from various professionals within the college. College administrators must have PD of faculty as a core part of their institution’s mission and provide the funding that is necessary and sustained even during financially challenging times (Fernandez et al., 2017). The institution and content developers must also foster buy-in from faculty, communicate why the PD is important, include full-time and adjunct faculty in the development process (Danaei, 2019), and acknowledge and celebrate instructors’ expertise and commitment to student retention and success (Dvorak, 2019). Whether there are teaching and learning centers that provide mentoring, dedicated faculty development days, mentorship programs, or

workshops focused on instructional methods (Bolitzer, 2019), the process, context, and content should be thoughtfully implemented (Almuhammadi, 2017). Almuhammadi expanded on these ideas by stating that adult learning theory should be the framework or process under which PD programs should be developed. Faculty who participate in the PD opportunities should feel in control of their learning, actively participate, and the presenter should function as the facilitator creating greater engagement. PD that is created under the aforementioned conditions represents a formalized process that will lead to greater faculty participation (Elliott & Oliver, 2016) and a stronger connection to the college, especially for adjuncts who often feel excluded from the institutions they serve (Danaei, 2019).

Instructors benefit from PD opportunities that are specific to their discipline with opportunities for collaboration with their peers. Faculty in developmental and first-year writing courses want to discuss methods for writing instruction, including workshops that may be focused on specific writing assignments or tasks (Fernandez et al., 2017). English composition courses that have high enrollment numbers and are taught in every term need faculty who can be involved in PD with other first-year writing instructors; they will have access to a variety of teaching methods keeping their experiences fresh (Isern et al., 2016). Workshops should be a means to create a community of learners within the discipline who participate in critical self-reflection about their teaching methods with their colleagues (Dvorak et al., 2019). Further, learning communities would be appropriate contexts for mentorship programs because of the potential relationships built between participants; they are best executed within the same department (Danaei, 2019).

New full-time faculty and adjuncts can learn from veteran instructors about available resources for themselves and the students, and peer observation activities could be established (Bolitzer, 2019). Expertise in writing instruction can be advanced through collaboration in the community of instructors (Almuhammadi, 2017). Success in these types of PD opportunities flourishes when the foundations are built on the discipline and the techniques instructors use in the classroom (Bolitzer, 2019). PD practices for educators should be continuous throughout the academic year (Dvorak et al., 2019) not only to apply, reflect, and possibly adjust what was learned (Almuhammadi, 2017) but also to build a greater understanding of how to teach, instructors' confidence, and positive attitudes (Elliott & Oliver, 2016). When faculty have this kind of support, they will be better prepared for learner-centered instruction.

Most faculty in community colleges are content experts, so they may enter the learning environment without approaches for teaching the material they know well. In these situations, instructors will mimic the learning experiences they had while in college thereby electing to lecture to the students with the hopes that the learners will absorb the material (Lane, 2018). PD provides techniques that will invigorate their teaching in the classroom (Danaei, 2019) and present them with alternative teaching and assessment methods (Dvorak et al., 2019). Dvorak et al. (2019) recommended instructional development workshops or even online asynchronous sessions focused on evidence-based practices in instruction that will add variety to faculty teaching approaches and expand their understanding of their classes increasingly diverse student populations. The researchers also emphasized the value of including curricula developed on social justice

platforms to better meet the needs of the entire class. Fernandez et al. (2017) stressed the importance of learner-centered PD within writing courses that would help minimize the gap for students between first-year writing, developmental writing, and especially students who speak English as a second language. Friedrich et al. (2018) also mentioned the value of intensive PD for writing instructors in which they actively participate in the kinds of writing assignments they will have their students complete to have a greater understanding of what the learners will experience as they are working through the writing process. There is a direct link between learner-centered PD that focuses on teaching strategies and student learning outcomes. Students who have learning experiences with instructors who apply learner-centered techniques have higher rates of satisfaction and persistence (Elliott & Oliver, 2016).

One of the keys to continuous and effective PD is assessment. Communities of instructors in ongoing development activities contribute to the assessment process because they have established relationships and teaching methods that they can review term after term effectively updating their instructional development each time (English & LaCroix, 2020; Isern et al., 2016). Having a faculty community with whom instructors can engage in these activities in a collaborative way is beneficial to instructors and improves learning outcomes for students (Aguilar-Smith & Gonzalez, 2021; Alshehri, 2020; Wagner et al., 2021).

Just as instructors in class would use a variety of means to assess the learning of their students, so must the developers of PD. As learning and program outcomes are developed, the assessment of that learning must be developed as well (Dvorak et al.,

2019). It is important to establish the goals for the development experience along with what the faculty will learn, so that an appropriate assessment tool can be utilized to continue to improve upon the program (Dvorak et al., 2019). Elliott and Oliver (2016) urged developers to also track the identity and total number of participants so colleges will have justification for funding and departments can connect student learning outcomes with their faculty's participation in PD activities.

Implications

The goal of this study was to discover andragogical approaches and teaching strategies used by instructors in developmental writing and first-year English composition courses. I analyzed responses from faculty members to discover the most effective methods for improving persistence for students enrolled in the writing courses.

Using the common themes that emerged from the interviews, I created a PD program for full-time and adjunct faculty. The goal of the PD was to establish a community of instructors who can share teaching methods and andragogical approaches based not only on the findings, but also on the relationships that could be established with a continuous PD program focused on the discipline of writing instruction.

Summary

Course delivery in developmental writing and first-year composition continues to go through changes. Pressure from legislatures and administrators has caused a transformation in the way courses are offered changing learners' access to developmental writing courses and first-year composition. With the possibility of the elimination of developmental writing courses, writing instructors will still need to be prepared to

provide effective learning experiences for the students regardless of their writing level. Instructors who have continually worked with developmental and first-year composition students have expertise and techniques that they can share with other faculty who may not have the needed depth to their teaching methods and andragogical approaches. Without an established and formalized PD program for the writing instructors, there could be a greater challenge in gaining a range of effective practices that will bolster students' persistence through first-year writing.

In the following section, I will present the methodology for this basic qualitative study. The discussion of the qualitative research design and approach for the study will be presented. The section also includes information pertaining to the participants, data collection, and data analysis.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

In this basic qualitative study, I explored developmental writing instructors' andragogical methods and teaching strategies as well as what they felt they needed to be more successful. Qualitative research focuses on what participants do and say to have a clear understanding of their experiences and the context in which those experiences take place (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Gathering what could be a multitude of andragogical methods and teaching strategies from instructors who work directly with the developmental writers in the community led to that understanding.

I chose the qualitative method over a quantitative approach because the goal of this study was not to collect numbers that prove or disprove a theory or determine a correlation, the goal of this study was to collect the perceptions of faculty in their words through semistructured interviews. The semistructured interview protocol provided a foundational set of questions, but there was also room for follow-up questions that arose as the interviews unfolded. Qualitative methods allowed for this type of flexibility to ensure that all data collected exhibited the faculty members' thoughts about teaching and needs and optimizes what can be learned from the case (see Stake, 1995).

Participants

Participants for the study included six faculty who facilitated developmental and first-year writing courses at MCC. MCC has campuses across the state that might offer variation in student demographics, so I recruited faculty participants from campuses that serve urban, suburban, and rural students. There was not a restriction on the number of

years the faculty member had been teaching or whether they were full-time or adjunct faculty. All faculty members had something significant to contribute, and it was important to get a variety of experiences to help ensure a more comprehensive collection of data for the study. In a discussion of maximum variation sampling, Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that this method allows for the diversity of participants and the patterns that may occur within that diversity. For the current study, a diverse collection of faculty members provided variety in the data. The faculty interviewed represented both adjunct and full-time instructors and those who taught solely developmental writing or both developmental writing and English composition.

Table 1

Participating Faculty Details

Name	Courses Taught	Employment Status	Years Teaching
Betty	Developmental writing and composition	Full-time	25+
Debra	Developmental writing and composition	Full-time	25+
Dorris	Developmental writing	Adjunct	11–15
Ellestine	Developmental writing and composition	Full-time	6–10
Linda	Developmental writing and composition	Full-time	6–10
Sonya	Developmental writing and composition	Adjunct	16–20

The participants' years of teaching experience in writing ranged from 6 to over 25. Through careful examination of their responses, I collected teaching methods and andragogical approaches to discover not only the best practices but also deviations that could allow for critical reflection about individual members' experiences and how they

used that individualized method to aid their specific student populations. Rubin and Rubin (2012) determined that a large number of interviewees was not needed if the participants were credible and the interviewer was accurate in recording and reporting the responses.

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board, approval number 04-27-21-0314932, I sent a general inquiry via email to the different campuses' English departments. The request for participants included a description of the study and its goals and the information that was desired. I indicated that participation in the interviews was strictly voluntary, provided the anticipated timeframe for the length of the interview, and assured the potential participants of the confidentiality of their responses in writing, so that they could provide informed consent to be interviewed.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was semistructured interviews. Speaking directly to instructors to gather their andragogical and teaching strategies represents the qualitative process of gathering phenomenological data directly from content experts (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A semistructured interview process worked best because this method allowed for some set questions for participants along with the flexibility to adjust the line of inquiry as the conversation unfolded (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I audio recorded the interviews using Microsoft voice dictation software to capture voice to text and a hand-held audio recorder with a playback feature to review the text captured. I also took notes during each interview. Considering COVID-19 restrictions varied by county and to ensure the health and safety of participants and the interviewer, interviews were

conducted by phone or using the Zoom video-conferencing application. The phone interviews occurred over speakerphone to allow for audio recording, but I was in a private room to maintain the participant's anonymity. I followed the same process for Zoom meetings to avoid the possibility of the meeting getting recorded to the cloud, which would not guarantee the interview's security.

I developed the preset interview questions using Knowles's (2015) tenets for adult learning and Barhoum's (2017b) recommendations for best practices in developmental writing. The research questions were developed to discover instructors' andragogical and teaching methods and to determine their needs to experience success in the developmental writing classroom. Both Knowles and Barhoum focused specifically on the adult learner population and those instructors who work with them; thus, using their work to help develop the preliminary semistructured interview questions of the current study was the most appropriate way to gather the necessary information.

Upon approval to contact and set up telephone or video-conference interviews with the instructors, I arranged individual interview sessions in 30- to 45-minute time slots at days and times that worked with the instructors' schedules. All interviews were conducted over a span of 30–45 days to ensure all participants were interviewed promptly but with time allowed to generate the session's transcript and have it reviewed by the participant. I coded each interview immediately after the transcript was approved by the participant. Coding was initially established according to the questionnaire, with new categories added or adjusted as themes emerged. All the interview data, along with the research log and cataloging system, are stored on a coded spreadsheet to protect

participants' identities and housed on a secure, password-protected hard drive. The data will be stored for 5 years, and then I will destroy the files by permanently deleting them from the password-protected hard drive.

I am full-time faculty at one of the campuses in the statewide system. I did not interview any instructors with whom I have a direct working relationship on my campus. All participants were solicited from other campuses well outside my home campus. On the one hand, institutional familiarity could have allowed for a degree of comfort between the participants and me. On the other hand, it might have made it more difficult to get authentic answers from participants who knew that I was also affiliated with the college. I established my role as the researcher by keeping the focus on the study and the guiding questions. I mitigated any potential bias by using an interview protocol and by keeping a researcher's journal so that I could record and reflect on my personal responses to participant data.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data collected from the phone and/or video-conference interviews after transcript review by each participant had taken place. Categories were initially predetermined according to the semistructured interview questions topics and emerging themes that came out from any expanded areas mentioned by the participants. The primary software used to organize, categorize, and code the data was Microsoft Excel.

The purpose of the study was to determine the teaching methods and andragogical approaches used by faculty in developmental writing and first-year composition courses. The semistructured interview protocol was used to provide a guide for the conversation

and to help keep the participants focused on the methods faculty specifically practiced in the classroom directly with their students. Barhoum (2017a, 2018) provided some initial recommendations for andragogical approaches, including academic, study, and life skills, guided by the instructor and developing relationships to have a more holistic understanding of the student. Barhoum also listed identifying strengths and weaknesses of students early, providing regular and critical feedback and individual instruction as needed, and andragogical approaches that promote transferrable skills in argumentation and critical thought as recommendations. Instructor flexibility and adaptation to classroom dynamics were also recommended along with understanding and teaching to various learning styles, which led to the development of the interview questions. Barhoum's (2017a, 2018) work focused on those structural, curricular, relational practices that have been and should be applied by writing instructors. To look at how writing instruction is more completely applied to adult learners, I utilized Knowles's theory of andragogy, which also aided in the development of additional interview questions. Knowles et al. (2015) discussed the importance of a learner's prior experience as a consideration in the classroom and the relevancy of the content to the student as a motivation to learn. Knowles et al. also discussed the need for instructors to be not only attentive to their total group of students but also to individuals within the learning environment. The work of Barhoum and Knowles led to the following guiding questions for the interviews (see Table 2). These questions served as a guide for the interviews, and participants' responses led to other questions that arose during the process.

Table 2*Development of a Priori Codes*

Barhoum	Knowles	Interview Question
Relationship building	Relationship building	At the beginning of the term, what are ways that you build relationships with your students?
Identifying strengths and weaknesses	Needs assessment	What do you do early on to identify students' strengths and challenges, and how do you use that information?
Student-led planning	Existing knowledge and prior experience of the learner; relevancy of content to learners as extrinsic motivation	How do you make activities or assignments relevant to the students' academic, personal, and future professional lives?
Required tutoring; funded writing center	Involve students in course planning; fostering student initiative	Do you ever include students in course planning?
Feedback is consistent, critical and holds students accountable	Link students to resources for learning	Do you have required tutoring or writing center help built into the course?
Transfer-level andragogy through argumentation and critical thinking		What is your process for providing feedback on students' assignments?
		What types of assignments do you include to help students develop critical thinking skills?
	Attentiveness to individuals and groups of students	What kinds of activities or writing assignments do you incorporate that allow students to work collaboratively?
		What are your needs as an instructor?

I used the guiding questions to categorize the participants' responses into the areas of relationship building, strengths and challenges, experience and motivation,

critical thinking, feedback, collaboration, and instructors' needs. A code book was developed based on these initial codes. Relationship building was defined as actions taken by the instructor to know the students better (e.g., establish trust, learning names, share basic information about instructor and student). Strengths and challenges were defined as instructor identification of writing skills in which students did well and those which the instructor identified as needing more development (e.g., struggle, polished, organized). The definition for experience and motivation included attitudes, comments, and behaviors exhibited by students within the developmental writing and English composition classroom to understand prior experience and create relevancy of the material (e.g., feel, nervous, responsibilities, inquiry). I defined critical thinking as methods used by instructors that caused students to consider a subject beyond surface level (e.g., thinking, logic, evidence, analysis, rhetoric). Feedback's definition focused on the instructor's practice of providing students with criticism related to their writing that helped them to correct, improve, reflect, and/or confirm what they have learned and written (e.g., conversation, comments, rubric, explain). Collaboration was defined as opportunities for learners to work together to write or develop their understanding of the class content (e.g., collaborate, together, group, pair). I categorized instructor needs as any element the instructor identified that would improve their experience as a faculty member (e.g., wish, useful, support, love to have).

As each transcript was reviewed, I placed the participant responses in the spreadsheet under each category. Additional remarks were highlighted for later review after initial categorization to determine if they were discrepant cases. Further analysis of

the responses showed similarity in participant responses that led to the creation of additional categories for instructor adaptability and connecting students to resources. Instructor adaptability was defined as the instructors' willingness to make changes whether they were immediate changes during the class session or to the course over any period of time (e.g., change, try, take risk, difference over time). For the connecting students to resources category, the definition was the act of instructors helping students find different resources that will help them with their writing class and other academic or life issues they might have, so they may eventually take the initiative to do it on their own (e.g., show them how; take them to writing center, tutoring, library).

Data Analysis Results

The MCC system has campuses across the state. To ensure that there was a diversity in demographic participation, I recruited participants from four campuses in various locations. The protocol is included in the Appendix. Per MCC requirements, a notification message was sent via email to the main campus leader and academic officer notifying them that participants were requested from their specific campus. I sent each English department chair an email requesting the names of the individual instructors, either full-time or adjunct, whom they identified as having positive success and persistence rates in developmental writing and/or English composition. Three of the four department chairs sent a list of possible participants totaling 18. Thereafter, I sent an email to each instructor requesting their voluntary participation in the study. Ten faculty members returned their consent forms expressing their interest to be interviewed for the study. Two of those 10 did not respond when an interview time was requested: One

participant declined participation because of scheduling conflicts, and one other instructor did not attend two separate scheduled interview times. The final number of faculty who participated in the interview was six, with saturation becoming evident after the compilation of four instructor interviews. Saunders et al. (2018) recommended several possible ways that saturation can be determined depending upon the type of qualitative data being collected and its applicability to the research questions. For this study, saturation was evident when I noted similarity in responses during the interviews across all questions that directly connected to the research questions regarding the participants' teaching approaches and their individual needs as instructors.

Deductive Coding

I developed the interview questions using both the adult learning theory tenets developed by Knowles et al. (2015) and the recommendations for andragogical practices developed by Barhoum (2017a). Initially, themes were created based on the interview questions with more refined categories as responses were collected (see Table 3).

Table 3*Codes and Samples From the Data*

Research question	Theme	Example from data
1	Relationship building	The first thing I do is the minute they walk through the door is greet them like they're old friends.
1	Strengths and challenges	So, that's it. It's kind of how I use that writing sample, so that I know that there's certain things that I'm going to have to hit on or certain extra support and I'm going to have to give to certain students
1	Connecting students to resources	But then I say, 'well like, let's walk down to the office together.' Because I do know there is research to show that helping them do it once encourages them to do it again, on their own, and of course, whether it's remedial or developmental, or [English Composition], it's often first semester.
1	Experience and motivation	Reading is a really big issue for many students and not just the [developmental writing] students, but there are some students who have very low reading skills, and you know, we talked about that in [developmental writing], but we talk about that some in English [Composition] too.
1	Adapting instruction to engage individuals and groups of learners	I want to encourage them and make the class as much as possible a place where they, you know, can take that risk and have that courage to learn because it's, you know, learning is, it takes some vulnerability; it takes some risk.
1	Critical thinking	And I'll say, okay take some time and think about this. What is your experience with this particular writing?
1	Giving students feedback	I give teaching in the feedback.
2	Instructors' needs	In my heart, what I want to say is please let me do what I do best. And what I'm trained to do, and that's crucial to student success.

In addition to the responses that were gathered from the faculty, the type of courses taught, the number of years of teaching, and whether the instructor was full-time, or an adjunct was also collected. The participants' years of service ranged from no fewer than 6 years to over 25 years in a college classroom. Both adjunct and full-time faculty participated in the study, and there was representation from faculty who taught in either or both developmental writing courses and first-year composition.

The guiding research questions for this study were as follows:

RQ1: What andragogical methods and teaching strategies do developmental writing instructors use to foster successful completion of developmental and first-year composition courses?

RQ2: What do developmental writing instructors need to be more successful within developmental and first-year composition courses?

The data collected from the interviews were presented within the context of each question. The participants' responses were demarcated further with the themes that emerged from the data analysis. A discussion of the participants' methods and strategies will be included followed by a discussion of the instructors' needs.

Research Question 1

The goal of this question was to find out what instructors did in their classrooms with their students. To have a greater understanding of what methods and strategies work in the classroom, the content expert provided responses that spoke specifically to their classroom process. Each theme and the instructors' responses (pseudonyms used) were as follows:

Building Relationships

One important step that must be taken in the classroom is building relationships with and among the student population. Tinto (1997) identified actions institutions and faculty must take to help students to persist through their courses. Relationship building was one of those identified actions. Barhoum (2017) discussed the importance of relationships as one of four key components to help community college students persist through developmental writing courses. The faculty who were interviewed shared that one of the first steps in establishing relationships with students is learning students' names. The instructors asserted that as they learn the students' names, they also got to know more about the students' prior academic experiences, family and work situations, and other personal matters the students were willing to share. One important and simple action that faculty take to build relationships is making a real effort to learn the names of the students. Linda shared:

I mean I really like to spend time getting to know them by you know making sure that I learn their names right away. And being really clear on like how to pronounce people's names which I think is really important.

In addition to the process of learning students' names and about their lives, the instructors recommended sharing some information about themselves and some of their experiences. Knowles et al. (2015) emphasized the value of integrating prior experiences into the course content, and these instructors made the efforts to share their experiences which in turn encouraged students to share something about themselves. Dorris stated, "I try to work with them on that level. That well, yes, school is important, but your family's

important too. So, I just try to build these relationships with the students and it's more one on one.” Sonya mentioned the methods that faculty used could be applied in face-to-face synchronous online video, or totally online classes. All of the instructors did the initial work required to get to know students, but there was one instructor who also included introductory exercises that helped students begin to strengthen their connections with their classmates and with the college. The activity is most effective for students who were taking classes on campus. Betty expressed:

We also do, again, this is when we're on campus. We do a little treasure hunt where you know I have a sheet. Like Where do you go if you lose your phone? And one of the questions, I put them in, depending on the size of the class, either pairs or trios. One of the questions is what is the middle name of everyone in the team? So that they have to talk to each other while they're wandering the building.

The methods and techniques recommended by the faculty were intended to build the relationships between the instructors and the students. All of the instructors interviewed also had students writing in the first class or during the first week of classes. The purpose of this early writing was to introduce students to the coursework and to each other. Many focused on educational or career goals as a topic for development. Linda's method for the first writing gave students a chance to interview each other and write an introduction:

We have a wide range of people from all different places and backgrounds so, I like to do like freewriting exercises too that you know, that ask them about their goals and what they're doing here so. As well as you know, doing those exercises

at the beginning of class where they pair them up and they interview each other and then one introduces the other.

Building relationships with students began simply by learning their names. Each faculty member used methods that ensured that they learned about their students personally, without overreaching, and academically. The instructors initiated techniques that achieved the same goal whether they were in face-to-face classes, synchronous online video classes or totally online classes.

Student Strengths and Challenges

Students enter the learning environment bringing with them their strengths, but they will also face some challenges. Faculty need to discover early in the course the students' strengths and challenges (Barhoum, 2017b). The instructors who participated in this study discussed how they determined students' strengths and challenges and explained how they used the information they received once the students completed the initial assessment. All of the faculty interviewed had a type of writing assignment at the beginning of the term so they could get an initial grasp of the students' writing skillsets. Sonya offered this method from her courses and emphasized that there was special care needed when engaging with students whose first language was not English:

I will a lot of times have them just write something on the first day of class. Just kind of to give me, an ungraded, you know, low stakes, low stress, kind of like you get, you'll get some points if you just turn it in. I'll give you credit and then I can read over those and just get a sense of where they are, you know, oftentimes too if their English is, they're learning; English is another language you know

then that has its own particular set of challenges and that immediately becomes evident and then I can add also makes me more aware of like oh OK. I might need to work with this student a little bit differently. Just be aware of the particular challenges they're going to face based on where they are.

The instructors all had their own variation of the writing assignments or activities that they used on the first day or in the first week of classes to preliminarily assess students' writing. Ellestine explained that she used a list of several questions or had students respond to some form of media with a goal to not have students so much focused on the fact that they were writing for an English class, but just to get them comfortable writing. Betty affirmed the idea of giving quick topics to get students writing. Dorris also used a short paragraph writing activity to get students writing, but she admitted that she took some time to prepare the students for the writing before they began. Dorris stated:

So, I finally decided; you know the only way I'm going to know where you are is in the first assignment. And it usually is just making a short paragraph or something, but we've had time to discuss it; we've had time to work on it.

Dorris's practice of taking a little more time with the developmental students extended beyond the first journal assignment to have a better understanding of how the students write "because simply you don't change your writing style much." The other instructors, like Dorris and Ellestine, eliminated rigidity in the first writing assignments to allow students to write freely and from their own experiences.

Upon review of the students' first writing submissions, the faculty discovered but also already knew what the most common grammatical errors were with run-on

sentences, sentence fragments, and comma splices being mentioned by all of them. Debra said:

I know that there's certain things that I'm going to have to hit on or certain extra support and I'm going to have to give to certain students. ... I know I'm going to have to cover sentence structure. I'm going to have to cover comma splices and sentence fragments.

Most of the faculty dealt with grammar issues in a limited way. They did not determine a need to spend significant hours of class time on practicing grammar. Students in developmental courses got more review on grammatical constructs than students in first-year composition, but even then, the faculty wanted to focus the majority of their time on developing the content of students' ideas. Linda stated,

Usually, we'll do one day when I talk about common grammatical mistakes that I see, but I think to spend a whole lot of time on grammar gets old or whatever, so usually I only spend like one day on that.

The faculty shared similar perspectives about teaching grammar and stated that they preferred to do a little review with the majority of their focus in both developmental writing and first-year composition courses to be on paragraph and essay drafting.

Another challenge the instructors noted was that some learners struggled with using their computers and the word processing software. Students were most often cited as needing help navigating the word processing software to set up their documents according to guidelines of the assignment or citation style. Faculty used these circumstances to work with students one-one-one during regular class time. Sonya said:

I have had students sometimes I think who struggled you know, just to use Word, for example, to double space, to set up a paper so that it's double space. The one thing I did with my developmental writing classes sometimes because we had that three hour block I would, you know, kind of lecture through a PowerPoint and you know, interspersed with some activities for like the first hour, and then often because if they were small classes, I would meet the students individually and try to give them as much one on one time as possible.

The first writing assignment was an early point of discovery for developmental writing and composition instructors. Whether they used a short paragraph, an easy topic development, or for the opening to the first paper, they were learning about their students' writing styles, grammar needs, and ability to use the required technology and applications for the course. The instructors took the time to look at the students individually and allowed for some class time, particularly in the developmental course, to work with the students one-on-one.

Connecting Students to Resources

Instructors need to connect students to resources that they might need to use outside of the classroom. Knowles et al. (2015) included resource connection as one of the primary functions of instructors facilitating courses for adult learners. In the developmental writing and first-year composition classroom, Barhoum (2018) recommended required tutoring and the establishment of a fully funded writing center to help students succeed. Barhoum went on to indicate that required tutoring was a good technique to use to better support students of color at community colleges. Not all of the

instructors in this study made tutoring a requirement, but they all insured that the students were given the information they needed to access tutoring resources and the writing center. Betty shared that she understood that not all students have someone in their homes who can help them to identify the resources they might need and how to seek them out:

I don't want to stereotype any of our students as a whole, but we do have many students where this is all new to them and they don't have somebody at home who has the experience... I do know there is research to show that helping them do it once encourages them to do it again, on their own, and of course, whether it's remedial or developmental, or [English Composition], it's often first semester.

And so, I personally really see kind of adjusting to college as part.

Ellestine and Sonya had similar approaches connecting students to resources then gradually making room for students to seek out resources on their own, particularly with writing assistance. Ellestine built required tutoring into her course. "I have assignments where they're going specifically for tutoring or specifically for peer review, but I really try to lessen that and leave that over to them by midway point in the semester." Sonya also required the use of the campus writing center/tutoring in her courses, but her requirement was given after she assessed the writing and determined that the students' writing was significantly below what was needed to effectively complete the assignment. Students were then given an opportunity to resubmit the assignment after meeting with the tutor to improve their grade.

For those courses that met via synchronous online video or asynchronously online, instructors recommended online resources that were available to students

whenever they needed. Betty embedded information about available resources like the library and tutoring into the learning management system. Dorris discussed the difference in providing resources between face-to-face and synchronous online video classes:

Now, it's been harder in the last year because of the virtual; we're home. I'm sorry the writing center is not right next door....In some cases, I have written up step-by-step procedures for them to follow, so if you don't have me at 2:00 a.m. in the morning, they have those.

MCC provided students with a subscription to 24-hour online tutoring service that the instructors utilized and found beneficial. Sonya expressed to her students, "I always tell them [online tutoring] is available 24/7 because I know a lot of them have really crazy schedules, and you know, if it's 3:00 a.m. and you have a writing question."

Debra did not make tutoring or the writing center a requirement in her course, but she recognized the value of introducing students to those resources. In her developmental courses, she had students who would regularly take advantage of the writing tutors without it being required in the course:

You know, I don't think I have required it. I think I have recommended it or suggested it or talked about it as an option, and I think I have had people from the tutoring center come in to talk to students. I don't think that I have mandated that, but especially in [developmental writing], I always have some students who are at the tutoring center every day after class...So, I do see the value in doing that and if I were to teach face-to-face, I probably would require something.

Linda also discussed that when she had courses face-to-face, she would take her class to the library and writing center to view a presentation by the librarian, but no additional required assignments for them to go on their own. Her online composition courses had a required tutoring assignment built in. “Actually, I think I’ll keep that. I think it helped people. ‘I mean they realized oh, this isn’t bad; I’ll probably use this again, this [online tutoring].’”

The instructors understood the importance of tutoring, writing centers, and the library as being an integral part of the students’ overall learning experience. All of the instructors explained how to access those resources, and four of the six faculty interviewed required assignments. Some faculty posted online resources within the learning management system or took the students directly to the tutoring or writing center. The instructors acted as they saw necessary to connect students to the resources they needed.

Learner Prior Experience and Motivation

Adult learners have longer and more complex life experiences that they bring into the classroom. Those experiences are, of course, both positive and negative, and the way students connect their prior experience to new ideas and concepts they learn often determines whether they will be receptive to any new material they encounter (Knowles et al., 2015). Developmental writing and English Composition instructors who are effective in the classroom are attentive to their individual students’ identities and experiences and use that information to help shape the learners’ classroom experiences (Barhoum, 2017b; Knowles et al., 2015). The faculty who participated in this study

discussed the methods and approaches that considered the students individual experience with English language learning and that motivated students to learn and contribute by providing content that was relevant to them. Betty began her writing courses by helping the students understand how their college education needed to be integrated into the other responsibilities they had in their lives:

I have a week calendar that's blocked out, and I mean this is a little manipulative because I have a strategy, but the strategy really works. So, I have our class or classes marked already on the schedule. I bring in colored pencils. I have them mark all their other classes and then they mark jobs, responsibilities that they already have. And then I say, "So look at the time when you think about when to do your work." ...I still will get a student who has missed for a week and says, "Well, oh my car broke down," or you know, "my computer crashed." And so you know in my mind I'm like, do you remember in week one when we talked about-- What are things that could possibly go wrong?

Ellestine shared that prior English education experiences for both native English speakers and second language learners have to be considered and properly approached in the classroom. She found that second language learners spent significant time revising and editing while trying to construct a first draft because they believed that process was the one right way to get the work done. Further, she used videos and readings that showed successful writers who were also second language learners to help the students understand that there was no judgment from her about their skills as writers:

So, getting his [writer from the assigned article] experience and letting them feel comfortable like, “Oh, these are her values. She doesn’t think that there’s anything wrong with my brain just because English is not my first language.” But that really becomes really relevant to their personal experience.

At MCC, developmental writing and first-year composition courses have as a part of their design a requirement for research that includes analysis of text and evaluation of sources. Reading is a critically important skill that students must develop in order to transfer their reading and writing skills to other courses (Barhoum, 2017b). Barhoum (2017b) went further and explained that reading and writing must both be included in developmental writing courses as a regular practice to improve students’ success. When learners were present who may have had previous educational struggles in the areas of reading, faculty in this study were already prepared to meet those students and provide them with practice in critical reading skills that aided students’ growth in reading as well as writing. Debra noted:

We talk about critical reading and annotating- all that stuff. And then in [developmental writing] I really break it down, and we talk about what kind of things to annotate and how to look for topic sentences and so on, but the ability to read informational text is, cannot be taken for granted. Many students have a lot of trouble with it, and I sometimes feel like, you know, there’s probably research that shows that reading skills overall have gone down. That’s what I feel since the start of my career that I used to just, I wouldn’t have to teach reading, and now I feel like I have to teach how to read every time.

Preparing students for the workforce is one of the core initiatives of community colleges. Knowles et al. (2015) posited that adult learners found value in an educational experience when content could help them to achieve their personal learning goals including those that will improve them on a professional level. Faculty used real world examples and activities to show the relevancy of good writing habits for job placement. Dorris showed students the importance of grammar as they prepared to enter the workforce:

And you know, they're consistently making grammar errors, and so I say, I'll tell you what. I was in an interview one time, and I had made a mistake on my paper. Even though I thought I had it on my resume, I thought I had gone back to read it several times. And the guy who's interviewing me pointed it out. "Did you see this?" No. I didn't. "These are things you need to look at because if there are 10 people in line with the same qualifications, the one that has the perfect grammar, the perfect spelling, the perfect punctuation is liable to get the job. Even though you know you've got good qualifications, you are a good worker. This is who you're competing with. This is what employers are looking for." Yes, I try to point them in that direction. You want a good job.

The students' prior experiences and self-concept did not just manifest practical skills on which instructors focused. Faculty also used the students' interests to motivate them and make the material relevant. Andragogical methodology incorporates the use of students in the course planning to keep them motivated and engaged, while also integrating their life experience and making the material relevant to them (Knowles et al.,

2015). This type of engagement with faculty creates an environment that fosters persistence (Tinto, 2012). Linda got the students' input to help connect them with the material:

I love to open it up and say "Hey what are you passionate about? What are you interested in?" Especially with the argument paper they have to do at the end, you know everybody has to do, you know. It's like if you're arguing about something you're passionate about or it's important to you, and you're finding your voice, that could be really powerful.... Use the research, back it up, but if you have some sort of personal connection to it, use a little bit of your personal anecdote to support your argument as well....because we have such a wide range of life experience, different ethnic backgrounds, people from all over the world, and just such interesting students.

Both Sonya and Ellestine engaged students by having them look toward their future professions to make the content relevant and to motivate them to write. Sonya made space for students to look to their future careers when considering the citation style they used for their major research writing assignment. "So, you know, I'm like, if you're going into nursing or psychology, you know, use APA, you know. Let's help you get the foundation that's going to help you in your nursing classes." Ellestine used the students' programs of study to add relevant material and readings to the class.

So, for instance, I have a lot of nursing students in class, and even if I'm having a class where I talk about media and pop culture, I might bring in an article that is

related to how nursing or medical professions are depicted in the media, so I try to make those like those branches if I can.

Debra integrated reading and discussion activities that allowed students to share some of their life experiences while working with text and their classmates. This form of community building helps students to stay connected and engaged, laying the foundation for persistence through the course (Tinto, 2012). Debra shared:

I mean I'll do a summary and response, but the response part, that's when students can share about their lives, and I'll also do either I like to have some homework in between the class sessions when we're meeting face to face. And I used, for example, discussion boards which are normally an online type thing, but I've used those as a homework thing in between class sessions, so that they'll have a discussion topic where they talk about the reading, or they share how that reading relates to something that they're interested in or their own life.

Faculty paid close attention to their students and valued their positions in the classroom to infuse the learners' prior experiences into the content to make it relevant and motivate the students to learn. Every student had a unique set of experiences and personal motivations they brought into the learning environment, so instructors in this study used a variety of techniques and approaches to ensure that they effectively connected the students with the writing course content (Barhoum, 2017b; Knowles et al., 2015). Each instructor interviewed had their unique approach to integrating the learners' prior experience and making the material relevant, but in the end, it was the intersection

of those three concepts- experience, motivation, and relevancy where instructors and students met for meaningful facilitating and learning.

Adapting Instruction to Engage Individuals and Groups

In the previous section, the instructors discussed how they presented relevant material based on the students' experiences to keep them motivated to learn. For this portion of the interviews, they shared other approaches they applied to keep learners engaged. In Knowles et al. (2015) work in andragogy, the researchers recommended that course facilitators be flexible with learners in the classroom, opening the pathways to allow students to be engaged, to contribute to the course's or days' activities, and to become self-directed in their education. Also, Tinto (2000) stated that there was value in the use of collaboration among students to build a sense of community and keep learners engaged and help them persist. The faculty in this study shared how they reflect on their own teaching to adjust their classroom instruction, avoid a rigid structure in their teaching methods and approaches for flexibility and adaptation in the writing classroom, and they discussed the impact that collaboration has on the students enrolled in their developmental writing and first-year composition classes.

One way faculty adapt in their instruction is after attending conferences designed for educators. Dorris discussed ways in which she might approach the class when she has acquired new ways of teaching material from conferences she has attended:

You know that's the direction I need to go, and you know if it works, if I find most students really like this, we'll do it. We'll do more. But if they kind of balk like, "Oh this is really stupid," then maybe not. So, I have to listen to the groups

how they feel about it. “Oh, we like this. We like being in the breakout room talking to each other,” or “please don't do that again to me.”

Dorris also mentioned that she does some self-reflection even beyond the feedback she might get from students at other times during the semester. “I tweak even in the semester if a day doesn't go right. What did I do wrong? What can I do to make this more engaging for the students? It's for them; it's not for me.”

Sonya, Ellestine, and Debra all reflected on how their teaching practices have changed as they have worked with a variety of learners over the years. Sonya said:

I think I've become over time, I think, I've mellowed as an instructor. And I just really want my students to succeed and have the courage to take a risk to write something. And I try to always keep in mind writing a paper is a pretty vulnerable act, you know, even if it's a research paper. They're putting themselves out there, and I just really want them to succeed. I want to see them grow. I'm not, I don't want them to see me as the main instructor who's going to tick off every little point I can find for every little grammar error or every little, you know, MLA or APA imperfection.

Ellestine added:

As I develop confidence in my teaching, in myself as an instructor, I've gained confidence in the students, and so I have begun, like in the past probably 3-4 years, to intentionally develop my, even the syllabus even the course outline to start to give students agency over their own work because you know I find that I

think maybe even in the very beginning, maybe I was giving them too little direction.

Debra shared this thought about how the amount of work changed as her student population changed:

I have also tended to assign shorter and shorter things over the years. I don't, I'm not going to assign a 10-page article. That's not going to happen because a 3-page article is already in the outer limits, you know? And that's so sad to me, you know, but I can still teach the skills that they need to learn, so I've just adapted.

Betty emphasized the importance of integrating life skills into the course that will help students stay engaged not only in their English class but in classes in general:

And so, a few colleagues and I put together what we called an affective unit. And we made it a requirement of all [developmental writing] classes.... We kind of broke it down into problem solving, goal setting, confidence- my gosh, it's been awhile since we worked on it- and motivation. And essentially, what it is, it's just little ideas of how you can kind of address these things.

All of the instructors also identified how they adapted their instruction utilizing common writing education practices and collaboration among the students to help them stay engaged and practicing their writing skills. Ellestine discussed her use of the writing conference to give students the individualized instruction they need:

I conference with my students a lot, especially in the developmental course. Like, I conference with them at least every other week, and that's one-on-one time with each student, and so that's where they really shape their own experience.... So, in

that way they really guide like that conferencing experience. I find too it can be a time saver. Like when you ask them what they want, it can be a time saver in class because there are students that will come to me like, "I got it. I just have four specific questions. If you answer this for me, I'm going to fly." And you know that they're right, so you answer those questions for them, and they're gone. And then you have somebody who's, like, barely has an idea, and so you spend that whole time, like talking to them about their topic, and you spend a little bit more time with that student because that's what they need at that point in their process.

Debra explained her version of the peer review process to help students not only edit their own writing but have a clearer understanding of her expectations for the writing assignment:

Well, you know, obviously, the biggest collaborative thing is to do peer responses; that's big. And depending on the class, like sometimes, I have a [developmental writing] class that's very small, which is great. I love that. ...when we get to [developmental writing class] then we can all sit around the table, and we all read everybody's drafts together, and we have a discussion rather than writing or writing something down. We get comments verbally, and everybody gets a chance to go around and say what they think. And they get to see how I give some comments verbally; that's a really great modeling exercise, so I love it, like kind of having paper workshops with students.

Collaboration was identified by the other instructors as another important method to help keep students engaged in the class, build confidence, learn from one another, and help to build community. This aligns with Pierce (2018) who found that the learning activities that faculty deliver should include collaborative, active learning techniques. Betty spoke about the significance of observing students interacting with one another socially at the beginning of class and how that opportunity is lost in a virtual class setting:

And so, whenever they can talk to each other, that is also, and man, have I missed that in virtual. Just those little conversations, I come in and they're talking about music, but you know, like something seemingly irrelevant, but it's building a resource for them, but they are not aware of that.

Linda added a similar perception of the use of collaboration to help the students feel more at ease in class and included how she uses it to work through specific writing assignments:

I think it can engage them more, right. Rather than just sitting there listening to me. And even then, a class discussion because of course in a small group people are going to talk and interact more than in a class as a whole discussion. And hopefully they'll feel more, I think if they can make connections with their peers, it can help them feel more a part of the class and more a part of the experience. I think it can give them more motivation. I think also feel less alone....When I was talking about the rhetorical analysis, I like to put them in groups. And then virtually, you know the breakout rooms, of course, and giving them a shared

google doc putting group one and here's the image and putting a link to a video and then they write their comments.

Sonya also shared the importance of collaboration to keep students engaged and build confidence, and she expressed concern for students who may not get that in an online course who need it:

When the students are interacting together, I think they almost, could almost see them take comfort and courage from each other, you know. I mean sometimes they are just staring at you and dead, but when they're online I think they could just- I sometimes get messages from students who are so frustrated and overwhelmed, and I think they need that in-person support really ideally.

Although I guess you know, the world we live in, we have to work with what we have.

The instructors engaged with their students individually through conferencing and one-on-one interactions during the class time. Faculty recognized that the developmental and first-year writing classroom can be stressful for some students, so they regularly made adjustments to the way they presented material. They practiced self-reflection after class meetings and over their years as instructors and were in tune with the students' responses to a learning experience. In the next class or course, they would cover material again or in a different way if needed. Further, they paid close attention to those elements of students' lives that were outside of the writing process and integrated methods to build confidence, motivation, and other necessary life skills that would help them to be successful.

Faculty also included collaboration within the learning environment. The combination of contextual, collaborative, and active learning techniques can help students improve intrinsic motivation, self-awareness, efficacy, and perception (Pierce, 2018). The collaborations reported by faculty in this study were intended to help students build confidence through peer-to-peer learning and build community. Instructors also validated how important it was to create the sense of community and allow space for students to learn from one another in an asynchronous online environment or a synchronous online video classroom. At the time of the interviews, methods were still being developed for student engagement in the synchronous online video classroom, but the instructors were already adapting to the new learning environment to ensure their students success in developmental writing and first-year composition courses.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a process that takes practice to develop. There are various ways that critical thinking may occur, and in this age of access to information from all over the globe, it is vital for students to have a variety of ways to practice and apply the layered process of thinking critically (Sellars et al., 2018). Barhoum (2017a, 2017b) recommended that instructors in developmental writing courses include activities and writing assignments in argumentation and critical thinking to develop transferrable skills that can be applied in other college courses and beyond. MCC used the argument research paper as its final assessment of the students' ability to apply critical thinking skills through research. In addition to the researched argument, the most common approaches for critical thinking practice used by the instructors in this study included

discussion activities, reading and responding, student collaboration, and a rhetorical analysis essay.

In the developmental writing course, Dorris used short readings to gradually initiate students' critical thought. She explained that she wanted to help students to recognize when they were engaged in the critical thinking process by getting them to recognize when they encountered new ideas that they may be able to connect to concepts they were already familiar with. She used a short paragraph to demonstrate it for students:

And I'll say, okay take some time and think about this. What is your experience with this particular writing? And then we come back together, and we discuss what their experiences are. And yes, we get kind of long winded and off topic maybe, but it gets them thinking, gets those juices going.

Ellestine liked to use visual media to analyze and discuss as a group to initiate students critical thinking skills early on in the course. She also used this activity to help students to work on other transferrable writing skills. She stated,

I do a lot of visual things. So, I'll have students look at an advertisement or look at a picture and talk about- this can help with concepts like summary, right, because there aren't words there. I have a lot of students who have issues with like paraphrasing and summarizing. It really gets difficult to put it into your own words.

Sonya provided a reading with a short writing assignment to get students started. Her goal was to encourage students to read critically and react to the text. Students

showed what else they might learn about the topic of the reading, or she had them locate other perspectives related to the topic within the text. She said:

What's, where's the point where maybe this person, there is something they're overlooking, or there's a point that might need more research. Or, somewhere where you could inquire into this issue and add to your knowledge or understanding of it? So, I think just trying to help them see text as always partial if that makes sense. Like, you know rather than just this is good; this is bad.

Betty also made sure to include critical reading in her classroom to help students understand how to read complex texts and think about that material with more depth. Her step-by-step process was geared toward guiding students through the act of finding synthesis in different articles they have read about a topic. Betty shared some of the steps her class followed in the activity:

I've kind of broken it, trying to break it down into practical steps; even though, it's not quite as straightforward as 123, but the first question is what is the article saying? And who is the author? What is the context? The second one is. Was there evidence? Their argument, was it effective and why? And then the third one is how does it connect to other ideas, other peoples' ideas? So, at the start it's your idea. How does it connect to your thoughts on the topic? And then as we go, I try to say, can you connect it to the first article?

Many of the instructors used the rhetorical analysis essay to help students combine critical reading and writing skills. Debra explained that she had students

complete the rhetorical analysis essay and other writing assignments to apply critical thinking:

I really think that you know a rhetorical analysis even though that's a dreaded assignment for some students, but that's really important for developing critical thinking as it does make you have a meta-analysis of the text so just that students can even just grasp the idea of logos, ethos, and pathos, that's huge, you know?

Debra also mentioned that she used the annotated bibliography as another required assignment for students to hone their critical thinking skills. She stated that was an important critical thinking skill through which students would validate sources so that they could draft “a reasonable argument.”

Linda introduced students to variety of media and genres as students worked through the rhetorical analysis essay:

I like for them to learn rhetorical analysis. Even if it's just starting off with advertisements. I like doing that. I think that's kind of fun. Like giving them print ads or a photo. Okay, let's break this down. What is the thesis in the ad? What do you think the purpose is, the audience? Are there any subliminal messages? ...And we talk about logos, pathos, and ethos, biases and stuff, but then like applying that to writing, even a poem....Even looking at like social media, looking at a tweet and rhetorically analyze that.

When Sonya instructed students on the rhetorical analysis, she taught students to critically analyze it from the perspective of the author's choices. She encouraged them to apply that process to themselves as writers as well. She said:

It's, it can be challenging, and I think some of the terminology you know, logos, pathos, ethos. Some of them find it a little intimidating, but it helps them start to think of, you know, this text didn't just descend from on high. Someone wrote it. They made choices, you know... and I think that has the advantage too of like, well, what choices do you want to make as an author, you know? I think there may be that more critical thinking piece of it also bleeds over into thinking about yourself and your own writing choices. Ideally.

Ellestine offered a final thought about critical thinking and the transferability of that skill:

Now critical thinking skills and analysis are there, but maybe like some other things are not like cultural awareness, you know some of those things might not be specifically course goals that I always have because I think that they serve the greater good, but also the greater good of the student, the student's ability to then navigate other courses that might be completely different from my own, but they've learned something from my course that helps them navigate that.

The faculty who were interviewed understood that students needed to learn how to think, read, and write critically. These instructors ensured that students completed a variety of activities, reading, and writing assignments to help them through the process. They guided students through steps of the critical thinking process in activities that covered various types of media and genres. All of the instructors relied on the rhetorical analysis and the researched argument as two of the primary essays designed for critical thinking.

Giving Students Feedback

Feedback is a vital component in helping students in developmental writing and English composition courses progress toward and ultimately demonstrate college-level writing. Students need feedback on their writing assignments and other activities to understand their progress and the areas which require additional attention, practice, and revision (Perun, 2015). Feedback to students should occur regularly and include specific details that will be useful to the student. Faculty can provide feedback directly on assignments, through various forms of agreed upon communication, and during class sessions (Barhoum, 2017b). At MCC, the study participants' feedback process focused on including positive commentary to the students, content over grammar, opportunities for revision at any stage in the writing process, and encouraging self-direction.

All of the faculty interviewed provided feedback to their students, and they all had a specific process that they followed that determined how much feedback they planned to give on any assignment. Debra was one faculty who mentioned that she provided feedback to students on all of their assignments. She stated:

I'm one of those people who provides a fair bit of feedback, and I usually provide feedback on pretty much everything even those students doing a discussion board as homework in between....So, I do think it's important for students to feel like somebody is reading their work and taking it seriously.

Another practice that was common for all the faculty was the act of offering critical feedback, but through a positive lens. Even during the times in the semester when the workload become heavy, Both Sonya and Linda emphasized that the feedback had to

be given. Sonya shared the importance of positive feedback even when the instructor's workload is heavy:

I do try, I mean feedback is- it's rough for all of us, and I try to keep that in mind. I think sometimes as an instructor it's easy for me to just check out because you know I have a big stack of papers. Like, OK let's get through this, but I also, you know, when I sit down too. I really try to find specific things to praise no matter where they are, you know, and say okay, you know, it could be something as simple as, 'wow, you figured out MLA style....The thing I try to remember is, if they're discouraged, then it doesn't matter what I'm putting out there, they're not going to be able to hear it.

Dorris highlighted especially good segments of writing to show the students that they had written something well. She used the positive feedback to help the students build on the good writing they had done from that point, encouraging them through the revision process. She said:

You know and then as we move on, I'll find a paragraph that is really good. "Don't lose this paragraph." And since we are using computers, they are saving, hopefully, to like a cloud or a thumb drive and not their hard drives. They can save that paragraph and build on it, so if I find better paragraphs. "This is really good. Leave it in there because this really says what you want to say about it."

All of the faculty who were interviewed favored focusing on the content of the students writing versus the grammar. They would offer guidance on the grammar if the errors were too distracting, and one of the instructors mentioned giving students page

numbers in the text for students to refer to for additional ways to make the grammatical corrections. Betty explained:

Okay, so I also always have a sheet that says, “How to Read [Name] Feedback.” And so they'll know, and so I confess I am- I'm not a minimal grader. I do mark issues, and I mark issues early on. I mark issues and explain them...I give teaching in the feedback. It's sentence level and punctuation. I tend to mark one. And so, I then say to them, you know, “The idea here is I'm not editing your paper.”

Debra expressed why she opted to emphasize content more than grammar in her courses:

I'm more concerned with getting their content across and making sure that they can structure something appropriately and that they have developed an interesting idea ...I tend to feel that you learn grammar best by reading a lot, so for me to do lots and lots of drills is kind of counterproductive, I think.

Ellestine set a specific parameter for herself regarding the amount and type of feedback she gave to students. She also stated that she did not comment on grammar unless it was distracting. She shared:

I typically start off with the first paper. I have started to try to limit myself in terms of really meaningful comments to five on any draft, and I will tell them “I'm going to give you five meaningful comments.” ... that helps me to focus on meaningful comments, which are things like, about their development and organization that are actually going to improve their papers quite a bit.

Lastly, all of the instructors encouraged students to be self-directed in some form throughout the course. The most common, mentioned by at least three of the instructors interviewed, occurred in the revision process. Sonya let students know that she was always available when they needed her, but they had to initiate that contact. If the students did initiate that contact whether by email or during class or office hours, she would give them an opportunity to rewrite the work without penalty, especially if the student needed to make significant amounts of revisions. Ellestine discussed how her process for “five meaningful comments” changed over the course of the semester, but she always allowed for revision and resubmission of the assignment:

Because again, the agency is on them at that point and even from the beginning of the semester when it comes to final drafts, like if it's the final, I do not comment I mark the rubric....And if, and then I allow revision and makeup work and all that. I probably am too flexible with that, but I allow it until the end.

Betty also fostered student self-direction as the student progresses through the course:

As we progress kind of more general, so I'll do some specific about the kind of higher-level issues that I want them to work on, but then I include gentle reminders for everyone because my idea is ultimately, you're going to have to do this independently. I'm not going to follow you through college giving this feedback.

The instructors in this study made sure that they kept students encouraged by including positive commentary within their feedback. The instructors took the time to do

the work for each student regardless of the amount of grading they had to do primarily spending their time on the content of the writing with help as needed on grammatical constructs. Further, they helped students take responsibility for their own learning by leaving open opportunities to discuss their work more and complete additional rewrites as needed.

Research Question 2

The goal of this question was to determine what instructors perceived their needs to be for success in the courses they taught and with their students. Faculty spend their time determining and meeting the needs of their students, so it is equally important for instructors to be able to express what their needs are as educators in developmental writing and first-year composition courses.

Every need identified by the instructors was relevant to the research question. They considered what was required for them to be successful almost strictly based on how they could best serve their students. Faculty acknowledged three main areas most often in their responses as a need—workload, support, and community.

Workload

Regarding their workload, the MCC instructors wanted to be able to focus their work on their students. All of the instructors identified that their workload was overwhelming because they were asked to do other things that took away from their time with students. Betty preferred not to have advising as an additional requirement of her job. She felt that the time she spent helping a student register for classes could have been spent helping one of the students enrolled in her class get better. The instructors would

like their contributions as content experts and educators to be prioritized over other responsibilities.

Debra wanted a reduction in the number of students allowed to enroll in a class along with the number of classes faculty were asked to teach. A change like that would relieve some of the pressure for her, especially considering she also served as a department chair. She stated:

And now I still have tons of stuff to do plus I'm teaching two classes, and like the summer I have two Composition classes.... In an 8-weeks, that's a huge amount of work and then on top of everything else I'm doing it's like, are you kidding me? So, I would like to have fewer classes and fewer students, so that I could do a great job with the students. That's what I want. Please, give it to me.

Another instructor, Linda, also showed concern about the shortening of the length of the terms; that change created additional stress on top of the regular workload. She said:

But then again, this is another thing about the 8-week. It is much harder to be more flexible, to be more interactive, to get to know your students; all of that is much harder in the 8-weeks, much harder.

Ellestine offered a final thought about the teaching workload, specifically when the faculty were asked to teach additional courses on top of the standard number of courses they were required to teach. She reflected:

I feel like I have other people around the college who care just as much as I do or willing to do whatever, but also, I feel like we shouldn't have to run ourselves

down into the ground which sometimes I do feel like it's happening, for me. I shouldn't have to be sleepless every night... So, for instance, if we're being asked to teach an additional class what does that do to how I can interact with my students, right?

These instructors were dedicated to the students. They wanted to be able to devote their time to helping students who are enrolled in their classes. They wanted smaller class sizes with a better balance between 8- and 16-week course offerings to maximize their ability to be flexible in the classroom and build relationships with their students. They preferred to have a reduction in the other duties they were assigned outside of the classroom. The instructors in this study wanted their role as educators to be prioritized above all else.

Support

Developmental writing and first-year composition instructors at MCC overall spoke positively of the support they received from their department heads and from support services such as the library and writing/tutoring centers. Having strong professional relationships with their department heads was important to them, and having the additional student supports in place to enhance the students' classroom experience were all a part of faculty responses related to support. Ellestine spoke to both types of support in her response:

So, the support that I have through like, our library and librarians, as well as our writing and tutoring center, are like invaluable to me because they're there all the time; you know....Also, I think that there's a lot of support in my department in

particular for my department chair in terms of giving us and encouraging us to like try to make courses our own, to try to work in modes that best suit us as individuals and best serve the students.

Dorris, who taught as an adjunct in developmental writing, mentioned the importance of the administrators knowing who she was and responding to her requests:

So, I know I'm getting the right support, and I believe, the higher ups, I guess, they know me by name. I have [Admin name] "Hi [name] how are you?" "Hi, [Admin name] I can't believe you remember me." So, the support's there. I think too we as instructors have to put forth the effort. We have to ask the questions.

We have to walk in the office. "By the way [dept chair name] can we make some changes to the classroom right now?" ...It's you. You have to make the effort. It's a two-way street between you.

Faculty at MCC felt supported by their department chairs and college administrators, and they were confident in the staff and availability of student support services like the library and writing center. Additionally, one of the faculty emphasized the value of vocalizing their needs in the courses and classroom and the willingness of administrators to respond to those needs.

Community

Of all the needs identified by the instructors during the interviews, the desire for regular interaction with other colleagues in the discipline was expressed with the most enthusiasm. The faculty wanted to talk about teaching, different techniques they used in the classroom, and even books or articles they had read. One of the faculty missed the

impromptu interactions she would have with other English faculty particularly when everyone was isolated during the pandemic. There was an even greater need for communication with colleagues because the teaching environment had changed so quickly and drastically. Next to their workload, faculty identified having a sense of community amongst their colleagues as a vital part of their process for better serving students in the classroom.

Sonya described what she would like to see happen more regularly on her campus. “I would love to have a- I'd love to meet with other instructors weekly.... Every time I've interacted with other instructors, I feel like I've picked up something that I can try out and just feel less isolated.”

Betty identified the difference that community makes especially while facilitating courses during the pandemic:

I like talking about teaching. I like sharing ideas. I like getting ideas. I like telling somebody when it went really well...But I think sometimes we get stuck, like in this and the pandemic, I think, at least for me, you know like, well, this has always worked, and then I think, well, has it? The world has changed and so maybe this assignment needs to change... I'm never going to pass up an hour where I get to talk about myself and my teaching.

Linda shared a similar thought, reflecting on how circumstances changed during the isolation of the pandemic:

When I would see my colleagues more in-person and talking, we would bounce ideas off each other a lot and it would help with developing our classes and our

teaching. We'd share articles and ideas. We don't do that as much now... We would like more group things where like, a group reading that book or a group talking about the coreq, a group talking about whatever it is, just meeting up and just talking, just connecting. Doesn't have to be so structured I don't think. It's much harder now, virtually.

Faculty identified their needs in terms of their workload, support from campus services and administration, and community. Regarding their workload, they wanted to be able to focus their time and energy on helping their students along with having their role as educators and content experts prioritized over additional responsibilities. They felt supported by their program and college administrators and knew they were able to approach them with their concerns about courses. Finally, the faculty wanted to be able to interact with their colleagues regularly to share ideas and practices about their courses and teaching.

Discrepant Cases

This study was designed to discover the teaching strategies and andragogical approaches used by faculty who taught developmental writing and first-year composition at a community college. The department chairs identified those instructors who had the best persistence rates with students to participate in this study. Because of this, all six of the faculty who were interviewed for this study provided methods and approaches that they used in their courses, so each method and approach was considered important to include. As a result, there were no discrepant cases in this basic qualitative study.

Conclusion

A lack of formalized PD for developmental writing and first-year composition instructors was identified as a gap in the practice of the field. The purpose of the study was to determine the teaching methods and andragogical approaches used by faculty in developmental writing and first-year composition courses. Instructors who were identified as the most effective and with the highest persistence rates were interviewed to gain insight into the methods and approaches used in the classroom. Also, the needs of the instructors were sought out to have a more holistic understanding of the instructors and how those needs affect their work in the classroom.

The conceptual framework developed using Knowles et al.'s (1970, 2015) theory of adult learning, Tinto's (1997, 2000) research on persistence, and the work of Barhoum (2017a, 2017b, 2018) guided the creation of the interview questions that would pinpoint the andragogical methods and teaching strategies used by faculty in developmental writing and first-year composition courses, research question number one. From the participants' responses it was determined that effective instructors built relationships (Barhoum, 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Tinto, 1997, 2000), determined student strengths and challenges (Barhoum 2017a, 2017b), connected students to resources (Barhoum, 2017a, 2017b; Knowles et al, 2015), utilized learners' prior experiences (Barhoum, 2017a, 2017b; Knowles et al., 2015) and motivated them, adapted their instruction to engage individuals and groups (Knowles et al, 2015), fostered critical thinking and provided thoughtful and constructive feedback (Barhoum, 2017a, 2017b). The second research question asked what do developmental writing instructors need to be more successful

within developmental and first-year composition courses? Faculty identified their needs in the areas of workload balance, support from college resources, departmental and college leadership, and building community with other writing instructors.

Instructors built relationships with their students to create an environment, whether in face-to-face, synchronous online video classes or totally online classes, that were student-centered, safe, and educational. The most important piece for all the faculty interviewed was learning the students' names and getting to know a little about them while also sharing something about themselves. Building relationships with students from the beginning of their student experience and in the classroom was one of the key components to student success as identified by Edenfeld and McBrayer (2021). Building this relationship enables faculty to act as advocates with and for their students (Parisi, 2018). Parnes et al. (2020) also concluded that relationship building between faculty and students was critically important to student success, directly impacting their overall grade point average. The modality of the class, whether face-to-face or online, requires faculty who are approachable and respond to questions. Students value the relationships they have with their instructors as a part of their success in the course (English & LaCroix, 2020). Faculty at MCC did the work to build relationships with their students.

Determining the level of skill that students have in writing courses is in line with practices many community colleges use to place students in developmental courses or directly into first-year writing (Boatman & Long, 2018). MCC's instructors also needed to determine early in the course the students' strengths and challenges in the writing classroom. Typically using the first writing assignment to accomplish this, instructors

focused on the content of the writing primarily, but made note of any common grammatical issues. The first writing assignment was intended to be a diagnostic and a way to get students to begin their journey into academic writing, so faculty used this piece to build upon later and provided points just for completion. Tedrow (2020) explained that new student writers needed to have “low-risk” opportunities to write to build their confidence as writers in academic settings, so they could better see themselves as scholarly writers. The faculty at MCC ensured that the introduction to the writing process was done while also helping students progressively feel more comfortable about their own writing and skills.

Instructors recognized the students needed to access resources beyond those available in the classroom. All of the participants made sure to connect their students to tutoring, writing centers, and the library by posting information in the learning management system, including assignments that required students to utilize the resources, or by taking the students to those areas in-person. The goal was not only to help the students use the resources to become better writers but to also set them on the path to take advantage of the different areas on their own. The faculty who participated in this study had just begun teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and mentioned that there was some clear difference in connecting students to resources during that time; students had to take advantage of writing center and tutoring services that were available online. Benz et al. (2021) conducted a study that confirmed the importance of having a clear plan in place to keep students connected to the college and additional resources during the pandemic and found that having the right plan in place that was well executed contributed

to student success. One type of resource not mentioned by the faculty, but is considered relevant to student supports, pertained to helping students manage stress and anxiety as another set of resources for students to aid in persistence (Palmisano, 2021). Though the interview questions did not inquire directly about these types of resources, it is necessary to note that the literature supports the value of including these types of student supports along with those that directly assist with students' coursework.

Adult learners need the material they are learning to be relevant which is one aspect of their motivation to persist (Knowles et al., 2015). The instructors integrated students' prior experiences into the content to create that relevancy. Wagner et al. (2021) examined this concept further by showing how faculty who have experience in certain industries can bring their experiences into the classroom and make the content relevant for students by giving them a perspective of what actually happens in the field or industry. Students want the material to be relevant and apply to what they will do in the "real world" (Edenfield & McBrayer, 2021). The instructors at MCC developed methods to do what worked best with the unique learning styles of the students. The faculty who regularly worked with English language learners also worked to validate the knowledge that those students had even though they were still adding to their English language skillset. Acknowledging and including the contributions of nonnative English speakers reduces their resistance to the English language learning process and helps them to feel more connected to the college (Suh & Shapiro, 2020). Experience, motivation, and relevancy all worked in tandem to give the students a significant learning experience.

Adaptation of instruction was an absolute to keep individual and groups of students engaged. Instructors utilized one-on-one attention in class and outside conferences to meet the needs of each student. The instructors also engaged in self-reflection on their teaching after class sessions, so they could make adjustments to improve the next class or add in additional teaching when necessary. Adjusting curriculum to best suit the needs of the diverse student population contribute to students' persistence (Rodriguez & Rima, 2020). For the groups of students referenced by the instructors at MCC, building a sense of community within the classroom through collaboration and group work also kept students engaged allowing them to learn from one another and helped boost confidence among their peers.

Critical thinking has been identified as one of the most desired skills needed from new graduates entering the workplace, so there is a need for it to be included in all college courses (Price & Magy, 2021). The faculty who were interviewed integrated opportunities into their courses for students to think and read critically. The act of critical thinking was built in stages and applied not only in thought, but in reading and writing as well. Instructors provided a variety of activities, reading, and writing assignments. All of the instructors used the rhetorical analysis and the required argument research essays to engage the students in critical thinking. MacArthur et al. (2021) showed that the rhetorical analysis essay could not only be used for bolstering writing students thinking, but it could also be used to guide students through the practice of self-regulation by goal setting, time management, and self-evaluation through their writing process. The learners at MCC continually practiced and employed critical thinking and were shown how it

could be applied in a variety of circumstances, not just their writing courses. Avni and Finn (2021) discussed how faculty who taught a combined course in writing for English language learners and critical thinking emphasized the need to find a balance between teaching skills that are specific to the writing process such as grammar, mechanics, and paragraph development along with the metacognitive processes. The instructors who participated in my study had a primary purpose to teach writing, but they also incorporated critical thinking into the work students completed in their developmental writing and first-year composition courses.

Giving students feedback was vital to success in developmental writing and first-year composition courses. In research conducted by English and LaCroix (2020), students considered plentiful and thorough feedback as one of the indicators of good instruction. That marker received an even higher ranking than the instructors in the same survey thought the students would give it. The MCC instructors took the time and were thorough and consistent in their feedback process. They made sure to include positive commentary, focused more on their content than grammar, and provided opportunities for revision at any stage in the writing process while encouraging students to take initiative on their own to improve. Baker et al. (2021) also stressed the importance of having students take initiative with the feedback they receive to progress through the writing and revision process and recommended guiding students through a process in which they are required to ask specific questions about their work to receive feedback on areas they identified as needing more revision. This added step helps students to be stronger agents of their

writing. None of the instructors mentioned the use of question-based feedback, but they did make themselves available to students for additional help as they needed it.

The instructors at MCC also discussed their needs as faculty. Their responses were categorized in terms of workload, support, and community needs. Instructors needed for their work to be primarily focused on the students who are enrolled in their classes. Aguilar-Smith and Gonzales (2021) noted that community college faculty are expected to understand their students and provide them with the proper supports along with their teaching duties. In addition to this they are responsible for participating in PD, staying current on research in their field and apply new strategies regularly; further, they are required to participate in college service. Participating in PD with clear goals is essential (Dvorak et al., 2019) and it could be possible to connect student learning outcomes with faculty participation in PD activities (Elliott & Oliver, 2016). The instructors from MCC recognized PD and other aspects of college service were important, but as content experts, they would like to have a better balance that allowed them to spend the greatest portion of their time preparing for their classes, teaching, and being available when their writing students needed them.

Overall, instructors felt like they had good support from their department heads and student support services. It was important for them to have strong professional relationships with their department heads and college administrators to share ideas and contribute to any changes that will directly affect their work in the classroom. Positive relationships with other colleagues and administrators are connected to more satisfaction with college work and are correlated with improved teaching (Alshehri, 2020). Positive

relationships with other colleagues and administrators are important for both full and part-time faculty. One of the adjunct faculty at MCC mentioned her satisfaction due in part to the fact that they knew her and called her by name, and she was free to offer recommendations that were taken into consideration.

MCC's developmental writing and first-year composition instructors wanted to build a sense of community among other writing faculty. Having a community of other faculty with whom instructors can collaborate is beneficial to full-time and part-time instructors, creates a stronger connection to the institution, and helps improve learning outcomes for the student population (Aguilar-Smith & Gonzalez, 2021; Alshehri, 2020; Wagner et al., 2021). Strong, effective faculty members, whether full-time or part-time, are the most important element in a student's educational journey (Lane, 2018). Faculty at MCC enjoyed talking about the work they did and benefitted from sharing ideas and strategies with their colleagues. With the change to the teaching landscape that occurred during the pandemic, connecting regularly with other writing instructors was vital to creating fresh ideas and reducing the sense of isolation but was difficult to achieve. The faculty looked forward to regularly engaging with their colleagues face-to-face.

The instructors in this study provided insight into the work they did inside the developmental writing and first-year composition classroom. Identifying those areas within andragogical practice and the teaching methods that they applied made it possible to create PD for both new and veteran instructors in developmental writing and first-year composition courses. More instructors who can begin or refresh their teaching with practices of those identified as the most effective instructors with high student persistence

rates can make it possible for more students to persist through developmental writing and first-year composition.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

I conducted this study and developed this project to address the gap in practice of there being a lack of a formalized PD for instructors of developmental writing and first-year composition courses at MCC. In the study, I purposefully sought instructors who were identified by their department chairs as the most effective and with the highest persistence rates. I interviewed those instructors to find out what teaching strategies and andragogical methods they used in the classroom with their students. The intent of those interviews was to utilize the methods those instructors employ to create a PD program that could be completed by both new and veteran developmental and first-year composition faculty.

Rationale

I selected PD for this project not only because there is a gap in practice but also because all educators need to have continuous education in the most effective ways to instruct and engage the learners they serve. Community college instructors have a diversity of adult learners because, like MCC, they often have open enrollment, meaning anyone who applies will be accepted and can pursue higher education. To ensure that new and veteran instructors are prepared for the variety of students they will work with, PD is a means to offer the participants' methods and approaches gathered in this study that will best meet the needs of this diverse population of adult learners.

The faculty who participated in the study were happy to share what they did in the classroom. My analysis of their responses showed that they wanted to talk about their

profession and wanted to share with others what methods work well for them so that others might have, if they do not already, stronger learning experiences with their students. I used the participants' responses to build the PD as well as provide confirmation for veteran instructors about their own teaching strategies and opportunities to share their successes and ideas with their colleagues, including those who are new to teaching developmental writing and first-year composition in the community college.

Review of the Literature

The literature review I conducted for Section 1 focused on collecting previous research discussing andragogy, persistence, and PD to determine the connections to community colleges, adult learners, and students enrolled in developmental and first-year writing courses. The PD component of the first literature review served as an initial search for ideas about PD for employees in general with a brief focus on PD for faculty in higher education.

In the literature review for this section, Section 3, I focused solely on PD in higher education and community colleges with an emphasis on discovering the benefits of PD in those constructs and their design elements. The review of the literature was conducted using the Education Source, EBSCO, ERIC, Academic Search Complete, and ProQuest databases. Combinations of the following search terms were used to locate research literature: *professional development, higher education, benefits, community college, two-year college, junior college, best practices, writing, faculty, instructor, professor, college teacher, teacher training, professional learning, and writing instruction*. Through reviewing the extant literature, I drew out four main areas of

emphasis: needs/benefits, development for new instructors, financial support for PD, and design.

Needs for and Benefits of Professional Development

PD for faculty members is relevant and necessary for a variety of reasons. At some institutions, completing PD within the instructor's discipline or connected to the goals of the college is directly tied to promotion through the ranks of professor (Martello et al., 2021). For community colleges, which have open enrollment, PD is essential to ensure that instructors are prepared to serve the diverse student population that will complete coursework. Writing instructors and administrators of writing programs need PD to successfully engage with the community college population of adult learners (Snyder, 2020). Denecker (2020) and Johnson et al. (2020) discussed how important it is for instructors who teach concurrent enrollment courses to complete PD. Concurrent enrollment teachers are those who teach college courses such as English composition to students still enrolled in high school. Teachers of these courses must maintain the same course rigor that the students would experience if they were taking the courses on campus, so the teachers' development is relevant and necessary to both their high schools and the colleges that will award the credit. Community colleges that were considered the best places to work exhibited strong PD programming as one of their defining characteristics ("Most Promising," 2022). Faculty in these types of settings have better overall morale and are less likely to experience feelings of isolation because they have a community with whom they can collaborate and share ideas (Finkel, 2021b). Carpenter et al. (2022) also discussed the value of collaboration in a PD community of instructors and

explained that faculty can also share their outside professional learning communities they are connected with the PD offerings that can be accessed through a variety of platforms like social media. This type of information sharing creates a larger interconnected web of continuous learning for educators across a variety of content areas.

The benefits of PD are numerous, and many times, circumstances in the national consciousness or the need for abrupt changes at an institution can also create a need for PD. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many people to pay attention to what was happening in the United States and around the world because people had to stay in their homes to stay safe. At this time, though it was hardly a new occurrence, millions of people watched as a Black man was killed by police, and educational institutions responded to this by funding PD in diversity education. For example, Finkel (2021a) explained that diversity education was provided to help educators create more equitable classrooms when working with a diverse population of adult learners. Derrick et al. (2021) showed how faculty who participated in diversity PD not only had an opportunity to reflect on their personal cultural narratives but also gained a greater understanding of their colleagues who were people of color. Derrick et al. also noted that instructors who felt unprepared to work with diverse populations indicated that PD was essential to engaging more completely with their students. Writing instructors who worked with English language learners completed PD showing them how teaching the concept of standard American English as the “right way” suggests to students that their way of speaking and writing is wrong thereby further creating a feeling of marginalization (McNair & Garrison-Fletcher, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic did not just set a stage for institutions to see the necessity for diversity training, it also forced colleges all over the country to make quick changes in teaching modality. Writing instructors, and their colleagues in other disciplines, had to move from face-to-face classes to totally online or on to synchronous video platforms to meet with their students. Many faculty were not prepared to make that adjustment, whether it was in the use of the technology or for student engagement (Kim & Kessler-Eng, 2021). Quickly developed PD sessions were necessary so faculty could continue the work that was many times interrupted in the middle of the term. The changes to the courses gave instructors a reason to look at the courses and their methods of teaching them more closely, and they also noticed that students needed additional support for their emotional and mental well-being (Sheppard, 2021). Faculty members are still learning from that time and recognize that the way they used to do things will not necessarily be the way they will conduct their courses or engage with their students anymore (Sheppard, 2021). The need for PD and its benefits are plentiful. It is a positive experience that all institutions must participate in.

PD for New Instructors

PD is not just intended for full-time faculty who need to refresh their teaching methods. Adjunct faculty and new full-time instructors benefit from it as well. Harwood and Koyama (2021) discussed a self-reflection model of PD used for adjunct instructors who teach first-year composition courses, showing that the PD is a part of their onboarding process to not only help them get acclimated to the institution, but it also helps them to reflect on their teaching methods and continually improve their classes as

they go. Bosley et al. (2021) added that PD used for some corequisite reading and writing courses utilize the more seasoned faculty in collaboration with new faculty and adjuncts to share teaching ideas and talk through different student experiences they have had to enrich the newer instructors' PD sessions. Bodily (2019) also mentioned the value that is added when instructors can share their stories with each other as a part of PD. The participants get to hear and even reshare the narratives to expand and even change their points of view about teaching approaches and student engagement. Newer faculty begin building connections with their colleagues and reported that they felt less isolated after the experience. Colleges that can create space for faculty to have these types of experiences in PD also make it possible for instructors to have a larger part in shaping the design of the sessions, and this freedom motivates participants to learn instead of attending just because it is mandatory (Mahon et al., 2022). Adjunct, new, and veteran instructors benefit from PD even more when they can take ownership of what is included and how it is conducted.

Financial Support

There is no PDPD without faculty buy-in to participate, but the colleges must also show their buy-in by providing the necessary financial support. When faculty can see that the institution cares about their continual learning by funding PD, it helps the instructors feel more connected to that institution (Bosley et al., 2021). More recently, colleges have been funneling more financial resources to PD due to changes in enrollment and teaching modalities especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Finkel, 2021b). Those community colleges that were considered the best had PD programs that are fully funded. Institutions

had PD as a part of their strategic plans and included in their funding models along with all of the other necessary components to make a college run successfully (“Most Promising,” 2022). Colleges recognize that fully funded PD programs have value within and outside of the institution, and highlighting the fact that the college completely supports PD for all employees is a great way to acquire some of the best talent when recruiting faculty and staff (McClellan, 2020). Effective PD programs require full funding to create buy-in, show faculty that they care about their continuous learning, and acquire the best talent to build diverse teams that can have the most positive impact on their institutions and the students they serve.

Design

The success of any PD is largely dependent upon its design. A number of factors are taken into consideration when developers are in the PD design process. PD for faculty, whether new, continuing, or adjunct, requires considerable thought and collaboration in the design. Hundley (2020) detailed that PD must be designed well, focused on the learning goals of the institution, have clearly identified participants so their needs and the topics can be prioritized, have appropriate evaluation of the PD, and should create a dialogue among participants and build community. Abdullah-Matta et al. (2020) researched writing programs in 2-year colleges and noted that faculty are more likely to participate in the PD if they can collaborate with the developers on the design and most often want to focus the elements of the PD on the curriculum. In cases where funding might be limited but PD is vital, Fox and Bear (2021) stated that institutions in rural communities utilized teacher-to-teacher PD that included the sharing of instructional

materials so faculty could select what they needed and formative assessment tools that allowed writing instructors to analyze student writing to identify the next instructional steps that needed to be taken. This PD process led to significantly improved student writing in argumentation. Bodily (2019) also emphasized that faculty wish to be included in the design of PD and have access to and select the materials they need.

Online instructors also need PD, but the type of content that is included in their PD has some significant differences in the design. Online faculty need their PD to show how teaching methods, content, and technology work together (Andrews & Hu, 2021). Like faculty who do not teach online, instructors want to be included in the selection of resources, discussion of student engagement techniques, and evaluation of their effectiveness as online instructors. Their PD needs to also include these components so faculty may collaborate on them. New instructors need a complete orientation to online teaching in their PD, and they need to be connected to a larger community of online instructors for continuous PD, connection to the college, and mentorship (Andrews & Hu, 2021). In this time when faculty could be teaching in any modality, including totally online, it is important to ensure that PD is designed to include the variety of learning environments in which instructors will serve their students.

The length of the PD and the participants to include are also considerations in the design. Kwok (2022) researched the impact of including faculty from other disciplines in PD for writing instructors and found that a variety of instructors made it possible for the instructors to recognize the needs for writing across disciplines in all of their courses, and they were able to collaborate and determine different types of assignments and

assessment of those assignments that would be beneficial to students as they move through courses that are not a part of the English department. Brower et al. (2021) discussed PD that was created and offered specifically for instructors who would work with students who needed developmental courses. This PD focused on multiple disciplines, students with disabilities, and English language learners. Collaboration in the design of and during the PD was vital to ensuring faculty would get a variety of perspectives and techniques so the students with whom these faculty worked would move from underprepared to college ready. All designs for PD are also dependent upon how much time is available to hold the sessions regardless of who is included and what the subject matter may be (Traga Philippakos, 2020). The level of comfort that instructors have with the content and their discipline has a bearing on the length of the session. Some sessions may be just a few hours in a few days, and some have been held continuously over a year so faculty can be completely comfortable with the content and have time to form a well-connected community of instructors (Traga Philippakos, 2020). There is much to consider in the design of PD, and there is also much to be gained by the instructors who participate in the PD and the students who will engage with those instructors.

Project Description

The project I developed is PD intended for adjunct, new, and returning faculty who teach developmental writing and first-year composition courses. The purpose of the training is to help new instructors to design their courses through understanding the teaching methods and andragogical approaches used by the best instructors in the

discipline. Returning faculty can use the training to refresh their courses and help the new faculty members become acclimated to the college, department, and the courses. The goal is to share the best practices so they can adapt and apply them based on their teaching style. Learning outcomes for participants are as follows: (a) understand the learning objectives for developmental writing and English composition courses; (b) review, apply, and share best practices; (c) create and evaluate writing assignments; and (d) connect with other faculty in the discipline.

Components, Implementation, and Timeline

The training will be delivered over 3 days in 6-hour sessions. This maximum timeframe will allow for the practice activities and completion of the training prior to the start of any term when the sessions are delivered. The ideal environment for the training would be in-person to optimize collaboration and discussion, but it can also be delivered via synchronous online video if necessary. An online component will be included with the training for the participants to post activities, write reflections, and complete daily evaluations and reflections. The learning management system will also be designed as a space for participants to continue to share ideas and communications after the training has been completed. To make this part of the development more accessible, the participants will be asked to bring in their laptops during the session.

A large room with tables and chairs for seating in groups will be needed to make discussion conditions optimal. Additionally, the room will require a computer and screen projector for the facilitator to present the slides that will guide the PD and show the learning management system when reviewing submitted activities. On each of the 3 days,

lunch will be provided, so there will need to be arrangements made with the campus PD department or the English department to submit the purchase order and place the order for food. A table in the room will be set for food, water, and coffee that participants will have access to throughout the session. To reduce the amount of paper being used, the session will be provided electronically from the facilitator's projection and sent via email with the calendar reminders of the dates and times for the training. An agenda will also be posted in the learning management system. The educational technology team or information technology team will be contacted to create a class in the learning management system for participants in the PD to post activities and have an electronic community of instructors available as previously mentioned.

The PD should ideally take place prior to the start of the term. Contact will be made with the English department chair at the campus in the term preceding the proposed PD dates. The three sessions will be given on consecutive dates; once dates have been confirmed the facilitator will work with the department chair to collect contact information for all English faculty in the department along with requesting that any new adjuncts who will be teaching in the next term be added to the invite list. The facilitator will handle all communications to participating faculty, and participants can be added up until the week prior to the PD. Exceptions will be made if one or two faculty are added after the deadline date if space allows.

Two weeks prior to the PD date, contact will be made with the campus English department chair to confirm the room and number of participants as well as determine any other needs the campus requires. An email calendar invite will be sent out to all

English faculty that will include the dates and time of the PD, agenda, room location, and information about the lunch provision. On the final day of the PD, there will be an interdisciplinary roundtable discussion. The facilitator will request contact information for deans and/or chairs from other disciplines to send a separate invitation to their faculty to participate during the roundtable discussion. The goal of the roundtable will be to discuss how the participants view the work of English faculty fitting in with other disciplines. The participants will have an opportunity to discuss this and how individuals can support each other.

Table 4

Implementation Timeline

Timing	Action
Eight weeks prior to next term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact department chair to set date for PD • Gather email addresses of English faculty • Send save the date for the PD
One month prior to PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit purchase order for lunch funding • Send calendar invite with agenda
Two weeks prior to PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm room for PD • Send calendar invite with agenda to English faculty • Acquire contact information for other department deans and chairs. Send invite for interdisciplinary roundtable • Contact educational technology team to create class in learning management system
Two hours prior to PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up room • Make arrangements for lunch delivery • Navigate in-room technology, load slide deck, log in to learning management system. Correct issues if any.

On Day 1 of the PD, the facilitator will arrive 2 hours prior to the event to get the room set up, meet with the chair, and make preparations for lunch time ordering and set up. The facilitator will check available technology to ensure everything is functioning properly and load the slide deck and agenda. A sign in sheet will be available as

participants enter the room so the campus and facilitator will have an account of all who attended.

Design, Barriers, and Solutions to Barriers

The 3 days of PD are designed to engage both new and returning faculty in developmental writing and first-year composition. The sessions are built on the best practices shared by the faculty interviewed for the study. The development is primarily discussion and activity based to allow the faculty to share their thoughts on the best practices, not to simply be told what they are. Each segment includes questions for discussion to create deeper thought about each practice along with activities that pair or group faculty together to create their own activities and assignments for students and to evaluate existing products they may have previously created and used in their classes. The sessions are grouped together in an order that would follow the flow of one of their courses considering their student population, the needs of that population, and how the best practices apply for those students. See Appendix A for the agenda and slide deck.

Deliverables that they create during the sessions will be uploaded to the learning management system for everyone to view even after the sessions are completed, but also to be projected during the sessions for discussion and evaluation as needed. The learning management system will also be used for evaluation and comments regarding each session and for the final evaluation of the overall PD.

Some potential barriers to this PD design include the length of the sessions and the format. Faculty schedules are busy during the term with grading, taking care of students, serving on various committees, and meeting other needs of the college. The

time between terms is valuable to them so they can get the rest they deserve. If the PD can be held in the week prior to the start of classes, it will not be interrupting their break, but it will be filling time that they might otherwise be using to prepare for the coming term. A solution to this barrier is found within the PD itself. Using the question-and-answer style that allows them to shape the commentary that brought during the experience gives them ownership of the training. New instructors benefit greatly from the knowledge that returning instructors will share and returning instructors can get new ideas from both other faculty within their discipline and potentially from the new instructors who might be bringing activities, assignments, or approaches from their own prior experience. Another solution to this barrier comes from the institution and the department chair. The college has set the precedent for the importance of PD for faculty teaching and engagement of students; faculty complete the PD thereby meeting college requirements.

With a system as large MCC, there are opportunities for adjuncts to teach for campuses all over the state. Also, with the increased use of online video platforms for teaching since the pandemic, faculty have become accustomed to attending PD all over the country in this way. There may be some apprehension from faculty to attend in person for the sake of convenience, potential costs of travel or other obligations. The solution to this barrier was also built into the PD with the design being easily transitioned into an online synchronous video format and the utilization of the learning management system to capture documents and to create the community of faculty learners. Further, returning

instructors know the value of in-person learning, and may not have the perceived apprehensions.

Project Evaluation Plan

Formative and summative evaluations will be used for this PD model. The formative evaluation will be used to gauge the participants understanding of the concepts covered and will make space for any feedback they have day-to day so any changes or improvements can be made prior to the next session (Herman & Nilson, 2018).

Participants will be able to evaluate each session at the conclusion of the day. The daily evaluations ask instructors to share what they may have already known that was shared and what they would have liked to discuss or learn about during that day's session. They are also asked to provide any other comments about the session. The facilitator will be able to review the evaluations prior to the next session, then at the beginning of the next session there is time allocated for review of the previous session and potential discussion of any concepts that they would like to spend more time on. An evaluation of this type also allows them to reflect not only on the session and what they gleaned from it, but it also encourages them to reflect on their teaching methods and andragogical approaches. At the end of the PD, they will be asked to reflect on the experience as a whole and leave final comments that the facilitator will use to continually improve the experience.

The summative evaluation will be sent to participating instructors at the end of the next term. The purpose of the summative evaluation is to get the participants' feedback on the PD as a whole and to evaluate their progress since the PD was completed (Herman & Nilson, 2018). It will be a short survey to discover how the practices from the PD may

or may not have been applied in the term the just completed. This evaluation will help the facilitator discover if the instructors found enough value in the PD to immediately apply any of the techniques they learned or if they refreshed any parts of their courses. Conversely, the evaluation will also serve as another opportunity for instructors to offer any critiques of the training that can be used to improve the content or the way in which it was presented. The key stakeholders, the faculty and college administrators, will have access to results that they can see, not only from the feedback provided by the faculty, but also in the increasing numbers of students who persist through gateway courses in their first attempt. See Appendix A for the summative evaluation.

Project Implications

There are implications for this project to contribute to positive social change because more faculty will have access to andragogical methods and teaching strategies that will reach a larger portion of the marginalized student population, thereby giving them a more equitable educational experience. Instructors will examine their teaching practices and how well they engage with the ever-increasing diversity of the students they serve.

The implications of this project for the local stakeholders at MCC are directly connected with the mission of positive social change. It is vital for the administrators and educators to provide the best possible learning experiences equitably because instructors serve students who are first-generation, from low-income areas, from marginalized populations or are second language learners. Increasing the number of students who persist in gateway courses, increases the number of students who could go on to complete

credentials toward certifications or degrees that will get them into high demand, high wage jobs or prepare them for transfer into 4-year institutions. An increase in students persisting from semester to semester and year over year will make it possible for the college to receive more funding from the state making it possible to continually improve all programs available for students to study.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

The project strengths come from the attention paid to the student population represented in the courses of focus. Community college students and, more specifically, students who are enrolled in developmental courses are often considered less than or not worth the time it takes to prepare them during their college experience. Helping faculty and administrators recognize that there is as much value instructing this student population as any other segment of the population drove my work in this study. Education is the one way to help bring any person into a new mindset or a new level of income. When a study can be focused on those who might be considered the least desirable, it helps to break that stereotype and move everyone involved into a new way of thinking and a new way of serving all student populations.

Another strength of this project was discovered in the interviews of faculty. The best faculty have a passion for what they do, and they want to talk about it. They want to share their successes with other instructors, so they too can expand on their success in the classroom. This project creates a space for faculty to engage with each other and strengthen their community of instructors already in place and begins the process of connecting new instructors with that community. Faculty are the content experts, and they work directly with the student population, so they will be able to discuss how the different methods and approaches could be applied in their courses and determine which strategies might work best depending on the courses they teach.

Limitations

In that same vein, the project may be limited by the sample size of faculty who offered techniques and approaches highlighted in the PD. I interviewed six instructors who represented full-time and adjunct faculty who taught both developmental writing and English composition. While the six faculty who were interviewed shared many of the same methods and approaches across all the best practices identified, a larger sample size might have provided a wider range of approaches. A larger amount or greater variety of approaches would provide even more methods that faculty could learn in PD sessions and add to their own teaching.

As an English educator myself and a person who has often been relegated to the margins in the field of education and in life, this project study was important to me. I wanted to find ways to improve myself as an instructor and be able to share that information with others in my field. The study itself was designed to reduce any bias that I may have projected onto the results, but there was still the potential for it to have affected the work in some way, unintentionally.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem under study was a lack of formalized PD for instructors in developmental writing and English composition courses at MCC. Instructors may not necessarily need to or want to complete formal PD in-person over the course of 3 days. Therefore, another approach might be to simply create a space for the community of instructors to come together when and how they choose. Considering the number of responsibilities that faculty have and the fact that they are also experts in their field, it

may only be necessary to provide them with a common online space and/or regular meeting space where they can discuss different methods and share ideas for improving the curriculum. The focal point for this method would be simply to create room for instructors to come together and govern themselves in the way they choose.

Another approach to the study could be not to speak to the faculty but to complete a quantitative study that surveys the students. The students can also speak to their experiences in the classroom and the needs that they have as learners. A quantitative study of the students would make it possible to capture a large sample size of the diverse student population, and the data could be used in a variety of ways even beyond PD. College administrators, recruiters, and support services personnel could potentially use the data from a quantitative study about students' experiences in developmental writing and first-year composition to improve their areas depending on the type of data that were collected from the student population.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

The process of applying what it means to be a scholar-practitioner is a valuable learning experience. This study was intended to make a contribution to the field, and at first, it seemed like a difficult task because I had to find where “the gap” was in the practice of English education for adult learners. Conducting the research in my area of interest helped me to get there, and all the information I learned and confirmations I received made it possible for me to be truly engaged in scholarship in my field. The data that I gathered made it possible for me to be better informed and make what I considered to be the right decisions for the direction of the project. I initially wanted to approach the

subject of adult learning in English in a way that was much larger in scope than could be handled in this one study, and after reviewing the literature and understanding the various nuances that accompany scholarly research related to scope, sample sizes, and the varieties of qualitative models that exist, the approach to developing the project was revealed and produced usable results.

As an English professor, I have always recognized the value and importance of research as a means to strengthen a position that a writer might take on an issue. It is what I teach, and I want my students to understand how important it is too. Doing the work to create and conduct this study has undoubtedly expanded my perspective and opened up new ways to teach about the research process. Further, it made it possible for me to introduce students to what would be considered higher level research practices earlier in their English courses so that when they leave the community college after 2 years, they are already equipped with some skills that they would use in 300-400 level courses, masters, and doctoral level work. Going through this research process in specific, layered steps helped me to present the way I teach the material in an even more specific, layered process than I was already doing.

I have grown exponentially as a project developer, and this project has also helped me in the leadership positions that I have moved into since I have been conducting this research. When I am a part of the decision-making process that takes place at the college, I can look more deeply at the research that was used to propose a new way of offering curriculum or how some process might affect how instructors are able to present material in their classes. I am now intelligently seated at the table, fully able to make contributions

in the field of adult learning that will positively impact students, faculty, and administrators. Working through the development of this project has helped me to look at other areas in the college that might benefit from filling the gaps in practice, and I now know I am better equipped to do so.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The study is important overall because it gave faculty an opportunity to talk in depth about the work they do in the classroom. Instructors were able to share real actions that they take on almost a daily basis to help their students succeed, and as educators, that is our purpose, to help students succeed. In addition to the information the faculty shared about what they do in the classroom, they also were able to express what their needs were as educators. From the participants' responses I learned that instructors want to talk about the strategies they use in the classroom, and they want to share and receive ideas from their peers on a consistent basis. The work is important because it showed that instructors are important.

Another important aspect of this study is within the light that was shed on the changing practices in developmental education. Educational institutions all over the country are gradually eliminating development courses in higher education while there are students who still need that additional development to move forward with their learning goals (Barhoum, 2018). If the courses, whether delivered separately or as a part of a corequisite, are gone, there will still be a need for educators to have strategies and techniques to use to work with all their students, not just the ones who come into the classroom college ready. If community colleges, who have the highest populations of

students who need additional development, affirm that they are dedicated to the mission of making education accessible to everyone, then they must recognize how important it is to have faculty who are prepared to help every student succeed.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project's impact on social change can be manifested at multiple levels. Regarding the individual instructor, they will be able apply the appropriate techniques to their individual teaching style and philosophy to reach a broader range of students. Instructors will increase their confidence in their teaching and may desire to continue to expand how they can more effectively reach a more diverse population of students. For the individual student, their English class will feel more specific to them, which will give them a sense of belonging in a setting that can feel less inclusive because community colleges do not have on-campus housing and other opportunities for students to feel a part of the community of learners. If they feel included in their classes, then they are more likely to ask for help when they need it, spend the time necessary to complete their work because it is relatable and they understand it, and then they will successfully complete their course and progress in their education.

This study focused on the teaching methods and andragogical approaches of developmental writing and first-year composition instructors. I conducted the study during a time when faculty had transitioned out of classrooms and into their homes, teaching totally online asynchronously or through synchronous online video platforms. Many of their responses spoke to how challenging it was to teach under these conditions. Since students have begun to return to the classroom along with the instructors, the

environment may not be as it was prior to the great shift. Future research should look at methods and approaches in the virtual classroom for student engagement and persistence. There is also an opportunity to study how English education in teaching and learning is changing in light of new antiracist andragogy and greater linguistic diversity in classrooms. All people are global citizens. The United States is becoming more, not less diverse, and educators need to be ready to help every human being.

Conclusion

The world of adult learning in the community college is constantly changing. Instructors in developmental writing and first-year composition need to be prepared for those changes. A formalized PD program that walks instructors through the best practices applied by instructors in the classroom is critically important to ensuring that all adult learners, including students of color, first-generation students, second-language learners, and those of low income, have a significant learning experience that allows them to persist through first-year writing. In the PD program, instructors will not only be exposed to the best practices, but they will also be able to reflect on their own practice, become a part of a community of other English educators, and engage with instructors from outside of their discipline to make their courses even more applicable for when students progress into other subject areas. Instruction that is considerate of diverse populations contributes to a greater number of students completing their education credentials, ultimately leading them to improve themselves, their households, and communities.

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Appendix: The Project

Make it Yours: Crafting your Developmental Writing and English Composition Courses

Facilitator: Octavia Thorns-Jackson

Intended audience: Adjunct, new, and returning faculty who teach developmental writing and first-year composition courses.

Purpose: To help new instructors to design their courses through understanding the teaching methods and andragogical approaches used by the best instructors in the discipline. Returning faculty can use the training to refresh their courses and help the new faculty members become acclimated to the college, department, and the courses.

Learning outcomes: (a) Understand the learning objectives for developmental writing and English composition courses; (b) Review, apply, and share best practices; (c) Create and evaluate writing assignments; and (d) Connect with other faculty in the discipline.

AGENDA

DAY 1 – SESSION 1

9:00 am	Welcome and Introductions
	Developmental Writing and Composition Course Objectives
10:30	Break
10:45	Best Practices
	Relationship Building
12:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00	Student Strengths and Challenges
2:30	Evaluate the day

DAY 2 – SESSION 2

9:00 am	Review/Preview
	Connecting Students to Resources

10:30	Break
10:45	Connecting Students to Resources - Activity
12:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00	Prior Experience and Motivation
2:30	Homework
	Evaluate the day

DAY 3 – SESSION 3

9:00 am	Review/Preview
	Adapting Instruction
10:30	Break
10:45	Critical Thinking
12:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:00	Giving Students Feedback
2:00	Interdisciplinary Roundtable
	Evaluate the Day and the training

- *A note to participants that quotes included in the slides are from a qualitative study conducted by the facilitator, which is available for review. The purpose of showing the quotes is to help prompt discussion and provide additional insight to the topics of conversation.*

Learning Management System Modules

Module 1 – Session 1

Submission 1 – Course Outline Activity

- Go to your school’s website and download the course outline for the developmental writing course and English composition
- Select one of the course objectives and create an activity or assignment. Post your completed assignment or activity to the module 1- Submission 1 link

Submission 2 – Strengths and Challenges Activity

- Review the student submission
- Based on your assessment of the student’s writing, how would you help them? What would you integrate into the course to emphasize their strengths and work through their challenges? Submit your response in the Module 1 – Submission 2 link

Session 1 Module 1 - Evaluation

- Submit your responses to the following questions.
 - What did you already know?
 - What else would you like to have covered in Session 1?
 - Any other comments that would discuss how your experience could be improved

Module 2 – Session 2

Submission 1 – Resource Activity

- Create an activity that would help your students discover the resources that are available on campus.

- Create a page in the learning management system that would connect students to the guide for resources available off-campus. Submit in Module 2 – Submission 1 link

Preparation for Session 3

- Returning faculty be prepared to:
 - Share a rubric from an assignment you use in class. You will also find a place to post the rubric in the Module for Session 3.
 - Share a graded assignment that shows the feedback you gave a student.
 - Share an activity or essay assignment you use in class to develop students' critical thinking.

Session 2 Module 2 – Evaluation

- Go to the “Session 2 Module – Evaluation” in our Learning Management System and submit your responses to the following questions.
 - What did you already know?
 - What else would you like to have covered in Session 2?
 - Any other comments that would discuss how your experience could be improved.

Module 3 – Session 3

Submission 1 – Critical Thinking Activity

- Share an activity or essay assignment you use in class to develop students' critical thinking.

Submission 2 – Student Feedback

Submission 3 – Interdisciplinary Roundtable

Session 3 – Session and Program Evaluation

- Go to the “Session 2 Module – Evaluation” in our Learning Management System

and submit your responses to the following questions.

- What did you already know?
- What else would you like to have covered in Session 2?
- Any other comments that would discuss how your experience could be improved

Evaluation of professional development experience

- Explain why this experience was or was not a valuable use of your time.
- Explain which, if any, of the modules or best practices resonated with you and why
- Was your facilitator prepared, receptive to feedback, and knowledgeable in the content? Explain
- What recommendations would you make for changes to this professional development?
- Would you participate in a session like this again? Explain.
- Other comments

Post Term Evaluation

1. Did you feel more prepared at the start of the term after completing the professional development?	A. Yes B. No
2. Which of the best practices from the professional development did you apply during this term? Check all that apply.	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Student Strengths and Challenges <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting Students to Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Learner Prior Experience and Motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Adapting Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Giving Students Feedback
3. Was there an improvement in the number of students you retained compared to previous terms?	A. Significant improvement B. Some improvement C. No improvement D. N/A – This is my first term
4. Did you note an improvement in the writing submissions of students compared to previous terms?	A. Significant improvement B. Some improvement C. No improvement D. N/A – This is my first term
5. Have you connected with other English faculty in the online community of instructors?	A. Yes B. No C. Plan to D. Haven't had time



Introductions

- Share with the group your name, area of expertise, and course(s) you teach.
 - Why did you choose English education?
 - What do you appreciate most about our students?
 - What would you like to gain from this professional development?

Objectives

- Understand the learning objectives for developmental writing and English composition courses
- Review, apply, and share best practices
- Create and evaluate a writing assignment
- Connect with other faculty in the discipline

The Course Outlines

- Review the course outlines
 - Brainstorm: What are some ways you might help your students achieve the course objectives?
 - Pick a partner
 - Select one of the course objectives and create an activity or assignment.
 - Share with the group. Be prepared to receive and offer feedback as each team shares their activity.

Best Practices

- Relationship building
- Strengths and Challenges
- Connecting Students to Resources
- Experience and Motivation
- Adapting Instruction to Individuals and Groups
- Critical Thinking
- Giving Students Feedback

Relationship Building

- Why is learning your students' names important?
- How might this process differ in an online video class? An asynchronous online class?
- Based on your teaching style and personality, what are some ways that you **connect** or might begin to connect with your students?

"The first thing I do is the minute they walk through the door is greet them like they're old friends. You know the first day, "hey, hi. How are you?" Learn their names."

"I just try to get to know people and figure out, you know, something individual about each student to learn their names and develop a nice classroom environment."

"I don't shy away from putting myself in the classroom and being honest about my experience."

LUNCH BREAK

Student Strengths and Challenges

- Who are your students? How will you determine the strengths and challenges they have in writing at the beginning of the course?
- How do you view linguistic diversity? How will it affect your teaching methods?

"I'll give a list of several questions, and they'll get some time to write...then they'll pick one thing to share with the class. That usually works because it's something that they're interested in and care about."

"I will a lot of times have them just write something on the first day of class...an ungraded, you know, low stakes, low stress,...you'll get some points if you just turn it in."

"...the only way I'm going to know where you are is in the first assignment. And it usually is just making a short paragraph or something, but we've had time to discuss it; we've had time to work on it. I think I get more honest return that way."

- Review the student's first writing submission.
- Based on your assessment of the student's writing, how would you help them? What would you integrate into the course to emphasize their strengths and work through their challenges?

Assignment Instructions: Write 2-3 paragraphs about the profession you plan to go into after graduation. Keep in mind, this piece of writing is not about you; it is about the profession.

Student Name
Date
English Comp

What should it be? Should she be a nurse, doctor, teacher, veterinarian. There is so many choices out there for them. What should she do? Her mom is telling her to go be a nurse because there is so many jobs available. Her dad is telling her to be a veterinarian because she likes animals. She does not know what she wants to do. She is having a hard time trying to find herself. She knows that she wants to be up in the world but, she does not know where to begin. She also knows that what ever she puts her mind to she can achieve it. She may have problems getting it done but there is know doubt in her mind that she can't do it.

Veterinarian should grate, but could she really take having to put a dog down? A nurse should good you get to help save lives. Could she have the heart to tell the family that their mother or one of there family members died during surgery. She has a good heart, but I don't think she can find her self just quite yet but shell \get there it's just going to take some time.

End of Day 1 Session 1

Evaluate Today's Session

- Go to the "Session 1 Module- Evaluation" in our Learning Management System and submit your responses to the following questions.
 - What did you already know?
 - What else would you like to have covered in Session 1?
 - Any other comments that would discuss how your experience could be improved.

Session 2

- Recall from session 1
- What comments or questions do you have about the previous session?

Connecting Students to Resources

- What will your students need that will take more time than what you can allot in a class session?
- What will your students need that goes beyond what you are able to help them with?
- What resources might you integrate into your course that can help students?
- What resources does the college have available that could help your students if they need them?

"... I have assignments where they're going specifically for tutoring or specifically for peer review, but I really try to lessen that and leave that over to them by midway point in the semester."

"I don't want to stereotype any of our students as a whole, but we do have many students where this is all new to them and they don't have somebody at home who has the experience..."

Connecting Students to Resources

- Online tutoring
- Tutoring/writing center
- Technology needs
- Financial aid
- Advising
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Bill pay assistance
- Mental health
- Domestic violence/child abuse services

Touch base with your campus for resource guides for off campus resources.

Activity: Resource

- Work in groups of three
- Make a list of on-campus and off-campus resources that your students might need.
- Create an activity that would help your students discover the resources that are available on campus.
- Create a page in the learning management system that would connect students to the guide for resources available offcampus.

LUNCH BREAK

Students' Prior Experience and Motivation

- What unique set of experiences and personal motivations could your students bring into the classroom?
- How will you make the course content relevant to your students?

"I've used those [online discussion board] as a homework thing in between class sessions, so that they'll have a discussion topic where they talk about the reading, or they share how that reading relates to something that they're interested in or their own life."

"I work with a lot of students who English is not their first language, students with various academic experiences...but I do find that there's a lot of students who are stuck and take a lot of time to just draft because they're trying to edit while they're working."

ACTIVITY: MAKE IT RELEVANT

- Scenario:
 - Your department chair has asked you to teach a section of first-year composition that has been reserved for students in the Advanced Manufacturing program. One of the complaints that you have heard from students is that they do not understand why they need to take a writing class for their program.
 - Working in pairs, discuss with your partner what the needs of those students would be, then design an activity and a short writing assignment that you might give to these students that will help them practice their writing skills and discover the importance of writing for their field.
 - Once finished, you will swap your activity and short writing assignment with another pair of instructors and evaluate them to determine degree of connection to one or more course objectives and relevancy of the assignments to your class of students.

End of Day 2 Session 2

Evaluate Today's Session

- Go to the "Session 2 Module – Evaluation" in our Learning Management System and submit your responses to the following questions.
 - What did you already know?
 - What else would you like to have covered in Session 2?
 - Any other comments that would discuss how your experience could be improved.

Prep for Session 3

- Returning faculty be prepared to:
 - Share a rubric from an assignment you use in class. You will also find a place to post the rubric in the Module for Session 3.
 - Share a graded assignment that shows the feedback you gave a student.
 - Share an activity or essay assignment you use in class to develop students' critical thinking.

Session 3

- Recall from session 2
- What comments or questions do you have about the previous session?

Adapting Instruction

- How will you engage with your students individually during the class session?
- What are the benefits of collaboration among students when working on content? The drawbacks?
- How would you/do you make adjustments to your instruction for individuals and groups
 - depending on the modality?
 - if your students are struggling to understand the concept?
 - when the presentation of content or the activity is not engaging your students?

Critical Thinking

- In what ways can you help students develop their critical thinking, reading, and writing skills?
 - How will the various degrees of preparedness that your students might have affect your approach?
- What activities and writing assignments will you develop to meet the course objectives while also helping students be prepared for other courses and life outside of the college?

"...take some time and think about this. What is your experience with this particular writing? And then we come back together, and we discuss what their experiences are."

"...break it down into practical steps...the first question is what is the article saying? And who is the author? What is the context? The second one is, Was there evidence? Their argument, was it effective and why? And then the third one is how does it connect to other ideas, other peoples' ideas?"

~LUNCH BREAK~

Giving Students Feedback

- How will you integrate positive commentary along with advice for improvement?
- How will you design your rubrics?
- What position will you take on revision? Will you limit it for the duration of the assignment period, or will you let it be continuous until the student has submitted a satisfactory draft?
- How will you balance the workload that comes with grading longer writing assignments?

"I will tell them 'I'm going to give you five meaningful comments.' I also let them know that I will not comment on your grammar or mechanics unless one, it's distracting,... or two,... you've done everything else right."

"I usually provide feedback on pretty much everything even those students doing a discussion board as homework ...I'll put a comment on there. Like, 'oh this was interesting' or whatever. So, I do think it's important for students to feel like somebody is reading their work and taking it seriously."

"I'm not a minimal grader. I do mark issues, and I mark issues early on. I mark issues and explain them...I give teaching in the feedback."

- Utilizing the rubric, activity, and/or assignment you brought in after session two:
 - Work in teams of two or three
 - Discuss the choices you made when developing the rubric.
 - Discuss the assignment you created including how it meets the course objective, engages students, and includes the diversity of your student population.
 - What do you like about it? What, if anything, would you change about it?
 - Be prepared to critique the assignment shared by your colleagues as if you were a student in their class.

Interdisciplinary Roundtable

- How do the English instructors see their work fitting in with other disciplines?
- From a writing perspective, how well do the students perform in your courses?
- What do we need from each other?
- What other questions do we have for each other?
- How would you like to keep this communication going?

What's next?

- Keep in contact with your colleagues in and out of your discipline.
- Set up a group in your LMS just for English faculty if you don't already have one.
- Trust your instincts as a content expert.
- Always keep your students first when designing your courses.
- Be on the lookout for and complete evaluation at the end of next term!

THANK YOU!

- Be sure to complete the evaluation. It is located in module 3 of our LMS.