Dedication

To my mother, Bette Sue Loebel Baer, a feminist, entrepreneur, and powerhouse before these terms were ever coined. Mama, last year when you were sick, you told me stories from your childhood. These stories became my practice data. From your childhood, the themes of longing, loneliness, industriousness, tenacity, creativity, and love emerged. At 81, more powerful than ever, you are my role model for living, loving, and creating fiercely.

Acknowledgments

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allowing me to be in the same room with you all while I studied. Thank you, Ike, for never failing to ask how school was going during our regular chats. Thanks, Mama, for being my biggest cheerleader. Thanks, Steve, for reminding me to not take on too much, even though neither you nor I ever follow your sage advice. Thanks, PB, for being so absolutely certain I should go ahead and start my doctoral program when I was still debating. Thank you to my father, David Baer, who passed before he could share in this rite of passage of which he would be so proud. And thank you to my dear neighbor, friend, and now teaching colleague, Ingrid, for supporting so absolutely my pursuing a doctorate since I first considered it in 2008.

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And thank you to the ten willing students whose writing experiences are documented in this work. Your generosity of time, effort, and spirit enriched me, and your courage, tenacity, brilliance, and power instructed and inspired me.

I am grateful to everyone who has believed in me.
Abstract

Writing is a critical proficiency for academic and career success, but a significant number of students enter higher education underprepared for the academic writing expectations awaiting them. Due to immense sociocultural barriers, linguistically-diverse college (LDC) students, in particular, may find college writing challenging. Complicated linguistic systems, implicit standard English-normed discourse practices, perceptions of discrimination, and lack of academic support contribute to LDC students’ higher college attrition rates relative to their monolingual English-only classmates. This qualitative case study, therefore, sought to learn about the academic writing development of LDC students: specifically, what factors they perceive as inhibiting and facilitating their development as academic writers. Ten resident U.S., multilingual students responded to surveys and were interviewed about their experiences writing papers in disciplinary courses. Data was analyzed through an activity theory framework to discern extrapersonal, interpersonal, and intrapersonal mediators of learners and their learning processes. The findings of this study revealed intersecting, multilevel mediators that can both facilitate and inhibit LDC students’ writing development and, consequently, their educational outcomes. Participants predominantly attributed their writing development successes or struggles to interpersonal faculty-related mediators, expressing the need for personal connection, explicit disciplinary writing instruction, clear assignment expectations and instructions, and useful feedback and the chance to revise their writing. Additionally, they expressed the need to feel included as emerging scholars and be valued for the diverse and divergent cultural and linguistic backgrounds they bring. In this study, such positive faculty interaction was shown to have the power to compensate for societal, institutional, and social disadvantages LDC students often bring into classrooms. Simultaneously, findings revealed how negative faculty mediation
can undermine and negate existing strengths or advantages LDC students may possess, or worse, exacerbate existing disadvantages. Thus, negative faculty interactions may serve to predict negative writing and overall academic outcomes for LDC students. Study findings clearly show that if institutions do not prepare faculty to provide academic writing support that is attuned to LDC students’ needs, LDC students will continue to drop out. Participants’ precisely articulated educational needs can inform faculty development programs to train educators to address these societal educational inequities.

*Keywords:* linguistically-diverse college students, developmental pedagogy, discipline-specific writing, second language writing, teaching English language-learners
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments ..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract ..................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Introduction to the Study ......................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem ..................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of language and literacy ..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The transition to college writing .........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misconceptions about language and literacy ...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need for writing support ...............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement ...............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions .............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Research Problem ....................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and faculty ..........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities and society .....................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework: Activity Theory ..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion .........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Review of the Literature ....................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Demographics in U.S. Higher Education .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College readiness ...............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nontraditional college students ............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistically-diverse college students ...................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions, terms, and labels ............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDC student college enrollment ............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal and Institutional Determinants of Academic Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal factors ..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional factors ...........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Determinants of Academic Success: Faculty-related Mediators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty-student interactions ...............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline-specific writing ..................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental teaching and learning .....................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment expectations, instruction, and written feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination ..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Determinants of Academic Success ..........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal attributes, behaviors, and beliefs .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization ....................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary ............................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths of the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficiencies in the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Three: Research Design</th>
<th>82</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Research Approach</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Constructivist-Interpretivist Paradigm</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study research tradition</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity theory and developmental learning</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Site and Participants</th>
<th>90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sampling Methods</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small sample using purposive sampling</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample frame: Inclusion and exclusion criteria</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Review Board approval</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data sources</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary eligibility survey</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic memoing</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
<th>104</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for Quality Qualitative Research</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical considerations</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection for participants</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data storage</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability and dependability</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-checking</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-reflexivity and Transparency</th>
<th>119</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion of Research Design</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Four: Study Findings</th>
<th>126</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Profiles</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisés</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mateo</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erika</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmy</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriana</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intra, Inter, and Extra: Experiences of Linguistically-Diverse College Students Developing as Academic Writers

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Touting campus diversity is a familiar trope in college marketing literature in the United States. It is impossible to read an American college website and miss the earnest language expressing the institution’s commitment to diversity or boasting the many foreign languages spoken by its student population (Briguglio & Watson, 2014). Multilingual students comprise one intertwined strand within a diverse campus. Ironically, many of these ostensibly pro-diversity institutions are not graduating their multilingual students at the same rate as they are graduating their native English-speaking students (Andrade, Evans, & Hartshorn, 2014; Bond, Gray, Baxley, Cason, & Denke, 2008; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle, Ball, & Maliszewski, 2013; Mulholland, Anionwu, Atkins, Tappern, & Franks, 2008; Walker et al., 2011). This disparity is the problem at the heart of this study.

As a writing specialist in a large, urban university, I support the academic writing development of a multicultural, multilingual student body. My students are smart, talented, eager, and able to learn, determined to succeed, and tenacious in the face of stubborn societal barriers that can undermine their access to and success in college (Donnelly, McKiel, & Hwang, 2009b; Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011; Lillis, 2001; Marschall & Davis, 2012; Millward, 2010; Nadeau, 2014), yet they often enter college underprepared in various ways for the academic reading and writing demands they will face (Andrade, et al., 2014; Bergey, Movit, Baird, & Faria, 2018; Greenberg, 2013; Olson, 2012; Salamonson, Koch, Weaver, Everett, & Jackson, 2010; Starkey, 2015). Indeed, academic writing struggles have been found to be one
significant barrier to retention and graduation for multilingual students (Crosby, 2009; Holzer & Baum, 2017; Johns, 1995).

**Statement of the Problem**

The importance of language and literacy. In my work, I have seen how instrumental literacy can be in human development. Writing development engenders clearer communication in one’s many unfolding life contexts, including home, work, community, school, and society. Writing can support learning, increase clarity, stimulate problem-solving, foster self-discovery, and promote identity development (Gopee & Deane, 2013; Graham & Perin, 2007; Krebs, 2008). In higher education, the component literacy proficiencies of critical thinking, critical reading, and analytical writing are fundamental in all academic disciplines (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AACU], 2015; de Leon Siantz, 2008; Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Graham & Harris, 2014; MacArthur, Philippakos, & Ianetta, 2015; Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006). Conley (2011) described “the ability to write well” as “the single academic skill most closely associated with college success” (p. 1). Writing is vital for “developing complex reasoning processes” (Sternglass, 1999, p. 18) and for expressing ideas “in ways that can be understood by others” (Krebs, 2008, p. xi). Hyland (2016b) acknowledged the intellectual and analytical benefits all students accrue by developing academic literacy: “Universities are ABOUT writing and . . . specialist forms of academic literacy are at the heart of everything that goes on in them” (p. 233). Development of mature reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking practices is necessary for advancement for all.

In addition to being critical academic proficiencies, writing, reading, and oral communication skills are necessary for success in both getting and keeping jobs. In a 2015 AACU survey of 400 high-level executives in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, four-
fifths rated written and oral communication among the most highly-valued “cross-cutting” (p. 4) college learning proficiencies, such as the ability to read to comprehend and analyze texts of all genres and to communicate articulately with others. Reading critically was identified as indispensable in all sectors “including jobs that require no education or training beyond high school” (Business Roundtable, 2016, p. 1). Clear writing is a function of clear and complex thinking, and more sophisticated writing, reading, and speaking are crucial in order to develop as a successful professional in a career (Kerr, 2017) in all industries, from technology, engineering and other STEM fields, financial sectors, to healthcare, law enforcement, and the military. With all fields becoming increasingly dependent on email, text, social media, and other communication technology, precise and concise writing and speaking are required on a daily basis (Laurinavicius, 2017). Many employers are finding their employees insufficiently prepared for writing and reading well in their careers (Archer & Davison, 2008). Students’ trajectories, it seems, both for good or ill, both in higher education and in their professional careers thereafter, are often determined by the degree to which they have mastered reading and writing (Gopee & Deane, 2013; Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Hirvela, 2004). Writing can serve as a gatekeeper to social mobility (Kerr, 2017), which can exclude those without exposure to writing development.

**The transition to college writing.** For students from any cultural or linguistic background, the transition to college writing can be perplexing and can stymie students whose academic preparation may have been uneven or subpar (Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2000). Even for monolingual English-only students, developing academic writing may feel like learning a foreign language. Approximately two-thirds of all students enter higher education with little more than a basic level of writing proficiency and will thus need significant support and
remediation to be academically successful (Graham & Hebert, 2010; Kirst & Venezia, 2004; The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education & the Southern Regional Educational Board, 2010). It is so common for faculty to complain in absolute terms that college students can’t write (Lillis, 2001), that their chorus of lament “forms part of the public discourse of literacy crisis, falling standards, and the collapse of Western civilization” (Hyland, 2013a, p. 58). For linguistically-diverse college (LDC) students, who may start college at a relative disadvantage with regard to academic writing compared to their English-only classmates, this transition may be especially challenging (Andrade et al., 2014; Johns, 1995; Kanno & Grosik, 2012; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Perin, 2013; Starkey, 2015). Due to immense societal barriers, LDC students can find themselves “unprepared for the complex and language intensive reading and writing tasks” that await them in their college classes (Crosby, 2009, p. 105; Holzer & Baum, 2017; Johns, 1995). This is due to so many “interrelated, multifaceted, dynamic, and complex aspects of language systems and discourse practices” that interact and become entangled when LDC students learn to write academically (Cumming, 2016, p. 367). These intersecting systems can be obstacles to LDC students’ college graduation rates (Andrade et al., 2014; Bond et al., 2008; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2013; Mulholland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011), resulting in college attainment disparities across populations (Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016).

**Misconceptions about language and literacy.** Many disciplinary faculty and higher educational administrators, in my experience, seem to view writing as a discrete, mechanical skill, separate from disciplinary scholarship, that can be learned all at once in a single dose, equally by every learner (Horner, 2010; Street, 2003). Faculty regularly express to me their feeling that students should have learned how to write already by the time they begin taking core
disciplinary courses. These faculty therefore become frustrated that their nursing, business, or anthropology students, for example, did not “learn to write” in high school, First-Year English Composition, or community college. Many disciplinary content faculty feel it is not their job to teach their students how to write, or do not know how, yet employ high-stakes writing assignments papers as evaluative tools (Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Newton & Moore, 2012; Troxler, Vann, & Oermann, 2011).

Further, some instructors may conflate LDC students’ developing proficiency in standard English academic language and writing with a lack of potential for critical thinking and communication as future professionals (Zamel & Spack, 2006); they fail to see language and literacy development as a developmental process or understand that they are engaged in sociocultural relationships with their students, who are works in progress. They evince the fixed mindset misconception that some people are born good writers, whereas others are destined to be poor writers (Dweck, 2008; Parrott, 2017). On the contrary, reading and writing proficiency is a continuous, evolving process within each person, regardless of linguistic background. Since, in my experience, many academically underprepared, monolingual, native English-speaking students can struggle to develop academic writing skills to an almost equal degree as LDC students, one might have reason to suspect an underlying racism and linguicism, whether conscious or latent.

**The need for writing support.** Without academic literacy support that is attuned to their needs, LDC students’ access to and success in higher education may be jeopardized. Indeed, comparatively high attrition rates among LDC students reveal that such supports are not in place (Andrade et al., 2014; Bond et al., 2008; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2013; Mulholland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011). This disparity is a
“pressing social justice issue” because access to education that can “potentially unlock a life of reward and fulfillment” (Marschall & Davis, 2012, p. 786) is inequitably provided across society, thereby perpetuating existing societal inequities.

It is evident that LDC students, if not all students, require culturally- and linguistically-responsive teaching and support to be able to learn, persist, and graduate (Donnelly, McKiel, & Hwang, 2009a; Greenberg, 2013; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Parboteeah & Anwar, 2009; Salamonson et al., 2010; Starkey, 2015; Wong, Seago, Keane, & Grumbach, 2008).

Consequently, writing studies scholars have called for more research on underprepared and LDC student writing, especially in courses and majors across academic disciplines (Cox, 2011; McLeod & Miraglia, 2001; Perin, 2013). This study responds to this call by asking LDC students to talk about writing papers in their content and general education courses in order to learn what they perceive as inhibiting and facilitating their development as academic writers.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to gain insight into the process of academic writing development among domestic, LDC students as they write papers in disciplinary classes at Urban University (UU, a pseudonym), a public, minority-serving higher education institution in the Northeastern United States.

Researchers began studying multilingual students’ language and literacy development in K-12 schools in the early 2000s (Bergey et al., 2018; cf. August & Shanahan, 2006; Goldenberg, 2013; Janzen, 2008; Takanishi & Le Menestrel, 2017), but there have been fewer studies of this development among multilingual college students (Oropeza, Varghese, & Kanno, 2010). Therefore, in this study, I asked ten linguistically-diverse college students, alternately referred to in this dissertation as “multilingual”) to discuss their experiences developing as academic writers
in college. I wanted to hear from the students themselves how they develop the expected brand of writing so critical for success in college and career. I asked what it was like to produce writing assignments in discipline-specific college courses and what supports they need in order to be academically successful and to grow as writers. In this study, I sought to learn what factors LDC students identified as facilitators to and inhibitors of their academic writing development.

It is hoped that these glimpses into the “complex, sometimes hidden, often unpredictable” extra, inter-, and intrapersonal processes and forces that interact with multilingual students’ writing development (Leki, 2007, p. 1) can inform targeted educational practices and resources to begin to address these educational disparities.

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by one primary research question and two sub-questions: How do linguistically-diverse undergraduate students describe their processes of developing as academic writers? What factors do they identify as facilitating their academic writing development in college? What factors do they identify as inhibiting their academic writing development in college?

**Significance of the Research Problem**

The knowledge gained from this study should be of interest to all stakeholders: students, educators across age levels, disciplines, and populations, parents, preservice teacher preparation and in-service professional development providers, institutional leadership, funders, and policymakers. Similarly scholars across disciplines should be interested in this work since findings bolster the knowledge base found at the interesting disciplinary intersection point at play in the study (e.g., a nexus of the academic fields that study, for example, English composition; Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID); second
Students and faculty. The desired outcome from this research was a more nuanced understanding about the process of learning how to write in college among LDC students. These findings can inform new, strategic practices, curricula, pedagogy, programs, and materials for tutors and faculty, as well as lead to better understandings of why existing practices are ineffective. As this emerging critical-theoretical interdisciplinary space grows into a field of its own, it will illuminate educators’ understandings of LDC students’ learning needs. More comprehensive understandings will also inform professional development and training programs for both preservice and in-service teachers and college faculty, higher educational staff, and writing center tutors. Faculty who learn to teach LDC students in a culturally-competent and comprehensible manner will best support their diverse students (Igbo et al., 2011).

Communities and society. Understandings gleaned from this study can enhance pedagogy and curriculum. Linguistically- and culturally-aware educators will benefit LDC students by increasing their learning, facilitating their agency as learners, and consequently, lowering their risks for educational attrition. Higher graduation rates would support local, regional, national, and global economies, which would represent a significant benefit to many stakeholders and society overall. Therefore, if the new knowledge derived from this study’s findings can pave the way for LDC students to be better supported to develop academic writing practices and proficiencies, they will be more likely to earn their baccalaureate degrees, become professionals, and begin to move their families into a more stable financial status (Ayers, 2010; Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013; Carnevale, 2007; Gorski, 2014; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Leonardo, 2003; Ma et al., 2016). When LDC students who are parents succeed in their education, they
present a powerful role model for their children, as maternal educational level has been shown to
be a major factor in children’s school performance (Cadima, McWilliam, & Leal, 2009; National
Institutes for Health, 2010; Sastry & Pebley, 2010). Graduating creates options for success and
self-actualization in their lives and in the lives of their families and communities.

**Definition of Key Terminology**

Academic writing is defined broadly as writing “that fulfills a purpose of education” in
higher education (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006, p. 4). Thus academic writing development refers to
a learner’s evolving understanding and gradual mastery of “the activity of interpretation and
production of academic and discipline-based texts” (Leki, 2007, p. 3) through engagement with
academic writing conventions and expectations, including the underlying higher-order cognitive
activities and critical thinking (Allison, 2009). The terms “academic writing” and “academic
literacy” will refer to the cross-disciplinary academic reading, writing, speaking, listening, and
thinking processes, and will be used interchangeably in this dissertation.

“Discourse” refers to all modes of communicative interaction, of “language in action”
(Hyland, 2016a, p. 6). Therefore, a “discourse community” refers to a fluctuating community of
people who share objectives and values, who regularly interact with each other through common
writing and speaking modes, forms, standards, and roles (Bartholomae, 1986; Beaufort, 2012;
Swales, 1990). All writers “live and perform in some multivariegated, sociocultural context”
(Huckin, 1992, p. 85). For example, writing assignments in an anthropology class involve forms
of argumentation and conventions of expressing ideas distinct from those in a nursing class
(Hyland, 2016b), and coworkers in a marketing department employ different terms and
vernacular to communicate than do teammates on a soccer team.
A “linguistically-diverse” student refers to someone who grew up in a context “where a language variety other than mainstream English is or was predominantly used” (de Kleine & Lawton, 2015, p. 5; Ferris, 2018). Just as in this definition, I intentionally employ the verb “use” regarding linguistic practices, rather than “speak,” to be as inclusive as possible. Similarly, I use the term “linguistically-diverse” to capture all students for whom dominant-culture standard English language is developing, to frame linguistic diversity as an asset and proficiency rather than liability or deficiency, and to avoid assumptions about linguistic status in individuals.

“Multilingual” will be defined as using at least two languages (one being English). I shift my terminology to using the term “multilingual” (in place of “linguistically-diverse”) with participants to be more meaningful for individual multilingual students, who will not recognize or identify themselves as “linguistically-diverse,” an inherently comparative term. The descriptor “linguistically-diverse” is only meaningful in consideration of all of society’s language-speakers, in that people who use or once used a language other than English at home “diverge” from the mainstream dominant group of language-speakers who use only English at home.) It is critical that individuals self-define their own linguistic status and practice.

“Literacy practices” are the ways people actually read and write as culturally-, socially-, and contextually-bound and -defined (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 1998; Street, 2003). “Literacy events” are social instances in which literacy and written texts play a central role (Barton et al., 1998; Heath, 1983), such as producing writing assignments and engaging in conversations in which interlocutors discuss writing assignments.

The following section of this chapter will include a description and discussion of activity theory, which serves as the theoretical framework for this study.
Theoretical Framework: Activity Theory

Cultural-historical activity theory (also known as CHAT and sociocultural theory, but referred to here simply as activity theory) frames the understanding of the research problem as well as the research design of this study. Activity theory was conceived by Lev Vygotsky in the 1930s in Russia and has been developed and enhanced by scholars over the years since, as a way to understand and operationalize the teaching and learning activity (Karpov, 2014). Lev Vygotsky viewed teaching and learning as elemental human faculties (Moll, 1990). They are “interactive, collaborative, dynamic, and dialogical” processes during which meaning and learning are co-constructed by learner and teacher (Eun, 2010, p. 404): people “not only develop, but are developed” by others (Eun, 2010, p. 402; Karpov, 2014). Vygotsky, in collaboration with his collaborators Luria and Leontiev, originated activity theory (also known as sociocultural theory) to explain this interactive teaching and learning space (van Oers, 2008), especially the psychological power on a learner’s development of the mediation and scaffolding by a “more capable peer” (Vygotsky, 1935/1978, p. 86).

Vygotsky himself did not originate the term “sociocultural” (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009). His preferred term was “cultural psychology” or “cultural-historical psychology,” but the Vygotsky scholar, Wertsch (1985), conceived the hybrid term “sociocultural” to convey the idea that human learning and cognition develop through social and cultural mediation by others. As Vygotsky conceived it, a learning activity involves a subject, a mediator, and an object. The subject is the learner, and the object is the learning objective, which is always relative to the subject and context. The main model is the social, cultural, and psychological mediation of a learner’s development by another person, typically, a teacher or “more capable peer” (Vygotsky, 1935/1978, p. 86). Vygotsky’s original sociocultural theory primarily addressed the social
context of an action: subject (learner or agent), object (objective in the subject’s learning process, also referred to in later activity theory as “motive”), mediating artifacts and tools (any entity, force, construct, or intervention that influences the subject’s development toward accomplishing the object), and the learning outcome. To Vygotsky, language itself is the primary mediator of all development. Learning entails the learner’s internalization of mediation. See Figure 1.1, below.

Figure 1.1. Activity theory (adapted from Vygotsky 1935/1978). Adapted from Wikimedia Commons (2016). Reprinted by Creative Commons license.

All learning is first stimulated by social mediation in a “social mind” (van Oers, 2008, p. 3) in a cultural context (Eun, 2010; Moll, 2012; Vygotsky, 1935/1978) before it can become psychologically “internalized” by the learner and thus form part of the learner’s own understanding and schema (van de Veer, 2008). Internalization is defined as “the process through which individuals appropriate social forms of mediation, including cultural artifacts such as language, and use it to regulate their own mental activity” (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009, p. 460). Learners’ internalize extrapersonal and interpersonal mediating forces, and these internalized
intrapersonal attitudes and attributes in turn mediate their development. This “social mind” is a product of the internalization of the learner’s social, cultural, and historical experiences (Crawford & Hasan, 2006; Lantolf & Beckett, 2009).

Vygotsky saw these influential “meaningful interventions” and mediating tools as anything that served to influence the learning process of the subject, e.g., concrete artifacts like computers or the internet, or invisible systems such as language or instruction (Crawford & Hasan, 2006; Lantolf & Beckett, 2009; Wilson, 2006). Tools were invented by humans for specific historical, social, or cultural reasons and, therefore, cannot help but express, teach even, those historical, social, or cultural influences and contexts in their mediational use by the subject or learner (Turuk, 2008). A subject’s experience of developing and internalizing learning is mediated by these socioculturally-influenced messages.

Vygotsky (1935/1978) described this teaching-learning space as a zone of proximal development (ZPD), which lies between a learner’s current, “actual” level of development, where the learner has already achieved independent mastery, and their proximal or potential level, which they can reach only with help, i.e., through the mediation of another’s scaffolding. Sociocultural mediation can push development before the subject is inherently developmentally ready to learn. Because of this dynamic, continually evolving teaching and learning space, Vygotsky insisted on studying participants who were engaged in the active learning process, rather than investigating processes and behaviors that were “fossilized” and static (Moll, 1990).

Leontiev enriched the context of the learning activity. In Leontiev’s (1978) explanation of activity theory’s hierarchical levels, an activity is seen as a “dialectic,” “dynamic, purposeful,” subject-to-object interaction (Crawford & Hasan, 2006, p. 50), in which the “always active” subject learns and grows while the object is interpreted and reinterpreted by the subject in the
ongoing conduct of the activity” (p. 50). This “reinterpretation” of the object may be a result of an evolving context based on changing sociocultural mediation. For example, a student’s object in developing a writing assignment might be to earnestly explore a topic, develop writing skills and practices, or strictly to earn a grade. Or it might be all three at once. If that object changes over the course of the activity, according to the theory, it will change the activity itself.

Mediated activity recursively changes the subject, object, mediators, and overall context of the learning activity (Thompson, 2015). Leontiev’s view, as seen in Figure 1.2, below, accounts for the foundational subcomponents underlying activity.


Leontiev’s model of activity theory states that motives are at the root of all objects of activity (Wilson, 2006). In Leontiev’s iteration of the theory, the overall concept of motives that underlie an object is analyzed into its elemental psychological, social, and cultural components: motives regulate personal learning goals, which are influenced and mediated by social and
cultural conditions. Meanwhile, activity is logistically composed of individual actions, which are made up of individual operations. Then he shows how the logistical aspect of activity is governed by the personal, psychological, and sociocultural realms. For instance, conditions will dictate the function of operations, while a subject’s short-term goals in achieving its object will control actions. Each of these foundational elements that underlie a subject’s undertaking its object has been considered in the conceptual framework of this study.

In a final iteration, Engeström’s (1987/2014) conception of activity theory accounts for even more background microcontexts of each agent of an overall activity and explains how each agent influences every other, for a recursively evolving learning activity. Engeström (1987/2014) essentially built Leontiev’s underlying conditions and operations of actions into Vygotsky’s mediational activity model by demonstrating how rules (societal, cultural, institutional norms, policies, and practices), community (other people in subject’s social, cultural, and institutional environments), and the division of labor (configurations of who does what to/with whom in these communities, according to these rules) undergird and affect each other, the subject, the mediational forces, and the object. The conceptual framework that evolved from all three generations of activity theory is seen in Figure 1.3.

Critics. Some Vygotsky scholars, including Chaiklin (2003), Wertsch (1985), Moll (2012), Kozulin (2003), Van der Veer and Valsiner (1991), and Smagorinsky (2011), have criticized what they perceive as an overuse and misunderstanding of the essential sociocultural and ZPD theories, arguing that many researchers dilute their scholarship through a cultish adoration of Vygotsky (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991). Part of the reason, according to Wertsch (1985) and Smagorinsky (2011), is that many researchers use the decontextualized concepts of the ZPD and sociocultural theory. However, they argue that these concepts are not
comprehensive enough theoretical frameworks and, therefore, are not strong enough to stand alone outside of their grander theoretical context, activity theory. Mistranslation into English of critical terms and concepts has also been blamed for misapplications of the theory into practice (Smagorinsky, 2011; Wertsch, 1985). In this study, I have attempted to avoid a superficial, “Vygotsky lite” approach. I have instead consciously considered each component of activity theory and developed a schematic illustration that amalgamates all prior iterations of the theory (see Figure 1.3).

Other scholars have criticized what they see as a verbal bias in sociocultural mediation and scaffolding. Lui and Matthews (2005) and Rogoff (1990) argued that the tool of language, due to its predominantly oral-aural delivery, is not necessarily transferable to all learner populations and educational contexts. These scholars argued that for diverse learners from different cultures and populations and with different abilities, other modes of scaffolding need to be considered. For example, a more hands-on approach employing demonstration and practice might be more universally applicable. Rather than rebut these legitimate criticisms, though, teachers should admit that culture and ability and other factors do indeed mediate learning, and consequently be mindful to differentiate scaffolding accordingly.

Rationale. The development of language and literacy are prime examples of socially- and culturally-mediated activities (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Thompson, 2013), and therefore, discourse and literacy events are opportune activities to investigate. Language is richly infused in all aspects of this study. The problem of practice is multilingual college students’ need to develop academic writing. The participants are people who use more than one language who were interviewed and surveyed (using language) about their experiences using language and
developing literacy. Interviews featured deep discussions about participants’ own writing development, in which language and literacy interact with other sociocultural mediators.

Language itself can be both mediator and mediated (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Vygotsky, 1935/1978). Language serves as a mediational tool when it is used by the subject to accomplish the object, or when it is a tool that mediates a subject’s progress and experience trying to accomplish the object (Jones, 2008). Conversely, language can be mediated when a subject’s development of a writing assignment in a non-native language is the object that is then mediated by faculty feedback (or lack thereof)—the focus of this study. The development of intrapersonal language and literacy is affected by a subject’s internalization of sociocultural mediation, both facilitating and inhibiting.

**Application to practice.** Vygotsky (1926/1997) advocated praxis, which is the “dialectical unity of theory and practical activity as an instrument of change” (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009, p. 459). Activity theory guides my practice as it informs my understanding of the developmental process of academic writing development. For example, as a teacher, I must conduct ongoing informal formative assessments of each learner’s current level of development, in order to identify the proximal level. Vygotsky (1935/1978) described the ZPD as “a tool through which the internal course of development can be understood” (p. 87). According to Lantolf and Thorne (2007), for example, “evidence of development can be observed at two distinct levels: at the level of overt independent performance and at the level where performance is mediated by someone else” (p. 208). Therefore, employing ZPD and being mindful of the transformational power of social mediation when supporting LDC students (Cumming, 2016) to develop academic writing has helped me as an educator to identify students’ differing levels of potential development, and to not view their current levels from a deficit perspective or use a
static or biased evaluation tool (Moll, 1990; Tappan, 1998). Activity theory can raise teachers’ awareness of the poignant mediating effect they have on students’ development and success, and by guiding teachers to “design tasks and learning environments that challenge students and enable them to acquire and internalise the learning tools necessary for them to develop conceptual understanding” (Thompson, 2015, CHAT Research, para. 1). Educators need to be constantly vigilant since development is, by definition, always changing.

As applied to the problem of practice in this study, this ZPD heuristic can help educators assess and address students’ writing needs in the classroom or writing center in order to choose which tools and approaches to use for most effective instruction, and to treat each student as a work in progress. Sociocultural mediation of learners at school facilitates “entry into a culture via induction by more skilled members” (Bruner, 1985, p. 25), which is a means for non-dominant culture learners to gain cultural, social, academic, and linguistic capital for success in dominant-culture society. While the internalization of sociocultural language and literacy within a learner can be facilitated, it can also be inhibited depending upon the nature of the social mediation that is provided. Inhibiting sociocultural mediation can be harmful to a learner’s development.

**Application to research.** The aim of this study was to understand the sociocultural mediation that facilitates or inhibits LDC students’ internal processes of academic literacy development. Using an activity theory framework, this process may be seen as multilingual college student development of academic writing in English via the sociocultural mediation of a teacher, through the use of sociocultural tools. In this study, interview questions attempted to capture socially-mediated, developmental learning. Since, due to the dynamic nature of development, Vygotsky studied participants engaged in the learning process (Moll, 1990), this
study employed discourse-based interviewing techniques in addition to a qualitative semi-structured interviewing protocol. To accomplish this engaged interaction, participants were asked to bring writing samples from the current semester to the interviews. In the interviews, participants talked through all aspects of their writing and learning processes producing the papers. In this way, I was attempting to recreate the students’ intrapersonal experiences and processes that had initially been mediated socioculturally, and thus, were not static or as likely to be filtered through memory. Overall, activity theory served as a guide for conceptualizing the problem of practice, developing the research questions, designing the data collection protocols, and analyzing and interpreting data.

![Figure 1.3 Study conceptual framework: Multilevel developmental mediation (adapted from Vygotsky, 1935/1978, Leontiev, 1981, and Engeström, 1987/2014)](image)

**Extended theoretical framework.** Ideally, mediation looks like a learner being pushed and scaffolded by a teacher to reach a new level of writing development. For example, when I
teach writing, I have to conduct ongoing formative assessments of each learner’s current level of
development, and many other aspects of the learner, in order to know how much mediation is
appropriate and beneficial to apply, how much challenge and how much scaffolding to balance,
for the learner’s development. This is what I call “facilitating” mediation. However, the
findings from this study required an extension of activity theory to account for a learner’s
internalization of negative or inhibiting mediation, which can be harmful to a learner’s writing
development (see Figure 1.3).

Additionally when analyzing my data, I noticed mediation on different ecological
levels. Some mediators flowed from societal and institutional structures: I called this the
extrapersonal domain. Some mediators were social: I called this the interpersonal domain.
Some mediators were within the student: I called this the intrapersonal domain. These multilevel
mediating forces can facilitate and inhibit development. Furthermore, applying the
internalization dynamic from activity theory, extrapersonal and interpersonal mediators are then
internalized into intrapersonal mediators within the learner, which then become attributes,
behaviors, beliefs that can in turn mediate the learner’s writing development, by either
facilitating or inhibiting. I refer to this augmentation of activity theory as multilevel
developmental mediation. Thus, applied to this study, on the extrapersonal and interpersonal
levels, this study sought to better understand how LDC students interpret and internalize the
messages and pressures they receive from the world, their institutions, their teachers, and their
communities about their potential and value as scholars, writers, and language-users.

Conclusion

The problem of practice of this study aimed to draw attention to an educational inequity.
This chapter has introduced the research problem concerning LDC students, who have been
shown to encounter restricted access to and success in higher education. Consequently, this problem of practice has local and global significance because it creates inequitable access to life-altering opportunities across populations. Horner (2010) called for the emergence of new instructional philosophes and scholarship protocols “built on the characteristics identified in studies of the pragmatics of micro-processes” of multilingual speakers (p. 13). Therefore, this study looked at LDC students’ micro-processes as they develop their discipline-specific writing practices. On the micro, intrapersonal level, it is hoped that the revealed patterns of ups and downs of writing development (e.g., feeling confused vs. feeling clear; feeling misunderstood vs. feeling heard; feeling excluded vs. feeling welcome; feeling stuck vs. feeling productive) can lead to better alignment of teaching with learning to most effectively meet LDC students’ needs, as well as inform faculty development programs for teaching LDC students and target areas for further research.

On the extrapersonal and interpersonal levels, this study sought to better understand how LDC students interpret and internalize the messages and pressures they receive from the world, their institutions, their teachers, and their communities about their potential and value as scholars, writers, and language-users. This research inquired into what LDC students identify as the facilitators and inhibitors that influence their academic writing development. It asked about their experiences interacting with faculty, staff, and peers, the influence of those interactions on their writing development, and how they feel their languages interact with their writing development. Maybe somewhere within these discoveries, light will dawn on where unjust infrastructure can be disrupted, aiding in creating contexts that can be realigned with what LDC students actually need to develop and succeed. The next chapter reviews the literature related to
this study to understand what is known to date about LDC students and their academic barriers and supports.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the process of academic writing development among domestic, linguistically-diverse undergraduate students as they engage in writing assignments in disciplinary classes at Urban University. This study aimed to identify extrapersonal and interpersonal forces that are internalized by LDC students as intrapersonal attributes, which in turn mediate their progress in disciplinary writing development. These multilevel domains distribute the “affordances and barriers” to resources disparately across populations and, therefore, can facilitate or inhibit LDC students’ writing development (Fong, 2013, p. 268). This study was guided by one primary research question and two sub-questions: How do linguistically-diverse undergraduate students describe their processes of developing as academic writers? What factors do they identify as facilitating their academic writing development in college? What factors do they identify as inhibiting their academic writing development in college? Ten LDC students were interviewed and surveyed about their literacy processes and practices to learn their authentic perspectives. It is hoped that the information revealed can inform more effective faculty development around teaching and supporting LDC students’ writing development in an attempt to redress societal educational attainment disparities.

Since “[s]cholarship originates from the ability to synthesize past insights and apply them in the pursuit of continued inquiry” (Kroll, 1990, p. 1), this chapter reviews the related research literature to synthesize a comprehensive understanding about what is currently known about the research problem. “Compared to its parent fields (i.e. composition and applied ESL), the field of second language writing [often referred to by scholars as ‘L2 writing’] is far younger, interdisciplinary, and still developing theoretically” (Otto, 2016, p. 2). Since little recent qualitative research has produced a nuanced, close-up examination of this process of writing
development amongst this student population, especially in disciplinary content and general education classes (Belcher, 2012) and focusing on their own developmental experiences, if English composition studies, Applied Linguistics, and L2 writing “have evolved from distinct epistemologies,” (Eckstein, Chan, & Blackwell, 2018), then the specific unit of analysis of this study has evolved from an amalgam of these antecedent epistemologies. Belcher (2012) sounded an alarm when she said, “If theory-building is the goal, then one cannot help but be concerned by the restricted range of the existing body of L2 writing research, both in terms of methodology and foci” (p. 144). This study is thus aimed to address Belcher’s identified focal gap as well as her projected goal of theory-building. This chapter reviews the research literature by considering the various related and interacting extrapersonal, interpersonal, and intrapersonal mediators individually, or in combinations slightly different from those of this study’s exact point of overlap, in order to provide some context and background.

This chapter first introduces a portrait of the continually changing face of higher education student populations, and then it introduces and defines the concept of college readiness. Next, it presents what is known about nontraditional college students, a rapidly growing college student population, and their intersecting documented societal determinants for academic success, and subsequently narrows its focus to multilingual or LDC students, its subpopulation under examination, who typically face the same societal and institutional barriers to success.

The first subsection will introduce these societal and institutional pressures, followed by a section on social influences, which is the most elaborate section due to the abundance of research on faculty-related effects on student learning. Finally, individual factors will be examined.
To conduct this literature search, education, humanities, and academic electronic databases housed in Northeastern University’s library (particularly EbscoHost, ERIC, Gale Cengage, JStor, Project MUSE, ProQuest, Sage, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, the WAC Clearinghouse at Colorado State University, WPA-CompPile, and Wiley) were searched using a variety of keywords including college students, English language learner (ELL), English as a second language (ESL), L2 writing, linguistically-diverse, language-minority, linguistic minority, multilingual, disciplinary literacy, academic literacy, academic writing, nontraditional students, college readiness, and developmental learning.

Changing Demographics in U.S. Higher Education

Recent U.S. Census Bureau statistics tell the story of an increasingly diverse U.S. population. For example, by 2020, over 50% of the U.S. population under age 18 will belong to a minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), and by 2060, 64% of the under-18 population will belong to a racial and ethnic minority (Colby & Ortman, 2015). By 2030, immigrants will comprise one quarter of the workforce (Casner-Lotto, 2011; Lowell, Gelatt, & Batalova, 2006). By 2044, the percentage of racially- and ethnically-diverse residents of all ages will tip and become the majority (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). By 2060, almost 20% of U.S. residents will have been born in a foreign country, up from 13% in 2014, an increase of 54% (Colby & Ortman, 2015). And by 2060, only one-third of Americans under age 18 will be mono-racial, non-Hispanic White, whereas in 2015 this group comprised 52%; meanwhile, the overall minority population is expected to increase to 56%, as versus 38% in 2014 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

College student populations overall have also been diversifying in many ways. As for socioeconomic diversity, from 2005 to 2015, while enrollment rates among higher
socioeconomic status (SES) recent high school graduates did not significantly increase, those of lower SES students increased by seven percentage points (Ma et al., 2016). Despite this increase, however, lower SES students are still significantly underrepresented as traditional-age college students (Holzer & Baum, 2017). NCES reported that in 2016, higher SES recent high school graduates enrolled in higher education at a higher rate (83%) compared to 67% among lower SES students (McFarland et al., 2018). These data may not capture all lower SES nontraditional students due to a myriad of lifestyle and other demographic factors, along with the fact that institutions typically do not collect student data about linguistic backgrounds or proficiency development (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Kanno & Harklau, 2013), so socioeconomic enrollment disparities may be even greater (Ma et al., 2016).

There have been similar increases in college enrollment among diverse racial, cultural, and linguistic populations. Disparities in college enrollment rates between White and minority recent high school graduates have declined between 2005 (11 percentage points) and 2015 (eight point gap between White and Black students, and 5 point gap between White and Hispanic students). The NCES (2016a) reported that between the early 2000s and 2014, the number of Black students enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions increased by 46%, Latino students by 114%, and Asian/Pacific Islander students by 43%, as compared to only 19% for White students. An indication of a significant social trend over the past two decades is the accelerated college enrollment and degree attainment rates among Hispanic students. Hispanic college enrollment rates have gone from 8% of total college enrollment in 1996, to 11% in 2006, to 19% in 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Similarly, NCES reported that between academic years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, the only populations whose higher education enrollment rates increased were Hispanic, Asian, two or more races, and resident alien (McFarland et al., 2018).
In terms of completing associate degrees or higher, the percentage of 25-29-year-old Hispanic students has increased almost 100%, whereas the rate was 40% among Black and White students collectively (NCES, 2014). While these figures may certainly only suggest an increased presence in college of linguistically-diverse students, they clearly illustrate the changing nature of college student populations to include “under-represented, traditionally non-college-bound” students (Marlink & Wahleithner, 2011, p. 1).

However, despite the relative college enrollment growth rate among minority and low SES groups, they are still severely underrepresented in college (Ashkenas, Park, & Pearce, 2017; Gabriel, 2008; Ma et al., 2016). In 2015, for example, White students represented 57% of total college enrollment, whereas the total aggregated minority student enrollment was only 42%, with Black students representing 14%, Latino students 17%, and Asian/Pacific Islander 6.8% (NCES, 2016a). Moreover, while higher educational institutions are seeing social progress in the form of more applications and enrollments from traditionally underrepresented students, many underprepared, first-generation, and lower socioeconomic status students are not persisting to graduation (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Bettinger, Boatman, & Long, 2013; Graham & Perin, 2007; NCES, 2016b). For example, in the past twenty years, the percentage of 25-29-year-old students completing associate degrees or higher was 54% among White students, and only 31% among Black students, and 26% among Hispanic students. A root of these educational enrollment and attainment disparities may be that nontraditional, non-dominant-culture students are often considered “outsiders” to academia by dominant-culture academia (Lillis, 2001, p. 13). The designations “nontraditional” and “underrepresented minority” are used in higher education to differentiate between an outdated, “traditional” norm and a diverse student population from
“social groups who have historically been largely excluded from higher education” (Lillis, 2001, p. 1) and who thus possess a variety of “othernesses.”

**College readiness.** The term “college readiness” is often used but rarely defined explicitly, a problem potentially lending itself to more traditional, dominant-culture, upper-middle-class-normed conceptions of what it means to be ready for college. An understanding that is sensitive and relative to different student populations is needed to be able to measure development in individual students across different students populations. One useful working definition of college readiness is:

> the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program. Succeed is defined as completing entry-level courses with a level of understanding and proficiency that makes it possible for the student to be eligible to take the next course in the sequence or the next level course in the subject area. (Conley, 2011, p. 1).

Therefore, when this study considers its participants’ “readiness” for college writing, and when this literature review synthesizes findings that ostensibly measure college readiness, this more basic definition that is less biased toward a traditional norm will be conceived as a partially useful benchmark. The concept of college readiness will always be relative to a given context, process, and population, so no definition can ever be seen as absolute without risking injustice to non-dominant and underserved student populations. Nevertheless, regardless of the particular definition or scale, and “whether or not students participate in remedial coursework” or ESL programs (Deil-Amen, 2011, p. 60), their simply being academically underprepared for higher education increases students’ chances of not graduating. The fact that a disproportionate number
of underprepared students are from minority backgrounds contributes to the gravity of the social inequity.

**Nontraditional college students.** Nontraditional students have been found to struggle more in college than traditional, dominant-culture students (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014; Turkan, de Oliveira, Lee, & Phelps, 2014) for a variety of reasons, and so the advent of increasingly diverse nontraditional student populations has raised questions about college readiness and how institutions can best support these students’ academic successes.

Nontraditional students bring to college many intersecting variables that pose pervasive risks to their academic access and success. For example, the factors of low socioeconomic status (SES) and minority status play unsurprising and exacerbating roles in students’ college-readiness rates (Porter & Polikoff, 2012). One-quarter of all college students today work full-time while attending college full-time (Carnevale, Smith, Melton, & Price, 2015), a practice that “hurts disadvantaged students the most” (p. 1) because it consumes indispensable study hours, keeps students from attending valuable faculty office hours, and prevents them from participating in enriching school community activities such as joining student associations and attending speaker or performance events (Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012; Zong & Batalova, 2015).

Additionally, working while going to college simply causes fatigue. Furthermore, many nontraditional students are supporting a family and thus have domestic and financial obligations, often as the sole parent (Bettinger et al., 2013; Capt et al., 2014; Holzer & Baum, 2017; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; MacArthur et al., 2015).

Similarly, many nontraditional college students are the first in their family to go to college. First-generation-to-college students (FGS) often face barriers to college access and success due to a lack of “college knowledge” from their parents, including familiarity with
college customs, expectations, policies, processes, and the lack of “an accurate sense of what they must do to be successful in and out of class” (Ward et al., 2012). FGS must satisfactorily complete “key transitional tasks” (p. 25), including acculturating to institutional structures and policies, student body, faculty expectations, staff roles, and campus environment. Additionally, they may not have been exposed to critical academic success behaviors and habits (Bettinger et al., 2013; Capt et al., 2014; Conley, 2011). Further, they may experience academic anxiety if they are returning to higher education after a hiatus between secondary education and college (Capt et al., 2014) and do not feel prepared or ready. FGS must often forge a new identity as a scholar, i.e., as “college material” (Ward et al., 2012). Nontraditionally-aged, multilingual college students have been shown to want and need explicit language and literacy instruction to support them to transfer their tacit linguistic knowledge to their new contexts (DeKeyser, 2017). These barriers are in addition, of course, to developing writing and academics in general.

This situation is not new. Underprepared nontraditional and non-dominant-culture students began entering higher education in unprecedentedly greater numbers in the 1970s, due to the advent of the GI Bill and a new policy of open admissions at community colleges (Bawarshi & Pelkowski, 1999). Thus, the concept of remedial or basic writing courses came into being. Literacy scholar-practitioners have written about the problem of students entering higher education underprepared for college reading and writing since the 1970s. As early as 1973, Fisher and Murray described these “remedial” students: “They feared writing—they were scientists and agricultural majors, whites and blacks, athletes and wounded veterans; they were the bored, the angry, the apprehensive” (p. 170). Shaughnessy (1977) called these new college students “strangers in academia, unacquainted with the rules and rituals of college life” (p. 3). Institutions reacted to this influx of such “others” as “threats” to the academic norm; higher
education’s strategy was, therefore, to “acculturate students who speak, read, and write Other dialects, Other languages, Other discourses, and initiate them into academic discourses” (Bawarshi & Pelkowski, 1999, p. 42).

This background on nontraditional college students paints a context for their often being underprepared for college level writing. Nontraditional and culturally- and linguistically-diverse college students may enter postsecondary institutions with underdeveloped standard English academic writing exposure and proficiency, which can negatively affect their college success and persistence-to-graduation rates (MacArthur et al., 2015). Consequently, entering students might be assessed into remedial writing classes, which can extend the time needed to complete a degree and as a result potentially increase the odds of not graduating (Bettinger et al., 2013; Conley, 2011). All of these variables have been documented as college attrition risks (Andrade et al., 2014; Capt et al., 2014). These more vulnerable students will need knowledgeable, dedicated support to help them “balance demanding schedules and competing priorities” (Gates Foundation, 2017, n.p) and to help them learn how to learn, write, and succeed in college. In the next section, the topic narrows to linguistically-diverse college students, a subgroup of nontraditional and underrepresented minority college students.

**Linguistically-diverse college students.** Reading and writing, speaking and listening are acts of literacy (Hyland, 2003). Literacy involves the interaction and negotiation of meaning between writers and their readers, between speakers and their listeners, within and between discourse communities, and within and through social contexts. Social contexts are multifactorial, dynamic, and intersecting (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992), and as a result, powerfully influential on the process of meaning-making among all participants in literacy relationships. Furthermore, social contexts are inevitably colored by power relationships. In the context of
U.S. higher education, these power relationships may be manifested on a global level by standard dominant conventions of literacy being privileged over other non-dominant-culture forms (Barton, 2007; Fairclough, 2003), and on a more local or micro level, in instructors’ biased grades and feedback on LDC student writing that is different from that of English-only students. This conceptual background is important to bear in mind as the focal problem and population to be studied are introduced in this section.

Definitions, terms, and labels. The term “linguistically-diverse” (Harklau et al., 1999) comprises “the entire set of multilingual individuals who speak a non-English language at home” (Kanno & Harklau, 2013, p. 3), which, to reduce the deficit-orientation of this definition, might be amended by adding, “or who use a non-dominant-culture variety of English at home…” There are many terms for multilingual students that are used “almost interchangeably, each with its own connotations and limitations” (Matsuda, 2012, p. 38). It is important to remain aware that there is no consensus among educators on a satisfactorily inclusive definition for this population, as it encompasses many populations (CCCC, 2009; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2010; Matsuda, 2012), and it is critical that individuals self-define their linguistic status (Costino & Hyon, 2007; Oropeza et al., 2010).

Linguistically-diverse college students are not a monolithic group with static attributes and needs (Ferris, 2018), though many postsecondary institutions and faculty may still refer to any non-native English-speaking student as being “English as a second language” or “ESL,” a moniker contested in part due to the assumption that English is the second language being learned, when in reality, many students already speak multiple languages—and are therefore quite linguistically sophisticated. Marshall (2009) described this as revealing deficit-mindset as well as ignorance about the complexity of multilingualism:
Describing a student as ESL thus juxtaposes deficit with multiplicity. ESL is not only a linguistic state, a course, an abbreviation, appreciated by many, disliked by others; it is also as an institutional and learner identity that some students associate with nonacceptance, deficit, and even nonrecognition of their multilingual and multicultural knowledge and competence.” (p. 51)

In actuality, ESL refers not to the students, but to the programs within educational institutions that ostensibly support students’ learning of English (Bergey et al., 2018; Matsuda, 2012). In fact, within the population of linguistically-diverse students are those who were automatically placed in institutional ESL programs due to having indicated on a form that they spoke another language at home (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018), those who have aged or tested out of K-12 ESL programs, and those who are multilingual but were never placed in ESL programs.

The diversity within the category of students who are “multilingual” is remarkable. “Many second language writers are highly literate in their first languages, while others have never learned to write in their mother tongues. Some are even native speakers of languages without a written form” (CCCC 2009, Part One). The category includes everyone from “late-arriving resident immigrants” (Ferris, 2018, n.p.), also known as “newcomers” (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for English Language Acquisition, 2017), who typically received some education in their native country in their native language, but whose English, and especially academic English, is still developing; to international students with advanced-level English proficiency studying in the United States on a student visa (Friedrich, 2006; Kanno & Harklau, 2013; National Council of Teachers of English, Conference on College Composition and Communication [CCCC], 1974); to immigrants from non-Anglophone countries who have lived in the United States for most of their lives. Other terms for this population in educational
parlance include linguistic or language minority (de Kleine & Lawton, 2015; Kieffer & Thompson, 2018), limited English proficient (LEP), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), which attempts to acknowledge multilingualism but includes the problematic word “other,” English language-learner (ELL), English as an additional language (EAL), second-language learner (L2), non-native English-speaker—all referring to variations of English language and literacy developmental levels and statuses (Cumming, 2016; Matsuda, 2012) and depending on the institution undertaking the labeling (Zawacki et al., 2007).

To further complicate this definition, there are no clear or predictable delineations for these terms, as they cannot in reality refer to absolute or factual categories, and therefore externally- or institutionally-generated labels may lend themselves to the disempowering of entire categories of people. Generation 1.5 students are a case in point. Typically, Generation 1.5 students’ parents immigrated to the United States, either bringing them as young children or giving birth to them in the United States. They grew up and received their education in U.S. K-12 schools (Bergey et al., 2018; Ferris, 2018, n.p.; Harklau et al., 1999), and therefore typically identify as native English-speakers. Some Generation 1.5 students consider themselves fully fluent in both or all their languages, while some may not use their parents’ native languages at all. Some may understand their parents’ native languages, but not speak, read, or write it. As a consequence, many Generation 1.5 students do not identify as “ESL” and view such stigmatizing labels as reductive, oppressive, and handicapping (CCCC, 2009; Costino & Hyon, 2007; Frodesen, 2000; Horner, 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Roberge et al., 2000; Ruecker, 2011; Thonus, 2003). Such artificial labeling serves institutions’ convenience, but may disadvantage or harm students.
The CCCC’s (2000) stated definition of this population comprises “international visa students, refugees, and permanent residents as well as naturalized and native-born citizens of the United States and Canada” (p. 669), reflecting a range of individuals with differing levels of English proficiency, academic preparation, and life experiences. In this dissertation, in order to be as inclusive as possible and capture all students who self-identify as developing dominant-culture standard English, as well as to frame linguistic diversity as an asset and proficiency rather than liability or deficiency, I intentionally employ the descriptor “linguistically-diverse,” and define it as those who self-identify as multilingual or multilingual, i.e., using language(s) in addition to English.

**LDC student college enrollment.** Students who are linguistically-diverse or multilingual (Bardack, 2010; Matsuda, 2012) are the fastest-increasing U.S. student population. Currently, one out of every ten U.S. K-12 public school students is an English language-learner of some nature, and that percentage is much higher in certain states with higher populations of immigrants (NCES, 2017). Today, 20% of U.S. college students and 24% of community college students are children of immigrants (Connell, 2008). However, college-attending rates are still relatively lower for LDC students than for English-only students and are expected only to reach 25% of the total college population by 2025 (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). When LDC students do enroll in college, they are not graduating at the same rates as dominant-culture White students (Andrade et al., 2014; Holzer & Baum, 2017). The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center recently reported on the entering Fall 2010 student cohort’s 6-year completion rates. It found that, in any type of postsecondary institution, approximately 63% of White and Asian American college students graduated within six years, compared to only 46% of Latino students, and 38% of African American students (Shapiro et al., 2017). In public 4-year institutions,
among the Fall 2010 cohort, only 46% of African American students and 55% of Hispanic students completed within six years, whereas more than 67% of White and 72% of Asian American students completed in that same period.

Among LDCs with differing English proficiency levels, there are graduation rate disparities as well. For example, in 2013, only 12.5% of LDCs who were not fully proficient in English graduated with their bachelor degrees, as compared to 25% of those who were English-proficient (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). The problem is that there exist a “multitude of disadvantages that tend to co-occur for ELLs that hinder their college access and attainment” (Kanno & Cromley, 2013, p. 113). The next section will examine what has been found in the research literature regarding some of these co-occurring societal and institutional disadvantages that mediate LDC students’ college trajectories.

Societal and Institutional Determinants of Academic Success

Society exerts disparate pressures across populations. These pressures serve variably as facilitating or inhibiting determinants of academic success, including access to quality academic preparation for college, parents’ educational access and attainment, English proficiency, and socioeconomic status. Before LDC students even enroll in college, societal forces and structures regulate their access to opportunities, resources, and services. These societal and institutional factors present documented obstacles, either directly due to restrictive policies, or indirectly through internalization as intrapersonal barriers, to LDC students’ academic success and, ultimately, graduation (Andrade et al., 2014; Bond et al., 2008; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2013; Mulholland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011). Socioeconomics, language pressures, and discrimination are internalized as variable qualities of academic identity development, writing self-assessment, perceptions of being included or
excluded, and mental health status (American Psychiatric Association, 2018). Due to these factors, LDC students’ transition to college writing may be fraught. This section will present the literature relating to the societal and institutional barriers to and supports of LDC students’ academic developmental experiences either through access to resources, services, and opportunities—or lack thereof. If society is to begin to remedy the “persistently large achievement gaps” (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018, p. 1) between non-native English-speakers and their native-English-speaking peers, researchers need to explore the causes for these disparities.

**Societal factors.** While language might seem at first glance to be the primary inhibitor to academic success among LDC students, and it certainly does present substantial obstacles to their English writing development, there are well-documented, nonlinguistic factors that also serve as barriers. In addition to linguistic barriers, some enrollment disparities may derive from personal struggles involving “financial and logistical” issues such as time or family obligations (Amaro, Abriam-Yago, & Yoder, 2006; Ma et al., 2016, p. 9). LDC students may not possess the advantages of a higher income, parents who attended college, or strong academic preparation before college, factors which have been found to mediate higher education access and success (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Zamel & Spack, 2006). These are just a few societal determinants of educational access and attainment.

**Language-related societal factors in the standard English-normed context of U.S. higher education.** New, academic and discipline-specific writing modes are challenging to every student, but may be particularly problematic for LDC students if they have not developed a sufficient degree of English proficiency (Amaro et al., 2006; Andrade et al., 2014; Fong, 2013; Salamonson et al., 2010; Starkey, 2015). College writing expectations tend to be different and more rigorous than those of high school or other pre-college programs. For example, compared
to community-based adult basic education or ESL/ESOL programs, which tend to focus more on literacy and communication, higher education ESL and sub-college-level English programs are predominantly geared toward English composition development (Blanton, 2005), and development of specific forms and academic writing genres to which underprepared LDC students may have had little exposure.

Discrimination and microaggressions against non-native English-speakers can also serve as societal and institutional language-related inhibitors in the standard-English-normed context of U.S. higher education. While it is impossible to disaggregate oppressive language-related ideologies from those of race and class, discrimination towards non-standard varieties of English can be interpreted as “racialized—that is, expressed with indirect or direct reference to racial categories or using rhetorical patterns most often associated with discussions of race and ethnicity” (Shuck, 2006, p. 260). In Amaro et al.’s 2006 study, LDC participants reported feeling discriminated against due to their accent in English. This “racialization” can feel to LDC students as discrimination and deficit rather than “difference” and can be internalized as identity and self-assessment.

**Educational access and equity.** Statistics show that LDC students are often not provided rigorous or often even adequate college preparation in their secondary, pre-college, or earlier tertiary education, and as a consequence, may enter college with underdeveloped levels of proficiency in their writing practices (Graham & Perin, 2007). Kanno & Cromley’s (2013) large-scale quantitative study found that LDC students experienced regular barriers to higher educational opportunities. They described those who do graduate as “exceptions rather than the rule” (p. 112). Furthermore, LDC students are often also first-generation college students since their own parents were similarly prevented from accessing higher education (Conley, 2011) and
thus must face the missing cultural capital and college knowledge inherited by their classmates whose parents did go to college. Even immigrant LDC students who have attended and graduated from ESL or ESOL programs struggle with reading comprehension due primarily to lack of vocabulary in English (Casner-Lotto, 2011). Society, it would seem, punishes underserved students by further underserving them.

**Institutional factors.** Institutions are units of society whose values and behavior reflect societal structures, and faculty’s behavior in turn reflects the values and structures of its respective institutions. LDC students’ writing trajectories can be significantly influenced by institutional policies and conditions. Many institutions of higher education are philosophically resistant to change and, furthermore, make any attempt to lead change difficult through layers of bureaucracy (Painter & Clark, 2015). For LDC students to succeed academically, higher educational institutions must build “a learning environment that is inclusive and responsive” to every student from every linguistic and cultural background (Billings & Kowalski, 2015, p. 64). It is the responsibility of the institution to provide resources and services to support both faculty and students (Donnelly et al., 2009a). An institution’s failure to adequately support its LDC students may functionally alienate these students from the academic community and lead to their lower educational outcomes as compared to their native English-speaking classmates (Greenberg, 2013; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Salamonson et al., 2010; Starkey, 2015).

**ESL and writing placement policies.** In reality, there is a great diversity among multilingual students. However, in higher education and other educational contexts, all non-native English-speakers and multilingual students are typically “lumped together” into one category (Bergey et al., 2018). Upon entering higher education, LDC students may be automatically placed in remedial or ESL tracks, realities which may negatively affect their higher
educational access and success (de Kleine & Lawton, 2015; Graham & Perin, 2007; Horner, 2010; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Marshall, 2009; Scott-Clayton, Crosta, & Belfield, 2014). This placement often does not take into account individual students’ linguistic backgrounds or educational histories, and fully fluent and biliterate multilingual students who simply indicated on an entrance survey that a language in addition to English was spoken at home and who already completed or tested out of ESL programs in secondary school, are “re-identified as ESL” upon enrollment in college (Marshall, 2009).

Institutional writing placement processes vary enormously across institutions and are typically haphazard, not evidence-based, not student-centered, automatically implemented, and “often rudimentary in nature, identifying only those students with the most serious deficiencies” (Conley, 2011, p. 7). Regarding options for writing placement, Saenkhum (2012) similarly found few informational resources available and little communication between writing program or academic advisors and LDC students. This seemingly random system for placing students in class levels according to a brief writing sample can inhibit academic success and cause long term consequences for more vulnerable students facing multiple societal pressures, such as LDC, lower SES, and FGS students.

**Dearth of appropriate support.** Once they are enrolled, LDC students often face academic barriers due to a documented lack of support from both institution and faculty. LDC students indicate they need coaching in time and workload management; tutoring in academic writing; advisement regarding course choice and enrollment; resources for forming study groups; and mentoring and emotional support (Amaro et al., 2006; Bond et al., 2008; Donnelly et al., 2009a)—resources that may or may not be language-related, and which simply may not be available. Developing academic language and literacy for LDC students requires the
commitment of extra time and effort on the part of all parties: students, faculty, staff, and other institutional resources (Allison, 2000; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Zamel & Spack, 2006). Since higher education has not yet built in the time or support to afford all students the chance to develop their academic writing, their access to higher education may be obstructed (Sternglass, 1999).

**Institutional support of faculty.** Institutions set the tone for faculty behavior. In many institutions, faculty are typically allowed sole jurisdiction on the territories of their classrooms and syllabi, and face few accountability requirements (Painter, & Clark, 2015) or benefit from little institutional support (Donnelly et al., 2009b). Faculty are simultaneously expected to juggle multiple competing demands for their time: they must write curricula, plan lectures, teach classes, grade papers, and advise students. They are often also expected to conduct research, publish their findings, play service roles, and attend faculty meetings (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Xu & Davidhizar, 2005). To make matters worse, faculty are required to cover an ever-increasing breadth of content each term (Ironside, 2004). Faculty, thus, may not react enthusiastically to additional requirements at work such as mandatory professional development trainings. Faculty often feel pressured to cover excessive content (Zamel & Spack, 2006), and consequently may resort to teaching content through one-way lectures and assigned textbook readings; this ignores research that refutes such outdated, passive pedagogical practices (Amaro et al., 2006; Mulready-Shick, 2013).

While faculty are often experts in their disciplines, they are not typically trained to teach or engage LDC students (Bifuh-Ambe, 2011; Capt et al., 2014; Matsuda, Saenkhum, & Accardi, 2013; Watson, 2000) or to teach or assess academic writing (Andrade et al., 2014; Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Holtz & Wilson, 1992; Johnson & Parrish, 2010; Marlink & Wahleithner, 2011;
Marschall & Davis, 2012; Morton-Miller, 2013), and their heavy workload may leave them with little time and energy to invest in building relationships with LDC students (Donnelly et al., 2009b). At the same time, however, faculty express their frustration about not knowing how to teach their LDC students, especially around reading and writing in their disciplines (CCCC, 2009). They may wish they knew strategies for teaching LDC students the reading and writing skills required for their success (Bifuh-Ambe, 2011). As a result, even though the idea of infusing content with reading and writing activities may not yet fit into content faculty's longtime lecture-based methods (Mulready-Shick, 2013; NCES, 2014), opportunities to learn to do just that may alleviate some frustration and stress due to feeling unprepared (Beard, 2014), and therefore ultimately create a more time-efficient and balanced work life.

Shulman (1987) stated that excellent teachers possess a “special amalgam of content and pedagogy” (p. 8). This observation points out a possible imbalance, in that disciplinary content instructors cannot strictly be experts in their disciplinary area, but also must possess pedagogical skills (Watson, 2000). And since LDC students have been identified as a population at risk for attrition (Beauvais, Stewart, DeNisco, & Beauvais, 2014; Murray, 2016), it would fall upon institutions to take on the responsibility to prepare faculty to teach and support their diverse classes. Institutional faculty developers must facilitate awareness-raising of instructors’ own biases and beliefs, so they may be able to internalize new approaches to pedagogy and actually apply them in practice (Painter & Clark, 2015). Instructors must therefore become versed in “creating a learning environment that is inclusive and responsive” to every student from every linguistic and cultural background (Billings & Kowalski, 2015, p. 64). Yet, despite heavy demands on faculty time and effort, some institutions provide little support for faculty or
students (Donnelly et al., 2009b). Faculty are in the position to empower LDC students if they
themselves receive support from their institutions (Holtz & Wilson, 1992).

**Standard English-normed academic literacy expectations.** “Standard English” is the
official, dominant-culture version of the language expected to be used in academia, government,
business, and media in the United States (Carino, 1991). Some writing studies scholars consider
standard English academic literacy oppressive in that they impose an “essentialist and hegemonic
pedagogical imperative” that frames as deficient any non-dominant form (Bawarshi &
Pelkowski, 1999, p. 42; de Kleine & Lawton, 2015; Horner, 2010; Street, 2003)—a
“fundamental binary framing” (Lillis, 2001, p. 14). In 1974, CCCC published an important
position statement calling the institutional privileging of standard academic dominant-culture
English “an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another” (p. 3).

Multicultural and multilingual students in Anglophone higher education settings must
contend with “Western frames of logic” and being evaluated according to “traditional essay
formats [to] measure students’ knowledge and competence” (Marshall, 2009, p. 42) using
dominant-culture-normed values (Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Matsuda, 2006), meaning-making
processes, and identities. The favoring of “logic over emotion; academic truth (published theory
and research) over personal experience; linearity over circularity; explicitness … over evocation”
(Lillis, 2001, p. 81) may be implicit and conceptually foreign. College students are required to
subsume their individuality into a standardize style, “anonymizing themselves [to] adopt the
guise of a rational, disinterested, a social seeker of truth” (Hyland, 2016b, p. 45). Such ideology
“regulates entry” into the academy and its values and epistemologies (Hyland, 2016b, p. 38;
Marshall, 2009), which functionally “works against the possibilities for greater participation”
(Lillis, 2001, p. 12) of non-dominant-culture college students, thereby perpetuating inequitable
social power structures, and establishing a single, impossible benchmark for LDC students (Alster, 2004; Horner et al., 2011; Leki, 2006; Sanner & Wilson, 2008).

At the same time, however, while poorer writing outcomes among non-dominant-culture students compared to English-only classmates have frequently been found, and notwithstanding the need to value multiliteracies, Delpit (1995) argued that it must not be presupposed that non-dominant-culture students will necessarily have trouble learning dominant-culture academic writing and discourse. Further, if dominant discourses are only seen as oppressive, and thus resisted under protest as some educational scholars suggest (cf. Gee, Horner, Lillis, Street, etc.), this could further oppress multicultural and multilingual students. If non-dominant-culture students are not explicitly taught the language and literacy practices that will allow them to compete successfully in a dominant-culture institution and world, they could be locked out of access to dominant institutions and discourse forever. Therefore, being versed in effective and respectful teaching of academic writing to LDC students is no longer solely the province of ESL specialists, but rather the responsibility of the entire institution (Oláh, 2008).

Conclusion of societal and institutional determinants. Societal and institutional forces affect populations disparately and can thus support or stymie LDC students’ academic success by, for example, affording or obstructing access to educational opportunities for both their parents and themselves. This is inequitable because such extrapersonal variables as academic preparation and parents’ educational attainment are documented to affect college graduation.

Social Determinants of Academic Success: Faculty-related Mediators

As with extrapersonal mediators, interpersonal interactions are also internalized by LDC students. Faculty interaction with their LDC students has been shown as the most powerful mediator of their academic writing development; it can serve as equally inhibiting or facilitating
Disciplinary faculty often do not know how to teach or support LDC students (Donnelly et al., 2009a; Holtz & Wilson, 1992; Parboteeah & Anwar, 2009). Many disciplinary faculty are principally focused on conducting research in their field and “may have little time or interest in pedagogical self-development, and … may not be philosophically committed” to teach students to write (Wolfe-Quintero & Segade, 1999, p. 201), seeing doing so as the role of the English teacher. Yet, faculty are not always eager for more training or engaging in writing initiatives. In an institutional writing-in-the-disciplines initiative at Simon Fraser University in Canada, one faculty member observed that few of his peers were interested. Those who were interested, however, did not know how to move forward in the project or else had “wrong-headed ideas” about best practices for supporting students to develop writing in their discipline (Krebs, 2008, p. xii). Untrained or biased instructors have been found to respond to and grade student writing in a punitive and unhelpful way, e.g., giving feedback that is partial, non-formative, random, or simply wrong (Hyland, 2016b; Zamel, 1995). Faculty “are often as ‘underprepared’ to work with multilingual learners as multilingual learners are to work with them” (Zamel & Spack, 2006, p. 137).

As a powerful mirror image, however, educators who do assume accountability for the learning and well-being of all their students support retention (Amaro et al., 2006). These educators know how to provide formative, useful, culturally-relevant, and linguistically-comprehensible instruction that supports LDC students to surmount the societal and institutional barriers they face to being successful in the standard English-normed context of college. This section synthesizes findings on faculty-related mediators of LDC students’ academic success, and specifically, academic writing success.
Faculty-student interactions. Faculty-student alliances are critical factors in the learning and graduating of all students, but even more so for LDC students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Leki, 2006; Nielsen, 2014). Teaching and learning how to write are complex endeavors in any context (Brockman, Taylor, Crawford, & Kreth, 2010; Graham & Harris, 2014), but particularly so for underprepared or LDC students and their overcommitted faculty. The way teachers teach can present barriers to LDC students’ academic writing development (Turner, 2009). LDC students’ interactions with faculty affect them dramatically—both positively and negatively. Negative or insensitive interactions between instructors and students can distress and destabilize all students’ performance in college (Robinson, Pope, & Holyoak, 2013), but LDC students are especially susceptible to the power of faculty for good or ill (Leki, 2006). Uninformed, inaccurate faculty attitudes toward LDC students’ linguistic backgrounds can exacerbate their perceived barriers (Amaro et al., 2006) and thus lower their academic self-concept, self-efficacy, and performance (Robinson et al., 2013). The give-and-take involved in teacher-student relationships forms a learning bond that breeds literacy and language development (Blanton, 2005).

Available, supportive, and encouraging faculty are a significantly positive factor in LDC students’ happiness and persistence (Amaro et al., 2006; Donnelly et al., 2009a; Holtz & Wilson, 1992; Nadeau, 2014). Mentoring faculty alliances function as powerful factors in LDC student development and interactive community-building (Amaro et al., 2006; Donnelly et al., 2009a; Holtz & Wilson, 1992; Nadeau, 2014). When LDC students ask for help, if the professor is available and understanding, students feel much more comfortable, connected, and content (Nadeau, 2014). When students engage with someone who listens to them and answers their questions, their satisfaction with their learning experience increases (MacArthur et al., 2015;
These findings corroborate Tinto’s (1993) seminal theory of student retention, in which he found that frequent, friendly interactions with faculty support students’ happiness and persistence in college programs. Relationships with faculty support students’ academic development as well, through supporting by, for example, clarifying assignments (Lillis, 2001) and teaching beneficial study habits (Soria & Stebleton, 2012). With regard to academic literacy and language, a singular role faculty play is to mentor their students into their disciplinary discourse community (Gee, 1999), a role only faculty in students’ majors can perform for novice members of their discourse communities.

**Discipline-specific writing.** Content classes are the laboratories where such discipline-specific genres must be taught and practiced. Critical thinking, close reading, and conceptual expression differ across fields and contexts (Farris & Smith, 1992) and specific disciplinary writing forms, functions, purposes, formats, genres, styles, and vocabulary can differ greatly due to diverging epistemologies and ontologies (Ferris, 2018; Haswell, 2008). “Genre” is the key word here, and was defined by Hyland (2007): “resources for getting things done using language . . . a repertoire of responses that we can call on to engage in recurring situations” (p. 1). Each general education or content area class is an “academic microcosm, representing some of the values, texts, and conventions of the discipline” (Johns, 1995, p. 186). Students are expected to competently engage in the “debates of their disciplines” and be fluent in expressing their knowledge to disciplinary peers (Hyland, 2013c, p. 240).

Since writing in the discipline “operates as a tool for learning both disciplinary content and the specialised conventions of disciplinary discourse” (Hyland, 2013c, p. 242), if disciplinary faculty find that their LDC students possess relatively underdeveloped reading and writing practices or have difficulty understanding their expectations for writing assignments,
they must be able to respond with support, scaffolding (Fong, 2013), and curricula that embed disciplinary literacy activities into content delivery. However, disciplinary instructors who are experts in their disciplinary area may expect students to enter their classrooms already knowing discipline-specific discourse (Hyland, 2013c; Zawacki & Habib, 2014). Despite their content expertise, these scholars may not know how to teach disciplinary writing to their students (Watson, 2000), nor especially to LDC students (Silva, 1997).

Writing in the Disciplines (WID), a component of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), is a longtime best practice developed by writing scholars intended to afford students practice with “the language conventions of a discipline as well as with specific formats typical of a given discipline” (Kiefer, Palmquist, Carbone, Cox, & Melzer, 2018). In a WID learning environment, writing and reading activities are regularly, consistently, and effectively threaded throughout the content sequence (Lavelle et al., 2013; Newton & Moore, 2012) to provide opportunities for practice and instruction in the discipline and afford faculty frequent and ongoing opportunities to assess students’ development (Cammarota, 2004; Murray, 2016). Practice in disciplinary discourse contributes not only to students’ writing abilities, but also to their understanding of how knowledge is organized and valued across disciplines. Future disciplinary scholars need to be explicitly inculcated into the values, ways of knowing, and strategies of meaning-making of their fields (Farris & Smith, 1992; Hyland, 2013b; Krebs, 2008). Practicing writing in their major teaches students practices and competencies that will serve them throughout their academic and professional careers (Hyland, 2013b). Thus, explicit instruction in discipline-specific reading and writing and increased opportunities for engagement with authentic and contextualized disciplinary literacy activities are warranted in all classes in all majors (Lerner & Poe, 2014), not merely English composition, ESL, or literature courses.
It has been found that disciplinary literacy is developed “while learners engage with the subject matter” (Zamel & Spack, 2006, p. 138) by working on authentic assignments in their major (Farris & Smith, 1992). Writing-intensive (WI) seminars are another form of WID. WI seminars are typically configured as small classes comprising between 15-25 students. They are usually taught by faculty in the seminar’s discipline, as opposed to English faculty teaching a themed composition class (Farris & Smith, 1992). WI classes often assign a combination of formal and informal writing exercises and collaborative peer response. Final papers tend to be built from a series of scaffolded drafts informed and improved through iterative feedback and drafting, and seminars often have special relationships with a writing tutor or student mentor. WID and WI courses have proven successful for many years.

Unfortunately, many disciplinary instructors have been found to conceive their responsibility as strictly transmitting content knowledge, not teaching disciplinary writing (Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2018; Newton & Moore, 2012; Troxler et al., 2011). Faculty tend to not teach disciplinary writing in their classes; however, they still assign papers for evaluation purposes (Bawarshi & Pelkowski, 1999; Dávila, 2016; Lillis, 2001). Indeed, faculty in different disciplines have recently been found to assess student writing differently compared to English faculty trained to assess LDC student writing: disciplinary faculty tend strictly to grade for content information, whereas writing instructors read in a more comprehensive manner regarding aspects of writing proficiency (Eckstein et al., 2018).

Simultaneously, some faculty have misaligned values, prioritizing lower-order concerns like grammar and punctuation over higher-order concerns like organization and argument development. To make matters worse, faculty often use the same rubric for evaluating the
grammar of both English-only and LDC students (Wolfe-Quintero & Segade, 1999), which may be inequitable, or eschew rubrics altogether.

Higher education faculty use writing assignments to assess students’ apprehension of subject matter concepts, development of critical and analytic skills, and ability “to shape an argument using the conventions of their field” (Hyland, 2017, para. 1). Therefore, it would seem that all students need this discipline-specific writing to be explicitly taught by their professors, who are theoretically masters in the field’s discourse. And those students from outside the dominant culture would even more urgently need explicit teaching and formative feedback in order to learn, progress, and be able to successfully compete in the mainstream institution and world (Delpit, 1992). If teachers are not prepared to explicitly teach their discipline’s “discourse structures, linguistic precision, objectivity, or critical thought necessary for academic exposition or argumentation” (Johns, 1995, p. 183), students may not thrive when engaging in writing assignments across the disciplines, which are critical for preparing students for post-college intellectual work (Cumming, 2016, p. 366).

Furthermore, notwithstanding the value of discipline-specific writing and reading practice for monolingual English-only students, research has shown that LDC students may have difficulty comprehending readings and producing writing (Johns, 2001; Matsuda, 2012; McLeod & Miraglia, 2001). If LDC students face barriers of academic underpreparation and discrimination, and since writing and all literacy competencies are critically important to success (AACU, 2015), then they need support from faculty who are versed in teaching multilingual students to develop writing in their disciplines (Amaro et al., 2006; Beard, 2014; Bond et al., 2008; Cox, 2011). Hall (2009), Hall and Navarro (2011), and Matsuda (2012) acknowledged the need for a fundamental reframing of how disciplinary faculty teach in order to support the
equitable academic development of multilingual campuses. Such a paradigm shift, Hall (2009)

stated, can only be effected by “shifting faculty development programming to be fully inclusive

of L2 writers” (p. 42).

**Developmental teaching and learning.** To be effective, academic writing instruction

must be developmentally-responsive to all students’ “readiness to learn to communicate” in their

chosen disciplines (Lerner & Poe, 2014). Because “writerly growth requires time, productive

mentoring relationship, practice/risk taking, and eventually performance” (Brockman et al.,

2010, p. 48), teachers must see their LDC students’ writing development as a process, and thus

scaffold their gradual, incremental growth (Cumming, 2016). Educators must be ever-aware of

maintaining the necessary combination of scaffolding and challenge in their feedback on

students’ writing (Lizzio & Wilson, 2008), a dynamic that aligns with Vygotsky’s ZPD.

“Expertise is therefore a continuum rather than an end state” (Hyland, 2016b, p. 39), a

multidimensional activity that grows along an iterative ZPD (Brockman et al., 2010; Vygotsky,

do not constitute appropriate evidence of learning and development” (p. 207), a Vygotskian

epistemology about what constitutes evidence of learning for assessment purposes.

While some faculty may interpret their LDC students’ non-native or non-dominant-
culture English as deficient, the truth is that multilingual students’ writing processes are just
different—“strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in important ways”—from the
writing processes of monolingual students (Silva, 1993, p. 201). Further, LDC students will
have already developed oral interpersonal communication skills as well as elements of basic
academic language and literacy proficiencies by the time they begin college (Condrey & Derico,
2012; Cummins, 1991; Hansen & Beaver, 2012). This linguistic foundation, of which untrained,
deficit-oriented faculty might fail to recognize, can be built upon to support LDC students’
development of the cognitive academic language proficiencies needed for academic success. It
is crucial for teachers to be ever mindful and explicit in their promoting such an “apprenticeship”
into the standard discourse (Gee, 1989) for the purpose of providing tools for engaging and
succeeding in the world’s arena.

**Assignment expectations, instruction, and written feedback.** Faculty feedback on
student writing serves a social function in addition to an academic one (Séror, 2009), and
therefore is a significant factor in students’ learning (Andrade & Evans, 2013; Taggart &
Laughlin, 2017). However, feedback can be positive and useful, or it can be negative and
harmful. If faculty lack understanding of LDC students’ life experience and missing background
knowledge (Ferris, 2011), they will not be able to identify or address underdeveloped areas
within LDC students’ writing resulting from missing knowledge, nor support their development
in these critical domains. Feedback might be punitive or corrective, rather than supportive and
developmental. Indeed, research studies have regularly shown faculty feedback on LDC student
writing as “incomplete, idiosyncratic, erratic, and inaccurate” (Ferris, 2011, p. 20).

Transparent feedback makes known what instructors value and what they see as
problems. Implementing a routine of recursive drafting and revising, providing comprehensible
rubrics (CCCC, 2009), and giving instructional feedback “will provide the opportunity for
ongoing assessment directly connected to the courses’ learning outcomes. This process . . .
facilitates students’ understanding of what they are learning” (Gabriel, 2008, p. 108). Students
have reflected that to be of optimal use, writing feedback should be substantive (Smoke, 2004),
fair and respectful (Wingard & Geosits, 2014), and developmental to help students see where
they are in the learning process and where they still need to go (Johnson-Shull & Rysdam, 2012;
Lizzio & Wilson, 2008; Sadler, 2010), as in the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1935/1978). LDC students in Leki’s 1995 study reported that when they were explicitly taught and provided formative and comprehensible feedback, they were able to develop academic papers in their classes. For Leki (1992), “it is not the students’ texts that need to change; rather it is the native-speaking readers and evaluators (particularly in educational institutions) that need to learn to read more broadly, with a more cosmopolitan, less parochial eye” (p. 132). Faculty could read more “generously” for ideas (Horner et al., 2011; Spence, 2010) and preserve students’ authorship and authority of their own work (Wingard & Geosits, 2014).

Lillis’s (2001) conversations with her participants tended to focus predominantly on their not knowing what type of response was expected in a given writing assignment. They frequently recounted instances in which their instructor provided rigid yet seemingly arbitrary criticism to their writing, often in cryptic language. When asked why they thought a paper had or had not been successful, they did not know. “It turned out she liked it” (p. 60), was all one student could answer, whereas another responded, “she didn’t like it one bit” (p. 61). Instructors’ apparent capriciousness caused students to feel that pleasing the instructors’ “taste” (p. 60) or “quirks” (p. 61) was purely a matter of chance, based on their instructor’s “personal opinion, albeit with institutional power” (p. 63). Such a moving-target type of guessing game can strip away students’ agency and self-efficacy, and subverts the life-changing promise of education and learning.

When Brockman et al. (2010) surveyed faculty across their university about their expectations of students, the writing they assign, and the instructional supports they employ, they learned that “‘good’ writing is a highly elusive concept, especially within the context of multiple disciplines” (p. 43). The researchers heard a wide range of expectations and values across
instructors. Lillis’s (2001) participants often reported systematic obstructions to asking questions or receiving clarification from instructors. The instructors held a position of power over students by maintaining a constant level of distance and ambiguity. While any human being would be confounded if they were evaluated for competing “within the rules of the game without knowing what the rules were” (Lillis, 2001, p. x), writing can be a particularly thorny problem for LDC students due to the extrapersonal disparities between populations’ access to academic preparation and support. For an LDC student who may be academically underprepared, facing such varying conventions in writing formats and expectations among instructors could be frustrating and difficult to overcome.

**Discrimination.**

*Deficit perspective.* Society and institutions can unconsciously promulgate a “Eurocentric” rather than multicultural school climate causing LDC and other minority students to find their instructors hostile and leaving them with negative feelings about their college experiences (Gilchrist & Rector, 2007). Similarly, faculty untrained in teaching LDC students may perpetuate the equivalent “biased learning environments” (Behar-Horenstein & Morgan, 1995, p. 142) in their classrooms. They may default to basing their curriculum and instruction on the outdated student norm of young, affluent, white, monolingual native English-speaking, academically-prepared students with college-educated parents (Horner & Trimbur, 2002; Rafoth, 2015; Street, 2003, 2013), i.e., students benefiting from societal facilitators. Typically, any divergence from monolingual English-only forms of writing is seen by the mainstream academy as a deficiency in the LDC student. Deficit-mentality discourse, whether conscious or unconscious, is founded on a view of LDC students as underperformers (Leki, 2006; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1999; Zamel & Spack, 2006), rather than a realization that not all student
populations were given access to all of society’s advantages.

Faculty may be unwilling to “learn to recognize and honor the ‘logic’ of seemingly opaque writings of students deemed illiterate by adherents of English-only standards” (Horner, 2010, p. 13). Such faculty may consciously or unconsciously conflate LDC students’ standard English proficiency with their credibility, potential, or intelligence (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011; Matsuda, 2006; Zamel, 1995; Zamel & Spack, 2006). LDC students “may feel marginalized, isolated, alienated” as they sense they are not being supported by their professors or the institution at large (Villarruel, Canales, & Torres, 2001). This can cause them to internalize a self-assessment as lacking in intelligence, competence, and potential (Bawarshi & Pelkowski, 1999; Dávila, 2016; Holtz & Wilson, 1992; Horner et al., 2011; Lillis, 2001; Morton-Miller, 2013; Sanner & Wilson, 2008). Shifting this deficit perspective to seeing LDC students’ abundance of linguistic and cultural capital, along with their many other significant strengths, can stimulate a radical transformation in a classroom (Bergey et al., 2018; Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Delpit, 2002; García, 2012; Gee, 1989; Leonardo, 2003; Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Yosso, 2005).

_Cultural and linguistic inclusiveness._ All students need help and support from faculty to surmount the academic literacy barriers they may face (Metcalf & Neubrander, 2016). Faculty attention and engagement is therefore a key learning opportunity for all students, but perhaps even more so for LDC students, who may need culturally-inclusive academic support (Parboteeah & Anwar, 2009). Faculty typically do not familiarize themselves with the backgrounds, educational needs, discourses, and ways of knowing of culturally- and linguistically diverse students in general (Andrade et al., 2014; Beard, 2014; de Kleine & Lawton, 2015; Gee, 1989; Greenberg, 2013; Morton-Miller, 2013). If faculty are unaware of
students’ missing background knowledge, academic skills, and linguistic obstacles, they cannot provide effective, usable feedback (Ferris, 2011) and they risk exacerbating students’ perceived academic barriers (Amaro et al., 2006).

Intercultural misunderstandings between LDC students and dominant-culture faculty can lead to miscommunications and harm to LDC students (Donnelly et al., 2009a). Without cultural and linguistic awareness and understanding, faculty might draw incorrect conclusions about LDC students’ motives and motivation, for instance, why students’ work may be missing key understandings from course readings, thorough paraphrasing and proper citation of sources, or clear adoption of a position supported by evidence. This mismatch (Orellana, 2007) creates problems for LDC students “who must learn to negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and racial identities within the mainstream contexts and discourses” (Kinloch & Burkhard, 2016, p. 383). This can result in LDC students’ refraining from asking questions and joining class discussions, a situation which can be exacerbated by students’ varying degrees of English proficiency and slow acculturating to U.S. standard English-normed academic customs (Scheele, Pruitt, Johnson, & Xu, 2011; Xu & Davidhizar, 2005).

Jepson (2009) warned educators, when considering students’ and colleagues’ culture and ethnicity, about making the mistake of placing groups into neat, unilateral boxes. No culture is unidimensional, and no individual person comes from a single background, since personal histories make for individuality even within categories. Content faculty need training to learn about (and want to learn about) their LDC students, so they can identify their students’ needs and teach accordingly (Amaro et al., 2006; Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Moussu, 2013; Pacquaio, 2007; Rafoth, 2015; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). When faculty are culturally inclusive, LDC students do not feel they have to subsume their cultural
identities and worldviews, and therefore feel more self-confident, which aids them in developing professional identities and learning (Nadeau, 2014; Starr, Shattell, & Gonzales, 2011; Yoder, 2001).

Socio-linguistically-aware educators do not assume that dominant-culture standard English is superior to any other linguistic form; rather they value multilingualism as an asset (Millward, 2010). Rather than imposing a monolingual-normed curriculum and instruction with “correct” literacy forms onto all learners, faculty should legitimate “multiliteracies,” and scrutinize their curriculum and instruction to assess who they effectively empower and who they disempower, who is invited into the discourse community and who is excluded (CCCC, 1974; Dávila, 2016; de Kleine & Lawton, 2015; Street, 2003; Zawacki & Cox, 2011). With regard to academic writing instruction and assessment, faculty should be cognizant that aspects of student writing “may be evidence of alternative patterns and understanding, rather than of individual inability or poor study habits” (Hyland, 2016b, p. 54) because writing development occurs “in a socially influenced environment much larger than the assignment” (Eodice, Geller, & Lerner, 2017, p. 29). Academic writing should be seen as a developmental, socially-mediated practice (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Street, 2003; Vygotsky, 1935/1978).

Low faculty expectations of LDC students create unequal classroom communities and can lead to lower LDC student performance and retention. Conceiving of “otherness” as marginal or deficient can cause faculty to see LDC students as subpar. Due to interactions with biased faculty, non-dominant-culture students have expressed that they feel othered, silenced, and suppressed by the perceived message that their voices do not count (Hyland, 2002; Ivanič, 1998; Lillis, 2001; Zamel, 1995; Zamel & Spack, 2006). Some LDC students have reported feeling discriminated against, for example, due to an accent in English (Amaro et al., 2006;
Villarruel et al., 2001) and feel that their cultural backgrounds and ways of knowing are misunderstood or not valued by faculty (Donnelly et al., 2009a). “It’s like I’m imprisoned” is how one participant expressed her inability to write what she thought and felt in the context of college (Lillis, 2001, p. 85) and another reported she “had to put away [her] Pakistani self and give [faculty] what they want” (p. 102). Some LDC students report that they are intimidated to orally participate in class discussion due to fear that their intelligence and potential will be judged according to their English proficiency level (Mulready-Shick, 2013; Zamel & Spack, 2006).

LDC students may need help and support to surmount the barriers they face completing their degrees. But if they seek support or advice from an instructor, and that instructor is not culturally aware or “bridging” (Amaro et al., 2006, p. 248), this exacerbates LDC students’ perceived barriers. Since LDC students’ identities are embedded in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Lucas & Villegas, 2013), they are more likely to succeed in developing disciplinary literacy in classrooms that view diversity as a valuable form of capital, rather than merely an aberration from the dominant-culture norm (Amaro et al., 2006; Morton-Miller, 2013). LDC students wish faculty would recognize and appreciate the strengths they bring to their academic work, rather than solely pointing out their errors from a deficit perspective (Donnelly et al., 2009a). Instead, valuing and teaching classmates to value LDC students’ linguistic and cultural difference and their contributions to the educational community can be supportive of students’ learning (Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Delpit, 2002; Gee, 1989; Leki, 2006; Leonardo, 2003; Levinson et al., 2009; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Yosso, 2005). Many faculty do feel positive about diversity because it brings new points of view into the campus (Park & Denson, 2009).

Because language and literacy are mediums through which learners construct
understanding, all faculty need to be linguistically aware and inclusive (Oláh, 2008; Zamel & Spack, 2006). All faculty have to “recognize and take responsibility for the regular presence of second language writers” in their classes (CCCC, 2009, Part One; de Kleine & Lawton, 2015) and learn about the sociocultural and linguistic inhibitors faced by LDC students in learning to write in their disciplines (Fong, 2013) in order to create discipline-specific writing curricula that are inclusive, scaffolded, and multimodal (Cumming, 2016; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Pettit, 2011; Starr et al., 2011; Sumpter & Carthon, 2011; Yoder, 2001). Those who assume accountability for the learning of all their students support retention (Beard, 2014; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1999).

**Conclusion of social determinants.** To succeed in college coursework, students need a sufficient mastery of academic English reading and writing proficiency. Many academically underprepared LDC students may struggle with a variety of academic tasks and find few college resources to support them. Moreover, they might meet discrimination and low expectations, both conscious and unconscious, if instructors are uneducated about best practices in teaching and working with ways of knowing. As a result, LDC students often feel like outsiders to the higher educational institutional community, or, worse, drop out. However, there is no call to abandon teaching standard academic literacy altogether. Even social-justice-minded literacy educators in modern Anglo-United States contexts understand that they must support all their students to learn the code of standard academic literacy so they can develop the inherent, underlying analytical skills (Hyland, 2016b), as well as compete in the same arena as dominant-culture students (Delpit, 1995; Zawacki & Cox, 2011).
Individual Determinants of Academic Success

The above extra- and interpersonal influences are internalized in LDC students and become intrapersonal attributes that manifest in individuals as variable levels of internalized negative or positive attributes, behaviors, and self-assessment levels. These attributes subsequently mediate LDC students’ learning processes and writing development. The next section focuses on intrapersonal attributes and behaviors.

Intrapersonal attributes, behaviors, and beliefs.

Multicultural and multilingual strengths. Despite their struggles, culturally- and linguistically-diverse nontraditional students possess many intangible yet powerful strengths, including unrecognized intellectual, cultural, and linguistic capital and “wealth” from their own rich culture (Horner et al., 2011; Millward, 2010; Yosso, 2005). They bring years’ worth of authentic life experience and knowledge to their “acts of meaning making in academic writing” (Lillis, 2001, p. 6), and this cultural capital is valid and beneficial to a college learning community (Marschall & Davis, 2012; Yosso, 2005). LDC students’ home and community genres and vernaculars can assist them as they approach academic writing (Johns, 1995). Furthermore, these multicultural and multilingual qualities make them agile in negotiating new situations and contexts and are thus increasingly necessary and marketable due to today’s global market (Kanno & Cromley, 2013).

Motivation. Despite the academic adversity they face, LDC students possess personal qualities that help them persist through obstacles (Mulready-Shick, 2013). LDC students have been found to be driven by a powerful work ethic, motivation, determination, and tenacity (Amaro et al., 2006; Bond et al., 2008; Diefenbeck, Michalec, & Alexander, 2016; Donnelly et al., 2009b). The high value, for instance, Latinx LDC students place on academic attainment
motivates them to persevere through difficulty and anxiety (Bond et al., 2008; Nadeau, 2014). LDC students who are first in their families to attend college tend to be empowered not only to achieve for themselves, but also for the sake of their families (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Yoder, 2001). This exhibits agency and determination, especially considering their parents and families do not have personal experience from which to guide or support them. LDC students thrive when the institution overall sees the value they bring. These under-recognized and undervalued qualities support nontraditional and LDC students’ resilience and persistence.

**Social nature.** LDC students deeply value peer, faculty, family, and community relationships. Leki (2007) found LDC students’ literacy experiences to have a “social nature” (p. 5). Peer interaction, especially with culturally-diverse peers, is an important element in LDC students’ academic success (Nadeau, 2014; Wong et al., 2008). As for family, LDC students across many studies cited social relationships as a primary personal concern, both positive and negative (Amaro et al., 2006; Nadeau, 2014). For example, some students describe their family as supportive of their academic and career goals, while others are stressed by a lack of support from their family.

**College readiness.** Conley (2011), one of the foremost college readiness researchers, has identified the following four principal attributes and behaviors as critical for academic success for all beginning college students.

*Transferable cognitive and metacognitive proficiencies.* The first is the “range of cognitive and metacognitive capabilities” (e.g., problem-solving, argumentation, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis) that many educators of beginning college students have “consistently and emphatically identified” as far more crucial for academic success than disciplinary knowledge (p. 1). Conley (2010) also identified soft skills and other interpersonal and
intrapersonal attributes as necessary for college success, including being able to work both independently and collectively, follow directions, and demonstrate leadership. Among Conley’s (2011) matrix of student attributes and behaviors needed for academic success are beginning college students’ “high levels of self-awareness and intentionality” (p. 1), including developing the ability to assess oneself and one’s performance on a given academic task. Self-assessment, and the implications thereof, are milestones toward maturity and will lead students towards taking more accountability of their own learning and success.

Writing and content knowledge. Conley’s (2011) second category associated with academic success is “key content knowledge” in the various disciplinary areas. He bundled “the ability to write well” into this category and described writing well as “the single academic skill most closely associated with college success,” but it was surprisingly merely given a brief mention and not analyzed into its own many components (p. 1). It might seem to writing educators and researchers that the ability to write well is more of a cross-disciplinary proficiency, to be folded into the first category above, but Conley is not a writing specialist. Many LDC students will need to be supported by faculty and other institutional support staff to develop a level of writing and content knowledge to build upon. Without such support, their success may be jeopardized.

Attitudes and behaviors. Conley’s (2011) third component of college success is certain intrapersonal attitudes, such as persistence, agency, and accountability. Paired with these attitudes are the behaviors that flow out of them, including studying, managing time and coursework effectively, and engaging regularly with peers to support learning. As shown above, research has consistently found LDC students possess determination and motivation. However,
due to internalized negativity and deficient self-assessment, and lacking pre-college academic preparation, they may not have sufficiently developed success habits to persist through adversity.

*College knowledge.* Conley’s (2011) final aspect needed for academic success is “contextual knowledge” about how college works, such as applying, enrolling, and funding college, and understanding the customs, expectations, and policies of college. He acknowledged that college knowledge is like social and cultural capital in that it is inequitably constellated in the upper socioeconomic strata, thereby putting lower SES, along with the minority groups who make up most of this sector, at risk for attrition. “Access to information about the culture of college helps students understand how to interact with professors and peers in college and how to navigate college as a social system and learning environment” (p. 1). This component of college readiness is typically lacking in LDC students who are also FGS and from lower SES. Missing college knowledge can cause many high-stakes mistakes and misunderstandings regarding policies and expectations.

**Internalization.** Nonacademic experiences may present significant obstacles to LDC students’ college success. If LDC students feel they cannot express themselves completely or accurately using accepted forms of writing, they may feel silenced (Lillis, 2001; Zamel & Spack, 2006). Not surprisingly, faculty have reported perceiving less-developed students in general as evincing low self-confidence, being easily distracted, and suffering from academic anxiety (Capt et al., 2014; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Nadeau, 2014). LDC students may experience depression, sadness, discouragement, frustration, loneliness, and disappointment due to troubles with assignments or unkind faculty (Donnelly et al., 2009b; Jeong et al., 2011; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Nadeau, 2014; Ume-Nwagbo, 2012; Villarruel et al., 2001). LDC students reported that because they were intimidated or shy, they wished their faculty would open relationships with them by
offering academic support and positive feedback about their work (Donnelly et al., 2009a). Excessive shyness to the point of withdrawal causes LDC students to alienate themselves from the academic community of their peers and teachers (Donnelly et al., 2009a; Greenberg, 2013; Jeong et al., 2011; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Salamonson et al., 2010; Sanner & Wilson, 2008; Starkey, 2015), leading to negative outcomes.

If LDC students feel discriminated against or misunderstood, they may be reluctant to ask for academic help, especially if they are intimidated by faculty’s perceived power (Nadeau, 2014). LDC students report interpreting unfriendly, inattentive, or insensitive treatment from faculty as discrimination (Ackerman-Barger, 2010; Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007; Donnelly et al., 2009a; Sanner & Wilson, 2008; Starkey, 2015; Villarruel et al., 2001; Yoder, 2001).

**Conclusion of individual determinants of academic success.** LDC students bring many personal strengths to higher education, including a fierce work ethic, determination to succeed, strong motivation to graduate, resourcefulness, and desire for social connection. Faculty can be critically important supports to LDC students’ success. However, LDC students also may internalize negativity from biased environments and instructors, which can inhibit their academic success and writing development.

**Summary**

This review of the literature on the barriers to and supports of LDC students’ academic literacy development provides the warrant for this study’s research questions, thesis, and choice of methods. The consensus from the research literature is that college populations are changing rapidly, and are no longer predominantly from dominant-culture, white, English-only, higher SES backgrounds. Many individuals within this growing number of nontraditional students are
from culturally- and linguistically-diverse backgrounds and often experience societal,
institutional, and interpersonal obstacles that can impede their academic achievement and
persistence. LDC students have been identified as a population at risk for attrition; indeed, their
retention and graduation rate is far lower than dominant-culture students. To succeed in college
coursework, LDC students need to develop sufficient mastery of academic English reading and
writing proficiency. Many academically underprepared LDC students may struggle with a
variety of academic tasks, but find few college resources to support them.

Faculty have consistently been identified as a key factor that can help or hamper LDC
students’ academic literacy development and overall success in their college programs.
Therefore, LDC students can benefit greatly from knowledgeable and caring support from
educators who value the multiple literacies LDC students bring into their classrooms and
communities. However, faculty are not typically trained to teach discipline-specific writing, nor
to effectively engage or assess LDC students, though they regularly assign evaluative written
products and expect well-developed standard English academic literacy from all students.

If LDC students enter college with underdeveloped literacy proficiency, yet find little
developmentally-appropriate support, their academic achievement will be negatively affected.
Without writing support designed to meet their needs, nontraditional students’ pathways into and
through higher education can be obstructed. By expecting all students to be inculcated in the
dominant standard English academic literacy practice, but not teaching it or being available for
extra help or clarification, educators are perpetuating societal inequities that can damage their
vulnerable students. LDC students may need culturally- and linguistically-relevant support to be
successful and persist in college. LDC students bring many personal strengths to programs
which must be recognized and built upon to support their academic success in general and academic writing development in particular—the specific area of this study.

**Thesis statement.** If writing is critically important in college and career, LDC students, a population at risk for noncompletion, are underprepared for college-level writing in the standard-English context of U.S. higher education, and faculty are key factors in student academic outcomes, then available, developmental, formative, and culturally-inclusive writing instruction must be provided by faculty.

Educational inequities must be studied at the societal, institutional, social, and individual levels before a solution can be derived. This study was therefore warranted to gain a deeper, more intricate understanding of LDC students’ processes of academic writing development and their perceptions of their needs for support. Identifying perceived inhibitors and facilitators to such development will ultimately supply insight into developmentally-sound and culturally- and linguistically-inclusive teaching practices for supporting LDC students’ academic writing development.

**Strengths of the literature.** The findings of this review of the research literature demonstrate the consensus that rigid systemic barriers to academic access and success loom for LDC students. Because faculty have been shown to play a disproportionate role in LDC students’ perception of their ability to succeed, they can function as either positive or negative factors in LDC students’ academic trajectories. With specific regard to academic writing development, faculty untrained in evidence-based, culturally- and linguistically-relevant pedagogy can dramatically inhibit LDC students’ progress. Faculty who do not know how or refuse to developmentally teach or assess disciplinary literacy, as well as those who use antiquated teaching and assessment methods, are not supporting their culturally and
linguistically-diverse students’ development as disciplinary discourse members. Furthermore, faculty can be unconscious of their unexamined biases, leading to a deficit view of their non-dominant-culture students if they are not trained to be culturally and linguistically-aware.

Conversely, scholars concur that faculty who teach in a culturally- and linguistically-relevant manner and who value and respect students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds and strengths increase LDC students’ learning and lower their risks for attrition. The literature shows the power of LDC students’ motivation, tenacity, resourcefulness, and agency to succeed and graduate. Building upon these intrapersonal strengths can empower students to see themselves as valuable scholars with strengths deserving recognition who deserve academic support.

**Deficiencies in the literature.** The field of research into academic language and literacy is young. Moreover, the topic of this study is an intersection of several distinct areas of study and practice that tend to remain isolated, i.e., applied linguistics and TESOL, second-language writing, English composition, basic or remedial writing, college readiness, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)/Writing in the Disciplines (WID, Cox, 2011; Leki, 2006; Matsuda, 2012) and others. LDC writing research to date has been largely positivistic, aiming to quantify frequency and pattern in written products, with the goal of generalization to larger populations (Atkinson & Connor, 2008). In the late 1990s, several scholars, including Johns, Leki, Matsuda, and McLeod, began intentionally investigating the intersection of multilingual students’ learning and WAC/WID (Cox, 2011; Hall, 2014). However, there has been little recent qualitative research focusing specifically on linguistic background as a frame for inequitable college access and support (Kanno & Cromley, 2013) regarding academic writing development in disciplinary courses (i.e., not English, ESL, WAC, WID, or WI courses) in college. Further, few scholars
have focused on LDC students’ personal experiences of the forces they perceive as helping or hindering their processes of becoming academic writers, which is the aim of the study. There have been a small number of studies investigating some combinations of the following factors and phenomena that overlap within the research area of the study (Cumming, 2016). There is scholarship in the area of college access and success among underrepresented minority (Deil-Amen & Turley, 2007), undocumented (Morales, Herrera, & Murry, 2009), low SES (Bowen, Kurzwell, & Tobin, 2005), Latino (Arbona & Nora, 2007), first-generation (Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004), immigrant (Soria & Stebleton, 2012), and linguistically-diverse (Kanno & Cromley, 2013) students. There are scholars studying college writing readiness among 4-year (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014) and community college students (Perin, 2013). There have been studies on disciplinary writing development in native-English-speaking students (Beaufort, 2004) and college writing issues among international visa non-native English-speaking nursing students in Canada, Australia, and the United States (Baik & Greig, 2009; Donnelly et al., 2009b; Guttman, 2004; Hansen & Beaver, 2012; Knoch, Rouhshad, & Storch, 2014; Séror, 2009; Starkey, 2015; Weaver & Jackson, 2011). Additionally, a body of research has been conducted on LDC students’ academic writing in their English composition or ESL classes (Harklau et al., 1999; Leki, 1995, 2007; Matsuda, Saenkhum, & Accardi, 2013; Roberge et al., 2000; Zamel, 1995). Regarding faculty written feedback specifically, Taggart & Laughlin (2017) studied how (all) students feel about negative feedback and how it affects subsequent revision. These fields overlap and inform each other. Overall, this body of research has concurred that LDC students generally have poorer educational outcomes than their dominant-culture, English-only peers, and that student writing support is needed.
A few qualitative studies overlapped the research topic of the study to a greater degree than others. For example, Leki (1995) sought to learn about how LDC students developed academic writing across the curriculum, but her participants were exclusively international visa students. Lillis’s (2001) 3-year study investigated nontraditional student academic writing development in a UK university by capturing students’ talk about their college writing experiences. Leki’s (2007) more recent 5-year longitudinal case study of four LDC students found that their literacy experiences were deeply enveloped in “personal, social, and other academic experiences” and therefore difficult to disaggregate (p. 3). In 2007, Zawacki, Hajabbasi, Habib, Antram, and Das conducted interviews with 26 multilingual students, many of whom were international visa students, to learn about their experiences learning to write in college and found many similar experiences to participants in this study, but some of their participants were students known to the researchers as tutees in their writing center, which this study sought to avoid.

Ortmeier-Hooper’s (2008) case study on identity development among three Generation 1.5 students in their first-year English composition classes found that LDC students encompass a multiplicity of backgrounds, and their fragile, necessary identity development processes are harmed when students are forced wholesale into the reductive label of ESL. Nielsen (2014) studied Generation 1.5 students in an affluent, predominantly White, English-speaking college to learn their writing experiences “across the disciplines” (p. 133). Finally, Gopee & Deane (2013) conducted a qualitative study similar to this one, in which they interviewed ten nursing undergraduates (five international visa) in a UK nursing program to learn their perceptions of supports and barriers to their writing development in their discipline. Like this study, their
participants reported that the “enablers” of their writing development were their own high levels of motivation and writing support from the institution.

While each of these studies addressed a combination of the research topic, purpose, question, population, setting, or methodology of this study, it misses one or more critical criteria. Moreover, since there have been significant demographic and political shifts in U.S. higher education in the intervening time since many of these studies were conducted, this study sought to fill this gap.

**Conclusion.** This review of the literature contributes to the knowledge base by helping to define the field of resident multilingual college students’ writing development in academic disciplines. Writing proficiently is critical in all academic disciplines for all students, but LDC students may struggle more than their English-only classmates, thus placing their access to and success in higher education at risk. The disparities in educational equity found in this literature review are alarming. They signal inequity on societal, institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels. In order for literacy scholar-practitioners to redress this disparity by creating targeted writing support, they must understand what the students themselves experience as missing and needed to support their academic writing development in the disciplines. Atkinson and Connor (2008) called for more writing studies that conceive multilingual writers as “whole people,” instead of strictly writers or students isolated from the complex social contexts in which they write, in order to “do justice to the multiple, complex identities and demands impacting multilingual writing development” (p. 527). Therefore, this study built on the findings of this literature review to address a gap in the knowledge base, i.e., nuanced understandings of the sociocultural mediational forces LDC students perceive as facilitating versus inhibiting their
academic writing development in their disciplinary courses, in order to identify how educators can better support them to persist and graduate.
Chapter Three: Research Design

Haswell (1991) reflected that teaching and learning to write are “entangled with the happenstances of human development” (p. 1). These entangled developmental happenstances among a vulnerable, growing cohort are the focus of this study. The corpus of writing studies is full of small-scale investigations that spring from practitioners’ curiosity about “the ways their students write, or how target communities use the texts” (Hyland, 2016a, p. 73). This “systematic study of practice therefore provides a basis for theoretical reflection and modelling which in turn feeds back into, and improves, that practice” (Hyland, 2016a, p. 74). Because I am a practitioner who has identified a problem in my practice as a writing specialist in a multilingual, multicultural higher educational institution, and the research literature corroborates my observations, the study sought further insight into a process that is not well understood.

All choices and steps in a research study methodology must be aligned and logically connected (Smagorinsky, 2008). According to Creswell (2015), “the problem, the questions, and the literature reviews help steer the researcher toward either the quantitative or the qualitative track” (p. 11). The themes emerging from the literature review, and the gaps in between, crystallize a specific question to be answered. The study is designed to then capture the data sought in the most precise and comprehensive way. “Methods are inseparable from theories and how we understand writing itself” (Hyland, 2016a, p.75), thus all data collection, analysis, and interpretation must be aligned with the guiding theory (Smagorinsky, 2008). Smagorinsky (2008) called for writing researchers to provide more robust, detailed, and comprehensive methods sections, because “for results to be credible, the methods of collection, reduction, and analysis need to be highly explicit” (p. 393). They need to be transparent, too (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This is beneficial both for researchers and readers. Readers deserve to know
how a researcher’s conclusions follow from the data. And when researchers report their empirical research, the methods section “serves as the core from which radiate the content and organization of each of the other sections” (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 394). Explicitness and transparency in describing methods increase credibility and trustworthiness of findings.

I am a Vygotskyan writing educator; I conceptualize learning to write as developmental and socioculturally mediated. My pedagogical philosophy led naturally to my choice of activity theory as a guiding framework for research design and data analysis and interpretation. Due to the sociocultural mediation lens, in-depth conversational and discourse-based interviews with participants (multilingual college student writers) were chosen as two of the sources of data. These socially-framed data collection methods generated “thick description that not only clarifies the all-important context, but that makes it possible for the reader vicariously to experience it” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 180). It also supports the reader to identify aspects of the study and its findings that are transferable to their own professional context (Colorado State University, 2017). In this case study, the unit of analysis is interwoven with its context (Yin, 2013), another area of alignment. The next section will discuss in more depth each of these aspects of the study’s methodology.

**Qualitative Research Approach**

In her conception of meaning being socially constructed, Merriam (2002), a case study specialist, is aligned with Vygotsky (1935/1978), who viewed all language and learning as socially- and culturally-mediated (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007) and the New Literacy Studies thesis that all literacy is socially-mediated (Street, 2003). Qualitative research embodies “the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world” (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). Because this study did not seek to prove a prediction or hypothesis, demonstrate causality
among variables, analyze data using numerical statistics, or remain strictly objective, a qualitative research design was chosen (Creswell, 2015). This study simply sought to draw attention to an authentic problem of practice, an inequity affecting an at-risk group, a missed opportunity for the world. Qualitative methods often employ naturalistic methods including intensive, in-depth interviewing and focus groups (Schutt, 2006). This local, emic view on the developmental and social process of writing calls for such a qualitative approach (Leki, 1995).

**Social Constructivist-Interpretivist Paradigm.** A paradigm is a “distillation of what we think about the world (but cannot prove)” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15), a model for research that aligns to ontological worldview, epistemological consideration of knowledge, and axiological values (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study employed the social constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, which posits that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work... and develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 24) through moment-by-moment social mediation and interaction, predominantly through discourse (Hyland, 2013a; Vygotsky, 1935/1978). This study sought to understand participants’ “constructions of reality” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 243), and thus was theoretically aligned throughout its paradigmatic and methodological choices.

As long as researchers explicitly express their positionality and assumptions right at the start, the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm’s epistemology allows and encourages researchers to interact with participants. This paradigm allows me to be myself, which is the only way I can excel. Qualitative researchers formed and informed by social-constructivist-interpretivist ontologies are interested in learning how their participants make meaning. Similarly, social-constructivist educators, as in my case with the study context and student population, believe that to engender real learning, they must encourage and scaffold their students to make meaning for
themselves. Qualitative writing researchers, in turn, due to their socially-mediated view of language, literacy, learners, and learning, are curious about writers: how they are affected by social contexts, what considerations they entertain and strategies they employ, and how they evaluate the writing they produce (Hyland, 2016b; Sheridan & Nickoson, 2012). Writing research therefore often is conducted in naturalistic contexts, referring to the fact that qualitative study does not control or manipulate contexts, as compared to experimental research procedures (Hyland, 2016b; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Because my study sought to identify dynamics at play in the social process of writing development among “specific students, writers, texts, users or practices” (Hyland, 2016b, p.75), it took the form of a small-scale, naturalistic, social constructivist-interpretivist case study approach. My goal was to provide targeted, local knowledge that addressed gaps, identified connections, and remaining questions found in the literature knowledge base. Interviews were conducted with screened participants to collect data from exemplifying individuals in order to produce complexity of description, synthesis of perspective, and illumination of a process (Weiss, 1994). Therefore, this is a qualitative constructivist case study in the field of literacy studies whose aim is to learn about processes of discipline-specific academic writing development among LDC students.

Being intellectually reflective and relating interpretations back to the social context are the key responsibilities of qualitative researchers (Stake, 2005). In qualitative case studies, researchers are responsible for directing and redirecting participants’ interview responses back toward the unit of analysis and research topic under study (Weiss, 1994). In interviews, thus, I had to gauge when my questions had been satisfactorily answered versus when I needed to probe deeper, while simultaneously avoiding interfering or influencing the participants’ responses.
And I had to avoid injecting myself or my own experiences or reference points into interviews. While qualitative constructivist-interpretivist researchers do not strive for neutrality or objectivity as would positivist or postpositivist researchers, I had to be careful to remain self-aware and self-reflexive of my positionality and any bias that could skew data collection, analysis, interpretation (Powell & Takayoshi, 2012). A section near the end of this chapter is reserved for such self-reflexivity and transparency.

**Case study research tradition.** Case study is an empirical qualitative research methodology that seeks to extensively explore an authentic, multifaceted, real-time, real-life, real-world case or “instance in action” (Hyland, 2016a, p. 121), from a small group of instantiating individuals’ points of view (Hyland, 2016a; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2013). In case study, the unit of analysis (the “case”) and its authentic setting and context are inextricable. Case study methodology is aimed at gaining insight into an explicitly defined phenomenon, “issue, problem, or concern” (Creswell, 2013, p. 98) of a small scope (MacNealy, 1999), when the insight sought is "in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (Merriam, 1988, p. 19). Writing in college is a salient example of the intertwined nature of context and content, since text is composed for a pre-established purpose and audience, in a pre-established style and form, and within pre-established content parameters, according to a contextualized assignment. All writers respond to the disciplinary or discourse context or community in which they are members. The assignment instructions and instructor expectations define the context and the content for the writing process and the written product.

Most case studies are conducted by “people who have intrinsic interest in the case” (Stake, 2005, p. 450). This is reflected in my relationship to the unit of analysis. In my practice,
I support the academic writing practices of a multilingual student population. I am interested in discovering the inter- and intrapersonal processes underlying academic writing development among students like my own. This research, thus, aims for a deeper understanding of this process, within this context, among these instantiating individuals.

Case study is interesting to qualitative researchers because of a paradox regarding the individual and the case, and the issue of generalizability. Certainly, it is acknowledged that every individual and every instance is different; for example, every student’s story, classroom, department, school, community is different, given demographic profile, educational philosophies and practices (Bonda, 2014). Yet, there are common experiences and processes across the individuals. For example, in approaching her 2014 case study of a struggling school district, Bonda (2014) explained that “every failing school district has something in common: its students are not learning at the rate the school, broader community, and society want” (“Why Report,” para. 1). Her case study of one failing school district and its improvement process can “inform other school districts with similar challenges about the numerous aspects of this change process that are working” (para. 1). She is not saying her results are generalizable, but they may be transferable to a reader’s own context. This idiographic focus on one particular district’s experience, using multiple data sources and thick, in-depth description, can yield a detailed portrait of all the complexity of the individual, local case, but which can also inform the understanding of scholars, educators, and policymakers working to make positive change across districts.

As delineated by case study practice, I focused data collection on ten instantiating local individuals in my higher educational context. The study was conducted using an instrumental, descriptive, holistic case study approach. “Instrumental” refers to the study’s aim to learn about
and potentially build theory on the process of academic writing development, as evidenced by convergences and divergences across instantiating individuals (Stake, 1995). “Descriptive” means it will provide “rich and revealing insights into the social world of a particular case” (Yin, 2011, p. 49)—essentially describing “what happened” (Yin, 2011, p. xxii) within and across the individual participants’ processes. “Holistic” refers to one bounded unit of analysis (Stake, 1995, 2005; Yin, 2013), i.e., the process of development of academic writing among LDC students in disciplinary courses (as opposed to English or ESL courses). Writing researchers commonly use case study to seek the emic, personal perspectives of a small number of participants to “gain critical knowledge about writing practices” (Schultz, 2006, p. 360) through inductive analysis and intricate description that lends itself to practical application and transferability.

Another hallmark of case study is the triangulation of multiple sources of data for validity, credibility, and to avoid misinterpretation (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2013). Triangulation involves “verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” by either using more than one researcher to collect, analyze, or interpret data, or if the researcher is operating alone, as in the dissertation study, collecting multiple sources of data to find common patterns across multiple individuals (Stake, 2005, p. 454). Triangulation facilitates the understanding of various realities and truths, and increases the rigor, credibility, and, thus, trustworthiness of a study’s findings. Trustworthiness and its components will be discussed below.

The case of this study was therefore bounded as the process of academic writing development in disciplinary courses among domestic LDC undergraduate students at Urban University. Since writing researchers are interested in the manner in which writing is created and used for different events and within different contexts (Hyland, 2016b), I engaged
participants in conversations about their writing development experiences. In interviews, I paid close attention to the ways participants describe their engagement with reading and writing texts, as well as their instructors and peers, to access “not just what people do with literacy, but also what they make of what they do, the values they place on it and the ideologies that surround it” (Baynham, 1995, p. 1). Since case study is defined as a the study of a unit of analysis interwoven with its context, and the process of academic writing development among LDC students (the unit of analysis) is deeply influenced by the institution, department, instructor, class, assignment, student background, and purpose, among other factors (the context), I also concerned myself with in-depth descriptions of this context, such as class requirements and any other information participants shared (Stake, 2005).

**Activity theory and developmental learning.** Activity theory guided my framing of the problem and purpose that then guided my review of the research literature. It also guided my methodology. Vygotsky (1935/1978) discussed the need for a new way of thinking about method, in that researchers should analyze process, not product. He claimed that every psychological process, “whether the development of thought or voluntary behavior, is a process undergoing changes right before one’s eyes” (p. 61) and that learning is a social process. This study, then, through the framework of activity theory, sought to learn about participants’ experiences of the social interactions that affect their inner developmental processes of making meaning and making decisions that produce texts.
Research Site and Participants

Urban University (UU) is a large, urban, public research university in the Northeastern United States. In Fall 2017, UU reported an enrollment of approximately 16,400, of which 12,660 were undergraduates, including 1,880 new freshmen and 1,540 new transfer students. On its website it stated that in 2017, UU graduated 4,075 students. UU comprises 11 colleges and graduate schools and offers 213 undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs.

Many UU students are from low socioeconomic, multicultural, and multilingual backgrounds. UU reported on its website that in Fall 2017, 64% of undergraduates received financial aid, with 40% receiving Pell Grants. UU is a Title III institution, which the U.S. Department of Education (ED, 2014) defines as one having “at least 50 percent of its degree students receiving need-based assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, or hav[ing] a substantial number of enrolled students receiving Pell Grants” (para 2). Its website articulates UU’s pride about serving local urban constituents and extols its leadership in high quality education, access, and diversity. Its mission statement contends its community “nurture[s] respect for differences, excites curiosity, and embodies civility . . . [and provides] a supportive environment for the academic and social development of a broad array of students of all ages who represent many national and cultural origins.” UU stated on its website that its Fall 2017 undergraduate student population was 59% minority, one of the most diverse in the region. Additionally, 40% reported being linguistically diverse. In a 2017 publication reporting on annual indicators, the statewide university system listed UU’s predominant minority groups as Cape Verdean, African-American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, and/or two or more races.
UU is additionally an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander (AANAPISI)-serving institution, enrolling an undergraduate population in Fall 2017 that was 16% Asian American. For federal AANAPISI eligibility, an institution’s undergraduate population must be a minimum of 10% Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander (ED, 2014, para. 1) and more than half of the student population must be eligible for financial aid. Additionally, in Fall 2017, the statewide university system reported that 56% of UU undergraduate students were first-generation college students. These statistics are offered to help define the context of the case in this case study. As a practitioner, I have served as a writing support specialist and instructor at UU for several years and am personally and professionally familiar with its context and students. I am deeply committed to the academic success of UU’s student population, and specifically their academic writing development. This is important to bear in mind.

**Sampling Methods**

**Small sample using purposive sampling.** Non-probability sampling was employed to identify potential participants (Morgan, 2008). Following qualitative case study protocol, the sample size of participants was relatively small: ten individual students (Creswell, 2013; Grant-Davie, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Weiss, 1994; Yin, 2013). Merriam (1998) described qualitative inquiry’s intention to “understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants, it is important to select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 12). In this study, purposive, criteria-focused sample selection helped “inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 156; Morgan, 2008). With such a small sample, individual interviewees must represent “information-rich cases,” from whom researchers may “learn a great deal about issues of central
importance to the purpose of the research” which, she states, is the origin of the term purposive or purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998, p. 13).

Purposive sampling aided in defining the target population: multilingual college students. “Multilingual” students identify as using at least one other language in addition to English. It is worth noting that I shifted my terminology to using “multilingual” (rather than “linguistically-diverse”) when addressing participants to be more meaningful for individual multilingual students, who would not recognize or identify themselves as “linguistically-diverse,” an inherently comparative term. (“Linguistically-diverse” is only meaningful in consideration of all of society’s language-speakers, in that people who speak or once spoke a language other than English at home “diverge” from the mainstream dominant group of language-speakers who speak only English at home.) I also shifted from employing the verb “speaking” to “using” multiple languages, as multilingualism can take many forms including receptive listening to native-language speakers but responding in English. The final sample consisted of ten participants, who were screened for eligibility using inclusion and exclusion criteria through an online survey. Precise inclusion and exclusion criteria for sample selection are described below.

**Sample frame: Inclusion and exclusion criteria.** The sample frame comprised domestic (non-international visa) LDC undergraduate students who have to engage in writing assignments in general education or discipline-specific classes (i.e., outside of the English or ESL department, where it is assumed more explicit teaching of writing occurs). I excluded international visa students because I am most interested in multilingual college students who transition to college from urban U.S. high schools, adult education and ESOL programs, and community colleges. The variables of age, gender, race, ethnicity, and specific linguistic background are not being studied, so that eligible participants could be of traditional- or
nontraditional-age, and of any gender, race, ethnicity, or linguistic background (except English-only). I intentionally did not recruit from the college I worked in, and I made certain I was not personally acquainted with any of the survey respondents before inviting them to interview for the study.

**Procedures**

**Institutional Review Board approval.** Once the research proposal was accepted by my dissertation committee, approval from Northeastern University Institutional Review Board was sought, and once obtained, an IRB authorization agreement from Urban University, the research site, was requested, obtained, and signed by both Northeastern University and Urban University. After IRB approvals, I sent an IRB-stamped recruitment email (included as Appendix A), informed consent, and survey to selected instructors to be disseminated to their class rosters. In the recruitment email, I indicated explicitly what participation would entail and that afterwards, participants would receive a gift card for $20 as compensation. I had been given permission by the Northeastern IRB to distribute and discuss the recruitment email in person with the class. I visited five classes to talk about the study and personally invite participation. After data collection, I requested of Northeastern IRB a modification of my research protocol to be able to send a second survey, which was approved.

**Data sources.** Data was collected from several sources from ten participants: (1) responses to a preliminary survey to ascertain potential participant eligibility vis a vis inclusion and exclusion criteria, i.e., residency status, language use, and course assignments; (2) one in-depth, hour-long interview per participant in which participants were asked about their writing experiences (a) in their classes and (b) in the context of specific writing samples produced for their classes (discourse-based); and (3) responses from a follow-up survey to the interviews.
Regarding the follow-up survey, certain societal variables had emerged in some of the interviews, but not all. I suspected these variables were important mediators in participants' experiences developing writing in college, so I felt I needed to inquire explicitly about these variables across all participants. Therefore, I requested from the Northeastern IRB a modification of my approved research protocol to be able to conduct a follow-up survey, and it was approved. Eight of the 10 participants completed the follow-up survey, in which they were asked questions to ascertain participants’ respective statuses regarding these variables: parent/guardian educational attainment; years living in U.S.; academic preparation; language dominance; accent in English; instructors’ awareness of their being multilingual/multilingual; and instructor comments on their English proficiency. Enriching the survey and interview data was my regular analytic memoing. The interview protocol and two survey questionnaires are included as Appendices C, B, and F, respectively. A focus group was not conducted due to time constraints.

It took several attempts to identify a disciplinary class whose writing assignments are understandable enough for me, an academic writing scholar, to analyze. After receiving permission from the IRBs of Northeastern University, Urban University, the director of the IS, and the academic department head, I sent a recruitment email to the instructor to disseminate to her class roster in the attempt to recruit and study student participants and course documents in their classes. The recruitment email included a link to a preliminary eligibility questionnaire (survey questionnaire included as Appendix B).

**Data collection.** Intentional design is important for a case study to be valuable, and data collection must be systematic (MacNealy, 1999). In this study, data included questionnaire
responses from two surveys, interviews, and researcher memoing. Data was collected in early 2018, in the traditional spring semester.

**Preliminary eligibility survey.** To assist in sample selection, respondents from the target population were sent a short, preliminary, web-based questionnaire (Creswell, 2015) through a password-protected Google Forms survey, in which only the respondent and I could see respective respondent’s email address and responses. An unsigned informed consent document preceded the survey page. The questionnaire was designed consciously to increase the likelihood that respondents would complete it (MacNealy, 1999). For example, the questions were phrased and posed intentionally and sensitively in terms of format, wording, and scales for responses (Creswell, 2015). The questionnaire posed a combination of closed-ended questions, in which respondents chose a response from provided options, and semi-closed-ended questions, in which respondents chose from among offered response options while being offered the opportunity to create their own response if their viewpoint was not captured by the response options provided. Closed-ended responses afford more analysis convenience for researchers due to being inherently categorizable and immediately quantifiable, while open-ended responses must be coded and categorized into themes and patterns (Creswell, 2015), but invite respondents to express their thoughts on their own terms.

Survey questions requested residency status (simply because I was seeking to interview domestic, resident multilingual students, rather than international visa students), multilingual status, languages spoken, and usage patterns of these multiple languages. These background questions offered respondents “preset response options” (Creswell, 2015, p. 389) as well as an optional open-ended response. The survey also asked in which courses respondents have writing assignments and what types of writing assignments they have, with a checklist of options.
A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted on a small group of respondents who were not among the potential sample population, e.g., colleagues, family members, and graduate students. The purpose of the pilot was to ensure the email delivery system containing the Google forms survey functioned properly, and to learn how recipients responded to the way questions were posed on the survey itself. Pilot respondents were asked to share their assessment of the questions and questionnaire overall, as well as offer suggestions for improving it. Respondents felt there was too much text that came before the survey, which could serve as a deterrent. While I agreed, due to IRB requirements, the recruitment email plus the non-signed informed consent had to come before the questions.

Final sample selection was based on potential participants’ responses to the initial survey. There was one case in which a respondent’s answer to a survey question was unclear, and I had to follow up to ascertain eligibility. This respondent answered, “All of them” to the survey question asking, “Which of your courses require writing assignments? Please list them here.” To my further questioning, it was determined he was in fact eligible. Due to all respondents’ being eligible, it is my supposition that students self-selected when they read the language-status inclusion criteria when completing the survey. The survey questionnaire is included as Appendix B.

I distributed a request for dissemination of the recruitment invitation to numerous instructors, but there were three instructors in particular who took an interest in promoting participation as a lesson on the value of social science research that studies social disparities, who invited me into their classes to recruit participants directly. My class visits served as the epicenter of a snowball, causing a torrent of eight respondents in one week. I immediately capitalized on the interest and scheduled and conducted the interviews within days, hours even,
of each individual's response to my survey. After the initial burst, the responses slowed. My committee recommended five to eight participants, and I had conducted eight. However, based on the data I had conducted at that point, I felt I needed a few more individuals for a more solid database for findings. I then reached back out to several faculty to remind students that recruitment would continue through the end of the month of April. I was able to recruit two more participants, for a total of ten interviews. I felt satisfied with the saturation of data to answer the research questions at that point, and I therefore ended the recruitment period, closing down the Google survey. Additionally, at that late point in the semester, I knew students would be concentrating on final assignments and exams and would consequently be less likely to be able to or interested in participating in an interview study.

**Interviews.** “The interview is the main road to multiple realities” about a case, the examination, interpretation, and understanding of which might be seen as the value and purpose of case study (Stake, 1995, p. 64). Qualitative researchers interview participants to collect their descriptions of their perceptions, interpretations, and experiences of their “life worlds” (Kvale, 1996, p. 11), which yield understandings of their “thoughts, perceptions, feelings, motivations, responses, and actions in relation to the issues” being researched (Blakeslee & Fleischer, 2007, p. 129). In a qualitative approach, data from participants’ descriptions of their personal experiences provides evidence, and findings are backed by illustrative quotations, rather than statistical analyses (Weiss, 1994). In-depth interviewing puts a “human face” on abstract research problems (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 29) and creates an authentic, often enjoyable social experience for both researcher and participant.

In this study, interviews were conducted to collect data from exemplifying individuals in order to produce complexity of description, synthesis of perspective, and illumination of a
process (Weiss, 1994). Data was collected through semi-structured, in-depth, open-ended interviews in which participants were given the opportunity and encouragement to describe in depth their processes as they develop as academic writers in their disciplinary classes and programs. There was one in-depth interview conducted with each participant. Two types of qualitative interviews were conducted during each one-hour session in order to collect different sources of data for the purpose of triangulation: (1) open-ended conversational questions and answers to learn about participants’ experiences and backgrounds developing as writers, and (2) discourse-based questions and answers about participants’ writing samples (which we were reviewing together) to learn about their processes and experiences of writing itself. The interviews took place during the Spring term in an empty office (not belonging to the researcher) on campus, and lasted approximately one hour each. The interview protocol is included as Appendix C.

**Semi-structured interviews.** Semi-structured interviews afford a general guideline, yet “allow extensive follow-up” (Hyland, 2016a, p. 117). The interview is thus free to follow the direction taken by the participant’s narrative. Because development, language, and literacy are mediated socially (Street, 2003; Vygotsky, 1935/1978), students were encouraged to elaborate on any experiential factor that emerged in the conversation that has interacted with their writing development, including self-assessment, self-efficacy, and identity, as well as interaction with instructors, tutors, advisors, and peers. An example of the type of information I was seeking in the experiential interviews may be seen in Leki’s (2007) study, in which she asked interview questions about participants’ “perceptions of the work they were required to do in their courses across the disciplines and on the resources they had or developed” (p. 5). Writing research
frequently uses semi-structured interviews due to the agility and flexibility they afford, as well as the social nature of the interaction (Hyland, 2016b).

In this study, interview questions were derived from the research questions and guided by activity theory in that they inquired into an experiential, social, and developmental process. As such, in my study, participants were prompted to describe what has helped and what has hindered their learning to write in college. Following the theoretical guide of activity theory, I asked questions about their overall writing development experiences for the first half. They were asked to describe interactions with instructors, peers, staff, and tutors. They were asked about their experience engaging in discipline-specific writing assignments. They were also asked how their multiple languages influence their academic writing development.

**Discourse-based interviews.** In this study, I was interested in learning about the intrapersonal development influencing LDC students’ writing, including the intrapersonal moment-by-moment “assumptions writers made or what background knowledge they had concerning the audience, the topic, and the strategies” that they employ to the task of writing (Odell, Goswami, & Herrington, 1983, p. 222). Leki (2006) conducted research with similar aims to those of the study (in a study prior to her 2007 study mentioned earlier), in which she constructed an interview protocol that asked about “the kinds of academic tasks confronting the students, any problems they were experiencing with them, the way the students approached the tasks, [and] the strategies they were using to address any problems” (p. 139). In this study, I asked interview questions such as these to elicit this type of data.

I reasoned that capturing such micro-processes would be best accomplished through discourse-based interviews, which “engage students in dialogue about their writing—to see them as individuals with the ability to use language in powerful ways given the opportunity—in short,
to have one-to-one conferences with them…” (Pemberton & Kinkead, 2003, p. 6) about their writing, so I asked participants to bring samples of their own written work, so we could talk about the processes, strategies, and decisions they employed as they wrote. Discourse-based interviews afford participants the opportunity to “make explicit the knowledge or strategies that previously may have been only implicit” about their writing processes and development (p. 222). Heath (1982) referred to discourse-based conversations and other “occasions in which written language is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretative processes and strategies” as "literacy events" (p. 74). Lerner and Poe (2014) conducted discourse-based interviews with college students in science fields in which they asked participants to describe how they approached their discipline-specific writing assignments and share their “reflections on the challenges and successes of their writing as well as the larger role that writing and speaking played for them” (p. 48). Discourse-based interviews were invaluable to capture the data of interest in the study.

There has been limited discourse-based research that has brought to light such “tacit personal knowledge” (Odell et al. 1983, p. 222) writers apply as they write. This research study engaged participants in discourse-based discussions about their process of developing as academic writers, frequently centering around a piece of their own writing (Odell et al., 1983). Specifically, talking about participants’ writing assignments from their discipline-specific courses was the focal point of these discourse-based interviews. The discourse-based phase of the interviews was employed not to analyze the rhetorical aspects of the writing per se, but as a medium for bringing participants into the present moment with their own micro-level writing process, rather than simply recalling experiences filtered through memory and influenced by
time and affect, and thus less reliable. This second phase of interviewing was chosen for the purpose of triangulating participants’ data.

To accomplish the discourse-based interviews, participants were asked to bring to each interview their discipline-specific writing assignments. In the second phase of each interview, I asked questions about their writing samples. I did not evaluate the writing process or product, nor did I employ a rubric, nor did I plan to analyze the writing for rhetorical or process moves. The intention was to use the writing as a vehicle to learn about students’ experiences engaging in the actual writing process as well as their experiences with faculty feedback, assignments, and expectations. I inquired into students’ decision-making processes in developing that particular piece of writing. I wanted to learn about these intrapersonal experiences in addition to those that were social (interpersonal and extrapersonal).

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument or filter (Takayoshi, Tomlinson, & Castillo, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), so I felt it appropriate to serve as the expert in interpreting student writing. I trusted myself to interpret what was “going on,” and I tried to squeeze meaning from students’ descriptions and explanations of their processes. I asked participants to talk about their experiences regarding decisions about individual words, sentences, paragraphs, and structure. Because written texts represent communicative events in which a writer intends to relate meaning to a reader (Huckin, 1992), I asked participants to describe their experiences on sociocultural levels as well, regarding interpersonal interactions with their instructors, classmates, or tutors regarding their writing. Such literacy events were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Once ten hour-long interviews (one with each of ten participants) were conducted, and no new information emerged, I considered there to be saturation and ended the recruitment and interview phase (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2006).
**Disadvantages of interviews.** Interviews can have some weaknesses. For instance, researcher bias and assumptions can unconsciously color the language they use to form interview questions or the framework they use to interpret participants’ answers (MacNealy, 1999). There can be unconscious influence in any interpersonal dimension, e.g., physical, psychological, emotional, cultural, or linguistic. This influence can intimidate or oppress participants through perceived power distance, authority, or reputation of researcher. Audio recording may serve as an accountability measure that can alleviate some of the researcher’s influence on the participant during an interview. Secondarily, there can be bias or falsity in the answers, whether intentional or unintentional, on the part of the participant, or due to a flaw in the researcher’s questions or methods (MacNealy, 1999; Weiss, 1994). In this study, care was taken to remedy these drawbacks through increased awareness, and researcher bias was addressed through regular clarification during interviews and member-checking of transcriptions in which participants were asked to adjust anything to better represent their intended meanings.

**Recording and transcription.** The interviews were audio-recorded using a small digital recording device and the Rev.com application on my phone as a backup. Audio files were then uploaded and sent to Rev.com immediately after the session for human transcription. Rev.com sends transcriptions back within a day or so. I would then check the transcriptions against the recordings and make any corrections, and then send each to the respective participant for member-checking. This was part of the agreement when they signed up and I was clear that the incentive offered would be paid upon my receipt of their approval of the transcription. Only after participants approved the transcriptions were they read for analysis, iteratively, to note emerging themes and patterns within each interview transcript and across the transcripts as a body of data.
Analytic memoing. Immediately post-interview, as soon as I uploaded the audio file of each transcription to Rev.com for transcription, my process was to force myself to sit down and spend 20 minutes writing an analytic memo about the interview, using notes taken during the interview as a mnemonic, before I did anything else. I maintained a research notebook in a password-protected app called Evernote, in which I wrote my thinking, planning, and questioning (strictly using pseudonyms and anonymizing any other identifiable information) during my process of “exploration of issues with unreserved fervour” (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008, p. 69). In addition to such chronicle of exploration and documentation, I also developed a practice of continuous musing in order to make connections, draw conclusions, and build theory. My research notebook served as a repository of these writings called analytic memoing.

My regular practice of analytic memoing supported the reflective, recursive “conception and contemplation” (Birks et al., 2008, p. 68) that afforded me deep enough levels of engagement for taking “conceptual leaps from raw data to those abstractions that explain research phenomena” (Birks et al., p. 68), through which new theory could be constructed. Memoing began at the earliest phases of the study through conceptualizing the research problem, “record[ing] the decision-making trail” (Birks et al., p. 70), articulating the research question, and reflecting upon my own stance and positionality. My early memos addressed concrete problem-solving and planning, while, as the data analysis process progressed, memoing involved iterative questioning and reconsideration of data and literature (Bailey, 2007). Making a habit of daily memoing aided me in preserving and developing my ideas and understandings for later unpacking and connecting, no matter how inconsequential a thought or connection may have seemed at the time.
Another benefit of regular analytic memoing was my sense of momentum and productivity (Birks et al., 2008). As the study progressed, the data were collected, and the consideration, analysis, and interpretation were underway, daily memoing sessions served as clarifying and documentary practices toward meaning-making, while simultaneously reducing the chances I would become overwhelmed by complexity or confusion. Because such analytical reflection is framed in the informal, personal form of a memo, the barriers of impostorship syndrome, perfectionism, and self-censoring were sidestepped; memos were rough drafts, sometimes repetitive, sometimes bullet points and lists, thereby making me feel less inhibited in jotting down my wild hunches, conjectures, and notions.

**Data Analysis**

Analysis entailed “identifying units of analysis and classifying each unit according to the categories in a coding system—either a preexisting system or one developed for the data in question” (Grant-Davie, 1992, p. 272). The analytical approach of this research was predominantly emic and “problem-driven, not theory-driven” (Huckin, 1992, p. 89). An emic approach denotes a concern for the local, context-specific problem of practice and what understandings were revealed with investigation and exploration, as versus the etic approach, in which an a priori theoretical framework or other pre-existing organizational system is used to analyze and make meaning from data. While having begun with a priori coding, I remained predominantly interested in emic, inductive analysis to discover new understandings that emerge naturally and authentically through the social interaction between researcher and participant around their experiences of the process of developing as writers in college. It is only through listening openly to participants’ authentic descriptions of their experiences and needs that educators can learn what is missing in existing pedagogy and curriculum and thus target new
approaches to maximally support students’ learning. However, in the interest of analytical intricacy that would increase rigor and trustworthiness of findings, I sought a balance between the emic and etic: I considered ideas from the research question, theoretical framework, and literature when first reading transcripts and engaging in preliminary, exploratory analysis. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) and Levitt et al. (2018) called for researchers to be fully transparent in their analytical method to allow readers to judge for themselves the findings’ trustworthiness. Therefore, in the next section, I will recount the analytical process I engaged in in this study.

Data analysis began immediately upon initiation of the data collection process with post-interview memoing on the same page with the interview protocol and my notes taken during the interview (Weiss, 1994). In this constant comparative method, as themes began to emerge authentically from freshly collected data, new data were compared to the preliminary codes in an “essence-capturing” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 9), recursive process that was enriched and challenged as more data were collected and categories were refined and solidified (Creswell, 2013). The research study thus proceeded inductively in order to prioritize identifying patterns that emerged naturally from the data. Transcription data was then reread numerous times and edited down to only the relevant text to my research concerns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), i.e., “significant statements, sentences or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 61). After I began noticing a recurrence of ideas (e.g., prior academic preparation repeatedly emerged as a variable that participants saw as directly affecting their writing development in college), in subsequent interviews I was intentional about asking about those ideas.
Coding was my first step of data analysis, in which meaning units or chunks in raw data were labeled for later organization and analysis (Creswell, 2013, p. 180), thus progressing from reading raw interviews to gleaning answers to my research questions, gradually and methodically, with “each step building on the previous one” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 35). My purpose in data analysis was therefore to simplify and break apart the data into component elements to seek for patterns, common themes, convergences, and divergences across the elements. MAXQDA was used to aid in data management and analysis. Initially, the software was mainly helpful as a repository to prepare, store, organize, and code my data (Creswell, 2013), including memos, but after the coding and categorizing was underway, it became indispensable for managing data and affording me the ability to pull reports to find patterns and to visualize cross-dimensional relationships for interpretation of meanings and implications. While I was writing up the findings, I regularly returned to the software to find or check a quotation.

Analysis began with preliminary, first-cycle coding using a priori codes that flowed from the research question, problem statement, purpose statement, and theoretical framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2016; Smagorinsky, 2008), i.e., seeking evidence such as social mediation (from activity theory) and participants’ perceptions and internalization of the effects of this mediation—both the facilitators and inhibitors (from research questions)—on their writing development. Additional initial codes included students’ personal attributes, reported linguistic interaction with writing, and descriptive codes for neutral aspects of writing (e.g., retrieving information from texts, or thesis and argument) that emerged in their narratives. These meaning chunks were labeled with inductive structural codes that identified inherent concepts for later splitting into subcodes and categorizing into superordinate concepts (Saldaña, 2016). Salient,
idiomatic quotes were highlighted for later presentation. I intended for the participants’ voices to be foregrounded in the study write-up because participants’ authentic language is more descriptive and evocative than predetermined or etic codes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Furthermore, representing the participants’ meanings authentically by using their own words affords a layer of accountability to stem researcher bias in interpretation, thus increasing credibility of research findings.

As codes recurred and accumulated, and patterns began revealing themselves, I began to constellate similar codes into groupings and fold subcodes into a superordinate “implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 38). For example, a passage about a participant’s rigorous high school experience was coded as “academic preparation.” I transitioned to Second Cycle coding by combing through all my First Cycle coding systems in MAXQDA, methodically subsuming codes into categories, i.e., “abstracting out beyond the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2013, p. 199). The code of “Academic preparation” was folded into the superordinate category of “Educational access.”

In Second Cycle coding, I synthesized the categories of codes into themes that would help me as the researcher, and ultimately the reader, to explain and understand the wider-vista meanings found in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The category of “Educational access” was themed as “Extrapersonal.” Then I returned to the binary qualification in the research questions and considered whether a given data point would serve to facilitate or inhibit an LDC student’s academic writing development. However, this more advanced phase of categorization was not a definitive process. For example, since I had asked participants about the perceived facilitators and inhibitors to their academic writing development, and these same identified
forces (e.g., faculty feedback, academic preparation) would be seen, according to my framework, as sociocultural mediators, I assumed the process would involve a binary determination of whether the mediator was facilitating or inhibiting. However, while it was a powerful finding that every mediator could serve as both a help or a hindrance to participants’ writing development (e.g., positive, abundant faculty feedback was a clear facilitator, yet negative or lacking faculty feedback was a powerful inhibitor), it was not that simple. For example, many students reported strengths in having ideas and locating information in texts. I coded this phenomenon as a facilitator. When asked about the areas in their writing which they perceived they needed to develop, these same students typically named synthesizing and connecting those ideas in order to write a full argument. Initially, I coded this data (the areas in need of development) as inhibiting mediators. But then I reconsidered; I reasoned that possessing a critical clarity regarding areas one needs to develop is actually a facilitator of development. However, then I reflected that the negative self-assessment might not necessarily be accurate, but instead revealed participants’ skewed writing self-assessment and internalization of negative sociocultural mediation and messages due to societal, institutional, or faculty discrimination. Thus, I decided to add the code “writing self-assessment” and use my judgment, based on the discourse-based interview and participants’ metacognition around strengths and weakness in their own writing, as guides for whether self-assessment was accurate or distorted. This is just an example of how the analytical process of arriving at synthesized findings required constant self-questioning and reflexivity.

I began constructing a conceptual framework to understand how codes, categories, and themes related to build upon preexisting activity theory and to represent those relationships as revealed through analysis. I constructed a theory sentence (Saldaña, 2016) based on this
conceptual framework: The theory constructed from this study is that external sociocultural structures and conditions [societal, community, institutional, and faculty (e.g., feedback, reception, expectations)] mediate (by facilitating or inhibiting) LDC student’s (subject) internal context and conditions [due to intersecting risk factors (e.g., parents’ level of educational attainment, English proficiency, academic preparation for college, years lived in United States, having to work)] that in turn mediate (by facilitating or inhibiting) their processes of writing class papers (object) and developing as writers (learning activity). This sentence-creation exercise clarified my understanding of the interacting dynamics in the phenomena I was studying.

I then assembled a corresponding linear skeleton, which I progressively fleshed out with quotes and narrative to tell participants’ stories in order to understand their experiences, all the while memoing (Saldaña, 2016). I recursively aligned all of these expressions of the conceptual framework as the nature of relationships between concepts, codes, categories, and theory, and outline became clearer. Then I pulled illustrative quotes from each transcription and data from the surveys and inserted them into the outline quotes from each transcript into the outline.

The sentence exercise forced me to revisit and reevaluate the theoretical framework to try to understand it and its evolution more thoroughly, as described in Chapter One. From this deeper analysis of the theory, I constructed my conceptual framework that fully concretized my understanding of the findings. This newly reassembled conceptual framework revealed a fresh and complete understanding of the meaning of the data. This stepwise analysis and synthesis process allowed me to ultimately infer, interpret, and construct meaning to answer the research question (Grant-Davie, 1992; MacNealy, 1999).
Criteria for Quality Qualitative Research

As a longtime visual artist and emerging educational researcher, I find the process of qualitative research reflects the process of creating collage. A collage artist first collects whole original objects and images, studies them, and cuts them up into component pieces and parts. The component parts are then studied, scrutinized, and sorted into some kind of desired, logical groups. The artist might have started the process with a vague aesthetic in mind—for example, I have been interested in translucency of light or nature-based abstraction for periods of time—or the desire and logic emerge through the process itself, in which, during the sorting process, the artist becomes aware of an aesthetic pattern, trend, or theme. Often the prior interest and the dawning interest combine and interact. This aesthetic interest drove decision-making regarding the incremental next steps of reassembling parts into a new wholly-different, integrated, concentrated whole that reflected more than a simple additive composite, that bespoke an essence of the original wholes, an understanding of new relationships between parts and whole.

The metaphor of making collage, which occurred to me naturally as a mixed media artist, but was found to also have been noted in the literature by Norris (2008) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) as the bricolage process in making quilts and the montage process in making films, can be analogized to engaging in qualitative research. A researcher collects whole original interviews, documents, observations, and research literature. The wholes are studied in their entirety, and then analyzed and coded. The researcher might have started the process with a vague theory in mind, or the theory emerges through the process itself, in which, during the coding process, she becomes aware of patterns, trends, or themes. Often the prior theory and the emerging theory combine and interact. The theory serves as a guide for the researcher’s intellect and ethic, as the
codes are iteratively studied, scrutinized, and sorted into larger categories. Theory similarly
drives decision-making regarding the incremental next steps of re-assembling parts into a new
wholly-different, integrated, concentrated whole (Saldaña, 2016) that reflects more than a simple
additive composite, but bespeaks the essence of the original data, an understanding.

**Ethical considerations.** “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the
world” (Stake, 2005, p. 459), and as a result, the safety and wellbeing of participants in these
private spaces is of primary importance in all research (Mack et al., 2005).

**Informed consent.** Unsigned informed consent forms were included with both surveys,
placed so as to be read before the questionnaire text began. The unsigned informed consent form
is attached as Appendix D. Signed informed consent were requested before recording each
interview, and orally repeated and recorded after initial consent was given, in a manner that was
understandable to each participant (American Educational Research Association [AERA], 2011).
Participants were informed of their rights: confidentiality or withdrawal, or refusal of the use of
their data (Hyland, 2016b). I explained to all participants that I was inviting them to take part in
a research study due to their self-identifying as multilingual and otherwise satisfying the
inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation in the study. The signed informed consent
document described everything a potential participant would need to know to be able to make an
informed decision (included as Appendix E). I read and explained it to participants and
encouraged them to ask me questions. I informed them that the decision as to whether to
participate was exclusively theirs to make. Those that decided to participate were asked to sign
the consent form and then given a copy to keep.

**Participants’ rights.** Regarding confidentiality, participants’ personal information and
the information they shared during the interviews and other data collection were kept
confidential. Participants were informed of their rights and assured that neither their interview data nor their identity would be revealed to anyone (Mack et al., 2005). Regarding anonymity, any identifying marks or words on documents were disguised, concealed, or removed. Code numbers and pseudonyms were assigned to replace individuals’ names and all identifying information (e.g., high schools attended, courses they were enrolled in, professors’ names) during the research process and in this dissertation (AERA, 2011). Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the project at any time as well as decide later to refuse to allow me to use their data in the study. These reassurances were vital to build trust between researchers and participants, as well as to ensure participants were aware of the purposes and risks of their participation in the study (Mack et al., 2005).

**Protection for participants.** Linguistically-diverse college students, as explained in Chapters One and Two, are a population found to be at risk for attrition and other hardships (Andrade et al., 2014; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2013; Mulholland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011), making them more vulnerable to any harm participation in my study may pose. As an educational researcher, it was my responsibility to protect participants’ “rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities,” especially those of research populations known to be vulnerable (AERA, 2011, p. 145). Therefore, in this study, I undertook measures to safeguard participants and protect them from harm, exposure, embarrassment, invasion of privacy, or any personal loss (AERA, 2011, p. 147). One way I protected my participants by eliminating any fear of undue influence or pressure to respond in any particular manner was to ensure I was not personally acquainted with any. Further, I sought to avoid recruiting in the college I worked in because, I reflected, even if I had not worked with a student, if they were aware of my role, this might affect their responses. Additionally, I not only created
I also changed the names of a professor who was discussed by several participants as well as that instructor’s class and department. I similarly changed the country that participants indicated they or their family was originally from. I was cautious to make certain no one would be able to identify participants based on their enrollment in a particular class or major or their linguistic background.

I recognized it as my duty to be aware that I could have inadvertently offended or harmed my culturally- and linguistically- diverse participants or any participants “with distinctive characteristics. . . based on race; ethnicity; culture; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity; age; religion; language; disability; health conditions; socioeconomic status; or marital, domestic, or parental status” (AERA, 2011, p. 147). Potential risks, aims of the study, data to be gathered, who would be in contact with data, and how they would use data (Hyland, 2016b; Stake, 2005) were explicitly expressed to participants prior to each survey and interview. All purposes and expectations were disclosed and explained comprehensibly to avoid perception of exploitation, coercion, pressure, or other undue influence or mistreatment (Mack et al., 2005).

**Data storage.** Study data collected were used solely for reporting results in the dissertation. All names and other identifying descriptors were replaced by pseudonyms as soon as the potential participant was deemed eligible (according to the first survey) and confirmed their interest in participating. All new data produced or received was immediately scrubbed of participants’ names and emails. Only I had any access to raw data collected. Data, including audio recording files and transcriptions of interviews, was stored in password-protected files on cloud-based systems (e.g., Dropbox and Google Drive) that require passwords, as well as backup external hard drives that were stored in a secure, lockable drawer in the researcher’s home. Physical material such as external hard drive, printed documents such as signed informed
consents (the only document linking participants’ names and the study) and interview protocols with my notes (on which participants’ names were substituted with numbers) were stored in a safe at my home office. All data were stored under pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of participants. Signed consent documents will be retained for three years following the end of the study, stored in a locked safe in my home office. After one year, all research data and audio recordings not loaded into MAXQDA will be destroyed.

**Trustworthiness.** The positivist value of validity has been reconsidered and reframed for its purposes in qualitative research. “Validity” in quantitative research generally refers to the degree to which the research questions have been answered, due to how appropriate the strategies employed to draw interpretations and conclusions are, thus leading to the level of confidence readers may feel in the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Hyland, 2016a). For qualitative purposes, the term “validity” has been recast by different scholars at different times as “authenticity, goodness, verisimilitude, adequacy, trustworthiness, plausibility, validity, validation, and credibility” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 124). Because qualitative data analysis through coding is relative and interpretive, “and no interpretation can be considered absolutely correct or valid” (Grant-Davie, 192, p. 280), absolute validity is an expected benchmark in positivist research paradigms, but usually not expected to be attainable in social constructivist qualitative research (Schutt, 2006). To be valuable, a qualitative research study, therefore, is expected to be trustworthy (Hyland, 2016b).

Trustworthiness is achieved when all findings emerge from and “constitute honest and authentic reconstruction of the research and of the knowledge that emerged in the social environment” (Burns, 2010, p. 85). In the study, therefore, I was assiduous about representing each component of the study truthfully and transparently. In my write-up of results and
conclusions, I consciously checked whether my bias was unduly influencing my interpretations and findings. The following subsections explain concepts and strategies that comprise a study’s trustworthiness.

**Transferability.** When a study is said to be generalizable, its findings are typically taken from large samples that “can be used to inform us about persons, places, or events that were not studied” (Schutt, 2006, p. 20). Case studies on writing, however, are necessarily small-scale and interested in learning about local idiosyncratic trends, behaviors, and experiences of writers (Kirsch, 1992). They are not expected to be generalizable to other populations or contexts (MacNealy, 1999). But studies must be trustworthy to be valuable, and trustworthiness compels some level of, if not generalizability, then transferability.

In small-scale writing case studies, transferability happens within the reader of research, i.e., readers transfer aspects of a study’s findings to another, more personally familiar context. To afford the maximal degree of transferability, I needed to write intricately described research reports both of the phenomenon and the context (Colorado State University, 2017). Though this writing case study might be small-scale and locally focused, it still revealed complex problems and barriers to success. These understandings can be transferred by readers to inform application to their own context. They can be built on by peers in further studies of other individuals. They can inspire new approaches to educational change to pilot in other contexts. They can suggest questions to pose. They can provide ideas for the development of theory. And they can produce evidence to build a case for new policy.

Therefore, in the study, in order for findings to be most readily transferable to other cases, I tried to provide the reader with enough thick and detailed description of the unit of analysis, context of the problem of practice, and findings of the study, so that readers could
reliably compare findings with their own experience (Stake, 2005). The strategies of providing such detailed description and primary source material will aid readers’ ability to determine the transferability of individual aspects of my study and findings to other specific contexts in their professional experience (Colorado State University, 2017). While the purpose of this study is to answer the research questions that sprang authentically from the researcher’s own problem of practice, not necessarily to be generalizable to other contexts, new revelations may eventually lead to development of new theoretical models or transfer to curriculum and instruction in other contexts.

**Credibility.** Research studies need to address and answer their guiding research questions if they are to produce a “credible explanation or characterization” of the research topic (Hyland, 2003, p. 251). To earn credibility, the interviews in this study focused deeply on participants’ experiences to establish grounds for supporting conclusions, and I subjected myself to scrupulous procedural rigor. I explicitly reported my data collection, analysis, and interpretation procedures to readers (Tracy, 2010) in this dissertation. These methods should assure the reader of the credibility of my findings (Stake, 2005).

**Reliability and dependability.** Ideally, analytical coding systems must be reliable and dependable, but, like validity, absolute reliability cannot be expected in subjective, interpretive, qualitative research due to its necessarily human factor. Reliability and dependability refer to methodical and consistent coding procedures as reported by the researcher (Grant-Davie, 1992, p. 281) to the point that the findings could be replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Triangulation.** Triangulation is critical to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Hyland, 2016b; Stake, 2005). Credibility was gained by comprehensive, continuous triangulation of data to ensure “rich rigor” in the process of data
collection, analysis, and interpretation by acknowledging the complexity of phenomena and preparing for a nuanced interpretation thereof (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). Triangulation entailed collecting multiple sources of data to find common patterns across multiple individuals (Stake, 2005), thus “converging measures to gain separate views” of a phenomenon (MacNealy, 1999, p. 202). My intention was for these separate views to facilitate credibility and verifiability, due to this “more complete picture of a complex reality” (Hyland, 2016b, p.78). Triangulation enhances and complexifies data analysis and clarification of meaning in interpretation (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2013).

In this study, to achieve triangulation, I (1) increased the sample size from the original three to five in the proposal to an actual total of ten participants, (2) conducted an eligibility survey, (3) conducted two types of interviews per participant at the same meeting (first, semi-structured experiential, and then discourse-based), (4) checked transcriptions against audio files for accuracy and sent transcriptions to participants to check for accuracy and change to more accurately reflect their thoughts (member checking), (5) conducted a follow-up survey to collect data across all participants (eight of ten responded) on certain key topics that had emerged naturally in just some, and (6) engaged in ongoing analytic memoing after each interview and throughout all phases of the study.

**Member-checking.** After each interview was transcribed via Rev.com human transcribers, I checked it against the audio recording of the interview, correcting inaccuracies. I then emailed the transcription to the respective participant for their approval. The purpose of such member-checking was to ensure accuracy of the data, thus increasing trustworthiness of findings (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013; Creswell, 2008), but also to afford participants more control over their data, disclosure about what data be analyzed, and confidence
In the data’s capturing and communicating their thoughts and meanings. Member-checking served to protect participants from any perceived exposure or risk, since they could point out inaccuracies and misinterpretations, and they can also change their mind about giving consent to use of certain data. I suggested participants add or change the transcript to more closely represent their intended ideas and experiences. Nine of the ten participants approved the transcriptions as they were, and one made some clarifications.

**Rigor.** A study’s rigor contributes to its trustworthiness and credibility (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Rigor was achieved through a researcher’s investments of time spent collecting data from the participants; using several dimensions of analysis through memoing, coding, categorizing; and engaging in extensive reporting and describing (Creswell, 2013). In this qualitative writing research study, “to compensate for the relative lack of rigor inherent in context-sensitive studies and for the inadequacy of any one particular method” (Huckin, 1992, p. 101), multiple analytical methods were employed.

**Confirmability.** I engaged in constant self-reflexivity to check for bias, assumptions, or ulterior motives, and such internal audits and reflection about my positionality increased confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Internal audit.** I consciously engaged in continuous intellectual and ethical reflection and conducted regular internal auditing for the purposes of authenticity, honesty, sincerity, rigor, transparency, and accountability. The internal audit was manifested by concrete documentation in my research notebook, and later in this dissertation, from which a reader can follow the chain of evidence progressing to the final report of study findings. This audit trail also includes the research questions, research notebook with analytic memoing, audio recordings, annotations on transcripts, tables of themes and codes, and dissertation drafts.
Self-reflexivity and Transparency

Unlike with more positivist paradigms, a qualitative researcher’s closeness to participants actually benefits the effort toward validity (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) encourages the researcher to consistently practice self-reflection and share this reflexivity with readers. It can be positive when personal meaning imbues a researcher’s work with an energizing “curiosity or personal desire to figure out how or why something occurs” (p. 104). Reflexivity refers to a regular, mandatory self-questioning and awareness-checking of the influence of the researcher on the research (Powell & Takayoshi, 2012).

Readers of qualitative studies must be mindful that all research findings are personal interpretations of data collected by human researchers and filtered accordingly (Takayoshi et al., 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This personal filter can be both a positive and a negative. Certainly, each unique nexus of researchers’ abiding interests, values, practical experience, and the research literature derives original research questions and spaces. However, it can be a problem because, by definition, these orientations can serve as habituated or unconscious biases which must be intentionally acknowledged and somewhat bracketed if the research is to be trustworthy and socially just, and, thus, useful to address the problem of practice and answer the research questions. Researchers’ positionalities can distort their data collection, analysis, and interpretation, so that they may not be able to freely construct meaning from participants’ authentic narratives of their lived experiences and behaviors (Briscoe, 2005).

As a researcher, I therefore recognized my ethical obligation to reflect on my assumptions and to inventory my biases, so they did not unwittingly inform my observations and consequently influence any phase of this research. I acknowledge my need to be accountable to my “socially inherited” positioning (Carlton Parsons, 2008, p. 1129; Takayoshi et al., 2012), to
avoid it coloring my interpretations according to unconscious, dominant-culture norms (Briscoe, 2005). Such unexamined norming serves to reproduce social inequities, even among social-justice-oriented scholars (Naples, 2003). Therefore, constant reflexivity practice was required during collecting data, e.g., spending significant time with participants, documents, and other sources of data, memoing, coding, categorizing, analyzing, interpreting, and concluding. As such, Machi and McEvoy’s (2012) conception of positionality as both strength and weakness guided the following examination of my positionality in the hope that awareness might check their potential sway. While I have had to be aware of my positionality for my methods, data analysis, and findings to ultimately be deemed trustworthy, the more compelling reason for such reflexivity and transparency is to protect my participants, whose documented risk factors for college attrition make them particularly vulnerable to influence and harm, whether intentional or inadvertent.

Despite ethnically-isolated family roots and personal childhood trauma, I have been fortunate to have had opportunities to learn in my life, benefiting from my parents’ first-generation educational opportunities and consequent social mobility. As a result, I possess more power, privilege, and comfort than my students, who have experienced trauma, loss, deprivation, and barriers to opportunity. Forgetting or ignoring this social positionality through inert, habitual, unexamined assumptions (Riegler, 2012) could affect the collection of authentic data or distort data coding and interpretation. I might infer meanings colored by my own ontological view, for example reflecting an assumed higher level of safety and entitlement than the viewpoints of participants. To my multicultural, predominantly lower-income students and participants, as a white, middle class woman, I might be seen as just another of a monolithic “them.”
I am transparent about my Jewish ethnic background because it helps bring into my relationship with students my non-dominant linguistic, religious, and cultural background, as well as my people’s history of oppression and my personal experience of discrimination. This leads to some intersection, common experience, and trust. However, I quickly acknowledge that as a Jew, I can “pass,” which highlights the disparities of power and privilege between white people (even if not of the fully-accepted, dominant culture) and people of color. The trust with my students would be destroyed if I denied the level of power and privilege I possess as a privileged white person. I can harm a student by viewing their socioeconomic background through a deficit perspective, visiting assumptions onto them, reducing them to a stereotype, or failing to acknowledge the hardship their socioeconomic background causes in this Eurocentrically-normed society. While my bias is always to be loyal to my students and to advocate for them, if I presume they are vulnerable, they may resent this as paternalism or exclusionary discourse (Briscoe, 2005). Similarly, my fierce maternal orientation can bring strengths when it helps form trusting bonds with students. But it can obscure my awareness of the need to pull down the scaffolding for students to learn lessons for themselves.

As a literacy educator, I have taught academic reading and writing to a wide range of ages, from out-of-school youth through elders, in a variety of contexts including public adult education, workforce development programs, community-based anti-poverty organizations, college transition programs, higher education institutions, and hospitals. My stance as a writing educator, therefore, was shaped through this multicontextual interdisciplinarity. I consider writing and literacy foundationally necessary competencies in all people for leading a successful, effective, and rewarding life that contributes to society. I am compelled to study students’ literacy development because reading and writing were instrumental to my own identity.
formation and psychological survival. Additionally, I myself am a foreign language-learner, and am drawn to those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These are strengths. But there are weaknesses. My progressive, activist stance is so eager to shake up what I see as wrong-headed in educational systems that I can be impetuous with crigenerticism or premature solutions. My solution to a local problem might not be ecologically sound and might cause different problems for downstream stakeholders.

I am suspicious toward faculty and am quick to critique instructors’ pedagogy and prejudiced attitudes toward students. I recognize that my interpretation springs from experiences that I have globalized into a positionality. I assume that all faculty ignorantly compare their non-dominant-culture students to a hegemonic dominant-culture norm (Fennel & Arnot, 2008). I assume that faculty have no pedagogical or curricular training, and that they are unable and unwilling to teach discipline-specific writing in their courses. I assume that faculty unconsciously believe that their dominant culture is superior to the multicultural backgrounds of their students (Briscoe, 2005; Carlton Parsons, 2008; Fennell & Arnot, 2008). I worry that their unexamined positionality conflates LDC students’ lesser privilege, educational access, or non-dominant culture status into the assumption of less culture, intelligence, or potential. While the literature corroborates these interpretations, I tried not to assume each occasion is necessarily another instance of oppression, or allow these assumptions to distort my data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012).

Based on my conversations with faculty and observations of curriculum and instruction in the college, it seems they conceive literacy development as a discrete skill to be acquired once and for all—in someone else’s class—like drawing blood or using commas correctly. My perception is that these educators fail to conceive of writing as the developmental process that it
is within each scholar. I strongly believe faculty themselves need to teach their nursing, philosophy, or engineering students how to transfer the writing they learned in English composition class into writing in their discipline. But I admit I may be missing the broader context, the greater socio-ecological view (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). And I do not always have the faculty’s perspective. Simply put, I should be more understanding, more patient, and less quick to make assumptions.

In the study, assumptions based on my experience in the role of writing specialist in the institution where I work could have skewed my interpretations of what is happening in students’ experiences as evinced in their interview responses. Therefore, I recruited and interviewed participants from a different college. Additionally, I strove to remain mindful to keep my mind open to new understandings and views of what was happening within participants’ processes of writing development. As a qualitative researcher, my positionality, both as a strength and weakness, is nevertheless intrinsic to who I am, but I tried to frame this paradox as a help, not a hindrance (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). My practitioner self must listen to the intellect and research practices of my scholar self, and both will stay safe under the benevolent regulation of my ethics.

**Limitations**

It is recognized that, due to unique contexts and small samples, case study findings are not expected to be generalizable to other contexts or samples (MacNealy, 1999; Schutt, 2006). Furthermore, being considered through the viewfinder of one theoretical framework may narrow or restrict a researcher’s comprehension of the full problem of practice and skew analysis and interpretation of data. These limitations are fully acknowledged.
Conclusion of Research Design

This chapter explicated the methodology employed in this qualitative case study following the social constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. Ten multilingual college students were interviewed and surveyed about their literacy processes and practices to learn their authentic perspectives. Activity theory informed the researcher’s practice and was therefore chosen to guide the framing of the problem and purpose, and the approach to reviewing the research literature, and designing and conducting the study.

As delineated by case study practice, I focused data collection on ten instantiating local individuals in my higher educational context. The study was conducted using an instrumental, descriptive, holistic case study approach. The unit of analysis was bounded as the process of academic writing development in disciplinary courses among domestic LDC undergraduate students. The research site of the study was Urban University (UU, a pseudonym), a large, urban, public research university in the Northeastern United States. Purposive sampling was conducted to obtain the richest, most informative data. Data was collected from three sources from ten participants: (1) responses to a preliminary survey to ascertain potential participant eligibility vis-à-vis inclusion and exclusion criteria; (2) one in-depth hour-long interview per participant in which they were asked about their writing experiences (a) in their classes and (b) in the context of specific writing samples produced for their classes; and (3) responses from a follow-up survey to the interviews. Data was methodically collected, transcribed by humans at Rev.com, checked by the researcher, and member-checked. It was analyzed by recursive coding, categorizing, and theming in light of the study problem, research question, and theory, as well as with regular referencing back to the qualitative research methodology literature. A research notebook was kept with daily memoing. Data was kept confidential and secure. As a result of
this evidence-based methodology, readers can feel confident in the trustworthiness of the findings of this study.
Chapter Four: Study Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to gain insight into the process of academic writing development among domestic, linguistically-diverse undergraduate students as they write papers in disciplinary classes at UU. The problem of practice addressed by this study is the relative disadvantage college-bound and college-going LDC students face compared to their English-only classmates with regard to academic literacy and consequent academic success, persistence, and graduation (Andrade et al., 2014; Johns, 1995; Kanno & Grosik, 2012; Kanno & Harklau, 2013; Perin, 2013; Starkey, 2015). Due to immense societal determinants, LDC students can find themselves “unprepared for the complex and language intensive reading and writing tasks” that await them in their college classes (Crosby, 2009, p. 105; Holzer & Baum, 2017; Johns, 1995). These factors present documented obstacles to LDC students’ college graduation rates (Andrade et al., 2014; Bond et al., 2008; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2013; Mulholland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011). Due to these factors, their transition to college writing may be fraught.

This study was guided by one primary research question and two sub-questions: How do linguistically-diverse undergraduate students describe their processes of developing as academic writers? What factors do they identify as facilitating their academic writing development in college? What factors do they identify as inhibiting their academic writing development in college?

This chapter presents the study’s findings. Data collected included transcripts from ten semi-structured individual researcher-participant interviews (both experience-based and discourse-based) and two surveys (a preliminary eligibility survey and a post-interview, follow-up survey). Chapter Three described my data analysis procedure. I kept a research notebook
throughout the duration of the study and made daily and post-interview entries. Analysis of the collected data began immediately after the transcription of the first interview and continued throughout the data collection phase. After coding, categorizing, and theming, three overall sociocultural domains were revealed that seemed to mediate participants’ experiences developing as academic writers in college: extrapersonal, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

This chapter starts by introducing the participants via their responses to the preliminary eligibility and follow-up surveys. Afterwards, results will be presented according to the adapted conceptual model based on activity theory. Findings will be presented working inwards from extrapersonal, to interpersonal, to intrapersonal. Participants’ own voices are featured heavily because they poignantly exemplify their experiences, and in turn concretize the conceptual framework. After the results have been fully introduced, Chapter Five will present my interpretations of the data and the potential implications for policy, practice, and research.

**Participant Profiles**

This section introduces the participants. All names given are pseudonyms, and any potentially identifying information about individuals, e.g., countries of origin and names of classes and faculty, has been changed. Following inclusion and exclusion criteria, each participant indicated on the first survey that they were not an international visa student. The data reported by participants in their survey responses is first presented in a table and then in narrative paragraphs. It is noteworthy that some participants’ responses to one survey question were not fully congruent with the interview data. For example, most participants answered the question “When you do writing assignments, do you write drafts and get someone’s feedback in order to revise?” with the response “No,” whereas in their interviews they described feedback of varying quality that they received on their papers from their instructors. The only way to reconcile these
discrepancies is to acknowledge that the language in the survey responses was my own. Students were only given the options of “yes,” “no,” or “other.” In their answers, therefore, many participants’ “no” responses to the drafts and feedback question might be more reflective of their emotional impression, i.e., evincing their dissatisfaction with the limited and often unhelpful feedback provided by their instructors, as stated in the interviews. Regarding the number of years lived in United States, the survey only offered ranges. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show participants’ responses to preliminary eligibility survey questions.

Moisés. Moisés is a native Spanish-speaker, born and educated in his native country. In the survey, he reported that he attended a private high school and a 4-year college, but his schooling before UU was not strong and did not prepare him for writing in college. Both parents are Spanish-speaking only. He uses Spanish for reading, writing, speaking, and listening, both at home and when instant messaging with family. He writes papers, essays, short answers on exams, and annotated bibliographies in his Sociology and Classics courses, and he stated he does not receive feedback on drafts in these classes. At least one parent completed a bachelor degree or higher, but, due to language barriers, his parents cannot support his English writing. He reported he doesn’t receive “any support from parents since they don’t speak English.” He has lived in the United States for one to five years, which impacts his writing due to his “transition of speaking English-only except at home, getting used to thinking in English instead of translating thoughts.” He stated he is equally fluent in English and Spanish, with a self-described mild foreign accent in English. He feels his professors are probably not aware he is multilingual. When asked on the survey if faculty have ever commented on his English, he answered, “Yes, they think I am from another area of the U.S. but congratulate my fluency.” To the survey
question asking what impact his English proficiency has had on his writing development, he answered, “Not knowing what U.S. college professors value” in writing assignments.

Mateo. Mateo considers himself equally fluent in Spanish and English, with no foreign accent in English. In his interview, he stated that he originally learned Spanish from his Argentinian grandmother. In the survey, he responded that he uses Spanish for reading, speaking, and listening with family at home, in his religious community, and in his neighborhood. He writes papers, essays, short answers on exams and quizzes, and annotated bibliographies in his Sociology class. He stated that he does not get feedback on drafts. At least one parent or guardian completed an associate degree, but, overall, he stated his parents’ limited college experience thwarts their ability to understand how much time assignments can take and how much stress he is under in college. Similarly, he said his parents cannot support him by reading paper drafts and then providing knowledgeable feedback or by helping him decipher his instructors’ expectations and instructions for writing assignments. He has lived in the United States for 11-20 years, and he attended rigorous middle (charter) and high (private) schools. He attributes his having “developed a stronger sense of English language arts allowing me to have stronger writing” to these facts. His instructors are probably not aware he is multilingual and have never commented on his speaking or writing in English, except to praise his “strong writing proficiency.”
Table 4.1

*Eligibility survey responses (Participants 1-5)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Non-English languages</th>
<th>Use of non-English languages</th>
<th>Uses non-English languages with...</th>
<th>Where uses non-English languages</th>
<th>Courses with writing</th>
<th>Writing assignmts</th>
<th>Feedback on drafts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moises</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Spouse</td>
<td>Home, Instant messaging</td>
<td>Sociology, Classics</td>
<td>Papers, Essays, Short answers on exams, Annotated biblio</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mateo</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents, Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents</td>
<td>Home, Religious community, Neighborhood</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Papers, Essays, Short answers on exams, Annotated biblio</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erika</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Reading, Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents, Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents, Neighbors, Coworkers</td>
<td>Home, Work</td>
<td>Ethnic Studies, Literature</td>
<td>Papers, Essays, Annotated biblio</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmy</td>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents, Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents, Spouse/ partner, Children, Neighbors, Coworkers, Professor</td>
<td>Home, Religious community, Neighborhood, School</td>
<td>Poli Sci, Ethnic Studies, Chemistry labs</td>
<td>Papers, Lab reports, Discussion board, Writing journals, Essays, Short exam answers</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grand-parents, Spouse/ partner, Coworkers</td>
<td>Home, Work</td>
<td>Ethnic Studies</td>
<td>Papers, Writing journals, Essays, Short exam answers</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Erika.* Erika considers herself equally fluent in Spanish and English, with no foreign accent in English. She uses her Spanish at home with family and neighbors and at work with...
coworkers for reading, speaking, and listening. She has to write papers, essays, and annotated bibliographies in her Ethnic Studies and literature classes. She indicated that she does not receive feedback on drafts. Neither of her parents attended any college, and, this fact severely curtails any academic or writing support they can provide. She has lived in the United States for 11-20 years, and this fact impacts her writing in that she has “a better understanding than an international student would.” She attended a public high school and a community college before enrolling in UU, and said this schooling “prepared me for research papers.” She stated her professors are probably not aware she is multilingual, though where the survey asked, “Has a professor ever commented on your English speaking or writing proficiency?” she answered, “Yes, they would say my sentences don’t flow well or get mixed up.” However, when asked on the survey, “In what ways does your English proficiency or accent affect your academic writing in college?” she responded, “My English is good enough that I rarely struggle.”

**Emmy.** Emmy is equally fluent in English and Cambodian, which she uses for reading writing, speaking, and listening at home with family, in her religious community, in her neighborhood, at work, and at school with professors. She has to write papers, lab reports, discussion board postings, writing journal entries, essays, and short answers on exams and quizzes in her Political Science, Ethnic Studies, and Chemistry classes. She indicated that she does not receive feedback on drafts. No parent or guardian attended any college and, like several other participants, found that parents’ lack of college experience limits their ability to understand her stress level and the time writing assignments take, as well as to read her writing, provide knowledgeable feedback, or help her decipher the instructor's expectations. Emmy has lived in the United States for more than 21 years. When asked how the number of years she has lived in the United States impacts her writing, she answered, “It’s tough to understand test questions
because I don’t know what the question is asking.” She attended a public high school in the United States that she felt was not strong and thus did not prepare her for college writing. She feels she has a mild foreign accent in English, such that professors and others may or may not know she is multilingual. When asked if professors have ever commented on her English, she answered, “Professors take points off for grammar,” and when asked how her English proficiency or accent affect her writing development, she answered, “It affects the capability of writing.”

Marco. Marco is multilingual in English and Spanish, which he uses at home with family and at work with coworkers for reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The classes in which he writes papers, journal entries, essays, and short answers on exams are Ethnic Studies and Music. He indicated that he does not receive feedback on drafts. Marco did not complete the second survey, but in his interview, he referred to his Uruguayan father as “highly educated.” He has lived in the United States his whole life (20 plus years) and attended a public exam high school known for its rigor and excellence. His English is stronger than his Spanish, which he began learning in middle school, and he has no foreign accent in English.

Hui. Hui is multilingual in English and in three different Asian languages. Her Vietnamese is stronger than her English. She uses Vietnamese for reading and speaking with parents and grandparents at home. She has to write papers in her Ethnic Health Studies class. She stated she does not receive feedback on drafts. One of her parents earned an Associate degree, but she reported that the limited exposure to college hindered her parents’ ability to support her writing development. She has lived in the United States for six to ten years, which affects her writing in the following way: “The years of living in the U.S. means the years I study in the U.S. Therefore, my writing skills would be better [if I had lived in U.S. from the
beginning].” Her U.S. public high school was not strong and did not prepare her well for college-level writing. She stated she speaks English with a mild foreign accent, thus her professors are probably aware she is multilingual. She answered “no” when asked if she had ever received a comment on her English proficiency or accent from a professor, but added, “Students might not understand me well when we doing the group project.”

**Adriana.** Adriana is equally fluent in English and Portuguese, which she uses for reading, writing, speaking, and listening with family at home in her native country. She writes papers, lab reports, discussion board posts, essays, short answers on exams, and a reflection presentation in her, Sociology and Cinema courses. She “sometimes” receives feedback on drafts. At least one parent completed a Bachelor degree or higher, which causes them to be able to support her academic writing. She has lived in the United States for more than 21 years. She attended a public U.S. vocational high school, which did not support her academic writing development. However, before enrolling in UU, she attended a community college and made use of the writing center, which prepared her well for writing in college. Regarding her accent in English, she answered, “Most of the time mild, but if I am nervous sometimes it is strong.” Thus, she feels, her professors are probably aware she is multilingual. While she has not received comments from professors about her English proficiency or accent, she stated, “I try not to think about it, but I can feel discriminated if I do think about it.”

**Nadia.** Nadia is trilingual in Creole, Portuguese, and English. She uses Creole and Portuguese for speaking and listening at home, work, religious community, and neighborhood with family, neighbors, and coworkers. She writes papers, lab reports, discussion board posts, essays, short answers on exams, and annotated bibliographies in her First-Year Seminar and English classes. As to whether she receives feedback on paper drafts, she wrote in, “Wish I
could get have someone to read over my papers to submit.” Nadia did not complete the second survey, but in our interview she stated she has only lived in the United States for four and one-half years and that she attended a public high school for newcomer immigrants.

Table 4.2

*Eligibility survey responses (Participants 6-10)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Non-English languages</th>
<th>Use of non-English languages</th>
<th>Uses non-English languages with</th>
<th>Where uses non-English languages</th>
<th>Courses with writing</th>
<th>Writing assignments</th>
<th>Feedback on drafts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hui</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Reading, Speaking</td>
<td>Parents, Grandparents</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Ethnic Health Studies</td>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriana</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents/guardians, Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Spouse</td>
<td>Home, communicate with family in native country</td>
<td>Sociology Research Methods, Cinema</td>
<td>Papers, Lab reports, Discussion board, Essays, Short exam answers, Reflections</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>Creole, Portuguese</td>
<td>Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents, Siblings, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents, Neighbors, Coworkers</td>
<td>Home, Work, Religious community, Neighborhood</td>
<td>First-Year Seminar, English</td>
<td>Papers, Lab reports, Discussion board, Essays, Short exam answers Annotated biblio</td>
<td>Wish I could have someone to read over my papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Seminar, Poli Sci, Psych</td>
<td>Papers, Writing journals, Essays</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liliana</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Speaking, Listening</td>
<td>Parents, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents</td>
<td>[Blank]</td>
<td>English, Poli Sci, Sociology</td>
<td>Papers, Discussion board, Writing journals, Essays, Short exam answers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Min.** Min speaks Vietnamese and English at home and in his religious community with his family and coworkers. He writes papers, journals, and essays in his Seminar, Political Science, and Psychology classes. He stated that he does submit papers and receive feedback. No parents attended any college, which limits their understanding of the stress he is under. He has lived in the United States for six to ten years, which does not affect his writing. He attended public high school in the United States, which was not strong and did not prepare him well for college writing. He feels he is equally fluent in Vietnamese and English with a mild foreign accent in English, and his professors are probably aware he is multilingual. When asked if professors have made any comments on his English, he answered, “[Professors’] comments on my papers were lack of clarification,” and when asked how his English proficiency or accent affected his writing development, he answered, “Mostly are structure of my writing and grammar.”

**Liliana.** Liliana is multilingual in English and Spanish. She uses Spanish for speaking and listening with her Ecuadorian family at home, though her father does not speak Spanish. She writes papers, discussion board posts, journal entries, essays, and short answers on exams in English, Political Science, and Sociology classes. She stated she does receive feedback on drafts from someone. A parent attended some college, but did not receive a degree, and their lack of college limits their ability to understand how much time assignments take and how much stress she is under. She has lived in the United States for 11-20 years, but states, “I don’t think that the years I’ve lived here has impacted my writing. I’ve lived here my entire life and I’ve grown as a writer just like everyone else.” She attended a public high school in the United States, which was strong and prepared her well for college writing. Her English is stronger than her Spanish, with no foreign accent in English, thus professors probably do not know she is multilingual. No
comments have been made by professors on her English, but she stated, “I feel like people have lower expectations for my writing and how proper it is because I’m not white.”

Theoretical Framework

Study findings will be presented according to the conceptual framework described in detail in Chapter One. Understanding and explaining the data required adding two dimensions of complexity to activity theory: (1) sociocultural mediation of student learning was found to emanate from three multilevel ecological domains: extrapersonal, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, and (2) this mediation did not always support learning; in many cases it served as a barrier to learning. The extended theory constructed from this study is multilevel developmental mediation: mediating extrapersonal and interpersonal forces are internalized by LDC students as intrapersonal attributes and behaviors, which in turn mediate students’ academic writing development, both positively and negatively. This section will present findings according to this conceptual framework as explained in Chapter One.

Society is an extrapersonal domain that exerts disparate and variable pressures on populations, serving as determinants of academic success, including access to quality academic preparation for college, parents’ educational access and attainment, and socioeconomic status. Institutions are units of society whose values and behavior reflect societal structures, and faculty behavior in turn reflects the values and structures of its institution. As shown in the literature, before LDC students even enroll in college, extrapersonal forces facilitate or inhibit their experiences of academic access, support for success, academic identity, perceptions of inclusion versus exclusion, and the discrimination they face. Interpersonal interactions with faculty and other community members, such as peers, staff, and family, are also internalized by LDC students. These extra- and interpersonal influences are internalized and become intrapersonal
attributes that manifest in individuals as variable levels of personal agency, motivation, resourcefulness, writing self-assessment, and socioemotional states. These intrapersonal attributes accordingly mediate LDC students’ learning processes and writing development.

Study Findings

The study revealed interacting and intersecting mediation originating in all three domains that facilitate or inhibit participants’ academic outcomes, and in particular their writing development. The most consistent study finding was a powerful mediator on the interpersonal level: the influence of faculty on student writing outcomes, whether positive or negative. Participants’ expressed interpersonal needs for instructors who make themselves available to students; teach developmentally, make their expectations explicit, and provide formative feedback on writing; and teach using culturally- and linguistically-inclusive practices. These three overall faculty-related mediating behaviors interact with mediation from all domains. Among participants, it was found that faculty interactions have the power to compensate for, negate, or exacerbate sociocultural determinants in all domains.

This section will successively discuss the findings according to participants’ perceptions of (1) extrapersonal sociocultural mediators of their writing development, i.e., through access to resources and services or lack thereof, (2) interpersonal sociocultural mediators, and, finally, (3) intrapersonal sociocultural mediators. Because Vygotsky viewed language as the primary mediator of all development, language-related interactions with learning and writing in the standard English-normed context of U.S. higher education are examined first in each domain. I acknowledge that all extrapersonal and interpersonal mediators are only truly visible within individuals themselves through their internalization. However, the following sections examine
the mediators themselves (versus the results of the mediation, found in the intrapersonal domain) in order to identify where interventions might be situated.

**Extrapersonal sociocultural mediators.** This section examines participants’ descriptions of how extrapersonal (societal and institutional) structures serve as mediators of their academic experiences and writing development, both supporting and obstructing. The principal extrapersonal sociocultural variables that materialized in participants’ narratives were language-related, educational access (including parental educational attainment levels, students’ own levels of academic preparation for college, the institutional structure of ESL placement), and socioeconomic status (SES).

**Extrapersonal language-related interactions with learning and writing in the U.S. standard-English-normed context.**

*Facilitating: Opportunity.* The fact that being multilingual in the monolingually-normed U.S. society can create opportunities was a theme that emerged in this study. Erika described how being multilingual in both English and Spanish generates opportunities for jobs: “That's a bonus because I know a bunch of people that don't get jobs because they only know Spanish or they only know one language that not many people speak.” Similarly, when potential employers learn she is multilingual, she feels she is more marketable and promotable. Liliana also recognized the value of being both multilingual and bicultural: “I have all these different resources. . . and opportunities because of knowing Spanish and being a part of that culture as well.” She displayed her positive internalization of the value being multilingual adds to her potential and identity when she pointed out succinctly, “Not everybody knows multiple languages.” Liliana also expressed gratitude for being born and raised a member of the U.S. society and therefore being able to “get the experience of living the American life.” At the same
time, she said she values her Ecuadorian culture and identity. Being multilingual demonstrates to her “where I come from and what I've adapted into . . . I'm never going to fully be adapted into the American way because . . . my mom has incorporated Spanish in my life. . . . I probably will pass on to my children later in life because it's such a rich culture, and it's such a bond between people.”

Table 4.3

Extrapersonal sociocultural mediators: Language-related interactions in a U.S. standard English-normed context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>EXTRA-PERSONAL Sociocultural Mediators</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities from being multilingual</td>
<td>Erika: “That's a bonus because I know a bunch of people that don't get jobs because they only know Spanish or they only know one language that not many people speak.”</td>
<td>Language-related mediators in US standard English-normed context</td>
<td>Missed opportunities due to being from non-dominant cultural and linguistic backgrounds</td>
<td>Liliana and Emmy, who were raised bilingually and thus were fluent in English, were placed inappropriately in ESL tracks in K-12 because their families did not know the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional ESL programs</td>
<td>Hui: “Maybe [ESL program] improved my writing a little bit [because now] when I just sit in front of the computer, I can just type [a paper].”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Insensitive, automatic ESL placement with no sensitivity to individuals’ linguistic backgrounds or needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She added, definitively, “I think it's very important that people that know more than one language should feel like expressing that part of you is important, and to never disregard that because that's something that you might have that not everybody has.”

*Facilitating: Institutional ESL placement policies.* Institutions, which are components of society and often reflect societal structures, can exert an influence on student learning and academic writing development. Even though Hui attended high school in the United States, she was placed into an ESL track at UU. Fortunately, due to support from tutors and a great deal of
writing practice, she found UU’s ESL Bridge Program to be educational and facilitating: “Maybe it improved my writing a little bit [because now] when I just sit in front of the computer, I can just type [a paper].”

**Inhibiting: Obstructed opportunity.** Participants expressed that being multilingual can also be problematic in a monolingual context. The theme of missed opportunities from being from non-dominant cultural and linguistic backgrounds was revealed. Liliana and Emmy, who were born in the United States and raised bilingually, were fluent in English upon enrolling in public school, but were placed in ESL tracks in K-12 because their families did not know the system: it all depended upon which box they checked on the enrollment form regarding languages spoken. Liliana reported that her mother, who was a native Spanish-speaker, tried in vain to appeal to the school system, insisting that English was Liliana’s first language and Spanish was her second, but as long as the child spoke any language other than English, they were placed in the ESL track.

Erika, however, indicated that her family had found out the policy. She explained, “If you put [on the Kindergarten registration form] that you speak a different language before English, they put you [into ESL].” Her family did not inform the district that they spoke Spanish in their home, and so Erika was not placed in ESL classes. “I was always afraid of doing that, so I never did it. So I've never been in an ESL class.” Poignantly, however, Erika still seems to have internalized a low self-assessment of her language capabilities in both English and Spanish since today she questions whether not taking the ESL track had been a mistake. “Now I'm wondering if I'm missing out, because I've been trying so hard to not lose whatever Spanish I have learned, that I'm wondering if my English, or my writing at least, would've been better if I took something like [ESL].”
Inhibiting: Institutional ESL placement policies. Institutional ESL placement policies can inhibit writing development. Automatic ESL placement with no sensitivity to individuals’ backgrounds or needs was reported by several participants as harmful to their development, in contrast to Hui’s mostly positive learning experiences in an ESL track. As mentioned above, two participants reported being fully fluent in English and speaking with self-described American accents by the time they began public schooling, but were automatically placed in ESL programs because they indicated they spoke their parents’ native language at home. Emmy explained, “From pre-K to second grade, I was in ESL classes . . . but then they had to drop the program, and I became a mute. And so then I transferred to a different elementary school.” Later, when she enrolled in UU, “I said that I spoke another language before I spoke English. I took that [English language placement] test. [Then, when] I came into school to take my classes, . . . it said I had to take ESL classes.” She explained that when she met the instructors, and they heard her fluent, unaccented oral English, they expressed surprise that she had been placed in the ESL track: “They're so confused. They're like, ‘You speak good.’ And I'm just like, ‘Yeah, but my writing's horrible.’ . . . I knew at that point my writing wasn't good enough to get out of the ESL, that title.” She was still segregated from mainstream coursework, even though she had graduated out of the K-12 ESL program, and spoke English fluently. Furthermore, her choice of the phrases “get out” and “that title” seems to evince a perception of stigmatization.

Liliana had a similar ESL placement against her family’s will. There were not many multilingual families in her school district at that time, which she described as “hard.” “The very few people that were [multilingual], were put into ELL and were in special classes in order to improve their writing. I was in that class personally because my mom is Hispanic, and my second language is Spanish. That being said, they thought that my first language was Spanish. . .
My mom would always fight with them . . . because I live here, I grew up here. There was nothing tying me to [Spanish] other than the fact that my mom talked to me in Spanish at home. She added, “I personally don't like [ESL placement for multilingual students]. It puts you in that little corner of ‘You're not going to succeed past what we expect you to do.’” This last sentiment is congruent to that perception of stigma found in Emmy’s experience.

**Educational access and equity.**

*Facilitating: Parental educational experience.* The theme of parental educational attainment as a mediator for student academic trajectories emerged in the study. Societal structures like academic access and support for success can serve as determinants to educational access and outcomes. On the positive side, Adriana reported (on the follow-up survey) that her parent(s) earned a bachelor degree or higher and were thus able to support her writing development, and Marco explained that he routinely discusses his writing assignments in Spanish with his father, who is “very, very educated, very intelligent, like formally educated with degrees.” He described his father as “a big role model, helper, really supports me in a lot of . . . academic pursuits.”

*Facilitating: Student academic preparation for college writing.* Several participants reported that writing instruction in their high school or community college prepared them for college writing. Mateo, Erika, Marco, and Liliana reported in the second survey that their high school education was strong and therefore prepared them well for college writing, and in her interview, Adriana benefited greatly from a writing tutor in her community college. In his interview, Marco stated, “I was fortunate in my academic upbringing. I went to a public exam school and studied Latin.” Mateo referred often to his rigorous middle school, and how, now in college, he was still benefiting from preparation that “set me up [regarding] organization,
writing, everything.” He also attended a private high school, where his teachers were “great” and very helpful: “I took American literature and history honors in high school, and that helped improve my writing as well” through “lot of just practicing, and [identifying] what type of evidence . . . is necessary, how I could use certain evidence in order to help prove my thesis statement. . . . That influenced me.”

Table 4.4

Extrapersonal sociocultural mediators: Educational access and equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>EXTRAPERSONAL Sociocultural Mediators</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental educational attainment</td>
<td>Marco: “[My father] is very, very educated, very intelligent, like formally educated with degrees . . . a big role model, helper, really supports me in a lot of . . . academic pursuits.”</td>
<td>Educational access and equity</td>
<td>Parental low educational attainment</td>
<td>Erika, Emmy, Min, Liliana, Mateo, Hui reported their parents’ limited college experience reduced their ability to understand how much time assignments take; appreciate the stress they were under academically; read their drafts and provide knowledgeable feedback; and help them interpret professors’ expectations for writing assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic preparation for college</td>
<td>Mateo: “[My rigorous middle school and high school] set me up [regarding] organization, writing, everything.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic underpreparation</td>
<td>Adriana: “[High school] got me behind I think, trying to transition to college. . . . I don’t think they prepare you. They prepare you to get out of school, and just go to do something else like computer.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing a love of reading in high school can serve as a facilitator for students’ writing development in college. Nadia attended a “newcomer” immigrant high school, since she had only moved to the United States four and one-half years previously, and with few English skills. She described how her schooling inculcated a love and practice of reading. “We need to read for 20 minutes for English class. And this is how we process and see words that we don't know, translate it, and see how to use it in a sentence. This is how we learn. . . . They encourage people to read.” However, though Nadia benefited from many positive aspects at her high school, she said she still felt underprepared for college writing due to other extrapersonal and interpersonal
inhibitors, as will be related in a later section. Emmy, similarly, despite many obstacles in her early schooling, discovered a love of reading that helped her academic growth: “I got to the fifth grade where I got hooked on books, and so I would just keep reading books and books. . . . And so, the more I read . . . I actually got really good grades.” (Again, as with Nadia, despite developing a love of reading, Emmy described obstacles to feeling academically prepared for college writing, as will be related in a later section.)

Academic and writing support in college can facilitate college writing development. Adriana explained that her “tech” high school held low academic expectations for students, and she felt ill-prepared for college. After high school, she enrolled in a two-year community college where the writing center tutors supported her tremendously. She reported that, as a result, today she feels confident in her writing. Tutors would help with “outlining and using the right [evidence and sources].” [The tutor] would be like, ‘You should put this here.” But she was always positive. She would always say it in a nice way.”

Hui experienced similar benefit by using tutors in the ESL Bridge program at UU. She described her tutors as having been demonstrably more helpful, available, and instructive than any professors: “Tutor work with us most every due date before the English class.” She explained how a tutoring session transpired:

[Tutors] can organize the . . . ideas for me. . . . I'm not very good at putting a quote in the paragraph, so one of the tutor make notes for me, . . . and, . . . I just write the draft, and then I let them see it, and they change some sentence, like how to write better, use the vocabulary that more fit in my sentence.

She stated she feels tutor support really helps because “I can keep the draft and then see how it changed. It's better than [if] I just delete it in the computer and then rewrite the sentence.” She
said she is dedicated to using the tutor’s modeling to learn from, rather than simply having tutors do the work for her.

Inhibiting: Parental educational experience. Conversely, as indicated in their survey responses, the parents/guardians of Mateo, Erika, Emmy, Hui, Min, and Liliana did not attend college or attended limited college, and as such could not support these participants’ academic writing development well. (Of course, there is a combination of factors at play in this phenomenon, but the purpose of this chapter is strictly to report participants’ responses on surveys and interviews, which could not capture the implicit complexity of this phenomenon. Chapter Two contains a section synthesizing research literature on first-generation-to-college students.) Moisés reported on the second survey that while his parent(s) did earn a bachelor degree or higher, because they did not speak English, their high educational attainment levels did not translate into support for his writing development. Erika, Emmy, and Min reported that their parents did not attend any college; Liliana reported her parent(s) attended some college without completing any degrees; and Mateo and Hui reported that their parents earned associate degree(s). These participants reported that their parents’ limited college experience reduced their ability to understand how much time assignments take and appreciate the stress participants were under academically. Similarly, they also indicated that parents’ limited educational attainment stymied their ability to read students’ drafts and provide knowledgeable feedback, as well as help them decipher and interpret professors’ expectations for writing assignments.

Inhibiting: Student academic preparation for college writing. Participants’ experiences also showed that academic underpreparation can inhibit writing development. In the second survey, Moisés, Emmy, Hui, Min, in contrast to Marco, Mateo, Erika, and Liliana, reported that their high school preparation was not strong and as a result felt underprepared for college
writing. For Erika, though she had some positive experiences in high school, in her interview, she reported an uneven schooling experience, and some unengaging classes: “In high school my only class where we actually read books and analyzed them and wrote actual interesting essays was my English AP class, and then after that it was just boring. They just threw books at us, and we wrote responses.” She also attended some community college, and did report on the survey that her pre-college schooling did prepare her for writing research papers. On the second survey, Moisés indicated that he completed his education in the Dominican Republic, including study in a private 4-year institution, but he said he still felt underprepared for writing at UU. It was not clear if this underpreparation was due to linguistic or institutional factors, since the data came from checkboxes on a survey. As mentioned above, Adriana stated one reason she was not prepared for college was that her vocational high school exhibited low expectations for multilingual students. She said she regretted choosing to attend that school because it caused confusion. “[It] got me behind [academically] I think, trying to transition to college. . . . I don't think they prepare you. They [only] prepare you to get out of [high] school, and just go to do something else like computer [career].”

Inhibiting: Lower socioeconomic status. The inhibitor of having to work while attending college was mentioned by two participants. Two participants mentioned that having to work while attending college inhibited. Moisés expressed this inhibitor clearly: “I can write and ask [faculty for clarification on assignments], but . . . I work 50 hours a week. Four classes. So, it's pretty difficult to meet . . . that professor or have office hours with them.” Nadia added, “we don't have time to be going to the writing center . . . if you work [and] . . . you're taking five classes . . . I tried to get in [the writing center] in my first semester here, but then I was like, ‘I won't have time. I won't have time.’ And my teacher was saying, ‘Oh, get a tutor, get a tutor!’’”
Nadia said she would like to use the writing center: “If I had time, I would do it, but I don't have time.”

Having to live at a distance from UU, a non-residential college, due to housing affordability issues was another reported socioeconomic barrier to academic writing development. Emmy explained that her school day involves a long daily commute:

I always wake up late to school and I drive two, two and a half hours to school … I live [36 miles from school], and so traffic sucks, and there's car accidents even worse … So I'm missing a [writing] prompt that's due on Monday, and I try to email [the professor], and he doesn’t answer his emails, supposedly.

### Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>EXTRAPERSONAL Sociocultural Mediators</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic status</td>
<td>Lower SES: Having to work while attending college</td>
<td>Lower SES: Having to commute daily</td>
<td>Moisés: “I can write and ask [professors for clarification], but … I work 50 hours a week. Four classes. So, it's pretty difficult to meet … that professor or have office hours with them.”</td>
<td>Emmy: “I always wake up late to school and I drive two, two and a half hours to school … I live [36 miles from school], and so traffic sucks, and there's car accidents even worse … So I'm missing a [writing] prompt that's due on Monday.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reader will note the absence of any reported facilitators inherent in low SES.

**Interpersonal sociocultural mediators.** The main finding of this study is the powerful mediator of faculty interaction on positive or negative outcomes on LDC student writing development. This section first examines language-related findings and then is arranged according to the three most salient needs expressed by participants, i.e., instructors who: (1) make themselves available to students; (2) teach developmentally, make their expectations
explicit, and provide formative feedback on writing; and (3) teach using culturally- and linguistically-inclusive practices.

**Interpersonal language-related interactions in U.S. standard English-normed context.**

Facilitating: Being multilingual can enrich cultural and familial connections. Being multilingual in the context of one’s family and culture can add richness to one’s identity. Marco, Liliana, and Mateo described the enriching experiences of being able to speak Spanish with their family in their family’s native countries. Mateo expressed pride in his native Spanish: “The first language I learned was Spanish, off the bat, because my grandmother, she only spoke Spanish.”

Liliana sketched a vignette about her Spanish multilingualism: “You go down the street, and you see a bunch of Spanish[-speaking] people, and you're like, "¿Hola, cómo estás?" like, "How are you? How are you doing?" You just become friends right there.” She values her mother’s origin in Ecuador, as well, even though she herself is not fluent in the native language of pre-Columbian natives of the region:

My grandma speaks the native language of our country, and none of us know it. She incorporates it in her life, even though she doesn't speak it with anybody. I think it is from the native people, and she speaks it. They're so proud of knowing it.

Facilitating: Multilingual language usage. One participant exhibited metalinguistic awareness and facility around how using his multiple languages benefits writing development. Marco described how he consciously engages in “a lot of language switching,” trying “to use Spanish as often as possible throughout the day.” He explains how doing so “positively impacts” him because it “causes the mind to work a little bit extra, work a little bit differently.” Another example of how he uses his multilingualism interpersonally to facilitate writing development is discussing his assignments with his multilingual father, whom he described as a “big role model,
helper, really supports me in a lot of ... academic pursuits.” They will discuss an assignment in Spanish:

and go through some thinking processes that way. . . . I think it also forces me to be more cognizant of what is actually going on because when you have to translate it, you can't just regurgitate it, you have to think a little more about it. . . to try just to look at things in different ways.

Table 4.6

**Interpersonal sociocultural mediators: Language-related interactions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL SOCIOCULTURAL MEDIATORS</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multilingualism can enrich interpersonal connections</td>
<td>Liliana: “You go down the street, and you see a bunch of Spanish-speaking people, and you're like, ‘¿Hola, cómo estás?’ . . . You just become friends right there.”</td>
<td>Language-related</td>
<td>Home language behaviors can be confusing</td>
<td>Erika: “everyone in my home speaks Spanish, and I’ve noticed that if someone’s speaking Spanish, my brain does a little flip. . . . I have to think in English, and it’s . . . distracting in both.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilingual language usage can benefit writing development</td>
<td>Marco: “Before I've written [the assignments], I'll talk with my father . . . [who] is a big role model, helper, really supports me in . . . academic pursuits. So, I'll talk with him in Spanish about an assignment and go through some thinking processes.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emmy: “My mom, she'll speak to me in English, and I don't know what she's talking about. To my sister, she'll exactly know what she's talking about, so I have to specifically tell my mom, 'Can you speak to me in Cambodian?'”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He also reflected on the social nature of being multilingual, or as he phrased it, “this idea of language peers”: “I have relationships that are in Spanish more so than in English,” with native Spanish-speakers as well as:

People who can speak in perfect English, and I can speak in perfect English, but we'll always speak in Spanish. And there's people who have decent English and better Spanish, but maybe we'll speak in English because they want to speak in English.

He exhibited a high level of interpersonal as well as metalinguistic maturity: “Another thing that I try to be cognizant of is if somebody wants to use a language, to use it and not try to impose another language because I know there's also social issues with that as well.”
Owning mastery of both of his languages, Marco is linguistically sophisticated and intentional. He discussed the sociocultural access being multilingual and educated affords him:

I … have a formal educated Spanish that I dislike using. And then I have my Spanish, that really I learned in a combination of a rural and poor urban context in Uruguay. . . . That was always what I enjoyed using, because it was also more real, more relatable to people. And so, this code switching kind of thing . . . have influenced me as well, as a student, as a person. Like in English, I think having the ability to talk to the dean of the university and talk to the bus driver or the janitor in their language, their words, is important. It's about communication… and also being able to understand life.

Inhibiting: Home language behaviors can be difficult to manage. Nadia, Emmy, and Erika discussed interpersonal conflicts emanating from home language usage. Nadia’s mother does not speak their native Creole in the house because she wants the family to improve their English. Nadia realizes this enforced extra English practice may facilitate her English development, but it could create some sociocultural identity confusion, and she explicitly expressed that she is losing her native language proficiencies and often forgets words in Portuguese. Liliana’s father does not speak Spanish; she talks with him in English and with her mother in Spanish:

Usually in my household, we speak in English. If I go to my grandma's house, my grandma only knows Spanish, and my aunts and my uncles only like talking in Spanish. But communicating with my cousins or my mom, for the most part, I speak in English unless my mom is mad at me. Then she'll talk to me in Spanish.

Erika expressed discomfort about her:
Very American accent [in Spanish] that's very not well received by other [Spanish-speaking] people. I have relatives that think it's funny, like cute, but . . . I want to be taken seriously [because]. . . . I'm Hispanic, just like you.

Emmy reported a similar home situation, where her mother “wants to speak English more because she works around a lot of English-speaking people. Her workers speak Cambodian, so the more she speaks English, the more that they could be able to follow along with her.” Emmy’s parents, when she was a child, would alternately say, “‘Oh, you're an American. Speak English,’” but then, “the less I talked, they'd be like, ‘I gave birth to you. You should still speak the [native] language.’” She expressed this irremediable paradox as “a mixed feeling, but at the same time, I understand both in some sort of way. I can be able to read, write both. It's okay. I don't mind.” In spite of this expression of acceptance of this dichotomy, however, Emmy’s interviews described her fraught experience of being multilingual. She repeatedly referred to herself as “a middle person,” which she defined as “a person who's in between,” not knowing “how one feels or the other feels.” She expressed, “I can't get along with people who speak in English, [and] I can't get along with people who speak Cambodian because I'm always the person in the middle.” Emmy explained:

My mom, she'll speak to me in English, and I don't know what she's talking about. To my sister, she'll exactly know what she's talking about, so I have to specifically tell my mom, “Can you speak to me in Cambodian?” And so, that's the only way I can be able to understand her. . . . She kind of gets mad at me . . . But for me, I can't do it. There's something about the way that my mom's saying it that I can't understand it.

**Faculty mediation.** The single clearest, most consistent finding of this study was the influence of faculty on student writing outcomes, whether positive or negative. Participants
seemed to show internal benchmarks of what constitutes a “good teacher.” Erika reflected, “I've had about three English teachers that . . . were really good, and they actually did impact my reading.” Many of the participants spoke very highly of their experience learning to write in English classes, and, admittedly, here Erika was referring explicitly to an English faculty member teaching a required English class, rather than disciplinary faculty teaching general education and subject matter courses, whose assignments are closer to the focus of this study. However, in this section on faculty-related mediators, rather than attempt to segregate participants’ frequent descriptions of positive experiences in their English classes from those in disciplinary or general education classes, they are integrated throughout. My rationale is the potential guiding and calibrating effect to be achieved by contrasting pedagogical practices and behaviors identified as positive by participants with those perceived as negative. For clarity, each participant’s narrative will explicitly identify whether an instructor being discussed is an English professor or a professor in a disciplinary course.

**Facilitating: Faculty availability for meaningful connections.** Participants discussed certain memorable experiences when they felt professors cared about them and about teaching. Erika said:

My actual English teacher, oh my god, it was incredible because he was the first teacher I had where he basically threw everything I learned in K through 12 out the window. And he was like, “you should be comfortable using ‘I,’ you should be able to make your points and feel comfortable expressing your ideas. This is your writing, so you have to own it.” So I think that's why my final paper in that class was incredible.
Marco, Erika, and Emmy talked about Professor K, a particular Multicultural Studies (a fictitious course name) instructor who was eager to provide meaningful time and attention to her students. Erika said she can tell that Professor K is dedicated to teaching:

She's super nice. And she showed just as much enthusiasm about helping us with our writing, and making sure we get something done, that she does with the rest of the class.

So I like that she seems genuine about wanting to help.

She added, “I'm glad that she really wants us to do well for this, because no other teacher really brings it up . . . . I appreciate that about her.” Professor K’s class is powerful for Erika, who expressed distinct disappointment and anger regarding other classes—and college at large. She said, “I love [Professor K’s] class. I love everything about the class. I love the teacher, so it's easy to write about things I don't hate.”

Erika described how the best English instructors she has had would spend time to talk with her. She said, “That's the main thing, communicating.” She had one excellent English class in high school: “I was excelling in that class because I really connected with my teacher . . . and she would help me with my writing. She believed in me, so they put me in an . . . advanced college prep [class].” Liliana said that in her English class, “meeting with the teacher, talking about my experience with writing, and building that connection, building that friendship with my professor was really helpful in succeeding in that class my first semester.” For Liliana:

At least you have one teacher that you can express emotion, I guess, with. It's hard to build up a relationship with a teacher, especially when you go to a commuter school where you get in, you get out. Having that time to build a friendship with a teacher, it feels a lot better meeting with a teacher and knowing you have at least one person at the school that you can talk to.
Adriana found this connection with a tutor, rather than an instructor, at her community college: “I always had this one person I would go to, and we just developed this relationship, so it was great.”

When faculty make themselves available to students for conferences and meetings, students benefit greatly. In Mateo’s English classes, “We had one on one conferences on a ten-page paper that we had to do, and that really helped make it more less unbearing.” He reflected that it “was good to have the one-on-one conference with my professors. And this has been [my] experiences in other classes, regardless of my major.”

Unlike Nadia, who had better luck getting access to her teachers in high school than in college, Min reported he finds professors more accessible in college than in high school, where there was no time after class to ask questions directly with teachers because he had to run to the next class. In college, he said, there is more time to catch an instructor after class. He described a recent after-class meeting with a professor: “I talk about how the readings works and . . . some reading that I find confusing. It goes well. She showed me the main point of the readings [and] . . . she give me handout.” Liliana agreed that her English teachers “are willing to talk to you after class about the feedback that they give you.” She said, “Working with teachers and working out what you're trying to get from them is a lot easier, and it shows that teachers care.”

Facilitating: Developmental, student-centered pedagogy. When faculty teach developmentally, i.e., increasing the challenge and rigor while scaffolding and unconditionally supporting the learning, students feel faculty have high expectations of them. An operative word among participants was “push.” Liliana explained, “having that one teacher that really pushed me to be better as a student and be better as a writer really helped. She really supported me.”
Thinking back on high school, Liliana reflected that being forced to be in ESL classes until high school “was hard, but over time when I got up to high school, I improved in writing in itself because my freshman year teacher really pushed me.” Liliana related:

My freshman year [high school] teacher really pushed me. . . . I was taking . . . a lower level class. . . . I did really well in that class [and] all the three other years [and] . . . I improved from high school to college. I think I improved a lot more, and I like writing.

Table 4.7

Interpersonal sociocultural mediators: Faculty-related

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL Sociocultural Mediators</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty availability for connection</td>
<td>Liliana: “Meeting with the teacher, talking about my experience with writing, and building that connection, building that friendship with my professor was really helpful in succeeding in that class my first semester.”</td>
<td>Faculty unresponsive, uncaring, unkind</td>
<td>Nadia: “When I ask for help..., sometimes [professors] give you attitude.” “[Professors] can be mean sometimes.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental, student-centered teaching</td>
<td>Moises: “Incredible” professor “helped by going from simple to complex, to break down ideas … so [I] could see the spectrum of where [I] can ... push to the limit.” Nadia: Instructors should “go over and be like, ‘Okay, this is what this whole assignment is about. This is what you’re supposed to do, basically.’”</td>
<td>Lack of developmental teaching Unclear expectations for writing assignments</td>
<td>Hui: “The professor force us to speak in class. . . . just sit in a circle and then. . . . It’s your turn. Speak.” “Sometimes it’s just embarrassing to speak in class.” Min: It is hard “when you not sure what the paper’s about. I mean probably the assignment is not clear, and you don’t know where to find those information.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explicit expectations for writing assignments</td>
<td>Adriana: “It really helps when [professors] allow us to give them the paper, then give it back to us, so we can fix it. Definitely, I think that we learn a lot from [feedback].”</td>
<td>Lack of instructional feedback</td>
<td>Moisés: “I still haven't had that feedback from a professor, so I still don't know if it's something right or wrong.”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discriminatory, deficit-oriented teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Culturally- and linguistically-inclusive practices</td>
<td>Emmy: “[Ethnic Studies] is the only class... that I actually want to participate more. I think it's because… I'm a [Cambodian] person, there's things I could relate to... [The professor] kept telling me [to] tell more of my story.”</td>
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For Liliana, class discussion is “beneficial when it comes down to writing later because you might have thought a certain way before, but some parts of another perspective can be put, and you can be pushed into thinking differently and altering your thinking, which I liked.” Liliana’s instructor challenged students conceptually, to “try arguing for another point and see the other
Liliana said she liked having the “chance to see another person's way of thinking. That's really powerful when you're writing. . . and you can be pushed into thinking differently and altering your thinking.” She also reported being challenged on a more rhetorical level to incorporate more transition signals into her writing to “guide a reader basically in reading and understanding because my audience was basically people that don't really understand the idea.”

Erika had a positive experience in English because the instructor valued each student’s development and gave them each time and support. She said that while her English teacher “doesn't judge us for doing things an hour before it's due,” he at the same time challenges them by insisting, “‘there will come a time when you're gonna need to revise, and you shouldn't always expect to have a teacher tell you to revise.”’ This English professor “didn't shove us aside, just because our first sample of writing wasn't great.” Erika additionally described Professor K’s strategy for supporting their academic writing development in her Multicultural Studies class:

She even . . .[explained] to us again the writing process, and the structure of five-paragraph essay. . . . “I know you hate this. I hate this too. I'm just here just in case someone doesn't know.” But she said it apologetically, not like, “I have to. You guys suck.”

Nadia described the valuable experience of her learning being scaffolded by a professor when she explained how they “can give you a track . . . maybe if you go this direction, you're going to get closer to what you want to say.” Min also described how he found developmental scaffolds helpful:

I think the instructor understand us because they know that the reading is sometimes difficult. So . . . she try to make the introduction for the reading first, and then she got
still into groups and discuss about the main point of the readings. Then we talk about our readings.

If Min were giving advice to instructors, he would suggest, “Focus on what the student needs to understand.” Moisés similarly benefited from developmental pedagogy. He described his English teacher as “incredible” because he developmentally:

dumb[ed] it down. . . . He went from simple to extremely complicated. . . . So [I] could see the spectrum of where [I] can . . . push to the limit. . . . It made me comfortable. It made me realize that I could write a pretty good paper now. The way that [the professor] did it, it was step-by-step process.

In her English class, Erika found that “having to say out loud what I was thinking made me more confident once I realized that I knew what I was talking about in front of other people.”

Liliana’s experiences have been “pretty positive because, especially here [at UU], where for the most part, teachers are willing to help you succeed in your writing… teachers are so enthusiastic when you come to office hours.” About Professor K, Erika said, “She's very encouraging of us here. If people don't talk, she's like, ‘I want to hear from you . . . . You didn't say anything, can you please speak up?’”

Adriana talked about how a sociology professor entertained her disagreement on a topic being taught:

I always have the opposite opinion in certain things, not always, but sometimes . . . I just express myself and . . . I write about it. [This sociology professor] would be like, "Oh, this is interesting." I would say [my thoughts] in class, some people would get mad at me, but I'm like, “This is how I think.’ . . . I like to question things sometimes.”

Liliana’s interactions with faculty have been:
pretty positive because . . . teachers are willing to help you succeed in your writing. . . . Teachers are so enthusiastic when you come to office hours, and you're ready to talk about your essay, and you're ready to discuss your thinking and maybe alter it a little bit to the expectations of what a teacher wants.

Most of Marco’s classes require writing:

Practice has been a huge thing. . . . I've been on more a liberal arts academic track, I've had to do a lot of writing and different types of writing: reflective writing, more concrete, five-page essay kind of things, certain research papers, but just constantly writing has been really important in terms of developing writing.

Mateo’s classes similarly “require some form of writing essays, either within exams, within papers that are due, so writing-wise, with my professors, it's just common . . . essay assignments that are expected of us throughout the course.” Hui’s ESL college transition program was helpful:

because I did a lot of writing, but not all five pages long, just a small, like, journal or small paper. . . . It improved my writing a little bit when I just sit in front of the computer, I can just type . . . practice and the instruction [are important], . . . but I think the practice is more important.

Facilitating: Explicit expectations for writing assignments. Comprehensible, clearly-articulated expectations for writing assignments and constructive, instructional feedback on writing drafts were cited consistently by all participants as indispensable and in low supply. Nadia was very specific about how faculty should assign writing. Instructors should “go over and be like, ‘Okay, this is what this whole assignment is about. This is what you're supposed to do, basically.”’ Min agreed: “I need teachers’ advice.” Moisés discussed the benefit of rubrics,
tools that are meant to help clarify and quantify assignment expectations for accountability and transparency. He related how one instructor “did provide a rubric of how [the assignment] was going to be broken down. Like grammar, structure, . . . if you supported evidence, if you quoted, if you cited. [I consulted it and] . . . I got pretty good, pretty decent grade in that class.” The rubric served an important purpose for him:

So you basically get an idea of what you're working, and if you have a rubric, you don't use it like, okay, this, this, this, this, but you read the rubric, and you read your paper, like, okay it has the essence. I think that's something that helps you out.

*Facilitating: Instructional, formative feedback.* Most participants expressed their appreciation of iterative drafting and the opportunity to “fix” their papers, which is how some participants framed the idea of revision, and ten participants articulated the powerful mediator of faculty feedback. Adriana stated, “It really helps when [faculty] allow us to give them the paper, then give it back to us, so we can fix it. Definitely, I think that we learn a lot from [feedback].” She added:

I think feedback is always good because even when you get a feedback and, like I said, they don't give you the opportunity to rewrite, you can just look at it and say, “Okay, so I can do better.” I can just look at it and try to focus on fixing it.

Moisés similarly explained:

[It is helpful to] get that feedback from the professor where you're missing out and not just a grade. . . . Where is it I'm failing? . . . Because that way you can try to change it and have an insight of where you could have done it better, not just, “This is where you're wrong.” . . . And not only the grade but to expand on the analysis of the paper.
He summarized this need: “That interaction between the professor and me, you know where you had to change on the next project.” Liliana agreed with this sentiment: “I like communicating with my professors, especially with writing. Knowing what they see in my essay and what I can work on. That has helped me succeed in my writing the most.”

Mateo reiterated the importance of instructive feedback. While he said he did gain confidence when “my professors have said that my papers are good,” simply positive comments are not that helpful. Feedback needs to be informational to be useful. He gave examples:

An instructor could say: “Careful not to be too repetitive,” or “Make sure your analysis isn't just saying what the quote is saying.” Be more of like, “how does this apply to my thesis, how does this apply to the idea I'm trying to present?”

From one professor’s feedback, he realized that his argument was “a little bit biased”:

When I was talking about it, I was like, Oh yeah, media is framing it. Media is terrible. [But the professor said,] “Look at your evidence. . . . Don't be more aggressive, like just attack them off the bat. Be analytical about it.” That was really helpful criticism, being that when you're writing a paper, you like to include your own ideas. Certain occasions, it's acceptable, it's understandable. [But] certain occasions, it's not. Certain occasions, you have to be more argumentative, . . . bringing the counter argument as well. It helps improve your argument much more.

Min’s experience corresponds to that of Mateo. Pointing to a comment on his graded paper, Min reflected, “Let's say this note clarify on this specific sentence. [The professor] will highlight it so what it means, that makes me know I am making mistake.” On Min’s paper, the instructor had written, “Great close reading of the images.” When asked how this comment made him feel, he answered with a smile, “Makes me feel great.” It was not just positive: it was
specific, so he knew what he had done well. Similarly, when Professor K gave extensive commentary on Erika’s draft, clearly having spent a great deal of time and care to provide feedback, Erika said, “I really enjoyed that she actually took the time to write out what she thought of it.” The paper “was covered in notes, but they made sense. And she not only highlighted what didn't make sense, but she also told me what I should keep in the paper.” She added that, as a result, she attended carefully to Professor K’s comments.

While meaningful faculty interaction is important to all students, Moisés stated that formative feedback is that much more pivotal “when you're a foreign student, [and] you . . . didn’t go to high school in here,” but admitted, “not only . . . foreign-speaking languages students but also American students could [benefit from] that feedback.” Liliana agreed that “the support between student and teacher is very, very crucial with multilingual students just because sometimes you don't understand fully what you're expected as a writer.” Nadia agreed that what supports her writing development most is when she can get to see the professor and get feedback. She recommended:

Definitely something I could suggest for . . . how to improve the teaching to a student like me is to, whenever they assign a paper to do, a paper for them to write, give them feedback, because the feedback is helpful. Right away with the first draft. And when you are correcting, and checking, and giving feedback, definitely . . . I would like to know about my English writing, the words, how I'm writing. If you can say, “Oh, you can use this word for this part, . . . [you] can express what you're trying to say better, so people can get the sense, and the same feeling you're having.”
Facilitating: Culturally- and linguistically-inclusive pedagogical practices. Erika’s two favorite professors (Professor K and her English teacher) made her feel comfortable, especially because they were not from the dominant culture, or at least they knew how it felt to be different:

It kind of made me comfortable with [the English instructor], because he's not just some white guy telling me I write shitty. I wouldn't [have thought] he knows what it's like to me, but he has an understanding of what it's like to not know everything right off the bat.

Regarding Professor K, Erika said, “She's obviously not your stereotypical white English teacher.” Relatable classroom experiences with multicultural educators have helped her feel included and therefore want to participate. “I feel like my cultural background helps me relate a lot to the class . . . . I wasn't some sort of ‘other.’” Emmy concurred completely with Erika: “Professor K’s class is the only class . . . that I actually want to participate more. I think it's because it's a Multicultural Studies class, and since I'm a Cambodian person, there's things I could relate to. . . . She kept telling me, tell more of my story.” However, Erika admonished, “having a diverse staff is only the beginning to having an inclusive environment for people of color. The reading materials we’re often given . . . aren’t relatable or reflective of our changing community.”

Erika raised another facilitating faculty-related interpersonal mediator for academic writing:

I had a Spanish teacher that said once [about some multilingual students], “My girls ... they're not stupid. They just can't articulate what they have to say in English. That doesn't mean they're stupid. . . . If you ask them in Spanish, they'll be able to tell you everything you need to know.”
Inhibiting. Faculty are unavailable or unresponsive. Moisés and Hui stated they have had no interaction with instructors whatsoever. Erika reflected that “instructors should give more encouragement to students - that is missing.” She explained that “the faculty that don't care are the ones that are just gonna give you a quick yes, or a quick no,” rather than give your question the time and care it deserves.” Erika feels professors “don’t care,” and most “pity” students because they are “dumb.” She added:

I'm not saying that I need to be pampered or anything, but I feel like sometimes when I try to ask a question, or comment . . . the way [the author] wrote something, [the professor will] shut me down or brush it off. And I'm like, “But I don't know what's going on.” So . . . you can tell when a teacher's being fake with you, or pretending she liked your comment. I'd rather they fight me about something than just be like, “Oh, that's nice.”

She expressed it poignantly when she said, “Every other class that's not specifically English, and also not a teacher that cares, they kind of make me hate writing.”

When participants do not feel cared for, they feel lost and find it hard to care themselves. Erika, Emmy, and Nadia reported on occasion feeling “lost” and Erika complained that when professors “just ramble,” don’t “take enough time to look at you or talk to you to know anything,” she ends up “just not caring.” She said with exasperation:

I'm paying you, I want to learn. I'm wasting my hours here. You get paid whether I show up or not. It wouldn't kill you to at least entertain me and tell me your take on something based on commentary. . . . The [students] I've talked to look just as lost as I do, but I don't know. I'm just really disappointed.
She again expressed disappointment: “It's just very minimal teaching” and “You're a professor, I was expecting more effort.” Erika feels college has been “a disappointment.” She explained about a particular psychology class, “I thought I was gonna enjoy it, but it's just him talking, and it's really early, so I'm just not caring.” Emmy is disappointed when she applies faculty feedback and comments on her revision, but the grade doesn’t change.

While challenge is a pivotal aspect of teaching and learning, it has to be balanced by support and informed by assessment of a learner’s developmental level of the student. For example, Hui felt uncomfortably pushed and pressured when “the professor force us to speak in class. . . . just sit in a circle and then. . . . ‘It's your turn. Speak.’” She stated, “Sometimes it's just embarrassing to speak in class.” However, she admitted, “It improved my speaking a lot, [even though] sometimes it's just embarrassing to speak in class, especially [if] I'm not very understand the chapter or the reading. . . . But after the in-class discussion, I have more ideas about the reading.” Erika illustrated sociocultural developmental mediation perfectly when she expressed her understanding is this cogent manner: “You can't just learn how to write out of a book, you need to have someone talk to you and guide you, and then push you to do it.”

More problematic even than uncaring faculty are those that are unkind and cause students to suffer. Adriana had a disturbing experience with a “hard-headed” literature professor at her community college.

[The professor] said really bad things to me. . . . She . . . made me cry on Valentine's Day. . . . She got really mad at me because I had some questions. . . . She kept telling me that I was not a good student because I didn't know how to write. . . . Then I had to say to her, “I'm actually an A student, and I don't have any problem writing, and I never had any problems with any professors.”. . . Then she got really mad at me.
When Emmy was in third grade, she said, “I remember that I didn't know what partners was. I didn't know what group work was. I remember a teacher getting mad at me because I didn't know anything. I started crying in class.” On occasion, Nadia has emailed instructors to ask for clarification on assignments, but they “give her attitude” if she says she doesn’t know how to write the paper. One particular instructor is “very mean sometimes.” Nadia stated, “I don't want to ask too much. . . . So, I don't want her to feel like ‘Nadia is attacking me with her grade.’ Obviously, I want a good grade, because who doesn't want a good grade?” According to Nadia, students admonish each other, “‘Don't be rude, don't be mean to her, because you know she's already rude and mean with people. So, just try to be nice.’ Maybe that's the strategy, be nice with this teacher, even though they give you a bad grade. Be nice.”

Inhibiting: Inappropriate pedagogy. Many disciplinary faculty do not teach writing in their disciplines, yet continue to evaluate students with writing assignments. Marco speculated, “Maybe because they are not necessarily English professors . . . they're looking more at the content, rather than more of the fine-tuned aspects [of writing].” He gave faculty the benefit of the doubt: “A lot of faculty are overworked and they have their own responsibilities. . . . just are so overburdened with research and classes and large classes, so you can definitely understand where their ability to [provide quality feedback] gets cut down.” Moisés stated that he applied a formula to any writing he was assigned, regardless of whether for a Classics, History, or Anthropology class. He acknowledged that he knew there should be different disciplinary structures, but he had not been explicitly taught them.

Some participants expressed not feeling included by their instructors and not wanting to contribute to class discussions. When Emmy was asked what interaction she had with her professors, she answered, “None. I am a person who's too shy to actually talk in class or do
anything, so I try to stick off into a corner, which is not good because I really need
recommendations for things. It just kind of sucks.” Hui’s experience being forced to speak in
class was “embarrassing . . . ” Hui’s transition from ESL in which she was scaffolded to
mainstream one-way lecture classes was difficult. She explained that the instructor “will not let
us sit in the circle and then speak . . . and then if you have any thought, any question, and you
can ask.” However, most students are silent. It is usually the same few students who will ask
questions, and the professor does not stimulate whole-class conversation or encourage silent
students to speak. Further, an instructor of Adriana’s “wouldn't let us ask questions. [If you’re]
a literature professor, you want people to ask questions. She didn't want us to really interrupt the
class and not ask anything. It was kind of hard.” Erika discussed on one of her classes:

I hate the class, and every time I have to write something, I don't know what I'm talking
about. So it just drags… the whole time I'm smashing my head on the desk. I feel like
I'm not learning anything… I didn't get what I expected. I was so excited to have a class
where we talk about a book… . And then now I hate it, I hate it so much.

When faculty are not able or willing to engage with the inherent ideas in students’
writing, this can cause a missed opportunity for learning. When we were discussing a piece of
her writing, Erika pointed to a passage and said, “My thesis was somewhere in here . . . but I
don't think [the instructor] knew that was the thesis. So I'm guessing I did something wrong, but
no one explains to me which it is.” Emmy explained that she feels her writing is chronically
misunderstood by her professors:

I have the way of seeing it [that instructors don’t understand] . . . . So, [the instructor
wrote] wrote . . . , “[these paragraphs have] similar ideas,” but for me, what I talked about
Emmy was intentional and metacognitive about what her writing was doing; she saw clearly how the two consecutive paragraphs related while addressing different ideas. However, the instructor was not able to recognize the difference. She illustrated her different way of seeing in a unique way:

It's like reading a book and then watching the movie. People would . . . rather see . . . the movie because you can see the emotions, you can see the rain, or the wind. You can hear the music, right? But in a book, it just tells you what's happening, and people can't be able to picture that in their head. And so for me, I can be able to [see and hear all that in my writing], but some other people can't do it. . . . I know where my writing stands, but it would never become a movie where people can be able to read from.

This last sentence reflects an internalized resignation of never being able to develop the expected level of standard English academic writing in college, while simultaneously exhibiting a profound degree of metacognition and abstract thinking that may not be measurable or recognizable in the standard-English context of higher education.

Inhibiting: Unclear expectations and instructions. It can be a barrier to writing development when faculty’s expectations and assignment instructions are unclear. Min stated, “The teacher usually explain to student what you really need to put on your papers, but they didn't really explain how you're gonna structure papers.” Moisés said, “It is hard when instructors don’t make it clear what they expect. It makes it hard for students to know what to do, how to write.” Moisés said he can email faculty to ask for clarification on assignments, “but email is pretty difficult . . . to understand it” and the instructor typically tells him to attend office
hours. However, Moisés takes four classes while working 50 hours a week, “so it's pretty
difficult to meet . . . that professor or have office hours with them. So if they don't give us [clear
instructions] from the get-go, you're just gonna wing it.”

Erika and Moisés both expressed the problem of different teachers having different
expectations, and yet most expectations are implicit and not transparently articulated. Erika said:

I had a different professor say that I talk too much when I write. Or that when I write, I
write excessively. I don't get straight to the point. But I didn't know what to make of
what she told me, because sometimes if I write too little, I feel like I'm missing
something, like I'm doing something wrong. I don’t understand what they want.

Erika felt “lost” because she did not know what the instructor “liked.” Moisés explained:

Each class is different. . . . Each professor is different, so I don't know if that's what
they're looking for. . . . [For example, if feedback states,] “not enough quotes,” . . . where
should I go? Where was the point that you read that I should have had a quote?

As for quotes, Moisés admitted:

I did know that they wanted: . . . for us to grab this information from . . . scholarly
journals, [but] . . . I don't know where you're supposed to put that quote, or if you want to
put a quote or just a paraphrase. Professors say, “The words have to be too sweet for you
not to put them in.” Okay, but then again, perspective. What you like, I might not.

Nadia also expressed frustration when expectations are unclear:

Sometimes when I read [assignment instructions], I don't understand what this whole
thing is saying. What am I supposed to do? And this is when I have to email my
professor and say, “I don't understand. What is this whole assignment about? I don't
know where to start, where to end.” And . . . same thing for chemistry.
She pointed out that it is not only she who has difficulty understanding, but classmates, too. Adriana also wonders "what is missing?" when instructors are unclear in their feedback. “They would ask me a question [in their comments] and then not explain. Then . . . I would just go home and be confused [and] have no idea what I need to do still.” Min also said it is hard “when you not sure what the paper's about. I mean probably the assignment is not clear, and you don't know where to find those information.”

Nadia’s instructors do not use grading rubrics, so she does not know how they will evaluate her writing. “[We] just write the paper and then we get the grade.” According to Liliana:

Some teachers [provide grading rubrics], not all. . . . My philosophy teacher just expects you to know what source to pull from. There's not really a hard rubric that she goes by to check off whether you do it or not. For my English classes, for the most part, yeah, there are rubrics. . . . [Without a rubric], I feel like my thoughts are just everywhere. I don't really know where to start in a sense. [A rubric helps because it states,] “This is what expected” . . . . I feel like the [assignment] instructions guide a writer, but also the rubric structures what you have to write about, which I like, which helps me write with both . . . [the structure and the content]. How clear the assignment instructions are “depends on . . . how the wording is. . . . Easier words to use to explain something are better just so you don't misinterpret completely what you're trying to get from this question.

She gave an example of the words “inquiry” and “genre”. . . . “Exactly what are you expecting me to write for ‘genre’?” Nadia extended this idea about choices of wording: “A professor can write out, ‘this is what you're supposed to do,’ but [it’s] not only me [who] cannot understand it,”
but her classmates too. “So, maybe it's not my fault or the students’ fault. Maybe you didn't word it in a way we can understand it.”

**Inhibiting: Lack of formative, instructional feedback.** Mirroring the benefit to students of regular drafting and revising, and formative, instructive feedback on their writing is the lack thereof. Most of Erika’s instructors do not conduct iterative drafting with papers, and even if they ostensibly do, they either have a laissez faire attitude or do not enforce substantive drafts. As a consequence, Erika has never gotten in the habit of revising, a practice she readily acknowledges would improve her writing. In some cases, faculty do not provide sufficient feedback. For Nadia, faculty in high school were more accessible, “they say, ‘Do the first draft, and then I'm going to revise it.’” However, in college, “you have to run after [faculty and ask], ‘can you please [review this draft and give me feedback]?’ . . . [They reply,] ‘Oh, you can email it to me, and I'll look at it later’. . . . I'll have to wait until he or she gives me a feedback, then go back and revise it. And if I knew all those [comments], I could write a paper [much more easily].” Nadia added:

> If by chance I get someone to read my paper before I submit it, which is like never happens. . . So, if I read it [myself], and maybe you read something that you wrote, you're going to read it with the same eyes, and you're not going to see the mistake you made.

For Moisés, receiving feedback from the professor has always been helpful, though there has never been very much: “If it's a writing-intensive class, there should be a lot of feedback.” Liliana acknowledged that:

> There are certain teachers who put more into feedback, while others just say an overall general idea of what they expect in your writing. . . . if they're in big classrooms like a lecture, they're not really going to talk to you as much about feedback.
Perhaps even more challenging than not enough feedback is feedback that is unhelpful, non-instructive, or even confusing and frustrating. Nadia couldn’t understanding why, “if [professors] see an English word mistake, that I translate . . . they don't say it, but they take points off. Maybe they don't want to offend you . . . but the points are taken.” She finds this lack of transparency unfair, and certainly not instructive when she wants to learn and improve.  For Adriana, some faculty would only ask, “‘What is missing?’ They would ask me a question and then not explain [what they were referring to]. Then . . . I would just go home and be confused. I [would] have no idea what I need to do still.” For Moisés, “What makes you doubt is, ‘where am I missing?’ Because you might think you're getting to the point, but . . . if you're just told you're not getting to the point, you're like, ‘okay, where is it? What's the point?’” He offered the examples of when and where to quote, where to use the “other writer’s” (i.e., author’s) ideas and words, and how to integrate them into his paper. So, he said:

If the professor says, “not enough quotes” or “not enough references,” you don't have the idea of what she's expecting. So even if you have somebody else go over it, it might not be what [the instructor’s] expecting. So that feedback actually helps when you know what . . . she's waiting for.

Emmy said her instructors almost always say, “good points,” but don’t provide instruction or modeling to help her begin to analyze and synthesize the points to move to the next level in her writing. Furthermore, the feedback is not easily understandable: “What I think is that those are good sentences, good points . . . when I see [instructors’ comments in] words.” She is guessing about the meaning and furthermore, often interpreting neutral comments as criticisms, as negative. When looking at her writing together, Emmy said, “I got a thesis right. That was the only good part about it.” When asked why she thought that, she could now explain her
reasoning: “There's a check mark right there. So I was just like, ‘Okay. I got the thesis right. I have a thesis there that makes sense.’” When I pointed out the comment “excellent quote,” she did not accept the praise or approbation: “[My] information is always great, but then you see this…” She was referring to the professor’s comment on paper asking, “What is the difference between these two paragraphs?” She said, “I don't know how to connect it, how to contrast it. The thing is that for me, because I don't know how to do anything with it, it just sounds repetitive to other people.” She tries very hard to use feedback to improve:

When I get the comments back from professors or teachers, it's that I try to follow the way that they do it. So I would add and delete what their comments are based on, and then I would pass that in. And then when I got it back, it's still the same grade.

This, she explained, is frustrating, disillusioning, and certainly not instructive.

Nadia said she receives no feedback of substance, only “‘You need to proofread. You need to proofread.’” She does not find that level of feedback useful or instructional. To Moisés:

If it's just multiple choice test, you just know where you missed it and that's it. But if you have to write an essay, and you have three essays and the final one is the one that counts, and you botched the first three, and you don't [get any feedback from the professor to] know what's going on, now you're gonna botch the third one.

He added, “I still haven't had that feedback from a professor, so I still don't know if it's something right or wrong.” Erika described a professor’s feedback as “very minimal and honestly kind of useless” and quite simply wants to tell her instructors, “I want you to tell me how to fix this.”

Even Mateo and Marco, both of whom recounted rigorous academic preparation in high school and assessed their own writing as highly proficient, articulated their need for more
valuable feedback in order to continue developing their writing. Marco said, "I often times just get ‘great response,’ ‘great whatever,’ which is good, and I think I put in the effort to deserve that, but I know I can be better.” While positive comments increase his confidence and writing self-assessment, he could really learn from “a little more of that critical feedback.” If his professor were more explicit and instructive by saying, for example, “This could be more concrete; you're just being too ambiguous here,’ that would I think help me. . . . I think that would be important for me to just get to that next step in my writing.” He had written a research paper the previous semester, which he developed by working closely with an instructor:

but then I never really got a final big feedback from him. . . . Then I reread the paper, and I was like, “Man, there's so many places that this could have been stronger.” And I think those kind of things would be what I feel is lacking in some of the interaction [with faculty].

Inhibiting: Discriminatory, deficit-oriented teaching. Participants’ interviews reflected perceived bias or being othered, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. Moisés felt that faculty assume “everybody is a straight-A student, [but] we're not all alike. . . . We don't all have the same vocabulary. We don't all have the same level of English.” Liliana stated she does not think “faculty really knows [how valuable being multilingual is].” Emmy’s interview evinces a longtime perception of being misunderstood due to linguistic bias:

No one has [thought I have a language barrier] because I speak like this [no foreign accent in English]. People who have the accents and sometimes doesn't have [an understanding of] what a simple sentence would be, you could tell. But for me, it's not. I sound like this. [They think] I can be able to make complete sentences [and write in perfect English].
Erika similarly related how:

in elementary, I would have teachers assume I didn't speak English. But I don't think I
speak with a Hispanic or foreign accent, so I would get offended. Or, I would try to pick
up books, and the teacher would be like, “Are you sure you can read that?” . . . I'd get so
mad.

Adriana stated in her survey that if she thinks about it, she could feel discriminated against due to
her accent, and Erika stated, “[We’re] assumed to be inferior.” Erika related one incident with
one of her professors: “The way she looked at me and the way she talked about [my writing], I
felt like she thought I was dumb. . . . She sugar coated her commentary.”

Regarding linguistic discrimination, Mateo reflected:

I personally never had an experience with a professor who demonstrated like, “Oh, if you
don't speak English fluently, I really don't want to hear you talk.” I've never, thankfully,
have had that experience. I've heard, I'm not sure if it's professors here, but I've definitely
heard from my friends “this professor is kind of …” excuse my language ... “kind of an
ass because he doesn't even listen properly to when people are talking.” That's . . .
definitely a big issue. Thankfully, I have not had that experience, but it's definitely an
issue that should be resolved.

**Intrapersonal sociocultural mediators.**

**Intrapersonal language-related interactions in a standard English-normed context.**

*Facilitating: Pride.* The value of multilingualism as a facilitator for writing emerged as a
theme. Being multilingual can engender pride, which can be expressed in writing. Liliana said
she believes:
Those who . . . know more than one language, they should really show it in their papers. . . . You have at least one thing to bring to the table. . . . You have a lot more to offer. You are very powerful knowing more than one language.

Erika described how she makes intentional literary use of her multilingualism:

I enjoy [being multilingual] just because things don't translate the same in both languages. . . . So I feel like it gives me some flair when I write. . . . Things sound more fancy in Spanish. “Excuse me” in Spanish is *permiso*, but that would translate directly to “permission” [in English].

Marco expressed the same experience writing to learn a new language: “I think that some of my style . . . and passive voice has to do with my multilingualism and kind of just the way I think sometimes.” For Marco:

Being multilingual has been such a positive for me in terms of writing . . . because I studied Spanish so much later. I didn't really start learning Spanish until I started studying it in 8th grade, and because I had that more formal base, I really had to work on tenses. I think in general, we don't think about tenses. . . . And I think it helps my style of writing, you know that ambiguous [style I choose], who knows when [the action] going on, we can place it in different times and periods.

*Facilitating: Support for reading and vocabulary development.* Being multilingual can promote critical reading development. Marco explained:

I struggle in reading in Spanish. I read very slowly and have to go over concepts. And I think there's definitely part of that that gave me a new patience with reading [in English in general]. And also gave me a more subconscious understanding that you have to really understand a concept rather than skimming a page and thinking you understand a
concept, which I think we can get into the habit of very easily. [Being multilingual has helped with] really reading pieces more analytically and getting into greater depth with them.

Erika and Marco also expressed the value being fluent in Spanish adds to their English writing. Erika explained, “looking at the root words in English, if I don't know what [a word] means, I can just try to figure out what it would mean in Spanish, so it helps me a lot.” For Marco as well, “the one place [being multilingual] definitely has a positive influence is on vocabulary. There's definitely words, especially academic words, that are with Latin roots that you can understand from a Spanish context easier than from an English context.”

Inhibiting: English proficiency. Higher English proficiency is a facilitator to success, specifically to academic writing development. For example, Mateo appraises himself as equally fluent in both English and Spanish: “My writing in English isn't really affected by the fact that I also speak Spanish. English-wise, I'm fluent: I read, I think, above average.” Nadia, on the other hand, only immigrated to the United States from Angola four and one-half years ago and explained, “All of the English I know right now, speak, writing, is what I have learned here in this four years. And it's been hard, because still I don't know most of the words, so I can’t write a perfect paper like anyone.”

Only Hui reported her native language as stronger than her English, which possibly accounts for her benefiting from the ESL program more than Emmy or Liliana, both of whom were already fully fluent in English. Moisés, Mateo, Erika, Marco, Adriana, Min, and Liliana all indicated that their English was equal to or stronger than their other language(s). (However, the interviews showed that, despite reports of such evenly balanced multilingualism and multilingualism, participants still reported variable degrees of difficulty developing academic
writing in English.) On the second survey, Mateo stated that “professors indicate I have a strong writing proficiency” and that his being multilingual does not affect his writing. In the interview, he said he was beginning to “balance English more because I use it more throughout my day. So, [being multilingual] doesn’t affect me as much in my [English] writing as I'd expect.” Erika wrote, “My English is good enough that I rarely struggle in writing,” and yet she stated, “Professors say my sentences don’t flow well or get mixed up” when asked about comments instructors have made about her English.

Moisés, Emmy, Hui, and Min reported mild foreign accents in English on the survey, which, it should be noted, offered as responses only a binary yes or no and did not allow for any nuance. Emmy’s survey response indicating a mild accent diverged slightly with her description during her interview of speaking unaccented American English. Indeed, Emmy’s interview conveyed a student with a variable self-assessment who was sincerely struggling and often feeling lost, yet because she spoke with no foreign accent, she seemed to be projecting that faculty would feel she doesn’t deserve to ask for their help. She even stated she wasn’t sure she could call hers a language barrier because she “speaks like this.” When asked if she felt that she was seen to have a language barrier, she answered, “No. No one has [said I have a language barrier] because I speak like this. People who have the accents and sometimes doesn't have [the proficiency to know] what a simple sentence would be, you could tell [they were multilingual].” And yet she strongly expressed needing more support. When asked about professors’ comments about her English, she wrote, “professors take points off for grammar,” and stated that her English language proficiency “affects the capability of my writing.”
Table 4.8

Intrapersonal sociocultural mediators: Language-related mediators in a U.S. standard English-normed context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enriching writing</td>
<td>Marco: “It’s had a positive influence on my writing … I think that some of my style [such as] … ambiguity and passive voice has to do with my multilingualism and the way I think sometimes.”</td>
<td>English proficiency</td>
<td>Nadia: “All of the English I know right now, speak, writing, is what I have learned here in this four years. And it's been hard, because still I don't know most of the words, so I can’t write a perfect paper like anyone.”</td>
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<td>Support for reading and vocabulary</td>
<td>Erika: “Looking at the root words in English, if I don’t know what it means, I can just try to figure out what it would mean in Spanish, so it helps me a lot.”</td>
<td>Reading and vocabulary difficulty</td>
<td>Adriana: “You get confused with the language definitely. … It's a challenge to understand the words fully. I have to go slow.”</td>
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<td>development</td>
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<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Emmy: “Sometimes I don't know if I'm reading the sentence right. You could tell me, &quot;I walked the dog.&quot; It could be the simplest sentence ever, but I don't know what you're telling me.”</td>
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<td>Extra time</td>
<td>Nadia: “It takes me a longer time to write a paper than it can take someone that came to [college after attending a US] middle school, high school,”</td>
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<td>Linguistic clashes</td>
<td>Moisés: “It's not the grammar, it's the structure. … It's different. It's not only like writing it, it's how to write it.” “Language is … the biggest barrier.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorical style and genre clashes</td>
<td>Hui: “[In my native country, writing is about] the way you write, like how you use the adjective, and how you express … the action, your thinking, [whereas in US, it is] more about your idea, … how you think and how you connected the experience and your thinking.” “I was not used to [US writing].”</td>
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<td>Heritage language loss</td>
<td>Erika: “[I am] always struggling to keep up both languages. … I feel like they’re both equally leveling out, and it's getting worse on both.”</td>
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It should be noted that this survey question about English proficiency and accent was asked to expose any overt correspondence between reports of different or discriminatory reception from professors due to a foreign accent in English. The variability of participants’ responses around their English proficiency, accent, and other socioculturally-related linguistic factors raises the possibility of internalization of societal discrimination leading to conflicted academic and writing self-assessments. However, the data were not conclusive, especially since this was asked on a follow-up survey, therefore allowing no opportunity to further unpack the matter with participants.
Inhibiting: Reading difficulty. Nearly all participants reported this to be true for them.

Erika said that because she does not read a great deal in either language, she finds she reads more slowly in both languages:

I used to make fun of the kids that take longer to read something, now I became one of those people. And . . . I don't grasp the material as much. I have to reread things now.

I'm not sure if that has anything to do with my Spanish.

Erika does not seem to have transformed the difficulty of reading in Spanish into an opportunity for slowing down and digging deeper as Marco described above. Adriana’s experiences coincide with those of Erika:

You get confused with the language definitely. . . . My husband, he's been here for his whole life. He came here and was one year old. He gets a book and read a hundred pages, and I'm on page 20. . . . It's a challenge to understand the words fully. I have to go slow.

Moisés stated he finds it hard to discern the “secondary intent” in writing, the “ulterior motive,” due to societal and cultural differences. He explained that grew up in a society that "doesn’t read a lot.” He has never read a book in Spanish, though he reads history avidly in English. Min also expressed the difficulty of reading in English: “I try to understand a general summary of the readings. but the vocabulary is so difficult to understand, I will ask question about it.” And Hui conceded, “If they didn't discuss [the readings] in class, I can't understand the [whole reading], just the contents, like not understand every, every meaning.” She uses translation, as do many other participants to get by: “I need to translate the vocab, so most of time after I translate it, I understand every word, but when it combined together, I can't understand the sentence.”
Inhibiting: Confusion. Generalized confusion resulting from constant alternating between multiple languages was consistently cited by participants. Some participants reported processing and comprehension difficulty related to the constant alternating of language use. In Erika’s home, the family speaks Spanish. She described an almost neurological experience alternating between languages: “I've noticed that if someone's speaking Spanish, my brain does a little flip. But then I have to think in English, and it's kind of distracting in both.” Nadia described a similar experience: “My brain is shutting and opening for three languages. . . . It's very hard. Speaking, listening, especially the speaking. And writing too. Writing is hard.” She added, “I go home sometimes, I can be lost.” Emmy stated, “Sometimes I don't know if I'm reading the sentence right. You could tell me, "I walked the dog." Right? It could be the simplest sentence ever, but I don't know what you're telling me.” She did not explain whether she felt this difficulty in comprehension resulted from language or other causes, but she said:

There were times when I didn't understand anything. I guess when people ask me questions or tell me stories, sometimes I have to have them reword it, so that I can be able to understand it a little bit more. . . . When professors or teachers say, “Oh, this is very basic. You should know this.” I'm just like, “What do you mean?”

Inhibiting: Extra time. Reading and writing in English can take a long time. For Nadia, “It takes me a longer time to write a paper than it can take someone that came to [college after attending a U.S.] middle school, high school.” But, she added:

If I knew English, if I was born here, like I knew some words to use, it would be so easy to just type it. I [wouldn't] even have to think, “Okay, how does this, how do you say this?” But I have to translate it all in English.

For Adriana, learning English:
Wasn't so great in the beginning. It was really complicated because . . . you're just all over the place. . . . I'm getting confused with two languages, but you don't think about it as much because you're just so used to juggling the two languages.

She added, “I don't think [teachers understand the extra time that it takes for multilingual students]. I don't think they care. They're like, ‘It's your job. Do whatever you have to do and just learn.’ Sometimes it's just a lot.”

**Inhibiting: Linguistic clashes.** Writing in English is difficult for Moisés, “where it's not the grammar, it's the structure. . . . It's different. It's not only like writing it, it's how to write it.” He stated, “Language is. . . the biggest barrier. So even if [multilingual students] speak perfect English. . . you tend to . . . think in your native [language] and you translate. Even if you don't want to.” Emmy stated that she felt that native English-speakers write better than non-native or multilingual speakers because the languages are so different. “The English language sounds like a monotone language to me. You do the question mark where you can hear the question, or an exclamation point, but in the Cambodian language, you hear every tone from every word.”

**Inhibiting: Rhetorical clashes.** Moisés explained that long, winding sentences are common in Spanish writing, but not appropriate in standard-English academic writing, in which sentences should be concise and direct. Moisés said he recognizes his sentences are very long. He described how he once received feedback on a paper from a multilingual peer, who “got the feeling I was writing in Spanish [and translating into English], because I was writing too-long sentences. I wasn't getting that pause [that comes from intentional English-style punctuation usage], and it's the first [time] I actually got that.” He added, “I never use semicolons,” which demonstrates his awareness that combining multiple complete sentences with commas or no punctuation, while legitimate usage in Spanish writing, would be considered improper grammar.
In English academic writing, to combine independent clauses (complete sentences), one would need semicolons or simply to separate each sentence with periods (full stops).

Hui corroborated Moisés’ view that different languages have different writing styles. For Hui, the difference is more about the conceptual purpose of writing, not just the syntax and mechanics. She described her perception of this difference as in “the organization and the thinking.” Hui attended primary and middle school in Vietnam, and when she moved to the United States in high school, she experienced this discrepancy in expectations:

- In the middle school and elementary, our essay is more about making up a thing . . . that does not happen in my life, and I just make it up to fit the question. Maybe the question asks me to write about friendship, and I just make up a story to show my friendship.
- [Whereas here, you are expected to write about] something happened in my life and also, like maybe I need to do research about friendship.

She identified another dissonance in purposes between Vietnamese and U.S. academic literary styles. In Vietnam, they are concerned with:

- The way you write, like how you use the adjective, and how you express . . . even the action, your thinking, [whereas here, it is] more about your idea . . . how you think and how you connected the experience and your thinking. I was not used to it, to write something real.

Inhibiting: Vocabulary. Many participants cited learning English vocabulary as one of their most significant barriers to writing. Emmy finds:

- It always kind of stops me from continue writing, because there's a lot of English words that I forget. And so, I would always know the Cambodian version. And because the
Cambodian version has the accents on them, I don't know which word is what I'm trying to translate to. . . Sometimes the grammars [also are barriers].

If she can’t find a word in English and she knows how to say it in Cambodian, she has no way of looking up how to say the Cambodian word in English because of the tones and not knowing how to spell the word. For Min:

English word has multiple meanings, so in my own language, there is only one meaning, so that's different. Cantonese, Mandarin both. . . For English let's say the word has multiple meanings it could be like “influence.” It could mean “affect.” But in my own language, there's only one meaning. . . so you have to figure out how to use the word in English.

For example, he said, “When I read books, I usually stuck in some vocabulary, and I mess up the meaning of the whole sentence.” And when he writes, “some of the vocabulary—I'm not sure I'm really need to use those vocabulary because I'm not sure that will make it difficult for reader to read it or doesn't make it look more professional.” Hui similarly “would think something in Vietnamese, the words in Vietnamese, and I can't find any word in English to write.”

For Nadia, “It's been hard, because . . . when I'm writing a paper, I try to translate it from Portuguese in my mind. . . . How would I say this in Portuguese to English?” She added:

And even for me speaking, I have to say a word in Portuguese, and a word in English, and Creole. It's like my brain is . . . shutting and open, shutting and opening for the language, so it doesn't know which one to choose.

Nadia’s trouble goes beyond vocabulary:

Translating my Creole thoughts into English, how can I find the articles, everything I need to write the paper? And even sometimes when I'm writing, . . . if I don't know what
words to use, I'll just write it in Portuguese. And then highlight it with the yellow, and I
know I have to go back and find a word for this.

Moisés said, “The main issue is thinking in Spanish and going, ‘Okay, it sounds about
right,’ but in Spanish, it's not the same [meaning in English].” Adriana offered an example of
this phenomenon. The word “‘pretend’ in Portuguese and in English, it's something, it's the
same, it's almost the same word, but then the translation is different.” For Liliana:

There are times where I just know a word in Spanish that I don't know how to say it in
English, or vice versa, which has been hard on me ever since I could not tell you how
long. . . And I'm typing in English, but I'm thinking it in Spanish, which is hard, but it's
adaptable.

Inhibiting: Heritage language sacrifice. Several participants reported losses of
proficiency in their native languages. Erika is “always struggling to keep up both languages.
Instead of letting one get worse than the other, I feel like they're both equally leveling out, and
it's getting worse on both.” She said, “My Spanish is getting messy from not reading or writing.
I barely even speak at home anymore. . . . [and yet] I like my Spanish more.” For Liliana:

Reading in Spanish, has been like, not that it's hard, I know a couple of words, but to tell
me to read a whole chapter in a book in Spanish with hard words to say in Spanish, I will
not be able to do that.

Liliana “wasn’t exposed to [reading and writing in Spanish] as much growing up.” She added,
“The only time I've ever written in Spanish or read in Spanish is for Spanish class. No, my mom
never forced me to write in Spanish or read in Spanish because my dad's American.” Hui
declared, “I can't write in Vietnamese now.” Nadia lamented, “Now that I'm not practicing
Portuguese fluently, I'm . . . losing my Portuguese, and I'm more into English now. When I
speak with the Angolans . . . it needs to come English and Creole. . . . And now I'm kind of forgetting.”

**Individual attributes and behaviors.**

*Facilitating. Agency.* Agency is defined as “the capacity to act or not to act contingent upon various conditions” (Saenkhum, 2012, p. i). Agency is a feature of Vygotsky’s (1935/1978) original activity theory (subject-mediator-object), in which the subject is the agent and therefore has agency. Students exhibit agency when they take responsibility for their own learning, whether by asking for help from faculty, being resourceful, being motivated to improve, or advocating for themselves. For Moisés:

If [I am] aware . . . that it's going to be something demanding . . . I'll reach out [to the professor]. . . . I don't think there's something that's being impossible as long as you know it . . . and you reach out, you can . . . get a big idea of what it is. Once you get a big idea . . . you can basically break it down. But without knowing it, it's pretty frustrating.

Nadia frequently attempts to reach out to professors for help:

I always want to schedule, try to see the professor, so she or he can give me ideas, I mean, not ideas, but how I can go with this paper . . . because if I go home sometimes, I can be lost. So, definitely try to see the professor and get some feedback on my paper before the final draft.

Min is not hesitant to ask for help: “I usually ask teachers by email or after class. Like the idea that you're not sure about . . . what to write.” Of the two most academically prepared, unaccented, dominant-English participants, Marco, on the one hand, felt hesitant to request professors’ help because their limited time should go to lesser-prepared students who need help more than he, whereas Mateo is comfortable asking his instructors for feedback and clarification.
Table 4.9

**Intrapersonal sociocultural mediators: Individual attributes and behaviors**

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<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>INTRA-PERSONAL Sociocultural Mediators</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Moisés: “If I am aware . . . that it’s going to be something demanding . . . I’ll reach out to the professor . . . I don’t think there’s something that’s being impossible as long as you know it . . . and you reach out.”</td>
<td>Individual attributes and behaviors</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
<td>Erika: “I’m always afraid if I do, even lab reports, or studies, or stuff like that, if I do my own dissertation, I won’t be able to get a good result from it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to revise and develop writing</td>
<td>Mateo: “Sometimes I would even ask the professor to talk about the paper outside of class in order to see if this is acceptable or not, if I can make any revisions, especially for classes required in my major.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fearing negative reaction from faculty</td>
<td>Marco: “I’ve asked for [feedback] once or twice, but it’s also the kind of thing that I’m a little embarrassed to ask for, too, because I also don’t like to be overly needy.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being resourceful</td>
<td>Min: “[I] watch YouTube how to start writing those ideas. I search at Google like how to write professional introductions.”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Internalizing discrimination, deficiency</td>
<td>Erika: “We’re assumed to be inferior.”</td>
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**Facilitating: Motivation.** Liliana described this attribute well: “It depends on the student, too. It’s are you willing to succeed? Are you willing to do it yourself? Or are you willing to just lay back and not do anything?” Adriana’s identity is intertwined with her motivation to develop: “I'm an achiever. I like to do my best on everything. I think that has to do with being multilingual, too, because I'm always afraid to make mistakes, so I'm always trying to give my best.” Mateo is eager to develop: “Sometimes I would even ask the professor to talk about the paper outside of class in order to see if this is acceptable or not, if I can make any revisions, especially for classes required in my major.” Min similarly wants to improve: “I [use a writing center] on every Wednesday, there's a writing strategies [session], so I go there like twice a month. They show me how to start a paper by putting all the idea. It helps me.” He also prepares for every class: “I try to understand a general summary of the readings, but the vocabulary is so difficult to understand, I will ask question about it.”

When Erika and I were discussing her paper, she said, “I'm reading over it, I can understand why [the professor] was like, ‘What is she saying?’ . . . Just reading it over myself, I kind of want to make my own revisions again, and then compare them to whatever she wrote to...
me.” Erika was grateful that Professor K “even offered to extend the deadline all the way to the last day of the semester to rewrite it.” She admitted, “I wanted to redo it. . . . I knew it could've been better, so I feel bad not reading [her comments] when she took the time to read through all of our papers.” About the paper we were discussing together specifically, she said, “I want to fix my conclusion, because when I was writing it I had a great idea for it, but when I wrote it out, it wasn't what I wanted it to be.”

Marco expressed the desire to revise as well: “I think this paper could have been stronger … and there's a chance to rewrite it. I probably will put in my references and stuff.” Upon looking together at her writing, Nadia shared, “[I feel] confident. But I see some mistakes here and there now . . . that I'm reading it for the second time, not with the same eyes.” When Adriana and I looked at her writing together, she said, “I knew right away when I saw it [that the instructor’s comments were right]. Definitely. I'm glad he gave me the opportunity to fix it.” She added, “I think it’s a really important thing to learn how to listen to people and be okay with them . . . not think like you.”

When I asked Min how he felt about the paper we were looking at together, he said, “I feel great, but I still need to fix some grammar mistakes. I did notice there's too much repeated words. I'm gonna try to fix it.” When asked how he would transfer what he’d learned from this feedback to the next paper, he answered, “I try to make more . . . clarifying this paper. . . . Make more analyze of Shakespeare's plays. Give more analyze and examples.” Liliana felt it is right and fair for students to be given a “second chance to write a paper on something you slightly missed a little bit, it's fair. And for the most part, when I've read big essays, all these essays were pretty big essays within the class, it worked.” Moisés described a method of using feedback to good effect:
I took that class with a co-worker, and we actually went like, after the fact, “Okay, this, this, this.” And [the professor] gave us that feedback: “this is where you missed. This is where you missed.” So [we] looked where it was . . . that interaction between the professor and me, you know where you had to change on the next project.

Emmy said she does her best to apply the faculty feedback as well: “When I get the comments back from professors or teachers, it’s that I try to follow the way that they do it. So I would add and delete what their comments are based on, and then I would pass that in.”

Adriana also feels that she wants to learn and revise from feedback, but says:

I also learned a lot when the professor would not allow [revision], and I would get mad, and it would just be like, “I’ve got to get better.” I would get better because they didn’t really give me the chance. I’d be like, “Okay, I got to get better, and I have to do a better job next time for the next paper.” But I think it depends on the person too.

Facilitating: Resourcefulness. Resourceful students develop and use strategies to develop assignments. Marco said he always starts with the first line: “I can spend 47 minutes on the first line.” Min’s strategy is about getting started:

When I'm not writings, I keep of thinking of how I'm gonna write about the papers. I mean some papers I do like to write about, so I have try to get an A for my paper. Yeah I try [to work hard], but sometimes just the idea goes on in my head, and I start to write those ideas down and then starting my papers.

He explained that his strategies are to “watch YouTube how to start writing those ideas. I search at Google like how to write professional introductions.” Liliana said, “Throughout, I used a rubric just to go piece by piece, so I wouldn't forget anything.” To start the assignment, Adriana said:
I looked at the question, and I just basically tried to answer the questions all of three and try to relate the stories. . . . I did what I always do, I try to explain in the first paragraph what I'm going to write about. Then mention roughly all three work, and then I can go one by one.

Erika described how she starts with the prompt:

You have your stance, or you have your topic. . . . Then off that I just make the chunks. . . . I'll write out the body first. I don't have any conclusion or topic sentence when I'm writing, I just shove that in last minute. . . . Once I have the chunks, it usually make sense, assuming I did the outline.

Reading strategies can facilitate writing development. Erika said, “If I can't read something in English, I can switch to Spanish and vice versa. Whichever one makes sense, I'll just keep reading in that language.” Emmy said, “I read, a lot, and that's it.” For Nadia:

Reading is important, because that's where you get the words, and how to [write] the sentence. And this is something . . . maybe I'm lacking. . . . And this is how we process and see words that we don't know, translate it, and see how to use it in a sentence.

Adriana reads a great deal as well: “I spend a lot of time reading, because psychology major. . . . I just read slow because I want to make sure that I understand.”

Using strategies to develop vocabulary facilitates writing development. Hui “will think about English when . . . writing in English.” Nadia will look for an English word and if she can’t find it, she will use the Portuguese word, but highlight it and come back to it later. Adriana said:

Sometimes I have to go into the dictionary and make sure that I get it right because the translation can be different. . . . You have to go to the dictionary and make sure that you get that in your head, because [I] might get . . . confused if I'm writing.
Min also made use of translation services:

I usually online source like I search how to use this vocabulary, this sentence. I try to learn those and put it in my papers. Like on this paper I try to use the word “absurdity” to describe that something looks ridiculous. So the word ridiculous sounds weird, so I try to look for a synonym.

Resourceful students transfer learned strategies across assignments. Another critical strategy for writing development is the meta-ability to transfer understanding of structure in writing across disciplines. Moisés showed his awareness of consciously using this strategy: “I try to stick to the same strategy of writing where I state my point, and then I state . . . two or three supporting facts. I think that's helped me. That's the pattern all across disciplines.”

However, he was aware that such wholesale transferring may not always be appropriate:

But I shouldn't be doing that, because . . . I think [disciplinary writing is] different in a Classical way, you have to state evidence, [whereas] from Business . . . you have to basically break it in different sections and not one whole piece. I haven't had the opportunity of writing a paper for a Business course yet. [Only] either Classic or History-based. . . . I think I shouldn't keep the same structure for everything.

He explained:

I keep going to the same three points always, and I don't know if that's right. Like I should just close one point, and then the second, and then the third, but I believe they're all connected. So if they're all connected, there's no reason why not write them all together.

Min and Liliana also expressed their understanding of the way writing genres differ across disciplines. Min said, “Different paper have different structure. If you're gonna write an
inquiry paper, you have to start a question in the introductions. But if you're gonna write like thesis paper, you have to include thesis in the beginnings.” Liliana concurred:

I think [writing style] depends on the class. In psych, it's more or less because I'm taking a research-based class, we have to use a lot of textual evidence. We have to pull stuff from the readings and basically go by there. I feel like there's little to no opinion that has to be in that paper, which is hard. Then same with philosophy, it's text that you have to put into a paper. But in my English composition class, it's a lot more based on your own opinions and working with the text to build up your claims and your theses. That's the type of writing I like more.

Facilitating: Positive writing self-assessment. When participants internalized an overall positive writing self-assessment, it led to confidence in their strengths. Marco and Mateo stated unequivocally that they felt they were strong writers. Liliana related the evolution of her writing:

Now I feel more confident in my writing. Growing up in a school system where there wasn't many people who were multilingual or multilingual, that was hard. . . . The first semester [of college] was hard, but going into my second semester, it was a lot easier to adapt to the writing of college.

Moisés said he felt good about his writing in general: “I think I'm a pretty decent writer.” He said it was not very difficult to write: “It's actually pretty facilitating to put . . . my thoughts into paper.” Erika qualified her positive self-assessment by saying, “I think I'm pretty good at writing if I try.” Adriana admitted the difficulty in writing, but overall assessed herself highly: “I just write. It comes out good, but it's just I struggled more to learn the hard way.” Hui did not commit to a full positive self-assessments but assessed her writing as “Not pretty good, but not
bad.” Min specified where he felt his writing proficiency was strong: “I always meet the deadline and I usually research on the topic that I like to write about.”

Marco, Adriana, and Liliana expressed confidence in writing in their own voice and style. Marco said he tries to “invoke [his] own voice” and creativity in his writing style and referred to his “quality of writing,” which he stated he did not mean “in an arrogant way at all, just being honest, because my quality of writing might be better than my classmates.” Adriana described her writing style: “I just write what I think, and I don't care. . . . I'm not trying to be offensive, but it's just the way that I see things. The way that I think.” Liliana said,

My strengths are just my voice in the text. I think that my uniqueness with my thoughts are really driven throughout the paper, and I really use my own perspective when I write. . . and can make an audience or a reader see what my process of thinking is like, which I think is the richest part of writing.

Having good ideas was a commonly cited strength. Nadia said, “I always have ideas. Brainstorming … I'm good with that.” Moisés explained, “I'm not elaborate, but I think I do know how to state my points.” Emmy, the participant with the seemingly lowest writing self-assessment, clearly declared, “I'm always good on getting information.” She explained how she starts a writing assignment by using that information: “I think about what I want to talk about of the prompt, and then see what data I can get. And then I base everything off the data.” She reported, “I always get [feedback that says] ‘good points.’” She also recognized she is able to do some preliminary analysis on this information by “picking parts out of it.” Erika similarly stated, “I make good points. . . . They're relevant.” And Adriana reported, “I would say I'm good at getting the sources and citing. . . . I don't struggle with that as much as outlining.”
Table 4.10

Intrapersonal sociocultural mediators: Writing self-assessment in a U.S. standard English-normed context

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<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
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<th>Writing self-assessment in a US standard English-normed context</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<td>Personal voice</td>
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Hui, Adriana, Min, and Marco assessed highly their own ability to organize their ideas.

Hui said, “I can organize the idea in my mind and, like after you gave me the topic or the requirement.” This was borne out by her well-organized paper, in which her claims were well-supported with evidence. Interestingly, she stated she did not like to write down the outline, but she is clearly proficient in outlining mentally. Marco also expressed, “I'll have it mostly in my mind,” and Min explained that before writing, “I keep of thinking of how I'm gonna write about the papers.” While not as explicitly stated as Hui or Marco, Adriana alluded to an ability to mentally organize ideas in a paper: “I just like writing, but I'm not all over the place when I'm writing. My head—it's right.”
Facilitating: Clear-sighted writing self-assessment. As follows from the subsection immediately above, participants recognized the need to improve their writing by starting an assignment by writing out a concrete outline. Adriana identified what she sees as her “problem”:

I don't like taking the time and outlining and then doing the summary and then writing. . . . But I'm getting better at it. I think it's much better than before. . . . I wish I could just sit down, outline, and then write.

But she reiterated, what “I need to get better at is outlining because I have a hard time to structure still. Once I get that done, I'm fine.” Marco admitted, “probably it would be a good evolution to start outlining things a little bit better.” Hui came right out and declared, “I don't like to do the outline.”

Learning how to analyze and synthesize, and thereby developing connections between ideas, was consistently identified by participants as needed proficiencies. Mateo recognized his need to bring “ties of both sides, bringing the counter argument as well. It helps improve your argument much more.” Erika recognized that her points are “not connected in the formally written paper. I just have trouble structure-wise, fluidity.” Emmy stated, “I can't connect my paragraphs together, can't connect my information. They're always their own separate story.” She further identified the development she needs: “The flow, the structure, the connection, and then the beginning and the end. I don't have those.” About her idea, she granted, “I don't know how to connect it, how to contrast it. . . . I don't know how to do anything with it.” Liliana related:

Sometimes when I'm writing papers that have to do a lot with research . . . pulling textual information and putting it into your paper, then connecting a source to another source, that's hard when you're not the person writing those two sources. You have to make it
your own opinion instead of being like, “Oh, yeah, this person said this. This person said that,” and connecting them in a certain way that makes them work together.

Introductions and conclusions were common areas of difficulty for participants. Moisés stated, “I still have issues [regarding the] hook of grasping the idea from a reader. And where that hook has to be your thesis . . . the big sentence.” Min also feels “stuck” on the introduction: Because that's the starting point, you going to write about this. . . . You have to look all for your supporting ideas, body paragraphs, to put into one. That's conclusion, and when you start writing you have to make the introduction that makes the reader to understand what you are talking about, it’s hard to get reader to understand what the paper’s gonna about.

Conciseness, explicitness, and focus were mentioned as areas in need of development by some participants. When discussing her paper with me, Erika explained:

Some of my paragraphs had to be condensed a bit because. . . I repeat myself in some earlier paragraphs. They have to do with the same topic, but I separated them. I could either flesh them more out so that they make more sense, or just smush them together.

Moisés said, “What I find complicated is to get . . . to a point. I tend to go way off the subject.” Marco knows he needs to be more specific sometimes, in very academic genres, but his likes to use a vaguer “voice” intentionally to allow for different meanings and different experiences: “[In] more formal academic pieces, if you're writing a thesis, it's not good to talk in such ambiguity. . . . I probably should be a little bit stronger.” Hui recognized the need to be more explicit to guide the reader:
Like something in my mind, but I just can't explain well in the word. . . . I don't know how to say, but just I have something in my mind, and I want to express out, like into the words, but I just can't write as specific as I think.

When we discussed her paper, Erika realized, “I just generalize so much that whoever was reading this wouldn't know what I was talking about unless they saw the charts too. . . . I need to explain what's going on . . . and be more explicit with the statistics I give.” She suggested, “I could cut out some words. I feel like my sentences run on a bit.”

Several participants identified vocabulary and grammar as opportunities for improvement in their writing. Nadia felt she needs more “options of words to use” because she feels “stuck”: “I don't know what other words exist, so I can use. It does exist, but I don't know them.” Hui said she needs to develop “the way to organize the sentence. Like something in my mind, but I just can't explain well in the word.”

Development of reading comprehension was mentioned as a prime need by most participants. Moisés said what he finds difficult in reading is “the secondary intent of a writer . . . an ulterior motive.” He identified societal and cultural access as one inhibitor to reading difficulty among multilingual people: “If you don't have that access to society as a full [member], and you don't know . . . what they're talking about, it might be difficult for you to understand.” Hui expressed having difficulty understanding the totality of the meaning in a reading: “I can't understand . . . the contents, like not understand every . . . meaning” and “when you're missing something, it's hard to connect the reading together.” She has to resort to translating each vocabulary word literally, “but when it combined together, I can't understand the sentence.” Erika finds she is losing reading proficiency in both her languages:
I feel like I read slower. . . . And I just feel like I don't grasp the material as much. I have to reread things now. I'm not sure if that has anything to do with my Spanish, but I've noticed that happened in the past few years.

*Inhibiting: Hopelessness.* At times, participants’ despair showed through their words. Emmy described her certainty of not being able to improve her writing when she stated, “I can't be able to get out of that. That's why I'm always afraid if I do, even lab reports, or studies, or stuff like that, if I do my own dissertation, I won't be able to get a good result from it.” When describing her writing areas in need of development, she frequently used the word “always” and “never”: “But everything else, like in conclusion, or introduction, or connecting them, that's where I always have a problem with.” When describing seeking help from another, she explained, “when I try to take in their information, it doesn't work out. So it always ends up clashing, and I always go my way. And yeah, it just kinda goes downhill.” She described her experience as “being stuck in a rut.” She stated, “You just kind of give up after that.”

*Inhibiting: Fear.* Nadia and Emmy described fearing negative reactions from faculty when requesting help or feedback from instructors. Nadia often wants to ask for help, but is afraid of the professor’s negative reaction. Marco justified not asking for help:

I've asked for [feedback] once or twice, but it's also the kind of thing that I'm a little embarrassed to ask for, too, because I also don't like to be overly needy, and I am also very cognizant of the reality of a professor, you know, professors are . . . working class a lot of times. They work a lot. They have big burdens.

Emmy anticipates being misunderstood and devalued:

The thing is that I don't want to go out of my way to be like, “Hey professor, I don't understand this,” because I . . . sound like this [has no foreign accent in English], and
sometimes in the back of my head, they're just like, “You're complaining. You sound okay.”

Inhibiting: Distorted writing self-assessment. Several participants seem to have internalized extra- or interpersonally-mediated deficit orientations when they reported feeling as though faculty think they’re not intelligent or are incapable of writing, learning, or improving. They seemed to be assessing their own writing through a skewed frame. Emmy stated she feels her writing is “mediocre.” She stated,

I know that I can never get A's on my writings. I always get at least like B minus, C plus, only. . . . I would always get taken points off for grammar, and sometimes I can't connect my paragraphs together, can't connect my information. They're always their own separate story. And so, because of that, I feel like my writing is really average or mediocre.

When I reflected to her that she seems to see very clearly what areas of writing she needs to develop, and that many people don’t have this kind of insight, she unexpectedly whispered, “I love to write!”

Erika, who acknowledged that she waits until the last minute to begin writing assignments, recognized that her best papers start with an outline. In the paper we discussed together, she said was “just me writing and writing and writing. . . . I don't like it.” Hui and Emmy both expressed emphatically that they cannot write conclusions. Hui declared, “I do the bad ending in this paragraph.” Emmy interprets neutral or even positive feedback as negative and hypercritical. She interpreted an instructor’s comment on a paper we were discussing as critical and negative, when his comment seemed to me to be positively engaging with and responding to her idea. She says she can’t use others’ feedback because, though she tries to, it doesn’t make
sense to her or align with her logic. She related how she carefully applies professors’ comments to a revision, but “when I got it back, it's still the same grade. It's disappointing. . . . You just kind of give up after that.” Her seemingly skewed writing self-assessment colors her experience of writing assignments in all classes and will continue to obstruct her future potential as a scholar. When asked how she feels her peers are evaluating her writing, she instantly whispered without hesitation, “Negatively.” Even when peers give her positive feedback, she said:

There's this thought in the back of my head where it's just like, ‘Oh, they're just saying that. . . . It's not true. If you were doing great, you would've gotten really good grades.’ Because in these writings, I always get B's. B's was always the average for me. If I was doing great, I would've gotten an A minus or something, but I haven't. I'm always stuck in that B area.

She described how this negative self-assessment feeling has persisted through her whole life: “I still feel like how I felt when I was younger about reading and writing. It's never gone away.” This low self-assessment is reinforced “when professors or teachers say, ‘Oh, this is very basic. You should know this.’” She admitted, sounding hopeless:

I honestly feel like at this point, the fact that I know what my flaws are . . . and the fact that because I've known them for so long and that they stuck with me, I don't know what it can do to be able to fix that. . . . Despite me taking ESL classes that are supposed to help me with sentence structure . . . or despite trying to read to figure out how sentences should form . . . I don't have a way to tackle that. Because for me, I find grammar shouldn't be graded because [of] the fact that not everyone's perfect at the language. I end up getting 20 points off for grammar, and it just kind of sucks.
Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from this study that build upon and complicate activity and sociocultural theory. Participants described facilitators and inhibitors to their writing development in college. These mediating forces that emerged from the interviews fell into three domains. Amongst extrapersonal (societal, institutional), interpersonal, intrapersonal, and language-related (cross-domain) determinants of academic writing success, faculty-related interpersonal mediators were shown to most powerfully influence students’ experiences and processes of developing as academic writers, both positively and negatively. According to analysis of participants’ interviews and survey responses, it is concluded that meaningful, instructional, developmental, and culturally-inclusive faculty attention and feedback can powerfully support and facilitate LDC students’ academic writing development. In the same breath, negative or discriminatory faculty attention and feedback can hold students’ development back. A positive angle on the powerful effect on students of faculty interaction was eloquently articulated by Liliana when she summed up, “In the long run, teachers are here to help you learn. And taking advantage of those office hours and working with a teacher have really helped me grow as a writer.” In the next chapter, I will answer the research questions, discuss the findings, and explore the implications for research, policy, and practice.
Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

Overview

Purpose. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the process of academic writing development among linguistically-diverse college students. LDC students often face obstacles on the societal, institutional, social, and individual levels, which can impede their academic success. In particular, college academic writing demands can serve as insurmountable hurdles for LDC students (Ferris, 2018; Hyland, 2007; Lavelle et al., 2013), especially if they have not had strong pre-college preparation. Writing struggles contribute to LDC students’ relatively high attrition rates compared to monolingual English-speaking students (Andrade et al., 2014; Bond et al., 2008; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2013; Mulholland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011). This severe educational attainment disparity regulates access to and success in life opportunities (Marschall & Davis, 2012). This is a social injustice that cannot be ignored.

Theory. Activity theory guided the study design, and was used as a system for understanding the data. The activity-framed analysis served to build out the theory itself: extrapersonal and interpersonal mediators, both those that support and those that obstruct participants’ development of writing, are internalized in the individual as intrapersonal attributes and behaviors, both positively and negatively. These intrapersonal attributes in turn mediate students’ academic writing development, either by helping or hindering. Thus, the intrapersonal domain comprises both mediators and the result of mediation. By providing learners’ perspectives, the findings from this study enrich activity theory as it applies to a non-dominant-culture student population with statistically higher rates of attrition and potentially greater needs for educational scaffolding than those in populations better served by existing societal and
institutional structures. Further, the study findings complicate and problematize activity theory’s concept of developmental sociocultural mediation by identifying its powerfully damaging mirror-image: inhibiting sociocultural mediation.

**Methods.** The study was conducted using an instrumental, descriptive, holistic case study approach. The unit of analysis was bounded as the process of academic writing development in disciplinary courses among domestic LDC undergraduate students. Inclusion criteria were: self-defining as multilingual, being an undergraduate, and being enrolled in at least one class (other than an English class) in which writing was assigned. Exclusion criterion was being an international student. I collected data from ten instantiating individuals in my local higher educational context to learn their authentic perspectives. Three sources of data were collected from these ten participants: (1) responses to a preliminary survey to ascertain potential participant eligibility vis a vis inclusion and exclusion criteria, i.e., residency status, language use, and course assignments, (2) one in-depth, hour-long interview per participant that asked about their writing experiences (a) in their classes and (b) in the context of specific writing samples produced for their classes (discourse-based), and (3) responses from a follow-up survey to the interviews that asked about English proficiency, accent in English, academic preparation for college writing, and parents’ educational attainment.

**Literature review.** There has been little recent research focusing specifically on domestic multilingual undergraduates’ experiences of academic writing development in disciplinary classes. The literature review concluded that writing proficiently is critical to success in all academic disciplines and all careers, but LDC students often struggle more than their monolingual English-only classmates, thus placing at risk their access to and success in higher education. It painted a picture of disparities in educational access, support, and
attainment on societal, institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels. These troubling disparities were corroborated by the findings of this study. The next section will first answer the research questions directly, then discuss the study findings, and identify implications for research, theory, policy, and practice.

**Discussion**

**Answers to the research questions.**

*How do linguistically-diverse undergraduate students describe their processes of developing as academic writers?* Participants consistently expressed needing more connection, instruction, support, and appreciation from their professors. They want instructors who make themselves available to students, teach developmentally, make their expectations explicit, and provide formative feedback on writing, as well as teach using culturally- and linguistically-inclusive practices. Participants expressed a range of writing self-assessment levels that were typically framed in relation to these faculty-related mediators. On one end of the spectrum, Emmy reported extreme difficulty, confusion, frustration, and low writing self-assessment with regard to developing her writing, and Nadia reported similarly frustrating experiences, but exhibited less hopelessness about improvement. Both of these students reported difficulty understanding expectations and accessing their instructors for clarification and feedback.

At the other extreme, Marco, Mateo, and Liliana expressed high writing self-assessment and clear senses of progress in their writing development, with Adriana not far behind. These participants reported that their high school or community college prepared them well for college-level writing and evinced a sense of confidence notably missing in those who felt underprepared for college writing (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Conley, 2010, 2011; Deil-Amen, 2011). They described many positive interactions with instructors and the overall ability to get clarification if
they needed it, though they still wished for more critical feedback to be able to improve their writing. Between the extremes, the range ran from struggling though coping due to strategy use (Hui, Min) to feeling adequate despite being inhibited by faculty-related barriers (Moisés, Erika) such as lack of instruction, feedback, and attention. Reading comprehension was reported as difficult for all participants, due mainly to language barriers. Most impressively, all participants expressed and displayed eagerness, energy, and motivation to learn and improve as writers in college.

What factors do they identify as facilitating their academic writing development in college? Participants consistently enumerated the facilitators of faculty responsiveness, attention, formative feedback, and caring teaching. All participants expressed the benefit of faculty alliances, and the desire for more connection and interaction with their professor. For nontraditional, underrepresented minority, and LDC students, who often face multiple societal barriers to educational access and success, “the classroom may be the only place where students and faculty meet . . . the classroom is the crossroads where the social and the academic meet” (Tinto, 1997, p. 599), thus creating the conditions for student learning, persistence, and success. Faculty have been long found to be critical factors in students’ experiences and success in college (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993), serving as potentially inhibiting or facilitating (Amaro et al., 2006; Komarraju et al., 2010; Nielsen, 2014; Robinson et al., 2013; Taggart & Laughlin, 2017). Frequent positive faculty-student interactions can lead to students’ internalization of academic self-confidence (Plecha, 2002), agency, resourcefulness, positive writing self-assessment, and accurate identification of areas in need of development.

While this is not in answer to the research question that asked about participants’ perceptions, from the interviews, I recognized noteworthy intrapersonal facilitators. Regardless
of their sociocultural inhibitors, participants showed remarkable intrapersonal strengths. Motivation was consistently demonstrated by all participants (Gopee & Deane, 2013), which they themselves identified as facilitators to their writing development. In this study, most participants additionally showed resourcefulness in figuring out ways to find information to complete their assignments and agency in reaching out to instructors for information, aligning with findings of Leki (1995) and Center and Niestepski (2014). Exhibiting clear-sighted self-assessment, participants in this study assessed their writing strengths as ideas and getting information, but their weakness as connecting those ideas and synthesizing that information (Zawacki et al., 2007). Oropeza et al.’s 2010 study similarly found their linguistic-minority college students exhibited intrapersonal strengths and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) despite being oppressed by restrictive, deficit-model labels. These intrapersonal LDC student attributes that facilitate their academic success, even in the face of societal barriers and lack of faculty support and feedback, align with Yosso’s (2005) critical race theory subtheory of “community cultural wealth,” (p. 69) in which she identifies these strengths as navigational, familial, aspirational, social, resistant, and linguistic.

Regarding academic writing development, participants in this study showed navigational capital when employing strategies to obtain the information they need from faculty and to complete their reading and writing assignments. They showed aspirational capital in their intense motivation and tenacity to achieve. When they found tutors, made connections with faculty, or connected with peers for study groups, they showed social capital. They displayed resistant capital when they critiqued institutional ESL placement processes and faculty questioning their potential or dismissing them as deficient or advocated for themselves. They used their linguistic capital when they located Latin root words to understand vocabulary. Their
success employing these intrapersonal strengths was variable, often depending upon other inhibiting forces and their ability to be resilient (Oropeza et al., 2010). Several of the personal strengths and attributes participants exhibited additionally fall into Conley’s (2011) breakdown of knowledge components needed for college readiness, including their developing ability to soberly assess themselves and their writing development needs, be responsible for their own learning and success, and persist. However, the findings of this study seem to show participants being obstructed from achieving some of the aspects of college readiness by unavailable, indifferent, or unkind faculty.

Agency is “the capacity to act or not to act contingent upon various conditions” (Saenkhum, 2012, p. i). Participants exhibited agency when they discussed their ability to undertake and complete the assignments, learn, and improve—if they just could access the information being kept from them. Those participants with lower English proficiency showed remarkable resourcefulness by employing strategies to get by. Leki (1995) and Center and Niestepski (2014) also found that LDC students cleverly devised and employed strategies for success, such as seeking clarification from instructors and prioritizing readings.

What factors do they identify as inhibiting their academic writing development in college? Being multilingual in a monolingual-normed society in itself is difficult. Societal mediators identified by participants included socioeconomic status, parents’ educational attainment, academic preparation, discrimination, and institutional structures that privilege normative students over others (Amaro et al., 2006; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Ma et al., 2016; Zamel & Spack, 2006). While it was indeed reassuring to hear that one participant had had a positive learning experience in her ESL program and did not seem to harbor any resentment or a sense of being labeled or held back by the placement, the extrapersonal institutional mediator
most invoked as a problem was insensitive institutional ESL placement policies that fail to take
into account individual students’ linguistic or educational backgrounds. Just as Emmy described
when she was shocked to find she had been placed in the ESL track when enrolling at UU,
Marshall’s (2009) participants had similar experiences “re-becoming ESL,” a level they had
placed or aged out of in high school. His participants felt thrust by the institution and faculty
into “remedial ESL” identities (p. 41), that cast “their presence in the university as a problem to
be fixed rather than an asset to be welcomed” (p. 42). This relabeling as ESL can be internalized
as deficiencies, and in turn mediate LDC students’ intrapersonal process of developing identities
as legitimate college students (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008) and academic writers. ESL and other
remedial-type programs, despite their intention to support students’ academic progress, can be
strong inhibitors of LDC students’ academic and writing development due to internalized
societal and institutional language-related deficit views and stigmatization, and the increased
odds of attrition (Bettinger et al., 2013; Conley, 2011; de Kleine & Lawton, 2015; Graham &

Interpersonal pressures universally cited as mediating writing progress were when faculty
are not available, or worse, when they are unkind, unhelpful, or discriminatory. Not only can
this impede nontraditional, first-generation, multicultural, and multilingual students’ learning and
writing development, through students’ internalization process, it can harm their self-assessment
and identities as scholars (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Nadeau, 2014;
Starr et al., 2011; Ward et al., 2012; Yoder, 2001). All participants in this study expressed the
need for explicit instructions and expectations for each writing assignment (Taggart & Laughlin,
2017). They described the sensation of essentially shooting in the dark when submitting their
assignments, an experience reported in other studies (Gopee & Deane, 2013; Lillis, 2001; Johns,
1995; Nielsen, 2014; Smoke, 2004; Sternglass, 1999). In this study, some participants internalized instructors’ lack of clarity as a weakness in themselves. Unfortunately, participants had varying levels of success trying to get feedback from instructors, and one participant even expressed fear of an instructor’s negative reaction. Small & Attree (2016) and Leki (2006) found that due to perceived “socioacademic” power imbalances and lack of self-confidence, fearful students may refrain from seeking explanation or clarification from professors.

Participants expressed several areas in which they struggled academically due to language-related barriers in the standard English-normed context of U.S. higher education. Many participants complained that being multilingual takes extra work and time, both for reading and writing. Participants reported having difficulty at times understanding assignment instructions (Gopee & Deane, 2013; Wang, Singh, Bird, & Ives, 2008). Almost all participants reported difficulty especially with reading comprehension and vocabulary in English, problems which represented high-stakes inhibitors, due to their influence on grades and achievement. Indeed, research shows that knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar among multilingual students predicts reading comprehension proficiency (Condrey & Derico, 2012; Grabe & Stoller, 2018).

Intrapersonally, developing an identity as a college student can be trying for LDC students with lower levels of English proficiency (Amaro et al., 2006; Andrade et al., 2014; MacArthur et al., 2015; Salamonson et al., 2010; Starkey, 2015). Most participants’ negative feelings were attributed to faculty interactions or inability to access faculty when they needed support or clarity. Emmy displayed a sense of resignation, Nadia evinced frustration, and Erika expressed disappointment, resentment, and anger at the barriers placed by faculty and institution to their learning. Adriana described a professor whose behavior hurt her deeply. LDC students
are especially susceptible to the power of faculty treatment (Donnelly et al., 2009b; Jeong et al., 2011; Leki, 2006; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Nadeau, 2014; Robinson et al., 2013; Ume-Nwagbo, 2012; Villarruel et al., 2001). LDC students often interpret unfriendly, inattentive, or insensitive treatment from faculty as discrimination (Ackerman-Barger, 2010; Adger et al., 2007; Donnelly et al., 2009a; Sanner & Wilson, 2008; Starkey, 2015; Villarruel et al., 2001; Yoder, 2001). This can cause them to internalize a self-assessment as lacking in intelligence, competence, and potential (Bawarshi & Pelkowski, 1999; Dávila, 2016; Holtz & Wilson, 1992; Horner et al., 2011; Lillis, 2001; Morton-Miller, 2013; Sanner & Wilson, 2008). Leki (2006) similarly found that such “socioacademic” interactions with faculty, both positive and negative equally, colored LDC students’ experiences of college (p. 139).

Participants felt they cannot express themselves using standard English formats, and feeling silenced and stuck (Lillis, 2001; Williams, 2012; Zamel & Spack, 2006). Participants expressed feeling stigmatized and discriminated against due to being multilingual (CCCC, 2009; Costino & Hyon, 2007; Frodesen, 2000; Horner, 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Ruecker, 2011; Thonus, 2003). When LDC students feel discriminated against or too intimidated to reach out to faculty or challenge a professor’s action they felt was incorrect or unjust, they may not ask for help (Donnelly et al., 2009a; Greenberg, 2013; Jeong et al., 2011; Mulready-Shick, 2013; Nadeau, 2014; Salamonson et al., 2010; Sanner & Wilson, 2008; Starkey, 2015).

**Key findings.** While the findings of this study revealed facilitating and inhibiting sociocultural mediators of LDC students’ writing outcomes originating in all three domains, it is concluded that faculty-related interpersonal mediators are the single most robust influence on participants’ experiences of developing as academic writers. Study participants consistently expressed interpersonal needs for instructors who make themselves available to students; teach
developmentally, make their expectations explicit, provide formative feedback on writing, and
teach using culturally- and linguistically-inclusive practices. Faculty interactions and feedback
that are dismissive, discouraging, deficit-oriented, or discriminatory can inhibit students’ writing
development and, moreover, potentially cause them intrapersonal harm. Students’
internalization of this negativity can manifest as frustration, disappointment, low writing self-
assessment, and despair. Equally powerful as facilitating mediators of LDC student writing are
faculty interactions that are meaningful, instructional, developmental, and culturally-inclusive,
which are internalized as a remarkable tenacity and resourcefulness in the face of ongoing
sociocultural barriers to their success.

Research has shown the importance of faculty-student alliances (Amaro et al., 2006;
Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Donnelly et al., 2009a; Leki, 2006), discipline-specific writing
instruction (Hyland, 2013c; Johns, 1995; Lavelle et al., 2013; Newton & Moore, 2012),
developmental pedagogy (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Cumming, 2016; Street, 2003; Vygotsky,
1935/1978), faculty feedback (Andrade & Evans, 2013; Séror, 2009; Taggart & Laughlin, 2017,
and culturally-responsive teaching (Amaro et al., 2006; Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Gilchrist &
Rector, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Parboteeah & Anwar, 2009) on
LDC students (and all students). However, there are new findings here. This study clearly
shows that faculty mediators are so powerful they may even have the power to compensate for,
negate, or exacerbate other interacting sociocultural determinants of LDC students’ academic
success. I divide this last statement into its component equations below, and then discuss other
findings of interest.

**Compensation.** Facilitating interpersonal mediators as identified in this study, such as
having faculty who are available and open, teach developmentally, make their expectations
explicit, provide formative feedback on writing, and teach using culturally- and linguistically-
inclusive practices, may be able to compensate for such inhibiting extrapersonal mediators as
low SES, first-generation status, academic underpreparation, or discriminatory societal or
institutional policies, and such inhibiting interpersonal mediators as negative experiences with
family, peers, or other faculty. Positive faculty interactions may even be able to compensate for
such inhibiting intrapersonal mediators as internalized deficit mentality, distorted writing self-
assessment, lack of agency, low English proficiency, resignation, or despair.

**Negation.** Inhibiting interpersonal mediators such as having faculty who are
unresponsive or unkind, teach with inappropriate pedagogy, do not provide clear expectations or
formative feedback, or teach with a deficit-perspective or bias may have the power to undermine
and negate such facilitating extrapersonal mediators as academic preparation, parental
educational attainment, or higher SES, and such facilitating interpersonal mediators as
supportive peers or family. Unsupportive faculty or lack of instructional feedback for even the
most prepared participants was reported as a consistent inhibitor. Negative faculty interactions
may be powerful enough to negate such facilitating intrapersonal mediators as agency, positive
writing self-assessment, and motivation.

**Exacerbation.** Inhibiting interpersonal faculty-related mediators as identified in this
study may exacerbate inhibiting extrapersonal, interpersonal, and intrapersonal mediators as
delineated above. For those participants with the most extrapersonal pressures, e.g., those
without strong academic preparation, English proficiency, strong vocabulary, or college-
educated parents, the lack of access to faculty, non-instructional feedback, and perceived
discrimination exacerbated the obstacles to writing development.
Since LDC students’ writing development is often disadvantaged by inhibiting extrapersonal mediators that may lead to higher rates of academic struggles and dropping out (Andrade et al., 2014; Beauvais et al., 2014; Condrey & Derico, 2012; Dávila, 2016; Igbo et al., 2011; Lavelle et al., 2013; Mulholland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011), negative faculty interactions can be interpreted to predict negative writing and overall academic outcomes for LDC students—regardless of other mediating factors. While educators continue to fight for a more just society and more equitable institutional policies and practices for LDC students, it is acknowledged that these structures are more difficult to dismantle. The findings of this study point to a more feasible remedy to improve writing outcomes for LDC students: faculty must be trained to facilitate LDC students’ writing and overall positive academic experiences and outcomes.

**Implications for Research**

While significant mediators to LDC students’ academic writing development were discovered in the findings, notably faculty-related mediators, this study admittedly raised more questions than it answered. This study has hinted at the need to magnify pockets of phenomena under the presumptive, artificial umbrella categories of “linguistically-diverse” or even “nontraditional,” to shine a flashlight on what is really going on within subpopulations due to intersecting variables. These understandings of LDC learners’ writing experiences from the learners themselves will help educational scholars identify where further research is needed. These findings magnify the hidden, internal processes of writing development among LDC students that may have been mediated, both positively and negatively, through interaction with faculty, curricula, pedagogy, and institutional and societal structures.
Each mismatch revealed in this study from participant testimony (e.g., on the levels of K-12 teacher-student, higher education faculty-student, educational institution-student, educational system-student, and society-student) will justify further study to investigate convergences and divergences among other student demographics and in other educational contexts. Similarly, interventions developed based on facilitating practices identified in this study can be tested in future experimental studies. Finally, future studies might attempt to control for selected sociocultural variables and personal attributes to seek an understanding of their intersecting and intermediating relationships. For example, while the literature shows LDC students struggle more with college writing and experience higher attrition rates than English-only students, the intrapersonal attributes and mediators revealed in this study and the fact that participants spoke with such awareness and intentionality about their writing could lead one to question if variable levels of English or writing proficiency themselves cause the disparity.

Internalization and identity is another intersecting space for future study. One critical difference between participants was how they internalized and operationalized societal, institutional, and interpersonal messages to become stressed, form identities, and make decisions about their potential. Identities themselves are internalized and “taught” by extrapersonal forces (Ivanič, 1998; Marshall, 2009). The aspect of identity considered in this study was framed as writing self-assessment, or how students view and evaluate their own writing, both the current and potential level (Vygotsky, 1935/1978), including “who the student has been, is, and wants to become. It also relates to what a society/institution expects an individual to be and allows them to become/constrains them from becoming” (Marshall, 2009, p. 46). Emmy and Adriana are illustrations of the entangled nature of sociocultural mediation. Extrapersonally, both students are orally fluent in both of their languages and both described
their high school preparation for college as subpar. Interpersonally, both students had negative experiences with teachers in high school and professors in college. However, Adriana attended community college and took advantage of writing support services there, and her parents earned bachelor degrees or higher. She did not express any cultural or linguistic ambivalence and did express confidence in her writing, declaring, “I’m an achiever.” In contrast, Emmy did not attend community college, re-placed into an ESL track in college, and is a first-generation college student. Since, during our interviews, both of these students evinced self-awareness, agency, motivation, and active help-seeking behaviors, the key difference would seem to be the internalized negativity or positivity that drove their respective self-assessments and that could erode their motivation and optimism.

It is impossible to know which particular combination of extrapersonal and interpersonal forces mediated the difference between these two students’ intrapersonal states. But one critical difference is that Adriana’s interpersonal experiences working with a kind and instructive tutor seems to have mediated her internalization of her intellectual power. As a result, she is able to interact with professors now with confidence in her ideas, intellect, and potential. Emmy, on the other hand, except for positive interactions with Professor K, has internalized negative interactions with institutions and faculty, and consequently exhibited a low writing self-assessment and a sense of hopelessness, as illustrated by expressions like “you just kind of give up after that” and “it just kind of goes downhill from there.” Could Emmy’s placement in an ESL track when she was young have sent her such permanent negative messages about her potential? Gopee and Deane’s (2013) study also found a similar recursive effect of negative internalization: “motivation to write can be undermined if the student does not initially feel competent or confident” (p. 1627). Therefore, future research should investigate LDC students’
intrapersonal experiences (Harrison & Shi, 2016) to try to disaggregate and study individual variables that tend to serve as risk factors or protective factors in the academic success of LDC students. In this study, those participants who considered themselves highly academically prepared and fluent in English seemed to be less negatively affected by faculty who were inaccessible or who did not provide educational support. They seemed to be less likely to be deeply harmed by an internalization of discrimination.

In addition to studying students, further research could collect institutions’ and educators’ perceptions and behaviors. For instance, what is causing the variant behaviors of the instructor of Nadia (a brown, accented, female student with writing that may not have “sounded” like standard academic English) who waved her away, saying, “Just email it to me” as compared to the instructor who was willing to meet with Mateo (a white, non-accented, male student with proficient standard academic English writing) for two separate hours for one paper? Additionally, it would be important to study the seemingly effective teaching practices from institutions, both K-12 and higher education, that have been found to prepare LDC students well for college writing, such as those attended by Mateo, Erika, and Marco. And finally, it would be beneficial to study higher education institutions where evidence-based faculty development initiatives for teaching writing to LDC students have been implemented to see whether they indeed resulted in fewer LDC students leaving school.

Finally, the findings of this study could lead directly into a new qualitative study in which LDC students who were unable to persist in college and subsequently dropped out are interviewed to unpack their experiences writing assignments, relationships with faculty, and decision processes. Based on those findings, a quantitative survey could be developed for
implementation on a larger scale that would be sent through institutions to LDC students who left college.

Implications for Policy

The findings of this study help to identify specific points in societal and institutional structures where inequities begin in order to begin to dismantle and disrupt them. One notable problem is the fact that possibly due to institutions’ not collecting linguistic data (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Kanno & Harklau, 2012), there is no equitable policy to inform how linguistically-diverse college students are evaluated and supported in higher education (Bergey et al., 2018). And even if linguistic data were collected, how would it circumnavigate the problem of “identity labels” or enforce students’ accurate responses (recall Erika’s intentionally not checking the multilingual box on the registration form to avoid stigma and inauspicious placement). Therefore, findings from this study can be brought to the attention of policymakers, who are in the position to legislate and enforce evidence-based interventions and regulations to increase educational opportunity and increase social justice (Hillman, Tandberg, & Sponsler, 2015), whether on the federal, state, local, or institutional levels. Knowledge derived from this and future studies of LDC students can ultimately inform effective educational practices that can be piloted and implemented in institutions.

Implications for Theory

The findings from this study, combined with a consideration of the elements of all components of activity theory, informed a new conceptual framework that augments existing theory. The newly derived theory takes into account Vygotsky’s (1935/1978) learning activity model and a learner’s process of internalizing sociocultural mediators and tools, and builds in concepts from Leontiev’s (1978) concept of motives and Engeström’s (1987/2014) concepts of
rules and community. By placing these different mediating forces into hierarchical ecological contexts (cf., Bronfenbrenner, 1994), I was able to more clearly identify how they might operate on a multilingual college student’s writing development based on findings of the literature review. From having been a writing specialist in a college of nursing, I was exposed to the frequently-used model identifying facilitators and inhibitors of a given research problem. I found this a clear lens through which to analyze forces in all domains.

The evolving conceptual framework superimposed these different lenses to help me make sense of participants’ experiences. The theory evolved from this study is that mediating extrapersonal and interpersonal forces, both facilitating and inhibiting, are internalized by LDC students as intrapersonal attributes, which in turn mediate individuals’ academic writing development, both positively and negatively. Thus, the intrapersonal domain comprises the result of mediation as well as mediator. This augmented activity theory framework can be readily used to help scholars understand research problems, frame research questions, design studies, develop interview questions, analyze and interpret data, and present findings.

Implications for Practice

Institutions. Study findings corroborate the literature’s conclusion that higher educational institutions must commit more time, money, and effort to prepare educators to support the academic success of all their students (Borg & Deane, 2011; Cox, 2011; Hall, 2009). Specifically, study findings can raise higher educational leadership’s awareness about the emergent need to prepare faculty to teach disciplinary reading and writing to their LDC students, a population at risk for attrition (Murray, 2016; Beauvais et al., 2014; Donnelly et al., 2009b; Gopee & Deane, 2013; Hall, 2009; Moussu, 2013; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Educators must be trained to “better understand the experiences and abilities of the growing population of students
with complex language backgrounds” (Hall & Navarro, 2011, p. 2). For example, if LDC students are entering college underprepared for college-level writing assignments, higher education and K-12 must communicate to align preparation with expectations. Higher education leaders and researchers must collaborate with those in the K-12 setting who are studying and developing policy regarding linguistically-diverse students’ academic access and success.

The findings of this study can inform ongoing learning opportunities to equip content faculty to create effective and equitable curriculum and instruction for all students. Faculty express their frustration about not knowing how to teach their LDC students reading and writing in their disciplines (Bifuh-Ambe, 2011; CCCC, 2009). To be fully accountable to institutions’ publicly-espoused social justice missions, institutions and educators must begin to send welcoming and appreciative messages to multicultural and multilingual students, and acknowledge the value they bring (Yosso, 2005), so that LDC students may begin to recognize and internalize their own value (Amaro et al., 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Moussu, 2013; Rafoth, 2015). When faculty have not received training on evidence-based practices for teaching students reading comprehension strategies or discipline-specific writing, or when they do not feel such literacy teaching is their responsibility, LDC students are left to their own devices (Grabe & Stoller, 2018) and can struggle and become frustrated, as seen in the data from this study. This frustration could lead to despair and dropout. The specific areas revealed by this study in which faculty training may be most meaningful and needed for LDC students include faculty-student alliances, developmental teaching practices, explicit expectations, formative feedback, and culturally- and linguistically-inclusive practices.

**Faculty.** To teach developmentally is to operationalize activity theory. The best teachers conduct ongoing formative assessment of their developing students to be able to provide the
appropriate, evolving levels of support and challenge (Vygotsky, 1935/1978). The findings of this study can help faculty begin to reconceive academic writing as a developmental, socioculturally-mediated practice (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Street, 2003; Vygotsky, 1935/1978). Such a philosophical shift will inform pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment with the appreciation that writing development occurs “in a socially influenced environment much larger than the assignment” (Eodice et al., 2017, p. 29), i.e., relative to students’ unique backgrounds, mediators, and attributes. Faculty must shift from strictly assessing LDC students’ sometimes “nonstandard” writing as exhibiting proof of “individual inability or poor study habits” (Hyland, 2016b, p. 54). Faculty need to engage with their multilingual writers, who, like the participants in this study, will likely be students with tremendous motivation, intelligence, and potential to grow.

One of the clearest mandates emerging from this study and the literature was the need for more faculty feedback that students can understand and learn from, and the chance to apply that feedback to improve their paper and grade. Moisés’s comment incisively illustrated his deep need for feedback on his writing as, “Where am I missing?” Written feedback has been found time and again as critical for all students to develop as writers (Ferris, 2018; Gopee & Deane, 2013; Hyland, 2013b). Drafts and feedback cycles afford faculty insight on development and support students’ learning. Scholars have written about the educational and social value of feedback, and the need to see feedback as “a process, rather than as a product” (McLean, Bond, & Nicholson, 2015), which speaks all the more to the Vygotskian ideal of socially interactive learning and the value of the professor-student relationship. Literacy scholars concur that teachers need training on how to most effectively respond to LDC student writing (Ferris, 2014; Hyland, 2013b; Small & Attree, 2016) because students can be negatively affected by unhelpful
or disrespectful feedback (Taggart & Laughlin, 2017). Ideal feedback should offer a “constant balance of challenge and support” (Lizzio & Wilson, 2008, p. 271), a deeply Vygotskian perspective.

Faculty also need to develop understandings about language development processes (Hall & Navarro, 2011) and become interested in the varied educational and linguistic backgrounds of their LDC students, so they can identify their students’ needs and provide scaffolding accordingly (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Rafoth, 2015; Shulman, 1987). Many behaviors and structures that cause the most suffering are interpersonal microaggressions, whether perpetuated intentionally or unintentionally. Microaggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al, 2007, p. 271). One participant in this study stated, “We’re assumed to be inferior.” LDC students can indeed be stigmatized “simply because their first language is not English” (Oropeza et al., 2010, p. 217). Shuck (2006) considered linguicism a form of racism. It is not surprising that two students mentioned that they felt more comfortable with multicultural instructors. Therefore, faculty need training to teach culturally and linguistically inclusively.

**Limitations**

Findings in this study might have been more incisive had there been more specific exclusion and inclusion criteria to attempt to disaggregate some of the variables, such as SES, parental educational history, immigration history, academic preparation, or English proficiency. However, this study made a first step by excluding international students, since I recognized that academic preparation in other countries would be too difficult to calibrate. Additionally, as with case study as a method, results from this study are not generalizable wholesale. This study
collected data from just ten individual students in one particular context. However, it is hoped that, through this detailed write-up, readers and peers will be able to transfer these findings to their own context and population.

**Conclusion**

This study contributes nuanced understandings of the sociocultural mediation LDC students perceive as facilitating and inhibiting their writing development. The findings of this study reveal the existence of extrapersonal, interpersonal, and intrapersonal forces that influence LDC students’ experiences developing as academic writers and, consequently, their educational outcomes. Participants’ descriptions of their intrapersonal experiences can inform researchers, educators, and leadership about how they internalize and operationalize sociocultural mediators in their processes of writing development.

More than any other factor, participants tended to attribute their writing struggles and successes to interpersonal faculty-related mediators. Participants consistently expressed needing more connection, instruction, support, and appreciation from their professors to be able to develop their writing. The findings of this study corroborate Tinto’s (1997) theory of college student departure that states that, notwithstanding documented societal obstacles, it is students’ interpersonal experiences in college that most powerfully contribute to their academic success or struggle. On the interpersonal level, many faculty do indeed wish to be more available and supportive of their students, to “fulfill the promise for teaching and learning that drew us to the profession in the first place” (Lerner, 2005, p. 205). Lerner (2005) described three powerful co-occurring purposes that drive faculty to want to meet with their students: explicit writing instruction, student-centered pedagogy, and faculty-student relationships. On the intrapersonal domain, participants in this study reported they need these very interactions from faculty to
develop as academic writers. Nadia expressed what she needs succinctly: “Someone that is honest with you, someone that can help you truly improve your English writing. That's what I want. Because that's what I need.”

This study’s findings reveal the power of faculty mediation for good, in that positive interaction and teaching may be able to compensate for societal, institutional, and social disadvantages LDC students often bring into the classroom. Simultaneously, findings revealed the frank danger inherent in negative faculty mediation, which can undermine or negate existing strengths, supports, or advantages LDC students may possess, or worse, exacerbate their existing disadvantages. Exacerbation may lead to anger, despair, resignation, and, finally, attrition.

Simply put, if institutions do not prepare their faculty to teach LDC students to write in their disciplines, they will continue to drop out. This is unconscionable. This is a finding that cannot be ignored by higher education leaders who express their concern about attrition rate disparities for LDC students.

In this study, we learned from ten articulate and motivated multilingual college students exactly what they need from their professors in order to develop their academic writing. They reported they need faculty to be responsive and available to connect with them. They need their instructors to developmentally teach them how to write in their disciplines, make their assignment expectations and instructions explicit, and provide them with useful, formative feedback on their writing. And they need to feel included and respected as emerging scholars in their disciplines and be valued for the diverse and divergent cultural and linguistic backgrounds they bring. These basic practices must be taught, supported, and enforced by institutions. There needs to be more research to better understand multilingual students’ language and literacy development processes and to seek patterns in LDC college retention and attrition. These
understandings can inform learning opportunities that prepare faculty to support the writing development of all students, with special attention to those from non-dominant-culture and academically underserved backgrounds. If faculty learning could be normalized into institutional life, it would benefit all members of our learning communities.
References


Appendix A: Study Recruitment Email

Dear Student,

Would you like to participate in my research study that is investigating multilingual students’ writing processes in their college classes? I am a writing specialist here and doctoral candidate in education at Northeastern University. I am looking for five to eight resident multilingual students (not international F1-visa students) to talk to this semester.

What participation entails: If you are eligible and selected to participate, we will meet one or two times this semester. We will have one private one-hour conversational interview, and we will also have one 45-minute small-group meeting in which you will talk with other multilingual students. The conversations will take place at a comfortable and convenient space which you choose. I will ask you to bring some of your class writing assignments. In the conversations, we will talk about your experiences writing your class papers in college. Everything will be private and confidential, you can stop at any time, and your decision to participate or not participate will have no effect on your grade or relationship with your instructor or anyone else. In our conversations, I will not judge or evaluate you or your work. I am only interested in learning about your process of academic writing. After the conversations, I will send you the transcriptions of our conversations for you to check for accuracy.

Participants will receive a $20 gift card after the conversations have been conducted and checked. Please see the study description below. If you are interested in talking about your writing experience with me for my study, please answer the questions on this short survey—the first page of the survey is the Northeastern University IRB approved informed consent:

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not complete the survey, or email me at baer.j@husky.neu.edu only, you will not be contacted again regarding this research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and complete the survey! Please contact me with any questions. I hope to hear from you soon!

Sincerely,

Julie Baer, EdD Candidate
Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies, EdD program
baer.j@husky.neu.edu

Principal Investigator: Patricia Mason, PhD
Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies, EdD program
Pa.Mason@northeastern.edu

IRB# CPS18-01-17
Approved:
2/26/18 Expiration
Date: 2/25/19
Appendix B: Study Participation Eligibility Survey Questionnaire

1. Do you think you might be interested in participating in my research study on multilingual students’ writing processes in college courses? [Choose one: Yes; No; Maybe]

2. Are you an international student (do you have an F-1 Visa)? [Choose one: Yes; No; I don’t know]

3. To be eligible to participate in this study, one must be multilingual. Do you use more than one language? [Choose one: Yes; No; I don’t know]

4. If you are multilingual, what language(s) in addition to English do you use? [Open response]

5. For what purposes do you use your non-English language(s)? [Checkboxes: Reading; Writing; Speaking; Listening; Other]

6. With whom do you use your non-English language(s)? [Checkboxes: Parents; Siblings; Aunts/Uncles/Cousins; Children; Neighbors; Co-workers; Other]

7. Do you use your non-English language(s) at home or in other specific situations? Please explain. [Open response]

8. Which of your courses require writing assignments? [Open response]

9. What types of writing assignments do you have in your classes? [Checkboxes: Papers; Lab reports; Discussion boards; Writing journals; Essays; Short answers on exams and quizzes; Annotated bibliographies; Other]

10. When you do writing assignments, do you write drafts and get someone’s feedback in order to revise? [Choose one: Yes; No; Maybe]

11. Do you have other questions or concerns? Please write them here. [Open response]
Appendix C: Interview Protocol

General Writing Development
- How do you feel about your writing?
  - What do you see as your strengths?
  - Which aspects do you feel you need to develop?
  - What has helped your learning to write in college?
  - What has made it harder for you to develop as a writer?

Social Interactions
- Describe interactions regarding your writing with
  - Instructors
  - Peers
  - Others

Linguistic Interactions with Writing
- How does being multilingual influence your academic writing development?
  - Writing papers
  - Reading

Talk about Writing
- Student writing (with student writing sample document)
  - Walk me through your writing
  - (Consider prompts regarding: structure, thesis, examples, sections)
  - Describe how you went about writing/revising the paper.
  - Tell me about your writing process

Conclusion
- Is there anything else you would like to add to what we’ve already discussed?
- Can I answer any questions?

I will send you a transcript of our conversation, and ask you to check it for accuracy.

Thank you so much for your time and participation!
Appendix D: Unsigned Consent for Follow-up Survey

We would like to invite you to participate in a follow-up web-based online survey. The survey is part of a research study whose purpose is to gain insight into the experiences of domestic, linguistically-diverse undergraduate students as they develop as academic writers in college. The ultimate purpose of the study is to help educators design classes and lessons that better support and teach writing to multilingual students to increase their academic success.

This survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

We are asking you to participate in this study because you have identified yourself as a multilingual undergraduate college student who is enrolled in a college class that requires you to complete writing assignments. I am interested in learning about your writing experiences in college.

You must be at least 18 years old to take this survey.

The decision to participate in this research project is voluntary. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the web-based online survey, you can stop at any time. There are no risks to you in taking part in this survey. There is a small possibility that you may experience minimal discomfort answering questions about your learning experiences.

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this survey. However, your responses may help us learn more about how to design classes that better teach writing to and support multilingual students to increase their academic success. You will not be paid for completion of the survey. Your participation in this survey will be handled in a confidential manner. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being affiliated with this project.

If you have any questions regarding electronic privacy, please feel free to contact Mark Nardone, NU’s Director of Information Security at 617-373-7901, or at privacy@neu.edu. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me, Julie Baer, 617-797-6565, baer.j@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact my dissertation committee chair and advisor, Patricia Mason, 617-429-2694, pa.mason@northeastern.edu, who is the Principal Investigator.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. 617.373.4588, n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

By completing the survey, you are indicating that you consent to participate in this study. Please print out a copy of this consent form for your records if desired.

Thank you for your time.

Julie Baer
Appendix E: Signed Informed Consent

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies, Graduate School of Education
Investigators: Principal Investigator, Patricia Mason, Student Researcher, Julie Baer
Title of Project: Inter and Intra: Experiences of Linguistically-Diverse College Students
Developing as Academic Writers

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study
We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This document will explain the study, and I will also personally explain it to you. Please feel free to ask me (the student researcher) any questions at any time. It is important to me that you understand everything completely. It is completely your decision whether to participate or not. It is fine if you choose not to participate. If you do decide you would like to participate, I will ask you to sign this informed consent statement, and I will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
We are asking you to be in this study because you have identified yourself as a multilingual undergraduate college student who is enrolled in a college class that requires you to complete writing assignments. I am interested in learning about your writing experiences in college.

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of the proposed case study is to gain insight into the experiences of domestic, linguistically-diverse undergraduate students as they develop as academic writers in college. The ultimate purpose of the study is to help educators design classes and lessons that better support and teach writing to multilingual students to increase their academic success.

What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask you to engage in one interview conversation with me and one small group conversation with other multilingual students about your experience of developing as a writer. These conversations will take place during the spring semester in a space that is comfortable and convenient to you. I will ask you to bring writing you produced for your class assignments, so we can talk about it during our interview. I will ask if we can record the conversations, so I can capture everything we talk about for my study. If you agree, I will audio-record our conversations. After the recordings of the conversations have been transcribed and checked by me for accuracy, I will ask you to check them to confirm that they are correct and acceptable records of our conversations and that you are comfortable with the information you have shared. If you would like to change or correct anything, you can direct me to do so.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
You will be interviewed at a mutually-convenient location, at a time that is convenient for you. To ensure confidentiality, you can choose a location off campus. The interview will take about one hour. There will be one 45-minute group conversation towards the end of the semester, also at a time and place that is convenient for all participants. In addition to those two sessions, checking the transcriptions for accuracy will take some more of your time.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
Any risk or discomfort to you will be minimized. Your decision to participate or not will have no risk to or effect on your reputation, class standing, grades, or relationship with instructors, advisors, administrators, or any others in the university. If you feel uncomfortable at any point,
you may withdraw your consent with no consequence whatsoever. This study does not involve evaluation or judgment, so you should feel no pressure or anxiety about your writing, academic performance, or in any other area. You have the right to confidentiality, withdrawal, and refusal of the use of their data. Even if you agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty of any kind. All information you share in interviews, focus group, or writing will be private and confidential. You can and should ask me questions or share any concerns with me at any time.

However, because you will be asked to describe your writing and learning experiences, there is a small possibility that you may experience some sadness, anxiety, or other uncomfortable emotion. If such emotions should arise and you feel you do not wish to continue, we will stop. Additionally, I can guide you to University Health Services, which offers counseling (617-287-5690) to all students.

**Will I benefit by being in this research?**

There will be no direct benefit to you from taking part in the study besides the opportunity to reflect on your writing processes. The long-term benefit, however, is that the information learned from this study may help educators design classes that better support and teach writing to multilingual students to increase their academic success.

**Who will see the information about me?**

Only I (the student researcher) will know that you participated in this study. Your participation in this study will be handled in a confidential manner, and no one but me will be able to identify you. Any marks, words, names, or other identifying information on documents will be disguised or concealed. Pseudonyms (false names) will be assigned to replace your real names or other identifying information during the research process and on any distributed or published writing. I (the researcher) will be the only one with access to the audio recordings of our conversations. We will keep confidential all information you share in interviews, group conversations, or writing. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual who participated in this project. I will destroy the recordings after they are transcribed.

**Can I stop my participation in this study?**

Yes, you may stop at any time for any reason if you so choose. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want, and you can refuse to answer any question you do not wish to answer. Even if you decide to begin the study, you may stop at any time for any reason with no consequence. Your decision not to participate or to stop your participation will not affect your status in college in any way or any relationships with instructors or others at the university: you will not lose any rights, benefits, services, relationships, or considerations that you would otherwise have.

**Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?**

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me, Julie Baer, xxx-xxx-xxxx, baer.j@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. Emails to my UMB email address must be deleted with no response per Northeastern University IRB. You can also contact my dissertation committee chair and advisor, Patricia Mason, 617-429-2694, pa.mason@northeastern.edu, who is the Principal Investigator.

**Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?**

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, Mail Stop: 560-177, 360 Huntington Avenue,
Will I be paid for my participation?
After you complete the two to three conversations and conduct the accuracy check of the transcription, you will be given a $20 gift certificate.

Will it cost me anything to participate?
You will incur no costs to participate in this research. All conversations will occur on campus or at a mutually-arranged, convenient location, and at a time convenient to you, so that you will not need to pay additional transportation or parking fees.

Is there anything else I need to know?
You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

I agree to take part in this research.

________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part  Date

____________________________
Printed name of person above

________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent  Date

____________________________
Printed name of person above
Appendix F: Follow-up Survey Questionnaire

Please check one of the following regarding your parents'/guardians' education.

- At least one parent/guardian:
  - completed a bachelor degree or higher
  - completed an associate degree
  - attended some college classes, but did not complete a degree
- No parent/guardian attended any college

In what ways do your parents’/guardians’ education levels influence your academic writing in college? [check all that apply]

- Their lack of college experience limits their ability to:
  - understand how much time assignments take and how much stress I'm under.
  - read my writing drafts and provide knowledgeable feedback.
  - help me figure out my instructor's expectations for writing assignments.
- Their educational experience causes them to be able to support my academic writing.
- Other: _____

How many years have you lived in the US? [choose one]
  1-5; 6-10; 11-20; 20+

In what ways does the number of years you have lived in the U.S. impact your writing?

Was the high school/secondary program you attended... [check one]
  Public; Charter; Private; Other: _____

In what city, state, and country was your high school/secondary program located?

Did you attend any other college before your current college? [check one]
  No; Yes, a community college; Yes, a four-year college; Other: _____

In what ways has your schooling before college affected your writing in college? [check one]
  - My schooling before college was strong. It prepared me well for college writing.
  - My schooling before college was not strong. It did not prepare me well for college writing.
  - Other: ______

As a person with proficiency in two or more languages, which of your languages would you say is most dominant? [check one]

- My English is stronger than my other language(s)
- Another language is stronger than English.
- I am equally fluent in both/all languages
- Other: _____
Do you think you speak English with a foreign accent? [check one]

- Strong foreign accent in English (people know I am bilingual)
- Mild foreign accent in English (people may or may not know I am bilingual)
- No foreign accent in English (no one would know I was bilingual from my English speaking)
- Other: ______

Do you think your professors are aware that you are bilingual or multilingual? [check one]
- My professors are probably aware I am multilingual; My professors are probably not aware I am multilingual; Other: _____

Has a professor ever commented on your English speaking or writing proficiency? Please explain.

In what ways do your English proficiency or accent affect your academic writing in college?
## Sociocultural Mediators of Academic Writing Development among LDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FACILITATING</td>
<td>Interview question: <em>What helps your academic writing development?</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-related</td>
<td>Multilingualism helps</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Erika: Or with looking at the root words in English, if I don't know what it means I can just try to figure out what it would mean in Spanish, so it helps me a lot with that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal voice, style</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marco: It's had a positive influence on my writing to learn a new language. I think that some of my style even of like more of this ambiguity and passive voice has to do with my multilingualism and kind of just the way I think sometimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English proficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mateo: I balance both languages about the same. I feel fluent in both languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrapersonal</td>
<td>Educational access</td>
<td>College-educated parents</td>
<td>Marco: My father is a big role model, helper, really supports me in a lot of this academic pursuits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal</td>
<td>Academic preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mateo: I attended a charter school, so it was very rigorous. It was very challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>Frequent writing and reading</td>
<td>Mateo: All my classes require some form of writing essays, either within exams, within papers . . . that are expected of us throughout the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Teachers available, supportive</td>
<td>Liliana: Having that time to build a friendship with a teacher, it's feels a lot better meeting with a teacher and knowing you have at least one person at the school that you can talk to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Faculty are culturally inclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Erika: It kind of made me comfortable with him, because he's not just some white guy telling me I write shitty.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Faculty are interested in students’ ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emmy: We have other writings, like how we felt and thought about. She did like some points that I had, and . . . she kept telling me tell more of my story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Faculty feedback pushes, is formative, meaningful</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moisés: I think that the one thing that would help is getting that feedback. . . . it's not bad to get that feedback from the professor where you're missing out and not just a grade . . . cause that way you can try to change it and have an insight of where you could have done it better.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty provide substantive feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td>Erika: Professor K . . . took the time, it was covered in notes, but they made sense. And she not only highlighted what didn't make sense, but she also told me what I should keep in the paper, instead of just leaving it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>Faculty assign drafting, revision</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adriana: It really helps when they allow us to give them the paper, then give it back to us, so we can fix it. Definitely, I think that we learn a lot from that [fb].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty teach developmentally</td>
<td>Moisés: The way that he did it, it was step-by-step process. So he broke it down to what you have to do to achieve that point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Faculty use rubric</td>
<td>Liliana: Throughout I used a rubric just to go piece by piece so I wouldn't forget anything.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peers Feedback from multilingual peer</td>
<td>Moisés: I actually got feedback from a student that, he's bilingual. And he got the feeling I was writing in Spanish, cause I was writing too-long sentences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>Hui: And also the tutor [helps], cause tutor work with us most.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual attributes, behaviors, beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenacity, determination</td>
<td>Adriana: I'm an achiever. I like to do my best on everything. I think that has to do with being multilingual too because I'm always afraid to make mistakes, so I'm always trying to give my best.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire to revise, improve, learn</td>
<td>Min: In class, I usually prepare. I try to understand a general summary of the readings, but the vocabulary is so difficult to understand, I will ask question about it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency, help-seeking, resourcefulness</td>
<td>Min: Things that help me, advice from instructor and online source... I also watch YouTube how to start writing those ideas. I search at Google like how to write professional introductions... I [use a writing center] on every Wednesday, there's a writing strategies, so I go there twice a month. They show me how to start a paper by putting all the idea. It helps me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intentionality about writing</td>
<td>Liliana: The transition between this paragraph and this paragraph, I said, &quot;This idea comes to show that Spanish is creating a bigger impact on the U.S. as a whole through pop culture.&quot; Then in the second paragraph, I say, &quot;With the impact of Spanish culture in American society of today, we cannot forget the voices of the people who fit in both cultures and have adapted into both.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride in being multilingual,</td>
<td>Liliana: It's because I feel like knowing both languages, it shows me where I come from and what I've adapted into.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness, self-knowledge</td>
<td>Marco: I probably don't do enough in terms of supporting my colleagues who are Spanish speakers, particularly native Spanish speakers, in writing in English. I think it's always one of those funky things where it's like how do you insert yourself and offer support without being condescending and thinking they don't have an ability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td>Identity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Moisés: I'm a history buff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Mateo: The confidence that I gained was because my professors have said that my papers are good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling included</td>
<td>Erika: In Professor K's class, I love it because... I feel like my cultural background helps me relate a lot.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoy writing/read</td>
<td>Emmy: I love to write.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working w/ ideas, info, sources</td>
<td>Emmy: I think I'm good at finding information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessed writing strengths</td>
<td>Personal voice, style, opinion</td>
<td>Liliana: My strengths are just my voice in the text. I think that my uniqueness with my thoughts are really driven throughout the paper, and I really use my own perspective when I write.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INHIBITING Language-related Barriers to writing, reading, education, career</td>
<td>Interview question: <em>What makes developing academic writing harder?</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Emmy: There were times when I didn't understand anything. When people ask me questions or tell me stories, sometimes I have to have them reword it so that I can be able to understand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficult to express oneself</td>
<td>Hui: I don't know how to say, but just I have something in my mind, and I want to express out, like into the words, but I just can't write as specific as I think.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English proficiency</td>
<td>Nadia: All of the English I know right now, speak writing, is what I have learned here in this four years. And it's been hard, because still I don't know most of the words, so I can't write a perfect paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorical/genre mismatch</td>
<td>Emmy: The English language sounds like a monotone language to me. You do the question mark where you can hear the question, or an exclamation point, but in [my other] language, you hear every tone from every word.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language difference, mismatch</td>
<td>Hui: [In my native country,] essay is more about making up a thing . . . that does not happen in my life, and I just make it up to fit the question.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing heritage language proficiency</td>
<td>Nadia: But now that I'm not practicing Portuguese fluently, I'm losing my Portuguese, and I'm more into English now.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extrapersonal

| Societal | Socioeconomic status | Moisés: I work 50 hours a week. Four classes. So, it's pretty difficult to meet for that professor or have office hours with them |
| Parental education | Survey responses showing parents’ limited college experience prevented them from being able to support students’ writing dev |
| Academic preparation | Adriana: I went to a tech high school, and I regret it because it got me confused. |

### Institutional

| ESL and writing placement policies | Emmy: I said that I spoke another language before I spoke English. I took that test. I came into school to take my classes, and on my paper, it said I had to take ESL classes. |
| Class too large, boring, faculty not accessible | Erika: Technically we're supposed to read to keep up with the lecture, but from what I have tried to read, and what the lecture happens, I feel like he just rambles more, and he doesn't really talk about anything. And he tries to engage with us, but it's the auditorium, so he's not really gonna know any of us. |

### Interpersonal

| Family | Home language use issues | Emmy: My mom, she'll speak to me in English, and I don't know what she's talking about. To my }
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Behavior</th>
<th>Faculty should value effort</th>
<th>Moisés: A lot of students just don't care. They just want to get the passing grade . . . . But if [professors] see . . . that someone that put effort, someone that can do better, will do better if they get that feedback and that response from a professor . . . . [If you] see that the professor is engaged and wants to help you out, you'll put more effort.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty are unavailable, unhelpful</td>
<td>Faculty are unavailable, unhelpful</td>
<td>Emmy: I'm missing a prompt that's due on Monday, and I try to email him, and he doesn't answer his emails, supposedly. I don't know when his hours are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty are unkind</td>
<td>Faculty are unkind</td>
<td>Adriana: She just kept saying that I was a bad student and that I didn't know how to write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair assessment</td>
<td>Assignment instructions unclear</td>
<td>Moisés: If the professor says, “not enough quotes” or “not enough references,” you don't have the idea of what she's expecting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair grading</td>
<td>Faculty ignorant about language; exhibit discrimination</td>
<td>Nadia: Sometimes when I read it, I don't understand what this whole thing is saying. What am I supposed to do? And this is when I have to email my professor and say, &quot;I don't understand. What is this whole assignment about? I don't know where to start, where to end.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Feedback not informative</td>
<td>Marco: One thing that I would have liked to have had is a little more critical feedback. I don't know if it's a thing where just of where my writing's at in comparison to my classmates, but I often times just get &quot;great response,&quot; &quot;great whatever&quot; which is good and I think I put in the effort to deserve that, but I know I can be better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not culturally inclusive</td>
<td>Not culturally inclusive</td>
<td>Nadia: How to improve the teaching to a student like me is to, whenever [faculty] assign a paper [they should] give . . . feedback . . . right away with the first draft . . . when you are correcting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Intrapersonal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student writing</th>
<th>English writing, reading takes time</th>
<th>Adriana: I have to [read] slow. I spend a lot of time reading, because [sociology] major . . . I just read slow because I want to make sure that I understand.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capturing thinking in words/vocab</td>
<td>Hui: Like something in my mind, but I just can't explain well in the word.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-assessed writing difficulties</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Connections, structure</td>
<td>Erika: I just have trouble structure wise, fluidity.</td>
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<td>Argument, analysis</td>
<td>Erika: I have no idea what a thesis is.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Outlining</td>
<td>Hui: I don't like to do the outline.</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
<td>Erika: “I don't grasp the material as much. I have to reread things now. I'm not sure if that has anything to do with my Spanish.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grammar, errors</td>
<td>Min: “I still need to fix some grammar mistakes.</td>
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<td>Student individual attributes</td>
<td>Negative writing self-assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perception of reaction to accent</td>
<td>Adriana: I try not to think about it, but I can feel discriminated if I do think about it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
<td>Emmy: You just kind of give up after that.</td>
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<td>Disappointed, lost, disengaged</td>
<td>Erika: It wouldn't kill you to at least entertain me and tell me your take on something based on commentary on I made. . . . The [students] I've talked to look just as lost as I do, but I don't know. I'm just really disappointed.</td>
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<td>Negative feelings about college</td>
<td>Emmy: I thought I was gonna enjoy [the class], but it's just him talking, and it's really early, so I'm just not caring.</td>
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<td>Feeling misunderstood, discriminated against</td>
<td>Emmy: am a person who's too shy to actually talk in class or do anything, so I try to stick off into a corner, which is not good because I really need recommendations for things. It just kind of sucks.”</td>
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<td>Not wishing to speak in class</td>
<td>Emmy:</td>
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