A Narrative Phenomenological Study: An Investigation into the Meaning
of Negative Predispositions toward Writing

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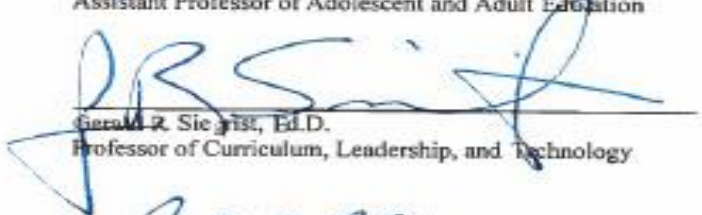
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ABSTRACT

This study explored college writing through the eyes of first-year technical college students between the ages of 18 and 24. Previous research indicated that negative predispositions can be mental constraints for first-year students. Lindemann and Anderson (2001) surmised that mental constraints were psychological barriers derived from years of red ink marks put on graded writing assignments by writing teachers. Educational psychologist Jennie Ormond (2009) suggested that psychological barriers were embedded in the human memory and that these lingered over many years to resurface during complex writing assignments. In the pursuit of investigating the meaning of such negative predispositions and identifying them based on students' perceptions, the study sought adult learning strategies and classroom management practices useful for lessening the effects of students' negative predispositions toward writing. For that purpose, two qualitative approaches were fused to shape elements for a systematic qualitative protocol. The theoretical foundation builds on constructivist perspectives, andragogy, and educational psychology. Qualtrics Online software was used to collect and analyze data. Data were sorted, sythesized, and transcribed to determine related formulated meanings to answer the central research question: What is the meaning of negative predispositions? The findings brought forth five related, and formulated themes; the meaning of negative predispositions toward writing; and information professional writing teachers can use to aid them in how to build effective writing communities in college. Lastly, the study outlines recommendations for future research.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this book to my grandchildren Taylor, Cameron, Miya, Makaila, Kennedy, Madison, Maurice, Leonard, and Caleb. This book lays the prophetic pathway for you all. As your grandmother, I have demonstrated that you can do all things through Christ Jesus. Now I pass this spiritual mantle on you all to fulfill your educational journey. Most of all, I ask that each of you take education to another dimension— not only to contribute to the wealth of knowledge to educate your generation, but also to wipe illiteracy out of the family lineage. May God strengthen you all until the end of time.

Finally, this study's findings speak for themselves. The students have spoken loudly. Their voices will be heard someday. Now the burden to put appropriate interventions in place is on the professionals, administrators, and policy makers.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background

*"*There is no royal path to good writing, and such paths as exist . . . lead through

the jungles of the self, the world, and the craft"—Jessamyn West (1957).

In this writing, interpretation of the subject of writing (if West is to be believed;) a

path to good writing largely arises from "…the jungles of the self, the world, and the

craft," (p. 1) and, as such, one must begin the quest to understand this journey through

examining his or her own jungles. Said another way, one must explore the world of

grammar and the craft of writing through the lens of others. According to Lindemann and

Anderson (2001), writing is a sequential process that is considered a conventional graphic

system, a way to convey messages to the reader. Burke (2002) concurred, stating that

"Writing is a way of … knowing — a method of discovery — and analysis" (Denzon &

Lincoln, 1998, p. 345).   Furthermore, Lindemann and Anderson (2001) believed that

"Writing has a great deal to do with thinking and creativity" (p. 87). Composition

teachers know that good writing can be taught, but it must be taught well and sometimes,

even at our best, we miss the mark in that respect.

In their discussion of writing, Lindemann and Anderson (2001) also identified

negative predispositions as being mental constraints or psychological barriers.

Predisposition, is defined, as *"*A tendency to hold a particular attitude, or act in a

particular way" (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2016). According to Chantrill

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(2008) and Gabriel (2014), some freshman students panicked when they were told that they must take a first-year English course.   Moreover, some students emotionally detach themselves from courses or stop participating altogether when pursuing difficult writing assignments, such as a college research paper (Elias, 1995; Holly, 2015).

However, Moustakas (1994) said that before a researcher can investigate a phenomenon, he or she needs an autobiographical connection to the topic. If not, the researcher's experience would be like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. As a matter of expediency, I began with my own autobiographical connection in an attempt to understand and recognize negative attitudes toward writing. Following this self-reflection, which comprises the remainder of Chapter 1, I present the central problem addressed by this study, followed by the purpose of the study, its significance, the research questions, and a definition of terms. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature. The study's methodology is presented in Chapter 3, its findings are presented in Chapter 4, and a summary, discussion, and recommendations for future research projects are presented in Chapter 5.

My journey with writing was an anticlimactic experience which I would equate with taking a long journey on a rocky road with many precipitous hills and low valleys. I have always had a deep desire and affinity for learning. For years, I longed for an opportunity to enroll at a university, but fear that felt like sharp knives piercing inside my belly kept me away. However, on one particular day in 1990, I found the courage to walk up to the door of Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. After getting accepted later that year, I walked into an English 099 course. My English professor had a very soft-spoken voice that sounded much like symphonic music playing. I could sit for

hours listening to her lectures on literacy and writing-related incentives that reflected the values of reading and writing. I sat in class like an empty teacup, eagerly waiting to catch the last drop of wisdom as it fell. That professor believed that reading and writing should be taught together, so the class involved a lot of reading. I would read two and three chapters of complex works at a time.

Moreover, I read a number of novels, but one in particular, *Ordinary People*, by Judith Guest (1976) stands out in my memory. It was about a typical American family divided by pain, yet bound by their struggle to heal. Beth was an organized, efficient wife who married a successful businessman; they had two sons, but one was lost in a tragedy (Guest, 1976). I connected with Guest's story immediately because of a similar tragedy that had occurred in my family; however, this novel brought more insights and meaning to my writing in college than one could ever imagine.

That semester, I learned that sometimes life's lessons result in the development of certain negative predispositions. For my first writing assignment, I had to write a three-page reflection paper. As I wrote, I frequently wiped tears away from the corners of my eyes and around the curve of my cheeks because Guest's novel was a reflection of my own tragedy. Overwhelmed by pain and a lack of confidence, I went to the professor after class and explained that I could not do the writing assignment. I anticipated dropping the course. When I told her, she responded, "Why don't you try? If you cannot do the writing assignment, I will assign you something else." I left that day bewildered; I kept pondering the situation and asking myself, "Can I?" — "Should I?" I kept hearing, "Why don't you try?" Slowly, I gained the courage to began putting words on paper. As I wrote about *Ordinary People, s*omething magical happened: I wrote so much that I

forgot about the rules of grammar and all those "diagramming grammar sentences" (Education Week, 2016, p. 1). At some point during the writing process, I forgot about the pain. This was the end of my long journey on that rocky road.

Over the course of my journey, I had developed into a passionate writer. The professor had us write so much that I finally gained confidence in my writing. I had to write essays, business letters, reading responses, research papers, and so forth. My lack of confidence in writing had disappeared, perhaps washed away by all those tears. Because I had to do so much writing, I no longer felt overwhelmed when I had to write a college paper. My fears no longer held me back, and, in 1993, I graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

Today, my journey has led me to the doorstep of Valdosta State University as a doctoral candidate. Along the way, I adopted my professor's philosophy of writing. She claimed that the best way to teach writing was to have students do a lot of writing: write for yourself, write to a friend, write in a journal and diary, just keep writing.

My journey eventually led to my first semester as an English instructor. That semester was pivotal. As I taught an English 1010 course, my experience was perhaps similar to that which the writer Bernard Malumud encountered while teaching his first composition course. His experience was so grueling that he wrote a short story about why students disappeared from his English 101 course (Chantrill, 2008). Malumud wrote that when he first taught at Oregon State University, his students had completely lost interest in the class and stopped 4 weeks into the semester. Quigley (1997) said that most students "do not make it past [the first] three weeks" (p. 107) of college before they

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slowly fade away; although this may be a prevalent phenomenon like Malumud, I noticed a few disturbing trends among my own students.

Firstly, a number of my young adult Millennial students had stopped coming to class. Secondly, they had began rebelling against the instructional lessons. Turner (2015) warned that an instructor would never forget Millennial students if they enrolled in a freshman level-course. Primarily, these students would "change the classroom rules, and they rebelled against the instructional lessons" (p. 9). With this in mind, colleges have begun responding to such issues and catering to the specific needs of Millennial learners, including offering them a variety of course formats (Caffarellia, 2007; Carter, 2007; Cartwright, 1955). Nichols (2014) promoted the idea that people will not learn until they are ready to learn; however, I was reminded of Steven Brookfield's three core assumptions: (1) skillful instruction includes whatever aids students in learning complicated information; (2) skillful instruction requires taking a reflective stance toward practice; and (3) skillful instruction requires educators to consistently be aware of how each student develops and experiences learning in diverse classrooms (Brookfield, 2006).

Finally, unlike Malamud who quit teaching altogether that semester, I wanted to investigate the meaning of negative predipositions toward writing and identify them based on students' perceptions; I also wanted to examine how negative predipositions might affect first-year, young adult Millennial students' ability to develop and improve his or her written communication skills in an English 1010 course. Fitzpatrick, Secrist, and Wright (1998), as cited in Patton (2002) that if you discover something interesting in the workplace, you should pursue it. As a teacher of writing, I wanted to find a solution to keep students from disappearing from composition courses; in addition, I wanted to

help lessen the negative effects of enforced writing as taught in college composition courses. As proposed by Guyton (2011) and Varner (2011), one solution was to understand the problem through the eyes of the students.

Finally, I wanted to help save a generation from the perils of navigating difficult terrains. Researchers have pointed out that most students are already frustrated to the point of dropping out of academic programs (Cornell, 2014; Standridge, 2010; College Reading Learning Association Symposium, 2016). Patton (2002) proposed that a "rigorous and theoretical insight into the problem" (p. 224) would provide valuable knowledge. To that end, I sought to conduct a careful and systematic investigation into the meaning of negative predispositions toward writing among college students.

Statement of the Problem

A key problem is that negative predispositions toward writing among college students could be affecting a student's ability to communicate using written methods in composition courses in academic programs (Lindemann & Anderson, 2001). Lindemann and Anderson (2001) indicated that certain negative predispositions could cause mental constraints for some students. In their view, mental constraints can be described as psychological barriers from years of copious red ink marks in the form of teachers' comments on graded writing assignments. Red ink could symbolize either the color of defeat or the color of authority for some students. Moreover, some students had an unreasonable fear of writing that came from the belief that writing represented failure or bad grades. The notion that "teachers have always found fault with my writing" (p. 15) could set up a negative thought cycle; however, there was a significant lack of research on how negative predispositions affected young adult Millennial students' ability to

develop and improve their written communication skills at college, particularly; while

learning among learners of other generations (Falk & Blaylock, 2016; Jackson, 2011;

Levine & Kirst, 2015). Without placing the blame on who, why, or how, educators must

deliver the knowledge students will need to develop and improve their competency skills

so as to write and express themselves clearly and concisely at college. Speedy mastery of

competency skills will help close achievement gaps, reduce time spent in college, and

increase retention rates (CCR, 2014; Dobrin, 2015).

Finally, capturing first-year college students' lived experiences of the meaning of

negative predispositions toward developing and improving their written communication

skills in an English 1010 course can contribute to our body of knowledge. The data can

help propel adult and career education programs and college communities as a whole to

better service these students. Therefore, "if the goal [of career and adult education

institutions] was to educate each student according to his or her needs, it would behoove

us to recognize those students affected by [negative predispositions] … early enough [to

lessen the effects] …" (Burke, 2002, p. 47). More research information on how negative

predispositions can affect students' ability to write can aid in improving low achievement

scores in composition courses (CCR, 2014). Data can also help administrators to

"allocate additional support and programs that [can] better address young adult

Millennial students' unique [learning] needs" (Guyton, 2011, p. 4). Thus, "with

integration, and sometimes what seems like total immersion of technology" (CRLA,

2015, Southeast Symposium, p. 1), institutions across the globe are faced with daily

challenges to graduate students on time (TCRLA, 2015, Southeast Symposium).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was threefold: (1) to investigate the meaning of negative predispositions based on students' perceptions; (2) to determine how negative predispositions affect students' ability to develop and improve written communication skills at college; and (3) to produce a descriptive data analysis based on student participants' written responses to six questions.

Researchers (Barron, 2012; CCA, 2014; Chantrill, 2008; Lindemann & Anderson, 2001; NAAl, 2012; NCES, 2013) have identified a number of problems related to first-year college students learning in writing and in composition courses. In 2002, when the No Child Left Behind law was established, it did not enforce the grammar instructions, nor did it assess grammar instructions under the common core standards (p. 16). Because the act did not mandate grammar instruction, students have not been prepared for the rigors of college writing and, as a result, more students have either failed in freshman-level content courses (e.g., [English, math, and psychology)] or dropped out of academic programs altogether) (Barron, 2012; CCA, 2014; NCES, 2013). Secondly, as reported by Levine and Kirst in the April 2015 *Education Week,* "not all those diagramming sentences we did as children stuck" (Levine & Kirst, 2015, p. 16); in other words, what little grammar education was imparted did not make much of a difference.

Finally, in 2012, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy reported that 87% of Americans lacked the skills to write (NAAL, 2012). Based on these assessments, this study purposefully sought evidence to determine how negative predispositions could affect a student's ability to develop and improve his or her written communication skills

in an English 1010 course. Chantrill (2008) asserted that most college students simply could not write a decent paper.

Moreover, collecting data on students' preconceptions (e.g., feelings, attitudes, and fears) may help institutions understand the problem through their students' eyes, and what respondents have to say may keep future students in educational programs until they graduate. Such data can provide useful information for lessening negative attitudes toward writing, so students can overcome their fear, reach their educational goals, and graduate on time (Lindemann & Anderson, 2001; Chantrill, 2008).

The overall purpose for this study was to collect written responses of students between the ages of 18 and 24 who were on the roster of an English 1010 course at a technical college. Based on these responses, the author wrote a descriptive report of the findings based on students' preconceptions (e.g., feelings, attitudes, and fears). In addition, this study purposefully collected data useful for building effective writing communities and information that instructors may use to lessen the negative effects of anti-writing predispositions.

Finally, this study produced data to contribute to the wealth of knowledge on education: to stimulate a spirit of inquiry, lead to a positive social change, inspire and empower students seeking a "more enriching educational experience" (Levine & Kirst, 2015, p. 1), and encourage writing teachers to stay in the field until they retire.

Research Questions

Research questions were linked to the theoretical and methodological framework to solidify this triangulated narrative phenomenological study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Research *questions,*

according to Creswell (2014), Maxwell (2013), Moustakas (1994), and Patton (2002), are

essential components of a qualitative protocol. In this case, the protocol uses an iterative

process: *the central question* was expected to generate sub-questions. This study's

central research question was: *W*hat is the meaning of negative predispositions toward

writing? This central question was sub-divided into three sub-questions (Creswell,

2014):

1. What negative predispositions can affect young adult Millennial students'
   ability to write in college?

2. What can lessen the negative effects of such predispositions and propel
   students to achieve a mastery grade of 'C' or better?

3. What teaching strategies and classroom management practices can college
   English 1010 instructors use to aid in building positive writing communities?

Definition of Terms

Andragogy: "the art and science of adult learning" (Knowles, 1989, p. 69).

Constructivism: "a learning theory about the nature of knowing, internal aspects of

learning" (Ormond, 2009, p. 18).

Georgia's State Board of Education mandatory competencies: "Abilities and qualities

necessary for students to reach their potential as individuals and citizens" (Paterson,

2008, p. 23 [G.A.R. 160-4-2-. 01 (2) (c)).].

Learning: "a long-term change in mental representations or associations due to

experience" (Ormond, 2009, p. 18).

Narrative study: "a collection of stories used to chronicle experiences" (Creswell, 2013,

p. 272).

Writing: "a process of communication that uses a conventional graphic system to convey a message to a reader" (Lindemann & Anderson, 2001, p. 10).

Phenomenology: "aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (Vagle, 2014, p. 11).

Predisposition: "a tendency to hold a particular attitude, or act in a particular way" (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2016).

Negative predispositions: to feel a premonition, apprehension, or fear that something bad or unpleasant will happen in the course (derived from the results of the study).

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Core Competencies

</div>

Before a student can receive credit for 3 semester hours, the student must successfully show mastery skills in all five domains based on the Georgia State Board of Education core competencies. Paterson (2008) explained the importance of the Georgia State Board of Education core competencies for an English 1010 course at a Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) campus. The TCSG has 22 technical colleges that follow version (201003L) core competencies protocol. TCSG's students who enroll in non-degree programs, regardless of the course offerings selected, must take an English 1010 course. TCSG's English 1010 instructors are required to implement appropriate lessons to aid students in writing efficiently, so they can write as productive citizens. A typical semester lesson plan would entail the production of the following: essays, business letters, and a research paper (TCSG, 2015). Each student must receive a mastery grade of 'C' or better before he or she can receive credit. Table 1 is an example

of the Technical College System of Georgia's core competencies (see Table 1 Core

Competencies for State Students, p. 12).

Table 1

Core Competencies for State Students

	Description	Lecture Hrs	Total Minutes	Learning Domain	Level of Learning
C1	"Analysis of Writing: Read and analyze writing to identify the subject, focus, and support"	225	225	Cognitive	Knowledge
C2	"Applied Grammar and Writing Skills: (1) Produce logically organized, grammatically acceptable writing, (2) compose a variety of writing assignments to prepare students for writing in the workplace"	1,350	225	Cognitive	Knowledge
C3	"Editing and Proofreading Skills: (1) Revise to improve ideas, style, organization, and format with word processing, (2) edit to improve grammar, mechanics, and spelling"	225	225	Cognitive	Knowledge
C4	Research Skills: "Access, use, and document appropriate resources to support writing"	225	225	Cognitive	Knowledge
C5	"Oral Communication Skills: Apply oral communication skills in discussion and presentations"	225	225	Cognitive	Knowledge

Total for Course ENGL1010 Fundamentals of English	2250	1125

(Reproduced from TCSG, 2015, [Standard], version 201003L).

Research Procedures

Theoretical Framework

As defined by Maxwell (2013), theory is a structure for gathering information about the world. Maxwell believed a qualitative research theory was a set of interpretational constructs that presented a view of the phenomena under study. A qualitative inquiry would provide an explanation of the natural phenomena being investigated (Patton, 2002).   In this context, Maxwell asserted that a theory explained concepts, ideas, and relationships about the study. He advised every researcher to use a theory when explaining the phenomenon under study and to use a theory throughout the study for every decision. To support his ideas, he provided an illustration called *Crow's Nest* (Maxwell, 2013):

> When you look through trees for a dark spot against the sky, and then you try to
>
> see a glimmer of light through it, you look for something, and then when you
>
> think you have it, you do your best to prove yourself wrong. (p. 28)

Maxwell's Theory of a *Crow's Nest* was a structure for gathering information about the world.

Maxwell (2013) stressed the importance of including other people's theories, not just published work, when trying to capture something about the world and its relations. In keeping with that concept, Patton (2002) philosophized that a genuine qualitative study consisted of three major components: a philosophical perspective, disciplinary roots in a theory, and a foundational central research question that was sub-divided into sub-

questions. To take each point, this study's philosophical perspective aimed to find the meaning of negative predispositions about writing and identify them based on students' perceptions. The disciplinary roots were grounded in constructivist theory, andragogy, and educational psychology; and the study put forth the central research question: What is the meaning of negative predispositions?

In this study, Ormond's Cognitive Learning Theory (2009) was used to link key aspects of the investigation to understand the way Millennial students think, learn, and come to develop knowledge.

A Narrative Phenomenological Design

A narrative approach and a phenomenological approach were used to design this framework. Vagle (2014) explained that a phenomenological approach would allow the researcher to focus on the [meaning] of the phenomena; for example, defining the meaning of negative predispositions toward writing. However, if the goal was to only capture a descriptive account of the phenomenon, this study would have followed the systematic procedures of a phenomenological approach. Given its broader focus, this research study merged two approaches—the phenomenological approach and the narrative approach. Patton (2002) explained that triangulation is a qualitative procedure useful for integrating multiple methods, approaches, and designs to shape elements of a qualitative study; similarly, triangulation can be used in a mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative aspects. Therefore, in this project, a phenomenological approach was triangulated with a narrative approach to shape the elements for specific qualitative protocols for the study. However, the researcher's goal was not only to explore the meaning of students' negative predispositions in their natural

environment, but also to report findings based on the student participants' written responses to six questions.

Three designs were considered: grounded theory, ethnography, and a case study approach. However, none of these designs met the systematic protocol for this study's research purpose. Each design has its place: for example, if this study's purpose was to generate theories to explain the process or actions of the phenomenon, it would have followed systematic procedures for a grounded theory design; if the study's goal was to understand the phenomenon within a given culture, it would have followed procedures for an ethnographic design; if the plan was to examine a system or people in its natural environment, it would have followed procedures for a case study design (Bogdan & Biklinurke, 2002; Creswell, 2013; Groenewald, 2004; Krawczyk, 2003; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002; Ravitch & Riggan, 2012; Vagle, 2014). Each of the above named qualitative approaches would require a researcher to follow a different protocol; none of which was wholly appropriate to the aims of the present study.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection procedures outlined by Creswell (2013) surmized the appropriate way to classsify data in a study of this nature. Data was collected from the written responses of four students at a Technical College System of Georgia's state college. Students responded to questions on a Qualtrics Online Survey (QTS). For that procedure, Vagle (2014) outlined an example for following writing prompts (see Appendix F: Survey Questions). The researcher purposefully selected examples of significant statements by individuals with negative predispositions toward writing; the responses were sorted and synthesized, and related formulated meanings were recorded in tables.

Qualtrics software is useful for collecting scientific data. Qualtrics is a sophisticated web-based tool used to analyze and generate a non-biased report. Its features permitted the researcher to sort through data on a general level and then move to more specific levels to find similarities and develop five themes (Purdue, 2013).

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was conducted through Qualtrics; the researcher sorted through the sensitive texts looking for similar patterns. Participants' descriptive written responses were read, sorted, and analyzed to pinpoint patterns and themes. Then the researcher followed the *seven-step process of bracketing* (epoch) to determine the meaning of negative predispositions as revealed in participants' responses.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of three contributions: (1) it exposes a real-world problem-based on students' perceptions of writing and negative predispositions; (2) it determines how negative predispositions may affect students' ability to develop and improve their written communication skills; and (3) it provides a descriptive report on factors that may enable the creation of effective writing communities and lessen the negative effects of negative predispositions toward writing in order to develop and improve written communication skills in an English 1010 course.

Highlights within the literature (Gabriel, 2014; CCAE, 2014; NCES, 2013; TCSG, 2013) provided the evidence to validate that this was a real problem. Gabriel (2014) wrote that most students are taking up to 6 years to graduate from college or university. This, of course, costs students a considerable amount of money and delays their entry into the workplace. Specifically, the non-profit Complete College America

(CCAE, 2014) reported that students at a two-year college spent approximately $15,933 for every extra additional year, beyond the requisite two years, on tuition fees and room and board (CCAE, 2014). In addition, the National Center for Education (NCES, 2013) documented that "26.2% of college students had to enroll in remedial courses" (p. 3). In addition, the NCES (2013) added that "the retention rate was only at 33%" (p. 3). In light of these concerns, educators need to make positive change. "With the emerging forces of change and pressures on institutions of higher education, TCSG colleges must raise the quality of education …" (CRLA, Southeast Symposium, 2015, p. 1) to graduate all students.

Complicating efforts to fully prepare students, Lindemann and Anderson (2001) suggested that certain negative predispositions could hinder a student's ability to write. Ormond (2009) confirmed that humans had the capacity to save things in memory, but that patterns—for instance, the thought that "Oh, I don't know grammar" (Elbow, 1998, p. 168) could linger in the human memory over years. Thinking and rethinking about bad grades, or failing a course, or believing that "Oh, I don't know grammar" (Elbow, 1998, p. 168) were all thought patterns recorded in memory which could block triggers that produce learning in the mind.

However, Howe and Strauss (2007) wrote that institutions that ride out the trends of the Millennial era might risk damaging their reputations by lowering their standards to conform to this generation's preferences. If they took this risk, it could take years to rebuild that good reputation; however, if academic programs did not take on the challenge of meeting Millennials' needs, they would be doing a disservice to a generation that they had dedicated themselves to serving. In other words, colleges and adult

education programs that plan appropriately have an extraordinary opportunity to stay competitive.

Patton (2002) said research-based evidence that helped people in our society is considered significant; this study certainly meets those criteria. This narrative phenomenological study lays the foundation for future research projects. Education scholars are not the only ones who may be able to build upon this foundational work. Others in the fields of math and psychology (Ormond, 2009) or beyond may be able to use the insights generated. Recommendations for future research and practice can be found in Chapter 5.

Limitations to the Study

Specific limitations of this study include the following:

1. This study only focused on one technical college under the umbrella of the Technical College System of Georgia's 22 colleges and one university.

2. The email from the Internal Review Board (IRB) department at the technical college email specifically stated the following: "Students' identity will not be revealed" (GTC, 2017), which limited the researcher from one-on-one contact by phone interviews and face-to-face interview sessions. This statement was modified and put in the VSU's IRB request form. Following, the technical college released the students' emails. For that reason, personal stories were not collected.

3. Qualtrics had limitations on identifying respondents.

4. The generalizability of this study is limited because the study excluded participants under 18 and over 24 years of age.

5. This study did not collect data on students' ethnicities.

Summary

In conclusion, writing academic papers can be challenging for some first-year college students. Research has indicated that negative predispositions toward writing can cause mental constraints. Lindemann and Anderson (2001) suggested that negative predispositions form mental barriers, often generated as a consequence of years of seeing red ink markings on graded writing assignments. Due to certain cognitive patterns, negative predispositions can become embedded in the human memory and may cause some students anxiety, fear, or negative feelings before complex writing assignments. Students may associate such red ink markings on graded written assignments with defeat or failure. Statistical reports have revealed that a high percentage of American citizens lack the basic skills to write in socially required contexts (NAAL, 2012). With these challenges in mind, the goal of this study was to identify and elucidate the meaning of negative predispositions based on students' perceptions of writing in an English 1010 course and to seek adult learning strategies and classroom management practices to lessen the effects of negative predispositions in college writing or composition courses.

Data collected were used to produce information for professional writing teachers that may help them build effective writing communities during the critical first 3 weeks of a new semester. Such communities may help to stir a spirit of inquiry and motivate students to stay in the course after the critical 3-week point at which many drop out (Quigley, 1997). Quigley claimed the first 3 weeks were crucial for students because if they do not connect with the subject matter, many drop out by that point.

This study's theoretical framework was triangulated with two qualitative approaches to shape the elements for specific qualitative elements for the study. However, the researcher's goal was to investigate the meaning of students' negative predispositions in their natural environment based on the student participants' written responses to six questions.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of the literature was exhaustive, and a large collection was synthesized in order to understand the problem. Moreover, the literature provided a link to the central research question and sub-questions. *The central question was asked: W*hat is the meaning of negative predisposition about writing? The following three sub-questions were asked:

1. What negative predispositions can affect a young adult Millennial student's ability to write in college?

2. What can lessen the negative effects of such predispositions and propel students to achieve a mastery grade of 'C' or better?

3. What teaching strategies and classroom management practices can college English 1010 instructors use to build positive writing communities?

The literature review began with a look into the Millennial generation's relevant characteristics and classroom behaviors. This chapter introduces three theories: (1) constructivist theory, (2) andragogy theory, and (3) cognitive learning theory. Following these theories, we explore adult teaching practices, adult learning strategies, and Steven Brookfield's three core teaching practices.

The Relevance of the Millennial Generation

Ten years ago, researchers wrote much about the generational differences in education and training environments as they pertained to the Baby Boomers and Generation X, or Gen Xers. At that time, given that the next generation was only beginning to emerge into adulthood, researchers reported on various theories about Baby Boomer and Gen Xers, writing very little on the Millennial generation and nothing about the young adult Millennials defined as individuals aged 18 to 24 as of the time of this project. Research revealed that postsecondary institutions did a better job preparing the Baby Boomers and Gen Xers with the proper knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) to succeed in their future lives and careers. Howe and Strauss (2007) documented the characteristics of generational learners as shown in Table 2 Generational Learners.

Table 2

Generational Learners

Description	Years Born	Age Now
Lost Generation	1883-1900	117 +
Greatest Generation	1901-1924	93-116
Silent Generation	1925-1945	72 - 92
Baby Boomers	1946-1960	71 - 57
Generation X	1961-1980	56 - 37
Generation Y	1981-1990	36 - 27
Millennials	1991-1998	26 – 19
Young Adult Millennials	1999 1993-	18 - 24

Generation Z	2004-	0 - 13
Smart Generation	2017	

(Reproduced from Howe & Strauss, 2007, p. 168).

Howe and Strauss (2007) identified Millennials between ages 18 and 24 as a group worthy of independent consideration, listing them as young adult Millennials, defined as those born between 1999 and 1993.

In the literature, the researcher found existing evidence to answer the question of whether the Millennial generation has unique characteristics. Howe and Strauss (2007) answered just that question in their *New York Times* bestseller, *Millennials Go to College: Strategies for a New Generation on Campus*. They asserted that Millennial students could be identified by seven major characteristics: (1) They rewrite the rules, (2) they are demanding, (3) they fail to take responsibility, (4) they are sheltered, (5) they place more importance on *doing* than *knowing,* (6) they are technologically savvy, and (7) they are good at multi-tasking.

Furthermore, Falk and Blaylock (2012) suggested that Millennials: (1) oppose formal instruction, (2) prefer more trial-and-error activities, (3) prefer working in groups with peers, (4) require a curriculum divided into small chunks rather than large quantities, and (5) prefer practical, hands-on activities. In addition, Cornell (2013) identified five more characteristics of Millenials: (1) they work well in groups; (2) their brains process information differently; (3) they view using knowledge as more valuable than memorizing facts; (4) their worldview is broader and more realistic; and (5) they are positive and typically team players.

Turner (2015) established that an instructor would never forget a Millennial student; in this view, Millennial learners tend to oppose classroom organization or rules. Howe and Strauss (2007) concurred with this assessment. Turner further emphasized that Millennial students would challenge "programs, services, and instructional strategies" (p. 9) put forth by institutions. Howe and Strauss (2007) contended that certain hindrances would prevent Millennials from taking on responsibility or engaging in self-directed learning. Several authors agreed that the Millennial generation would become the world's future leaders (Howe & Strauss, 2007; Perna 2013), eventually taking on leading roles in society.

Falk and Blaylock (2012) suggested that Millennial students' lack of readiness and negative attitudes toward learning could cause havoc in a diverse classroom for some instructors. Howe and Strauss (2013) posted that Millennials were not leaving the cradle. They relied heavily on the support of their parents, and they were not ready to handle adult responsibilities; they preferred working in groups, and they were certainly social learners. In addition, Cornell (2013) and TCSG (2013) promoted the idea that semester after semester, students were becoming more frustrated, and instructors were growing more weary trying to accommodate Millennial students' educational needs. In 2013, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) reported that the TCSG's 22 colleges were at a crossroads and needed to seek new ways to educate Millennial students (Guyton, 2011).

Finally, Howe and Strauss (2007) added to the body of knowledge about the Millennial generation's behavioral patterns, characteristics, and learning styles, reporting relevant information to help educators understand this generation's unique characteristics.

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Howe and Strauss concluded that accommodating the Millennial generation's orientation toward education and readiness to learn would require a major adjustment by educators. The authors put forth realistic theories, concepts, and strategies for possible solutions to aid in building effective writing communties.

<center>*Constructivist Theory*</center>

What Is Constructivist Theory?

Constructivist theory is a qualitative philosophical perspective on the origin, nature, methods, and limitations of how human beings process knowledge. Patton (2002) theorized that learning is a constructive internal process. From an epistemological standpoint, a constructivist view makes efforts to explore the study of knowledge itself. Patton explained that a narrative phenomenological study had disciplinary roots in constructivist theory. He stated that a philosophy-driven inquiry would take the direction of constructivist theory or social constructivism theory; which was chosen depended on the intent of the study.

In addition, Charmaz (2006) added works grounded in constructivist writing. He established that the constructivist theory placed emphasis on a single process or a core category as in the Strauss and Corbin (1998) approach. In Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach, they promoted a focus on "diverse local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of particular worlds, views, and actions" (p. 14). Thus, through a constructivist's eyes, people would create knowledge rather than absorb it. People learn new information when they combine and integrate bodies of knowledge with their personal beliefs (Patton, 2002).

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Origins

Andragogic theory can be traced back to the 1800s. Alexander Kapp explored this theory in 1833 (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 1980b; Knowles, 1989; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). According to Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007), andragogy became popular for its scholarly approaches. It was praised for its distinct nature and specific learning strategies for adult learners. Knowles (1989) added meaning to this theory when he defined andragogy as "the art and science of adult learning" (p. 68). The term andragogy encompassed a collaborative approach with a shared focus, whereby adult learners would take responsibility for learning new information rather than relying on the presenter of content (Merriam et al., 2007).

During the 1800s, continuing adult education programs explored numerous assumptions as they related to the concepts and learning strategies of andragogy. Europe was the first region credited for using the term andragogy (Knowles, 1980). Although Alexander Kapp was credited with creating andragogic theory, the Greek philosopher Plato was given credit for shaping Kapp's educational worldview. Plato's theory became the norm during the 1800s in continuing education programs, and was highly esteemed in adult education. Andragogy continued to rapidly expand as adult learners flocked to educational institutions (Knowles, 1980). Moreover, andragogy became popular as a profession and a practice across Europe (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Following Kapp's adaptation of Plato's theory, he began using andragogy in his own teaching practices as a high school teacher in the German school system.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) and Knowles (1989) provided the rationale for andragogy theory. They explained the foundational works to solidify andragogic

methods for building effective writing communities on college campuses. They also conceptualized the importance of adult readiness and orientation to learn new information. They identified essential concepts for understanding andragogy's collaborative approach for moving adult learners toward self-directed learning rather than placing the responsibility of learning on teachers.

The Meaning of Adult Education

In 1925, Lindeman clarified the meaning of "adult education." Lindeman put forth humanist perspectives that recognized individuality, values, and the uniqueness of each person. Lindeman (1925) philosophized that education was a perpetual process; it was lifelong and had no ending. He was a notable educator in his own rights. His contributions were enormous and reputable (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).

In 1968, Knowles published an article titled "Andragogy, Not Pedagogy." In this article, he asserted that pedagogy was different from andragogy (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 1980b; Knowles, 1989). While andragogy referred to the education of adults, pedagogy, by contrast, referred to children. Pedagogy, as Knowles defined, is "the art and science of teaching children" (1989, p. 15). Moreover, by 1920, high school teachers had begun to complain that the pedagogic model did not fit their adult students (Knowles, 1980). Community colleges had documented higher dropout rates and lower retention, and teachers had begun to complain that their adult learners were resisting pedagogical methodologies such as lectures, assigned readings, drills, quizzes, rote memorization, and examinations (Holmes & Cooper, 2000). Thus, with his separation of the two realms, Knowles (1989) was credited for adult learners being treated with respect in continuing learning settings.

Six Core Assumptions

During the evolution of andragogic theory, Knowles (1989) created six core assumptions. In the first assumption, Knowles posted that most adults would need to justify their decision before they would take on learning something new. In other words, most adults would assess the cost before they made the decision to go to college. Only if, they could see a benefit would they would enroll in community colleges. Such benefits included learning a new skill for a promotion, gaining an assurance that returning to college would lead to a college degree, a better paying job, or a better career. Only then would they enroll.

In the second assumption, Knowles (1989) explained that adults would take full responsibility for their own lives. He explained that in some cultures, an adult would be credited with a certain level of development when he or she became fully mature. For example, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers conceptualized their experiences (including errors) as a form of learning. Those Baby Boomers and Gen Xers had a deep psychological need for others to see them as capable of making the right decisions for various life situations.

In his third assumption, Knowles (1989) asserted that most adults had a different perspective about their life experiences than youths. For example, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers are prone to making appropriate decisions about their education; whereas, the younger generations lacked the life experience to make such appropriate decisions. However, in Knowles's (1989) fourth assumption, he theorized that if an adult (i.e., someone 25 years or older) believed that learning new information would better his or her

life situation, that person would be more likely to learn it. In this view, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers were only interested in learning subjects that had immediate relevance to their work or personal lives. In this context, learning was associated with job security.

Knowles (1989), in his fifth assumption, explained that some Baby Boomers and Gen Xers were more life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered in their orientation to learning, at least at school; in contrast, young adult Millennial learners were not task-centered in their orientation to learning at school.

Finally, in Knowles's sixth assumption, he wrote about internal motivators. He asserted that Baby Boomers and Gen Xers had certain primary internal motivators such as better jobs, promotions, and salary increases. He also referred to internal motivators as intrinsic motivators. For years, corporations and educational institutions had offered intrinsic motivators to their employees (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). Many corporations either included educational incentives to encourage employees to return to college or included monetary bonuses in salary packages (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012; Merriam et al., 2007).

According to Merriam et al. (2007) and Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012), Baby Boomers and Gen Xers achieved greater success in their lives, particularly in their careers, because they had intrinsic motivators in their employee packages, such as higher salaries, job promotions, and health benefits. Learners of those generations can be best described as self-directed learners, and they were highly committed to their educational goals.

In conclusion, Knowles outlined six core assumptions about the learning motivations, behaviors, and styles of the various generations that affect how educators

can best serve them in continuing education programs. Underlying assumptions added

six assumptions, core assumptions that educators adopted in continuing education

programs. Knowles et al. (2012) and Merriam et al. (2007) concluded that Baby

Boomers and Gen Xers had internal motivators to propel them through difficult terrains.

Before they made the decision to return to school and participate in learning new

information, these generations assessed the potential benefits, considering the cost of

daily life responsibilities, family life, and available money and time (Cooper &

Henschke, 2003). Knowles added considerably to the existing body of knowledge on

adult education by publishing, theorizing, and performing research on adult learners

(Cooper & Henschke, 2003).

<center>*Self-Directed Learning*</center>

Merriam and Bierema (2014) put forth a variety of concepts on self-directed

learning. Self-directed learning related to the idea that "the learner would take control of

his or her own learning" (p. 62). Similar to Knowles's (1989) beliefs, they asserted that

people become increasingly self-directed in their learning when they fully mature as

adults. This concept became a hallmark of adult basic education (Merriam & Bierema,

2014). However, this did not imply that a learner would be left "sitting in a room all

alone, learning something" (p. 62), but rather suggested that a maturely developed adult

would take on the necessary actions to learn new information. Thus, self-directedness

meant that adults had the capacity to handle adult responsibilities (Knowles, 1989).

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) explained that adults become more self-directed

as they mature:

As individuals mature, their self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of increasing self-directedness, and their readiness to learn becomes increasingly oriented to the developmental tasks of their social roles and not the product of biological development and academic pressure. For that, any time adults view others to be secondary, the learning process facilitates independence, creativity, and self-reliance. (p. 161)

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) also pointed out that Baby Boomers and Gen Xers had the requisite mindset to learn new information when participating in course activities, and learners of these generations would take responsibility for learning new and challenging information in adult learning communities. Thus, Merriam and Bierema (2014) surmised that self-directed learning (SDL) was life-long learning and life-wide education.

The Conversation around College Pedagogical Curricula

Most college curricula have traditionally been deeply rooted in pedagogical concepts (TCSG, 2015; Levine & Kirst, 2015). Pedagogy, as explained by Freire (2005), focuses on learning strategies for youths. Pedagogical concepts embody teacher-focused education. According to Freire (2005), educators deposited information when they taught via traditional lectures, expecting students to patiently receive, memorize, and repeat the information instead of leading in class discussions. Levine and Kirst (2015) exposed that when college-bound students came to postsecondary institutions, they would receive a pedagogical curriculum instead of innovative learning instruction.

Bitterman (2013) also opposed implementing some pedagogical curricula in an adult education learning environment. He wrote that the higher education curricula was

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the reason for the disconnect between colleges and the workplace; that is, job opportunities were changing every day, but college curricula had not changed. Therefore, he stated that college graduates were not prepared to meet life challenges. To address these issues and the challenges of generational learning differences, Werth and Werth (2011) asserted that academic institutions needed to create a curriculum specifically for young adult Millennial learners.

Why Colleges Should Consider Andragogic Curricula

Apps (1979) and Holt, Freire, and Illich (2013) endorsed the use of adult learning strategies and teaching practices, outlining the rationale for why community colleges should consider using an andragogy-based curricula. Apps (1979) and Holt et al. (2013) believed in radical and humanistic approaches. The authors placed a strong emphasis on noncompulsory learning and de-schooling concepts. In addition, Ferri-Reid (2010) wrote that educators should teach instructional lessons pertaining to students' life experiences. Ferri-Reid advised that social networking had changed how students perceived interactions: young adult Millennials required learning activities that kept them closely knitted to their peers, in contrast to learners of previous generations. Moreover, McLaughlin (2010) specified that young adult Millennials' orientation to learning (at least at school) was more subject-centered than that of previous generations. As a result, adult educators needed a curricula to promote problem-solving concepts. Furthermore, Carter (2007) wrote that Millennials could be motivated and inspired to excel further in their academic performance if they were introduced to an andragogic curricula.

Conklin (2012) also recommended that institutions use andragogic curricula, noting that young adult Millennials needed subject-based learning and that informal

learning accounted for more than 75% of the learning that took place in organizations. Building on these insights, Carter (2007) expounded that life-centered lessons would encourage young adult learners to form values about how they learn.

Finally, after long deliberation on the current state of the affairs, this study concluded that andragogic curricula would permit a student affected by negative predispositions toward writing to process complex information during the teaching and learning section instead of forcing the student to wait on the content taught. Moreover, andragogic curricula include learning strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation. These strategies may permit a writing instructor to take on the role of facilitator rather than lecturer or grader. Andragogic curricula can allow writing teachers to implement lessons centered around life experiences (Carter, 2007; Knowles, 1989). Andragogy entails a collaborative approach with a shared focus (Dictionary of Human Resources, 2006; Knowles, 1989; Knowles, 1989b; Knowles et al., 2007); in these activities, the teacher and students collaborate to come up with appropriate learning assignments that will bring about measurable gains.

How Negative Predispositions May Affect Students' Ability to Write in College

In order to conceptualize how negative predispositions could affect a student's ability to write in college, the researcher sought secondary sources written by educational writing experts such as Dobrin (2015), Lindemann and Anderson (2001), and Elbow (1998). Dobrin (2015) asserted that college students wrote in college for the following three reasons: (1) learning: students would share in an experience of learning to write in new and different situations and would write to learn from their writing; (2) participating:

students would write reflective papers about their experiences and their role in decision-making; and (3) expressing: students would write to express their ideas in writing.

Dobrin (2015), Lindemann and Anderson (2001), and Elbow (1998) agreed that college students would learn to write most effectively by using a conventional graphic system to convey a message to the reader. This conventional graphic system most typically consists of a seven-step process: (1) pre-writing, (2) rough draft, (3) peer editing, (4) revising, (5) editing, (6) final draft, and (7) publishing. Spivey (2006) held that when students engage in the pre-writing process, they must brainstorm in order to generate ideas for writing. In the initial pre-writing process, most students would chart, create story webs, develop graphic organizers, or develop a word list from which to work, depending on their preferred learning methods; then they would decide upon the type of writing and determine the purpose and the audience for their piece (Spivey, 2006).

To further this process, Lindemann and Anderson (2001) and McLaughlin (2010) promoted the idea of implementing a pre-writing diagnostic. McLaughlin (2010) believed that students affected by negative predispositions could be identified in the initial pre-writing phase. For the most part, students affected by negative predispositions have difficulties relating old information to new information in order to express ideas in writing. Specifically, students affected by mental constraints would find that spontaneous writing assignments represented a less comfortable expressive medium than the human voice. Lindemann and Anderson (2001) wrote that students affected by negative predispositions had difficulty recalling basic grammar, such as the core subject, prepositions and prepositional phrases, word order, words that cannot be verbs, verb

forms and tense, and so on; these issues were due to the anxiety produced by their mental constraints and the possibility of not being able to make contact on paper.

Making Contact on Paper

   Lindemann and Anderson (2001) defined the concept of *making contact on paper*. Being unable to make contact on paper means, in effect, that students could not convey in writing their experiences, beliefs, or "complicated configurations of knowledge" (p. 15) because they had difficulty thinking critically through complex readings and lacked the skills to problem solve (Chantrill, 2008; Dobrin, 2015; Haley & Alsweel, 2012; Ormond, 2009).

   Most of the writing teachers on TCSG's 22 campuses implement lessons designed to achieve the following standard learning objectives based on communication, critical thinking, and problem solving:

   Communication: Students will demonstrate communication using language appropriate for diverse audiences and purposes, including the ability to speak, write, and otherwise express oneself clearly and cogently.

   Critical thinking: Students will demonstrate the ability to examine, analyze, and compare alternatives to identify and challenge assumptions; develop alternative solutions and/or strategies while applying practical and ethical implications; and construct sound arguments and evaluate the arguments of others.

   Problem solving: Students will demonstrate locating relevant information and sources, judging the reliability of those sources, and evaluating the evidence

contained in those sources as they construct arguments, make decisions, and solve problems. (TCSG, 2016, p. 1)

Many writing experts agree that some students who enter college are not mentally ready to write (Booth, 1963; Chantrill, 2008; Dobrin, 2015; Hayes, 2016; Lindemann & Anderson, 2001). Hayes (2016) wrote, "We are asking [students] to dive into complex [writing] and texts and understand them, so we need to teach them how to [write] and read complex sentences" (p. 1). In addition, Chantrill (2008), Dobrin (2015), and Haley & Alswell, (2012) concurred that most college students could not identify complex sentences or understand how to synthesize complex texts. Moreover, Lindeman and Anderson cited Booth (1963), who stated, "Every paper a student will write in college will require a slightly different balancing act" (p. 18). Overall, these authors have promoted the idea that writing was a cognitive process that had to be acquired and honed.

Finally, Lindemann and Anderson (2001) closed the discussion by saying that students affected by psychological barriers had difficulty with the concept of failing the course, so they would either drop the course before the end of term or would quit school altogether and walk away in defeat (Lindemann & Anderson, 2001)

Brookfield's Three Core Teaching Practices

Brookfield (2006) presented three core assumptions regarding adult learning, as follows: (1) the skillful instructor would do whatever aids students in learning complicated information, (2) the skillful instructor would take a reflective stance toward practice, and (3) the skillful instructor would consistently be aware of how students were experiencing their learning. Brookfield (2006) made valid arguments about teachers in general. He claimed a skillful teacher "is compassionate and shows genuine concern for

all students" (p. 55). He emphasized the need for a teacher to maintain a professional

attitude in the classroom at all times. This would entail an absence of barriers,

prejudices, or preconceived bias. Teachers should implement well-thought-out

instructional lessons, making any necessary adjustments or adaptations along the way, as

well as assessing students' skill levels when determining instructional materials. The

present study put forth three classroom management practices to improve college writing

experiences—critical stance, new teaching methodologies, and classroom awareness—

based on Brookfield's three core assumptions; writing teachers may consider adopting

these to help lessen the effects of negative predispositions in the classroom and propel

students to achieve a mastery grade of 'C' or better in the course.

Classroom Management Practice: Adopting a Critical Stance

In assumption one, Brookfield explained that adopting skillful teaching practices

would not be an easy task. It would require teachers taking on more responsibilities, such

as "a practice or activity that may help one student to learn can be confusing and

inhibiting to other students in the same classroom" (pp. 22–26). For example, if teachers

of composition identify a student with negative predispositions who is struggling with

key concepts, they should re-emphasize the concept and encourage the learner to read

other materials. Leaving students alone to figure the challenge out without providing

some assistance could create, rather than solve, the problem. As many writing experts

have concluded, students with negative predispositions need to feel confident in the

initial pre-writing phase, before they proceed with other, more advanced concepts.

Classroom Management Practice: Adopting New Teaching Methodologies

In assumption two, Brookfield (2006) mentioned that skillful instructional practices required adopting new teaching methodologies. Brookfield suggested taking a critically reflective stance, stating that a "critical reflective stance was the process by which [writing teachers] research the assumptions informing our practices by viewing these through four complementary lenses" (pp. 21–26). This entailed (1) observing through the eyes of students, (2) observing through the lens of collegues and their perceptions, (3) having a thorough understanding of the literature, and (4) having one's own autobiographical connection to the topic. This was all part of having a *critically reflective* stance which "allows teachers to model critical thinking in front of students and regenerate our teaching" (pp. 21–26).

Classroom Management Practice: Classroom Awareness

In Brookfield's (2006) final assumption, he recommended that writing teachers consider classroom awareness. *Classroom awareness* is a way of being constantly aware of how a student experiences learning and how that student perceives the teacher's actions toward him or her. Importantly, "without this knowledge, choices that we make as [writing teachers would] risk being haphazard, closer to guesswork than informed judgements" (p. 28). According to Brookfield, "skillful [writing teachers] realize what content to teach, what examples to use [in order] to illustrate a complex idea, who to call on in discussions, how to frame a [writing] assignment, the amount of time needed for [students with negative predispositions], [know when to allow] small group break-outs, when to depart from the plan for the rest of the day, and so on" (p. 28).

If composition teachers adopted Brookfield's three classroom management practices, it would allow them to build upon the positive aspects and experiences of writing, helping to lessen negative predispositions.   By adopting these best practices, writing teachers may observe growth in their students, and they would know exactly when to adapt the teaching lesson for an affected student's learning style. Then, those students affected by negative predispositions could learn alongside other students in a diverse classroom.   Students affected by negative predispositions would not have to drop the course or shy away from postsecondary education altogether. They would have an opportunity to develop and improve their writing skills, and would have a better chance at passing the course with a 'C' or better the first time around (Chantrill, 2008).

For a variety of reasons, young adult Millennial students will continue to enroll in adult and career education programs. College curricula will require all students to write academic papers (Chantrill, 2008).   Institutions across the globe will continue be held accountable for providing quality education and graduating students on time. To meet these goals, educators must take into account the unique learning preferences of young adult Millennials. Overall, Brookfield's model can be useful to any professional seeking to improve his or her teaching practices, but they may be particularly helpful for composition teachers seeking to help struggling young writers.

Adult Learning Strategies

Holt, Freire, and Illichs: Three Strategies for Adult Learners

To the suggestions offered by Brookfield, it may be useful to add the nine key characteristics concerning adult learning strategies outlined by Holt, Freire, and Illich (1913). Three of the nine strategies fit the unique learning styles of young adult

Millennial students:

1. Future-oriented students need clear suggestions about what actions that they should take to improve and make progress. These suggestions should be offered before drop/add dates.

2. Affirmation is powerful and motivational. It gives students the hope needed and perseverance to keep trying against all odds.

3. Educative- this is critical for learners' success. Understanding the value of their work, can provide guidance for students' future actions (Holt, Freire, & Illich, 1913, as cited in Brookfield, 2006, pp. 183–187).

These three strategies can be useful for steering writing teachers away from demoralizing students who may already have negative predispositions toward writing.

Ferri-Reid's Five Strategies

Ferri-Reid (2010) added the following five strategies: (1) begin firmly, (2) stimulate a relaxed work environment, (3) provide challenging opportunities, (4) pull back on coaching, and (5) establish a career path. Adult learning strategies can help students affected by negative predispositions to learn writing skills, enabling them to graduate from college on time. Some Millennial students need instructional coaching during complex writing assignments such as a research paper.

Whole-Part-Whole Learning

Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012) endorsed the Whole-Part-Whole (WPW) learning strategy for adult and career education programs and other lesson designs. The WPW learning model was built upon systematic and behavioristic instructional approaches. This model is grounded in concepts for helping students who have personal

issues, emotional baggage, learning disabilities, or even negative predispositions toward learning. Moreover, the WPW learning strategy would, according to the authors, lend "to the practical work of designing education and training programs while holding on fiercely to learning theory and research" (Knowles et al., 2012, p. 253). The disciplinary roots of WPW are holistic in nature. According to Knowles et al. (2012), WPW concepts are supported by "natural learning and personal learning; it's holistic [in] flavor, and it is rich in whole-part rhythm to learning" (p. 254). The WPW template provides a logical springboard for establishing specific "whole-part-whole lessons that can be used in any [adult] learning program" (Knowles et al., 2012, pp. 246–254). This template included general learning theory, six core adult learning principles, and subject matter differences. The learning model focuses more on "how people learn" (p. 245) than what they learn. In addition, the WPW learning model was designed "for learning programs of any length— total courses as well as for short learning experiences" (Knowles et al., 2012, p. 245). Knowles et al. implied that this model could be useful for students, subject matter experts, and professional educators alike.

WPW sprang from the following two key perspectives: (1) the behavioristic-connectionist camp, termed *behaviorists,* and (2) the *gestalt-cognitive* camp. The first step in creating the model was to separate the field of learning psychology into the two major camps: the behavioristic-connectionist camp and the gestalt-cognitive camp. Then the authors acknowledged the value of each camp and integrated them "through Tolman's concept of purposive-behaviorism" (Knowles et al., 2012, pp. 245–246).

Furthermore, in their work, Knowles et al. (2012) exposed certain facts about how learners affected by negative predispositions may be able to process new information:

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students formed "in their minds the organizational framework to understand new concepts effectively and efficiently until concepts were cognitively absorbed" (p. 246). According to the authors, "supporting cognitive capabilities and component behaviors are then developed in the classical behavioristic style of instruction found in part or in several parts" (p. 246). Once the learner achieved desired performance criteria for the individual part, the writing teacher would step in to begin linking "these parts together, forming the second whole" (p. 246). The WPW approach would take into account the fact that "the present holistic, behavioristic, whole-part, and part-whole learning [will] aid [in] long-term memory" (p. 246). Given these benefits, the WPW learning strategy could be employed in educational programs, universities, and college communities as a whole, where it could aid student success.

Peer-Paired Teaching and Group Work

Peer-paired teaching and group work can spark synergy in a classroom (Valez, Cano, Whittington, & Wolf, 2011). Such collaborative techniques could help young adult Millennial students feel more at ease when undertaking complex assignments, as these students are more used to social and collaborative work than learners of previous generations. Peer-paired teaching or group work may inspire students who have negative predispositions toward writing to take the initiative or to volunteer for complex writing assignments and more projects, as opposed to when given an individual assignment. In addition, peer-paired teaching or group work can encourage social integration, which can motivate students toward self-directedness. According to Valez et al. (2011), the Millennial generation's unique learning style flourishes when working in groups.

Instructional Educational Coaching

Johns Hopkins University has put forth many interesting concepts on instructional educational coaching (Lacefield, 2014). Research on instructional educational coaching forms a framework for effective mediation in the classroom. For instance, it aims to stimulate self-directed learning (Perna, 2013) with the guidance of the teacher. Instructional classroom coaching could support insecure writers in a diverse learning environment (Carter, 2007; Costa & Garmston, 1985; Holly, 2014). In such a coaching-focused environment, teachers become less prescriptive in their attitudes toward students, and students become more in charge of their learning and their lives. In addition, Costa and Robert (2002) noted that instructional classroom coaching was a strategy often used by an instructor to work side-by-side with students, creating a supportive relationship rather than an authoritative one.

Educators around the globe have praised instructional classroom coaching. Specifically, it can free a teacher to work one-on-one to ensure individual learning needs are met. Furthermore, the technique can aid a teacher in helping those students with personal problems, such as allowing them to start deciphering what may be going on in a student's memory process at a particular time. Finally, instructional classroom coaching can provide a powerful stimulus for creating a positive writing environment. It may allow professional writing teachers to work closely with students affected by negative predispositions and to overcome them.

Authoritarian Teaching Practice: What to Avoid

Freire and Macedo (1921) endorsed a method for encouraging adult students to become active participants in the learning process. They clarified two teaching practices

that were commonly seen in most adult education settings of the period (and today): *authoritative* and *authoritarian* practices. They explained that "authoritarian writing instructors imposed their will by sheer force of tradition or by using institutional power" (p. 127). This included such techniques as dropping students who stopped participating in the class. Today, there is a strong risk that teachers of students with negative predispositions could become overly frustrated while teaching complex new concepts due to Millennial students' known learning characteristics, particularly the degree to which they have, and will continue, to rewrite the classroom rules, make demands, and refuse to take responsibility for their learning (Howe & Strauss, 2007). This may lead the teachers to reflexively adopt a more authoritarian attitude to control the classroom.

Millennial students' unique characteristics may cause some writing teachers undue stress when trying to teach to a collective audience (Chantrill, 2008; Freire & Macedo, 1921). Nevertheless, composition teachers should avoid authoritarian teaching practice by all means necessary. If they fail to do so, writing instructors risk losing young adult Millennial learners who have negative predispositions toward writing from their classes and perhaps from higher education altogether (Freire & Macedo, 1921).

Adopting an Authoritative Teaching Practice

Freire and Macedo (1921) explained that adopting an authoritative practice was considered highly preferable to implementing authoritarian practices. Instructors should earn the respect of their students by establishing credibility, trust, and authenticity. Doing so would allow writing teachers to build upon the positive and would permit college institutions to keep more young adult Millennial students with negative

predispositions on their rolls and actively participating throughout the entire semester (Chantrill. 2008; Dobrin, 2015; TCSG, 2013).

For decades, a variety of positive adult learning strategies and teaching practices have been tested and proven to be successful in adult and career education programs. These strategies were alive and well—even thriving—today. Therefore, if institutions want to keep students affected by negative predisposition in educational programs, they must consider adopting these and other innovative adult learning strategies, so that they can build upon the positive to lessen the effects of negative predispositions (Knowles, et al., 2012).

<div align="center">Cognitive Learning Theory</div>

The Learning Process

In 2009, Pennsylvania State University researcher Jeanne Ellis Ormond provided insight into the processes of learning, cognition, and memory, and how each differed in teaching adult learners aged 18 to 24. Ormond espoused that "[the] human memory operates and adds meaning; memory refers to learners' ability to 'save' things [mentally] that they have learned" (p. 24). Learning, as Ormond (2009) defined it, is "a long-term change in mental representations or associations due to experience" (p. 18). Here, Ormond was implying that a student would not simply learn by absorbing information like a sponge, but that knowledge and understanding would require a "process of making, actively and intentionally constructing, and knowledge" (p. 21). Learning is a natural process and learning processes are dialectical and cyclical (Mackeracher, 2006). This is a vital concept in constructivist theory.

According to Ormond (2009), learning is a cognitive process that involves the ongoing construction and fine tuning of thought, "building on while restructuring prior knowledge, skills, and experiences" (p. 96). If young adult Millennial learners affected by negative predispositions could come to associate new information with either prior knowledge or with their life experiences, they would experience meaningful and effective learning in writing courses. Unfortunately, few class instructors seem to be actively helping them to make these connections (Chantrill. 2008; Dobrin, 2015; TCSG, 2013).

In her work, Ormond's "Figure 2.4: Model of Human Memory" (2009, p. 25) displayed underlying factors involving "in-depth cognitive processes in connecting new information to prior knowledge." Ormond theorized that when young students focused on a particular stimulus, "attention in the memory process can occur" (p. 26). However, the memory process in students affected by negative predispositions is unique. Before a particular stimulus can trigger a memory, human attention must flow freely, but negative predispositions block those stimulus triggers from flowing freely. This was why students affected by negative predispositions experience a real disconnect, not only with the writing activity at hand, but with their peers and with their teachers (Lindemann & Anderson, 2001).

Moreover, Ormond (2009) described the following three different connections to knowledge:

1. Declarative knowledge: the nature of how things are, were, or will be;

2. Procedural knowledge: the knowledge of how to do something (e.g., skill);

3. Conceptual knowledge: a grouping of objects or events that have something in common (p. 26).

Ormond's conceptualization of knowledge can provide composition teachers with insightful information as to why students affected by negative predispositions may stop participating in class and why they slowly fade away from composition courses. These concepts put forth by Ormond can help writing teachers build upon the positive to lessen the effects of negative predispositions. Writing professionals may consider implementing instructional activities that involve life-experiences.

In conclusion, writing teachers know that good writing can be taught, but educators may need to do extraordinary things to teach it well. Applying Ormond's theories on cognitive learning and writing may help bring about the change institutions need to stay competitive in global markets (Levine & Kirst, 2015). The information provides professional writing teachers more insight on Millennials' thinking and learning process. Given the vast potential of these theories, other educators in the fields of education, psychology, political science, and history may want to embrace these concepts as well.

Linking Constructivist Theory to Learning

Ormond (2009) believed learning had three constructive parts. First, it created long-term change within a learner; it was not a quick "transitory use of information" (p. 18). Unlike remembering someone's phone number long enough to call it and then forgetting it shortly after, in this concept, true learning was natural and long-term. Secondly, learning involved "mental representations or associations" (p. 18) based on lasting patterns that an individual's brain formed after experiencing a "change due to experience" (p. 18). Thirdly, Ormond stated that learning was not an attribute of works

of "physiological maturation" (p. 18) but rather the process of becoming mature through mental development and growth.

Ormond (2009) and Smith and Morris (2014) cited Carl Jung to explain four main personality dichotomies that could affect learning:

1. Extroverted vs. introverted: Extroverted individuals like talking with others and learning through experience, whereas introverts prefer thinking alone about ideas.

2. Sensing vs. intuitive: Sensing types prefer working with concrete details and tend to be patient, practical, and realistic. Intuitive types like abstractions and are creative, impatient, and theory-oriented.

3. Thinking vs. feeling: Thinking types tend to base decisions on objective criteria and logical principles; feeling types are subjective and consider the impact of a decision on other people.

4. Judging vs. perceiving: Judging types are time-oriented and structured, whereas perceivers are spontaneous and flexible. (Ormond, 2009, p. 6)

Knowing how individuals learn and how they process knowledge, as well as having an understanding of cognitive, memory, and learning processes may help educators "unlock" the learning potential of students affected by negative predispositions; however, doing so will require writing teachers to create lessons adapted to individual students' personality traits.

Ormond (2005) assessed students in grade levels 6–8 and 9–12 to determine their personality traits and produced five learning strategies.

Grade Levels 6–8

- Predominance of rehearsal as a learning strategy

- Greater abstractness and flexibility in categories used to organize information

- Emergence of elaboration as an intentional learning strategy

Grade Levels 9–12

- Continuing reliance on rehearsal as an intentional learning strategy, especially by low-achieving students

- Increasing use of elaboration and organization to learn, especially by high-achieving students (Ormond, 2005, p. 35)

In short, individual students' cognitive and memory abilities were different, particularly at different ages.

Lastly, Smith and Morris (2014) conceptualized the *schemata* learning strategy. Smith and Morris (2014) held that schemata learning is a product of our imagination that "schemata are the [driving] force of active learning" (p. 271). Schemata was not driven by rehearsal or memorization (Smith & Morris, 2014). Drawing upon this concept, this study put forth the idea that schemata learning may move students with negative predispositions toward active learning because students can form images before charting, creating story webs, developing graphic organizers.

Basic Underlying Assumptions of Educational Psychology

Learning, Cognition, Memory, and Developmental Trends

Basic underlying assumptions of educational psychology have typically focused on key aspects of psychology: thinking, learning, development, motivation, and assessment of human characteristics. Ormond (2009) found in, a study by Piaget, that

young adult Millennial students could learn new information based on prior knowledge, but these students were still developing mentally and they lacked the experience to make good decisions concerning their own education. Students' mental development involved a continual process of refining, building on, and occasionally reconfiguring previous experiences. Ormond therefore concluded that young adult Millennials needed help to make decisions in the classroom.

Developmental Trends

Ormond (2009) believed that most Baby Boomers and Gen Xers would come to the adult learning environment with a greater volume of experiences and more physiological maturity than young adult Millennials. As a result, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers made better decisions about their educational needs. To support this hypothesis, Ormond identified several developmental trends that provided evidence that young adult Millennial students would rely on defenders, instructors, and parents to channel them toward the right decisions during complex writing assignments (Lindemann & Anderson, 2001; Ormond, 2009).

The work of Hershey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1976) supports Ormond's developmental assessment. Hershey et al. claimed that Baby Boomers and Gen Xers had a richer volume of experiences and an eagerness to learn than the Millennial generation. For example, when most Baby Boomers and Gen Xers went to college, they earned a mastery grade of 'C' on the Georgia state's core competency exam. These students developed the skills to write successfully in college and in other situations; therefore, they graduated on time, gained access to more life opportunities, and experienced success in their careers (NCES, 2013).

Reese (2011) concurred that students between ages 18 to 24 relied heavily on the support of their parents because they were not mentally ready to handle a disciplined lifestyle; accordingly, they would not take on adult-like responsibilities. On the other hand, Freire (2005) argued that when students came to the adult learning environment, the teacher would control what they learned; they would not need to take on adult responsibility for their learning. For these students, learning something new came through memorizing information "narrated by the teacher" (p. 80). Nor would students practice any act of cognition or employ critical thinking skills, because students were treated as mere objects that were banking concepts deposited by the instructor (p. 73). Therefore, teachers became the subject of the educational process. This underlying concept noted that writing teachers assumed the responsibility for making decisions about what students learned, how they would learn it, and when it was learned (Freire, 2005).

Critical Thinking and the Writing Process

Scriven and Paul (1996) believed that "critical thinking [is] the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (pp. 151–156). This process can be taught through writing, but students must engage with the process. Ormond's discovery greatly strengthened the cognitive learning concept regarding how young learners think, learn, and mentally develop skills and the knowledge to be successful in mastering new skills.

Summary

In closing, change can come to our institutions, but writing teachers and institutions will need a better understanding of negative predispositions before they can help lessen their negative effects. Writing was identified as a constructivist process because learners create knowledge rather than simply receive it (Ormond, 2009). The cognitive process development consists of a continual process of fine-tuning and adjusting one's mental state based on the use of prior knowledge, skills, and experiences (Ormond, 2009). Brookfield (2006) explained the importance of adopting better classroom practices, which would require writing teachers to take on more work-related responsibilities to ensure student success.

Ormond (2009) held that mental constraints could block the cognitive learning process. Dobrin (2015) stressed that writing procedures would involve similar overlapping processes: (1) pre-writing, (2) rough draft, (3) peer editing, (4) revising, (5) editing, (6) final draft, and (7) publishing. This, according to Dobrin, was due to the fact that college writing entailed writing within English, science, social studies, health education, and psychology courses. Ormond (2009) wrote that some developmental traits of young adult Millennials would fall in the same category, in many respects, as those of adolescents. This was based on her research into students in grade levels 9–12, which found that developmental trends and cognitive development were determined by age. Young adult Millennial students affected by negative predispositions do not yet have the necessary life experiences to make good decisions while they draft complex writing assignments and may not have the self-discipline to engage in autonomous learning.

Lastly, students affected by negative predispositions will need some support systems in place before they can internalize information to write complex papers in college.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This qualitative research study utilized a narrative phenomenological design. Systematic protocols of a narrative approach were triangulated with systematic protocols of a phenomenological approach to bring forth qualitative elements (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).   Both methodologies had qualitative traits. As found in Patton (2002) and Vagle (2014), a qualitative study differs from a quantitative or mixed method study in three key ways. Firstly, a qualitative study uses a narrative basis instead of an intensive focus on statistics. Secondly, qualitative studies do not manipulate variables. Thirdly, the findings of a qualitative study cannot generate numerical statistical data. However, a researcher's opinions could blend into the narrative. Qualitative inquiries give justification for a phenomenon, explaining the ideas under examination or answering research questions (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

According to Burke (2002), a phenomenological study is a qualitative study that "closely follows [a] narrative inquiry" (p. 11). A narrative inquiry is one that focuses on people, whereas a phenomenological study focuses on how an experience affected people; the present study sought to find out how negative predispositions can affect a student's ability to improve and develop written communication skills (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Vagal, 2009). Therefore, a phenomenological approach was appropriate. However, the narrative inquiry had protocol instructions to explore the phenomena and

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findings written in a narrative genre. Thus, the researcher determined that the appropriate methodology would combine the two approaches.

Justification for Using a Narrative Phenomenological Study

Justification for this decision came via experts in the field (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Vagle, 2014) who have designed protocols or instructions for narrative phenomenological studies. According to Creswell (2013), the researcher should carefully think through each systematic procedure before deciding upon a particular design. If the study's foundation is not planned properly, data could possibly be skewed. A researcher's design selection can affect the sampling procedures, selection of instruments, and analysis method. Patton (2002) explained that research questions are vital when choosing a design because research questions link the study to its theoretical framework. As suggested by Patton (2002), a narrative phenomenological approach was determined to be the correct design for this study. Specifically, it allowed for capturing the *true voice* of participants' writing experiences. It would also allow for gathering data by cutting across each participant's story to get to its significance in order to draw conclusions about the current state of affairs in participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Vagle, 2014).

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Purposeful Sampling Procedures

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Creswell (2013) explained the significance of purposeful sampling procedures. Purposeful sampling is a popular technique that is often used in qualitative studies to intentionally identify and then select volunteer participants based on certain criteria (Patton, 2002). Significantly, in a qualitative study, purposeful sampling would require all participants to experience the phenomenon under study. In considering how many

participants to use for this study, the researcher drew upon Vagle (2014), who stated that there are no "magic numbers" (p. 75). He explained that the sample size was only important in "statistical calculation" (p. 75). However, he suggested looking at other phenomenological studies for guidance, and therefore, phenomological studies by Guyton (2011) and Varner (2011) were used as a model. Guyton used six participants, and Varner used four. A minimum of four was used in this study.

Participants and the Research Site

The recruitment process began with gaining the approval of the Valdosta State University (VSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB). After the campus president of a technical college located in Georgia returned the letter of consent to VSU's IRB, the technical college released 58 e-mail addresses of students in English 1010 writing programs (see Appendix C: Initial Approval Letter). Specifically, the letter stated that the technical college would grant permission to conduct a study with currently enrolled students in English 1010 who were between ages 18 and 24 in an effort to aid this study. Following, the students' emails were made available. In addition, an advertisement flyer (see Appendix: Initial Recruitment Flyer) was developed with intent to recruit students; therefore, the flyer was drafted with specific colors using the following key terms: subject, verbs, writer's block, confused, and a statement: don't know what to write. Based on the readings found in Elbow (1998) and Lindeman and Anderson (2001), students affected with negative predispositions would understand the language in the recruitment flyer. The technical college was purposefully selected as the host site for the sample, primarily because it followed the state of Georgia's core competencies for an English 1010 course. This was a vital requirement for the study. A reusable link was

emailed to the 58 students. Four students responded to questions on a Qualtrics Online

Survey (QTS). Varner (2011) carries more depth in his phenomenological study because

he used only four participants.

Vagle (2014) outlined an example for following writing prompts (see Appendix

F: Survey Questions).   The researcher purposefully selected examples of significant

statements by individuals with negative predispositions toward writing; the responses

were sorted, analyzed, and synthesized, and related formulated meanings were recorded

in tables. Qualtrics software was used for the purpose of collecting scientific data.

Qualtrics is a sophisticated web-based tool used to analyze and generate a non-biased

report. Its features permitted the researcher to sort through data on a general level and

then move to more specific levels to find similarities and develop five themes.

Data Collection and Management

Vagle (2014) provided the groundwork for collecting data used in this study.

When describing the type of research data to collect, Vagle used the phrase "it depends"

(p. 77). This statement implied that data gathering depends upon the type of study, the

phenomena being investigated; the contexts being studied; the number of research

participants involved, and the field of study. A variety of different instruments could

have been used to collect qualitative data for this study, such as interviews, observations,

and written descriptions. However, Vagle (2014) stressed that data gathering depended

on the type of study and the contexts being studied. Based on the theoretical framework,

data were collected via written descriptive responses. Student participants were given a

reusable link that allowed them access to a Qualtrics Online Survey designed by the

researcher and were asked to write reponses to six questions. A student consent form

statement was at the top of the survey. Their voluntary participation served as their

informed consent. In addition, a brief explanation of the term negative predipositions was

defined for student understanding.

Survey Questions

Each volunteer student participant wrote short descriptions based on the following

questions:

1. What is your opinion about graded writing assignments, and how did any
    bad grade affect your ability to write?

2. What can an instructor do to lessen your effects of negative predispositions?

3. What is your opinion about having to develop and improve your
    communication skills to write by the Georgia's State Board of Education
    standard?

4. How did you feel having to take a writing composition course this semester?

5. What writing assignment makes you feel uncomfortable?

6. What negative predispositions do you think can affect your ability to write this
    semester?

Patton (2002) explained the significance of the term "epoch," which means "to

abstain from or stay away from the ordinary way of perceiving things" (Patton, 2002, p.

484). Qualtrics had features which constrained the collection of data in this study.

Qualtrics had measures in place that ensured the researcher had no way of identifying

respondents (Purdue, 2013). However, for additional measures, the researcher followed

what Howe (1976) described as, "A world which was not my own" (p. 1). By that, the

researcher's subjectivity remained null.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was rigorously objective (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). The Qualtrics Online Survey captured data analysis based on participants' descriptive written reponses. Data analysis was conducted through Qualtrics; the researcher sorted through the sensitive texts looking for similar patterns. Participants' descriptive written responses were read, sorted, and analyzed to pinpoint patterns and themes. Then, the researcher followed the *seven-step process of bracketing* (epoch) to determine the meaning of negative predispositions as revealed in participants' responses.

Seven-Step Process of Bracketing

Creswell (2014) described the seven steps followed in data analysis in this study:

Step 1. Gather data

Step 2. Submit data for analysis through Qualtrics

Step 3. Synthesize and make sense of information and reflect on its overall

     meaning

Step 4. Search for patterns and themes

Step 5. Look for emerging themes

Step 6. Identify descriptions, themes, and language useful for writing short

     passages

Step 7. Write narrative passages and interpret the findings

Ethical Considerations

There were precautionary measures in place to avoid threats to validity. Data security posed no risk. Participants' names were confidential, and their privacy was maintained. The researcher's commitment to objectivity was not breached. The

researcher's subjectivity remained null due to data in context. Significant statements by students affected with negative predispositions were recorded without any editing. Lastly, for ethical reasons, this study was not conducted at the researcher's place of employment.

Summary

Analysis and Presentation

Two main sources were consulted regarding the process of transcribing the data. *The Canadian Journal of Psychology* (May 2013) and Creswell (2013). First, *The Canadian Journal of Psychology* article provided instructions for transcribing data. Once the data analysis was generated, the report was fully transcribed. Next, the participants' written responses were sorted and grouped into significant statements, related meanings, and themes.

Next, the data themes, significant statements of individual respondents affected with negative predispositions, and related formulated meanings were interpreted. A textual description of significant statements was put into table format. Lastly, a narrative discussion was documented (see Chapter 5).

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This study investigated the meaning of negative predispositions to writing and identified them based on exploring "…the jungles of the self, the world, and the craft" (West, 1957, p. 1) from the perspective of first-year Millennial college students. West's 1957 theory laid the groundwork to determine whether or not there was a pleasant pathway to good writing. Elbow (1998) surmised that writing was similar to "a sea voyage and coming to new land" (p. 50). Before good writing could emerge, the writer must undertake a voyage via the sea. The sea voyage was a place of confusion. In this place, the writer would lose sight of his or her starting place in order to develop new concepts to strategically clarify and organize the writing piece before coming to the new land. This can be a challenging process, as seen in this chapter, where the findings of the study are presented in table format, giving respondents' descriptive written responses with related formulated meanings. (Note: the respondents' written responses were not edited; responses were copied from a Qualtrics-generated report and pasted into tables).

Five themes emerged as follows: (1) the need for skillful, authoritative writing teachers, (2) the meaning of negative predispositions toward writing in college based on students' perceptions of writing in college, (3) the negative predispositions that affected students' ability to write in college, (4) the listing of negative predispositions, and (5) the antidote teachers can use to lessen the negative effects of students' negative predispositions.

From four transcripts, 24 significant statements were extracted. Tables 3, 4, 5, and

6, consist of examples of significant statements with formulated meanings. The formulated

meanings were arranged in clusters. Five themes resulted from arranging the formulated

clusters, and ten identified negative predispositions.

Table 3

Significant Statements of Respondent 1 Affected with Negative Predispositions and Related Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning of Negative Predisposition
Q 1: What is your opinion about graded writing assignments, and how did any bad grade affect your ability to write?	
I like graded writing assignments honestly. They help you see and be able to correct your mistakes. Bad grades will always effect negatively.	Bad grades are a traumatizing reality; students have difficulty accepting bad grades.
Graded writing assignments are different than non-graded writing assignments because you are able to express yourself in a more freeway and not have to worry about punctuation marks or anything else that's considered in a rubric.	Free-writing assignments can ease the pressure of thinking about bad grades and can lessen the negative effects of predispositions.
Once you put your all into a paper and you feel and believe that it's a great piece of work and then hand it in and receive a bad grade it changes the way you think and feel about writing, and that's when doubt and fear kick in and you stop believing in yourself and the motivation you had while writing goes downward and you feel as if your hard work was for nothing.	Negative predispositions that students associate with bad grades: doubt, fear, lack of confidence, low self-motivation, no rewards for work completed

I think that graded writing assignments can be help you become a better writer. You can see which areas that you are weak in and can be able to fix it.

Students are seeking fruitful and positive feedback on graded writing assignments, so they can improve and develop writing skills in college.

Q 2: What can an instructor do to lessen the effects of negative predispositions?

Further explain and take time to see if we understand.

Show the students that you care and that you actually want them to succeed instead of just giving them work and writing assignments, grading it and not showing them how to improve on their mistakes they made on their assignment.

Students want to learn college writing without being penalized by graded writing assignments, but writing assignments useful for learning, so that they can learn and graduate from non-degree programs.

We would also like to see that our instructor is an efficient writer because that gives us confidence that we are secure and are going to be o.k.

Students are looking for teachers who will motivate, encourage, and mentor them through difficult writing tasks. They are tired of learning environments that push more assignments, but not meaningful learning activities.

By making the topic more interesting and explaining the topic better.

Bad grades can affect you by not being able to graduate.

Students want to learn college writing, but they are looking for authoritarian writing instructors who will mentor [instructional classroom writing coach] them in a caring and sufficient writing environment.

Being able to graduate requires all good grades.

Q 3: What is your opinion about having to develop and improve your communication skills to write by the Georgia's State Board of Education standard?

I think that taking a college course based on writing is great because you never know when you will need that experience in the future. I think that State Board standard for writing will be very helpful while taking a college writing

Students' expression of an understanding of the state's participation in ensuring quality education for future employment.

course.

Q 4: How did you feel having to take a
    writing composition course this
    semester?

Students come to the college
classroom with a mindset to write
academic papers.

Great. It lets me know how far I am.
I feel as if I need to take one because
I love to write and learn new things
in life.

Q 5: What writing assignment makes you
    feel uncomfortable?

Students have difficulty writing on
topics outside their life experiences.

Assignments about things I don't
know anything about and
Assignments about topics that are
hard to research. I think that writing
long essays is what makes me
uncomfortable

Q 6: What negative predispositions can
    affect your ability to write this
    semester?

Students desire to learn but they
want to learn from skillful teachers.
Furthermore, students are faced
with mental barriers or images of
failing the course: perception,
thought, anxiety, concerned,
fearful, fear.

Topics that I don't understand or being
taught by someone who really doesn't
care about your writing. Thinking that
I will get a bad grade for it.

Table 4

Significant Statements of Respondent 2 Affected with Negative Predispositions and Related Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning of Negative Predisposition
Q 1: What is your opinion about graded writing assignments, and how did any bad grade affect your ability to write?	
I think graded writing assignments are subjective to the person writing and reading the written work, depending on the subject matter. It would affect my confidence level and my grades.	Bad grades are a traumatizing reality; students have difficulty accepting bad grades.
Grading writing assignments are beneficial to me as they give me the practice I need to improve my writing skills. Bad grades would affect my overall gpa	Free-writing assignments can ease the pressure of thinking about bad grades and can lessen the negative effects of predispositions.
Q 2: What can an instructor do to lessen the effects of negative predispositions?	
To have more assignments that involve subject matter that I am familiar with. Provide as much reference materials as possible, also provide the option to have the professor or another person read the paper first and offer input so that a student might have an opportunity to make corrections prior to handing the assignment in.	Students are looking for andragogic writing activities: classroom discussions, input with planning, and life-lesson writing topics. Peer teaching and instructional coaching in college writing communities can help lessen the negative effects of predispositions.
Q 3: What is your opinion about having to develop and improve your communication skills to write by the Georgia's State Board of Education standard?	
I feel that it is definitely beneficial, as long as I have plenty of	Students come to the college

resources.	classroom with a mindset to write academic papers.
Q 4: How did you feel having to take a writing composition course this semester?	
I agree with having to take the course, but I would be concerned about the level of comprehension needed to be successful in the course.	Students are concerned about succeeding in college.
Q 5: What writing assignment makes you feel uncomfortable?	
Writing assignments with specific word count requirements. Writing assignments that require a lot of research, annotating and citations	Research papers can cause anxiety with some students. Students want non-critical thinking assignments in non-degree writing courses, so they can learn life-essential assignments to graduate on time.
Q 6: What negative predispositions can affect your ability to write this semester?	
Apprehensive

My vocabulary and comprehension level. | Students are anxious or fearful that something bad or unpleasant will happen; knowledge of having a vocabulary deficiency and skill level deficiency. |

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Table 5

Significant Statements of Respondent 3 Affected with Negative Predispositions and Related Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning of Negative Predisposition
Q 1: What is your opinion about graded writing assignments, and how did any bad grade affect your ability to write?	
All teachers should grade papers the same. When teachers grade differently and I get a bad grade I feel as if my writing was terrible.	Bad grades are a traumatizing reality; students have difficulty accepting bad grades.
Q 2: What can an instructor do to lessen the effects of negative predispositions?	
My teacher can show me ways to fix it instead of just telling me what was wrong.	Students are seeking fruitful and positive feedback on graded writing assignments, so they can improve and develop writing skills in college.
Q 3: What is your opinion about having to develop and improve your communication skills to write by the Georgia's State Board of Education standard?	Students express an understanding of the state's participation in ensuring quality education for future employment, so they come to the college classroom with a mindset to write academic papers.
I think that those standards will be helpful to the student that is taking writing courses.	
Q 4: How did you feel having to take a writing composition course this semester?	
The writing course is the hardest because my papers are good, but my teacher finds other mistakes that ends up getting me a terrible grade.	Students want to learn college writing, but they are looking for authoritarian writing instructors who will mentor them in a caring and sufficient writing environment.
Q 5: What writing assignment makes you feel uncomfortable?	

Writing about my personal life makes me uncomfortable.	Students are looking to have input on writing topics.
Q 6: What negative predispositions can affect your ability to write this semester?	
Thinking that I will make bad grades or not knowing what the topic is about can be an affect.	Students are having anxiety, perception, thought, anxiety, concern, fearful, and fear, over the idea of failing the course.

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Table 6

Significant Statements of Respondent 4 Affected with Negative Predispositions and
Related Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning of Negative Predisposition
Q 1: What is your opinion about graded writing assignments, and how did any bad grade affect your ability to write?	
I feel that graded writing assignments are very useful for many reasons during a writing college course. Bad graded may effect my goal which could cause a delay in my performance to excel and graduate.	Bad grades are a traumatizing reality; students have difficulty accepting bad grades.
My opinion regarding graded writing assignments; allows the students the opportunity to build writing confidence and receive feedback regarding writing errors. However, a student should not be penalized for expressing thoughts but cant adequately present his or her thoughts in a grammatical format. Therefore, bad grades can affect the confidence of a student and create writers block.	Free-writing assignments can ease the pressure of thinking about bad grades and can lessen the negative effects of predispositions.
Q 2: What can an instructor do to lessen the effects of negative predispositions?	
Take out one on one time with me so that I may understand my mistakes and correct them.	Students are seeking help from their writing teachers. Peer-paired teaching can free a writing teacher to shift toward instructional classroom coaching to give students one-on-one time.
The instructor can lessen the effects of negative predisposition by taking into consideration each student cultural, economic affluence and spheres of influence. This could help avoid unproductive writing	

behaviors that many undergraduates exhibit. Most important, the instructor becomes valuable to the student when identifying and complimenting the students on writing, and making positive comments and suggesting additional helpful pointers so that the writer gain confidence, and write more effectively.

Q 3: What is your opinion about having to develop and improve your communication skills to write by the Georgia's State Board of Education standard?

Everyone should be required to take this course.

Students come to the college classroom with a mindset to write academic papers.

I concur, regarding having to take a college course in writing based on the Georgia's State Board of Education standard. However, there are a plethora of writing styles. Consequently, this Georgia State Board writing course should build the confidence of the writer and not be judge on grammatical errors.

Q 4: How did you feel having to take a writing composition course this semester?

I agree with having to take the course, but I would be concerned about the level of comprehension needed to be successful in the course.

Students are concerned about succeeding in college.

Q 5: What writing assignment makes you feel uncomfortable?

Writing essays.

Research papers or lengthy essays can cause anxiety for some students. Students want non-critical thinking assignments in non-degree writing courses, so they can learn life-essential assignments to graduate on time.

The writing assignment which make me uncomfortable? Rhetorical writing, simply because their is no instructional format. However, placing these thoughts and ideas in writing becomes subjective.

Q 6: What negative predispositions can affect your ability to write this semester?

Trying to let go of my old writing techniques.	Students want to be in college and they are interested in learning, but they do not want to face this difficult terrain alone. Also, students are anxious or fearful that something bad or unpleasant will happen; knowledge of having a vocabulary deficiency and skill level deficiency.
The negative predisposition I think will affect my ability to write this semester, is not having the mental, and writing skills to maintain academic standards. In addition, instructors imply "call me if you need help". However, their demeanor that is given when seeking extra help is degrading and humiliating.	

Theme 1: The Need for Skillful, Authoritative Writing Teachers

Based on Table 3, the data indicated the need for skillful, authoritative writing teachers who exemplify classroom awareness. A skillful teacher will exemplify the following three traits: (1) the skillful instructor aids students in learning complicated information; (2) the skillful instructor takes a reflective stance towards practice; and (3) the skillful instructor is aware of how students experience learning (Brookfield, 2006). According to Brookfield's third assumption, a skillful writing teacher would ensure classroom awareness. Classroom awareness requires two factors: how a student experiences learning, and how a student perceives the teacher's actions toward him or her. This was demonstrated by the following statement from the participant responses:

Further explain and take time to see if we understand. Show the students that you

care and that you actually want them to succeed instead of just gving them work

and writing assignments, grading it and not showing them how to improve on

their mistakes they made on their assignment. We would also like to see that our

instructor is an efficient writer because that gives us confidence that

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we are secure and are going to be o.k. (Respondent 1:Written Response)

To have more assignments that involve subject matter that I am familiar with. Provide as much reference materials as possible, also provide the option to have the professor or another person read the paper first and offer input so that a student might have an opportunity to make corrections prior to handing the assignment in. (Respondent 2: Written Response)

My teacher can show me ways to fix it instead of just telling me what was wrong. (Respondent 3: Written Response)

Take out one on one time with me so that I may understand my mistakes and correct them. (Respondent 4: Written Response)

Most important, the instructor becomes valuable to the student when identifying and complimenting the students on writing, and making positive comments and suggesting additional helpful pointers so that the writer gain confidence. and write more effectively. (Respondent 4: Written Response)

Brookfield (2006) advised that writing teachers can improve classroom awareness by carefully planning the content of the lesson before teaching it; providing good, detailed examples when illustrating a complex idea; seeking volunteers to answer complicated questions before calling on students in discussions; and framing assignments and allowing additional time if students need it to complete them.

In addition, authoritative teaching practice would permit writing teachers to earn students' respect. Students desire skillful teachers who exemplify trust and authenticity. Based on the data collected in this study, students seek teachers who exemplify the traits of an authoritative teaching practice. Perhaps if we give students what they view as

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quality education, more writing teachers will see mastery grades of 'C' or better, along

with other improvements such as closing achievement gaps, raising retention rates, and

reducing the time spent in college (CCR, 2014; Chantrill, 2008; Dobrin, 2015).

Theme 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College

In Table 4, the data revealed formulated terms related to the meaning of negative

predispositions toward writing. In order to determine the meaning of negative

predispositions, the following research question was asked: What negative

predispositions can affect your ability to write this semester?

Apprehensive and my vocabulary and comprehension level.

(Respondent 2*:* Written Response)

Topics that I don't understand or being taught by someone who really doesn't care

about your writing. Thinking that I will get a bad grade for it. (Respondent 1:

Written Response)

Thinking that I will make bad grades or not knowing what the topic is about can

be an affect. (Respondent 3: Written Response)

Trying to let go of my old writing techniques. The negative predisposition I think will

affect my ability to write this semester, is not having the mental, and writing skills to

maintain academic standards. In addition, instructors imply "call me if you need help."

However, their demeanor that is given when seeking extra help is degrading and

Humiliating. (Respondent 4: Written Response)

Based on the above written responses, the meaning of negative predispositions

was translated and defined from words such as the following: *apprehensive, worried,*

nervous, uneasy, concerned, agitated, tense, afraid, scared, fearful, demeaning, and

humiliating. The formulated meaning was translated and paraphrased to derive the meaning of negative predispositions: students come to the learning environment anxious or fearful that something bad or unpleasant (bad grades) will happen (not graduating on time). Thus, the meaning of negative predispositions was established as: feeling a premonition or apprehensive, or fearful that something bad or unpleasant will happen in the course.

Theme 3: Negative Predispositions Affected Students' Abilities to Write in College

In Table 5, the data revealed that negative predispositions affected students' ability to develop and improve written communication skills in college. The question was asked: What negative predispositions can affect [unedited] your ability to write this semester? *Participants offered a variety of responses:*

Thinking that I will make bad grades or not knowing what the topic is about can be an affect. (Respondent 3: Written Response)

Apprehensive; my vocabulary and comprehension level. (Respondent 2: Written Response)

Thinking that I will get a bad grade for it; topics that I don't understand or being taught by someone who really doesn't care about your writing.

(Respondent 1: Written Response)

The negative predisposition I think will affect my ability to write this semester, is not having the mental, and writing skills to maintain academic standards. In addition, instructors imply "call me if you need help." However, their demeanor that is given when seeking extra help is degrading and humiliating. (Respondent 4: Written Response)

First-year college students were concerned about turning in papers with grammatical writing errors. According to Elbow's (1998) philosophical view, "Writing with errors doesn't make you anything, but writing with errors—if you give it to other people—makes you a hick, a boob, a bumpkin" (p. 167). However, Ormond (2009) confirmed that there were operational functions in place to save things in the human memory, but negative predispositions (e.g., thoughts about bad grades, worry, unease, nervous, concerned, agitated, tense, afraid, scared, frightened, fearful, demeaning, embarrassing) were deeply embedded into patterns and formed imprints in the human memory. Thus, the brain would undergo change and negative attitudes or mindsets would become embedded in the human memory; these mindsets could block learning.

Theme 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions

In Table 6, the data yielded a list of words, statements, and phrases to create an identifiable listing of negative predispositions. The question was asked: What negative predispositions can affect your ability to write this semester? Participants provided a variety of responses:

Thinking that I will make bad grades or not knowing what the topic is about can be an affect. (Respondent 3: Written Response)

Apprehensive; my vocabulary and comprehension level. (Respondent 2: Written Responses)

Thinking that I will get a bad grade for it; topics that I don't understand or being taught by someone who really doesn't care about your writing. Thinking that I will get a bad grade for it. (Respondent 1: Written Response)

From these responses, a collection of words associated with negative predispositions was generated: apprehensive, worried, uneasy, nervous, concerned, agitated, tense, afraid, scared, frightened, fearful, demeaning, and humiliating.

Theme 5: What Writing Instructors Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students' Predispositions toward Writing in College?

To help generate suggestions for dealing with the problems identified in this study, the following research question was asked: What can an instructor do to lessen the effects of negative predispositions? Based on the data gathered, information emerged that may help writing teachers lessen the negative effects of predispositions:

Further explain and take time to see if we understand. Show the students that you care and that you actually want them to succeed instead of just giving them work and writing assignments, grading it and not showing them how to improve on their mistakes they made on their assignment. (Respondent 1: Written Response)

To have more assignments that involve subject matter that I am familiar with. Provide as much reference materials as possible, also provide the option to have the professor or another person read the paper first and offer input so that a student might have an opportunity to make corrections prior to handing the assignment in. (Respondent 2: Written Response)

My teacher can show me ways to fix it instead of just telling me what was wrong. (Respondent 3: Written Response)

The instructor can lessen the effects of negative predisposition by taking into consideration each student cultural, economic affluence and spheres

of influence. This could help avoid unproductive writing behaviors that

many undergraduates exhibit. (Respondent 4: Written Response)

Students believed that writing teachers had the competencies, as professionals, to

help them learn academic writing, but they wanted writing instructors to demonstrate

complex writing by writing with them when assigning complex projects such as a

research paper. They also wanted one-on-one feedback that would help them identify

ongoing writing errors instead of simply marking errors on papers. Students further

suggested that writing teachers understand the cultural backgrounds of their students,

particularly African American Vernacular, Hispanic, and other non-standard-English-

speaking cultures who may be weak in speaking or writing standard English. According

to Elbow (1998), word usages often depend on the audience and the situation. If a

student had been brought up to speak and write standard, middle-class, white English,

that student would probably get penalized twice as much for any mistakes written in

standard English would be than white middle-class writers.

Additionally, writing instructors can lessen the negative effects of such

predispositions by providing more feedback before the final, polished paper is turned in.

Students put considerable effort into producing academic papers, so when they turn in a

polished paper without preliminary feedback, they believe it is a good paper written at

mastery level. It can be devastating for a student to receive an 'F' on a paper he or she

thought was written well. However, before college writing teachers can lessen the

negative effects of students' predispositions toward writing, they first have to identify

affected students (Chantrill, 2008; Lindemann & Anderson, 2001). Table 7 includes

examples of the ten identified negative predispositions.

Table 7

The Ten Identified Negative Predispositions

Description
Overthinking about getting bad grades
Writing unfamiliar topics
Lacking vocabulary skills
Lacking comprehensive skills
Lacking basic skills to write at a college level
Demeaning responses from writing teachers
Walking away feeling humiliated
Seeking help for basic skills to write
Perceiving that basic skills are learned in grade school
Asking basic grammar questions openly in class is embarrassing among peers

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The focus of this study was on defining the meaning of negative predispositions toward writing and identifying them based on students' written responses. Five themes emerged from the findings: (1) the need for skillful, authoritative writing teachers who exemplify classroom awareness, (2) the meaning of negative predispositions based on students' perceptions of writing in college, (3) the fact that negative predispositions affected students' ability to write in college, (4) the list of identifiable negative predispositions, and (5) the steps that instructors can do to lessen the negative effects of students' predispositions. Based on the responses of participants to a question regarding what they believed affected their ability to excel in an English 1010 course, this study identified 10 essential negative predispositions: (1) overthinking about bad grades, (2) writing unfamiliar topics, (3) lacking vocabulary skills, (4) lacking comprehensive skills, (5) lacking basic skills for writing at a college level, (6) demeaning responses from writing teachers, (7) walking away feeling humiliated, (8) unwilling to seek help for basic skills to write, (9) perceiving that basic skills are learned in grade school, and (10) asking basic grammar questions openly in class is embarrassing among peers.

The data were carefully sorted as the researcher followed the seven-step process of bracketing (epoch) to assess the 24 significant statements of four participants, which was generated via a Qualtrics Online Survey and to determine related formulated meanings. Four descriptive written responses were selected among the significant

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statements of persons with negative predispositions toward writing who attend a technical college in Georgia. Respondents were given six questions and asked to respond descriptively, ultimately generating a collection of 24 statements regarding their attitudes toward writing. The significant statements of respondents with negative predispositions and related formulated meanings have been presented in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Chapter 4 of this study; a qualitative analysis begins the discussion, along with three original research questions. In the remainder of Chapter 5, the subsequently generated information resulted in writing a narrative that could be considered a guide, followed by implications, and recommendations.

Discussion

The central research question of this study was: What is the meaning of negative predispositions? To answer this question, data were collected from four respondents' descriptive written responses and related formulated meanings were used to define negative predispositions. It was determined that the meaning of "negative predisposition" is to feel a premonition, apprehension, or fear that something bad or unpleasant will happen in the course.

Research Question 1:

What negative predispositions can affect young adult Millennial students' ability to write in college?

Based on examples of significant statements of persons with negative predispositions, 10 negative predispositions were identified:

1. Overthinking about getting bad grades

2. Writing unfamiliar topics

3. Lacking vocabulary skills

4. Lacking comprehensive skills

5. Lacking basic skills to write at a college level

6. Demeaning responses from writing teachers

7. Walking away feeling humiliated

8. Seeking help for basic skills to write

9. Perceiving that basic skills are learned in grade school

10. Asking basic grammar questions openly in class is embarrassing among peers

If the above mental constraints were lifted and appropriate support was given by writing instructors, these students may pass the English 1010 course the first time around and maintain a high level of motivation to continue with their education and graduate on time.

Research Question 2:

What can lessen the effects of such negative predispositions and propel students to achieve a mastery grade of 'C' or better?

It was determined that young adult Millennial students were seeking skillful, authoritative writing teachers who exemplify classroom awareness. Based on the related formulated meanings, respondents believed writing professionals didn't provide the feedback in a proper timeline to help them identify and overcome writing errors. Therefore, they turned in writing assignments in hopes of getting a passing grade of 'C' but were disappointed when their papers received low grades. Respondents wished for skillful, authoritative teachers who would provide the support needed to propel them forward in the course (Brookfield, 2006).

Research Question 3:

What teaching strategies and classroom management practices can college English 1010 instructors use to aid in building positive writing communities?

The literature was purposefully reviewed for solutions that could help build effective writing communities (Bland, Melton, Wells & Bigham, 2012; Burke, 2002; Brookfield, 2006; Carter, 2007; Chantrill, 2008; Costa & Garmston, 1985; Elbow, 1998; Falk & Blaylock, 2010; Freire & Macedo, 1921; Green, 2000; Holly, 2014; Holt et al., 2013; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Knowles, 1989; Knowles, 1989b; Knowles et al., 2007; Lacefield, 2014; Lindemann & Anderson, 2001; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; McLaughlin, 2010; Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004; Schon, 1987; Surowiecki, 2005; Valez, Cano, Whittington, & Wolf, 2011).

However, Charmaz (2006) believed more emphasis should be on the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of the individual researcher and that a researcher should advocate his or her own personal values, experiences, and priorities to enhance the study. Ormond (2009) surmised that a study should depend on a researcher's views about his or her experiences, situations, and relationships as embedded within the research. Therefore, the researcher relied heavily on respondents' descriptive written responses, collected from a Qualtrics Online Survey, and on the researcher's own views, values, beliefs, experiences, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies, along with concepts promulgated by experts in the field of adult education and educational psychology to put forth vital information for a guide on, "How to Build Effective Writing Communities in College." This information for a considered guide is twofold: 1) for lessening the negative effects of predispositions, and 2) for building upon the positive to

enhance the college writing experience. However, Theme 5: What Writing Instructors

Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students'

Predispositions toward Writing in College resulted in the production of information for a

guide useful for college composition teachers.

An Analysis for Developing a Guide: How to Build Effective Writing Communities in

College

The first step in developing this guide was to carefully assess the four transcripts;

24 significant statements were extracted with formulated meanings from Tables 3, 4, 5, 6,

and 7. The second step was to link the five themes, which resulted from arranging the

formulated clusters. The third step was to write a guide with suitable strategy types for

busy writing instructors who may not have the time to read a lengthy and complex book.

Instead, the guide is intended for instructors who have less than an hour to spare,

formatted as an easily read guide with 13 helpful tips for lessening the effects of negative

predispositions toward writing in first-year college composition courses. It will serve as

a resource to communicate with writing teachers, representing the voices of young adult

Millennial students who desire to be heard.

Linking Suitable Strategy Types to the Significant Statements and Five Themes

Table 8 Suitable Strategy Types for How to Build Effective Writing Communities

in College is an illustration of how the significant statements and five themes link to the

study's final purpose of the study. The final purpose of the study was to answer Research

Question 3: What teaching strategies and classroom management practices can college

English 1010 instructors use to aid in building positive writing communities?

Table 8

Suitable Strategy Types for How to Build Effective Writing Communities in College

Examples of Suitable Strategy Types for Building Effective Writing Communities in College	Significant Statements of the Student Participants Affected with Negative Predispositions	The Five Themes
1. Identifying students with Negative Predispositions?	Thinking that I will get a bad grade for it (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities toward Writing in College
	Apprehensive; my vocabulary and comprehension level" (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities to Write in College
	Thinking that I will make bad grades (Respondent 3: Written Response)	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities toward Writing in College
	Not having the mental, and writing skills to maintain academic standards (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities to Write in College
2. Breaking the Ice	When doubt and fear kick in and you stop believing in yourself and the motivation you had while writing goes downward and you feel as if your hard work was for nothing (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College
	I would be concerned about the level of comprehension needed to be successful in the course (Respondent 2: Written Responses).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College
	Thinking that I will make bad grades or not knowing what the topic is about can be an affect (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College

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	Bad grades can affect the confidence of a student and create writers block (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College
3. Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere	Writing long essays is what makes me uncomfortable (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	Writing assignments that require a lot of research, annotating and citations (Respondent 2: Written Responses).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	Telling me what was wrong (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	Not having the mental, and writing skills to maintain academic standards (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
4. Shifting to an Authoritative Teaching Practice	Show the students that you care and that you actually want them to succeed (Respondent 1: Written Response)	T: 5 What Writing Instructors Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students' predispositions toward writing in College?
	Provide as much reference materials as possible (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T: 5 What Writing Instructors Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students' Predispositions toward Writing in College?
	My teacher can show me ways to fix (Respondent 3: Written Response)	
	By taking into consideration each student cultural, economic affluence and spheres of influence (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T: 5 What Writing Instructors Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students' Predispositions toward writing in College?

5. Initiating Learning Incentives	Bad grades can affect you by not being able to graduate (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	I would be concerned about the level of comprehension needed to be successful in the course (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	I get a bad grade I feel as if my writing was terrible (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	A student should not be penalized for expressing thoughts but cant adequately present his or her thoughts in a grammatical format (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
6. Introducing the Course's Syllabus	Making the topic more interesting and explaining the topic better (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T: 5 What Writing Instructors Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students' Predispositions toward Writing in College?
	To have more assignments that involve subject matter that I am familiar with (Respondent 2: Written Response).	
	The writing course is the hardest (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T: 5 What Writing Instructors Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students' Predispositions toward Writing in College?
	The instructor becomes valuable to the student when identifying and complimenting the students on writing, and making positive comments and suggesting additional helpful pointers so that the writer gain confidence, and write more effectively (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T: 5 What Writing Instructors Can Do to Lessen the Negative Effects of Students' Predispositions toward Writing in College?
7. Discussing, Questions, and Concerns	I think that writing long essays is what makes me uncomfortable (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College

	I would be concerned about the level of comprehension needed to be successful in the course (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College
	Writing about my personal life makes me uncomfortable (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College
	Is not having the mental, and writing skills to maintain academic standards (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T 2: The Meaning of Negative Predispositions toward Writing in College
8. Listening Attentively	Bad grades will always effect negatively (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	Apprehensive. My vocabulary and comprehension level (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	Thinking that I will make bad grades (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
	Reluctance to seek help for basic skills to write (Respondent 4: Written Response)	T 4: Ten Identified Negative Predispositions
9. Creating Synergy in the Classroom	You stop believing in yourself and the motivation you had while writing goes downward (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities toward Writing in College
	Bad grades would affect my overall gpa (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities toward Writing in College
	Telling me what was wrong (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities toward Writing in College

	Instructors imply "call me if you need help". However, their demeanor that is given when seeking extra help is degrading and humiliating (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T 3: Negative Predispositions that Affected Students' Abilities toward Writing in College
10. Peer-Pairing Teaching and Group Work	You can see which areas that you are weak in and can be able to fix it (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	Another person read the paper first and offer input so that a student might have an opportunity to make corrections (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	Show me ways to fix (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	Suggesting additional helpful pointers so that the writer gain confidence, and write more effectively	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
11. Identifying Student Leaders in the Classroom	I like graded writing assignments honestly. They help you see and be able to correct your mistakes (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	Grading writing assignments are beneficial to me as they give me the practice I need to improve my writing skills (Respondent 1: Written Response). .	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	I think that those standards will be helpful to the student that is taking writing courses (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	I concur, regarding having to take a college course in writing based on the Georgia's State Board of	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers

	Education standard (Respondent 4: Written Responses).	
12. Writing Instructional Coaching	Not showing them how to improve on their mistakes they made on their assignment (Respondent 1: Written Assignment).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	Have the professor or another person read the paper first and offer input so that a student might have an opportunity to make corrections prior to handing the assignment in.	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	My teacher can show me ways to fix it instead of just telling me what was wrong (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	Take out one on one time with me so that I may understand my mistakes and correct them (Respondent 4: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
13. Avoiding an Authoritarian Teaching Practice	Just giving them work and writing assignments (Respondent 1: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	To have more assignments that involve subject matter that I am familiar with (Respondent 2: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	My teacher can show me ways to fix it instead of just telling me what was wrong (Respondent 3: Written Response).	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers
	Their demeanor that is given when seeking extra help is degrading and humiliating (Respondent 4: Written Response)	T: 1 The Need for Skillful Authoritative Writing Teachers

Narrative for a Potential Guide: How to Build Effective Writing Communities in College

How to Identify Students with Negative Predispositions?

College writing teachers can lessen the negative effects of students'

predispositions toward writing, but they first have to identify affected students (Chantrill,

2008; Lindemann & Anderson, 2001). It is important for writing instructors to

understand that negative predispositions are *real* to students. Data have proven that

students in an English 1010 class at a Technical System of Georgia College were affected

by negative predispositions toward writing. For example, students responded to the

survey question: What negative predisposition can affect your ability to write this

semester?

Lindemann and Anderson (2001) said that over time, students affected with

negative predispositions came to associate writing essays or research papers with bad

grades. Moreover, Lindemann and Anderson (2001) and McLaughlin (2010) advised on

ways to identify students with negative predispositions. They suggested giving a pre-

writing diagnosis. McLaughlin (2010) added that students affected by negative

predispositions would find spontaneous writing assignments uncomfortable; thus, when

writing teachers announce graded writing assignments on the spot, they will become

apprehensive and fearful.

Students affected by negative predispositions will also feel apprehensive writing

on unfamiliar topics. In this study, the word *apprehensive* was carefully analyzed; along

with other words such as *worried, uneasy, nervous, concerned, agitated, tense, afraid,*

scared, frightened, fearful. Based on the data collected, the researcher interpreted the

meaning of these statements and defined "negative predispositions" as: students'

premonitions, anxiety, or fear that something bad or unpleasant will happen in the course. Students often arrive on the first day of the semester feeling excited, and express a willingness to learn. Therefore, the challenge is to keep them excited and motivated throughout the semester.

Breaking the Ice

The week before a new semester, writing teachers must begin planning ways to make students feel comfortable (Green, 2000; Schon, 1987). This may require thinking out of the box. Writing teachers can consider introducing an ice breaker, playing games, or bringing in food. The goal is to break the tension in the classroom and to get students acquainted. Similar to a flight attendant who smiles, instructs passengers, and kindly explains the airline procedures, writing teachers will want to make students feel comfortable. Then, once the tension is eased, the teacher can begin with an opening presentation (Green, 2000; Schon, 1987). Another way to ease the tension is to decide upon a positive statement, quote, or a philosophy to represent the class—perhaps something similar to "quitting is not an option" or "failing is not an option" (Old English proverb). Positive statements can not only help break the ice, but can set the tone for a positive classroom atmosphere.

Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

Writing teachers can create a positive classroom environment early in the semester (Green, 2000). Once the teacher has decided upon a positive quote, statement, or philosophy, he or she should inscribe the positive quote, statement, or innovative philosophy on the class syllabus and within the Blackboard Learning online environment, if the college uses one. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for students; instead of

thinking about the negative, they can begin thinking about the positive. It also becomes

an agreement of sorts between the students and the instructor to support success (Green,

2000). Moreover, it will serve as a continuous reminder that the teacher can't give up on

his or her students. Further, it can help lessen negative predispositions. For the second

half of the course, writing instructors will explain the positive quote, statement, or

innovative philosophy and integrate it within both lessons and the classroom environment

(Carter, 2007). In this model, an instructor's goal is to ease students' anxiety and fears

within 30 minutes or before the class ends.

Shifting to an Authoritative Teaching Practice

Authentic, trusting, and caring. Following the explanation of the positive quote,

statement, or innovative philosophy, it is important that students see writing teachers as

authentic, trusting, and caring. All of us have a human side. Therefore, it is important

for students to see that we as educators are *authentic, trusting,* and *caring* (Brookfield,

2006). Doing so will require writing teachers to shift to an authoritative teaching practice

and abandon authoritarianism. In an authoritative teaching practice, instructors are

authentic, trusting, and caring; whereas, "an authoritarian teaching practice instructors

will impose their force by using institutional power" (Freire & Macedo, 1921, p. 127).

Freire and Macedo (1921) revealed that authoritative teachers can earn students'

respect and keep them engaged longer. Moreover, the *authoritative teaching practice* has

been highly praised by adult education experts, according to Holt et al. (2013). In order

to shift to an authoritative practice, writing instructors must be as transparent as possible.

Letting students know about your humble beginnings can bring about a connection with

your students. Students want to hear about why you decided to major in your specific

field of study. A teacher's story is important to students. It gives students a glimpse of their own future. For instance, I had an instructor who shared her humble beginnings as an adult educator. As a master's-level student, it gave me a glimpse into my future as an adult educator. Lindemann and Anderson (2001) and Chantrill (2008) believed students need to mentally see themselves passing the course, and they need to continuously hear positive affirmation.

Initiating Learning Incentives

Learning incentives can help build confidence and self-worth in adult learners (Bland, Melton, Wells & Bigham, 2012; Burke, 2002; Carter, 2007; Merriam et al., 2007). Burke (2002) and Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) explained that learning incentives are internal motivators that adult learners can find fulfilling. Subject-matter activities such as complex reading assignments, homework assignments, and other course work can become incentives to motivate students. In this context, learning incentives may involve bonus points built into the course's grading system to offset other scores (Green, 2000); these points can be earned through completing additional work that helps advance students' skills. To introduce such an incentive system, writing teachers should explain options for additional points while introducing the course's syllabus.

Most importantly, writing teachers should clearly explain that learning incentives are for students who are willing to take responsibility for their own learning. The learning incentives are in place for those students who have problems in one area but who are willing to do additional work to gain skills to improve their learning outcomes (Green, 2000). This will boost students' morale; merely knowing that learning incentives are built into the course's grading system may ease their minds about failing. For that

reason, writing teachers should wait to introduce the full syllabus until after they have explained the learning incentives or bonus points.

Introducing the Course's Syllabus

The course's syllabus is typically mandated by state institutions. Syllabi serve as templates for executing learning activities mandated by the state core competencies (TCSG, 2015). When introducing the course syllabus, explain the institution's role in mandating it, and explain the role of an instructor (Schon, 1987). With that background, students will not blame the writing instructor for adhering to state-mandated learning objectives. Moreover, this is an opportunity to demonstrate your authority as the expert in the field. Because a positive atmosphere has been created, students will welcome the information. This will set the bar for building an effective writing community and establish the writing instructor's expectations and goals for achieving a mastery grade of 'C' or better. Once the writing instructor has built a platform, express the expectations regarding attendance, class participation, late assignments, test makeups, etc.

Discussing Questions and Concerns

Once the syllabus has been introduced, writing teachers should repeat the semester theme, such as "quitting is not an option" or "failing is not an option." This will include expressing a willingness to meet each learner's individual learning needs. Pause for a moment and take a reflective stance, looking around the classroom at students' facial expressions (Brookfield, 2006). Following a 3-minute pause, open the floor for discussions, questions, or concerns about the syllabus. Writing teachers can feel confident in doing so because they have set a positive atmosphere. Even millennial

students will adhere to the demands outlined because they have seen an authentic, trusting, and caring person willing to help them to succeed (Howe & Strauss, 2007).

Listening Attentively

As students share their concerns or ask questions about the syllabus, writing instructors should listen attentively (Schon, 1987). As students express their concerns, teachers can either make mental notes or written notes in order to allow them to properly address individual concerns during the course of the class. If overly concerned students show signs of anxiety or fear, writing teachers may want to consider making a few adaptations to the syllabus where appropriate.

Teachers may consider implementing andragogy-based activities. Andragogy entails a collaborative approach with a shared focus (Dictionary of Human Resources, 2006; Knowles, 1989; Knowles, 1989b; Knowles et al., 2007); in these activities, the teacher and students collaborate to come up with appropriate learning assignments that will bring about fruitful gains.

Finally, if writing teachers have executed the plan properly, two things may happen. Firstly, if the introduction has been properly executed, those students who were in class the first day will take it upon themselves to find their peers who did not attend class; they will be enticed to spread the good news (Falk & Blaylock, 2010). Secondly, students will either build upon the positive atmosphere set by the teacher or try to tear it down. Therefore, writing instructors should continue building upon the positive foundations for students in the course; keep the discussions open and ensure a safe learning environment to stir a spirit of inquiry. Composition teachers will begin noticing their students are more talkative, asking questions and demonstrating a mindset to learn.

Creating Synergy in the Classroom

In 2004, Napier and Gershenfeld discussed the term "synergy" in the educational field. They endorsed the concept that people in large gatherings released a tremendous flow of synergy, based on the concept that two or more people are better than one. People stimulate others in group activities to supplement their own weaknesses and abilities although "the amount of the sum is not greater than the whole" (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004, p. 46). According to Surowiecki (2005), information is most useful when it is not placed in the hands of one person, but distributed across many students.

Researchers have also concluded that teacher commitments and peer support are key elements for building and stimulating effective learning communities. A learning strategy endorsed by Valez, Cano, Whittington, and Wolf (2011) endorsed peer-paired teaching and group work for sparking synergy in classrooms.

Peer Pairing Teaching and Group Work

Peer-paired teaching and group work can spark synergy in a classroom (Valez, Cano, Whittington, & Wolf, 2011). Peer-paired teaching and group work are ways to teach complex assignments. According to Valez et al. (2011), peer-paired teaching or group work inspired students to take the initiative or to volunteer for complex writing assignments and additional projects; they were more willing to do so while working in groups than when given an individual assignment. In addition, peer-paired teaching or group work encouraged social integration, which can motivate students to move toward self-directness. Valez et al. (2011) reported that the Millennial generation's learning increased when working in groups.

Identifying Student Leaders in the Classroom

Two weeks into the semester, the instructor's goal is to find leaders in the class. They are planted around the room; they just need to be found. Leaders are more talkative; they are often seen explaining something a teacher has said to those around them or to someone sitting on the other side of the classroom who just asked a question among peers but not openly to the teacher. After the writing teacher has identified leaders in the classroom, it is possible to determine how many groups to form. Keep all information confidential until after the pre-writing assessments have been graded. Then purposefully form groups based on students' writing strengths and weaknesses (Elbow, 1998), placing two or three, but not more than four, students in a group.

Peer-paired teaching lends itself to an environment in which students work in groups during instructional writing activities (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004; Valez et al., 2011). Peer-paired teaching or group work is useful for peer reviewing, assigned chapter readings, or group discussions. By placing student leaders in each group, the class can benefit from peer-paired teaching and group work, which may help a struggling writer reduce writing errors or overcome bad habits (Elbow, 1998). Two or three good writers can help proofread assignments. In addition, peer-paired teaching and group work can free the teacher to initiate instructional classroom coaching.

Writing Instructional Coaching

Johns Hopkins University outlined concepts on instructional educational coaching (Lacefield, 2014). Instructional educational coaching is a framework for effective mediation in the classroom. It focuses on self-directed learning at the guidance of the teacher (Perna, 2013). In this context, the term "instructional writing coaching" will be

used. This is a powerful tool for stimulating a positive writing environment. It can help undergird insecure writers in a diverse learning environment (Carter, 2007; Costa & Garmston, 1985; Holly, 2014). In addition, it's a way for a writing instructor to work side by side with students to encourage good writing practices. Specifically, by using peer-paired teaching practices and implementing a coaching mindset, teachers can work one-on-one to ensure individual learning needs are being met. Furthermore, instructional writing coaching can aid a teacher in understanding those students with personal problems, such as deciphering what may be going on in a student's memory process at a particular time (Ormond, 2009).

Respondents to the study made a number of significant statements regarding the benefits of supportive learning environments and coaching techniques:

> Further explain and take time to see if we understand. Show the students that you care and that you actually want them to succeed instead of just giving them work and writing assignments, grading it and not showing them how to improve on their mistakes they made on their assignment. We would also like to see that our instructor is an efficient writer because that gives us confidence that we are secure and are going to be o.k. (Respondent 1: Written Response)

> Provide as much reference materials as possible, also provide the option to have the professor or another person read the paper first and offer input so that a student might have an opportunity to make corrections prior to handing the assignment in. (Respondent 2: Written Response)

> My teacher can show me ways to fix it instead of just telling me what was wrong. (Respondent 3: Written Response)

Take out one on one time with me so that I may understand my mistakes and

correct them. (Respondent 4: Written Response)

Most important, the instructor becomes valuable to the student when identifying

and complimenting the students on writing, and making positive comments and

suggesting additional helpful pointers so that the writer gain confidence. and

write more effectively. (Respondent 4: Written Response)

Moreover, Costa and Robert (2002) reported that under the auspices of

instructional educational coaching, teachers become less prescriptive in their attitudes

toward students, and students become more in charge of their learning and their lives.

This technique is an excellent way for writing teachers to work closely with students

affected by negative predispositions. Using the coaching approach will permit writing

teachers to shift from the role of teacher to that of facilitator. In the long run,

instructional writing coaching can encourage stronger teacher–student relationships

(Costa & Robert, 2002). Remember, though, that before instructional writing coaching

can work effectively in a diverse learning environment, students affected with negative

predispositions need to feel a connection to the environment; they must feel safe and

included (Cartwright, 1955; Costa & Garmston, 1985; Holly, 2014). Thus, a positive

learning environment must be established before these greater changes to technique can

be successfully implemented.

Five Keys: Becoming an Effective Writing Coach

Five keys can help you develop as an effective instructional writing coach in the

classroom:

1. Listen: Listen first to understand, then listen to be understood. Professional writing teachers must actively listen to their students in order to build trusting relations.

2. Be positive: Positive language can encourage a student to at least try. It is critical for professional writing teachers to understand and implement positive language aspects such as pitch, tone, and volume when communicating with this sensitive group.

3. Be caring: Professional writing teachers should display a caring attitude, one signaling genuineness and honesty.

4. Practice self-development: Professional writing instructors should continue to perfect their teaching methodologies and philosophical views by staying abreast of new theories, strategies, and research topics on developing and improving written communication skills at college.

5. Be a guide: Teachers should help students to set realistic learning goals and then follow up by counseling those students on their progress so they will know exactly what is expected of them in the course.

Finally, to be an effective writing coach, a professional writing teacher want to provide specific but positive feedback—not just to your students who are affected by negative predispositions, but to all students. The goal is to give feedback on how well or poorly your students performed on assignments, but such feedback must be given by positive affirmation. The positive feedback can be corrective, but it must be given verbally or in writing. Effective coaching can offer students a flexible solution for fulfilling their writing goals.

Avoiding an Authoritarian Teaching Practice

Writing teachers should avoid an authoritarian teaching practice. According to Holt, Freire and Illich (2013), an *authoritarian* teaching practice is one in which writing teachers impose their will by sheer force or by using their institutional power. An example of an authoritarian writing teacher is one who expels from their class students who have stopped participating or who grades their assignments differently.

Brookfield (2006) advised teachers to maintain a professional attitude in the classroom at all times. As writing teachers, we will surely encounter and teach students affected by negative predispositions. In such situations, a teacher can become intensely frustrated, particularly while teaching new concepts, similar to Malamud at Oregon State University (Chantrill, 2008). Several writing teachers have reported experiencing undue stress trying to teach certain students (Chantrill, 2008; Holt et al., 2013). Knowing that stress is bound to occur at some point, if a writing teacher feels overwhelmed or frustrated, he or she must take a deep breath and repeat the positive quote, statement, or philosophy that was chosen at the beginning of the semester. This statement isn't just for the students; it's for us as well.

Implications

In order to lessen the negative effects of students' negative predispositions toward writing in first-year composition courses in college, the study added a narrative for a potential guide, "How to Build Effective Writing Communties in College." The narrative includes thirteen suitable strategy types for lessening the effects of negative predispositions toward writing. The narrative identifies negative predispositions that are often experienced by first-year college students. It goes on to describe and identify the

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ten negative predispositions and suggests thirteen alternative approaches to building effective writing communities in colleges.

Now that significant statements of respondents affected with negative predispositions and related formulated meanings have produced evidence regarding this phenomenon, writing instructors can begin building upon the positive to lessen the effects of negative predispositions. Adult and career education programs and college communities as a whole may use the information to better serve such students. The information may also be useful for staff development training in other disciplines serving first-year college students.

Now that a list of negative predispositions has been identified, writing teachers may use the information for modeling classroom awareness. Given a working definition of negative predispositions and examples of such attitudes, composition teachers and administrators may begin strategic planning to allocate funds for creating innovation programs and introducing more one-one-one support; they may also consider adjusting the college curricula to not only perfect learning for young adult Millennial students, (Guyton, 2011) but to also perfect learning for all generational learners they serve. With this level of information, writing instructors can plan, prepare, and position themselves to create effective and meaningful classroom experiences to stir the spirit of inquiry and motivate students toward an enjoyable path to good writing (Quigley, 1997).

The Technical College System of Georgia's 22 campuses have data to help them make the appropriate decisions to keep students in adult and career education programs and to keep students from walking out on the valuable opportunities education can afford them. By applying this data and the suggestions, they may begin to see speedy mastery

of competency skills, a reduction in achievement gaps, a reduction in time spent in college, and an increase in retention rates (CCR, 2014; Dobrin, 2015; TCSG, 2015, Southeast Symposium). Far beyond Georgia, institutions may benefit from this systematic investigation into the meaning of negative predispositions toward writing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the goal was threefold: (1) to investigate the meaning of negative predispositions based on students' perceptions, (2) to determine how such negative predispositions affect a student's ability to develop and improve written communication skills at college, and (3) to produce a descriptive data analysis based on the student participants' descriptive written responses to six questions. The above three objectives were met contributing the following to the knowledge in this field.

This study brought forth the meaning of negative predispositions based on students' perceptions. This list includes:

1. Identified ten negative predispositions.

2. Gathered information to aid professional writing instructors on: "How to Build Effective Writing Communities in College;" information that can be used to lessen the negative effects of writing predispositions; insights generated that others in the field of math, or beyond may use to aid their students

3. Carved a niche for empowering, motivatng, and inspiring students to achieve mastery grades of 'C' or better in disciplinary courses in order to help them graduate on time.

4. Provided a research basis for further work and tested proven effective

   techniques, innovative adult learning strategies, and classroom management

   practices for provoking synergy, creating a positive classroom environment,

   and creating safe learning environments for writing.

Recommendations for Future Research

This narrative phenomenological study has only revealed the tip off the iceberg; it has shown a need for future researchers to explore deeper. This study exposed a real-world-problem. It produced pertinent information that can help build effective writing communities to lessen the debilitating effects of negative predispositions; in hope, that students can develop and improve written communication skills in an English 1010 course. More research efforts should focus on how students' cultural and economic backgrounds affect their ability to develop and improve written communication skills in college. Another possibility for future research is to conduct a study that focuses on positive predispositions to determine the impact and significance that these positive predispositions have on Millennial students as they complete first-year writing courses.

As we embark upon a new Millennium, with a new generation pursuing higher education, we must do all we can to make our world of education better. We must join our forces to help our students write with confidence. We must continue to explore topics on students' cultural backgrounds and there affects. In addition, a recommendation for a mixed methods protocols, meanwhile, opens the door for collecting both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (close-ended) data in response to a research topic's base questions or hypothesis (Creswell, 2014).

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APPENDIX A:

Institutional Review Board Exemption Certificate

APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board Exemption Certificate

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
for the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 03431-2016   **INVESTIGATOR:** LaRonce Hendricks

PROJECT TITLE: *A Phenomenological Study: An Investigation into the Meaning of Negative Predispositions*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption Category 2. You may begin your study immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

☒ *If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.*

Elizabeth W. Olphie   *01/26/2017*   *Thank you for submitting an IRB application.*
Elizabeth W. Olphie, IRB Administrator   Date   *Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-259-5045.*

Revised: 06.02.16

APPENDIX B:

Initial Letter of Consent from Gwinnett Technical College

APPENDIX B: Initial Letter of Consent to Gwinnett Technical College

LaRonce M. Hendricks
237 Annie Mae Drive
Vidalia, Georgia 30474
August 4, 2016

Dr. Victoria Seals
Vice President of Academic Affairs
Gwinnett Technical College
5150 Sugarloaf Parkway
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043

Dear Dr. V. Seals,

I am writing to ask you for your assistance. As part of my doctoral studies at Valdosta State University, I would like permission to recruit participants for a research project that will be approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This research project is entitled "A Narrative Phenomenological Study: An Investigation into the Meaning of Predispositions toward Writing." I am interested in interviewing eight first-year students between ages 18 and 23 to learn about academic experiences among college students taking an English 1010 course.

As you know, writing can be challenging for some students because writing requires more skills than other courses (Spivey, 2006). Researchers believe that predispositions are affecting the student's ability to communicate using written method in composition courses in academic programs (Chantrill, 2008; Lindemann, 2001). Predispositions are psychological barriers from years of copious red ink marks given by the teacher's comments on graded school assignments. For some students, writing represents failure, the notion that "teachers have always found fault with my writing" (Lindemann, 2001, p. 15).

This study intends to determine how predispositions may be affecting a student's ability to develop and improve written communication skills in the first year of college. It will produce data for composition teachers that may be used to help retain students in adult and career education programs and for keeping students from walking out of composition writing courses. It may help protect them from losing the valuable opportunities that higher education programs can afford them.

With your permission, I would like to begin recruitment in August 2016, in the fall semester. A copy of the Valdosta State University's IRB consent letter will be forwarded to your attention. For more information, please contact me at either: (912) 245-2052 or lmhendricks@valdostastate.edu.

Respectfully submitted,

LaRonce M. Hendricks, Doctoral Candidate, Valdosta State University

APPENDIX C:

Initial Letter of Request to Gwinnett Technical College

APPENDIX C: Initial Approval Letter of GTC

GWINNETT
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

LAWRENCEVILLE | ALPHARETTA-NORTH FULTON

January 10, 2017

Ms. LaRonce Hendricks
Leadership Doctoral Candidate
Valdosta State University
Valdosta, GA 31698

Dear Ms. Hendricks,

I am writing regarding your study, "A Narrative Phenomenological Study: An Investigation into the Meaning of Negative Predispositions," a study designed to determine how negative predispositions affect a student's ability to develop and improve written communication skills in an English 1010 course.

This letter confirms that Gwinnett Technical College (GTC) grants permission for you to conduct a study with a minimum of ten currently enrolled Gwinnett Tech students enrolled in English 1010 and are between the ages of 18 and 24. In an effort to facilitate your work, GTC will make the appropriate students' emails available to you.

It is our understanding that this letter will facilitate IRB approval from your institution and that our office will receive a copy of the institution's approval letter when it becomes available.

Please remain in contact with Dr. Carla Morelon, Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, via email (cmorelon@gwinnetttech.edu) as the study progresses.

Sincerely,

Dr. Julie Post
Vice President of Student Affairs

APPENDIX D:

The Recruitment Flyer

Research Study
Students on the Spring 2017
English 1010 Roster
Looking for volunteers ages 18-24 to participate in a study!!!

Contact:
Researcher: LaRonce M. Hendricks
Valdosta State University Student
Email:lmhendricks@valdosta.edu
Phone Number: (912)245-2052

Subject?   Writer's block
Verbs?   Nouns?

Afraid to ask questions?
Predicate?

Embarrassed?
Don't know what to write?

Confused?
Sentence Structure?

APPENDIX E:

Qualtrics Survey Protocol

APPENDIX E: Qualtrics Survey Protocol

*You are being asked to participate in a research study entitled **"A Narrative Phenomenological Study: An Investigation into the Meaning of Negative Predispositions"**, which is being conducted by **LaRonce Hendricks**, a student at Valdosta State University. The purpose of this study is to determine how negative predispositions affected a student's ability to develop and improve written communication skills in an English1010 course.*

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The risks associated with this study are no ***foreseeable risks to participants.*** There are no benefits **that you will receive from this study.** Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your *grades in school.*

This research study is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be between ages 18 and 24 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation in the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are between ages 18 and 24.

 Students who are on the Spring 2017 English 1010 Roster:

If you have writer's block!

If you are afraid to ask questions in class!

If you don't know what to write!

Subject * Verbs* Prepositions* Confuse

You will want to participate in this study!!!

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to LaRonce Hendricks at lmhendricks@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-259-5045 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Gwinnett Technical College has approved this research in support of the student's doctoral research. GTC, however, is not affiliated with the student and has had no involvement with the questions or administering of the questions involved in the study. Should you, as a GTC student, have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact the student's dissertation chair (see the contact information above) or the GTC contact (Dr. Carla Morelon, cmorelon@gwinnetttech.edu).

Predisposition, as is often defined, as *"A tendency to hold a particular attitude, or act in a particular way"* (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2016). According to Chantrill (2008) and Gabriel (2014), some freshman students panicked when they were told that they must take an English course. Some students affected by negative predispositions emotionally detached themselves from courses or stop participating altogether (Elias, 1995; Holly, 2015).

Participants please take a few minutes to complete this survey. This is not a graded writing assignment. The researcher is collecting information to create effective writing environments for all students. This is an opportunity for you to express in writing your feelings or attitudes about learning to write in an English 1010 course. Again, this research study is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary, Lastly, your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your grades at GTC.

APPENDIX F:

Survey Questions

APPENDIX F: Survey Questions

1. What is your opinion about graded writing assignments, and how did any bad grade affect your ability to write?

2. What can an instructor do to lessen your effects of negative predispositions?

3. What is your opinion about having to develop and improve your communication skills to write by the Georgia's State Board of Education standard?

4. How did you feel having to take a writing composition course this semester?

5. What writing assignment makes you feel uncomfortable?

6. What negative predispositions do you think can affect your ability to write this semester?