CONTEXTUALIZATION AND BASIC WRITING:

A THREE-FOLD CASE STUDY IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on Contextualization, Basic Writing (BW) and Professional

Development (PD). Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a teaching and

learning strategy designed to address the problem of remediation by increasing student

interest, engagement, retention and success. Mazzeo (2008) defines CTL as:

> A diverse family of instructional strategies designed to more seamlessly link the
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> learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing
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> teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in a specific context that
>
> is of interest to the student. (p. 4)

CTL, in this three-fold case study, was explored largely in relation to the instruction of

BW skills with respect to three instructional methods: *contextualized instruction,*

integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized instruction. To

accomplish this, three case studies were implemented; each case study involved three

participants: a primary participant, a secondary participant and the doctoral candidate. As

for the main focus of this study, two questions were raised: what is faculty (and student)

experience with CTL and BW combined with PD, and what is the subsequent response of

faculty in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment? To address these

questions, this study had two concurrent phases: individualized and organic PD and the

actual implementation of the study by the participants. This dissertation, therefore,

addresses the following: introductory material; a review of the literature on CTL, BW and

PD; an explanation of the methodology; one case study in relation to contextualized

instruction; one case study in relation to integrated contextualized instruction and one

case study involving embedded contextualized instruction. Finally, this dissertation

includes reflections on the study in relation to the literature on CTL, BW and PD, as well

as the current and future implications for research and practice.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

One of the most significant problems facing community colleges today is related

to the number of students who require remediation, students who are not college-ready.

Although there may be any number of reasons for this phenomenon, if these

underprepared students are to not only attend college but to also graduate, something

must be done to bridge this ability gap between high school and college. To date,

community colleges all across the nation have instituted a wide-range of developmental

education programs with varying degrees of limited success; this is most likely because

the problems students manifest in these programs are much the same as they were in high

school and probably for many of the same reasons. This is less true when students have

been in the workforce and are returning to college at an older age.

Unfortunately, almost 50% of all community college students drop out, often

during the first year of college. This conclusion is shared by studies performed by Jaggers

and Xu in 2010 and 2011. They looked at community college students in the states of

Washington and Virginia and discovered that 25% of those students dropped out during

and after the first semester, while of those who remained, 20% more dropped out after the

second semester (CCRC Community College Research Center, n.d., Community College

FAQs, Community College Enrollment and Completion, What is the rate of student

persistence at Community Colleges?).

Determining the reasons why so many drop out is difficult. Here is a list of

potential reasons derived from a student survey for a tenure-track project and study I

performed (for Olive-Harvey College, One of the Seven City Colleges of Chicago) that

looked at the impact of Contextualization, Teaching and Learning (CTL) on student interest, engagement, retention and success:

> Depending on the student population and the factors/problems/distractions associated with their geographical location (in this case, an urban environment), these problems can include family responsibilities and work, financial struggles, dysfunctional family dynamics, relationship problems, lack of college preparation (manifested not only in knowledge of subject matter but also in knowledge of how to be a student), time management issues, lack of motivation, lack of discipline, lack of perceived relevance of developmental subject matter, negative attitudes, attendance issues and a variety of technological and social distractions. It is also important to note that how students perceive their own abilities and whether or not they enjoy college are also contributing factors. Beyond all of these factors related to students, there is also the real possibility of a lack of quality instruction, ineffective developmental education programs and such larger societal issues as poverty, racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, homophobia, crime (especially gang violence) and drug and alcohol abuse (Given, 2014, pp.23-24 & pp. 33-46).

These are all potential contributing factors/problems/distractions which must be considered. Not surprisingly, the outcome of such problems is a need for remediation that – due also to the additional time and money required for such developmental classes – is an obstacle that many students fail to overcome. The problem of remediation, therefore, is manifested in a lack of student interest, engagement, retention and success, ultimately resulting in lower graduation rates as well.

Purpose of the Study

Because it is faculty, and not students, who must develop, implement and facilitate all teaching practices used to address the problem of remediation, the purpose of this study is to ascertain if the utilization of the pedagogical strategy of CTL to teach basic writing (BW) skills combined with professional development (PD) for faculty – can increase faculty interest, engagement, retention and success. This increase is important and the reason it is important can be expressed as follows: when faculty do better, students do better; and when students do better, faculty, consequently, do even better. It is a never-ending circle of reciprocity that begins with instructors and increasingly improves the performance of both faculty and students.

Therefore, the research questions for this dissertation are: what is faculty (and student) experience with CTL and BW combined with PD for faculty, and what is the subsequent response of faculty in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment? It is important to note, however, that these research questions arose out of the aforementioned tenure-track project in relation to CTL and whether it can increase student interest, engagement, retention and success (Given, 2014). The results of that study answered the question in the affirmative, but it noted that the diverse group of strategies that make up CTL (see definition for CTL in the Abstract and the Definition of Terms section later in this chapter) must be chosen wisely; indeed, these strategies must be chosen based not only on research and best practices, but also on the factors/problems/distractions mentioned in the Statement of the Problem section at the beginning of this chapter. In other words, the problems that distract students must also be addressed if CTL is to increase student interest, engagement, retention and success.

Theoretical Perspective

The pre-suppositional stance of this study is Constructivism, a student-centered theoretical perspective that holds that all knowledge is socially constructed. To better understand this stance, a brief history is in order. According to the WNET Education website, many believe that the roots of Constructivism can be traced back to the time of Socrates, most notably in relation to the method of Socratic Questioning. This method was designed to encourage students to question their own views of the world and how they make sense of it. In other words, the method is designed to develop critical thinking skills. However, what we today understand as Constructivism directly evolved from the work of such notable philosophers as Jean Piaget and John Dewey. For example, the work of Piaget was inspired by the question, how does knowledge grow? His answer to this question became foundational to our understanding of Constructionism. He believed "that humans learn through the construction of progressively complex logical structures, from infancy to adulthood" (Concept to Classroom: Constructionism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning, n.d., What is the History of Constructionism and How has it Changed Over Time?, para. 2, Buzzwords 1), while Dewey emphasized that this learning happens best through experience (Concept to Classroom: Constructionism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning, What is the History of Constructionism and How has it Changed Over Time?, para. 2, Buzzwords 1). Both Piaget and Dewey utilized the Socratic Method.

Other philosophers have also contributed to our understanding of Constructionism. Most notable on this list are: Leo Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner. Of these, it was Vygotsky who first emphasized the social aspect of learning, calling it the

"zone of proximal learning." By this he meant that "students solve problems beyond their actual developmental level (but within their level of potential development) under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Concept to Classroom: Constructionism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning, n.d., What is the History of Constructionism and How has it Changed Over Time?, para. 6,). Bruner, on the other hand, focused on curriculum change utilizing "the notion that learning is an active, social process in which students construct new ideas or concepts based on their current knowledge" (Concept to Classroom: Constructionism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning, What is the History of Constructionism and How has it Changed Over Time?, para. 7). Both these perspectives echo and further the work of their predecessors, Piaget and Dewey. When all four perspectives are taken into account, combined and understood, we definitely have a clearer view of what Constructionism is today.

With respect to CTL as a teaching and learning strategy that fits into the theoretical stance of Constructionism, it is no surprise that CTL holds that students learn best not only by constructing knowledge within their own minds (through experiencing and understanding the relevance of developmental subject matter), but also by interacting with their classmates and teachers in relation to what they are learning. It is likewise no surprise that learning in the classroom cannot occur without the guidance or facilitation of an instructor. In other words, because learning, or the social construction of knowledge, is not teacher-centered, but rather, student centered, the instructor must create an environment that is conducive to learning. This includes how the subject matter is taught and how the content is adapted to encourage student interest, engagement, retention and success. CTL, therefore, not only grows out of the theoretical stance of

Constructionism, but because it addresses the problem of remediation, it is also one of its most significant manifestations in the world of education today.

Definition of Terms

The main term used in this study is *Contextualization*. Although it has many definitions and applications, the definition chosen for this study, as stated in the Abstract, is as follows:

> A diverse family of instructional strategies designed to more seamlessly link the learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in a specific context that is of interest to the student. (Mazzeo et al, 2008, p. 4)

More is said in Chapter Two (Contextualization, Basic Writing and Professional Development: A Three-Fold Review of the Literature) about this definition and why it was chosen. Other definitions will also be given. The simplest definition, however, is the idea of "learning by doing," which was popularized by John Dewey in the early twentieth century. Three other terms related to the instructional methods for CTL are used. These terms are *contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction, and embedded contextualized instruction*. I have added the term, *contextualized*, to the last two terms for the purpose of clarifying that each strategy is a form of CTL and its instruction.

The first of the three instructional methods for CTL is contextualized instruction. Perin (2011) defines it as follows: "Contextualized basic skills instruction involves the teaching of academic skills against a backdrop of specific subject matter to which such skills need to be applied, and is taught by reading, writing, and math instructors" (p. 1). The point of such instruction is to find a "backdrop of specific subject matter" that is of

interest to students, in order to increase student interest, engagement, retention and success. In other words, although these developmental education classes are set up to teach students basic skills in reading, writing or math, the focus of these classes is on a topic of interest, something students will find relevant to one of the following: their personal lives, their education and/or their future careers. Contextualized Instruction can also be implemented to varying degrees at the discretion of the instructor.

Some examples are: a Reading class in which reading assignments are related to a specific career field. For example, students in Nursing might read about the lives of nurses, their interaction with patients and doctors, or they might read about a variety of health issues. This could also be enhanced by a service learning experience related to the readings. Readings could also be related to societal or personal issues, and perhaps most importantly, reading strategies are taught. A Math class, for example, might learn specific types of math problems utilized in a particular career field. In other words, the type of math that an automotive technician might use, the type of math utilized in the field of construction or the type of math that accountants use. These are just a few examples, but whatever the example is, it could also have a service learning component. And finally, for an English class, the possibilities are almost limitless. The focus of the class can be anything ranging from education to career development or from social/political issues to personal issues. Students will write about these topics and also learn BW skills in the process. A service learning component could likewise be included.

The second of the three instructional methods for CTL is integrated contextualized instruction. It is defined by Pearson, Moje, and Greenleaf, 2010:

Integrated basic skills instruction is the incorporation of reading, writing, or math instruction into the teaching of content. Integrated instruction is taught by discipline-area instructors, with the academic skills serving as a means of developing critical thinking about disciplinary content (qtd. in Perin, 2011, p. 1).

The purpose of such instruction is to teach basic skills in reading, writing or math; however, the focus of these classes is a disciplinary subject. The main reason why this integration is necessary is because students often do not transfer what was "learned" in relation to basic skills in reading, writing or math to discipline area subject classes. Some examples of integrated contextualized instruction are: a Chemistry class in which students are also taught the type of math necessary for particular experiments and projects, a Sociology class in which students are taught specific reading strategies to be used when reading the textbook and other assigned readings, and finally, an Art class in which students are required to write essays about art – but need further instruction related to grammatical issues in their writing. It should also be noted that integrated contextualized instruction, like contextualized instruction, can have a service learning component and be implemented to varying degrees at the discretion of the instructor.

The third of the three instructional methods for CTL is embedded contextualized instruction. This is simply an adaptation of both contextualized and integrated contextualized instruction; whereas both the contextualized method and the integrated contextualized method are developed, implemented and facilitated by the basic skills instructor and the discipline area instructor respectively, the embedded method combines both. In other words, the basic skills instructor is "embedded" in the disciplinary subject instructor's class. This can be done either physically or digitally. The purpose remains the

same as the two other teaching methods – to increase student interest, engagement, retention and success. Also, it can have a service learning component and be implemented to varying degrees at the discretion of the instructor.

Examples of this method are rare, but most argue that learning communities are representative of this strategy; I would argue, however, that being "embedded" means to be in the same classroom – again, either physically or digitally. In my mind, learning communities are more of an example of collaboration because two teachers are working together, and the dual subject matter is considered to be of equal importance. When basic skills related to reading, math or writing are embedded, they are supplemental. The best examples are similar to what I did for the previously mentioned tenure-track project and what I did for this study. For the tenure-track project, I was given 30 minutes once a week to do instruction in grammar for a Supply Chain Management class in Olive-Harvey's Transportation, Distribution and Logistics program (TDL). For this dissertation, I created power-point videos in which I taught various issues related to writing; these were utilized by two discipline area subject matter instructors to address the writing issues their students were struggling with. These videos (30 altogether) are only 2 to 2 and ½ minutes long. With this method of instruction, the possibilities are limitless and very little is required of these faculty members – beyond playing videos of their choice in class and encouraging students to view the videos outside of class – thus freeing faculty up to fully address the main subject matter of their classes.

A History of Contextualization

A better understanding of CTL also involves a brief history. The idea of learning by doing has been around as long as humans have been on the planet, and one could even

argue that animals likewise learn by doing. However, as far as the history of educational theory is concerned, it was John Dewey who first developed this concept into what is known as Experiential Learning. It is, in effect, the precursor of what we know today as CTL. Born out of the conflict between what was considered "traditional" education and what was considered "progressive," Dewey's ideas revolutionized the way we look at teaching and learning. This was best expressed in his well-known work, *Experience and Education* (1938) – a critique of both Traditional and Progressive Education.

The gist of his critique was that Progressive Education overreacted to the paradigm of Traditional Education, and so in contrast depended too much on the student, the student's interest and impulse, to determine the subject matter and the process of education. On the other hand, Traditional Education depended too much on tradition and cultural heritage; it was the teacher who determined the subject matter and the process of education, while student interest and impulse were not taken into consideration (p. 9). Dewey, however, argued for a more centrist position avoiding these two polar opposites (p. 10). In the Preface to *Experience and Education* (1938), he argues that simply rejecting the traditional paradigm for education is not enough; a new theory of teaching and learning must be developed and tested, and unlike Traditional Education and its unquestioning reliance on the knowledge of the past, educators should Socratically question, empirically test and experientially build on the resulting knowledge. Largely, Dewey's philosophy of education was to be pragmatic. It was not, however, a total rejection of the knowledge of the past, as many of his critics claimed. What, therefore, was Dewey's definition of Experiential Education?

This is a difficult question to answer simply because Dewey had a tendency to bury such definitions in the mire of philosophical inquiry. Taking *Experience and Education* (1938), therefore, as a whole, it would appear that Dewey valued experience if the quality of that experience was educative rather than, as he termed it, mis-educative. Educative experiences require reflection on the part of the student and have to have continuity and interaction. By continuity he meant that future experiences are the consequence of all past and present experiences, as well as decisions (Dewey, p. 35). By interaction he meant that all experiences are composed of objective and subjective conditions (p. 42). Combined, continuity and interaction (all experiences and conditions) have the net effect of what Dewey called Experiential Education.

Unfortunately, perhaps due to Dewey's critiques of both Traditional and Progressive Education – combined with the resulting confusion as to where he actually stood, many of Dewey's ideas are yet to be fully embraced and many classrooms of today still practice some of the debilitating elements of the traditional paradigm of education. Dewey's comments in the Preface to *Experience and Education* (1938) say it all:

How many students, for example, were rendered callous to ideas, and how many lost the impetus to learn because of the way in which learning was experienced by them? How many acquired special skills by means of automatic drill so that their power of judgment and capacity to act intelligently in new situations was limited? How many came to associate the learning process with ennui and boredom? How many found what they did learn so foreign to the situations of life outside the school as to give them no power of control over the latter? How many came to

associate books with dull drudgery, so that they were "conditioned" to all but

flashy-reading matter? (p. 12)

To the degree, therefore, that this traditional paradigm is still in effect, to that degree the

results are also predictive of the problem addressed by this dissertation – the number of

students who require remediation. Students who experience traditional education are not

prepared for college, and so this lack of preparation is manifested in a lack of student

interest, engagement, retention and success.

But Dewey's ideas were to rise again. According to *Contextualized Teaching and*

Learning: A Faculty Primer (2009), CTL, as it is understood today, "re-entered" the

education and training repertoire of both private and public entities in the 1960s. It was

known as Functional Context Education (FCE). At that time, its use had to do with the

need to move employees toward workplace literacy in a more timely and effective

manner; the same goal was later applied to students and the need to move them to their

educational goals and careers. This was accomplished by focusing on specific job or

career content, as well as literacy skills relevant to the job or career (Baker, Hope &

Karandjeff, p. 7). Closer examination of FCE, however, reveals contextualization is

simply one component among many in this educational strategy, although highly

significant. One of the most familiar names in this field is Tom Sticht, an international

consultant in Adult Education. He notes in *Functional Context Education: Making*

Learning Relevant (1997), that this practice was actually inspired by military research in

the contextual education and training of soldiers, and the application of that research over

a 50 year period dating back to World War II (p. 5). The lessons learned there and in all

subsequent wars eventually caught the attention of adult literacy educators wanting to solve the problem of remediation for both the workplace and colleges.

Another factor that inspired FCE was the Civil Rights Movement and President Johnson's War on Poverty, both of which sought, among other things, to address workers and workplace issues. This played a significant role in motivating educators to develop and implement this practice. The motivation was a desire to contribute to the process of making a difference, at that time, largely in the lives of African Americans, as well as the poor in general. During this same period, the Vietnam War was also influential in the implementation of FCE; however, due to the increasing complexity of military service and what soldiers would have to know and understand, soldiers who could read at a higher-grade level were given a different type of training than what the military had previously implemented. In effect, for these soldiers, more emphasis was placed on critical thinking in relation to their respective jobs. Those who read at a lower-grade level did not receive this more advanced type of FCE. However, because studies showed that calling a program "remedial" had a negative impact on learners, all programs were referred to as job training (Sticht, p. 8). Studies also showed that this advanced type of FCE was more effective than what the military had been using (Sticht, p. 7).

FCE was also inspired by decades of research in behavioral and cognitive science related to "individualized, self-paced, competency-based education, and human information processing concepts" (Sticht, 1997, p. 6), rather than the more traditional philosophy and practice of Adult Education during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Standardized testing at the time likewise agreed with what the research was saying: a focus on jobs increases transfer of learning to the workplace, and readings relevant to the workplace

increase employee vocabulary and comprehension of workplace tasks (Sticht, p. 6).The

actual term, Functional Context Education, was first coined in 1960 as the Functional

Context Method. This term was utilized to describe the teaching and learning methods the

military developed for vocational purposes; it was soon applied to workplace training and

the term we use today, Contextualization, was adopted by educators in order to make the

method more applicable to education, specifically in relation to adult literacy (Sticht,

1997, p. 5). To implement this strategy, a curriculum development tool was developed to

merge the instruction of occupational content and vocational skills. It was called Literacy

Task Analysis; however, in many ways it is simply another name for Contextualization.

According to Mikulecky (1985), here is how it is defined:

> Literacy task analysis profiles the specific reading, writing, computational, and
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> communication competencies required for different occupational positions. These
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> competencies are then incorporated into a contextualized curriculum, with literacy
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> skills taught in the context of specific job applications. (qtd. in Baker, E. D.,
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> Hope, L., & Karandjeff, K., 2009, p. 7)

Although developed in the 1980s, literacy task analysis did not become a standard part of

FCE until the 1990s.

Another significant development in the 1990s was a move toward actual

legislation that promotes contextual learning. According to Hull (1993), the following

concepts were highlighted by the Department of Labor in a commission report from the

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS): "join knowledge and

skills; learn abstract concepts by doing practical activities; connect schoolwork with the

real world" (qtd. in Baker, Hope, and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 7). Eight years later, the main

publication (*Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance*) of the same commission continued to highlight CTL as "a key instructional strategy" (qtd. in Baker, Hope, and Karandjeff, p. 7). This emphasis on CTL was also echoed in the National School to Work Initiatives Act and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The latter even required community colleges to "integrate academic and vocational education for improved student performance and outcomes" (qtd. in Baker, Hope, and Karandjeff, p. 7). This legislation, enacted in 1998, was also renewed eight years later in 2006. Johnson (2002) likewise claimed that CTL renders the notion of applied academics obsolete – simply because it does not encompass all that CTL has the capacity to impact and perhaps even revolutionize when it comes to learning that can actually transfer to the workplace.

Increasingly, therefore, community colleges have been experimenting to varying degrees with CTL. This is evident in studies like those performed by Grubb & Kraskouskas, 1992; Grubb, 1995; Grubb & Badway, 1999. The California Community College system is another notable example, as well as colleges in Massachusetts and a variety of other states. These will be addressed in the review of the literature on CTL in Chapter Two. From this body of work, it is clear that "researchers have performed extensive investigation of these approaches and have developed standards and frameworks for this kind of integration as well as identified the benefits and limitations from [the] view of these practitioners" (Baker, Hope, and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 8). CTL, therefore, is an educational strategy that intrigues many educators. It also may hold promise for fulfilling the legacy of John Dewey within the community college system in order to address, and perhaps even solve, the problem of remediation.

Overview of Dissertation

The organization for this dissertation is designed to not only introduce the reader to CTL and its use in relation to the instruction of BW skills, but to also make a strong connection between this practice and PD. PD, however, is a means to an end – to implement and study this educational strategy and to ask what faculty (and student) experience with CTL, BW and PD is. Likewise, it also asks if CTL and the instruction of BW skills combined with PD increases faculty interest, engagement, retention and success. Following the Introduction (Chapter One), which orients the reader to CTL, a review of the literature on CTL, BW and PD (Chapter Two) will provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the two aforementioned research questions, providing foundational and background information that facilitated and guided this three-fold case study. A chapter on methodology (Chapter Three) will indicate how the study was accomplished, and a number of chapters (Chapters Four, Five, and Six) will relate three separate case studies, all of which are reflected on via a review of the literature on CTL, BW and PD (Chapter Seven). The current and future implications for research and practice will also be addressed (Chapter Eight). And finally, this dissertation includes a bibliography and an appendix wherein a PD handbook, created by the author of this dissertation and provided to each participant, is located.

CHAPTER TWO – A THREE-FOLD REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature for Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL), Basic Writing (BW) and Professional Development (PD). This is to lay a conceptual foundation for understanding potential answers to the two research questions this dissertation raises: what is faculty (and student) experience with the implementation of various methods of instruction related to CTL (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized instruction*) and the instruction of BW skills combined with PD for faculty, and how do faculty subsequently respond in relation to their own interest, engagement, retention and success?

Faculty (and student) experience with CTL, BW and PD, therefore, should be understood to be quite different than faculty response. A better distinction would be the contrast between an intellectual response vs. an emotional response – with the intellectual response having more to do with the mechanics of what happened in and what was learned from the implementation of CTL and the instruction of BW skills (combined with PD for faculty), while the emotional response has to do with the impact all three (CTL, BW and PD) have on each faculty member in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment. Again, as noted in Chapter One, faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL, BW and PD is directly related to how much it increases student interest, engagement, retention and success. Therefore, although most studies focus only on students, this study stands in contrast – because of what I call the never-ending "circle of reciprocity" that begins with instructors: the belief that when faculty do better, students

do better; and when students do better, consequently, faculty do even better – and so on and so forth, increasingly improving the performance of both faculty and students.

Chapter Overview

Building on the history of CTL related in Chapter One, this review of the literature begins with a large-scale initiative that introduced the author of this dissertation to CTL, a study done by the California Community Colleges. Therein, faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL is examined. From there, other implementations of CTL are analyzed from other states as the concept is further explained; faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL is once again explored, and in relation to this conceptual foundation, best practices and benchmarking are examined. In addition to this, other significant research/implementations, definitions and strategies are noted and the three significant instructional methods for CTL (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized instruction*) are once again defined; significant conclusions are also offered. Next, a relatively brief exploration of the literature on BW and the literature on PD are explored separately due to how each relates to CTL in this three-fold case study, and finally, more is said about faculty (and student experience) with and response to CTL and BW combined with PD for faculty and final thoughts are shared. It should also be noted that the search for this three-fold review of the literature was carried out via library data bases, as well as through the bibliographies found in various sources. Here are the results relevant to CTL.

Contextualization: A Review of the Literature

Most Significant Studies/Implementations of CTL

In 2009, researchers associated with the California Community Colleges presented what they had learned and assembled in a 75 page document: *Contextualized Teaching and Learning: A Faculty Primer* (Baker, Hope, and Karandjeff). To date, this is one of the most in depth sources to address both theory and practice in relation to this approach to teaching and learning at the community college level. Growing out of the 2007 *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (Center for Student Success), it focuses solely on CTL. Thus, in California, CTL is considered one of the most significant ways to address the problem of remediation. Foundational to this are the academic needs of the population of students served and the employment and economic needs of potential employers. This foundation also includes the social and economic needs of the larger society.

Theoretical standpoint. As noted in Chapter One, according to the *Faculty Primer* (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009), CTL is a derivative of the theoretical framework of Constructonism which claims that "learners create meaning in relationship to experience" (p. 6). This suggests an entirely different kind of classroom; the teacher's role shifts to that of a facilitator – "to create conditions that support student engagement in the learning process" (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, p. 6). This understanding is echoed in the literature on CTL as well, as noted by Perin in her 2011 review of the literature. It is likewise echoed when researchers such as Grubb and Badway, 1999; Perin, 2011; and Williams, 2010, decry the problem of the de-contextualized classroom – asserting that such instruction does not motivate students and does not result in the transfer of learning.

CTL, therefore, is considered a promising strategy and practice for remediation. And, as noted in Chapter One, it also echoes John Dewey's work on experiential learning, which many would argue is yet to be fully implemented or realized. It is important to note, however, that according to Perin (2011), what has been accomplished study-wise (61 studies as of 2011) in relation to CTL is much more descriptive (qualitative) than it is data driven (quantitative). She also notes that of those studies that are quantitative (27), very few look specifically at college students and most have flaws, methodologically speaking, that limit what we are able to conclude about CTL (p. 270).

However, in spite of these "flaws," Perin concludes that CTL holds promise for addressing the dilemma of remediation facing community colleges across the nation. Most likely, this conclusion is due to an understanding of the fact that every study has some methodological flaws, and also, most likely, it is due to her own experience with and response to CTL in relation to her 2010 study on CTL and its effect on basic reading and writing skills. And perhaps more importantly, the positive things those 61 studies do say about CTL certainly had to have an impact. It may also be due to the similarities between high school and college students, given that a number of these studies are high school related. It can likewise be argued that even studies done with lower levels of K-12 have some application for the college level. And finally, she does not stand alone. As noted, many in academia are exploring this teaching and learning strategy for its potential in relation to remediation – suggesting that faculty (and students) are having positive experiences with CTL and faculty are likely to also be experiencing career satisfaction and personal fulfillment as a result. The assumption being, that the level of interest,

engagement, retention and success of faculty is increasing – or, they would not continue in this theoretical pursuit and practice.

Theoretical practice. For the reasons just stated, what is most significant about the *Faculty Primer* (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009) in relation to this dissertation is what it tells us about faculty and their experience with and response to CTL. It should also be noted that the *Primer* is largely the only source that provides the most evidence regarding what faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL might be. All other studies, without exception, only relate student experience and response. I begin with reported faculty experience with CTL.

Faculty (and student) experience. The participants in the California study were interviewed, and the first theme that came to light from the variety of diverse models of CTL (stand-alone classrooms and linked classes or learning communities) was related to the theoretical perspectives that informed their practice. The common perspectives were the necessity of the social construction of knowledge in the classroom, the necessity of the self-motivation and engagement of students and the necessity of the role of CTL as a means to achieve an end – the transfer of learning (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 16). The second theme was faculty collaboration:

> All of the faculty members who were interviewed discussed the importance of collaboration—with their peers, other divisions of their college, administration, employers, community partners and/or funders. In many cases, cross-discipline and cross-function partnerships fueled faculty innovations. The importance of collaboration was referenced in a number of activities including: program design and course curriculum development, engagement of services or the development

of community experiences for students, professional development, evaluation and improvement of one's practice and the acquisition of resources to support instructional innovation. While collaboration varied in intensity by model type, it remained a central element of all practices. Reflective of contextualized instruction itself, collaboration across disciplines and functions of the college and with members of the community advanced faculty's ability to serve students in the classroom. (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, p. 16)

A third theme that arose from the response of faculty (and students) to their experience with CTL was the need to develop instructional materials. This generally required a great deal of time and money, not to mention more work than is typically required in the average classroom. This was partly due to the need for collaboration with other faculty, and sometimes, collaboration with outside employers and community partners. The interests and experiences of students were also taken into account in relation to these outside partners (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, pp. 16-17). The fourth theme was curriculum design and delivery in relation to the necessity of a relevant context. Faculty

noted how use of a relevant context helped students recognize the purpose and utility of the reading, writing and math skills to their personal or career development. Many indicated that the motivational aspect of these connections enhanced the efficiency of the learning process and facilitated students' mastery of the material. (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, p. 17)

Faculty also talked about the role that interactive teaching played. Interactive teaching can be defined as a close collaboration between teacher and students, as well as between

students. This was found to be enhanced by an authentic context around which the interaction would take place (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, p. 17). This was the fifth theme.

The need for professional development (PD) and institutional support were the sixth and seventh themes. With respect to PD, four areas were viewed as important: course and program design, curriculum development, the implementation of the curriculum, and finally, learning assessment. Due to the complexity involved in each of these factors, faculty believed PD should be ongoing (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 17). As for institutional support,

> this support came in a multiplicity of forms including administrative backing of
> new course creation and experimentation, release time for professional and
> curriculum development, sharing of faculty across departments, flexible
> scheduling and use of facilities and staff dedicated to program coordination for
> interaction with community and employer partners. For all program models
> (excluding the standalone classroom practices), linkages with student services or
> dedicated staff providing intensive support such as individual case management,
> academic and career advising or job placement was of particular importance.
> Many practices also pointed to the critical nature of institutional support in their
> ability to move beyond initial grant funding or pilot stages to the ongoing
> sustainability and true institutionalization of these CTL innovations. (Baker, Hope
> and Karandjeff, p. 18)

The final two themes that emerged from the faculty interviews were continuous improvement and improved outcomes. Unlike other forms of instruction, CTL appears to require more reflection on and revision of teacher practice. Here is what was learned:

> Nearly all faculty interviewed noted significant learning in the initial semester of the course or program implementation, such as realizations about how to effectively blend academic and occupational and foundational content, whether the time allotted was feasible for developing desired competencies, and how to best coordinate curriculum with other instructors and coursework. Many instructors talked about their curriculum "gelling," their instruction improving and their overall understanding of contextualization deepening after multiple semesters of implementation. Several practitioners have altered the design of their model since inception to address both students' needs and logistical challenges. Faculty referred to student feedback and input as a significant driver of the continuous improvement process. In some cases, the analysis of student achievement data … and/or persistence and performance indicators drove significant adaptations. (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 18)

Just as continuous improvement is important for any teaching strategy, so was improved outcomes as measured by the data the teachers themselves collected. This is the final theme. This data was both qualitative and quantitative. Not surprisingly (as noted earlier in this chapter), given that most of the studies undertaken in relation to CTL have been qualitative, the most encouraging results have been in relation to qualitative measures of improvement in student engagement, motivation, self-esteem and confidence and employer satisfaction. The quantitative results looked at such measures as retention

and success rates, graduation rates, and employment. What qualitative and quantitative data share is the positive experience with CTL that seems to be shared by all faculty. They believe that "contextualization is a key to success, and that a more extensive evaluation will both support what they have observed in their classes and help them refine their practice" (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 18).

  Faculty response. Having examined California Community College System faculty experience with CTL, it is important to also look at faculty response to CTL in relation to the impact it had on their own interest, engagement, retention and success. To ascertain this, background descriptions shared via the examples included in the study are examined. The study offers 11 examples. Each example not only relates how the faculty member utilized CTL to achieve a particular outcome, but it also shares the background story of the participant in relation to how the idea to utilize CTL came up in the first place. This demonstrates a level of personal interest on the part of the faculty member that one can only assume would also impact faculty engagement, retention and success, resulting in greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment. I say this because it is generally not the practice of most studies (including the California study) to explore faculty career satisfaction and personal fulfillment resulting from whatever is examined in a particular study. This means that such responses can only be inferred from the testimonials that were given to inform the background description. There are two representative types or examples: those testimonials in which the level of faculty interest is more obvious because it is internally motivated, and those in which the level of faculty interest is less obvious because it is externally motivated.

Before examining these two representative types from the California study, it is important to first list all eleven examples: basic reading and writing skills in an English class; basic skills math instruction for front-line workers in a manufacturing environment; the use of real-world contexts for the teaching of elementary and intermediate algebra; developmental math in an automotive course; basic math and writing for the Construction trade; basic math, reading and writing for career exploration and education planning; a focus on social justice issues for developing the learning process; basic skills math and writing for a Bio-tech lab or further education in that field; ESL for a Child Development course; and finally, the integration of basic skills and vocational skills for entry level jobs in various careers (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 20).

The Internally Motivated Examples. Of the eleven examples offered in the California study, inferences are drawn largely from a relatively few comments in the background description. These are the more obvious examples. For instance, in the first example offered, in which service learning serves as the context for a basic skills writing and reading class, what is revealed about the faculty member is the personal level of interest: "English instructor Daniel Keller read an article on service learning during his graduate studies that motivated him to pursue this instructional strategy at [the] College of San Mateo" (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, p. 21). This suggests a level of interest that stayed with the faculty member from his earlier education to his later teaching practice. In other words, it was internally motivated. The background description goes on to say:

> Keller currently works on his own to implement this course. At the onset, Keller
>
> benefited from support from CSM Connects which provided a small stipend and a

series of four trainings with colleagues on how to incorporate a service learning

approach into course curriculum. At this time, CSM Connects is no longer an

active function of the college. Keller arranges his own service learning

opportunities and works on his own to select readings, develop and deliver

assignments and arrange the service experience. (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, p.

21)

This passage suggests that not only did personal interest play a significant role in

the genesis of this faculty member's work with service learning, but also with service

learning as a component of CTL. And, perhaps more importantly, that work led to a level

of engagement that went on without support, and although not specifically stated, the loss

of the stipend as well. Is it a stretch of the imagination, therefore, to assume that this

experience with and response to CTL also positively impacted this faculty member's

retention and success? The final comments in the background description confirm this:

"Ultimately, he and his students have great enthusiasm for the experience: 'It's exciting,

it's fun, it's something different…it makes students like the class more' (Baker, Hope

and Karandjeff, p. 23). This is an example of not only career satisfaction, but personal

fulfillment as well.

The Externally Motivated Examples. The second representative type on the list of

all eleven courses illustrates what is meant by a less obvious example: basic skills math

instruction in a manufacturing environment. Unlike the example in which the faculty

member's personal interest during graduate studies led to later practice, resulting in

greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, the genesis for this example came

from an outside employer which sought to collaborate with a particular college to address

an educational need their employees manifested. In other words, it was externally

motivated. However, near the end of the background description, the following faculty

comments are shared regarding the level of personal interest and engagement required for

> setting up a contextualized basic skills course. "It's more work. You're not just
>
> getting a book off the shelf…you have to do lots of extra research." He
>
> acknowledges engaging in several revisions of curriculum based on Teledyne
>
> feedback and needing to create his own instructional materials for course delivery.
>
> At the same time, he notes that he "learns too" through course development and
>
> delivery and he appreciates being more personally involved. He recognizes the
>
> interplay between instructor and employer as supportive of and necessary to his
>
> contextualized curriculum development. (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009, p.
>
> 26)

Because the two types or examples shared here are representative, a comparison

of the more obvious examples and the less obvious examples leads to the same

conclusion: faculty experience with CTL results in greater faculty interest, engagement,

retention and success. Career satisfaction and personal fulfillment are only implied in all

examples, mainly because the purpose of the study was to address whether CTL increases

student interest, engagement, retention and success. This is why faculty response must be

inferred, but it can be argued that it is no less evident. Given the level of difficulty the

implementation and facilitation of CTL required in the California study, it is, for many,

no stretch of the imagination to assume that faculty who have experience with CTL also

respond to CTL with greater interest, engagement, retention and success with respect to

career satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

Other Significant Studies/Implementations of CTL

The California Community Colleges, the system, is not the only "place" in the country where work around CTL is being implemented on a large scale. In 2012, the Massachusetts Community College Workforce and Development Agenda (MCCWDTA) published a report entitled *Models of Contextualization in Developmental and Adult Basic Education*. The purpose of this report was to inform the community colleges of Massachusetts as to what is being utilized nationally, as well as what is taking place in Massachusetts. Models of CTL were presented in an effort to move toward a "break-through" model that could address the local and national problem of remediation. This study summarized the results from interviews, but the interviews may have only been with program directors – given that no individual faculty members are mentioned and only programs are spoken of. Their experiences (as well as their students) with CTL, however, were basically the same as those reported by faculty who participated in the California study. Here is a reminder of what faculty believe is important based on their experience with CTL: diverse models of CTL informed by theory, the development of instructional materials, faculty collaboration, curriculum design and delivery, interactive teaching, professional development, institutional support, continuous improvement and improved outcomes. The additions to this list by the MCCWTDTA related to the selection of an appropriate context, the development of appropriate assessment tools and evaluation measures. This list, with its additions, is also echoed in the research collected by the MCCWDTA. They cite Kalchik and Oertle (2010), who state:

> Challenges mentioned include cost; scheduling of interdisciplinary collaboration
> and resistance to the collaboration; lack of awareness of contextualization; lack of

preparedness by instructors, students or colleges; lack of support by

administrators; the effort required to work within system parameters; and finding

ways to apply abstract material to concrete experiences. (qtd. in MCCWDTA,

2012, pp. 4-5)

Another large scale effort noted by the MCCWDTA is found scattered across

Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and Virginia. It is known as Achieving the Dream /

Developmental Education Initiative (DEI). In this program, CTL is an option exercised

by some, but not a requirement for all. In other words, this effort is not solely about CTL.

It is an eclectic model that is much more like that of the City Colleges of Chicago, where

I did the previously mentioned tenure-track project related to CTL and where the three-

fold case study for this dissertation was also undertaken. How these "optional" models

compare to the aforementioned examples of CTL – in relation to faculty experience with

and response to CTL – is not specifically addressed; however, based on what was learned

about those models in California and Massachusetts, and the fact that these "optional"

models were included in the report by the MCCWDTA in which they argue for CTL, it

appears that the experiences were much the same. If they were less so, the MCCWDTA

would probably argue that it was related to the degree to which faculty utilized CTL. See

the above passage on challenges. In other words, what faculty learned and the degree of

career satisfaction and personal fulfillment would be directly proportional to the degree

of application of this teaching and learning strategy.

Other examples mentioned by the report are the emporium model and the gradual

contextualization of certain content related to student careers. Found in all the

aforementioned states, as well as nationally, the emporium model is not always

recognized as a potential strategy for CTL, but it does meet the student where he or she is educationally, and faculty can supplement the software programs being utilized to institute contextualization of a variety of careers. Gradual contextualization, practically speaking, is much easier – given that faculty implement this gradually at their own discretion. This mirrors the three-fold case study for this dissertation. And, perhaps most interesting, is the PD model wherein faculty are taught what CTL is and how to implement it. There is also an on-line version of this model for faculty development (MCCWDA, 2012, pp. 33-40). Unfortunately, no comments are made about the impact of CTL on faculty, either their experience with or their response to CTL. Thus, nothing can be learned about career satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

Best Practices, Benchmarking and a Definition

To further an understanding of the conceptual foundation for the answers this dissertation suggests in relation to its research questions, it is also important to understand best practices, benchmarking, and the definition offered by this study. I begin with best practices and benchmarking. What is evident in various places in the country is what are considered the best practices for CTL. These have already been addressed. However, national benchmarking in relation to the practice of CTL is difficult to ascertain. This is probably because of the variety of terms by which it is known, the many definitions and the wide range of applications. The benchmarking, if there is any, would have to be related to standards associated with the practice of Developmental and Adult Basic Education. Before addressing this in greater detail, however, it is important to first look (once again) at a definition. From the perspective of this dissertation, the best definition found is in the previously mentioned *Faculty Primer* (Baker, Hope and

Karandjeff, 2009). Therein, the researchers quoted Mazzeo (2008) and his more broadly
conceived definition for CTL:

> A diverse family of instructional strategies designed to more seamlessly link the
> learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing
> teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in a specific context that
> is of interest to the student. (p. 4)

This definition is contained in the *Primer's* review of the literature, and Perin also prefers
this definition (2011, p. 269). In fact, in Perin's Abstract for the same publication, she
offers an even more concise definition, although less descriptive: "an instructional
approach connecting foundational skills and college-level content (p. 268). Finally, it is
important to note that contextualized teaching and learning can take place both inside and
outside of the classroom. In fact, it can be manifested in such teaching and learning
strategies as learning communities, service learning, internships, and even study-abroad
programs. Service learning and learning communities have already been mentioned.

Other Significant Research

There are three resources that rival *the Primer* (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009)
with respect to the in-depth nature of their exploration of this strategy. These foster a
better understanding of the conceptual foundation being laid in this chapter. Perin (2011)
has already been mentioned. The other two sources also contribute a great deal to
defining this concept and its many manifestations: Sears (2002): *Contextualized Teaching
and Learning: A Primer for Effective Instruction* and Johnson (2002), *Contextual
Teaching and Learning: What is it and Why it's Here to Stay*? Sears' contribution
emphasizes the need to reform teacher education through training in CTL, as well as the

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need for students to accept greater responsibility for their own education. She defines CTL as "a system of instruction based on the philosophy that students learn when they see meaning in academic material, and they see meaning . . . when they can connect new information with prior knowledge and their own experience" (p. vii). She also sees CTL as a system with eight components: "making meaningful connections, doing significant work, self-regulated learning, collaborating, critical and creative thinking, nurturing the individual, reaching high standards, using authentic assessment" (p. 25). Much of this echoes faculty (and student) experience with CTL as noted in the California study. Finally, it should be noted that Sears focuses solely on reforming teacher education by creating a fictional scenario to illustrate her arguments, not actual real-world examples; therefore, although she would probably argue the scenario is modeled after the real-world, it is largely theoretical. And finally, even if her scenario was real, she does not address the issue of CTL and PD. Her focus is on the reform of teacher education – which some view as separate from PD; however, if CTL was implemented in teacher education, it could eventually lead more teachers to an experience with and response to CTL that could result in greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

In many respects, the expanded definition of Sears (found in the previous paragraph) suggests it probably grew through a trial and error process of experimentation. It also suggests that a researcher with a different experience might define it differently. This is because CTL requires the incorporation of other strategies (chosen based on research, best practices and a consideration of the student problems/distractions mentioned in the Statement of the Problem section of Chapter One) in order to achieve a more positive outcome. This inclusion of diverse strategies echoes Mazzeo's definition.

Johnson, on the other hand, builds her argument on what science is learning about the brain in relation to CTL and how it "naturally" improves education. However, she too appropriates other strategies and places them all under the umbrella term, CTL. Perin, however, avoids this by acknowledging that it takes a diverse family of strategies. As for CTL and PD, Johnson, like Sears, does not address this issue – as the focus is largely a theoretical one. Although both address faculty experience with CTL, amazingly, neither say anything that implies faculty response to CTL. In other words, nothing is implied about career satisfaction and personal fulfillment; however, based on the research each refers to, there does not appear to be any reason to believe that faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL is any different than what I have noted in relation to the California study or the work done in Massachusetts and elsewhere across the country.

Other Definitions, Terms and Strategies

Other definitions are also being utilized. This is important because how contextualization is defined impacts faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL. The multiplicity of definitions is evident from a cursory examination of Perin's review of the literature: Beder and Medina (2001) and Jacobson, Degener, and Purcell-Gates (2003) define contextualization as a focus on "real-world materials and activities," in which critical thinking is utilized to creatively solve problems. Berns and Ericksen (2001) take it a step further, suggesting there are "multiple applications" beyond the specific subject matter being contextualized, and Mazzeo, Rab, and Alssid (2003) see contextualization as "learning by doing." The latter, as already noted, echoes Dewey's philosophy of education.

Beyond different definitions, the use of many different terms for contextualization reinforces the need for "a diverse family of strategies." It also has implication for what faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL might be – given such diversity. Perin offers a revealing list of terms worthy of exploration:

contextual teaching and learning (Baker, Hope and Karandjeff, 2009; Johnson, 2002), contextualized instruction (Parr, Edwards, & Leising, 2008; Wisely, 2009), content area literacy (McKenna & Robinson, 2009), embedded instruction (Simpson, Hynd, Nist & Burrell, 1997), writing-to-learn (Klein, 1999), integrative curriculum (Dowden, 2007), situated cognition (Stone, Alfeld, Pearson, Lewis, & Jensen, 2006), theme-based instruction (Dirk & Prenger, 1997), anchored instruction (Bottge, Rueda, Serlin, Hung, & Jung, 2007), curriculum integration (Grubb & Badway, 1997), academic-occupation integration (Grubb & Kraskouskas, 1992; Perin, 2001), infused instruction (Grubb & Badway, 1997; Perin, 2001), developmental education learning communities (Weiss, Visher, & Wathington, 2010), workplace literacy (Mikulecky & Lloyd, 1997), and functional context education (Sticht, 2005). (2011, p. 7).

On the surface, all these terms have some similarities. It is understandable, therefore, why Sears and Johnson would move toward a "system" definition. For the purposes of this project, Mazzeo's definition is preferred because, as already noted, it acknowledges that CTL requires a diverse family of strategies, rather than appropriating other strategies as if they did not have an identity of their own. Avoiding an uncritical acceptance of someone else's system definition also allows instructors to choose the strategies that will best work for their personality and unique geographical circumstances

(urban, suburban or rural). Making such choices on their own may also increase faculty interest, engagement, retention and success – resulting, many would argue, in career satisfaction and personal fulfillment. Mazzeo's definition is also preferred because it makes none of the dogmatic claims that Sears and Johnson do, claiming that CTL is THE answer to the problems the nation is currently experiencing in relation to student interest, engagement, retention and success in remediation, as well as graduation rates. Given the history of education in the United States, this is important, if we are to avoid falling for what could potentially be yet another educational fad. Unfortunately, although research seems to support this teaching and learning strategy, it is bolstered more by the enthusiasm of educators than it is by science, which says a lot about faculty (and student) experience with and response to contextualization. This, however, can be a "red flag" if CTL is just another educational fad.

Instructional Methods for Contextualization

One final aspect of CTL, should be briefly revisited as part of the review of the literature. This is the three other terms noted, defined and illustrated in the Definition of Terms section in chapter one. No examples are offered here. As was noted, these definitions and terms for the various versions of CTL were put forth by Perin (2011) in a brief version of her review of the literature published the same year. Therein, she suggests that CTL is actually manifested in two ways: *contextualized and integrated contextualized instruction*. She was the first to offer this characterization. The main differences between these instructional methods have to do with "different teaching staff and instructional emphases" (p. 1). Once again, here is how Perin defines the former: "Contextualized basic skills instruction involves the teaching of academic skills against a

backdrop of specific subject matter to which such skills need to be applied, and is taught by reading, writing, and math instructors" (p. 1). The latter is defined by Pearson, Moje, and Greenleaf, 2010:

> Integrated basic skills instruction is the incorporation of reading, writing, or math instruction into the teaching of content. Integrated instruction is taught by discipline-area instructors, with the academic skills serving as a means of developing critical thinking about disciplinary content (qtd. in Perin, 2011, p. 1).

As for the embedded model, not mentioned by Perin, it involves the basic skills instructor either physically or digitally in a discipline area instructor's class. This method was developed by the author of this dissertation, but is recognized to probably not be the first implementation of such a model. In other words, it may be known by another name and associated with another teaching and learning practice.

The main reason for revisiting each method of contextualization in this chapter, however, is that it allows for the following: to point out that faculty (and student) experience with as well as the subsequent response of faculty to each method of CTL will understandably vary, depending on the method of CTL being implemented and the degree to which each method is utilized. This is important because, although faculty (and student) experience with CTL and faculty response to CTL is often similar, CTL is not just one thing; it is many things as represented by the diversity of definitions, terms, strategies and methods.

Basic Writing: A Review of the Literature

Brief History

Because CTL is examined in this study largely in relation to its utilization in the instruction of basic writing (BW) skills, it is instructive to do a relatively brief review of the literature on BW. Although some trace this field back to the early nineteenth century at Harvard University and Wellsley College, it was not until the 1970s that it became a conscious and separate field of study. Much of its history since then can also be traced via the academic publication, *Journal of Basic Writing*. This is not to say that studies on BW did not appear elsewhere in other academic journals and books, but most of the work done in the field was placed and tracked therein. This suggests that the field is a relatively small and new field by comparison to other academic disciplines, including what most would argue is the larger "umbrella" discipline of Rhetoric and Composition. The genesis of this new field, however, can arguably be traced to the political unrest and social upheaval of the 1960s – clearly evident in the protests which occurred at colleges and universities. One way in which this protest was manifested was with respect to the issue of equal educational opportunity. The epicenter of this, in terms of the recorded history of BW, was the City University of New York (CUNY) and the resulting open enrollment movement of the 1960s and the 1970s. Due to this movement, a large number of students who were not college-ready flooded the system. To address the overwhelming issues these students and their teachers had in relation to the instruction of BW skills, the field of BW was, in effect, born (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, pp. 3-11).

Beyond the epicenter of place (CUNY) was the epicenter of person: Mina Shaughnessy. Not only is she credited with beginning the field of BW, but she also

launched its journal, *Journal of Basic Writing*. This was accomplished the same year she published her ground-breaking/seminal work, *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing* (1977) (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 11). More will be said about Shaughnessy and her theoretical perspective in Chapter Seven, but it is safe to say that most of the work that followed hers in this field was largely in response to what she accomplished via her own work with these students and teachers, as well as *Errors* and other works published in the journal. Here is how that response is characterized: due to what many in the field see as the marginalization of BW teachers by the discipline of Rhetoric and Composition, and the "adjunctification" of this discipline and all that required in terms of training and management of adjuncts by full-time faculty, there are fewer researchers and less time for such endeavors, and therefore, relatively speaking, "research on basic writing is in short supply" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 122). This "short supply" is also a result of the "attacks on remediation that intensified in the 1990s and beyond" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, xv). In fact, CUNY itself fell victim to this and its program was phased out in 2001 (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, pp. 33-34).

Being "short in supply" when it comes to research, however, is a relative characterization and it says nothing about the quality of this research and what the field has learned. Basically, the research addresses the following areas: error, assessment, process, and attitudes and identities. Before briefly examining these four categories – spending most of this review on error and process for reasons to be noted later, it is important to define BW. Although it is certainly true that it can be theoretically, politically and morally problematic to define students as underprepared (and there is

much debate in the field over the question of definition and its impact on these students and how they are taught), in practical terms the idea of not being prepared for college is the best definition for BW students and what that suggests about the subject matter of these classes. Skills that were supposed to have been taught and learned prior to college must be taught and learned in order for students to "catch up" and to succeed in college and in their future careers. Although researchers/theorists have the luxury of debating these questions, underprepared college students do not. Shaughnessy understood this, and in spite of the reaction she received from others, both in and outside of the field of BW, her primary focus was on error – what is it, what causes it and how can it be fixed?

Error

Although others have offered their own attempts at defining error, analyzing its causes and offering prescriptions for student error, no one has ever matched the in depth work of Shaughnessy in *Errors and Expectations* (1977); this was her analysis of the writing of 4,000 BW students whose errors were categorized and analyzed in order to explain error – and, it can be argued, to use that understanding to solve the problem of remediation. As already noted, what this research revealed will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter Seven, but it is important to note that one of the first "places" this quest drove the field was to the field of linguistics: theoretical, applied and sociolinguistics. This was because the field of Rhetoric and Composition had already declared traditional grammar instruction a failure. Braddock, Loyd-Jones and Schoer (*Research in Written Composition,* 1963) made this declaration: "The teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (pp. 37–38).

Where the solution was first sought was in non-traditional forms of grammar instruction. Here are the ones that were examined: Structural Grammar (Fries, *The Structure of English*, 1952), Tagmenics (Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*, 1954; 1967; Pike, "A Linguistic Contribution to Composition," 1964; Young, Becker and Pike, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*, 1970) and Transformational Grammar (Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*, 1957; Freeman, "Linguistics and Error Analysis," 1979). Although there were positive aspects to each of these non-traditional forms of grammar instruction, the prevailing opinion was that each respectively proved ineffective due to being purely descriptive, too sophisticated or too caught up in explaining error as opposed to correcting it.

Error Analysis. The next direction the field took to solve the problem of error was the field of English as Second Language (ESL). *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition* (Richards, 1974) is considered groundbreaking and seminal in the field of BW. What was learned from this work was the concept of first-language interference; in other words, for all practical purposes, BW students learn Standard English and academic discourse as a second language. As a result, the impact of non-standard English can be understood as an "interference" with the Standard English being taught; "the clash of different language systems, generating transferences from one system to another or hybrid approximations, must imbue errors, rightly understood, with an explicability—what Shaughnessy would call the logic of errors" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 125). Shaughnessy touted this perspective as she took it to its logical conclusion: there is always logic behind every error; understanding that logic will help teachers to better instruct students in BW skills.

As noted earlier, much of the research in the field of BW was/is published in the

Journal of Basic Writing. In fact, the very first issue (1975) was all about the analysis of

error (Gray, "Dialect Interference in Writing: A Tripartite Analysis," Laurence; "Error's

Endless Train: Why Students Don't Perceive Errors"; Lay, "Chinese Language

Interference in Written English"; and Rizzo and Villafanes, "Spanish Influence on

Written English"). As is evident, largely, this issue was about language interference. It

should be noted, however, that one article in this issue advocated for grammar

instruction: D'Eloia, "Teaching Standard Written English." More will be said about

D'Eloia in Chapter Seven. Other sources for error analysis not located in this journal are

"Error-Analysis and the Teaching of Composition," (Barry Kroll and John Schafer,

1978), *Miscue Analysis: Applications to Reading Instruction* (Goodman, 1973), *Cohesion*

in English (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). These sources address how the BW skills of these

students are "windows into the mind" or "Freudian" slips of the tongue that help us to

analyze error; they also address the notion that what really matters about error is not just

"what was happening on the page but also in the writer's mind and, indeed, in the writer's

world" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 126).

And finally, a few other significant sources on error analysis are: "The Study of

Error," Bartholomae (1980) and "Acts of Wonderment," Hull (1986):

> Both . . . placed special emphasis on "talk-aloud" protocols, allowing students to
>
> reveal their thoughts as they made errors or [as instructors] met with them in
>
> rereading their writing. Such work provided an enriched understanding of errors
>
> and their origins. What it did not offer was an ability to generalize about much
>
> more than the complexity of the processes, psychological and social, that gave

rise to errors. Rather than providing a simple guideline of what needed to be taught, error analysis offered strikingly labor-intensive procedures of individualized instruction that had no place for prefabricated exercises or recycled lessons. (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, pp. 126-127)

As a result, some researchers began to question the applicability/practicality of such research. They concluded that "discerning patterns of error and means of correction seemed to be so labor-intensive and student-specific as to be beyond the capacities of teachers with dozens of students and little class time" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 128). Some even called for a return to traditional grammar instruction as a means of learning Standard English; although not necessarily evident from the title, Mary Epes (1985), "Tracing Errors to Their Sources: A Study of the Encoding Processes of Adult Basic Writers" offered that more traditional solution to the problem of error. This call for a return to grammar instruction will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

In spite of this response, the net effect of the research – right or wrong – was to drastically change attitudes about what error is, what causes it, and how to fix it; it also raised another question: should "error" be fixed? In other words, various aspects of literacy (notions about academic discourse and what is considered error) were being called into question. Graff (1979) addressed this larger question in his work, *The Literacy Myth: Cultural Integration and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century,* as did Raymond (1982), in his introduction to *Literacy as a Human Problem.* Such perspectives, however theoretically, politically or morally correct, did nothing to help the average BW instructor or the students under his/her tutelage. If anything they called that work into question. Contributing to this deconstruction of notions of academic discourse, Connors

and Lunsford (1988), "Frequency of Formal Errors in Current College Writing,"

"suggested that such big questions didn't seem to matter much in composition

classrooms, a conclusion that may, in effect, have helped to quell research on error" (Otte

and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 128). In other words, such research had no practical benefit

for BW instructors or students. What specifically does that mean?

Almost rivaling the breadth of Shaughnessy's study with 4,000 student writing

artifacts, Connors and Lunsford (1988) looked at 3,000 students to develop "a scholarly

basis for the treatment of error" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 129); the difference

was that they looked at instructors. How did BW teachers evaluate student errors and

what errors did they mark? The top 20 errors were then addressed and compared with

previous studies on error going back as far as 1917. What was learned was that the

frequency of errors have remained much the same over the past century. This, for many,

confirmed the notion that traditional grammar instruction is not very effective, and never

has been. It should also be noted that another study was conducted in 2008 (Lunsford and

Lunsford, "Mistakes are a Fact of Life: A National Comparative Study"), which basically

had the same results. Interestingly enough, both studies also addressed the types of errors

students make and the fact that what is considered an error has changed since 1917, and

even since 1988. This raised questions not only about how error is defined, but also how

it is evaluated. It also, in some respects, called into question and undermined the role and

mandate of BW instructors.

Error Recognition. To address this phenomenon, what is known as error

recognition became a focus of study – but in this case, the research arose out of the

discipline of Rhetoric and Composition. In a special issue devoted to this issue in the

journal, *College Composition and Communication* (1981), Greenbaum and Taylor, in

"The Recognition of Usage Errors by Instructors of Freshman Composition," discovered

that English instructors differed in what they considered an error and in terms of how to

fix it. This highlighted the subjectivity of error recognition, and by implication, error

analysis; however, it didn't – on a practical level – tell instructors what to do about error.

This was confirmed in Hull (1985), "Research on Error and Correction." This study of 55

English teachers revealed that they likewise defined error differently, and not

surprisingly, they also differed in how to correct error. One "exception" to this lack of

practicality was found in a later work by Hull (1987), "Constructing Taxonomies for

Error." Although Hull "noted a variation not only in error recognition but also in whole

taxonomies and categories of error[,] she [also] proposed a system based on the editing

process, acknowledging that error recognition rests in the eye of the beholder" (Otte and

Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 130). Hull and her attempt to offer something practical,

however, did not stem the tide; rather, the subjectivity in error recognition (and by

implication, analysis) became pivotal in terms of leading the research further away from

practical application.

This conclusion was summed up nicely about a decade later in "The Dilemma

That Still Counts: Basic Writing at a Political Crossroads" (Harrington and Adler-

Kassner, 1998):

> Despite Hull's conclusion, which outlined a broad research agenda, the study of
>
> error has not advanced much in succeeding years" (19). They even suggested that
>
> research like Hull's and that which she reviewed—research showing how unstable
>
> error taxonomies were, how little consensus there was on what constituted error,

and how little error frequency studies could be expected to inform instruction—

was responsible for dampening interest in further work on error. In a sense, Hull

would have agreed with this assessment. Her overview of the research on error

more than a decade earlier had concluded by saying that the real focus should be

not on error, per se, but on issues of assessment and instruction. (Otte and

Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 131)

Assessment, Process, and Attitudes and Identities

Assessment. In relation to the research categories of assessment, process, and

attitudes and identities, much less will be summarized from the literature. This is because

these areas of research (with the exception of process – which will receive a bit more

attention) are not as relevant to the BW writing issues largely to be addressed in the three

case studies of this dissertation; however, that does not mean these categories of research

are not relevant to the field of BW in general. In terms of assessment, therefore, what is

important to note is that the focus was on large-scale assessment and the fact that there is

a lack of a solid research base; this is because although much advice was present in the

literature, very few studies existed. However, the most notable studies, at that time, were

presented in the *Journal of Basic Writing* in 1978, an issue focused on assessment.

Included in that issue was Edward M. White's groundbreaking and seminal "Mass

Testing of Individual Writing: The California Model." It paved the way for all organized

assessment that was to follow (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 134).

What became the norm was the holistic evaluation of student writing; what was

rejected was multiple choice and machine-scored tests (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk,

2010, p. 135). This was stated best in the Preface to *Writing Assessment: Issues and*

Strategies (Greenberg, Wiener, and Donovan, 1986): "Multiple-choice tests cannot measure the skills that most writing teachers identify as the domain of composition: inventing, revising, and editing ideas to fit purpose and audience within the context of suitable linguistic, syntactic, and grammatical forms" (xiv). However, in time, theory, politics and morality impacted this aspect of the field of BW as each addressed the question of error – leaving subjectivity to reign, which led to the unraveling of the "twin lighthouses [of] reliability and validity (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 136).

The inevitable result was to move the debate from how to test to whether to test at all. In the midst of this controversy, some in the field began to do portfolio assessment, self-assessment and self-directed assessment – often in mainstreaming experiments (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 139). Some also began to argue that the burden should be placed back on the high schools which graduate these underprepared students; as a result, some programs were developed to address remediation in high schools (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 141). The final result, at least by the turn of the century (2001) and as has already been noted, was that the epicenter of place in BW (CUNY) was phased out. BW programs, however, are still found to varying degrees across the nation – largely in community colleges. This is true in relation to Olive-Harvey College, one the seven City Colleges of Chicago, where this three-fold case study took place; however, our program is likewise currently under revision, or perhaps, under attack. Given the fact that most of our students are not college-ready, however, many believe the program will persist - the problem still exists, it isn't going away, and therefore, it must be addressed. What form it will eventually take is yet to be determined.

Process. This category of research focuses on the writing process of BW students. To begin with, Emig (1971) wrote what is considered the groundbreaking/seminal work on process: *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders.* This was later echoed in 1977, in her "Writing as a Mode of Learning." From these and other works that followed it was learned that "the focus on process was never only on the writing process but also on the thought process, and the teaching goals that came of this focus were as much about teaching students how to think as teaching them how to write" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 144). What should be noted is that with process the field of BW ventured into the domain of cognitive theory.

At first, this was good news for instructors – because it moved away from the realm of the subjective implications of theory, politics and morality, and focused more so on practice. Articles like "The Cognition of Discovery" (1980), "Identifying the Organization of Writing Processes" (1980), "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" (1981), and "Images, Plans, and Prose: The Representation of Meaning in Writing" (1984), all written by Hayes and Flowers,

> communicated first and foremost . . . that the writing process was knowable (if complex), step-by-step (if recursive), and consistent across individuals and contexts (if only in its very general outlines). This was a powerful message for the beleaguered instructor. It didn't require an intimate knowledge of each student to teach process; what was needed—and at hand—was a model and a theory. (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 145).

The field also explored issues related to cognitive stages of growth in the works of Lawrence Kohlberg, William Perry, Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget – and here is where

researchers may have gone too far. These theoretical perspectives were utilized to "explain" BW students. There was great controversy around this as it suggested that these students were not cognitively ready for academic writing, and therefore, the only logical conclusion was that there was no point in attempting to teach them (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 146 – 148). The implication, of course, is that this argument could be used to deny these students equal opportunity to a college education. One researcher who called this argument into question was Myra Kogen in "The Conventions of Expository Writing" (1986). Here is how her argument was characterized:

> In finding the argument that "students do not have sufficient cognitive maturity to argue successfully in academic discourse" muddled and in claiming that the real issue was not students' maturity but adequate knowledge of discourse conventions, Kogen was making a point whose time had come. (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 145)

Others had already made the same point: Berthoff (1984), "Is Teaching Still Possible? Writing, Meaning, and Higher Order Reasoning"; Bizzell (1982), "Cognition, Convention, and Certainty"; Emig (1982), "Inquiry Paradigms and Writing." They basically argued, respectively speaking, that such a conclusion is exasperating to teachers and that the focus on the inner processes of the minds of these students should be balanced by giving more attention to their outer social context (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, pp. 149 - 150). This led to what was considered a "seismic" shift in the field – in which "convention trumped cognition." In other words, the problem is not the students and their cognitive development, but rather their lack of familiarity with Standard English and academic discourse. The understandable backlash to this aspect of

the process research in cognitive theory can be summarized in the following characterization: "The tracers of process, whether writing or thinking, were charged with being blinded by theory, ignoring context and difference, and reducing the life and individuality of what individuals do to stages of growth and flow charts of process" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 150-151).

This arc of the research on process and cognitive theory with the subsequent backlash eventually led to a focus on academic literacy. In many respects, the field went full-circle, returning to the category of error and some of the very same issues with subjectivity that had so far failed to address the need for the applicability and practicality of research. Here is how it was described:

> By the end of the 1980s, the ascendant research project for basic writing and composition generally was so far from the paradigm shift [to cognitive theory] as to seem its opposite: not a vanquishing of the old by the new but something quite the reverse. The invasion of methods and concepts from the social sciences had obscured an older, deeper tradition and chain of influences now re-manifested. (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p.153)

What was this deeper tradition and chain of influences? It was the tools of Literary/Critical Theory and Interpretation – which are often more theoretical than practical. More will be said about this in the final section of this review of the literature on BW. However, in the meantime, two theorists (during this time of flux) who sought to keep their research more practical were Bizzel ("College Composition: Initiation into the Academic Discourse Community," 1982; "What Happens When Basic Writers Come to College?," 1986; *Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness,* 1993), and

Bartholomae ("Writing Assignments: Where Writing Begins," 1983; "Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts: A Basic Reading and Writing Course for the College Curriculum," 1987; "Writing on the Margins: The Concept of Literacy in Higher Education," 1987; "The Tidy House: Basic Writing in the American Curriculum," 1993). Here is how their work was summarized: "Bizzell would go on to map out the program of initiating students into academic discourse while people like Bartholomae would be the popularizers and demonstrators, taking the theory into application" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p.153). The goal was to "de-mystify" academic discourse.

Where Bizzel and Bartholomae's work had more subjective implications was in relation to what this focus on academic literacy said about issues related to identity and power relationships. This became increasingly problematic for Bartholomae as the influence of Literary/Critical Theory gained prominence in the field and increasingly in his own mind. Of BW students, he said in 1985 (in "Inventing the University") that they must "know what I know and how I know what I know" (p. 9), while in1992 (in "The Tidy House"), he said that the field of BW had turned students into "the 'other' who is the incomplete version of ourselves, confirming existing patterns of power and authority, reproducing the hierarchies we had meant to question and overthrow (p. 18). Although this illustrates a swing of the theoretical pendulum in this field, such regret on Bartholomae's part is an important awareness for any BW instructor to have – in terms of how students are understood, treated and taught, but it does not change the mandate given to BW instructors: to initiate BW students into academic literacy. Again, researchers have the luxury of debating these issues, BW instructors and students do not.

Attitudes and Identities

The final category of research is attitudes and identities. Attitudes and identities, as was just noted, basically refer to the attitudes of society towards the cultural identities of students – how students are perceived, how students perceive themselves and how society thinks it should deal with issues of remediation. Horner (1996), in "Discoursing Basic Writing," argued for more research to be undertaken in this final category; he characterized other areas of research "as too focused on teachers' methods and student texts, too inattentive to the social and material conditions that marginalized those students and teachers" (qtd. in Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p.162). Driving this research, however, were those in the academy who likewise felt marginalized; note the mention of teachers in the previous quote. This suggests that at that time the research that became applicable to BW students grew out of the field of Rhetoric and Composition and its use of Literary/Critical Theory. The research that focused on this area of interest was largely case studies and literacy narratives.

> Especially important were the literacy narratives of those whose racial, ethnic, class, and/or language backgrounds made them the supreme (because they became highly successful) exemplars of the very students basic writing was designed to serve: teacher/scholars now situated on the other side of the literacy divide. (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, p. 156)

Marginalized writers of note were: Gilyard, *Voices of the Self* (1991); Villanueva, *Bootstraps* (1993); Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987); Brodkey, "Writing on the Bias" (1994) and Rose, *Lives on the Boundary* (1989). Respectively, these were writers of color and working-class writers. They were echoes of the work of Richard Rodriguez: *Hunger of Memory* (1982) and Richard Hoggart: *The*

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Uses of Literacy (1959). Because these types of literacy narratives still have application today, it is not uncommon that researchers are determined "to make autobiography a means to a scholarly end, a way of plumbing more deeply into the educational lives and struggles of BW students" (Otte and Williams-Mlynarczyk, 2010, p. 157). The work of Pablo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), should also be noted as a ground-breaking/seminal work that also plays a significant role in this aspect of BW research.

Taking Stock

In reviewing the history of the field of BW, it is apparent that by the time of the demise of CUNY's BW program, the field had splintered in several directions due largely to the convoluted evolution of its research in relation to error, assessment, process, and attitudes and identities. This left some to openly question the relevance of BW programs and others to call for their salvation, for clearly BW programs were under attack and still are to this day. Are we to dismantle the system or make it work for our students? And if it is dismantled, what happens to these students? To address these questions, the *Journal of Basic Writing* devoted an entire issue to this debate in 2000. BW instructors, of course, lean toward making the system work. This is presently being manifested in efforts to mainstream BW students, an idea that began in 1992 at the National Basic Writing Conference. From this conference, an important book arose: *Mainstreaming Basic Writers: Politics and Pedagogies of Access*. It is important to note, however, that this anthology argued for and against mainstreaming – making it especially relevant at the time of its publication in 2001.

In 2006, *The Journal of Basic Writing* devoted another issue to assessing the state of the field. The topics addressed were: defining BW and its institutional and political

relationships with the world (Gray-Rosendale), BW and public policy (Adler-Kassner and Harrington) and multilingual students (Zamel and Spack). The general perspective noted by most of the issue is the political pressure that has been brought on BW programs across the nation, a call to hold BW programs accountable, to demonstrate their worth. Mainstreaming programs are, therefore, one example of what some are doing to make BW programs work for these students – BW students who are increasingly multilingual and multicultural, and have one thing in common: they are not college-ready. Otte and Williams-Mlynarzyck (2010) offer this critique of mainstreaming:

> Regardless of where it is located or how it is structured, the success or failure of a mainstreaming initiative or BW program has to do with a host of factors: how students are defined (and define themselves), how programs are constituted, what theories drive the work, what practices are encouraged, what institutional support is provided (or withheld) (p. 39)

Saliday (2002), *The Politics of Remediation*, also notes the importance of how mainstreaming is "represented and understood by policymakers as well as stakeholders" (qtd. In Otte and Willians Mlynarzyck, p. 40). This indeed is paramount if BW is to survive – in whatever form is necessary in order to serve these students and provide a way out of poverty and all it entails.

Professional Development: A Review of the Literature

Defining Professional Development

In order to better understand the role of professional development (PD) in the utilization of Contextualization as a teaching and learning strategy in the teaching of BW skills, it is important to briefly examine the literature on PD. According to Glatthorn

(1995), "Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her experience systematically" (p. 41). This assumes the instructor is a "reflective" teacher. This has been characterized by Bartlett (1990) in "Teacher Development through Reflective Teaching":

1. Mapping what I do [as a teacher]

2. Discovering the reasons and assumption for what I do

3. Critically evaluating these reasons and assumptions

4. Appraising alternative practices

5. Implementing the results of reflection (p. 209)

This step by step process is intended to be circular and never ending.

Any observation of the field of education, however, quickly reveals that this process of examination is not just an isolated endeavor. There is a long history of trainings undertaken with colleagues, and these are intended to be utilized individually by teachers to improve their teaching and the learning of their students. This suggests a social constructionist orientation and practice; it also suggests a contextualized approach to PD that reveals its roots in John Dewey's concept of experiential learning. In other words, the knowledge and practice of teachers develops as they continue to learn by doing (experimenting) and reflecting individually and with colleagues. This is a systematic process.

The first factor that makes PD systematic is the analysis that must occur of what works and what doesn't work in the classroom (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995; King and Newman, 2000; Dads, 2001). This could suggest teachers would address the most problematic issue first, resolve it and move on to the next issue. The second

factor that makes PD systematic is the workshops and courses offered based on an analysis of what teachers need most in order to succeed (Abdal-Haqq, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Baker and Smith, 1999; Dudzinski et. al, 2000; Ganser, 2000; Ancess, 2001; McLaughlin and Zarro, 2001).

It is significant to note, however, that there is no one method of PD that fits all teachers and schools. It should most likely be a mix of various models, techniques and procedures given the wide range of diversity among teachers and educational institutions – not to mention social, political, and economic factors. Here is an example of a list of possible PD options slightly adapted to apply specifically to teachers:

- **Case Study Method** – The case [study] method is a teaching approach that consists in presenting [teachers] with a case, putting them in the role of a decision maker facing a problem
- **Consultation** – to assist an individual or group of [teachers] to clarify and address immediate concerns by following a systematic problem-solving process.
- **Coaching** – to enhance a [teacher's] competencies in a specific skill area by providing a process of observation, reflection, and action.
- **Communities of Practice** – to improve professional practice by engaging in shared inquiry and learning with [other teachers] who have a common goal
- **Lesson Study** – to solve practical dilemmas related to intervention or instruction through participation with other professionals in systematically examining practice
- **Mentoring** – to promote [a teacher's] awareness and refinement of his or her own professional development by providing and recommending structured opportunities for reflection and observation
- **Reflective Supervision** – to support, develop, and ultimately evaluate the performance of [teachers] through a process of inquiry that encourages their understanding and articulation of the rationale for their own practices
- **Technical Assistance** – to assist [teachers] and their organization to improve by offering resources and information, supporting networking and change efforts. (Wikipedia, Professional Development, Approaches, para. 1)

In light of the aforementioned options, Guskey (1995) notes the importance of considering a variety of PD options as each institution moves toward finding what he calls the "optimal mix" (p. 117). This mix, for example, might also include constructing a professional portfolio, a systematic way to guide, record and assess the process of PD (Wood and McQuarrie, 1999). Many teachers also use what is called an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). These typically includes goals, plans of action, and criteria for self-evaluation. PD can likewise be much more informal (Ganser, 2000); it can include reading material, chosen either by the individual or recommended by colleagues. Documentaries on relevant issues related to education can also be viewed outside of work – simply because teaching and learning, for many, is much more than a job or a career. It is a life-long interest and experience that can result in career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, the ultimate focus of this dissertation.

The Significance of Professional Development

It should also be pointed out that the profile of PD has risen dramatically in recent years, because it is considered a major way to bring about much-needed reforms in education – all across the planet. Here is how Villegas-Reimer characterized this conclusion (based on the research of Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2001 and Walling and Lewis, 2001) in *Teacher Professional Development: An International Review of the Literature*: "This shift has been so dramatic that many have referred to it as a 'new image' of teacher learning, a 'new model' of teacher education, a 'revolution' in education, and even a 'new paradigm' in professional development" (n.d. p. 12). The significance of PD is likewise illustrated in the now extensive and growing literature on PD, the greater acknowledgment of PD both nationally and internationally, national and

international initiatives related to PD, and its inclusion in most educational reforms (Villegas-Reimers, p. 12). However, it should be noted that such reforms can range from large-scale PD initiatives to small-scale PD projects – with the recognition that "the presentation of small-scale projects may be as valuable as large-scale initiatives" (Villegas-Reimers, p.9). This is significant, because the three-fold case study for this dissertation is representative of a small-scale PD project. What has been learned from large-scale initiatives, however, breaks down into three major categories: teacher's beliefs and practices, students' learning and the implementation of education reforms. There is, of course, some application here for small-scale projects.

The Research

Teacher's Beliefs and Practices. The literature on PD is clear with respect to the fact that PD has a significant impact on teachers' beliefs and practices. One reason this is true is due to the often unrecognized phenomenon of underprepared teachers; examples are found in the United States (US National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996), Latin America (Villegas-Reimers, 1998) and Africa (Ball, 2000; Henning, 2000). In the US, the percentage of underprepared teachers is 25%. The percentages are significantly higher outside the US. What this suggests is that the reason PD has a significant impact is because any form of PD is going to have an impact on these underprepared teachers. However, this impact is also true in relation to those teachers who have been "prepared."

Cobb, Wood and Yackel, 1990; Frank, et al, 1998 and Thompson, 1992 focused on PD and the complex relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. What was learned is that changes in belief result in changes in practice and, not surprisingly,

changes in practice result in changes in belief. This relationship is seen as circular and never-ending. Moreover, goal formation, which is a practical way to translate one's beliefs into practices, significantly impacts this circular relationship. This was confirmed by Kallestad and Olweus (1998) and Young (2001). Illustrating the maintenance of this circular relationship, one study found that PD can sustain the process of PD in teachers when it includes the following:

- A heavy emphasis on providing concrete, realistic and challenging goals

- Activities that include both technical and conceptual aspects of instruction

- Support from colleagues

- Frequent opportunities for teachers to witness the effects that their efforts have on students' learning (Baker and Smith, 1999)

Students' Learning. A large number of studies have shown that more PD results in higher levels of student learning (Grosso de Leon, 2001; Falk, 2001; Tatto, 1999; Educational Testing Service, 1998; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, 1997; McGinn and Borden, 1995); more specifically, this increase in students' learning was the result of an increase in teachers' knowledge and skills. Closely related to students' learning is the fact that PD often changes an instructor's teaching methods. In fact, Borko and Putnam (1995) claimed that their data showed "powerful evidence that experienced teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical content beliefs can be affected by professional-development [programs] and that such changes are associated with changes in their classroom instruction and student achievement" (p. 55). This was echoed by Cohen and Hill (1997), Darling-Hammond (1999), Supovitz and Turner (2000), as well as Supovitz, Maher and Kahle (2000).

In contrast, low-student learning (achievement) has been related to when instructors teach subjects they were not "prepared" to teach. In fact, Ingersol (2001) learned that: "Requiring teachers to teach classes to which they have not been trained or educated harms teachers and students" (p. 42, qtd. In Villegas-Reimers, n.d. p. 23). These teachers are typically "first-time teachers, in low-income schools, small schools, and lower-achieving classes" (Villegas-Reimers, p. 23). As for the "harm" teachers experience, most notable is just the waste of their time and the education that prepared them for teaching a different subject matter; this, however, pales in comparison to the negative impact on students.

The Implementation of Education Reforms. According to the already mentioned *Teacher Professional Development: An International Review of the Literature*, "Educational reforms that do not include teachers and their professional development have not been successful. Professional development initiatives that have not been embedded in some form of reform of structures and policies have not been successful either" (Villegas-Reimers, n.d., p. 24). In relation to educational reforms, the support for this claim is found in the following: Morris, Chan and Ling, 2000; Walker and Cheong, 1996; Villegas-Reimers and Reimers, 1996; Pierce and Hunsaker, 1996; Day, 2000; Klette, 2000; Chadbourne, 1995; Van Driel et. al, 2001). The common refrain from all these studies is that without the requisite knowledge, without shared governance, without respect of teachers and the utilization of their professional knowledge and skills – educational reforms will fail. This is due largely to that lack of requisite knowledge on the part of administrators and politicians, but also to resentment and resistance on the part of teachers (and sometimes, the local community) – but with humility, with shared

governance, with respect and with the utilization of teachers' knowledge and skill sets, the exact opposite is true. Examples of success are found in the studies conducted by Dalstrom et. al, 1999; Robinson, 1999; and Samuel, 1998.

In relation to PD initiatives, those "that are not embedded in some form of major reform of structures, policies and organizations have not been successful, as changing teachers without changing context, beliefs, and structures rarely creates a significant change" (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995; Futrell et. al, 1995 in Villegas-Reimers, n.d., p. 26). This is supported by Schifter, Russel and Bastable, 1999 and Wideen, 1992. It should be noted, however, that these were all large-scale initiatives and, therefore, the above conclusion does not necessarily preclude the success of small-scale PD projects – with large-scale initiatives being defined by an entire school or school-system (city, county, state or nation), while a small-scale project would encompass one or more individual teachers and classrooms, not the entire school. The question, however, is what is considered "significant" and who determines that? Success in a small-scale project could be defined quite differently than success in a large-scale initiative.

Calling this possibility of success in large-scale initiatives into question, Little (2001) suggested that in most cases PD is nothing more than administration determining what the problem is and how to fix it – without consulting teachers. PD also becomes the way that administration attempts to motivate teachers to implement the goals of the administration. Here is how Little characterized the dilemma that such PD represents to faculty:

1. "Reforms have the potential to enhance or threaten the emotional, moral and intellectual satisfactions of classroom teaching" (p. 26).

2. "Reforms have the potential to unite or divide colleagues or to generate or interrupt friendships and other bonds of professional community" (p. 27).

3. Reforms have the potential to consume teachers' private lives and to strain family relationships" (p. 27).

Little's research, however, does not stop there; it notes when satisfaction is enhanced, when unity is maintained and when the professional lives of teachers do not "spill over" into their personal lives PD can be a positive experience for teachers. And, by implication, PD can be a positive experience for their students – as well as the schools and communities in which they reside, whether that is local, national or global.

Professional Development for CTL

Background. To understand how PD can be utilized for CTL, looking once again to the California Community College system and what they did to train their faculty in relation to CTL is a good place to start. It is also important to note that it was also a large-scale PD initiative – which, once again, stands in contrast to the small-scale PD project represented by the three-fold case study of this dissertation. According to *Contextualized Teaching and Learning: a Faculty Primer* (2009), their program for PD was actually two-fold: in person and on-line. Both, however, focused on course and program design, curriculum development and implementation and learning assessment (Baker, Hope & Karandjeff, p. 17). As was noted, explained and illustrated earlier (in this chapter) in the review of the literature on CTL, *The Primer* also offers a significant number of case studies demonstrating how faculty contextualized their courses in different disciplines and programs, examples which suggest the kind of support required in the form of PD. These examples represent eleven different practices and are not intended to represent all

possible variations of CTL. In relation to implementation, although it was a large-scale initiative (state-wide), a glimpse is given into the individual classrooms of those involved – perhaps approximating in some respects the small-scale project model and the potentially different implications for PD.

As for CTL and the context chosen to interest and engage students, the examples from the California study range from the personal to the professional. And finally, in relation to the chosen content, they range from the specific to the general, the local to the global. It is important to note, however, that all the variations can be categorized in two ways: stand-alone classrooms and learning communities (Baker, Hope & Karandjeff, 2009, p. 18). It is also important to understand the different types of stand-alone classrooms, as well as the typical learning community because this also impacts the form that PD takes. There are basically two kinds of stand-alone classrooms: infused academic and infused occupational classrooms. The content "infused" is basic reading, math or writing skills either in the context of academic or occupational subject matter. As for learning communities, the subject matter and the content (basic skills) are taught separately; however, the content is intended to support student success in the subject matter/disciplinary course (Baker, Hope & Karandjeff, pp. 18-19). For further clarification, revisit the list of these examples in the Definition of Terms section in Chapter One and, related to faculty response, the review of the literature on CTL earlier in this chapter.

Models of Professional Development. According to *The Primer* (2009), what links these examples, or perhaps more importantly, models to be utilized for PD, is the tremendous variety to the approaches to CTL and the implementation of CTL. This is due

to the various interests of faculty and administration, the subject matter and goals of any given course or program, and the interests and needs of students. As eluded to earlier, but spoken of here in greater detail, the researchers note that there are four main considerations that undergird these models: resources, research, replicability and scalability, as well as sustainability. In other words, for faculty to develop and implement CTL, access must be given to resources; this is release time as well as funding and support both from within and outside of the college – which, it should be noted, are not always necessary in small-scale projects. Research is also a necessity to support and validate all initiatives and projects; formative and summative evaluation of each must likewise be utilized if questions related to replicability, scalability and sustainability are to be answered (pp. 61-64) – allowing the school to further implement CTL strategies for the purpose of increasing student interest, engagement, success and graduation rates.

Of course, the cornerstone of the aforementioned considerations is PD – both formal and informal (for large-scale initiatives and small-scale projects). Moreover, neither formal nor informal PD exists without the interest and desire of faculty to develop and implement CTL strategies. There must be a willingness to work both alone and with other faculty, to seek to collaborate and to initiate, to develop and to implement, and finally – throughout the entire process – to reach out for support from the administration of the school if such support is necessary. This is all exemplified in *The Primer* (2009), and therefore *The Primer* itself can likewise be considered a model for PD as many teachers and schools have looked to these examples to help them contextualize their courses and programs.

Offering confirmation of the perspective on PD presented in *The Primer* (2009) is Perin (2011). Based on her review of the literature, for large-scale initiatives she suggests that faculty should work together in groups and across disciplines with experienced trainers from within the same institution. The training should likewise involve intensive instruction and support in the form of coaching and agreed upon learning outcomes. There must also be agreement on how to achieve these outcomes. She cites Kozeracki (2005), Greenleaf et al. (2010), and Baker, Hope & Karandjeff (2009). The former addresses the qualifications of the trainers, while the latter two address the methodology utilized for PD (pp. 35-36). In contrast, nothing is specifically said about PD for small-scale projects.

Implications for CTL and the Instruction of BW Skills

In relation to the three-fold case study for this dissertation, what appears to be evident with respect to PD for CTL and the instruction of BW skills is that the process should be two-fold: it should be guided and driven by the individual instructor's interests, and it should be equally guided and driven by research, best practices and the factors/problems/distractions students face (See Statement of Problems section in Chapter One). When these are all combined, PD for CTL and BW may have more impact – not only on students, but also on teachers. This, of course, is the message of this dissertation – highlighted in the research questions: what is faculty (and student) experience with CTL and the instruction of BW skills combined with PD for faculty, and what is the subsequent response of faculty in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment?

Conclusion

In the chapters that follow, answers to how faculty (and students) experience the three teaching methodologies associated with CTL and the teaching of BW skills (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized instruction*) combined with PD, and what the subsequent response of faculty is in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment will be explored and analyzed in order to ascertain the pros and cons of PD, CTL and BW for faculty. The assumption is that if faculty are satisfied and happy with their experience with and response to CTL, BW and PD, this will inevitably translate to an increase in student interest, engagement, retention and success, ultimately resulting in an increase in graduation rates. Before preceding to those chapters, however, it is important to first look at the methodology used in this three-fold case study.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Research Design: A General Overview

The methods utilized in this three-fold case study were chosen based on the research questions: what is faculty (and student) experience with Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the instruction of basic writing (BW) skills combined with professional development (PD), and what is the subsequent response of faculty in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment? These questions suggested the best method for the study was a series of interviews. As a result, I did a pre and a post interview (entrance and exit survey) and bi-weekly or "as needed" conversations (also based on survey questions) with all the participants in relation to their questions, concerns and any comments related to their experience with and response to CTL, BW and PD. Audio and field notes were also taken at each meeting; the content of each meeting was audio recorded, while my thoughts and impressions were recorded in the field notes – as I am not only the researcher for this study and author of this dissertation, but also the third participant in each of the three case studies, each involving a primary and a secondary participant. In addition to these interviews and conversations, a representative selection of student writing artifacts were also collected, evaluated and graded by the instructor/participant, followed by a joint-analysis by the participant and myself. In effect, these interactions were a continuing form of individualized and organic PD. In other words, the content of the PD arose out of the circumstances of each participant; the literature (research and best practices) on CTL, BW and PD; and my educational background and experience with CTL, BW and PD.

Given that there are three teaching methodologies related to CTL, I chose to do three cases studies. Not counting myself, this meant that six faculty members would participate: a primary and a secondary participant for the *contextualized instruction method*, a primary and a secondary participant for the *integrated contextualized instruction method* and a primary and a secondary participant for the *embedded contextualized Instruction method*. The purpose of the secondary participant was to either support or to call into question the results and the conclusions related to the primary participant. I also chose to have two concurrent phases to the study: the first was individualized and organic PD with respect to CTL and BW (what I did as both the researcher and a participant); the second was the actual implementation of the study (what faculty did as participants). From these two concurrent phases, as already noted, all interview/survey data was collected via audio-recordings and field notes. In effect, I merged the concepts of interview and survey – utilizing the survey questions as a "jumping off" point for all conversations which comprised the content of the interviews. And finally, the narrative method of telling and describing the "stories" of each participant was utilized, but it was never meant to be solely an ethnography; the study actually has elements of all four types of qualitative research: phenomenology (description of an experience), ethnography (description of a culture), grounded theory (generation of a theory) and case study (a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases). I chose, however, to call my study a case study – because it was focused on and limited to specific individuals and their teaching.

A Closer Look

Participants for the study

The participants for this study broke down into the following categories: for the contextualized instruction method, two BW instructors participated – a primary and a secondary participant; for the integrated contextualized instruction method, a Sociology instructor and an Economics instructor participated – a primary and a secondary participant; and for the embedded contextualization instruction method, a Criminal Justice instructor and a Business instructor participated – a primary and a secondary participant. Each faculty member also taught two sections of the same class, allowing one class to serve as a comparison to the contextualized class – with one exception related to the first case study. This comparison allowed faculty to determine if they saw an increase in student interest, engagement, retention and success due to CTL and the instruction of BW skills combined with PD, which could ultimately translate into greater interest, engagement, retention and success for faculty as it relates to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment. It should also be noted that all participants were selected based on their interest in the project and their availability. This was ascertained via brief conversations with potential participants in which I informed each of my study and what his/her involvement would be if he/she chose to volunteer to be a part of the study. And finally, all faculty, including myself, were full-time, tenured faculty at the community college level; more specifically, this was at Olive-Harvey College, one of the seven City Colleges of Chicago.

Because I am also a participant, it is important at this juncture to provide information on my educational background and experience: sixteen years of teaching at

two universities, one four-year college and three community colleges with all classes taught related largely to writing. I have a B.A. in Theology (Pre-Seminary Bible) and a M.A. in English and with the approval of this dissertation, an Ed. D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a minor in African American Studies. I also did a tenure-track project on CTL and, at the time of this writing, have utilized this teaching and learning strategy for three years (eight semesters).

Procedures

A month prior to this three-fold case study, faculty members were provided with a Faculty Handbook on CTL (written by the author of this study and located in the Appendix) and were asked to read it. Then, I met with each faculty member for a pre-interview the week before classes began. In this pre-interview (entrance survey), I went over the PD handbook, answered questions, addressed concerns and basically oriented each faculty member to the study. I also assisted each faculty member with developing his/her chosen teaching method for CTL and the degree to which he/she was choosing to implement it. These meetings were about 30-60 minutes in duration depending on the participants understanding of CTL and BW and their individual time constraints. This was followed by bi-weekly or "as needed" conversations throughout the rest of the semester. The number of these meetings varied for each faculty member – as did the duration of each meeting, but generally each meeting was anywhere from 15-60 minutes long. In these meetings, individualized organic PD continued and all questions and concerns were addressed. Faculty comments in relation to their experience with and response to CTL were audio-recorded and my thoughts and impressions were recorded in the field notes. Then, at the end of the semester, a post-interview (an exit survey) was

implemented in which faculty answered a series of questions and were encouraged to elaborate on each one.

Artifacts, writing assignments from students, were also collected in an attempt to measure progress in the students' writing for each method of CTL instruction by three of the six instructors – for the purpose of ascertaining faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL and the instruction of BW skills combined with PD. Only the primary participants provided writing artifacts, while the graded papers and recollections of the secondary participants served to either support or call into question the analysis related to the primary participant's artifacts. The reasons for this will be addressed later in this chapter. From this analysis of the writing artifacts and the survey and interview data collected over the course of the entire semester, the rest of the dissertation, beyond the Introduction and the Literature Review, was written. It is also important to note that my education, my sixteen years of teaching experience, my tenure-track project and my current and continuing experience with CTL, BW and PD contributed greatly – because, in many respects, the project and my current experience were/are a "pilot" for this three-fold case study. This is why I am the third participant in each case study.

Description of Measurement Instruments

As has already been noted, all interviews were based on the following survey questions: pre and post interviews, bi-weekly or "as needed" conversations and an analysis of the student writing artifacts, which occurred during the post interview. Here is a closer look:

Pre-interview/entrance survey. As for the content of the pre-interview (entrance survey), the pre-interview contained questions related to the faculty member and the

faculty member's experience with and response to CTL and BW combined with PD. Here is a list of the questions:

Tell me about yourself as a teacher and feel free to elaborate on your answers to each question.

1. What is/are your degree/degrees in?

2. What is your official position as a full-time faculty member?

3. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

4. What is your academic discipline? List the classes you have taught.

5. What is your main teaching philosophy?

6. What teaching and learning strategy (or strategies) do you currently use?

7. What do you see as your accomplishments in the field of education?

8. From what do you derive your career satisfaction and personal fulfillment?

9. On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your level of career satisfaction and personal fulfillment?

10. What is your current understanding of Contextualization and the instruction of BW skills?

11. What are your expectations from this study, both professionally and personally?

12. How do you feel about your participation in this study?

Bi-weekly or "as-needed" conversations. These bi-weekly or "as needed" conversations were largely individualized, organic PD. Depending on the participant, the frequency of these meeting varied, sometime more, sometimes less, than bi-weekly. The content of these meetings was determined by faculty questions, concerns and comments. Faculty comments related to their experience with and response to CTL and BW

combined with PD were audio recorded and my thoughts and impressions were recorded in the field notes. The following are a series of prompts used to elicit questions, concerns and comments. In other words, the questions served as a "jumping off" point for all conversations:

1. Tell me about what is happening in your CTL and BW class. How did you implement CTL and the instruction of BW skills?

2. How are students responding?

3. Do you see any differences yet between your CTL students and your other students in the class being used for comparison purposes?

4. What did you learn about CTL and the instruction of BW skills?

5. Do you have any questions related to the implementation of CTL and BW, either related to what you did or what you plan to do during the next two-week period?

6. Do you have any concerns?

7. What is your response to CTL, BW and PD with respect to interest, engagement, retention and success as far as career satisfaction and personal fulfillment are concerned?

Note: these questions had to be slightly adapted for the embedded contextual instruction method, given that these faculty do not actually "implement" CTL; it is implemented for them as I was "embedded" in their classes digitally in power-point videos played in class (as each instructor saw fit) and available to students on Blackboard. More will be said about this later in this chapter.

Writing artifacts. Artifacts in the form of writing assignments collected from students by the instructors were utilized as another means of measuring the impact of CTL and the instruction of BW skills combined with PD on the participants. In other words, what was faculty experience and did student performance on the writing artifacts impact their career satisfaction and personal fulfillment? The types of writing assignments varied among the six instructors but allowed each instructor to see the progress or lack thereof of his/her students. With my help, an analysis was made of a representative sample of the students' writing (first and last papers of five anonymous students), and these papers were compared with a representative sample of the students' writing (first and last papers of five anonymous students) in the class that was not contextualized.

It is also important to note that there were a number of significant exceptions with respect to the collection of these writing artifacts which resulted in organizing each case study by a primary and secondary participant. The secondary participants either did not collect enough writing artifacts or did not collect any artifacts. There was also a problem related to the number of student artifacts. The main reason for only choosing five papers for analysis was because, unfortunately, in an urban environment students often quit attending classes and doing assignments, leaving a smaller number of students who actually did both the first and the last papers. Indeed, it is not uncommon to begin a class with 25 students and to end with only 10 students. This, of course, illustrates one aspect of the problem of remediation this dissertation seeks to address.

It should also be noted that all writing assignments throughout the semester were considered for content (subject matter and its organization) – largely via the instructor's

recollections, while specific BW skills (grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice) were analyzed by comparing first and last papers. Here are the questions that guided our analysis – both instructor/participant and researcher/participant:

1. With respect to the writing issues you saw and addressed via CTL and the instruction of BW skills, did you see any improvement in students' writing?

2. What were those writing issues, and to what degree did you see improvements?

3. Do you think CTL and the instruction of BW skills made any difference in students' interest, engagement, retention and success?

Conversations were also had between myself and each instructor/participant regarding the instructor's response to this progress or lack thereof: do these writing artifacts, a more concrete manifestation of the impact of CTL, impact career satisfaction and personal fulfilment? This analysis of the writing artifacts took place during the last meeting and was separate from the post-interview/exit survey.

Post-interview/exit survey. As for the content of the post-interview/exit survey, the exit survey contained questions related solely to the faculty member's experience with and response to CTL, BW and PD over the course of the entire semester. Here is a list of the questions:

Now that the semester is over, let's talk about your experience with and response to CTL.

1. What did you learn about the process of CTL and the instruction of BW skills in relation to your own teaching practice?

2. What did you learn about the process of CTL and BW in relation to your students – both in the CTL class and the class that was utilized for comparison purposes?

3. What are your overall conclusions?

4. If your conclusions are positive, will you expand your use of CTL and BW to more or to all of your classes?

5. Will you seek to implement CTL and BW to a greater degree than you did this semester?

6. If your conclusions are negative, why do you think that is the case?

7. If you have a mixed-review of CTL and the instruction of BW skills, will you continue to use CTL but seek to address the problems you had or will you simply discontinue the use of CTL and the instruction of BW skills?

8. Has the use of CTL and BW impacted your level of interest, engagement, retention and success as far as career satisfaction and personal fulfillment are concerned?

9. Do you have any questions, concerns or additional comments you would like to make?

Data

The following addresses all issues related to data: the number and duration of interviews, data analysis and data tables.

Number and duration of interviews. Finally, before addressing the question of data analysis, it is important to provide the following data regarding the number and duration of the interviews (the pre-interview, the bi-weekly or "as-needed" interviews

and the post interview). Included here is also the number of writing artifacts from each participant in each case study:

- Case Study # 1: Primary Participant

    Pre-Interview: 60 minutes

    Bi-Weekly or "As-Needed" Interviews: Eight meetings: 1) 45 min. / 2) 15 min. / 3) 30 min. / 4) 60 min. / 5) 60 min. / 6) 15 min. / 7) 15 min. / 8) 30 min.

    Post/Exit Interview: 90 min.

    Writing Artifacts: Contextualized Class – 5 first and last papers from the same 5 anonymous students / Comparison Class – 5 first and last papers from the same 5 anonymous students

Case Study # 1: Secondary Participant

    Pre-Interview: 60 minutes

    Bi-Weekly or "As-Needed" Interviews: Three meetings: 1) 30 min. / 2) 30 min. / 3) 30 min.

    Post/Exit Interview: 30 min.

    Writing Artifacts: No papers were provided

- Case Study # 2: Primary Participant

    Pre-Interview: 90 minutes

    Bi-Weekly or "As-Needed" Interviews: Three meetings: 1) 60 min. / 2) 60 min. / 3) 60 min.

    Post/Exit Interview: 90 min.

Writing Artifacts: Contextualized Class – 5 last papers from 5 anonymous

students / Comparison Class – 5 last papers from 5 anonymous students

Case Study # 2: Secondary Participant

Pre-Interview: 60 minutes

Bi-Weekly or "As-Needed" Interviews: Six meetings: 1) 30 min. / 2) 20

min. / 3) 30 min. / 4) 20 min. / 5) 15 min. / 6) 30 min.

Post/Exit Interview: 60 min.

Writing Artifacts: No papers were provided

- Case Study # 3: Primary Participant

Pre-Interview: 60 minutes

Bi-Weekly or "As-Needed" Interviews: Three meetings: 1) 15 min. / 2) 15

min. / 3) 15 min.

Post/Exit Interview: 30 min.

Writing Artifacts: Contextualized Class – 5 first and last papers from the

same 5 anonymous students / Comparison Class – 5 first and last papers

from the same 5 anonymous students

Case Study # 3: Secondary Participant

Pre-Interview: 60 minutes

Bi-Weekly or "As-Needed" Interviews: Three meetings: 1) 15 min. / 2) 15

min. / 3) 15 min.

Post/Exit Interview: 30 min.

Writing Artifacts: No first papers and only four last papers were provided

Data analysis. In order to understand the data collected from the pre-interview (entrance survey), the bi-weekly or "as needed" conversations, the writing artifacts, and finally, the post-interview (exit survey), it is important to recognize that the research design for this study was Non-experimental and Descriptive. Non-experimental designs are not intended to address questions of cause and effect, but rather can "uncover relationships of interest to educators" (Suter, 2006, p. 295). Description, on the other hand, allows educators to get a clearer understanding of whatever phenomenon is being studied if the description is done carefully and in great detail. The main method used in Descriptive research designs is the survey/interview. The pre-interview (entrance survey) supplied a baseline, while the bi-weekly or "as needed" conversations" function much like a "longitudinal" survey – collecting data overtime in order to "track" changes in faculty experience with and response to CTL and BW combined with PD. This was done for the dual purpose of providing organic PD and measuring career satisfaction and personal fulfillment. Finally, it should also be noted that the collection of more than one type of data was mainly for the purpose of triangulation.

Data tables. The analysis of the data, therefore, was accomplished via reflection on faculty (and student) experience with and response to CTL and the instruction of BW skills combined with PD, as elicited from the interview/survey data: the pre-interview (entrance survey), the bi-weekly or "as-needed" conversations, the writing artifacts and the post interview (exit survey)**.**

Interview data table. The table below provides an overview of the categories of data collected (recorded and categorized in the field notes) in relation to the two research questions: What is faculty (and student) experience with CTL and the instruction of BW

skills combined with PD for faculty? And, what is faculty response to CTL and the

instruction of BW skills?) – referred to in the table as Experience and Response. Note,

under Response, CS and PF = Career Satisfaction and Personal Fulfillment.

Case Studies	Experience	Response
Case Study # 1 (Contextualized Instruction Method)		
Primary Participant	CTL Focus = College Success Basic Writing Skills Instruction Writing Assignments	CS and PF
Secondary Participant	CTL Focus = Race and Racism Basic Writing Skills Instruction Writing Assignments	CS and PF
Case Study # 2 (Integrated Contextualized Instruction Method)		
Primary Participant	CTL Focus = Sociology Basic Writing Skills Instruction Writing Assignments	CS and PF
Secondary Participant	CTL Focus = Economics Basic Writing Skills Instruction Writing Assignments	CS and PF
Case Study # 3 (Embedded Contextualized Instruction Method)		
Primary Participant	CTL Focus = Business Basic Writing Skills Instruction Writing Assignments	CS and PF
Secondary Participant	CTL Focus = Criminal Justice Basic Writing Skills Instruction Writing Assignments	CS and PF

To understand the three areas of Experience noted (in the table above) that were

common to all three studies, I offer the following: 1) Because all participants were

already utilizing CTL to varying degrees, without actually knowing it was CTL, I decided

that the focus for each participant's class was considered a CTL focus. Only the

participants in Case Study # 1 had to choose subject matter that was not the normal

subject matter for the class; these were Basic English classes focused on College Success

and Race and Racism. 2) As for BW Skills instruction, all three case studies had this in

common – although there were significant differences in how this was accomplished:

formal BW skills instruction, integrated BW skills instruction which was much more

limited and embedded BW skills instruction via videos. 3) Finally, each study also had

writing assignments which were created by the instructors, taught by the instructors and

evaluated and graded by the instructors. There was variety, however, in relation to the

types of writing assignments: essays, reports and research papers (both individual and

group research papers).

   Writing artifact data table. In relation to the analysis of these writing artifacts,

content, organization of content, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word

choice (as well as grades) were examined – when student papers were available; when

they were not available, students' grades and instructor/participant recollections were

utilized. This is likewise illustrated in the following table which serves as an overview of

the categories of data for the analysis of the writing artifacts. Above the table is the

clarification for the list of writing categories:

C = Content

OC = Organization of Content

G = Grammar

P = Punctuation

SP = Spelling

M = Mechanics

WC = Word Choice

Grades

Recollections of Instructors/Participants

<u>Case Studies</u>   <u>Writing Categories</u>

                                   C / OC / G / P / SP / M / WC / Grades / Recollections

<u>Case Study # 1</u>
<u>(Contextualized Instruction Method)</u>

Primary Participant
Secondary Participant

<u>Case Study # 2</u>
<u>(Integrated Contextualized Instruction Method)</u>

Primary Participant
Secondary Participant

<u>Case Study # 3</u>
<u>(Embedded Contextualized Instruction Method)</u>

Primary Participant
Secondary Participant

Conclusion

      What follows in the remaining chapters are the narration of the three case studies

(Chapters Four, Five and Six) seen through the prism of my own experience with CTL,

BW and PD (my tenure-track project and my continuing use of this teaching and learning

strategy) and my experience with each participant. This is followed by a reflection on the

study with respect to the review of the literature on CTL, BW and PD (Chapter Seven)

and a reflection on the study in relation to its current and future implications for research

and practice (Chapter Eight). And finally, the dissertation includes a bibliography and an

appendix which contains a PD handbook created by the author of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR – CONTEXTUALIZED INSTRUCTION

Introduction

This chapter includes the first case study related to the first of the three

instructional methods (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction*

and embedded contextualized instruction) of Contextualized Teaching and Learning

(CTL). Involved in this study is a primary and a secondary participant. Largely, this

chapter will focus on the primary participant, but will end with a summary look at the

secondary participant – to either support or to call into question the conclusions related to

the primary participant. It is also important to note that this case study is reported here

through the prism of my experience with CTL and Basic Writing (BW), not only in my

current classes, but more importantly, as documented in my previously mentioned tenure-

track study on Contextualization: A Teaching and Learning Strategy for Improving

Student Interest, Engagement, Retention and Success (2014). It is also seen through the

prism of my experience with each participant in this dissertation. It is, therefore,

significant to mention that I utilized the contextualized instruction method extensively

prior to this study – because that experience (and my continuing experience) serves as a

"pilot" for all the case studies in this dissertation. This is why I too am considered a

participant in this study.

As for contextualized instruction, in Chapter One, the following explanation is

given: Perin (2011) defines it as follows: "Contextualized basic skills instruction involves

the teaching of academic skills against a backdrop of specific subject matter to which

such skills need to be applied, and is taught by reading, writing, and math instructors" (p.

1). The point of such instruction is to find a "backdrop of specific subject matter" that is

of interest to students, in order to increase student interest, engagement, retention and success. In other words, although these developmental education classes are set up to teach students basic skills in reading, writing or math, the focus of these classes is on a topic of interest, something students will find relevant to one of the following: their personal lives, their education and/or their future careers. Contextualized instruction can also be implemented to varying degrees at the discretion of the instructor.

As noted in Chapter One, some examples are: a Reading class in which reading assignments are related to a specific career field. For example, students in nursing might read about the lives of nurses, their interaction with patients and doctors, or they might read about a variety of health issues. This could also be enhanced by a service learning experience related to the readings. Readings could also be related to societal or personal issues, and perhaps most importantly, reading strategies are taught. A Math class, for example, might learn specific types of math problems utilized in a particular career field. In other words, the type of math that an automotive technician might use, the type of math utilized in the field of construction, or the type of math that accountants use. These are just a few examples, but whatever the example, like the reading examples, this could also have a service learning component. And finally, for an English class, the possibilities are almost limitless. The focus of the class can be anything ranging from education to career development or from social/political to personal issues. Students will write about these topics and hopefully learn BW skills through instruction and/or in the process of writing itself. Service learning can also be a component.

The Primary Participant

Prior to the beginning of this study, Professor LW officially agreed to participate. LW is an English instructor. As such, she is already teaching BW skills, but wanted to try to contextualize the concepts she was teaching in a College Success class – to see if this would increase student interest, engagement, retention and success. College Success is a first-year course designed to orient students to college and the process of being a student. From the answers to the pre-interview (entrance survey) questions, I learned that LW has a B.A. in English, a M.A. in English Composition and is currently working on a Ph.D. in Reading, Writing and Literature. She began her teaching career as an adjunct in 2003 and was hired as a full-time faculty member at the City Colleges of Chicago (Olive-Harvey) in the fall of 2011. She was tenured three years later. At the time of this writing, she has 13 years of teaching experience. She has taught such courses as Basic Writing (Dev. Ed.), Literature, Poetry, Composition I (essay writing) and Composition II (research writing). LW was also a writing tutor for a number of years prior to being hired full time at Olive-Harvey.

LW's philosophy of education mainly involves providing an academic environment in which students can learn, an environment that is psychologically safe and comfortable. She wants students to not be hesitant to ask questions and to truly believe in themselves – to believe that they can actually learn and succeed in college. This is extremely important given that our students are from an urban environment with all the accompanying issues associated with poverty, racism and a lack of quality education. (See the Statement of the Problem section in Chapter One for a list of the factors/problems/distractions our students face.) The student demographics of the college,

likewise, are largely African American (roughly 90-95%) with a small percentage of Hispanics and an even smaller percentage of other minorities and Caucasians. Beyond her focus on students, LW also believes her teaching must meet the needs of the college, which in this case is to address the significant problem of the need for remediation – because the vast majority of our students are not college-ready. In relation to how she implements her philosophy in the classroom, she utilizes various classroom activities: group and individual work, student presentations, brief lectures and lessons, a variety of videos and the use of technology such as supplemental online writing programs. She also utilizes Blackboard, an online learning system where an instructor can place course documents: a syllabus, handouts and power-points for lectures. Blackboard also has other benefits that LW uses: it houses Turn-It-In, a plagiarism software; Pearson's My Writing Lab, an online writing program; My Grades, a program that allows students to see and track their grades; and finally, Grades First, a program that allows teachers to communicate with students and their advisors regarding any academic, personal or financial issue students may be having.

In relation to what LW does outside of the classroom, she is a single mother of a three-year old daughter, and as has been mentioned, she is taking classes for her Ph.D. On campus, she teaches a full load (4 classes for English faculty), she is involved in a mentoring program and occasionally volunteers for various educational programs and committees on campus. Last year, she was the secretary for the union but found that to require more time and effort than her schedule allowed. She also seeks out professional development opportunities and has presented at a few conferences. When asked from what she derives her career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, LW first mentions

teaching. She loves to communicate, to interact with students and faculty and especially enjoys fulfilling her educational goals. Besides receiving her Ph.D., she would like to be published in academic journals and would like to work at a four-year university. On a scale of 1-10, LW rates her career satisfaction and personal fulfillment at a 9, but notes that working, going to school and having a young child can be very stressful.

Because it is not uncommon for teachers to know CTL by another name, LW succinctly expressed her own understanding of this teaching and learning strategy as, basically, "teaching according to a theme." She also noted that she has never taught thematically before; however, after reading and discussing the Professional Development Handbook on Contextualization (see Appendix) created by the author of this dissertation and provided to each participant, she realized that she has taught thematically, but only in relation to individual assignments. Consequently, LW expressed a desire to know more and that she hoped that the implementation of contextualized instruction would increase her students' interest, engagement, retention and success. And, in relation to success, she also hoped it would help improve her students' writing – as grammar instruction combined with exercises and quizzes, in her experience, only seems to help those students who take the initiative to actually transfer what is taught to their writing. This, unfortunately, is often a small number of students.

Over the course of the study, LW and I met bi-weekly and "as-needed." In these meetings, initially, we discussed how and to what degree she could contextualize college success - specifically, based on her wishes, in the writing assignments and the class discussions related to each of these assignments. We also discussed what worked and what did not work in her implementation of contextualized instruction as the study

progressed. Although grammar instruction has not been effective in improving the quality of her students' writing, LW was not ready to discontinue its use (as some would) and did not know of a more effective way to do it. This meant she would continue with grammar instruction, but hoped that CTL would somehow impact the quality of her students' writing. In relation to college success, what is generally covered in relation to this subject matter is preparing for success in learning, preparing for success in college and career and preparing for success in life. According to the textbook used by the City Colleges of Chicago for their College Success classes, preparing for success in learning involves: learning how to think critically, learning how students learn, learning how to read college textbooks, learning how to manage time, learning how to understand and utilize emotional intelligence, learning how to write and speak effectively, learning how to improve performance on exams and tests, learning how to be engaged in learning (listening, taking notes and participating) and learning how to study, comprehend and remember. Of all these factors related to preparing for success in learning, LW contextualized critical thinking, emotional intelligence, writing and speaking effectively, as well as student engagement and comprehension.

With respect to preparing for success in college and career, the following are generally taught in a College Success class: developing library, research and information literacy skills; establishing and maintaining relationships in college and making the right choices for majors and careers. LW only contextualized the idea of establishing and maintaining relationships in college, which was manifested via group activities in her classroom. And finally, in relation to preparing for success in life, which includes appreciating diversity and managing money, LW only contextualized the appreciation of

diversity. This was manifested only in relation to one of the four writing assignments. Taking all three aspects of college success into consideration (preparing for success in learning, preparing for success in college and career and preparing for success in life), some of these aspects of college success were discussed and integrated into the writing assignments to varying and sometimes limited degrees, while other aspects of college success garnered much more attention.

Therefore, in this analysis of LW and how and to what degree she contextualized college success, the focus was on those aspects that did or did not have the most relevance to student interest, engagement, retention and success, with a primary focus on CTL's impact on the students' BW skills in relation to the following: an understanding and utilization of the writing process, quality content and the organization of that content, and finally, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. This focus, ultimately, may impact career satisfaction and personal fulfillment for an instructor (if it is effective) and raises the following question: does the contextualization of college success into LW's BW class increase her own interest, engagement, retention and success as both an instructor and a facilitator of writing? In other words, as a result of CTL – in relation to the writing assignments and the discussions that follow each assignment – does she experience greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment?

Analysis

As part of the analysis of LW's contextualization of college success into a BW class, the class was compared with another BW class in which she did not contextualize; that class, however, was from the previous semester. This was because she did not have a second BW class during the semester in which the study took place. Both classes and

LW's teaching strategies were discussed in the pre-interview and access to both Blackboard classes and all students' papers (submitted to Turn-It-In and located in Blackboard) was given throughout the semester. This access allowed better understanding of the content of both courses. It also allowed an examination of the impact of CTL on the students' BW skills, which was undertaken throughout the semester in relation to the content and organization of each paper (I combine content and organization because I believe there is no such thing as quality content without an appropriate organization of that content.) and at the end of the semester in relation to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice when the first and last papers were compared. This examination, both during and at the end of the semester, also included the impact of student understanding and utilization of the writing process – because it is foundational and instrumental in the implementation of all writing. It should also be noted that grammar instruction, grammar exercises and quizzes occurred throughout the semester.

Pre-Interview

It is likewise important to note that from the pre-interview, the one factor which stands out about LW and her teaching is how she seeks to encourage her students; this is evident in how she interacts with them, almost as if she is a "nurturing mother." As a component of her personality, this makes emotional intelligence, one aspect of college success that is related to preparing for success in learning, a "natural fit" for LW. Emotional intelligence can be defined as follows: "the ability to identify your own emotions and the emotions of others, the ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving and the ability to manage emotions, including the

ability to regulate your own emotions and the ability to cheer up or calm down another person" (Psychology Today, n.d. Emotional Intelligence, What is Emotional Intelligence?, para. 1). It should also be noted that LW had never thought about how to facilitate emotional intelligence in her students – as a vehicle for their own college success. This class became an opportunity to attempt to do so. The pre-interview (entrance survey) brought this to her attention and actually helped LW to determine that emotional intelligence would be a large factor in how and to what degree she utilized contextualized instruction. LW left the first meeting excited about the possibilities and how she could build on her own personality and strengths in teaching to increase her students' interest, engagement, retention and success.

The pre-interview occurred at the beginning of the study, allowing LW to think through exactly how she would proceed. Following that first meeting, several impromptu and random discussions also occurred, because LW and I are in the same department and have developed a close friendship in which we sometimes discuss teaching and learning strategies. She is also familiar with how I have been contextualizing my own classes for the last three years, and this, coupled with the Professional Development Handbook provided to each participant of the study, is why she defines contextualization as "thematic learning" (one of the many definitions for CTL) and why she was able to quickly adapt her class for this study. LW knew how I had contextualized such subjects as career development, education, hip-hop, gangs and, most recently, police brutality. This helped her to choose college success and one aspect of it, emotional intelligence, especially once she discovered the "natural fit" emotional intelligence is for her personality and teaching strengths.

This discovery is important, because one of the significant lessons I learned in my tenure-track study was the significance of quality instruction. A cornerstone of quality instruction is the role personality plays – as a vehicle through which an instructor can not only tap into his/her passion for teaching, but also as a way to access the power of an authentic performance in the classroom. Understanding and utilizing this process consistently is all part of the teaching strategies I have brought together for my implementation of CTL, which it should be noted, once again, is a diverse family of teaching and learning strategies chosen by each instructor based on a consideration of research, best practices and a large number of factors/problems/distractions students face (mentioned earlier in this chapter and listed in the Statement of the Problem section of Chapter One). These teaching and learning strategies for me include the following: Quality Instruction, Relevant and Culturally Appropriate Subject Matter, Age Appropriate Instruction, Instruction in Self-Directed Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning, Collaborative Learning and Real-World Applications and Assessments (Given, 2014, pp. 47-53).

Bi-Weekly or "As-Needed" Interviews

During the second meeting, we discussed what LW's family of teaching strategies might be, something she had never really thought about before. This was something she said she would need to think about during the semester. She also shared how she specifically decided to adapt the class to fit her focus on college success. The decision, as has already been noted, was to limit the contextualization to the writing assignments and the discussions that followed each assignment. What follows is a discussion about the

content of the remaining bi-weekly or "as-needed" meetings – organized around the four writing assignments.

The first writing assignment. The first assignment was to be a narration of a story related to five different questions with respect to college and one more general question about the student's education prior to college. Students were to choose one from among the following:

1. What was your first impression of college?

2. What is your purpose for attending college?

3. How has college affected your daily routine?

4. Is college what you expected? Why or why not?

5. Describe a school experience that forever changed your life and your outlook on life.

Taking into account these questions, it is important to note that since the class is a BW skills class, the quality of the students' writing meant that LW would have to work twice as hard to teach BW skills and, in addition to that, to contextualize the various aspects of college success she had chosen. In relation to college success, the discussions became paramount. Her reflections on the discussion that followed this first assignment and our conversation about the content (and its organization) of her students' writing, as well as a comparison to the first writing assignment of her students from the previous semester, led us both to conclude that it was too early to tell if the contextualization of college success made any difference in students' writing. In other words, it was the first writing assignment and there was no difference between the contextualized class and the comparison class at that juncture. This, of course, is one reason why the first and last

papers should be compared – within and between both classes – to see if there is any improvement in their BW skills that can be attributed to CTL and, in LW's case, the instruction of grammar.

LW did note, however, that the discussion in her class was lively and that perhaps a discussion to generate ideas prior to the writing of the paper could make for better writing content – but this was problematic because of the number of other things she had to accomplish in a class that only meets for an hour and twenty minutes twice a week. The list of other things includes: brief lectures, grammar lessons and exercises, individual and group work, a variety of videos and end-of-the semester presentations. She did, however, have a document she developed and made available to students in Blackboard that explains the Narration paper assignment, and of course, students had a textbook which explains this type of paper in some detail – but, unfortunately, neither is specific to the concept of college success. In the end, she concluded that there was not enough time in the schedule for two discussions of sufficient length related to each assignment, before the paper was written and after it was finished.

This first after-the-assignment discussion also allowed her to talk to students about the challenges of being a first generation college student and not being properly prepared for college, which likewise allowed students to vent their insecurities and also their frustrations around navigating such issues as work and school schedules, as well as more difficult topics like financial aid – asking, given the "mountain" of debt a college education can become, is it worth it? This fostered the development of critical thinking and encouraged the development of each student's emotional intelligence as each interacted with classmates and LW to think about solutions for the problems they

discussed. It also helped LW to further develop her ability to instruct using emotional intelligence and to facilitate emotional intelligence in her students.

The second writing assignment. For the second assignment, LW had her students write a description of a person, place or event in the college environment. In spite of what she had concluded about having a discussion before the assignment, she attempted it anyways, but perhaps because students were so new to college, the discussion was not lively and LW felt she had to carry the "discussion" – resulting in what felt more like a lecture. We concluded that the benefit of having a discussion before an assignment depended on the topic. Before an assignment helps students to gain clarification on the assignment, while after allows students to reflect on the assignment. Another avenue of achieving clarity, as mentioned in relation to the first assignment, is the assignment explanation located in Blackboard and the textbook for the class. However, because she gave some intriguing examples during class related to college events, a number of students actually went to a sporting event or to one of the events that were being held in the theatre, to generate ideas for the assignment. As a result, the after-the-assignment discussion went a little better than the before-the-assignment discussion. Student interest and engagement seemed to only increase, however, for those students who had the time to attend one of these events. The problem is that most of her students, because they also work and some have children, could not do so, which in this case led to a lesser quality of content in their papers. The organization of that content was also problematic.

A comparison with the description assignment given to the students in the previous semester, suggests that, in this case, CTL did not make a difference for most

students. LW's former students actually did better (better content and organization of that content) and were more interested and engaged in the assignment because they chose what or who they would describe – and it was not limited to college success. It was at this juncture, that LW and I began to question whether the topic of college success was significant enough for students to maintain their interest for the entire semester; however, LW chose to continue with what she had planned and to work to find better ways to interest and engage students in this topic. This was clearly evident in the next assignment.

   The third writing assignment. For this assignment, a response paper, LW brought in a movie about the trials and tribulations of a group of multi-racial high school students who, due to their circumstances, could have understandably given up and dropped out – but did not. The movie is based on a compilation of diary entries from these students; the book is by Erin Gruwell, their non-urban, white teacher, and it is called *The Freedom Riders Diary*. The movie is called "The Freedom Writers." The historical backdrop for the movie and the book is the aftermath of the L.A. Riots in the early 90s. Gruwell began teaching just after the riots, her students are considered "at-risk" and "unreachable," and finally, they are not college-bound – assuming they would even graduate from high school. Although Woodrow Wilson is a multi-racial school, the students self-segregate and gang violence is rampant, resulting in a high degree of attendance issues. Thus, although teaching in this type of environment is a challenge, it is even worse than one might imagine – because Gruwell receives no support from other teachers, the school administration or even her husband. No one believes she, or anyone else for that matter, can succeed in such a negative environment.

The story also revolves around a small group of students and an event that allows Gruwell to reach out and develop trust and respect for and from these students. This takes several years. The event involves gang violence in the form of a drive-by shooting and the ethical question/dilemma of whether or not one student should testify against the shooter, "one of her own," who shot an unintended victim, one of her classmates. In the midst of this, Gruwell, as a result of how she responds to an un-related racial incident in class, begins to gain student trust by teaching the students about the Holocaust. Holocaust survivors are invited to speak to the class and the class is required to do a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance. By the second semester, Gruwell tries another tactic: she requires the class to do a "Toast for Change." This encourages students "to open up about their struggles and what they wish to change about themselves" (Wikipedia, n.d., Freedom Writers, Plot, para. 4). This is pivotal in the students' lives because they each begin writing their own reflections in their diaries. This has the net-effect of impacting the aforementioned event (the drive-by shooting), specifically in relation to the student's testimony in court. At the same time, Gruwell decides to take the diary entries and to begin to compile them into a book. In spite of her progress with these students, her colleagues reject her and her husband even divorces her. No one believes she will succeed; however, the film ends with a simple note: "Gruwell successfully prepared numerous high school students to graduate high school and attend college, for many the first in their families to do so" (Wikipedia, Freedom Writers, Plot, para. 5).

Although the message of the movie is inspirational, it is also controversial – controversial because once again a white "savior" comes to the rescue of people of color (a common theme in a number of similar urban-related movies); in spite of this, the

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movie was still a perfect way for LW to use emotional intelligence as a vehicle to teach

and facilitate college success. It likewise allowed for discussion of the appreciation of

diversity, one of the concepts related to college success. The timing was also good, given

that by that point in the semester, LW's students had already started to develop a

relationship of trust with her. They had already begun to open up, share their frustrations

and then the writing assignment that was coupled with the movie allowed students to

respond in some respects as the students did in the movie; students were allowed to

choose from among four questions that probed their response to the movie in relation to

their own life choices and their future success. Here are the four questions:

1. Do you think it's more important to "protect your own" or do what's right?

2. Ms. Gruwell is a shining role model and source of encouragement for her
   students. Who is your role-model or biggest motivator in life? Who pushes you to
   succeed?

3. A Freedom Writer writes, "Silence ensures that history repeats itself." What can
   silence do, good and bad? What can making oneself heard do?

4. How do you plan to make a difference in the world as Erin Gruwell did?

In the discussions that followed the assignment, LW reported that it was clear that

the movie moved her students in ways that are often not seen in a college classroom.

When LW and I met to discuss this assignment, it was clear that student interest and

engagement was at its highest – largely due to the content of the movie. Although this

paper (not the first or last paper) was not analyzed in relation to grammar, punctuation,

spelling, mechanics and word choice, it was clear – according to LW's recollection of

these papers, that the content (and its organization) of the writing was the best she had

seen up to that point in the semester. It should also be noted that although she provided

the class with an assignment explanation, there was no corresponding chapter in the

textbook to help students better understand this assignment. There was also no

comparison paper because the non-contextualized comparison class did not view the

movie, and therefore, did not write about it.

The fourth writing assignment. In relation to the last assignment, surprisingly –

given the success of the third assignment – LW chose to allow students to choose their

own topic for the writing of an Argument paper. This may have been problematic for the

study in relation to the change in content; this is because the assignment was not focused

on college success. This, of course, was LW's decision to make – apparently at the

request of her students. After the more personal response to the movie in the third writing

assignment, the students simply wanted to do something entirely different. Having said

that, since the comparison of the first and last papers was really about each student's BW

skills in relation to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice and

whether or not there was any improvement that could be related to CTL combined with

grammar instruction, an evaluation could still effectively be undertaken. All that LW had

to do was to encourage her students to choose topics they care about. If they did that, then

the level of interest and engagement could arguably be the same, and any improvement in

their writing over the course of the semester would still be evident in this final

assignment. It should also be noted that she provided her students with an assignment

explanation and the textbook also assisted students in understanding the assignment.

Some of the topics chosen by LW's students were: gang violence, suicide,

corporal punishment, financial aid, employee benefits, legalization of marijuana,

sweatshops, birth control, juveniles and a life sentence without parole, single parents and adoption, and finally, non-violent drug users and rehab. Given the diversity of subjects, no class discussion could follow this assignment, as had been the pattern for each of the preceding assignments. From a conversation with LW, her impression of the topics chosen by these students is that her students did choose topics they care about – but certainly not at the same level as the third writing assignment. She also suggested that perhaps it was a nice change for students to not have to focus once again on college success. This was, after all, the fourth and final writing assignment and some students were bored with the topic, and frankly, tired of writing.

Moving beyond the content (and its organization) of the fourth/last writing assignment and to a comparison of the first and last papers for both the contextualized class and the non-contextualized comparison class, the following is the analysis derived from our last meeting, which also included the exit interview. I begin with the grades and what they suggest.

The grades. What was of interest in the comparison of each student's first and last papers was if it would yield something of value in terms of whether or not CTL combined with grammar instruction can improve students' BW skills. Although a grade on any paper is not just related to the quality of the content (and its organization) but also the quality of a student's writing (grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice), the following grades provide "food" for thought. It should also be noted that the student's understanding and utilization of the writing process is also a factor to be considered, since it impacts both the content and the quality of the writing itself:

The Contextualized Class

Student # 1: Narration Paper = 40/50 pts. B-
        Argument Paper = 110/150 pts. C
Student # 2: Narration Paper = 45/50 pts. A-
        Argument Paper = 145/150 pts. A-
Student # 3: Narration Paper = 50/50 pts. A+
        Argument Paper = 130/150 pts. B
Student # 4: Narration Paper = 40/50 pts. B-
        Argument Paper = 100/150 pts. D+
Student # 5: Narration Paper = 40/50 pts. = B-
        Argument Paper = 140/150 pts. B-

The Non-Contextualized Class

Student # 1: Narration Paper = 35/50 pts. C-
        Argument Paper = 90/100 pts. A-
Student # 2: Narration Paper = 35/50 pts. C-
        Argument Paper = 90/100 pts. A-
Student # 3: Narration Paper = 45/50 pts. A-
        Argument Paper = 95/100 pts. A-
Student # 4: Narration Paper = 45/50 pts. A-
        Argument Paper = 100/100 pts. A+
Student # 5: Narration Paper = 35/50 pts. C-
        Argument Paper = 70/100 pts. C-

It appears that based on this representative sample of five students from each class that students' writing in the contextualized class (15 students altogether) either stayed the same or worsened, while students' writing in the non-contextualized class (16 students altogether) either stayed the same or improved. This is problematic given the claims of those who champion CTL; however, if one is to believe that CTL increases student

interest, engagement, retention and success – a more thorough analysis is called for. This is because the grades do not tell us how much of the grade is related to content (and its organization) and how much is related to the quality of the writing itself. This is because LW does not use a rubric – which would clarify this distinction. Here is her explanation for how she graded these assignments: when there is a paper that is only worth 50 pts., grading is not as precise as it would be for an assignment worth 150 pts., or even 100 pts. It is more of an estimation. It is also important to note that the first assignment is, in many respects, a diagnostic to ascertain the students' writing abilities, and therefore, the assignment is worth less points; she doesn't want students to be penalized too much or discouraged too much by their first writing assignment for this BW class. In effect, she is suggesting that she puts more weight on the last assignment and has certain criteria she uses to determine grades, and because she believes this criteria is quite subjective, she does not work with a "literal" rubric. She has internalized this criteria and draws on her own experience. Although some see this as problematic, it is also true, anecdotally speaking, that this is not uncommon at the community college level; however, amongst English instructors, most use a rubric.

   The papers. By looking more closely at each student's first and last papers, what emerges is the realization that although CTL can improve content (and its organization), it does not necessarily improve grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice – even when combined with grammar instruction. For example, student # 1 in the contextualized class answered the question: How has college affected your daily routine? In this paper the student talks about how she has had to adapt her life with her daughter to her life in college. The assignment asked for a one-page response, double spaced. This

student only submitted a half-page. The content and its organization, however, is fine and the student only appears to have minor issues related to grammar (verb tense) word choice (missing and unnecessary words), punctuation and spelling. She received a B- on this assignment. Yet, when that paper is compared to the student's Argument Paper, which met the 1 and ½ to 2 page requirement, what is evident is that although the content and its organization is initially good (the first paragraph), it becomes quite repetitious and disorganized thereafter – because the student does not appear to understand and utilize the writing process. In other words, the student does not sufficiently know how to generate ideas and plan (outline) how to use those ideas before writing the draft. Although the paper has a thesis, it does not indicate what arguments she would make to prove her thesis; therefore, she has nothing to guide her writing or the reader. As for grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice, there is not much difference between the first and last papers – suggesting no real improvement. One possible reason for this is the student only did half of the grammar exercises from My Writing Lab located in Blackboard. However, according to LW, the lower grade on the last paper, which was a C, is more about the repetitious and disorganized content than it is about the quality of the writing.

By comparison, student # 1 in the non-contextualized class wrote her paper about a blind date. The required length of the assignment was the same; it was only a one-page response, double spaced. The content was good and it was well organized; it was actually very creative. It does, however, have a large number of writing issues, much more than student # 1 in the contextualized class. In this case, this student's errors are specifically related to word choice (unnecessary words as well as awkward word choices and

phrases), punctuation, verb tense, spelling and capitalization issues. She received a C- on this assignment. For her last paper, student # 1 wrote about Birth Control. This paper received an A-; the content is good and well-organized. As for the writing itself, here is a list of the problems: grammar (pronoun agreement and subject-verb agreement), word choice (awkward word choice and missing words), punctuation and spelling. Although this list suggests a lot of writing issues, the list itself does not indicate how many of each problem exists in the paper. In this case, the number was quite low. Looking at both papers, first and last, the content (and its organization) is good and there was definitely a marked improvement in the writing itself. The difference, apparently, according to LW is that this student did all of the required Writing Lab assignments. She also met with one of our English tutors and received feedback on the paper before submitting it. Whether the quality of the student's writing improved due to the grammar instruction is unclear.

In looking at students # 2 - # 5 in the contextualized class, it appears that once again content and its organization was only an issue when the size of the paper increased, while the grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice did not really improve. These students either stayed the same or worsened: two stayed the same while two worsened. In looking at students # 2 – 5 in the non-contextualized class, the results are a mirror opposite: two stayed the same while two improved. The improvement in both classes – with one exception – was about the content and its organization – suggesting the students, for some reason, had a better understanding of the writing process and appeared to have utilized it in relation to the organization of the content. However, they did not – with one exception – improve in relation to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice.

Conclusions

This comparison of the first and last papers for the contextualized and non-contextualized classes, combined with the other aspects of this analysis, raises this question: does contextualized instruction – overall – improve student interest, engagement, retention and success? The answer is that it depends; it depends on whether we are talking about the class, the writing assignments, or the discussions about the writing assignments. LW's conclusion was that CTL can make a class more interesting for students, which can result in more student engagement, but that does not necessarily translate into a consistent interest and engagement in each class, each assignment, or each discussion. Most importantly, it does not necessarily translate into better writing. Students must transfer what they are learning in class – due to grammar instruction and/or grammar exercises in My Writing Lab – to their papers. This appears to be true about the writing whether the class was contextualized or not. The difference between the contextualized and non-contextualized class, with respect to the quality of the writing, boils down to the initiative of the student; students are always responsible for their response to any class and its assignments. However, if care is taken in choosing what is contextualized, student interest and engagement in the class can increase resulting in greater student retention and success – with, apparently, one significant exception: the quality of the writing.

In my experience, if the class is going to have one focus, it should be a topic that is of significant interest to students – with significant being the operative word. For example, as I have already mentioned elsewhere, I have taught writing classes where the focus has been on education, career development, hip-hop, gangs and police brutality. Of

these, only hip-hop and police brutality seemed to sustain student interest for most of the semester, while education, career development and gangs did not. For LW, college success did not maintain interest and engagement for the entire semester. The lesson here may very well be that it is better to have a variety of themes of significant interest to encourage more student engagement in the class, which will hopefully translate into greater retention and success. This was LW's conclusion. In addition to this, from my discussion with LW, we concluded that perhaps the next step would be to determine a way to increase student interest and engagement in relation to writing itself; this is a tall order given that most students view writing as a necessary "evil," just one more requirement representing the many "hurdles" students must cross in order to achieve their education and career goals.

In spite of this dilemma, perhaps grammar instruction should be somehow connected to each writing assignment, so students can see in a concrete manner – not just in the abstract – how much better their papers can be. This is something I am currently attempting to implement in my English classes by using student papers (names removed to protect the anonymity of students) as examples that the class can work on together (during class) as a more organic way of learning what works and what doesn't work and why. This is done as a class and in both individual and group activities. This is a great way for students to learn how to fix what doesn't work in their papers. LW thought that was a good idea and something she would consider doing in the future.

Finally, although contextualization in LW's class did seem to increase interest and engagement in the class, it did not necessarily translate into success with respect to their writing abilities, and therefore, the grades related to their writing assignments. Although

students were interested in what they wrote about, they were not as interested in the hard work of revising and editing. This is why student interest in writing, as well as engagement, is imperative. Therefore, in relation to CTL and its impact on the quality of students' writing, the fault – if there is any – does not necessarily lie with CTL, but rather with the significance of the topic choice and, more importantly, the general lack of student interest and engagement when it comes to writing itself. This is why other factors must be considered if CTL is to be effective. In other words, what factors/problems are distracting students when it comes to being a student and meeting all of its requirements? (See the discussion of the factors/problems that distract students mentioned earlier in this chapter and listed in the Statement of the Problem section in Chapter One.)

Exit Interview

From the exit interview (survey) it was clear that LW learned a great deal about the process of contextualized instruction. Here are the questions:

10. What did you learn about the process of CTL and BW in relation to your own teaching practice?

11. What did you learn about the process of CTL and BW in relation to your students – both in the CTL class and the class that was utilized for comparison purposes?

12. What are your overall conclusions?

13. If your conclusions are positive, will you expand your use of CTL and BW to more or to all of your classes?

14. Will you seek to implement CTL and BW to a greater degree than you did this semester?

15. If your conclusion are negative, why do you think that is the case?

16. If you have a mixed-review of CTL and BW, will you continue to use CTL but seek to address the problems you had or will you simply discontinue the use of CTL?

17. Has the use of CTL and BW impacted your level of interest, engagement, retention and success as far as career satisfaction and personal fulfillment are concerned?

18. Do you have any questions, concerns or additional comments you would like to make?

Based on the answers LW gave to the questions above, the most significant learning was related to her own "natural" use of emotional intelligence as a means of making a personal connection with her students, encouraging and motivating them to do better. Apart from possibly the first assignment and definitely the third assignment (the movie), she did not feel that she made much progress towards teaching her students how to consciously use their own emotional intelligence. This would probably take more time to figure out how to do this with other assignments and if it is possible to even do so. In other words, perhaps it is too much to expect every assignment to utilize emotional intelligence. Therefore, in relation to what all this has to say about her implementation of contextualized instruction, LW confirmed that the most significant teaching strategy in her "family of diverse strategies" (CTL) is emotional intelligence. She concluded that she has to systematically begin exploring that further as well as becoming clearer about what her other teaching strategies might be; however, she also concluded that she will limit the

degree to which she contextualizes. This is because college success, as a topic, failed to consistently sustain student interest and engagement. CTL also requires additional work.

To decide to limit or even quit the use of CTL is quite normal after one semester. In my experience, the first semester I attempted contextualized instruction, my retention and success rates actually went down. In fact, I might not have continued to use CTL if I had not been in the midst of my tenure-track project on CTL and its impact on students. It was, therefore, only after I began to add other strategies, such as motivation, and took into account more of my students' distractions (problems), that I saw my retention and success rates begin to slowly rise with each successive semester. As for LW's own interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, she said that perhaps her original estimation of her degree of satisfaction and personal fulfillment at a 9 on a 10-point scale was a bit high. She now feels that perhaps it was actually a 7 or an 8, and now she is a 9. This is interesting, because the results of the comparison of the students' writing would lead one to believe she would be less satisfied. LW stated that although that was disappointing, she was encouraged by student interest and engagement around the movie assignment and the lessons she learned about emotional intelligence. The change in her estimation of personal and career satisfaction also suggests that we often do not know how much better things can be, and so we tend to over-estimate. Is it possible that if LW continues to use contextualized instruction that there are greater levels of satisfaction and fulfillment that she did not realize she could experience? That is possible, but I would suggest – only – if the quality of students' writing also improves. As an English instructor, I share this same conclusion. CTL can impact student engagement, retention and success, but that may not translate to the

quality of students' writing. Teachers must continue to search for ways to make that happen. CTL does, therefore, to varying degrees, positively impact teacher fulfillment and satisfaction.

The Secondary Participant

Several months prior to the beginning of the study, Professor KW officially agreed to participate. KW was asked to be involved in the study because she is an English instructor. As such, she is already teaching BW skills – but, and this is important to note, at a higher level than what LW teaches. She is also already involved in contextualization, although she does not use that terminology. From the pre-interview (entrance survey) questions, I learned that KW has a B.A. in English, a M.A. in English and Literature and a Ph.D. in English: 20th Century African American Literature and Literary Theory. She began her teaching career in 2002 and was hired as a full-time faculty member at the City Colleges of Chicago in the fall of 2009. She was tenured three years later. At the time of this writing, she has 14 years of teaching experience. She has taught such courses as Basic Writing (Dev. Ed.), Composition I (essay writing), Composition II (research writing), American Literature, Women's Literature and African American Literature.

KW's philosophy of education mainly involves what is called Process Pedagogy. Technically, this is defined as

> a pedagogy that believes students should be treated like real writers, and so a course designed with process pedagogy is centered around the production of student texts, emphasizing in-class workshops, conferencing, peer review, invention and revision heuristics, and readings that support these goals (Tobin, 2009, Process Pedagogy, para. 1).

In KW's implementation of process pedagogy in the classroom, she utilizes various strategies: individual and group work, lecture, film and outside events. In contrast to LW, she only uses Blackboard in limited ways; however, she does use Grades First, a program that allows teachers to communicate with students and their advisors regarding any issues students may be having.

In relation to what KW does outside of the classroom, she is single and is very involved in her family and her religion. On campus, she teaches a full load (four classes in English), she is involved in the Assessment Committee and began a Writing Across the Curriculum program at Olive-Harvey College (one of the seven City Colleges of Chicago) and has facilitated this program for the last three years. She also represented the college at the International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference. She seeks out professional development (PD) opportunities and has presented at the NISOD (National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development) Conference. She has converted a chapter of her dissertation into an article that was published, and she has three articles published in a well-known university's theatre journal. Her final accomplishment, and certainly not her least, according to KW, is former students who have gone on to attend and graduate from a four-year college or university. When asked from what she derives her career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, KW first mentions teaching, followed closely by mentoring students, collaboration with other faculty, writing and being published. On a scale of 1-10, LW rates her career satisfaction and personal fulfillment at an 8.

Because it is not uncommon for teachers to know contextualization by another name, KW, like LW, succinctly expressed her own understanding of this teaching and

learning strategy as "teaching according to a theme." She also noted that she has been using this strategy throughout her 14 years of teaching. It is important to note, therefore, that because of this, KW has no classes for the purpose of comparison (contextualized vs. non-contextualized) and did not feel right about depriving any of her students of what she believes works quite well. This is why KW is being utilized in this chapter as a secondary participant; there is no comparison class and there are also no student artifacts to compare. However, due to her extensive experience with what she now understands to be CTL, KW can serve to support or to call into question my analysis of LW and the conclusions LW and I reached.

Analysis

Over the course of this study, KW and I met infrequently – as already noted – due to the fact that she was already, in effect, utilizing CTL, and therefore, did not require much, if any, PD. In the meetings we did have, we discussed how and to what degree she contextualizes a specific theme in order to increase student interest, engagement, retention and success. We also discussed whether she believes it makes a difference in her students' writing. This is significant, because she does no grammar instruction. Largely, what KW has done is to take cultural, political and social issues and to focus certain assignments on them. Because of her great interest in African American theatre, she has utilized many of the works of August Wilson as the topic of discussion, writing assignments and an outside event in which students attend the play they have been reading, studying and writing about. What follows is a comparison of two of her classes, one from the semester before this study (because she did not have a second higher-level BW Class in the same semester as the study) and one that was taught during the study.

First Contextualized Class

In the semester prior to this study, August Wilson's "Gem of the Ocean" was the play that, along with the issues it represents, was contextualized in KW's English class via the method of contextualized instruction. The class also looked at Martin Luther King Jr.'s last speech. A video was utilized at the beginning of the semester because it contained a few excerpts from the speech, and it was used as a way of foreshadowing many of the issues students would be writing about. To explore these two works further and the focus each brought to KW's class, it is instructive to begin with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop." Although a brief summary cannot do it justice, the speech essentially begins with a panoramic view of history and culminates with a focus on the concept of injustice and how to fight it, specifically in relation to the striking sanitation workers of Memphis (1968). In order to mobilize the people, King emphasized the strategy of black unity manifested in selflessness and economic boycotts in relation to banking, insurance, retail, etc. – basically, anywhere black dollars were spent.

In relation to "Gem of the Ocean," by August Wilson, this work also focuses on injustice and how to fight it, and once again, a brief summary cannot do it justice. However, because it is important to relate the plot of the play, here is a summary: Largely, the play tells of the spiritual journey of Citizen Barlow to the "City of Bones" (freedom) on the Gem of the Ocean, a legendary slave ship. It is a story of a spiritual awakening. The story takes place in 1904 in an African American community in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, at the home of Aunt Esther, the matriarch of the family – who claims she is 285 years old. This, it is believed, qualifies her to lead anyone who is in

search of redemption and a new life after the horrors of slavery, the Civil War, and all that followed. In effect, she is the voice of tradition and history, a "cleanser" of souls.

The reason this story is about injustice and how to fight it is because the story begins with and is moved along by an incident in which an African American man kills himself, rather than to confess to a crime he did not commit. It is a crime he is falsely accused of. That is contrasted with a crime that Citizen Barlow did commit and must, in the end, atone for by leading his people on the same spiritual journey to freedom he himself has taken. Contrasted with Dr. King's last speech, it offers the spiritual equivalent to the physical fight King argues for in "I've Been to the Mountaintop." There is, however, no conflict here; the journey to freedom requires both the physical and the spiritual.

Therefore, in this analysis of KW and how and to what degree she contextualized the concept of injustice as found in "I've Been to the Mountaintop" and "Gem of the Ocean," the focus is on those aspects that did or did not have the most impact on student interest, engagement, retention and success. This, ultimately, impacts her own career satisfaction and personal fulfillment and raises the following question: does the contextualization of injustice and how to fight it into KW's BW class increase her own interest, engagement, retention and success as both an instructor and a facilitator of writing?

The writing assignments. Before addressing the question of KW's career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, it is important to also explain and analyze the writing assignments that were associated with these two works. The first writing assignment was a Narrative essay based on a series of questions related to the characters

in the play, as well as the story itself. Students were to choose one of the questions, reflect on Gem of the Ocean and to write about their own stories related to the issues addressed in the play. The second writing assignment was an Argument essay. Students were to choose one of the issues addressed in the play and to write about it. The third writing assignment was a Critical Response essay. Students were to respond to a scholarly article about the play. The final assignment was designed to begin to prepare students for research and documentation in the writing of research papers – something they would have to do in the next level English class. This was an annotated bibliography. Students here had to look for articles about the play or about issues addressed in the play. KW's class was clearly quite different than LW's.

Second Contextualized Class

  The writing assignments. As for the semester in which this study took place, the same type of papers were done: Narrative, Argument, Critical Response and an Annotated Bibliography. All responded to Dr. King's last speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop." The difference was as follows: The Narrative essay was to look at what Dr. King spoke about. This speech is often overlooked because, unlike his "I Have a Dream" speech, it is more controversial by comparison. Such issues as prejudice, poverty, racism, injustice, protest and economic boycotts were addressed and were to be taken and applied by students to their own lives. For the Argument essay, students were to listen to and read the speech, reflect on its content, and then write an essay in which they agree or disagree and offer examples from the speech. The Critical Response essay required students to research scholarly articles about the speech or issues addressed in the speech, and students were to respond to their chosen article. And finally, an Annotated

Bibliography was also assigned, again, for the purpose of preparing students for the process of research and the writing of research papers.

Conclusions

In our discussion of students' writing from both semesters and whether her use of contextualized instruction increases student interest, engagement, retention and success, KW stated that, yes, it does make a difference in the content of their writing, but, unfortunately, it does not necessarily improve the quality of students' writing. This is interesting because this is what I too have discovered in my use of contextualized instruction. We also saw this with the primary participant, Professor LW, earlier in this chapter. In relation to content, KW believes that it is important to connect curriculum to experience, to utilize emotional intelligence to tap into students' interest in the subject matter of a class and to build the students' self-esteem and confidence through her use of process pedagogy. However, like myself, KW is still considering how to increase students' interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to writing itself. For her, so far, this does not include grammar instruction – beyond personal conferences, office visits and her comments on student papers. This is not to suggest that when students are interested and engaged in a topic that writing is not in some respects better, but there are other issues related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice that can still detract from the quality of a student's writing.

It appears, therefore, that the analysis related to the secondary participant supports the analysis of the primary participant. It should be acknowledged, however, that the class for the secondary participant was at a slightly higher level – but, even with that difference, both had basically the same results. Although CTL increases student interest,

engagement, retention and success, it does not necessarily improve the quality of the students' writing; that is largely the responsibility of the student. Is the student, therefore, willing to do the difficult work of revising and editing, and is there a way for a teacher to increase interest and engagement in those steps of the writing process? The next chapter will address these questions as well, but in the context of what is called integrated contextualized instruction.

CHAPTER 5 – INTEGRATED CONTEXTUALIZED INSTRUCTION

This chapter includes the second case study related to the second of the three instructional methods (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized* instruction) of Contextualization Teaching and Learning (CTL). Like the first case study, involved in this study is a primary and a secondary participant. Therefore, the focus will largely be on the primary participant and the chapter will end with a summary look at the secondary participant – for the purpose of supporting or calling into question the conclusions related to the primary participant. It is also important to note, once again, that this case study is reported here through the prism of my experience with CTL and Basic Writing (BW), documented in my previously mentioned tenure-track study on Contextualization: A Teaching and Learning Strategy for Improving Student Interest, Engagement, Retention and Success (2014). It is also seen through the prism of my experience with each participant in this dissertation. It is, therefore, significant to mention again that I utilized the contextualized instruction method extensively prior to this study – because that experience (and my continuing experience) serves as a "pilot" for all the case studies in this dissertation. This is why I too am considered a participant in this study.

As for integrated contextualized instruction, in Chapter One, the following explanation is given: The second of the three instructional methods for CTL is integrated contextualized instruction. It is defined by Pearson, Moje, and Greenleaf, 2010:

Integrated basic skills instruction is the incorporation of reading, writing, or math instruction into the teaching of content. Integrated instruction is taught by

discipline-area instructors, with the academic skills serving as a means of developing critical thinking about disciplinary content (qtd. in Perin, 2011, p. 1). The purpose of such instruction is to ultimately teach basic skills in reading, writing or math; however, the focus of these disciplinary classes is a disciplinary subject. The main reason why this integration is necessary is because students often do not transfer what was "learned" in relation to basic skills in reading, writing or math to discipline-area subject classes.

Some examples of integrated contextualized instruction are: a Chemistry class in which students are also taught the type of math necessary for particular experiments and projects, a Sociology class in which students are taught specific reading strategies to be used when reading the textbook and other assigned readings, and finally, an Art class in which students are required to write essays about art – but need further instruction related to issues in their writing. It should also be noted that integrated contextualized instruction, like contextualized instruction, can be implemented to varying degrees at the discretion of the instructor.

The Primary Participant

Prior to the beginning of this study, Professor CM agreed to participate. CM is a Sociology instructor. As such, she does not normally teach BW skills, but wanted to try to contextualize these skills into her Sociology classes. From the pre-interview (entrance survey) questions, I learned that CM has a B.A. in Sociology (Health Studies with a Minor in Psychology) and a M.A. / Ph.D. also in Sociology: Health Studies. She began her teaching career in 2001 and was hired as a full-time faculty member at one of the seven City Colleges of Chicago (Olive-Harvey) in the fall of 2011. She was tenured three

years later. At the time of this writing, she has 15 years of teaching experience. She has taught such courses as Intro to Sociology, Marriage and the Family, Sex and Gender and Ancient Cultures.

CM's philosophy of education involves the belief that a straight lecture format is not effective. She tries to create a positive learning environment in which both students and teacher learn via participation and reciprocity (collaboration), also known as interactive teaching. She likewise wants students to integrate the materials taught into their personal lives. In relation to how she implements her philosophy in the classroom, she utilizes various classroom activities: she asks questions, she asks students for examples of whatever is being discussed, she creates assignments which are based on the lectures and she uses group work and presentations as well as technology. In relation to technology, she utilizes Blackboard, an online learning system where an instructor can place course documents: a syllabus, lecture notes and a guide on how to conduct and write up field research. Blackboard also has other benefits that CM uses: it houses Turn-It-In, a plagiarism software; My Grades, a program that allows students to see and track their grades; and finally, Grades First, a program that allows teachers to communicate with students and their advisors regarding any issues students may be having. These can be personal, educational and/or financial.

In relation to what CM does outside of the classroom, she is a single mother of a 17 year old son, as well as two "adopted" sons for whom she recently became a legal guardian: one is 18 and the other is 15. She has also finished and is waiting for her first article to be published, an article written with a group of her colleagues in the field of Sociology. On campus, she teaches a full load (one online class and four "brick and

mortar" classes) and she occasionally volunteers for various educational programs and committees on campus. When asked from what she derives her career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, CM first mentions her students and her desire to see them learn. She also loves to communicate, to interact with students and faculty. On a scale of 1-10, CM rates her career satisfaction and personal fulfillment at an 8.

After reading and discussing the Professional Development Handbook on Contextualization (see Appendix) created by the author of this dissertation and provided to each participant, CM admitted that she had no prior knowledge of CTL; however, like the secondary participant in Chapter Four, she too utilizes some aspects of CTL – but, until this study, did not know it as CTL. As a Sociology instructor, she works hard to make her classes relevant to students; this often includes discussions of real-world events and issues, as well as real-world assignments. Understanding this was CTL was encouraging to CM, but she wanted to do something to address remediation issues with respect to her students' writing. Consequently, she was excited to begin using the integrated contextualized instruction method in her class. She wanted to learn more about CTL and was looking forward to the bi-weekly meetings or "as-needed" conversations for professional development (PD). She hoped that the implementation of integrated contextualized instruction would increase her students' interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to their writing.

Therefore, in the following analysis of CM and how and to what degree she integrated BW skills into her Sociology class, the focus is on those aspects that did or did not have the most relevance to student interest, engagement, retention and success, with success being about CTL's impact on the quality of the students' writing in relation to the

following: an understanding and utilization of the writing process, quality content and the organization of that content, and finally, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. This focus, ultimately, impacts career satisfaction and personal fulfillment for an instructor and raises the following question: does the contextualization of BW skills into CM's class increase her own interest, engagement, retention and success as both an instructor and a facilitator of writing in a Sociology class? In other words, as a result of CTL in relation to BW combined with PD, does she experience greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment?

Background for Analysis

Before actually analyzing the impact of integrated contextualized instruction on CM's Intro to Sociology class, it is important to have an understanding of what this class was about and to what degree CM was already contextualizing. The subject matter of this class, according to the school's catalog (quoted in her syllabus), involved the following areas related to "an Introduction to the Study of Society: characteristics of group life, the effects of the group on human conduct and the interrelationships between society, culture and the individual." More specifically, as laid out in CM's syllabus, the semester was divided into three sections: the first part of the semester looked at the history of sociology, the concept of culture and how group identity is constructed from it, the concept of society and how it is structured, and finally, the concept of social interaction as derived from human development theories. The second part of the semester looked at social interaction theories, group dynamics and power and the concept of deviance in the context of criminality. It also looked at social class and stratification in the United States and systems of stratification around the world. The third and final part of the semester

looked at the concept of culture and how group identity is constructed from it; it also looked at descriptive categories and how they contribute to our understanding of diversity. The categories are: age, ethnic or racial status, socioeconomic class, gender, physical abilities, sexual orientation, national origin and religion. And finally, the third section of the class was concluded by looking at the American healthcare system and its institutions.

As for how the class was structured in relation to assignments, activities and assessments, CM included three exams, three documentaries, a number of quizzes and one major writing assignment; the writing assignment was a group research paper with a required group presentation. As for how much CM was already contextualizing the class, as has already been mentioned (but requires further elaboration), she sought to make her class relevant to what students need to know about sociology; she did this via her selection of the content of the course, the topics of lectures, the chapters in the text, the real-world discussions and the real-world group research assignment. For example, issues related to racism are especially relevant for the population of students at Olive-Harvey; as noted elsewhere in this dissertation, it has a largely African American demographic. Whether this issue and others would increase student interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to the class would depend on if students were taking this class because it was seen as a significant first step toward their education and career goals, their personal lives, or if it was seen as nothing more than a general education requirement students often do not consider relevant. Beyond this, it is also important to be reminded of the large number of distractions/problems these urban students face – in order to not only better understand the difficulties these students face, but more importantly, for the

purposes of this dissertation, the impact this has on faculty, their experience with CTL and the instruction of BW skills, as well as their career satisfaction and personal fulfillment. (See the Statement of the Problem section in Chapter One to read the list of factors/problems/distractions again.)

Other Factors

The pattern of organization for this chapter's primary participant does not follow the pattern found for the primary participant in Chapter Four/The First Case Study. The difference is related to the distinctions between contextualized instruction and integrated contextualized instruction and the fact that CM's class only had one writing assignment – whereas LW (Case Study One/Primary Participant) had four writing assignments. It should also be noted that there were only four meetings between myself and the participant: the pre-interview, a middle of the semester meeting, a near-the-end of the semester meeting and an after-the-semester exit interview in which we also briefly analyzed a number of group research papers. The reason for the small number of meetings was because CM had a physical injury early in the semester and missed about four weeks of classes. Time was also an issue for her.

Because the research paper was the only writing assignment, not meeting as often presented no problems for the study; the time missed (due to her health) for integrated contextualized instruction just limited the degree to which she could integrate the teaching of BW skills. This resulted in a decision to only focus on punctuation, period and comma usage. More will be said about this later. It is also important to understand that the writing assignment not only assessed students' ability to conduct field research and to write it up, but it was likewise "an experiment in understanding group dynamics."

Students were – as a group – to write a 7-10 page research paper. The topic was to be

chosen from the assigned readings, and the group was to utilize one of the theories read

about and discussed in class. In practice, group writing means that each student in the

group writes up his/her part of the research and one student is selected to be the "scribe"

for the group. This does not mean that this person edits each contribution for grammar,

punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice; however, it should be understood that

there is no way to know if such editing occurred. It does, however, mean the "scribe"

works to make the paper feel as if it was written entirely by one person. Style, therefore,

becomes very important in a group research paper.

An assignment explanation in the form of a guide (how to do research and how to

write that research up) was also given (created by the instructor) to help facilitate the

group writing process, from beginning to end. The types of research could include

surveys/interviews and/or internet/library research. Time was also provided for students

to meet in their groups during three non-successive class sessions integrated throughout

the semester; more time was necessary outside of class (both individually and as a group)

to complete this assignment. CM also thought it was important to note that group writing

is common in Sociology and that this experience would give students a sense of what it

means to be a sociologist and, more importantly, how to think like a sociologist.

Finally, as part of the analysis of CM's integration of the instruction of BW skills

into an Intro to Sociology class, the class was compared with another Intro class from the

previous semester in which she did not utilize integrated contextualized instruction; the

class from the previous semester was chosen because she did not want to deprive any

class (from the same semester as the study) from any benefit that might be derived from

integrated contextualized instruction. At any rate, both classes and CM's teaching strategies were discussed in the pre-interview and access was given to students' writing after the semester. This allowed an examination of the impact of this form of CTL on the students' BW skills, which, again, was undertaken in relation to the group research paper, the only writing assignment. Since there was no "first paper" to compare to a "last paper," the research papers were compared between classes to see if there was any significant differences. Because there was only one writing assignment, it was not possible to definitively ascertain whether or not students made progress in relation to BW skills during the semester.

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Analysis

</div>

Middle of the Semester

Because of her health issues, the first bi-weekly meeting, "as needed" conversation, was in the middle of the semester. In this meeting, CM and I discussed the degree to which she would integrate the teaching of BW skills into her class. Since her students were already choosing topics for their group research papers and beginning to do their research, CM decided (as has already been noted) that she would focus her instruction on punctuation, more specifically, period and comma usage. A lesson was given and a handout on comma usage was provided for her students. The reason she made this choice to focus solely on commas and periods is because this has been an area of frustration for her throughout her teaching career. She believes that there is a societal trend in what she calls, free-style writing: the result of an abbreviated form of writing found in online chatting and texting – in which there are no breaks in sentences to signal a pause or the end of a complete thought. Her theory is that, as a result of this being the

dominant form of written communication by so many students, they are "afraid" of punctuation, and consequently, do not use it. She also understands that many students do not care. She wanted to learn how to persuade her students as to why they do not need to be intimidated by the use of periods and commas and why they should also care.

To address this problem, I shared with CM my own philosophy for teaching writing; this was the PD component of our meeting. In this case, as already noted, the focus was on punctuation as it relates to periods and commas. Although most students think they understand the purpose of a period and a comma (to signal either a stop or a pause), what they do not often understand is that a sentence is supposed to be a complete thought; hence, the period at the end. As for the comma and the pause it signals, there are a few exceptions. For example, commas associated with names, dates and places, as well as numbers, do not necessarily signal a pause. It is also true that sometimes comma usage is optional; while we always separate the items in a list with commas, an introductory phrase is not always followed by a comma: it depends on the length of the sentence, the length of the previous sentence (if there is one) and the effect the writer wants to create. Comma usage is also required when words interrupt the flow of thought in a sentence, but comma usage is optional when independent and dependent clauses are used. Again, it depends on the length of the sentence, the length of the previous sentence (if there is one) and the effect the writer wants to create. This optional and non-optional usage is problematic for students. I tell them that this is why they struggle with comma usage, simply because there are many exceptions that create a situation where there are no "black and white" rules that govern every situation students may write themselves into. Perhaps this is one of the many reasons why writing is an art, and not a science.

Because of this dilemma, the first thing I have students do is to read whatever they write out loud at least five to 10 times – in order to hear when they "naturally" pause and when they "naturally" stop. This gives them a sense of the rhythm of their sentences and what their voice is as a writer. It also helps them to become more familiar with what they have written and whether or not it makes sense. I use the word, naturally, because this is an acquired skill that overtime will become "natural." In other words, it is internalized, because students who read what they have written out loud will become increasingly familiar with how they tend to express themselves. The result will be, that in most cases, their punctuation choices will be correct. I tell them this is a good first step toward utilizing periods and commas correctly. Students should let their "ears" determine where to initially place periods and commas. Then, when students have finished the draft and revised the content, they can go back and double-check their punctuation choices when they are editing.

At the editing stage is when a handout is provided to students that explains the seven ways we use commas; again, as has been noted, some of these ways are optional. Other special forms of punctuation can be added at a later stage – once students are clear about the usage of periods and commas. This is because, although writing is more sophisticated when special forms of punctuation (semicolons, colons, dashes and parentheses) are utilized, if a paper is written only using periods and commas (as well as hyphens, question marks and apostrophes when required) it can still be a good paper – if that punctuation is done correctly. Reading out loud, therefore, is the key. This is also true in relation to reading the writing of others, especially textbooks and other required reading students will do during their college career; becoming familiar with how

professional writers punctuate will eventually begin to impact the students' use of punctuation – if they are paying attention to how it is done. Internalization, therefore, from reading the students' own writing out loud to the observation of required readings for any class is the best way to learn correct punctuation. In fact, it is much easier than attempting to memorize the rules for comma usage. Again, this is because some comma usage is optional, depending on the effect the writer wishes to create, asking when should the reader pause, when should the reader stop. Of course, correct usage of periods and commas is only possible if students take the additional time and effort – highlighting the importance of student initiative.

Near the End of the Semester

This meeting/conversation took place a few weeks prior to the time CM's students were submitting their group research papers. CM was excited about how she had integrated BW skills in relation to the lesson on period and comma usage, and from our discussion it also became clear that she has actually been doing more integrated contextualized instruction of BW skills than she realized. This is with respect to her 15 years of teaching experience, and the fact that, apparently, CM at one time made a living as an editor. This experience led to periodic comments she would make in class to students about her expectations related to their writing and, of course, how she actually commented on students' papers – both in personal conferences and on graded papers. She also noted that, even though issues related to the quality of students' writing may impact her evaluation of other aspects of the assignment much more than she probably realizes, technically, the percentage she takes off for those issues is fairly low: 2.5% of the total grade for the paper. Anecdotally speaking, at least at Olive-Harvey, this low percentage is

not uncommon and it can be problematic if the total percentage for the paper is significantly higher; it would be problematic (from an English teacher's perspective) because it does not communicate to students the importance of the quality of their writing.

In CM's case, the total percentage was 30 percentage points and the highest point value given to each of the other aspects of the assignment was just four percentage points (with the exception of the presentation). Her rubric broke down as follows:

1. Introduction   _____4%

2. Hypothesis/Research Question   _____4%

3. Theoretical Perspective   _____4%

4. Overall Support of Thesis   _____4%

5. Conclusion   _____4%

6. Grammar/Spelling   _____2.5%

7. Citations   _____2.5%

8. Presentation   _____5%

It should also be understood that, to be fair, discipline-area instructors focus on content. The fact that they tend to make the percentage related to the quality of the writing very low is problematic, but understandable; however, if they do not take off for grammatical issues at all, this is definitely problematic for the reason already stated in the previous paragraph: it does not communicate to students the importance of the quality of their writing. This means either that instructors do not want to grade papers for the quality of writing, they do not feel qualified or they have "given up" on underprepared college students' ability to write and to write well.

After the Semester

  Analysis of group research papers: the comparison class. In addition to the Exit Interview, the final meeting involved the analysis of the students' group research papers. I begin with the papers. The topics chosen by the sample of group research papers from the comparison class, the non-integrated contextualized class from the semester prior to the study, were as follows: Group Paper # 1 – The Crime Rate in Chicago. This paper asked the question, what is the cause of violent crime? The question was answered via library/internet research only; Group Paper # 2 – Classism and Race. This paper asked the question, how does classism and racism effect people in low-income neighborhoods? The question was answered via library/internet research only; Group Paper # 3 – Corporal Punishment. This paper asked the question, is physical punishment effective? The question was answered via library/internet research only; Group Paper # 4 – Poverty and a Healthy Lifestyle. This paper asked the question, how does having a lower income and being healthy correlate? The question was answered via library/internet research only; and finally, Group Paper # 5 – Police Brutality. This paper asked the question, does law enforcement have a license to kill? The question was answered via library/internet research only. A quick read of each of these papers revealed that the content was basically good – with some exceptions related to the organization of the content. As evidenced in the results/conclusions for Chapter Four/Case Study One (contextualized instruction), once again we can see that CTL does impact the content of students' writing; the question, however, is whether or not it helps to improve the quality of the writing.

A closer look at the five group papers revealed the following issues related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice: for grammar, errors related to subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement and verb tense were present to varying degrees; for punctuation, largely, comma usage was very problematic with a few issues related to the use of periods; for spelling, the issues were minor; for mechanics, the problems ranged from failure to indent a paragraph to right justifying a margin; and for word choice, awkward word choices and phrases appeared throughout. In my experience, this is common for the writing of many students at Olive-Harvey; however, in this study we are only looking at period and comma usage. In that respect, comma usage in this comparison class was an issue that definitely needed to be addressed.

Analysis of group papers: the integrated contextualized class. The topics chosen by the sample of group research papers from the integrated contextualized class, from the semester in which the study took place, were as follows: Group Paper # 1 – The War Zone of Chicago. This paper asked the question, why is gun violence so prevalent in minority communities and how can this problem be potentially solved? The question is answered via library/internet research and a questionnaire/survey; Group Paper # 2 – Cuisines, Nationalities and Choice. This paper asked survey respondents to choose, from a list of a variety of countries, which cuisine they prefer and how they would rate that cuisine. The question was also answered via library/internet research; Group Paper # 3 – Depression among Adolescents. This paper asked the question, what are the various reasons for adolescent depression? The question was answered via library/internet research and a questionnaire/survey; Group Paper # 4 – Inequality in Education. This paper asked the question, does inequality in education still exist (after the Brown vs.

Board of Education decision)? The question was answered via library/internet research and a questionnaire/survey; Group # 5 – Low Budget Autism. This paper asked the following questions: what is the Autism Spectrum Disorder, what programs/resources are available and what does the statistical analysis tell us about its impact on the African American community? These questions were answered via library/internet research only. A quick read of each of these papers revealed that the content was basically good – with some exceptions related to the organization of the content. This is really no different than the comparison class. Once again, as evidenced in the results/conclusions for Chapter Four/Case Study One (contextualized instruction), we can see that CTL does impact the content of students' writing; the question, however, is, once again, whether or not it affects the quality of the writing.

A closer look at the five group papers for the integrated contextualized class revealed the following issues related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice: for grammar, errors related to subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement and verb tense were present throughout to varying degrees; for punctuation, relatively few and minor issues related to comma usage; for spelling, the issues were minor; for mechanics, the problems ranged from extra spaces between paragraphs to right justifying a margin; and for word choice, awkward word choices and phrases appeared throughout. It should be noted, however, that we are only looking at period and comma usage. In that respect, period and comma usage in the integrated contextualized class was an issue that was addressed and by comparing the group papers from the two classes, it is clear that there were significantly less punctuation errors in the integrated contextualized class. A comparison of the grades for both classes reveals the following:

Comparison Class		Integrated Contextualized Class	
Group # 1	21/25	Group # 1	25/25
Group # 2	21/25	Group # 2	23/25
Group # 3	20/25	Group # 3	24/25
Group # 4	20/25	Group # 4	22/25
Group # 5	23/25	Group # 5	25/25

Note: The grade for the group research paper was worth 25% of the total points that could be earned for the class. That would mean that every 2.5 points was a letter grade. In other words, 22.5 – 25 = A, 20 – 22.5 = B, 17.5 – 20 = C, 15 – 17.5 = D and 0 – 15 = F. The grade for the presentation is not included. That was worth 5% of the total grade for this assignment, making the entire assignment worth up to 30 percentage points.

From these grades, it is evident that the integrated contextualized class, overall, did much better than the comparison class when it comes to the group research papers. Given that the rubric indicates that quality of writing was worth up 2.5%, this improvement in students' writing (period and comma usage only) definitely contributed to the higher scores – but it was certainly not the only factor. However, given that CM acknowledged that her evaluation of the other factors listed on the rubric could have been influenced by the quality of the students' writing, it is possible that it impacted those factors as well and contributed to the lower scores more than it is possible to ascertain. It is also possible that given the significant improvement related to punctuation, CM may have overlooked (in her grading) the other issues related to the quality of her students' writing. It should also be noted that this improvement in the quality of students' writing related to period and comma usage was a surprise, given the results/conclusions related to

the contextualized class for Case Study One/Chapter Four: CTL impacts the content of students' writing, but not necessarily the quality. This was true of both participants: LW and KW. With CM, this pattern was broken; not only was the content better (as expected), but that which was taught (period and comma usage) seems to have made a significant difference. The question is, why? One explanation might be that the degree to which BW skills were taught fell somewhere between full grammar instruction (illustrated by LW, the primary participant in Chapter Four/Case Study One) and no instruction (illustrated by KW, the secondary participant in the same chapter). In other words, "less is more," but what specifically does that mean?

To answer this question, I shared with CM how I convey to my students that in my classes (when it comes to the instruction of BW skills) I limit what I teach and how much I teach it – because, in my experience, if students are given too much information it becomes "clutter" in their minds and they often do not know how to sort through it to determine what is most important. This is why I only focus on punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tense and vocabulary, because these five areas are where I see students struggling the most in relation to their writing in college. It is not that students do not commit other types of errors, it is rather that those errors pale by comparison. This may be why CM had success, simply because she only addressed the one area that frustrated her most: period and comma usage; students, therefore, took that one area to heart (perhaps sensing her frustration) and student initiative made a difference. Perhaps if she had attempted more, the quality of students' writing – related to period and comma usage – would not have occurred. However, what is interesting about

this "less is more" approach is that what is considered less in a BW class could be considered too much in a discipline-area class seeking to integrate BW skills.

Exit interview. From the survey questions it was clear that CM learned a great deal about the process of integrated contextualized instruction. Here are the questions:

1. What did you learn about the process of CTL and the instruction of BW skills in relation to your own teaching practice?

2. What did you learn about the process of CTL and BW in relation to your students – both in the CTL class and the class that was utilized for comparison purposes?

3. What are your overall conclusions?

4. If your conclusions are positive, will you expand your use of CTL and BW to more or to all of your classes?

5. Will you seek to implement CTL and BW to a greater degree than you did this semester?

6. If your conclusion are negative, why do you think that is the case?

7. If you have a mixed-review of CTL, will you continue to use CTL and the instruction of BW skills but seek to address the problems you had or will you simply discontinue the use of CTL and the instruction of BW skills?

8. Has the use of CTL and BW impacted your level of interest, engagement, retention and success as far as career satisfaction and personal fulfillment are concerned?

9. Do you have any questions, concerns or additional comments you would like to make?

Based on her answers to the aforementioned questions, it is clear that, overall, CM was excited by the improvement in the quality of her students' writing – even if it was only in relation to period and comma usage. This means she (and her students) not only had a positive experience with CTL and the instruction of BW skills, but also a positive response, resulting in an increase in her own interest, engagement, retention and success. In other words, CM is now experiencing greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment. Because of this, she is determined to continue to increasingly use the integrated contextualized instruction method, but as I shared with her, if the "less is more" theory holds true, she may be falling into the trap of perhaps "wanting too much." Although not a part of this study, I will continue to work with her to either confirm or disconfirm this theory.

The Second Case Study

Prior to the beginning of this study, Professor SR agreed to participate. SR was asked to be a part of this study because he is an Economics instructor. As such, he does not normally teach BW skills, but wanted to try to contextualize these skills into one of his Economics classes. From the pre-interview (entrance survey) questions, I learned that SR has a B.A. in Economics and Business Administration with a Minor in Communication, and two masters: one in Economics and one in Business Administration. He began his teaching career in 2009 and was hired as a full-time faculty member at the City Colleges of Chicago in the fall of 2013. He was tenured three years later. At the time of this writing, he has seven years of teaching experience. He has, however, only taught Macro and Micro Economics.

SR's philosophy of education involves student-centered learning, active participation of students, relevant subject matter to students' personal lives and the use of formative and summative assessments. In relation to how he implements his philosophy in the classroom, he uses various activities: lecture, group assignments, formative and summative assessments (as already noted), as well as asking questions and encouraging students to ask questions. He also utilizes Blackboard extensively. Blackboard is an online learning system where an instructor can place course documents: a syllabus, a variety of assignment explanations, content related to each chapter (including videos) and homework and review material for the mid-term and final exams. Blackboard also has other benefits that SR uses: it houses his electronic textbook; Connect, an online reading program that also houses various quizzes, as well as the mid-term and final exams; a Math tutorial and the VARK questionnaire for ascertaining student learning styles; a Discussion Board; a web link for the Khan Academy; My Grades, a program that allows students to see and track their grades; and finally, Grades First, a program that allows teachers to communicate with students and their advisors regarding any issues students may be having. These can be personal, educational and/or financial.

In relation to what SR does outside of the classroom, he is single and also has a second career in translation work with the United States government. On campus, he teaches a full load (4 classes but often teaches 5 or 6 classes), he is involved in the STEM program (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) at Olive-Harvey and several intervention programs for urban high school students in relation to helping them to be college-ready in math, reading and writing. When asked from what he derives his career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, SR first mentions his students and his desire to see

them learn. He loves to communicate, to interact with students and faculty. On a scale of 1-10, SR rates his career satisfaction and personal fulfillment at an 8.

After reading and discussing the Professional Development Handbook on Contextualization (see Appendix) created by the author of this dissertation and provided to each participant, SR admitted that he had no prior knowledge of CTL. Consequently, he was a little hesitant to begin integrating the instruction of BW skills in his class; however, a lesson was developed and a handout was provided for his students, and this calmed his fears. As a result, he wanted to learn more about CTL and was looking forward to the bi-weekly meetings, or "as-needed" conversations, for PD. He hoped that the implementation of integrated contextualized instruction would increase his students' interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to their writing. It should be noted, however, that as the secondary participant, what was learned was to serve to support or to call into question what was learned from the analysis of CM's part of this study. The same question, therefore, is asked: does integrated contextualized instruction increase student interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to students' writing? Finally, although this case study is about the impact of integrated contextualized instruction on BW skills, it is also important to point out that, just like CM, SR also uses real-world discussions and assignments; therefore, he likewise has been using various aspects of CTL with some success – but did not know it as CTL. The question is, will it make a difference in his students' writing?

Before undertaking an analysis, however, there is one last thing to explain: the main reason SR was chosen to be the secondary participant is that SR forgot to keep the first papers from the contextualized and the non-contextualized comparison classes, and

the last papers were lost when they were shared with the assessment committee prior to my having access to them – leaving nothing for the purpose of analysis and comparison. Therefore, in order to support or to call into question the results associated with CM, SR's recollections in relation to his students' writing became paramount. I did, however, also have access to his grades for these papers. Since SR is the secondary participant, this problem did not negatively impact the study.

Analysis

Before I begin the analysis, it is important to provide some information on the classes that SR taught. The disciplinary subject matter of both classes was Micro-Economics. According to SR's syllabus, "Micro-Economics is a branch of Economics that studies how individual firms and households allocate limited resources to produce goods and services within an economy." The topics covered were:

1. A fundamental understanding of the basic economic terminology and theories concerning the household, the business firm, markets and prices, and government policy.

2. A fundamental understanding of the standard economic models and practices to prepare students for further economic study.

3. The practical application of Microeconomic principles to economic problems. (SR's Syllabus)

The assignments for each class were the same and required students to read certain online readings in Connect (located in Blackboard) which also required students to answer questions (quizzes) related to the readings, a Personal Observation paper and a Supply

and Demand paper. Both classes also included a mid-term and a final exam (located in Connect).

As for the analysis of the student writing artifacts, I begin first with an explanation of the writing assignments, first and last papers. However, before doing so, it is important to note that the PD for SR was basically the same as that for CM; in other words, both decided to only attempt to integrate BW in relation to punctuation, commas and periods – but, for entirely different reasons. Therefore, SR received not only the same PD, but also the same handout for comma usage that was provided to CM for her students. Although both were a little intimidated by the thought of grammar instruction, SR was more uncomfortable with the thought of such instruction and needed a bit more encouragement than CM. In relation to the papers in which these BW skills were to be applied, SR assigned a personal observation paper and a case study analysis (Supply and Demand paper). For the personal observation paper, students were to apply one or more economic principles or concepts learned from the current chapter the class was reading to explain a pattern of events or behavior that they have personally observed. SR said that students should imagine that they are articulating their ideas to someone who has never taken an economics course. He also noted that it makes no difference whether the topic is "important" or has implications for policy. Instead, students should concentrate on finding a topic that is interesting. SR also added the following clarifications: "The best papers begin by asking an interesting question and to then use economic principles to construct a plausible answer. In the very best papers, the question involves a phenomenon or behavior that initially seems inconsistent with economic theory, or the question and answer are subtle rather than immediately obvious."

As for the case study analysis, the Supply and Demand paper, this paper was about students demonstrating they know how to use supply and demand graphs to explain how prices change. These graphs were to be created related to information found in a recent article. SR provided students with his requirements for the graph, for the article and for his expectations for the writing portions of the paper. Here is his list of expectations as to the analysis itself:

- Your analysis should indicate why the price and/or quantity has/have changed by noting which *non-price determinants of demand or supply* have changed.

- The article chosen must mention at least TWO non-price determinants that have changed. If the article mentions more, then you must discuss them in your paper as well.

- Use supply and demand graphs to show changes in the equilibrium price and/or quantity.

- Clearly state what happened to the non-price determinants, what happened to supply and demand, and what happened to the price and quantity sold of the product as a result.

- Do not summarize the article, but rather explain your graph.

- **<u>Let me say this again. Do not summarize the article</u>**. Only use the parts of the article that explain the change in price and quantity. You should be summarizing the textbook and class notes, NOT the article.

The degree of difficulty between the two assignments is clearly evident, but since SR only had two writing assignments a comparison must be made between these two papers. However, it should be noted once again that there were no actual papers to compare, just SR's grades and recollections. I begin with the grades for the integrated contextualized class. This discussion also includes a summary of the PD that took place during our bi-weekly meetings or "as needed" conversations.

Grades: The Integrated Contextualized Class

The personal observation paper. The integrated contextualized class only had 13 students. For this paper, the total points possible was 10 pts. One student had a 10, two students had a 9, one student had an 8, five students had a 7, one student had a 6, one student had a 5 and one student had a 0. With 10 being basically equivalent to a typical 100 pt. scale, this translates to three As, one B, five Cs, one D and two Fs. According to SR's rubric, 2 pts. were associated with properly following writing guidelines as instructed, 5 pts. were associated with clearly articulating economic ideas (as if the paper is being written to someone who does not know economics) and 3 pts. were associated with clearly demonstrating the relevance between one or more economic principles or concepts found in the current reading and the pattern of events or behavior that the student has personally observed and wrote about in the paper. The quality of the writing, of course, would be reflected in the 2 pts. that could be earned in relation the guidelines for writing.

As SR and I discussed, the first problem with the low point value given to the guidelines for writing is that the only thing related to the quality of the writing in the

assignment explanation was stated in the last of the seven bullet points listed below in SR's instructions:

Paper (Instructions): Your submitted paper must meet the following criteria:

- be typed

- be double spaced

- include paper title and page numbers

- include student's name and CLASS MEETING TIME

- have no cover page or plastic covers, etc.

- be stapled in the upper left-hand corner

- be written as you would an English composition with complete sentences, correct punctuation, etc. (NO ABBREVIATIONS).

Thus, not only is the percentage related to the quality of the writing low, but writing quality is just one of seven criteria and does not, on the face of it, appear to be more important than the six other listed criteria. For example, stapling the paper is on the same list. This does not communicate to students the importance of the quality of their writing. The second problem with this is that when an assignment is only worth 10 pts., how accurate can the assessment be – unless the instructor imagines the 10 pts. as 100 pts. and grades accordingly? And finally, the third problem with this is that quality of writing impacts a paper much more than non-English instructors may realize, and they may unconsciously be taking off more points for grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice than what their rubric suggests. CM admitted as much and recognized it as a problem; is it possible that SR did the same?

The case study analysis paper. For this paper, the Supply and Demand paper, the total points possible were 25 pts. One student had a 19, one student had a 16, one student had a 15, one student had a 14, one student had a 13 and eight students had a 0. With 25 pts. equivalent to a typical 100 pt. scale, the grade scale would look like this: 22.5 – 25 = A; 20 – 22.5 = B; 17.5 – 20 = C; 15 – 17.5 = D; 0 – 15 = F. The students' scores translate to one C, two Ds and 10 Fs. According to SR's rubric, the guidelines for writing are only worth up to 4 pts. on a paper that is worth up to 25 pts. This rubric, however, is much more detailed than the rubric for the personal observation paper and even emphasizes the quality of the writing:

Criteria 3	High Proficiency	Proficiency	Some Proficiency	No/Limited Proficiency	Scores
Writing (Student will follow the guidelines provided to write the paper)	The student followed the writing criteria as directed. The writing is almost free of errors (4)	The student followed majority of the listed directives. However, missed some. There were also errors in the quality of writing (3)	The student missed several of the directives. In addition, the writing has many errors (2)	The student failed to follow any or most of the directives. The quality of writing is not comparable to a college level English (1)	/4

To fully understand this rubric, however, it is important to see the list of criteria for the guidelines for writing. The list is similar to the one for the personal observation paper, but it adds one more criterion related to writing: the student must get his/her paper approved by a tutor in the English writing lab. This last criterion is significant, because the additional requirement of seeing an English tutor could have addressed the quality of

writing issues that were present in these papers, but unfortunately, with the papers being lost, SR does not remember which students actually went to see a tutor; however, given that the grades were all C and below, students most likely did not see a tutor or did not learn enough from that experience.

Grades: The Non-Integrated Contextualized Comparison Class

The personal observation paper. The non-integrated contextualized class had 18 students. For this paper, the total points possible was 10 pts. Two students had a 10, five students had a 9, two students had an 8, one student had a 7, two students had a 6, one student had a 5, one student had a 4 and four students had a 0. With 10 equivalent to a typical 100 pt. scale, these student scores translate to seven As, two Bs, one C, two Ds and six Fs. In effect, with one student in the middle, half of the class did well, while the other half did not. As already noted when the integrated contextualized class was analyzed, according to SR's rubric, 2 pts. were associated with properly following writing guidelines as instructed. The quality of the writing, as noted in the integrated contextualized class, was only one of the seven criteria on the list of guidelines for writing. Why this is problematic has already been discussed.

The case study analysis paper. For this paper, the Supply and Demand paper, the total points possible were 25 pts. Two students had a 25, one student had a 23, three students had a 22, two students had a 21, two students had a 20, two students had a 19, one student had an 18, two students had a 15, two students had a 14 and one student had a 10. To make 25 equivalent to a typical 100 pt. scale, the grade scale would look like this: 22.5 – 25 = A; 20 – 22.5 = B; 17.5 – 20 = C; 15 – 17.5 = D; 0 – 15 = F. These student

scores translate to three As, seven Bs, three Cs, two Ds and three Fs. In effect, the class was almost evenly split between those who did well and those who did not. As already noted, according to SR's rubric, the guidelines for writing are only worth up to 4 pts. on a paper worth up to 25 pts. The plusses and minuses related to the rubric have already been discussed. What remains is SR's recollections on the quality of the students writing when we compare the two classes.

Recollections: The Integrated Contextualized Class and the Comparison Class

Here are SR's recollections related to the quality of his students' writing on the personal observation paper and the case study analysis paper (Supply and Demand paper) for both classes. Like LW and KW from Case Study One/Chapter Four, SR felt that – for those students who actually did the assignments – content was not the issue with his students' writing, although it could always be better. Rather, it was the quality of the writing. However, he noted that he did not believe his students were inattentive in class, either in relation to lessons on economics or with respect to the grammar lesson he gave on punctuation, period and comma usage. He believes his students are serious about their education. They are also aware of many of their deficiencies. His impression is that this is more about not being college-ready when it comes to writing. These students are, in effect, beginning writers, and in many respects, they are "beginning" students as well. SR felt that although our students have been in school for at least 12 years, many still do not really understand how to be a student. This, of course, impacts student initiative, which beyond the classroom, is really where the problem lies. How can they do what is required of them if they do not know how?

SR, however, does not believe this is an excuse that absolves students of their responsibilities as students; it is an explanation. As for the BW skills integrated into the class, he was disappointed that the grammar instruction had so little impact on the quality of his students' writing, but said that in spite of that, he will continue to integrate BW into his economics' classes – because it is our mandate to prepare these students for a real-world career in which writing will certainly be a component. He did admit, however, that his frustration with the quality of his students' writing has, over the years, led him to require less and less writing. Yet, to be fair to him, there have also been other contributing factors: class load, other college responsibilities (the tenure track process) and the fact that he has two careers, teacher and translator. Writing assignments, unlike tests and quizzes, require much more time when it comes to grading.

Conclusions

As for whether the analysis of SR's (secondary participant) two classes supports or calls into question the analysis of CM's (primary participant) two classes, there was a surprising difference. As was noted earlier in this chapter, the surprise was the improvement in CM's integrated contextualized class in which students' writing improved in relation to punctuation, comma and period usage only. This raises questions as to what was different between CM and SR and why CM saw progress and SR did not – because, although for entirely different reasons, both participants limited their instruction of BW skills to punctuation, period and comma usage. It should be noted, however, that the analysis of SR did support the analysis found in Case Study One/Chapter Four in relation to both LW and KW, who represent respectively: full grammar instruction and no

grammar instruction. That analysis was that CTL improves the content of writing, but not necessarily the quality; therefore, student initiative is required. Consequently, given what was learned from CM, it may now be speculated that perhaps LW was doing too much grammar instruction, while KW was not doing enough; but, I would argue that it is not just how much instruction takes place; rather, it is what is taught, to what degree it is taught and how it is taught. This, however, will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter Seven, Reflections on the Study and Chapter Eight: Current and Future Implications for Research and Practice.

Other possible reasons why improvement was made by CM's students in the quality of their writing may be due to factors represented by the strategies CM used in relation to CTL – even though she did not realize she was actually utilizing this teaching and learning strategy already. This is important, because CTL is defined not only by the link it creates between basic skills and academic or occupational content, but also by the diverse family of strategies chosen by the instructor. In Chapter Four/Case Study One (contextualized instruction), I noted that the strategies I personally use are: Quality Instruction, Relevant and Culturally Appropriate Subject Matter, Age Appropriate Instruction, Instruction in Self-Directed Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning, Collaborative Learning and Real-World Applications and Assessments. These were derived from my tenure-track project mentioned earlier in this dissertation (Given, 2014, pp. 47-53). One thing I learned from that study was that the diverse group of strategies chosen by any instructor should not only come from research and best practices, but perhaps even more importantly, from an understanding of the population of students an instructor works with. In other words, the student problems/distractions list found in

Chapter One in the Statement of the Problem Section. Taking these into account, contributed significantly to the selection of the aforementioned strategies that make up on my own version of CTL.

Although the strategies a CTL instructor chooses, if chosen based on research, best practices and an understanding of the student population, can positively impact student interest, engagement, retention and success, CTL will only impact the quality of students' writing if one or more of the strategies impacts student initiative. In my experience with CTL, it took several semesters of implementation before I came to the following conclusion: I believe instruction in self-directed motivation and self-regulated learning are paramount. The exception, of course, would be students who already are self-motivated and who self-regulate their own learning. At Olive-Harvey, anecdotally speaking, this would only describe a small portion of our student population – due largely to the lack of college preparation. Although it helps if an instructor is able to motivate students, the largely solitary nature of writing requires student initiative. Therefore, as has been demonstrated in the case study in this chapter and the case study for Chapter Four, CTL does improve the content of students' writing because it increases their interest and engagement with the subject matter of a class. It does not, however, improve the quality of students' writing – without student initiative.

As for explaining the difference in outcome between CM and SR, it would appear that CM – without realizing it – incorporated some limited instruction in self-directed learning; however, she did no instruction in self-directed motivation. It may be that motivation as a component of quality teaching functioned as a "jumping off" point for her students in relation to addressing the issues they had with punctuation, period and comma

usage, while the instruction in self-directed learning had some impact on the quality of their writing. In other words, students had to take the punctuation lesson and handout, understand what was being taught, internalize it and apply it in their writing. In contrast, SR did not instruct his students in relation to self-directed motivation or self-directed learning. He would also not characterize himself as a motivational speaker. Whether this fully explains the difference in outcome is certainly something to be considered. It also raises questions about how other strategies may come into play as well. Chapters Seven and Eight will address this further, while the next chapter, Chapter Six, looks at the final instructional method of CTL: the embedded contextualized instruction method.

CHAPTER SIX – EMBEDDED CONTEXTUALIZED INSTRUCTION

This chapter includes the third case study related to the last of the three

instructional methods (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction*

and embedded instruction) of Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL). As with the

other case studies, involved in this study is a primary and a secondary participant. In the

same way, this chapter will largely focus on the primary participant and end with a

summary look at the secondary participant – to either support or to call into question the

conclusions related to the primary participant. It is also important to note again that these

case studies are reported here through the prism of my experience with CTL and Basic

Writing (BW) – documented in my previously mentioned tenure-track study on

Contextualization: A Teaching and Learning Strategy for Improving Student Interest,

Engagement, Retention and Success (2014). It is likewise seen through the prism of my

experience with each participant in all three case studies for this dissertation. It is,

therefore, significant to mention again that I utilized the contextualized instruction

method extensively prior to this study – because that experience (and my continuing

experience) serves as a "pilot" for all the case studies in this dissertation. This is why I

too am considered a participant.

As for embedded contextualized instruction, in Chapter One the following

explanation is given: The last of the three instructional methods for CTL is embedded

contextualized instruction. This is simply an adaptation of both contextualized and

integrated contextualized instruction; whereas both the contextualized method and the

integrated contextualized method are developed, implemented and facilitated by the basic

skills instructor and the discipline area instructor respectively, the embedded method

combines both – but requires very little of the discipline area instructor by comparison. In other words, the basic skills instructor is "embedded" in the disciplinary subject instructor's class, either physically or digitally, and the BW skills instructor is responsible for the BW skills instruction. The discipline-area instructor need only to provide the time during class and to encourage students to take advantage of the instruction. The purpose, therefore, remains the same as the two other CTL teaching methods – to increase student interest, engagement, retention and success – specifically in relation to the students' writing. Also, it can be implemented to varying degrees at the discretion of the instructor.

Examples of this method are rare, but most in the field of CTL would argue that learning communities are representative of this strategy; I would argue, however, that being "embedded" means to be in the same class – again, either physically or digitally. In my mind, learning communities are an example of collaboration because two teachers are working together and the dual subject matter is considered to be of equal importance. When basic skills related to reading, math or writing are embedded, they are supplemental. The best examples are similar to what I did for the previously mentioned tenure-track project and this dissertation. For my tenure-track project, I was given 30 minutes once a week to do instruction in grammar for a Supply Chain Management class in Olive-Harvey's Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) program. For this dissertation, I created power-point videos in which I taught various issues related to writing; these were utilized by two discipline-area instructors to address the writing issues their students were struggling with. These videos are only 2 to 2 and ½ minutes long. With this method of instruction, the possibilities are limitless, and again, very little is required of these faculty members (play the videos in class – as they see fit – and

encourage students to watch the videos online), thus freeing them up to fully address the main subject matter of their classes.

The First Participant

Prior to the beginning of this study, Professor KG officially agreed to participate. KG is a Business instructor. As such, he does not teach BW skills, but wanted to try to contextualize these skills into one of his Business classes via the use of embedded contextualized instruction. From the pre-interview (entrance survey) questions, I learned that KG has a B.S. in Marketing and a M.S. in Management. He began his teaching career in 2008 and was hired as a full-time faculty member at the City Colleges of Chicago (Olive-0Harvey) the same year. He was tenured three years later. At the time of this writing, he has eight years of teaching experience. He is also an associate professor. He has taught such courses as Intro to Business, Intro to Entrepreneurship, Fundamentals of Marketing and Business Law.

KG's philosophy of education involves the practical application of theory. He tries to provide students with real-life examples to help them better understand the world of business. He also wants students to integrate the materials taught in any of his classes into their personal and, someday, professional lives. In relation to how he implements his philosophy in the classroom, he utilizes various activities: 40 – 50% lecture, 20 – 30% group work and 10 – 15% outside speakers. He also utilizes Blackboard, an online learning system where an instructor can place course documents: a syllabus, assignment explanations, links for videos and power-points for lectures. Blackboard also has other benefits that KG uses: a Digital Dropbox for student writing assignments and a feature that allows students to take quizzes, as well as mid-term and final exams in Blackboard;

My Grades, a program that allows students to see and track their grades; and finally, Grades First, a program that allows teachers to communicate with students and their advisors regarding any academic, personal or financial issues students may be having.

In relation to what KG does outside of the classroom, he is married with two children (ages 13 and seven) and he also manages his own construction business. On campus, he teaches a full load (four classes for Business faculty), and he is involved in the Business Club and various project committees. When asked from what he derives his career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, KG first mentions his students and his desire to see them succeed, noting that the greatest satisfaction comes from "running into" former students and hearing how they are applying what they learned in his classes. On a scale of 1-10, KG rates his career satisfaction and personal fulfillment at an 8.

After reading the Professional Development Handbook on Contextualization (see Appendix) created by the author of this dissertation and provided to each participant, KG admitted that he had no prior knowledge of CTL. He does, however, appear to utilize the idea by trying to make his classes more relevant to students through real-world discussions and assignments. This, like in the previous case studies, is an example of yet another instructor not familiar with the terminology, but utilizing some aspects of CTL. As for his students' writing issues and whether or not CTL would make a difference, KG was excited to incorporate the teaching method of embedded contextualization into his class. He hoped that the implementation of CTL would increase his students' interest, engagement, retention and success – especially in relation to their writing.

Background for Analysis

Before actually analyzing the impact of embedded contextualized instruction on KG's Intro to Business class, it is important to have an understanding of what this class was about and to what degree KG was already contextualizing. The subject matter of this class involved the following: a survey of modern U.S. business in which there is an analysis of business in relation to various types of businesses, how they are organized and what the major business functions are. Intro to Business also looked at small businesses and entrepreneurship, managing information and technology; marketing; management, motivation and leadership; human resource management; the role of business in our economy and various other economies around the world; and finally, the role of consumers. The class also discussed such issues as ethics in business, business and social responsibility and business and the environment. The writing assignments for this class were, with one exception, all business reports. The exception was a one-page synopsis (summary) of a documentary the class viewed on Walmart. This was an extra-credit assignment. I include it because, near the end of the study, I realized that it was the best example of students' writing – given that the business reports did not necessarily have to be written up like an essay; they could be bullet-pointed answers. Not understanding this was a failure on my part to anticipate the potential differences between a business report and an essay and that KG would only grade on content – not the quality of the writing. As for the reports, there were only two.

Assignments like these business reports were based on KG's chapter lectures, chapters students were also required to read. The point of these reports was to orient and familiarize students with the world of business, to teach students how to do research on

business and how to write up that research. As for how much KG was already contextualizing the class, it is clear from the previous paragraph that he sought to make his class relevant to what students need to know about business: the topics of lectures, the chapters in the text, the discussions that followed, the writing assignments and, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the fact that he brought in guest speakers from the business world. Whether this would increase student interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to the class would depend on if students were taking this class because it was a significant first step toward achieving their education and career goals, and most importantly, if business was their passion. However, given the large number of distractions/problems (See the Statement of the Problem section in Chapter One.) our students face, student interest, engagement, retention and success is not necessarily a given once a student is taking classes for his or her major. This is especially true given the population of underprepared students at Olive-Harvey.

Analysis

The pattern of organization for this study does not follow the pattern found in chapters four and five, the first and second case studies. This is because there were only three meetings between myself and the participant: the pre-interview, a middle of the semester meeting and the exit interview in which we also analyzed and discussed first, second and last papers. The reason for this small number of meetings was because KG had very little to do in the implementation of the study, except to play for the class – as he saw fit – any of the thirty videos related to writing. Here is a list of the topics addressed by these short videos:

1. Introduction to CAPP Videos (CAPP = Concept Application Power-Point Videos)

25. Writing Excellence: Subject-Verb Agreement Examples # 1

26. Writing Excellence: Subject-Verb Agreement Examples # 2

27. Writing Excellence: Pronoun Agreement

28. Writing Excellence: Verb Tense

29. Writing Excellence: Vocabulary

30. Writing Ethics: Plagiarism

The only other thing KG had to do was to remind students that the videos were also located in Blackboard and to encourage them to access them as needed. As has already been noted, this limited responsibility is one of the reasons why this type of CTL instruction is so attractive to discipline-area instructors who do not see themselves as English teachers and do not wish to have to take on that role as well. The question is whether or not embedded contextualized instruction actually improves students' writing.

The Contextualized Class: The First, Second and Final Writing Assignments

From the middle of the semester interview and the exit interview the remainder of what was learned through KG is to follow. It is important to note, however, that unlike the first two case studies in which first and last papers were compared, I decided to include an analysis of the second writing assignment (a business report similar to the first writing assignment) because the final writing assignment, as already mentioned, was an entirely different kind of assignment and it was extra-credit: a synopsis (summary) of a documentary on Walmart. I also made this decision because although only four of the 14 students in the class actually did the synopsis, of all the papers it allowed for the most analysis of the quality of students' writing. The first report was to identify a company, its mission statement, its sustainable competitive advantage and its primary competitors. The

research was to be summarized (in essay or in bullet-point format or in some combination of both) and the student was to offer his/her opinion about the business' outlook. The student was also to cite all resources used to complete the assignment. The second report was to research what the national debt is and to report it. The student was also to determine the GDP for years ending 2011-2015, plot the totals on a graph, determine what level we were in the business cycle as of 2015, and provide his/her opinion on how the GDP and national debt can be improved or maintained. The student was to cite all work. The synopsis, as has already been explained, was a summary of a documentary about Walmart.

Grades and papers. Of the 14 students in this class, eight wrote the first report, 12 wrote the second and only four wrote the synopsis. Of these students, based on the grades alone, five improved and nine actually worsened. It should be noted, however, that the grade on the synopsis, because it was extra-credit, was not an estimation of the quality of their work. Points were given simply for doing the assignment. This means that part of the improvement in the grade for four of these students reflects the extra-credit assignment. A more specific analysis that only compares the grades of a representative sample of five students for each of these writing assignments (five for the first, five for the second and five for the last) reveals that three students improved; two worsened (with one getting better again); and no one stayed the same. Here are the results:

Student # 1 – First Report = 100   Second Report = 60   Synopsis = 0

Student # 2 – First Report = 85   Second Report = 90   Synopsis = 100

Student # 3 – First Report = 70   Second Report = 75   Synopsis = 100

Student # 4 – First Report = 100   Second Report = 50   Synopsis = 100

Student # 5 – First Report = 50   Second Report = 100 Synopsis = 100

A closer examination of these writing assignments reveals the following: Student # 1 did a very good job in relation to content (and its organization) on the first report, but failed to do the same for the second report and did not submit a synopsis. The writing issues present in the first report were minor with basically one issue for each of the following: capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, spacing, spelling and a fragment. Unfortunately, this student's score dropped from a 100 on the first report to a 60 on the second. Since KG did not factor in the quality of the students' writing into his grade, the score only reflects the content. His explanation for this was that, although he sees himself as a good writer, he does not feel qualified to grade his students' writing in relation to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. He also noted the added time this would require. Anecdotally speaking, as was mentioned in Chapter Five, this is not uncommon; discipline-area instructors either do not grade the quality of the writing at all or it factors in as a small percentage of the grade. This complicates any analysis utilizing grades, but the fact that student # 1 bullet-pointed the Second Report also makes it nearly impossible to see if there was any improvement in her writing. Combine that with no synopsis and it is impossible to tell if she benefitted from the CAPP videos at all, whether they were shown in class or were accessed in Blackboard. This is unfortunate, because this is a student who could have easily benefitted from the videos – given the small number of writing issues she was having.

By comparison, student # 4 who also received a 100 on the first report, had about the same amount and type of writing issues as student # 1. Student # 4 likewise received a

lower grade on the second report; the content was problematic, a part of the report was missing, and although not a part of the grade, the writing was actually better. In this case, however, the improvement may have been due to unintentional plagiarism – which added to the reasons for the lower grade. As an English instructor, it is important to note that students often do not understand how to paraphrase, and of course, when a paraphrase is too similar to the original, that is considered plagiarism. In most cases, this is unintentional. Some students, believe it or not, do not understand that they are to use quotation marks for whatever is directly copied from a source. Often, what is common sense to those in academia is not to underprepared college students in an urban environment where a lack of quality education is quite common. Some never even wrote an essay, let alone a research paper, in high school. It should also be understood that, at the City Colleges, an Intro to Business class can be taken, and usually is, before a student takes English 102 – in which such matters as quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing are taught. As for student # 4's synopsis, the writing issues apparent in the first report are much the same in the synopsis, suggesting no improvement in his writing. If the CAPP videos were of any benefit, the student did not manifest it in his writing.

An examination of all three writing assignments for students # 2, # 3 and # 5 reveals much the same. Where there was improvement, it was largely related to the content and its organization; where there was not improvement, it was also largely related to the content and its organization. Writing, with respect to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice, for all students appears to have remained the same throughout the semester. This suggests these students did not benefit from the CAPP videos, whether played in class or accessed by students in Blackboard. It also suggests

that there would be no difference between the contextualized class and the non-contextualized comparison class. It should be noted, however, that the comparison class did not do a synopsis; therefore, the comparison here is only of the first and second business reports. It should also be mentioned that this class had 26 students, while, once again, the contextualized class only had 14.

The Comparison Class: The First and Second (Last) Writing Assignments

What was immediately apparent when looking at the grades from the comparison class was that five improved and 10 actually worsened. Among the remaining students, it should also be noted that three students did not do the first report, six did not do the second report and two did not do either report. As a result, I chose one student who improved and four who did not. I felt that would be the most representative of how the class did. Here are the results in relation to grades for five of these students:

Student # 1 – First Report = 60   Second Report = 100

Student # 2 – First Report = 60   Second Report = 50

Student # 3 – First Report = 100   Second Report = 50

Student # 4 – First Report = 70   Second Report = 50

Student # 5 – First Report = 100   Second Report = 80

Grades and papers. An examination of the first and second business reports in relation to each of the five students reveals that, just like the contextualized class, the grades were only based on content (and its organization). The quality of the writing, in relation to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice is not reflected in the grade. For example, the work of student # 1 improved from a 60 on the first assignment to a 100 on the second. On the surface, both papers appear to have good

content (and organization), but a closer look reveals that the student did not correctly answer the questions on the First Business Report. As for the writing for both reports, the student had very minor issues. This may be, as noted in my comments on student # 1 in the contextualized class, due to unintentional plagiarism. Therefore, it is impossible to tell if this student benefitted at all from the CAPP videos. Another student, student # 3, whose grade went from a 100 on the first report to a 50 on the second, appears to have gotten off-track on the second report and did not submit the same quality content as found in the First Business Report. The quality of the writing for the two reports is difficult to compare because the first report is closer to essay format and the second is bullet-pointed comments with the inclusion of a graph. The issues present in the first report are punctuation and spelling, and it looks like it is mostly about the student not proofreading. Once again, it is impossible to tell if this student benefitted at all from the CAPP videos, whether played in class or accessed in Blackboard.

Looking at students # 2, 4 and 5 reveals much the same as the analysis of students # 1 and 3. The content grew worse, but not as much as for student # 3. However, it should be noted that the content for student # 2 was already low in quality and it grew slightly worse: 60 to 50. Students # 4 and 5 each dropped by 20 points respectively: 70 to 50 and 100 to 80. In all cases, the grade only reflects problems in the content. As for the quality of the writing, an examination of student # 4 reveals the writing issues were as follows: punctuation, spelling, spacing, capitalization, awkward word choices, missing words and subject-verb agreement problems. When this report is compared to the second report, it is impossible to tell if there was any improvement in the quality of the writing, simply

because the second report is bullet-pointed. It is, therefore, impossible to tell if the CAPP videos were of any benefit to this student.

Conclusions

A comparison of the two classes, therefore, leaves no doubt that with or without embedded contextualized instruction, students did not improve in relation to their BW skills. If there was improvement, it was solely related to content (and its organization), and that was based on the fact that KG contextualized real-world topics, readings, discussions and speakers into the class. Thus, although CTL did positively impact KG's class, it did not make a difference in relation to student interest, engagement, retention and success – when it comes to students' writing.

From my discussions with KG, in spite of the negative results of the study, it was concluded that, although not a part of this study, next semester I will visit a few of his classes, introduce myself, talk briefly about my philosophy on teaching grammar (See Chapter Five for a fuller discussion) and play one of the videos. I will then come back at a later date to the same classes and echo that philosophy and play another video. The hope is that allowing the students to meet me and to get a sense of the benefit the CAPP videos can be for students' writing, they will take the next step and actually view the videos on their own as needed. Whether or not this will make a difference remains to be seen, but this is all any teacher can do: go the "extra-mile" and try to motivate students to take responsibility for their own education – in other words, to take the initiative to actually watch the videos outside of class to help them address qualitative issues related to their writing.

In terms of PD, it was suggested to KG that he should consider making the quality of the writing a component of the grade. To not do so, can suggest to students that the quality of their writing is not important. I also offered a simple rubric. Although he does not feel qualified to grade students' writing in relation to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice, he is probably more capable than he realizes. A simple rubric would help facilitate this. It could be nothing more than making the quality of the writing 10% of the grade: five percent if there are minor issues and 10% if there are major issues. If he wants to be more exact than that, he could break the percentages down in relation to types of issues: 2% for grammar (basically anything not covered by the other four categories), 2% for punctuation, 2 % for spelling, 2 % for mechanics (formatting and capitalization) and 2% for word-choice (awkward, missing or incorrect words). I also suggested that he might want to rethink the number of writing assignments (meaning he could add more writing assignments), and with a simple rubric he could do that. The final suggestion was to think about requiring his students to see one of the college's English tutors for these writing assignments – to address the writing issues. Like SR, the secondary participant in Chapter Five, KG did not realize he could require his students to do that; as a result, he was more open to this suggestion. This visit could also be factored into the grade, perhaps as extra-credit. To do so, would, once again, remind students of the importance of the quality of their writing. It would also reduce the amount of time that the grading of more writing assignments would require in relation to the quality of the writing.

Finally, it should be noted that beyond an analysis of students' writing, which reveals students did not benefit from the CAPP videos, Blackboard has a feature that

records how often students access the content placed in Blackboard by an instructor. The results can be summarized as follows: five students viewed one video and one student viewed two. Again, this is out of a class of 14 students. This confirms the analysis and the fact that our students struggle with the many distractions/problems noted in the Statement of the Problem section in Chapter One – most notably, not understanding what it means to be a student and how to implement that knowledge in daily practice.

The Second Case Study

Prior to the beginning of this study, Professor JD officially agreed to participate. JD was asked to be a part of this study because he is a Criminal Justice instructor. As a Criminal Justice instructor, he does not teach BW skills, but wanted to try to contextualize these skills into one of his Criminal Justice classes via the use of embedded videos. From the pre-interview (entrance survey) questions, I learned that JD has a B.S. in Marketing and a Doctorate of Jurisprudence (a Law degree). He began his teaching career in 2009 and was hired as a full-time faculty member at the City Colleges of Chicago (Olive-Harvey) in 2013. He was tenured three years later. At the time of this writing, he has seven years of teaching experience. He has taught such courses as Business Law, Issues in Criminal Justice, Juvenile Justice, Investigations, Professional Responsibility and a course he calls Street Law.

JD's philosophy of education is all about engaging students on both a personal and professional level. He believes the classroom should be a dialogue, rather than a monologue. He believes faculty and students can learn from each other. In relation to how he implements his philosophy in the classroom, he utilizes various activities: a focus on current events, group interaction, active learning assignments and outside speakers. He

also utilizes Blackboard, an online learning system where an instructor can place course documents; in this case, largely just a syllabus and a list of homework assignments and assignment explanations located in the Announcements. Blackboard also has other benefits that JD uses: My Grades, a program that allows students to see and track their grades; and finally, Grades First, a program that allows teachers to communicate with students and their advisors regarding any issues students may be having. In relation to what JD does outside of the classroom, he still practices law – but only periodically. He is also married with no children. On campus, he teaches a full load (4 classes for Criminal Justice faculty). When asked from what he derives his career satisfaction and personal fulfillment, JD points to the progress he sees in his students' understanding of criminal justice and the difference he believes they will subsequently make in the world. On a scale of 1-10, KG rates his career satisfaction and personal fulfillment at an 8.

After reading the Professional Development Handbook on Contextualization (see Appendix) created by the author of this dissertation and provided to each participant, he admitted that he had no prior knowledge of CTL. Consequently, JD was excited to utilize the teaching method of embedded contextualization in his class. He hoped that the implementation of embedded contextualized instruction would improve his students' writing. It should be noted, however, that as the secondary participant, what was learned was to serve to support or to call into question what was learned from the analysis of KG's part of this study. Therefore, like KG, JD was provided the same CAPP videos mentioned earlier in this chapter. He also – as he saw fit – played these videos in class and encouraged his students to access them in Blackboard. The same question, therefore, is asked: does embedded contextualized instruction increase student interest, engagement,

retention and success in relation to students' writing? Finally, although this case study is about the impact of CTL on the quality of students' writing via the use of embedded videos, it is also important to point out that, just like KG, JD also uses real-world discussions and assignments. Therefore, he likewise has been using various aspects of CTL with some success – without realizing it was CTL. The question is, will it likewise make a difference in his students' writing?

Before undertaking an analysis, however, there is one last thing to explain: the main reason JD was chosen to be the secondary participant is that, similar to SR (secondary participant in Chapter Five/ Case Study Two) whose papers were lost, JD forgot to keep the first papers from the contextualized and the non-contextualized comparison classes and only kept four of the last papers from the contextualized class – leaving very little for the purpose of analysis and nothing for comparison. Therefore, in order to support or to call into question the results associated with KG, JD's grades and recollections in relation to his students' writing became paramount. It should also be acknowledged that, in hindsight, I should have made JD the primary participant – because his students were asked to write essays, not business reports – but given that there were so few papers kept, KG was made the primary participant. This had a negative impact on the study.

<div align="center">**Analysis**</div>

Before analyzing the writing artifacts, it is important to first understand what JD's Issues in Criminal Justice class was about. Here is how his syllabus described the class: "Critical issues related to crime and urban society will be examined, as well as analysis and evaluation of documents in the field of criminal justice. The class will consider

newly proposed reforms and methods of implementing these reforms." To accomplish this, the class discussed current events and critiqued journal articles published in the field of Criminal Justice – examining such topics as victimology, policing, the judicial system, juvenile justice, punishment and corrections. In addition to these discussions, JD also utilized videos, group work and lecture. He also assigned two types of writing assignments: short response to questions at the end of each chapter in the textbook and two papers on current issues. I begin my analysis with an explanation of the two writing assignments, what I am calling the first and last papers. Both writing assignments were called Current Issue Papers. For the first assignment, students were to choose a criminal justice topic already discussed or to be discussed in class, to find and read three newspaper or magazine articles on the topic and then write a two to three page review of one of the articles. Students were also asked to do college-level work in relation to the quality of their writing. For the second assignment, students were to choose a criminal justice topic already discussed or to be discussed in class – but not the same topic as the first writing assignment, to find four newspaper or magazine articles on the topic and then write a three to four page review of one of the articles. Again, students were asked to do college-level work in relation to the quality of their writing. It should also be noted that students were to also do an 8-12 minute presentation for the last paper.

Grades and Recollections. Beyond JD's recollections, the only other way to either support or to call into question the results related to what was learned from the analysis of KG is the grades and his recollections. I begin with the grades. Here are the grades for the first and last papers, first for the contextualized class and second for the

non-contextualized comparison class. The paper was worth up to 150 pts. The results for the contextualized class (19 students) were:

Improved	Worsened	Stayed Same	Assignment(s)
10 (by 2-7 pts.)	4 (by 5-9 pts.)	4	1 (did neither assignment)

The results for the comparison class (21 students) were:

Improved	Worsened	Stayed Same	Assignment(s)
9 (by 3-15 pts.)	9 (by 1-12 pts.)	1	3 (only did 1 of the 2 papers)

As is evident, there does not appear to be that much difference between the two classes – except that it could be argued that there was slightly more improvement in the comparison class (9 students improved by 3-15 pts. as compared to 10 students who only improved by 2-7 pts.), but the same class also got slightly worse (9 students worsened by 1-12 pts. as compared to 4 students who worsened by 5-9 pts.). It should be noted, however, that the higher number, the 15 in the 3-15 pt. increase, and the 12 in the 1-12 pt. decrease only reflects the points earned, in both cases, by one student. The other students' numbers were much lower. Thus, in effect, the classes were basically the same.

As for the actual grades on these papers, in both classes the only Fs were given to students who did not do one or both assignments; all other students received an A, B or C. There were no Ds. Counting the grades for both papers, grade-wise, this broke down as follows for the contextualized class: there were 18 As, 14 Bs, 5 Cs and 1 F. For the comparison class, there were 18 As, 15 Bs, 4 Cs and 3 Fs. Again, there is not that much

difference between the two classes. It should also be noted that, like KG, JD did not have a rubric and unlike KG, JD did factor the quality of the writing into his grading; however, there was no specific percentage given that was to be related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. JD's explanation was that he largely just takes into account the degree to which these issues impact the content of each paper. Of course, as I shared with JD, as an English instructor, I see this as problematic for both the instructor and the student – because of what it says about the value placed on the quality of students' writing. However, it should be understood that JD does not have a degree in Education that would have taught him about the importance of the use of a rubric for grading; there is, however, some mention of rubrics in the PD associated with seeking tenure. To be fair, JD is still in the process of beginning to incorporate this training. I myself, for most of my sixteen years of teaching experience worked without a literal rubric. It was not until I went through the tenure process that I actually began to use one. Like LW in the first case study on contextualized instruction, I just had a sense of what an A paper is like, what a B paper is like, and so on and so forth. I knew I was basically correct because of the norming sessions I participated in at the schools in which I taught. My estimation of a student's grade was always in the same "ballpark" as other instructors. This absence of a rubric for grading is probably more common than educators would like to admit, or in some cases, would even agree that a rubric is a necessity. However, although it can be argued that it is not problematic for the instructor – although I would now disagree – it cannot be argued that it is not problematic for students. Without a rubric, they have nothing to guide them and no way to understand the grades they are given, unless they ask the instructor for clarification.

Because JD did still have four student papers for the last writing assignment in his contextualized class, these papers can be analyzed for the quality of the students' writing. I undertook this analysis because it may suggest the degree to which JD allowed the writing itself to impact the grade on the content of the paper. These papers covered topics like abduction, racial profiling, the criminal justice system and life sentences for juveniles. In every case, these were all A papers, and thus, the writing issues were relatively minor. I saw some issues related to punctuation, pronoun agreement, awkward word choices and phrases – but nothing that detracted significantly from the content of the paper. The writing content was also largely good, but there were some contradictory arguments. With no rubric, there is no way to tell how many points were associated with content and how many were associated with the writing quality. In one paper in particular, it appears that much of the paper may have been plagiarized. This paper, also, had no writing issues – with one or two very minor exceptions. JD did not know how to utilize Turn-It-In (a software program that detects plagiarism), which is located in Blackboard, so he did not realize what the student had done – either intentionally or unintentionally. Often as an English instructor, I forget that not all teachers see as much writing as English instructors do, and so may not pick up on plagiarism as easily or as quickly. In terms of PD, it was suggested to JD that he not only begin having his students submit their writing assignments digitally on Blackboard, but to, more importantly, have them submit them to Turn-It-In. This will serve to remind students of the importance of avoiding plagiarism. I also gave the same suggestion I gave to KG in relation to the use of a simple rubric.

Finally, and unfortunately, these four papers (the best papers in the class) do not really tell us anything about the students' quality of writing and if it improved due to the embedded videos. JD's recollections, however, do. According to JD, what he saw during this semester was what he has been seeing for the last seven years, and especially in the last 3 years since he was hired at the City Colleges of Chicago (Olive-Harvey): the writing issues students have when they enter one of his classes are the same writing issues they have when they leave. The content improves, but the quality of the writing does not. This is true for both the contextualized class and the non-contextualized comparison class. The embedded videos made no difference; JD believes this is because the students did not access the videos on Blackboard and did not take seriously the videos he played in class. This belief is confirmed because Blackboard has a feature that records how often students access the content placed in Blackboard by an instructor. The report can be summarized as follows: six students viewed one video and one student viewed five. Again, this is seven students out of a class of 26. This confirms the analysis and the fact that our students struggle with the many problems/distractions noted in the Statement of the Problem section in Chapter One. I will not repeat them here, but it suffices to say that for any number of reasons, many of our students tend to do only what they have to and a lesser number not even that much. These videos, because they were considered supplemental, were largely not viewed. Although students are responsible for the choices they make, it is clear to those who work with this population that this is learned behavior – the result of poverty, racism and a lack of quality education. This is why, with a few notable exceptions, these students are largely underprepared for college. They simply do

not know what it means to be a student and how to implement that knowledge in daily practice.

Conclusions

JD has agreed that the use of embedded contextualization in the form of digital videos has not been a success; however, he also believes we should not give up on the concept. Like KG, JD is open to embedding me both physically and digitally. As noted in relation to KG, although not a part of this dissertation, next semester I will visit a few of his classes, introduce myself, talk briefly about my philosophy on teaching grammar (See Chapter Five for a fuller discussion) and play one of the videos. I will then come back to the same classes at a later date and echo that philosophy and play another video. The hope is that allowing students to meet me and to get a sense of the benefit the CAPP videos can be for students' writing, they will take the next step and actually view the videos on their own as needed. Whether or not this will make a difference remains to be seen, but, as noted earlier in this chapter, this is all any teacher can do: go the "extra-mile" and try to motivate students to take responsibility for their own education. In other words, to take the initiative to actually watch the videos outside of class to help them address qualitative issues related to their writing.

Finally, the analysis of JD confirms the analysis of KG; contextualization of real-world subject matter (whether that is business or criminal justice) improves the content of students' writing, but it does not necessarily improve the quality of the writing – in relation to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. For this to take place, other factors must be considered and other teaching strategies must be utilized. As for the factors that distract students, they must be considered so that students can learn to

take responsibility for their own education and take the initiative to go above and beyond what is required to make time for education tools such as embedded videos. As for the other teaching strategies, if chosen wisely, they can help facilitate this. In the next chapter, I return to the literature as I reflect on the lessons learned from the three-fold case study of this dissertation.

CHAPTER SEVEN – REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY AND THE LITERATURE

Overview of Chapter

This chapter reflects on the results of this three-fold case study with respect to the literature on Contextualization (CTL), Basic Writing (BW) and Professional Development (PD). However, this chapter does not follow the typical pattern for a reflection on the study. In other words, to present my reflections I had to address more of the literature on CTL, BW and PD; the review of the literature was not sufficient. A more concise summary of the results of the study will appear at the beginning of Chapter Eight: Current and Future Implications for Research and Practice. In this chapter, therefore, I begin in the first two sections of this chapter with arguments derived from the literature on CTL and BW to explain faculty (and student) experience with CTL and the instruction of BW skills, as well as faculty response to each. And, for the same reasons, I end with arguments derived from the literature on PD. The purpose is to highlight the lessons learned from this study.

Faculty Experience with CTL and BW

With the exception of the primary participant utilizing the integrated contextualized instruction method (Case Study Two/Chapter Five) and seeing improvement in both the content and the quality of students' writing (period and comma usage only), it seems that CTL improves the content of students' writing, but not necessarily the quality. Issues related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice seem to be more connected to student initiative. This raises several questions related to faculty (and student) experience with CTL and BW:

1. Why doesn't an increased interest and engagement in relevant subject matter transfer to an increased interest and engagement in the act of writing?

2. Does the fault lie with CTL, our understanding of it, its implementation, the lack of student initiative or some admixture of all four?

This is important because answers to these questions may lead not only to a better understanding of CTL and the instruction of BW skills, but also to the subsequent improvement of faculty (and student) experience – which would ultimately impact faculty response, resulting in greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

Reflections from the Literature on CTL

"Big picture" solutions. Although the literature on CTL is replete with examples of increased student interest, engagement, retention and success, it is silent when it comes to the quality of students' writing. What the literature is not silent about is the "big picture" solutions to the problem of remediation for underprepared college students. In other words, the work done around CTL has largely been in large-scale initiatives. This is important because the three-fold case study for this dissertation stands in contrast – as it is a small-scale project. This contrast may also suggest why this problem, the quality of students' writing, is not being addressed in the literature; somehow, it has been lost/overlooked in the "big picture," or, researchers have just not "drilled down" deep enough to find satisfactory answers/solutions. Or worse, they either do not value quality writing or they do not believe BW students are capable of such writing.

As was seen in Chapter Two (Review of the Literature), one of the most significant sources on CTL is the work done by the California Community Colleges (*Contextualized Teaching and Learning: A Faculty Primer,* 2009), and as was noted, this

work grew out of the 2007 work (*Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*) also done by the same state-wide school system. What is similar about these two works is the fact that both are "big picture" solutions offered in the implementation of large-scale initiatives, while the work that must take place in the classroom in relation to the quality of students' writing is anything but, "big picture." Indeed, I would argue that such work is better suited for the small-scale project. This is because small-scale projects can address issues that are not being prioritized by those who implement large-scale initiatives. Small-scale projects can also look at the local situation and its implications for a national problem; quality of writing is one such problem. This three-fold case study is a perfect example: CTL and BW instruction as a solution to the problem of remediation for underprepared college students in an urban environment. This contrast would suggest the fault (in relation to the question: why doesn't an increased interest and engagement in relevant subject matter transfer to an increased interest and engagement in the act of writing?) does not lie with CTL itself, but rather in its implementation – which ultimately, impacts our understanding of CTL and by implication may also impact student initiative. If this is true, it may be possible that CTL, if examined in small-scale projects, can impact more than just the content in students' writing; however, before that can be ascertained, CTL in the large-scale initiative must be better understood.

In the "big picture," "Basic skills are those foundation skills in reading, writing, mathematics, learning skills, study skills, and English as a Second Language which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work" (Brochure: Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges, 2007, A Summary of

Literature and Effective Practices, p. 4). With such a broad definition for basic skills, all

that takes place in the classroom should be based on best practices. Best practices, as

defined by this California study, "refer to organizational, administrative, instructional

[and] support activities engaged in by highly successful programs, as validated by

research and literature relating to developmental education" (Brochure: Basic Skills as a

Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges, A Summary of

Literature and Effective Practices, p. 4). This is why both California studies took into

account organizational, administrative, instructional, and support activities, with

instruction being the most important area for this dissertation.

In the 2007 study on basic skills, here is what was said in terms of the "big

picture" solution – with respect to instructional practices and the problem of remediation:

In order to achieve successful student outcomes, BW practice (classes, programs and

services) should first utilize learning theory supported by research in order to both design

and deliver courses. This design and delivery should also be culturally responsive and

highly structured. It should acknowledge student diversity when choosing instructional

methods, and it should pay attention to the growth of the whole student – the cognitive,

emotional and social development. In relation to practice, consideration of best practices

related to curriculum and the implementation of curriculum is imperative. Course content

should be geared to prepare students for college classes, with special attention paid to

entry and exit skills for the purpose of placement and the developing of appropriate

learning objectives and outcomes. BW faculty should also communicate with one another

about what works and what doesn't work in their classes, as they and advisors also

monitor student progress. This means "comprehensive academic support mechanisms"

should be provided, along with tutors trained to work with BW students. (Brochure:

Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges,

Summary of Practices, Instructional Practice, pp. 14-15).

A more specific solution. Although everything mentioned above about

instructional practices and remediation for underprepared college students is significant,

nothing is specifically said about which teaching and learning strategy should be used;

however, given that the California Community Colleges followed the 2007 study on basic

skills with the 2009 study on CTL, it is evident they believe CTL is the best strategy. The

problem is that the 2009 study, when it addressed BW skills, gave a representative

example of a BW class (see Chapter Two in this dissertation), and in that example, all

that was spoken of was the degree to which CTL (in this case, with a service learning

component) impacted the interest and engagement of students, as well as the content of

students' writing. Here is the description the *Primer* (2009) offers:

> Keller highlights the positive impact engaging with a real-world issue, and the
>
> service experience in particular, has on students' performance. "It doesn't really
>
> impact what I can or can't cover…it's just that students are more excited and
>
> interested." He observes that experiencing the context allows students to
>
> comprehend their reading and express themselves in writing in a deeper way. (p.
>
> 22)

Given this description, the literature on CTL, in terms of the "big picture," is

silent about the quality of writing. It only tells us that as a result of CTL students are able

to "express themselves in a deeper way." Why, therefore, is the focus in this description

solely on the content? Is this because CTL only impacts the content and not the quality of

students' writing? And if that is the case, how can faculty (and students) have a positive experience with CTL and the instruction of BW skills – and, by implication, how can faculty have a positive response? Or, if as I have already suggested, is it possible that the research has lost sight/overlooked this issue and not "drilled down" deep enough to discover that small-scale projects can reveal things that large-scale initiatives, by their very nature, often overlook? And finally, do researchers value quality writing and do they believe BW students are capable of such writing? More will be said about this later. What is interesting about these questions and the answers I am about to suggest, is that this three-fold case study confirms the belief that CTL, in relation to writing, only impacts the content – with one exception (the primary participant in Case study Two/Chapter Five), and that exception gives us hope when it comes to the possibility that CTL can likewise impact the quality of students' writing.

Perhaps this hope is why, in relation to faculty response in my study, to a participant, each still believes that the quality of students' writing can improve. Perhaps, this is why the use of CTL, in all three instructional methods (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized instruction*) did not discourage these participants. This is surprising due to the fact that, on the surface, it appears to be counterintuitive. This kind of response could be what is known as the Hawthorne Effect, which suggests that participants who are being observed – and know they are being observed – may say or do things that run contrary to the response one would logically expect (Borg and Gall, 1983). The reasons for this can include a conscious or unconscious desire to not disappoint or to seek approval. Although this is always a distinct possibility, I am of the persuasion that the reasons for this positive

response are less counterintuitive than they may appear. It may be that the participants were encouraged by the fact that "someone" is attempting to address this issue. Perhaps this is why the participants in the embedded contextualized study (Case Study Three/Chapter Six) want the author of this dissertation to return to be physically and digitally embedded in their classes.

In contrast, it may also be a form of denial; no faculty want to believe that something so consequential as the quality of students' writing cannot be taught. And finally, to be entirely honest, the discipline-area participants (Case Study Two/Chapter Five and Case Study Three/Chapter Six) are not aware of the silence in the literature and the problem this has created for BW instructors and students, as well as discipline-area instructors who attempt to build upon the foundational work BW instructors are supposed to do. It should also be noted that the primary participant for Case Study One/Chapter Four, a BW instructor, is also not aware of this silence. For each participant, therefore, ignorance may be bliss. They assume that more grammar instruction can eventually resolve the problem and making such an assumption results in a positive response. The question is whether or not this belief in grammar instruction is an unfounded belief, because what they do not know is that the literature is silent for a reason.

Silence. To demonstrate the degree of silence within the research further, of the 61 studies (27 quantitative and 34 qualitative) on CTL compiled in 2011 by Perin (mentioned in Chapter Two of this dissertation), it is important to first note that very few studies addressed CTL in relation to writing and none addressed the quality of students writing. This, once again, raises a number of questions: why is quality of writing not an area of interest in CTL? Why is only the content of students' writing an area of concern?

Is this an example of the "big picture" losing sight of something very important or is the literature not "drilling down" deep enough? In moving toward the answers to these questions, it is important to see what the literature actually says. This is in relation to the three instructional methods of CTL and the small number that focused on writing. Perin notes that 16 of the 27 quantitative studies were of contextualized instruction, while 10 were of integrated contextualized instruction. The remaining study looked at both contextualized and integrated contextualized instruction; none, however, looked at embedded contextualized instruction. It should also be noted that Perin did not analyze any of the qualitative studies.

The contextualized instruction studies. With respect to these studies, four took place in K-12 classrooms, six in Adult Basic Education classrooms and six in college classrooms; however, only one of the 16 studies actually addressed writing – and it was not a college study. That study is Perin and Hare (2010). Therein, they studied the impact of CTL on reading and writing in relation to written summarization, question generation, vocabulary and persuasive writing skills. Note that none of these foci address the quality of students' writing. What they found is that due to the use of academic textbooks from discipline-area subjects, students were more interested and engaged because they saw the use of concrete real-world textbooks – and not the typical use of abstract content – as relevant to their college education. As a result, their ability to summarize the content in written form was greater than in the comparison group. It should be noted, however, that these gains were characterized as incremental – and, with the possible exception of vocabulary (word-choice), the gains were all related to the content of the writing, not the quality.

In Case Study One/Chapter Four of this three-fold case study, both participants had success related to the content of students' writing. LW, the primary participant, utilized college success as the focus (backdrop of relevant subject matter) of the class. Although student interest waxed and waned, it was clear that when their interest was piqued, the content in their writing improved. This was especially true with respect to the writing assignment related to the movie, "Freedom Writers." As for the small degree to which quality of writing improved, LW attributed that to student initiative, rather than CTL. The reason for such a conclusion was evident when the contextualized class was compared to the non-contextualized class. There was no difference. KW, the secondary participant, experienced the same success (in relation to content) with respect to her writing assignments which addressed issues of race and racism. Given that our students are largely African American, such issues feel quite relevant to students – especially in the time of police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement.

As for the quality of her students' writing, KW attributed the small degree of success to student initiative, not CTL. Although she had no comparison class, KW's analysis confirms LW's. Therefore, for both LW and KW, in relation to the quality of students' writing, the gains were characterized as incremental and not related to CTL. Moreover, although not specifically stated by Perin and Hare (2010), the literature on CTL (see Chapter Two) emphasizes the importance of student interest and engagement as a necessary compliment to teacher initiative in relation to the implementation of CTL instructional methods. Students must take the initiative if CTL is to ultimately impact student retention and success, and I would argue this is even more evident when it comes to the quality of students' writing.

The integrated contextualized instruction method. As for these studies, four of the 10 studies addressed writing (Cox et al., 2004; Tilson et al., 2010; Bulgren et al., 2009; De La Paz & Felton, 2010). I begin with Cox et al. (2004). This work was a large-scale initiative for a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program in a community college environment – standing in contrast to the small-scale project represented by this three-fold case study. Although this large-scale initiative integrates writing, it is not clear that the school sees this as BW skills being integrated into the program. The program, Gateway to Business, integrates writing and critical thinking into business courses because the school believes it is naïve to think that students can learn everything they need to know in relation to business writing in two classes, a required Freshman Composition class and a Business Communications class. As a result, they believe that writing needs to be integrated throughout the students' education. This is not an uncommon belief in academia, although not always implemented in practice.

This failure in practice is evident at Olive-Harvey – and most likely in community colleges across the nation, and as has been noted in this dissertation, discipline-area faculty frustrated with quality of writing issues for underprepared college students can, overtime, slowly gravitate away from writing assignments. Although not a part of the integrated contextualized instruction study, KG, the secondary participant in Case Study Three/Chapter Six (the embedded contextualized instruction method), admitted as much. However, anecdotally speaking, he is probably not alone. This also says something about what discipline-area faculty believe is possible – which ultimately, may reflect that the literature has not "drilled down" deep enough on this issue to impact BW practice. As a

consequence, the writing quality of students in these discipline-area classes impacts what faculty believe is possible.

What the Gateway Business program does that is different is the intensive amount of writing required. Here is a list of the course objectives: "develop critical thinking skills in the context of learning about contemporary business issues, learn about various management concepts and business themes, provide support for students from their transition from high school to college, and develop writing, teamwork, presentation, computer and research skills" (p. 65). Writing is just one of the many components addressed in this program; writing, however, in this program breaks down into the following categories: learning to write, writing to learn and learning to write in a group. In the learning to write aspect of writing, evaluation of the writing was in relation to: content, writing proficiency (grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice), organization and critical thinking. This evaluation was to be accomplished via the use of a rubric for each assignment. An examination of the rubrics involved reveals the typical gradation utilized for the degree to which errors are still present in an assignment.

In relation to this three-fold case study, it was evident that with the exception of one participant, the use of a rubric was problematic. Discipline-area instructors either assigned a very low percentage to quality of writing issues or they did not include them in the rubric at all. In Case Study Two/Chapter Five, the former was true of the primary participant, CM, the Sociology instructor, and SR, the Economics instructor, while the latter was true of the secondary participant, KG, the Business instructor in Case Study Three/Chapter Six. LW, the primary participant in Case Study One/Chapter Four, one of

the BW instructors, utilized a rubric, but the fact that it was just an internalized rubric makes it suspect due to its inherent subjectivity. JD, the secondary participant in Case Study Three/Chapter Four also had an internalized rubric, manifesting the same problems as LW, but more so given that he is not a BW instructor. Why is this important? The point value associated with grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice communicates to students the value placed on the quality of their writing. If it is given a low or no percentage in the grade for an assignment, it appears that students will (either consciously or unconsciously) – perhaps in direct proportion – spend very little to no time addressing these issues. If it is an internalized rubric, not only do students have no way of understanding their grade, but they also cannot utilize the rubric as a checklist to guide them as they prepare a paper for submission. Such practices on the part of any instructor devalue the importance of the quality of students' writing, however unintended that may be.

As for specifics about instruction in writing, the Gateway Business program noted that one class period was given to writing instruction (The director of the Writing Center taught this "seminar" on Writing.) and that students were encouraged to go to the Writing Center for all their assignments. This does not suggest that the program could really significantly address issues related to the quality of writing. The program appears to focus largely on content and the various types of writing done in business: summary, analysis and persuasion – assuming that the foundational instruction in writing would take place in the English and Business Writing classes and then be reinforced via tutors. Once again, student initiative becomes paramount. In this case, the quality of writing,

although emphasized, may get lost in the sheer quantity of what students are expected to learn not only about writing, but business issues, concepts and themes as well.

Of course, this would be true of any discipline-area course that attempts to address issues related to the quality of writing. Student initiative, the amount to be learned and time are always an issue. It is no surprise, therefore, that this was evident at Olive-Harvey as well, and of course, this is why this three-fold case study was implemented. To a participant, every instructor – even BW instructors – felt that given the severity of the problem of remediation, students need to take more initiative, faculty need to do better at limiting the content of their courses to only what has to be taught and something needs to be done to provide more time to fully address this problem and to see some progress that can be measured. A way must be found to address quality of writing issues that remain in students' writing and that frustrate discipline-area and BW instructors. A way must also be found for these students, who will in the future, unfortunately – right or wrong – be judged for the quality of their writing by employers, co-workers/colleagues and the general public, a judgment about how intelligent and capable they are.

Not mentioned by Perin as one of the four studies that addresses integrated contextualized instruction, but a large-scale initiative listed as another CTE program, Jenkins et al. (2009) actually does address the integration of BW skills, but writing is taught in just one class in the program. The class is about occupationally related reading, writing and mathematics for Adult Education students who are a part of the I-BEST program in the state of Washington. Given that reading, writing and math are all three required components of the class and they are only taught to the degree that certain

occupations utilize them, it is probably safe to assume that quality of writing issues cannot be sufficiently addressed. The second of the four integrated contextualized instruction studies listed by Perin was related to fourth grade students and how science writing instruction influences the evolution of students' informational writing. This study is by Tilson et al. (2010). The evaluation of the students' writing consisted of the following criteria listed on a rubric developed for the study: "science content, use of evidence, introduction, clarity, conclusion, vocabulary usage, and a count of topic-specific vocabulary words used in the piece" (p. 117). With the possible exception of vocabulary (word-choice), there is no mention of the quality of students' writing, just the content.

The same is true of the third study listed by Perin, which was Bulgren et al. (2009). The title of the study says it all: "Effectiveness of Question Exploration to Enhance Students' Written Expression of Content Knowledge and Comprehension." The study, therefore, is silent about the quality of students' writing. It should be noted, however, that unlike the first two integrated contextualized instruction studies (mentioned by Perin), this study was a small-scale project looking at 36 students in an inner-city school. And yet, although I argue in this chapter that the small-scale project is best suited to address the quality of students' writing, even this study did not "drill down" deep enough. The question, however, is whether that is a reflection of what is valued or what is believed possible? This is a significant question.

The fourth and final study, a large-scale initiative (160 students, 10 sections and a number of different schools), on Perin's list of integrated contextualized instruction studies is De La Paz and Felton, 2010. In that study,

students learned a pre-writing strategy for composing argumentative essays related to each historical event. Results indicate that in comparison to a control group . . . , essays written by students who received instruction . . . were longer, were rated as having significantly greater historical accuracy, were significantly more persuasive, and claims and rebuttals within each argument became more elaborated. (Abstract, p. 174)

It should also be noted that these students were in the 11th grade – closer to the age of college students. No analysis, however, is given as to what kinds of issues these students had with the quality of their writing. This silence was replicated in another study by De La Paz (2005) not found on Perin's list, but mentioned in her analysis (Perin, 2011). The problem with this study is that it only addressed writing strategies related to how eighth grade students were to write persuasive arguments in history; there was no focus on the quality of the students' writing.

In some respects, both the 11th and even the eighth grade students of those two studies seemed to be functioning at a higher level than many of the underprepared college students at Olive-Harvey. This higher level of functioning could also be said of the Gateway Business program. Anecdotally speaking, it is not uncommon to have students at our college who never wrote an essay of any kind in high school, let alone a persuasive essay. This raises questions about the relevance of studies undertaken with students who are apparently being prepared for college and whether those studies are entirely applicable to students who were not. One source to be addressed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter (Reflections from The Literature on Basic Writing) characterizes this latter group of students as follows:

those who had been left so far behind the others in their formal education that they appeared to have little chance of catching up, students whose difficulties with the written language seemed of a different order from those of the other groups, as if they had come, you might say, from a different country, or at least through different schools, where even very modest standards of high-school literacy had not been met. (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 2)

One might also wonder if this factors into why the aforementioned studies do not address the quality of students' writing. Perhaps this lack of quality writing is not the significant issue for college-ready students as it is with underprepared college students, and is it possible that is why it is either not valued or not believed possible? This is problematic when looking to the literature on CTL (with its inherent connection to basic skills) and what it doesn't say about issues related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. However, when the literature on BW is examined, another larger reason comes to light – explaining why there is such a large degree of silence about the quality of students' writing. Again, this is important because this larger reason may lead not only to a better understanding of CTL and the instruction of BW skills, but also to the improvement of faculty (and student) experience – which would ultimately impact faculty response, resulting in greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

Reflections on the Literature on Basic Writing

A settled question. Before looking at the literature on BW, it is instructive to take a moment and see this issue of silence as it is addressed by the larger "umbrella" literature in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. As noted in Chapter Two, this literature suggests that in relation to the instruction of grammar, for many in the field, it

has been a settled question since the 1960s. Braddock, Loyd-Jones and Schoer (*Research in Written Composition,* 1963) made this declaration: "The teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (pp. 37–38). This is echoed in the BW literature. In "The Uses – and Limits – of Grammar," D'Eloia (1977) points out that research has shown that the traditional form of teaching grammar via the analysis of grammar is not effective, and this is true regardless of the student population – ranging from junior high to college and taking into account whether the population is privileged or underprivileged. It is, however, slightly more effective when the structural and/or transformational generative instruction methods are used. These methods require students to manipulate language (their own writing).

However, "If there is one conclusion to be drawn which cuts across all the studies, it is this: the more time spent analyzing grammar as grammar, the less time spent writing; the less time spent writing, the less the improvement in the written product" (D'Eloia, 1977, p. 1). This belief was held by the secondary participant in Case Study One/Chapter Four; KW does not do any kind of grammar instruction in the classroom. She believes that the more students write, the more progress they will eventually and inevitably make with respect to the quality of their writing. However, given the time such progress requires, she also believes this progress would not be something she would see in its entirety. Standing in contrast to KW is LW, the primary participant in the same case study and chapter. She still believes in grammar instruction, but like most BW instructors, it is combined with writing instruction and assignments in which students learn the writing process. In other words, it is not traditional grammar instruction in

which students do not actually write, but analyze and learn the parts of speech, grammar and how to diagram sentences. More will be said about this in the following paragraph.

Although this greater emphasis on the act of writing does not necessarily preclude a non-traditional form of grammar instruction that might be effective, as was seen in the review of the literature in Chapter Two, only two studies since D'Eloia (1977) even bothered (which says something about how accepted this position is) to confirm her characterization of the literature and this "settled" question (Anderson, 1997; Saddler & Graham, 2005). Interestingly enough, the conclusions drawn from the studies D'Eloia mentioned present what I consider a troubling conclusion that is still evident today. Here is her characterization:

> These hard facts [about the quality of students' writing] cause many Basic Writing instructors to abandon the attempt to teach any grammar systematically. They hope, by emphasizing for the student the development of his unique voice and a number of strategies for finding and organizing better content, to foster simultaneously an improved self-image, a confidence and pride in the act of writing, a desire to make it perfect on every level. They hope to avoid a psychologically debilitating, boring, and futile preoccupation with grammar and error, in the belief that the student can get it right readily enough when he genuinely has the motivation to do so and in the belief that repeated exposure to the written standard will enable the student to acquire standard forms by osmosis, much as his instructor acquired them. (1977, p. 1)

The reason I consider this a troubling conclusion on the part of some is not that more writing leads to less errors, not that motivation makes a difference and not that

Standard English can be "absorbed" via the process of osmosis, but rather that to conclude that instruction in grammar should never take place assumes that the "hope" of Basic Writing instructors, as noted above, can be fulfilled as a by-product of the items on this "wish" list. The secondary participant, KW, in Case Study One/Chapter Four exemplifies this. In effect, it is a "sink or swim" methodology without the "swimming lessons." It also assumes that students will follow through and take the initiative. KW is of the persuasion that this will eventually happen. This is not impossible, but does this mean that instruction related to the quality of students' writing should never take place? Is this really an either/or proposition? In relation to the BW instructors in Case Study One/Chapter Four, the contrast between KW and LW (the primary participant) illustrates this; one argues for grammar instruction and one argues against. Indeed, the relative silence in the literature suggests that for many it is an either/or proposition, and this is highly problematic because BW teachers have a mandate to improve both the content and the quality of students' writing. In other words, how will such a mandate be achieved effectively and in a timely way? It is also highly problematic for discipline-area faculty who depend on BW instructors to "prepare" underprepared college students for the writing demands of their college classes.

This is clearly evident at Olive-Harvey, as manifested in the frustration of both BW instructors and discipline-area faculty who rightly wonder why students are not sufficiently learning BW skills and transferring those skills to discipline-area classes. In contrast, and perhaps due to their lack of awareness related to the silence in the literature and this "settled" question, this three-fold case study's participants (with one exception, KW) still wish to continue some form of grammar instruction after this study. This, as

noted earlier in this chapter, is even in spite of the overall lack of improvement in the quality of their students' writing. Such desire, although counterintuitive on the surface, can be forgiven in relation to those who do not know the literature, but for those who do know the literature, I would argue that the problem with dismissing grammar instruction is that such a conclusion is based on a literature that has not "drilled down" deep enough to really address the quality of BW students' writing. It is also based on a literature that either does not value quality of writing or it does not believe BW students are capable of such writing.

As for the BW literature, it should also be noted that D'Eloia characterizes dissenters, like myself, to the "accepted" position (the "settled" question) by mimicking the condescension often directed towards them – that these dissenters not only question the results of the studies D'Eloia mentions, but that they "foolishly" suggest that there may be problems with the research design in these studies: did they take into account all relevant factors? For example, dissenters wonder if the problem lies in how, how long and to what degree the grammar instruction took place. Calling this condescension into question, it should also be noted that in more recent literature, a report on the state of Literacy in the United States' K-12 Educational system (*Writing Next: Effective Strategies for Improving Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools*, 2007) does admit that some forms of non-traditional grammar instruction can be effective, and not just minimally so: "a recent study (Fearn & Farnan, 2005) found that teaching students to focus on the function and practical application of grammar within the context of writing (versus the traditional model of teaching grammar as an independent activity) produced strong and positive effects on students' writing" (p. 21). This study will be revisited in

greater detail in the final section of this chapter and in Chapter Eight: Current and Future

Implications – as it appears to be a form of contextualization heretofore not mentioned by

Perin (2011) in relation to the instructional methods of CTL. This is also the direction I

intend to take in my own classes after this study. However, there is a problem: would

discipline-area instructors be willing to take that step as well, or could this be so effective

in BW classes that these students would not necessarily need more instruction beyond

those classes to help them transfer what they learn to discipline-area classes? If this is

true, CTL may yet be able to move beyond content and to likewise impact the quality of

students' writing.

Another alternative method not considered grammar instruction, also mentioned

in *Writing Next*, is sentence combining. The authors of the report (Graham and Perin) cite

Saddler and Graham, 2005. That study compared sentence combining with traditional

grammar instruction and found it more effective: "Sentence combining involves teaching

students to construct more complex and sophisticated sentences through exercises in

which two or more basic sentences are combined into a single sentence" (qtd. in Graham

and Perin, 2007, p. 18). It is hard, however, to imagine how some form of grammar

instruction would not have to be incorporated (to some degree) to address quality of

writing issues that would arise. It should also be stated that this focus on the instruction

of grammar in the report was presented almost as an afterthought (A Note about

Grammar). Beyond this, the closest the report comes to issues related to quality of writing

is the mention of the process of editing in a couple of sections. No elaboration, however,

is made as to how students are to edit or what they would have to know about grammar in

order to edit effectively. This appears to be a disconnect in the literature and suggests (as

I have already argued) the need to "drill down" deeper – below the surface of what is now known.

And finally, returning to D'Eloia's characterization of the dissenters in the literature, some also question the efficacy of what she calls "linguistic osmosis" (1977, pp. 1-2), the gradual or unconscious assimilation of any language. However, as illustrated by the PD offered to the participants in Chapter Five/Case Study Two and addressed in the embedded videos for the participants of Chapter Six/Case Study Three, I personally do not question "linguistic osmosis"; in fact, I see it as an important foundational component to better writing – because more reading of and listening to Standard English contributes to the quality of students' writing.

Actual practice vs. the literature. In terms of practice, and in spite of the significant degree of silence in the literature, a large number of BW instructors still teach grammar – but in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. As for traditional grammar instruction, in 16 years of teaching writing and BW skills (at one four-year college, three universities and three community colleges), I have never known or heard of any BW instructor who teaches students how to diagram sentences; I have, however, known many – if not most – who teach the parts of speech and grammar, but always combined with writing instruction and assignments wherein the lessons learned were to be applied. The fact that grammar is still being taught is also evident in the continuing proliferation and popularity of a large number of textbook publishers who offer physical and digital textbooks that largely contain grammar and grammar exercises as well as online software programs that teach and test students in relation to grammar. It is also evident because

students are generally required to buy these textbooks. Many publishers also now offer online tutoring – thus, combining grammar instruction and feedback on writing.

At Olive-Harvey, the general consensus (with a few exceptions) is that we have to address quality of writing issues via some form of grammar instruction; it is part of our mandate. As noted earlier, in community colleges this is not uncommon. At our college, this instruction is manifested by a number of instructors via in-class grammar lessons and exercises, while others utilize online software programs that teach and test students on issues related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. It is also true that some instructors utilize both in-class and online instruction, not to mention grammar exercises and some form of testing. For most, however, the testing is generally undertaken when student writing is evaluated. Many of these strategies were evident in all three participants (myself included as the third participant) in Chapter Four/Case Study One. These were the BW instructors. In my experience, with minor variations, this is standard practice in BW classes.

I will acknowledge, however, that I did teach in one program that relied on the "hope" D'Eloia emphasized in her characterization of the BW literature. Instruction, however, I would argue, actually did take place – but only in the form of comments on students' writing assignments from both instructors and tutors, minimal written instructor comments and more detailed verbal comments on drafts from tutors. In both cases, student initiative was required if the quality of students' writing was to improve. No time was taken during class for grammar instruction. This program was also in a university – not a community college where most underprepared college students tend to reside. Therein, lies the difference and a possible explanation for why "hope" may work once

students reach a certain level in their writing ability, but does "hope" produce results at the lower level of BW students? Do these students "sink or swim?" And, should there be "swimming lessons?" This, of course, highlights the need for some kind of intervention, which, of course, is why this three-fold case study was undertaken.

        Unsettling a settled question. In order to improve faculty experience with CTL and BW, a very important question must be addressed: how, how long and to what degree should BW skills be taught in relation to the quality of students' writing? To answer this question, one must begin with the groundbreaking/seminal work of Mina Shaughnessy: *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing* (1977). She was the first to address writing issues related to underprepared college students who began to flood colleges and universities with open enrollment in the late 1960s and early 70s. As noted in Chapter Two's review of literature on BW, Shaughnessy's work is considered the foundation of the BW movement, a focus on the elimination of student writing errors that is still an expectation in higher education and all careers – although, as has already been noted, there are a large number of detractors in the literature. Two significant detractors were John Rouse (1979) and Min-zhan Lu (1991). Both called into question Shaughnessy's emphasis on basic skills and grammatical correctness. The work of these detractors helped to spark a debate within the field of BW and its "umbrella" discipline, Rhetoric and Composition (Wikipedia, Mina Shaughnessy, Legacy, para. 2-3). This echoes – and expands upon – the question just asked. The new and expanded question: Is how, how long and to what degree basic skills are taught in relation to the quality of writing a moral, political, theoretical or practical decision? The answer has important ramifications. Again, this is true because of the mandate given to BW instructors. It is

also true because the answer may be foundational to a solution to the problem of remediation – with respect to the quality of students' writing.

In Rouse's essay on "The Politics of Composition" (1979), his decision is largely political with some moral implications. His interpretation of Shaughnessy's work, *Errors and Expectations*, seems to be the opposite of how she describes her work. Rouse characterizes it as follows: "the overriding need to socialize these young people in a manner politically acceptable accounts, I think, for her misinterpretations of student work and her disregard of known facts of language learning" (1979, pp. 1-2). He clarifies this further by stating that there is something larger at work, the power and maintenance of the dominant culture – which wants "people who will carry out their assigned functions without raising troublesome questions about the human consequences of their work, about the moral meaning of what they do" (p. 2). How does this apply to Shaughnessy? Rouse believes that this influx of underprepared, urban and poor college students, from a variety of races and ethnicities, are unwitting pawns who accept without question the road to success laid out, basically, in language (Standard English) acquisition (pp. 2-3).

This argument is not without merit; however, it does not practically address the mandate given to BW instructors or the more immediate need of students to manifest quality Standard English in their writing. KW, the secondary participant in Case Study One/Chapter Four, in some respects, agrees with Rouse, although she would not deny the need for students to eventually become proficient in Standard English. LW, the primary participant in the same chapter, largely not a political person, would reject such an argument as being too impractical. Although I do not reject Rouse's argument (students as unwitting pawns) in its entirety, it is clear as a BW instructor that if students are taught

such a perspective – it could have a negative impact on student initiative. It may be that such philosophical perspectives, however significant they are for students' understanding of the world and its impact on them, should be reserved for after students have some "mastery" over the quality of their writing. Or, at the very least, as I do in my classes, it should be acknowledged – but with an understanding that if students want to succeed in the world we actually live in, they have to set that aside for the "moment" and focus on what is a necessity. Again, as has been noted elsewhere in this dissertation, BW students do not have the luxury of being philosophical about the practical realities of their academic lives and their future careers. BW instructors also have a mandate and we are given a limited amount of time to accomplish it.

As for the second significant detractor, Lu, in her "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A Critique of the Politics of Linguistic Innocence" (1991), the decision made in relation to the aforementioned question (Is how, how long and to what degree basic skills are taught in relation to the quality of writing a moral, political, theoretical or practical decision?) is largely theoretical with some moral and political implications. In contrast to Rouse, Lu argues that Shaughnessy put forth an essentialist theory of language as being politically innocent. Language, however, in her view is a "site of struggle among competing discourses," and that as a result, this

> leads Shaughnessy to overlook basic writers' need to confront the dissonance they experience between academic and other discourses, which might undercut her goal of helping students achieve "the freedom of deciding how and when and where to use which language." (Lu, Abstract)

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This argument too is not without merit, but – once again – it does not address the mandate given to BW instructors or the more immediate need of BW students to manifest quality Standard English in their writing. In my classes, once again, this theory (language as a site of struggle) is acknowledged – but it clearly does not have any practical implications for the education of BW students for a future career that will lift them out of poverty and place them in a position where they can more effectively (and with less negative impact) make such decisions about "how and when and where to use which language" (Lu, Abstrast). From the three-fold case study of this dissertation, it is clear that all participants – although they, in theory, agree with Lu, believe the practical needs of our students outweigh such concerns. To a participant (with one exception, KW), all believe that such concerns should be addressed later in these students' education in classes where it is more appropriate to address such issues.

In contrast to both Rouse and Lu, Shaughnessy's decision is largely practical with some moral implications:

> BW students write the way they do, not because they are slow or non-verbal, indifferent to or incapable of academic excellence, but because they are beginners and must, like all beginners, learn by making mistakes. These they make aplenty and for such a variety of reasons that the inexperienced teacher is almost certain to see nothing but a chaos of error when he first encounters their papers. Yet a closer look will reveal very little that is random or "illogical" in what they have written. And the keys to their development as writers often lie hidden in the very features of their writing that English teachers have been trained to brush aside with a marginal code letter or a scribbled injunction to "Proofread!"

Such strategies ram at the doors of their incompetence while the keys that would

open them lie in view. This is not to say that learning to write as a young adult

does not involve hard work, for certainly it does, but only that the work must be

informed by an understanding not only of what is missing or awry but of why this

is so. (1977, pp. 5-6)

In contrast to the moral, political and theoretical arguments offered by Rouse and Lu,

Shaughnessy clearly offers a more practical perspective that allows BW instructors to

address the mandate they have been given and it meets the students' more immediate

need to manifest quality Standard English in their writing.

With all these contrasting views in mind, does Shaughnessy herself address this

debate over which view – the political, the moral, the theoretical or the political – takes

precedence in the classroom? In speaking of her book, *Errors and Expectations*, she says

the following: "This book is concerned with the orientations and perceptions of teachers

in relation to a specific population *in situ*, in response to the needs of individual student

populations and as reflections of the particular histories and resources of individuals

colleges" (1977, p. 6). Although this suggests a clearly practical view, it does not

preclude the moral, the theoretical or the political. A closer reading of the Introduction of

her book reveals that she is very much aware of the controversy that will follow. For

example, she states:

This attention to error is certain to raise questions – both pedagogical and political

– in the minds of many teachers. Why, some will ask, do English teachers need to

be told so much about errors? Isn't their concern with error already a kind of

malignancy? Ought we not to dwell instead upon the options writers have rather than the constraints they must work under if they are to be read without prejudice?

There is a short answer to these questions – namely that the proportion of time I spend analyzing errors [in the book] does not reflect the proportion of time a teacher should spend teaching students how to avoid them. But since teachers' preconceptions about errors are frequently at the center of their misconceptions about BW students, I have no choice but to dwell on errors. The long answer to these questions leads us into more controversial territory. (p. 6)

In my current experience at Olive-Harvey, and I believe this is true for all community colleges as well, this more controversial territory arises out of four foundational categories: how students view error, how faculty view error, how schools view error and how society views error. For BW students, "academic writing is a trap, not a way of saying something to someone" (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 7). As a result students not only resent this type of writing, but they also fear and resist it (p. 7). For the BW teacher, there is also the realization that he/she will be evaluated with respect to the quality of students' writing. For the rest of the faculty, there is very "little tolerance for the kinds of errors BW student make" (p. 8), and they wonder what is being taught in BW classes and why there isn't more improvement in students' writing. For the school, "remedial programs are likely to be evaluated (and budgeted) according to the speed with which they produce correct writers, correctness being a highly measurable feature of acceptable writing" (p. 9). And finally, in relation to society, it is evident that – right or wrong – graduates who become employees will be judged on the content and quality of their writing by employers, co-workers/colleagues and the general public. It should also

be noted that, to a participant, all who participated in this three-fold case study agreed that these four foundational categories and the controversy they foster impact the work that we do. This is both as BW instructors (with one exception, KW) and discipline-area instructors who wish to integrate the instruction of BW skills in their classes to address the problem of remediation when it comes to the quality of students' writing.

What these four foundational categories illustrate, therefore, is the practical realm or the realities in which BW teachers and students must live their academic lives and, for these students, their future careers. This stands in contrast to the theoretical/political/moral arguments that call into question the practical application of Shaughnessy's groundbreaking/seminal ideas. Shaughnessy explains this further by revealing that she is clearly aware of the debate over essentialism and all its social/political/moral implications within academia.

> Teachers respond differently to these realities. Some rebel against the idea of error itself. All linguistic forms, they argue, are finally arbitrary. The spelling of a word, the inflectional systems that carry or reinforce certain kinds of information in sentences – these are merely conventions that differ from language to language and from dialect to dialect. And because the forms of language are arbitrary, the reasoning goes, they are not obligatory, not, at least, in those situations where variant forms can be understood by a reader or where the imposition of new forms undermines the writer's pride or confidence in his native language or vernacular.

> Such a view excludes many forms from the province of error. (1977, p. 9)

Shaughnessy also reveals that she understands the motives behind those who call into question her focus on error, while at the same time she points out the reality in which BW teachers and students must operate. She states:

> When one considers the damage that has been done to students in the name of correct writing, this effort to redefine error so as to exclude most of the forms that give students trouble in school and to assert the legitimacy of other kinds of English is understandable. Doubtless it is part of a much vaster thrust within this society not only to reduce the penalties for being culturally different but to be enriched by that diversity.

> Nonetheless, the teacher who faces a class of writers who have acquired but a rudimentary control of the skill discovers that the issue of error is much more complex and troubling than it seems in theory. (1977, p. 9)

The troubling complexity to which Shaughnessy is referring is that the sources of student error are many and varied: the conflict between vernacular and standard forms of language, negative experiences with Standard English, self-esteem issues related to academic abilities and the debilitating confusion that often accompanies learning how to read and write (1977, pp. 9-10). What this complexity suggests is that although "hope" is an important component, practical concerns in the classroom outweigh doing nothing in terms of the instruction in grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. The question, therefore, that must be returned to is: how, how long and to what degree should grammar be taught? The answer, of course, suggests how grammar instruction should be utilized by BW instructors to fulfill the mandate they have been given. This is true for Olive-Harvey and community colleges across the nation.

Shaughnessy appears to leave the question of how, how long and to what degree grammar instruction should take place to the discretion of the individual instructor. This suggests a need for PD, especially when a cursory examination of *Errors and Expectations* (1977), with its 300 pages of error analysis, has the net effect of overwhelming the average BW instructor. These are instructors who must offer students, schools and society more than just the "hope" that if students write enough and if attitudinal issues are addressed by the students themselves, then – eventually – the quality of students' writing will improve. The question of how quality of writing issues should be addressed via some form of grammar instruction, therefore, is perhaps better suited as a question to be addressed via the literature on PD – given that the literature on BW, with a few exceptions, is largely silent. In effect, apart from the PD I offered in the three case studies of this dissertation, instructors must venture out on their own and experiment and evaluate the effectiveness of whatever method of grammar instruction they choose to pursue. PD suggests how this process should be undertaken, and it is in this respect that the literature and its implications will be explored. I will also elaborate on my own philosophy developed via PD. This is in relation to the ever-evolving, non-traditional grammar instruction undertaken in my own classes.

Reflections from the Literature on Professional Development

Because the small-scale project (study) undertaken for this dissertation stands in contrast to the large-scale implementation (studies) of CTL (2009) and BW (2007) in the California Community Colleges state-wide system, a number of the factors addressed by the review of the literature on PD (which were derived partly from those studies) simply do not apply when it comes to CTL and BW for this three-fold case study. One example

is resources; this is release time as well as funding (casting the implementation of CTL as an expensive proposition) and support both from within and outside of the college (casting the implementation of CTL as a major undertaking, as complex and as incredibly time-consuming). In the implementation of this three-fold case study, no funding was required and no support (beyond PD) was needed. It is also true that utilizing CTL to address BW skills does not necessarily have to be incredibly time-consuming (because instructors decide to what degree they will contextualize their courses). What does apply from those two California studies is the fact that PD involves systematic research, course development or revision, experimentation, reflection and assessment (Baker, Hope & Karandjeff, p. 17).

Systematic Research. As has been illustrated in this chapter, systematic research informs practice – and what has been learned from the literature is that improving the quality of BW students' writing requires less silence (the need to "drill down" deeper and study quality of writing issues for BW students) and more simplicity (the use of small-scale projects which I argue are better suited for such studies). With respect to simplicity, in the large-scale initiatives represented in the literature for CTL, too many factors were in play (representing complexity), obscuring the issues related to quality writing. For example, in order to secure student interest, engagement, retention and success the focus for every class/discipline in the 2009 study on CTL had to involve relevant subject matter, ranging from education (a particular field of study) to career and from the personal to the social/political. This required systematic research – both within academia and with employers. Many classes also had a service-learning component, which requires even more research. This same problematic nature of the large-scale initiative can be

found in the literature for BW; for example, one component of the research was its focus on large-scale assessments. With a "big picture" approach, more granular issues like the quality of students' writing do not get addressed, and it certainly doesn't help when the literature strongly suggests that addressing these issues is a waste of time. The good news is that if the literature can be represented by a "wall" of silence when it comes to quality writing and BW students, there are those in the field (myself included) who are attempting to "break-down" that wall in order to loudly proclaim that a solution to the problem of remediation and BW may actually already exist in some form of simplicity that is being lost in all the complexity. There is, therefore, if the use of a mixed-metaphor can be forgiven, a need to "drill down" deeper in order to expand the literature and our understanding, and consequently, our practice

As noted earlier in this chapter, I discovered a source when I began reflecting on the results of this dissertation's three-fold case study. That source is Fearn and Farnan (2005). They found that teaching students to focus on the function and practical application of grammar within the context of writing (versus teaching grammar as an independent activity divorced from actual writing) produced strong and positive effects on students' writing" (p. 21). Is this, however, a reference to the content or the quality of writing? One would assume both, but before that question is answered (later in this section on Systematic Research), it is important to note that I saw something unexpected in this study; as noted above, the study suggests that grammar instruction can, in effect, be contextualized into a BW classroom. Note the phrase: "practical application of grammar within the context of writing."

This is surprising, because Perin's contextualized instruction method says nothing about how to contextualize basic skills into a basic skills classroom. This is true whether the class is teaching basic writing, reading or math skills. Perin assumed such instruction was taking place, so she does not address it as she does in relation to the integrated contextualized instruction method, in which basic skills are integrated into disciplinary subject matter. Does Fearn and Farnan (2005) call into question her conceptualization of the contextualized instruction method utilized by basic skills instructors, and what exactly does the practical application of grammar within the context of writing mean for BW instructors? Is that a form of integration as it is understood with respect to the integrated contextualized method? Could it be?

Perhaps coincidentally, during the time the three-fold case study for this dissertation was being implemented, I began answering this question. I began teaching grammar in relation to actual student papers in my own classes, but I did not realize that what I was doing could likewise be a form of integrated contextualized instruction in a BW class. It took seeing Fearn and Farnan (2005), after the study, to bring me to that realization. Again, Perin never mentions it in her 2011 review of the literature. She assumes that grammar instruction in a BW class cannot be an example of integration because BW is not a discipline-area class. The point is: if BW classes use CTL by contextualizing relevant subject matter, the same classes can also use CTL by integrating (contextualizing) grammar instruction in the analysis of students' writing. In other words, instead of teaching grammar "for" writing, it becomes a form of CTL when grammar is taught "in" writing. It is also possible that BW classes could forego the contextualization of relevant subject matter and only integrate grammar instruction into the analysis of

students' writing. In terms of simplicity and our mandate, this is probably the better option.

It should be pointed out, however, that the Fearn and Farnan (2005) study was with tenth-grade students and the purpose was to see if a non-traditional form of grammar instruction could not only improve students' writing, but likewise improve their scores on mandatory, high-stakes testing. This functional grammar instruction also occurred in relation to the writing of individual sentences students wrote in class in response to a prompt which asked students to write a sentence that contained certain parts of speech; for example, verbs. But what is functional grammar? Functional grammar is basically teaching students the function of the words in a sentence, rather than the "identify, describe and define" method (analysis) of learning parts of speech in traditional grammar instruction. It should also be pointed out that the study revealed there was no difference between this group and the control group (which received traditional grammar instruction) when it comes to being able to identify, describe and define the parts of speech that were being taught. The difference was in the writing. There appears to be something about understanding the function of words that has an effect on the writing itself. The question, as raised earlier, is: is the study referring to the content or the quality of the students' writing? Again, one would think both.

Unfortunately, and surprisingly – given what I learned from their study, Fearn and Farnan (2005) are referring to the following criteria. Here is how they stated it: their evaluation "occurred on a six-point scale in consideration of four attributes: the writing is on-point, elaborative, organized, and textured (for example, figurative language)" (p. 72). This is clearly about the content of the students' writing – not the quality of writing

related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and (with the possible exception of figurative language) word choice. In fact, the results of the study highlight this:

- One: Writing can be the context when we teach grammar. We can use writing to teach the grammar we want to teach.

- Two: Traditional grammar instruction did not affect error rate; both groups committed about an equal number of errors when they wrote.

- Three: If the purpose of grammar instruction is to satisfy standards and prepare for high-stakes testing, we can teach sentence parts and enhance students' writing at the same time without compromising either. (p. 78)

What does this mean? Although the study is not about the quality of students' writing in relation to the number of errors related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice, it can be an argument for "drilling down" deeper to explore such issues. For research, it basically suggests that there may be another form of CTL that can be utilized in a BW classroom. In other words, grammar instruction is contextualized (integrated) into an analysis of students' writing. The study also expands, redefines or calls into question Perin's contextualized instruction method. What it does not do, as has been noted, is improve the quality of students' writing, but it may be that the functional approach to teaching grammar could be utilized in the same way to impact the problem of error. In other words, to use the same method, but to focus on fixing errors – not for the learning of parts of speech in sentences written by students in class, but for an entire writing assignment, whether that is a paragraph, a one-page response or an essay.

As noted earlier, I used the functional method in my BW classes to impact the errors associated with grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice. The

problem with what I did, I now see, is that my method utilized one student's paper in class as a vehicle to analyze what did and did not work in all students' writing assignments. For that individual student, grammar instruction took place "in" his or her own writing; for the rest of the class, it was not as relevant (because it was not their own writing); relevance is an important component for any form of CTL. The rest of the class learned and transferred what was taught only to the degree that they took the initiative to do so. In Fearn and Farnan (2005), each student worked (in class) on his or her own writing; that made it relevant. It also allowed for and encouraged transfer of learning – another important component of CTL. Anecdotally speaking, and because I too am a participant in this study, I saw incremental changes in the quality of students' writing – but only to the degree that students also took the initiative to edit and proofread their writing. To illustrate this, I briefly explain my current and evolving philosophy for teaching grammar, which falls under the PD category of course development or revision and experimentation, which is followed by the remaining categories mentioned earlier in this section: reflection and assessment.

Course Development or Revision and Experimentation. Here is how my BW classes developed and were revised over a period of 16 years; for me, this is probably the most significant form of PD. My resulting philosophy is based on the following concepts and principles which I have come to accept based on the literature and the course development or revision and experimentation that is inherent in my teaching. Foundational to my philosophy is that fact that Standard English can be "absorbed" via the process of language osmosis, much like children approach language acquisition and much like language speakers and writers do as they move toward proficiency. This

process of internalization can be done via listening, reading and writing. Such osmosis also does not preclude some form of grammar instruction; it should be taught concurrent with students' experiences with increasingly complex listening, reading and writing activities. This can have the effect of internalizing what works in Standard English due to the sheer repetition of the exposure to various patterns of communication. Familiarity with Standard English can lead to some form of mimicry in writing, both consciously and unconsciously.

The grammar instruction I utilize is called Functional Grammar. This instruction should be individualized for each student in the context of his or her writing. In the past I have done this via extensive comments on students' writing assignments. What I learned is that such extensive commenting – although appreciated by some – can be overwhelming for most students; therefore, I moved to commenting in class on various students' papers. With what I have learned from this study, I have now moved to personal conferences when I take my class to a computer lab. At Olive-Harvey, our BW classes can utilize computer labs once a week (for an hour and twenty minutes). This has been more effective, because students are not overwhelmed by extensive comments and because the most effective grammar instruction occurs "in" the writing. However, I do attempt to facilitate the grammar instruction which occurs "in" writing with short grammar lessons in class.

Because I believe that students do not have to know everything there is to know about writing and grammar in order to write well, I limit what I teach only to those things students have to know in order to present their best work. I also limit it because as a BW teacher I only have one or two semesters in which to "prepare" these students for college-

level writing. Here is the list of the five areas I address: punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tense and vocabulary. This means that the only parts of speech students really need to know are nouns, pronouns and verbs – because such knowledge is foundational to understanding subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement and verb tense. They also need to be able to identify subjects for much the same reason. In my experience, whether or not students understand the other parts of speech does not really matter – because they actually do not make that many mistakes in relation to adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections. Beyond this, students may have other types of errors, but in my 16 years of teaching experience, this list of five areas stands out as what most college students struggle with, and these areas are also the ones that are the most glaring errors; they are the most representative of Non-Standard English. The other types of errors pale by comparison.

The final component of my philosophy has been with the use of CTL for a relevant focus in order to assure that students have quality content for their writing. I am, however, reconsidering this for the sake of simplicity. Relevant subject matter of interest to the student can be chosen by the student for each writing assignment.

The Primary and Secondary Participants. With respect to course development or revision and experimentation, each participant in this three-fold case study worked to integrate CTL into his or her class. The degree of PD varied from instructor to instructor, as all instructors are accustomed to developing their courses or revising their courses based on what they learn about their teaching and their students each semester. They are also used to experimentation. This is why the implementation of CTL, when kept simple, does not have to be an expensive or a complex proposition. Each participant can

determine the degree to which he or she contextualizes his or her classes, thus

determining the degree of complexity. For Case Study One/Chapter Four, the primary

participant (LW) took a subject she was already familiar with, College Success, and

contextualized it into her class – which required a little research on her part, the creation

of brief and relevant lessons and the developing of relevant writing assignments. The

secondary participant (KW) was already contextualizing the topic of Race and Racism in

all her classes. The primary participant required more PD in terms of what CTL is and

how to implement it; the secondary participant just needed to rename what she was

already doing and to understand it in a slightly different way. Because both participants

are BW instructors, although I shared my approach to teaching grammar after the study,

they both have their own methods (full grammar instruction vs. no grammar instruction),

and during the time of the study, as has been noted, I did not know that teaching grammar

"in" writing – as opposed to "for" writing – could be a form of CTL; I did not know that I

could integrate grammar instruction into an analysis of each individual students' writing.

Therefore, I did not incorporate it into the PD I offered.

The participants for Case Study Two/Chapter Five required PD mostly in relation

to grammar instruction. Each participant was also provided with handouts I developed for

such instruction, but, as has been noted, each decided to only teach punctuation (commas

and periods). What should be understood is that I teach students to read everything they

write out loud five to ten times – in order to listen for where they "naturally" pause and

stop. I tell students to insert commas and periods based on what their "ear" is telling

them, but when they are editing to go back to the rules for comma usage to see if the

choices they have made are correct. I also ask them to remember that "less is more," to

not overuse commas. For periods, I ask them to listen for complete thoughts. This simple approach to teaching punctuation had never occurred to these instructors, and they both felt like it was something they could easily do. As was learned, the primary participant (CM) had good results, while the secondary participant (SR) did not; the reasons why were explored in Chapter Five. It should also be noted that both participants were already contextualizing relevant subject matter in their disciplinary classes to varying degrees. By comparison, content was not as much of an issue in students' writing; rather, it was the quality of the students' writing that these instructors found most frustrating and concerning.

The participants (KG and JD) for the Third Case Study/Chapter Six were an entirely different story. Very little PD, by comparison to the other study participants, was required. Again, this implementation was not difficult because all these instructors had to do was to play the embedded videos in class – as they saw fit – and to encourage students to view the videos outside of class in order to help improve the quality of their writing. Unfortunately, as was stated in Chapter Six, the videos had no impact on the quality of students' writing – probably due to lack of student initiative, given that the instructors took the initiative to play the videos and to encourage students to utilize them.

Reflection and Assessment. As a participant in this study, and as a component of PD, what I learned from the literature is that in light of the silence about the quality of writing and – standing in stark contrast – the potential for teaching grammar "in" writing, is that this three-fold case study calls into question the value of contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized instruction when it comes to the quality of students' writing. This is in relation to Perin's

conceptualization of the first two. Certainly, CTL has demonstrated that it does impact the content of students' writing as it increases student interest, engagement, retention and success, but without the integration of grammar instruction "in" students' writing, the potential for success in relation to the quality of students' writing is questionable. The reason is the dependence on student initiative. What is interesting, however, is that instructors can learn to motivate students and to teach students how to motivate themselves, and this is encouraged by all the research related to CTL; beyond that, there is not much an instructor can do. BW instructors, of course, can make the time – as I am in the process of doing – to do personal conferences in order to teach grammar in the midst of the analysis of each students' writing. It is unlikely, however, that discipline-area instructors can and/or will do the same due to time constraints. Does this mean that grammar instruction should not be taught in any of these CTL instructional methods if it is not "integrated" in the manner in which I have suggested – addressing error in students' writing via grammar instruction "in" writing, the manner in which I am extending the work of Fearn and Farnan (2005)? Given that there is always the possibility of student initiative, I believe the answer is no; grammar should be taught. However, it should be acknowledged that the most effective way to impact quality of writing may very well be via the process of teaching grammar "in" writing, not "for" writing.

Other Participants. Over the course of the implementation of each of the case studies for this dissertation, instructors were encouraged to reflect and to assess the impact of CTL on the quality of their students' writing. As has been noted, the results were not encouraging – except for the content of the students' writing; however, perhaps surprisingly so (as has already been noted), to a man/woman, each participant wanted to

continue to utilize CTL (more or less) in future classes. What was learned via reflection and assessment, therefore, is that consistent with the Primer (2009), the large-scale California study on CTL, the more instructors utilize CTL the more they want to continue to use it – even in the face of somewhat negative results related to the quality of students' writing. This may be due to a number of factors: increased student interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to the subject matter of their classes; improvement in the content of students' writing; the fact that faculty individually determine what the group of diverse strategies are that make up CTL; the fact that more experience with CTL leads to greater mastery of this teaching and learning strategy; and finally, CTL combined with the instruction in BW skills may be the only solution on the theoretical horizon for seeing improvement in the quality of their students' writing, and therefore, instructors are willing to give this strategy more time to produce the results they desire.

Faculty Response to CTL and BW

In this smaller second section of the chapter, growing out of faculty (and student) experience with CTL and BW, here is what was learned: faculty response in relation to career satisfaction and personal fulfillment appears to be somewhat enhanced. For this three-fold case study, faculty response was varied and, surprisingly, was not necessarily determined by the results – but by their interpretation of the results. Wanting to continue to use CTL in future classes suggests that faculty had a positive experience. It may be that the implementation itself of CTL and the instruction of BW skills helped faculty to feel that they are – at the very least – doing something to address the problem of remediation and BW. Perhaps it is a needed sense of control over that which has felt out of their control. This illustrates the depth of the problem and the level of frustration and

concern felt by those whose mandate it is to prepare these students for success in the rest of their college experience and their future careers. There is also the realization of the need to motivate students and to teach students how to self-motivate and to self-regulate in order to attack the problem of the lack of student initiative, which is so necessary for transfer of learning. Providing faculty with tools to accomplish this, results in greater career satisfaction and personal fulfillment – because they feel they are making a difference in students' lives and preparing them for their future careers, and that, of course, is why teachers teach.

Conclusion

Given the length of this chapter, it is instructive to return for a moment to the questions raised near the beginning of this chapter.

1) Why doesn't an increased interest and engagement in relevant subject matter translate to an increased interest and engagement in the act of writing?

2) Does the fault lie with CTL, our understanding of it, its implementation, the lack of student initiative (as noted in the previous paragraph) or some admixture of all four?

This chapter has sought to address these questions, and several more, but what has been learned from this three-fold case study is that CTL – as it is currently portrayed in the literature – only impacts the content of students writing.

For CTL to have the same impact on the quality of students' writing, a form of functional grammar instruction (perhaps as I have modeled) must be taught in the context of students' writing. In other words, the grammar instruction must be integrated into an analysis of students' writing. This is a form of CTL not addressed in its literature; this

form of what I am categorizing as integrated contextualized instruction in a BW class is a distinct possibility for BW instructors, but is most likely not possible for discipline-area instructors who would not have the time this would require. This suggests that grammar instruction "in" writing must occur in the BW class and be so successful that further grammar instruction for the purpose of transfer is not necessary; however, given the problem that lack of student initiative presents, it would appear that Perin's integrated contextualized instruction method/model will still be relevant. The contextualized instruction method/model would not. As for the embedded contextualized instruction method/model, not addressed by Perin, it would only remain relevant as grammar instruction "for" writing in order to encourage transfer of learning.

In relation to where the fault may lie with respect to CTL only impacting the content of students' writing and not the quality, it would appear that the fault does not lie with CTL – but (as has just been noted) our understanding of it. The fault also lies in its implementation. This three-fold case study has argued that the most significant reasons for the silence in both the literature on CTL and BW has been the tendency toward large-scale initiatives, rather than small-scale projects. In such large-scale initiatives, the literature has not "drilled down" deep enough to uncover or address the quality of students' writing. To address this, dissenters must, as I have argued, "break down" this wall of silence and make their voices heard – via research and best practices. And finally, the fault also lies with a lack of student initiative. This is an issue that the literature on CTL has addressed, as it has emphasized the necessity of student interest and engagement if CTL is to impact the problem of remediation.

Finally, in relation to faculty response, as was just noted in the second section of this chapter, any effort to address issues of remediation around the quality of students' writing appears to encourage faculty who are frustrated and concerned with this problem. This is most likely why, in spite of the limited success CTL and BW instruction has presented in this three-fold case study, almost all faculty (with the exception of one) want to continue to utilize some form of CTL and BW instruction. It also should be noted that, as was seen in the California Community College study/large-scale initiative, success with CTL requires more than just one semester of implementation. Of course, this would be true for any teaching and learning strategy. In the next chapter, therefore, I will take an admixture of the answers to all the aforementioned questions and address the current and future implications for research and practice for CTL, BW and PD.

CHAPTER EIGHT – CURRENT AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Introduction

In this final chapter, I begin with a summary of the results of the three-fold case study. Because Chapter Seven integrated those results throughout a number of significant arguments that Chapter Two (A Three-Fold Review of the Literature) could not entirely address, a more concise summary of just the results here became a necessity. Following this summary, I explore the current and future implications for research and practice in relation to Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the instruction of basic writing (BW) skills combined with professional development (PD). And finally, the chapter ends with concluding thoughts on the entire study and dissertation.

Summary of Research Results

With the exception of the primary participant utilizing the integrated contextualized instruction method (Case Study Two/Chapter Five) and seeing improvement in both the content and the quality of students' writing (period and comma usage only), it seems that CTL improves the content of students' writing, but not necessarily the quality. Issues related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice seem to be more connected to student initiative. This was confirmed by the two BW instructors (Case Study One/Chapter Four) and myself as the third participant. It was also learned that there are significant differences related to the implementation and the outcomes of a study based on whether it is a large-scale initiative (focused on the "big picture") or a small-scale project. Indeed, I have argued that addressing such issues as quality of writing is better suited for the small-scale project. This is because small-scale

projects can address issues that are not being prioritized by those who implement large-scale initiatives. Small-scale projects can also look at the local situation and its implications for a national problem; quality of writing is one such problem that is being "lost" in the "big picture" – resulting in what I have characterized as a "silence" in the literature. In relation to CTL, BW and PD, this is the case. The small-scale project, therefore, allows researchers (and participants) to "drill down" deeper to "places" overlooked, and therefore, not being addressed.

The influence of the literature on practitioners was also found to be negligible. The pragmatic concerns of most BW instructors do not correlate with the concerns of researchers who see grammar instruction as a "settled question" deserving no further attention. As a result, BW instructors must "manufacture" their own form of PD in order to address the lack of concern in the literature related to BW students and the quality of their writing. This translates to a lack of interest in this issue and to what appears to be a lack of faith in BW students and their ability to rise to the occasion. Of course, this is if they are given, as I have argued (supported by Fearn and Farnan, 2005), grammar instruction "in" writing as opposed to "for" writing – or, not at all. Grammar instruction "for" writing is not effective (by itself) and offering no grammar instruction at all amounts to a "wish list" that cannot be fulfilled in a timely manner. It is also, as I have already stated in Chapter Seven, a "sink or swim" instructional method. Grammar instruction "in" writing, however, would allow BW instructors to fulfill their mandate and allow discipline-area instructors to believe BW students' writing can improve to meet the demands of their courses. Pragmatically speaking, researchers are not offering the

kind of hope required for BW instructors, discipline-area faculty and, most important of all, these BW students.

Perhaps this is why, in relation to faculty response in my study, in spite of the negative results related to quality of writing, each participant still has hope that the quality of students' writing can improve. Of course, this is based on a false belief in grammar instruction "for" writing, but they nonetheless have hope because of the necessity of finding a solution. Perhaps, this is why the use of CTL, in all three instructional methods (*contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction and embedded contextualized instruction*) did not discourage these participants. In fact, faculty experience with and response to CTL and BW instruction was overall positive. It may also be true, and I am of this persuasion, that they were encouraged by the fact that "someone" is attempting to address this issue. Perhaps this is why the participants in the embedded contextualized study (Case Study Three/Chapter Six) want the author of this dissertation to return to be physically and digitally embedded in their classes. Researchers, therefore, should not have given up on addressing the problem of remediation in writing – simply because, as the book of Proverbs states: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life (13:2).

In relation to faculty response, it was also learned that "hope deferred" can lead to problems related to instructional practice with respect to a diminishing number of writing assignments in discipline-area classes and issues related to the degree to which quality of writing is valued by these instructors: the use of rubrics in which quality of writing is a very low percentage of the grade or no percentage of the grade. This was evident in five of the six participants (not counting myself) of this three-fold case study. This does not

communicate to students the value that should be placed on the quality of our students' writing. It also calls into question what students are told in relation to how important writing is for their future college classes and their careers. Why should students believe if we do not demonstrate in our practice that we believe?

It appears that the literature has failed BW instructors and discipline-area faculty by not finding another way to address this problem. Assuming that "hope" will eventually and inevitably result in what discipline-area faculty and employers expect is counterproductive. Although it is a factor that should not be dismissed, rejecting any kind of grammar instruction in lieu of an examination of social and cultural issues does not allow BW instructors to fulfill their mandate in a timely manner, it does not allow discipline-area faculty to believe their students can do the writing required, and it does not serve BW students well. The social and cultural issues considered so important to BW researchers are already being addressed in other disciplines, Rhetoric and Composition for example, and the most pressing need in the BW classroom is how to improve the quality of students' writing. The issue of content has been addressed by CTL. The question now is whether CTL, in the form of grammar instruction "in" writing, can likewise improve the quality of students' writing. What follows in the remainder of this chapter is a reflection on the current and future implications of this three-fold case study for research and practice in relation to CTL, BW and PD.

Current Implications for Research

CTL, BW and PD

As has been demonstrated in this dissertation, any large-scale implementation of CTL, BW and PD can be a massive undertaking that cannot fully address every issue.

The California Community College system and its two large-scale initiatives/studies (the 2007 Basic Skills study and the 2009 CTL study), for example, illustrate that in order to address issues like the quality of students' writing, we must "drill down" deeper where the literature for CTL has not gone and the literature for BW and its umbrella discipline, Rhetoric and Composition, have not gone for a long time (with a relatively few exceptions). This is due either to lack of interest and/or lack of "faith" in what BW students are capable of doing. In other words, if researchers see the instruction of BW skills – in the form of some kind of grammar instruction – as not a very fruitful endeavor, such research will not be valued, and therefore, researchers will not gravitate towards it. This, of course, is evident in the literature. Silence is characteristic of the research on CTL when it comes to the quality of students' writing, and although silence is also a characteristic of the research on BW and quality writing – there are some dissident voices. Therefore, with respect to the current implications for research in relation to CTL and BW, I believe these dissident voices must be heard and encouraged, and this can happen right now.

One such voice was addressed in Chapter Seven. Therein, we looked at Fearn and Farnan (2005) and the implications of their work in relation to the contextualization (integration) of grammar instruction "in" and not "for" students' writing. This suggests a direction the research on CTL and BW can take now. And, as noted in the same chapter, I am in the process of incorporating this perspective in my own BW classes. Moreover, in the process of writing this chapter, Chapter Eight, I came across another source that, in some respects, supports the work of Fearn and Farnan. That source was found in the *Journal of Basic Writing*, the Fall 2000 issue. In an article entitled, "Checking the

Grammar Checker: Integrating Grammar Instruction with Writing" by Patricia J. Mc Alexander, the work of Rei Noguchi, *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing* (1991) is mentioned. Although I do not agree with the premise of Mc Alexander's article (the value of using a Grammar Checker), I was encouraged to find another dissenter. Here is what Mc Alexander said about Noguchi. I share first her characterization of where the field presently is:

> Today we find in many college composition classrooms a changing attitude toward teaching grammar. Research during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s had suggested that grammar instruction, traditionally a major part of composition classes, had a negligible effect on student writing (Hillocks). At the same time, a large number of English teachers began to regard grammar and mechanical errors as superficial and unimportant: content (particularly self-expressive aspects) and organization were the major elements of writing. Thus, during these years a "new paradigm" of teaching developed, one which often neglected the correctness of a final *product* to focus almost exclusively on the writing *process* (Hairston). (p. 124)

Here is her characterization of Noguchi's response:

> Rei Noguchi, however, finds problems with this approach. In his 1991 *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing,* Noguchi argues that style is "just as global ... as organization and content" (13) and that teaching grammar and mechanics can help students improve their style. Further, correctness is important, Noguchi points out, [that] "many readers, particularly in business and other professional settings, perceive . . . [errors] as major improprieties" (14). A reason

for the "negligible" effect of much grammar instruction, Noguchi speculates, is

that "students, though possessing sufficient knowledge of formal grammar, fail to

apply that knowledge to their writing" (7). His conclusion advises moderation

between extremes: composition faculty should teach grammar – but not at length

and not for its own sake. Rather, they should integrate grammar instruction with

writing instruction and teach only the most vital terms and the most frequently

made errors (17-18). (pp. 124-125)

A distinction, however, must be made. Noguchi is not specifically referring to

BW instruction or its students. He also is not referring to the contextualization

(integration) of grammar instruction "in" writing, but rather "with" writing instruction; in

other words, grammar instruction "for" writing. Anecdotally speaking, this is not

uncommon; many BW instructors do this already. What they do not do, as I have just

indicated, is to integrate grammar instruction into an analysis of students' writing. Having

said that, what Noguchi is doing is an excellent "jumping-off" point. The reason I believe

this is because, as I related in Chapter Seven, my own teaching philosophy addresses the

question of how, how long and to what degree grammar instruction should take place.

This is why I am encouraged by Noguchi and others like him who still believe in the

importance of the quality of students' writing. Similar to Noguchi, I believe grammar

instruction should be limited to only those concepts ("most vital terms and most frequent

errors") students have to know in order to improve the quality of their writing. I would,

therefore, argue that this is a direction the research can take right now. I also agree with

Noguchi that transfer of learning is one explanation for why discipline-area instructors do

not see quality writing in their students' papers. As for the students he refers to, his

characterization of these students as already "possessing sufficient knowledge of grammar" reveals that he is not talking about BW students. This instruction is taking place at a higher level (composition classes) – suggesting any success Noguchi has is partly related to the competence of his students. In other words, their writing is at a level that the "hope" referred to in Chapter Seven is a distinct possibility. These are also university students and not community college students – wherein most students who are not college-ready reside.

As for the current implications for PD in relation to CTL and BW, my opinion is that research into the quality of writing of BW students should be undertaken in small-scale projects/studies. Chapter Seven certainly demonstrated that large-scale initiatives have a tendency to be too complex, they involve too many people, there are too many problems that arise and they do not "drill down" deep enough to address all relevant issues. A simple comparison between the California studies and my three-fold case study illustrates this problem. For the California study, instructors were expected to completely "overhaul" their classes to convert them to CTL classes. This is not only complex, but it raises too many issues. As a result, it has to be assumed that some participants did not want to "overhaul" their classes. Although there is no evidence of this – in terms of what was recorded in the *Primer* (2009) – the Massachusetts large-scale CTL initiative/study which mirrors the California studies (mentioned in Chapter Two's review of the literature on CTL) noted the following. Pay particular attention to the negative aspects of this list of challenges:

> Challenges mentioned include cost; scheduling of interdisciplinary collaboration
> and resistance to the collaboration; lack of awareness of contextualization; lack of

preparedness by instructors, students or colleges; lack of support by

administrators; the effort required to work within system parameters; and finding

ways to apply abstract material to concrete experiences. (qtd. in MCCWDTA,

2012, pp. 4-5)

This illustrates not only the complexity of a large-scale initiative, but also the many

problems that arise – such as resistance to collaboration. Does this mean large-scale

initiatives should never be undertaken? Of course not, there are many instances in which

they are the best method for furthering knowledge via research; however, there is

something to say for simplicity and a much more limited number of problems to deal

with.

In my small-scale project/study, there was no cost, no large-scale scheduling

issues related to collaboration, there was no resistance to collaboration, no lack of support

from administration (because it was not needed), and no need to work within system

parameters. There was, however, a lack of awareness about CTL, some lack of

preparedness when it comes to the instruction of BW skills for some participants, and

finally, a number of the participants (not all) had to find ways to apply abstract material

to concrete experiences. Many of the participants were already contextualizing relevant

subject matter into their classes. It is also important to note that all participants willingly

volunteered. There was no professional "coercion" that left them no choice in the matter.

They also did not have to "overhaul" their classes. Each instructor decided the degree to

which he/she would incorporate CTL and BW. PD in this context is much more simple

and personal, and therefore, it can more competently address the smaller number of

problems that arise. This does not mean that my study was a total success, far from it, but

failure on my part can be rectified when the work is expected to continue after the study. PD in relation to a large-scale initiative can also be rectified, but it is less likely due to its complexity, the number of people involved and the number of problems that arise. Small-scale projects/studies, as has been noted, can also avoid all the bureaucracy and the problems that come with such endeavors – politics and personalities. The point is: if real change takes place in the individual classroom (for teachers and students), then PD offered in small-scale projects/studies makes more sense – depending, of course, on what the study is addressing.

The final plus for small-scale projects/studies is that even an individual instructor can receive his or her own PD in such an informal manner that collaboration can be minimal or no one else needs to even be involved. As was noted in Chapter Two's review of the literature on PD, this can involve anything from reading works on various issues related to education to watching educational documentaries to informal conversations between colleagues. This too is considered PD. The implication, therefore, is that small-scale projects/studies can happen right now. Any instructor can choose in the moment to begin a small-scale project/study in one or more or his or her own classes. This has been my own practice for many years; it was not until my tenure-track project/study that I actually formalized it in what I would now consider comparable to a master's thesis. This dissertation has become my second such endeavor (a study), but I know now that I will continue this type of research – whether it is documented for others to read or not. The implications, therefore, for PD as far as this three-fold study is concerned, are that researchers can begin now to explore CTL, BW and PD. They do not have to wait.

Future Implications for Research

CTL, BW and PD

The question facing researchers in relation to CTL, BW and PD is whether or not the future direction of the research is an either/or proposition. In this dissertation, I believe I have effectively called into question the notion that grammar instruction should have no place in the BW classroom, that our work with these students should rely solely on the "hope" mentioned in Chapter Seven. This "hope" encourages students to find their own voices as writers, to learn how to find and organize better content, to change how they see themselves (to improve their self-image as writers) and feel about themselves (to take pride in their writing and to motivate themselves) as beginning writers, to immerse themselves in Standard English, and finally, to aspire to perfect their writing – because, if they do, the "hope" is, their writing will improve. For teachers, it boils down to this: encourage "hope" and avoid any focus on grammar and error (D'Eloia, 1977, p. 1). If this "hope," therefore, represents the *either* in this either/or proposition, then the call to continue grammar instruction "in" writing, as opposed to "for" writing represents the *or*. I am not saying that this "hope" is a component of research that should not continue; rather, I am arguing that we must continue to explore the notion of grammar instruction because BW instructors do have a mandate and something must be done to prepare these underprepared college students for the writing demands of their future college classes and their careers. It is not enough to just "hope."

Although most researchers in the field of BW and Rhetoric and Composition have rejected grammar instruction and embraced this "hope," most BW instructors have rejected the assumption that this is an either/or proposition. BW instructors are

pragmatically working to do whatever it takes to address the problem of remediation. Speaking as a BW instructor, I am asking that researchers open their minds to the possibility that CTL, which has been incredibly effective in increasing student interest, engagement, retention and success in relation to the subject matter of any class, as well as the content of students' writing, may also be the solution to this intractable problem of remediation. What if there is a form of CTL that can be just as successful when it comes to the quality of BW students' writing? This is where I believe the research should go, and perhaps the poet, Robert Frost, said it best when it he so eloquently spoke of the road less traveled in his poem, "The Road Not Taken." Although Frost apparently had an entirely different interpretation, this poem is generally seen "as evidence of the benefit of free thinking and not following the crowd" (qtd. in Wikepedia, The Road Not Taken, Analysis, para. 3). In the case of the research on CTL and BW skills instruction, perhaps Fearn and Farnan (2005) is the first step on what is clearly the road less traveled in the literature for CTL and BW. The point is, if we are to discover the truth about the potential of BW students' writing, we must also be willing to travel down the road less traveled – because if we do, that may make all the difference.

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Current Implications for Practice

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CTL, BW and PD

In the second section of this chapter, it is clearly noted that the actual practice of BW instructors stands in contrast to the research. What has been argued in this dissertation is that CTL positively impacts the content of BW students' writing and may yet be able to positively impact its quality. As I shared in Chapter Seven, in my own classes I have moved towards contextualizing (integrating) grammar instruction "in" my

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students' writing. I also, however, continue to supplement this by teaching a limited and targeted version of grammar instruction "for" writing. What this illustrates is grammar instruction does not have to be an either/or option – between formal grammar instruction and contextualized grammar instruction. Again, as noted earlier, BW instructors are looking for whatever works. In my case, because my BW classes only meet in a lab four times for each writing assignment (two times to address content issues in student drafts and revisions and two times to address grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and word choice issues in student revisions ready for editing and proofreading), I felt that if students had some prior knowledge (supplemental instruction) of the five areas I believe students struggle with most at the college level (punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tense and vocabulary), this would help facilitate any grammar instruction that takes place in the analysis of each student's writing – which occurs in personal conferences. It should also be noted, by way of reminder, that prior to what I am doing now, I used to do extensive commenting on students' writing which I now realize can be a form of grammar instruction "in" students' writing, not "for" students' writing. I also would comment in class on a student's paper as a form of grammar instruction. I still do this periodically, but I came to the conclusion that this method was really only grammar instruction "in" writing for the student whose paper was analyzed. Personal conferences address this issue and allow each student to receive instruction – but only the instruction he or she needs.

Of course, not every BW program necessarily provides access for students to computer labs in which an instructor can meet individually with each student. At Olive-Harvey, we have that option, and I have come to believe it is paramount. Practically

speaking, what this means is that my classes meet twice a week with one class for instruction and one class for application of the instruction. This is ideal for the implementation of the contextualization of grammar instruction "in" students' writing. Therefore, I would argue that what I am currently doing illustrates what the implications for current practice are. Academic freedom, however, guarantees that each instructor can implement this or some form of it as he or she sees fit and according to his or her circumstances (what the school provides and allows). It should also be pointed out that the beauty of CTL is that BW instructors can limit contextualization to grammar instruction only and not to likewise contextualize relevant subject matter. As I have shared elsewhere in this dissertation, I have contextualized such subjects as education, career development, hip-hop, gangs and police brutality. For the sake of simplicity, therefore, those who would want to begin to implement this approach should probably not do both. This semester, for example, I chose to just focus on contextualizing grammar instruction both "in" and "for" students' writing. I am not contextualizing any relevant subject matter. I do, however, encourage – and assist – students to find relevant subject matter for all writing assignments. As I have argued in this chapter, small-scale projects/studies are best suited for "drilling down" to the issue of quality writing and when it comes to PD, I believe "less is more." By that I mean that any attempt at PD within one's own classroom has the best chances for success if an instructor experiments with only incremental changes that move him or her towards increasing student interest, engagement, retention and success for BW students and the quality of their writing.

Building semester by semester to the method of grammar instruction that works best is a necessity. Any attempt to "overhaul" a class is usually met with more problems

than one person can effectively deal with, often leading to some form or degree of disillusionment. This is why I strongly believe in small-scale projects/studies as opposed to large-scale initiatives/studies – and this is why I believe that another implication for current practice is the small-scale project/study. I emphasize here the ease of implementation and the personal benefits of the pursuit of whatever works in the classroom. In other words, one of the most significant implications for current practice is to not forget the role of career satisfaction and personal fulfillment in the practice of teachers.

Future Implications for Practice

CTL, BW and PD

When thinking of the future implications for practice in relation to CTL, BW and PD, one must recognize the direction that education is moving. If the work of Fearn and Farnan (2005) is built upon by BW instructors (and researchers) and we experience some measure of success, is grammar instruction "in" writing" something that can occur as education becomes more and more an online endeavor? Although I do not believe the face-to-face classroom experience will ever totally disappear, it is clear that, for some, the online experience is more convenient and perhaps just as effective. Many others do not do well in that environment for a variety of reasons. There are, however, intermediary steps which are being taken – whether we like it or not. What I mean by that is that at Olive-Harvey, there is a plan in the works to build an English lab, much like the Math lab we recently added. In the Math lab, students progress at their own rate, working their way through computer software programs that help students to learn the various levels of Math required for whatever degree the students are seeking. Instructors are available to

interact with students and to answer questions. Tutors are also available. The question is whether this same practice will work for writing.

Anecdotally, at Olive-Harvey, many students do not like the Math lab – probably because it forces students to take much more initiative than what they believe the typical class requires. In other words, they are not working the entire time – which requires self-discipline, self-motivation and self-regulation. Although the Math lab can be a time-saver in terms of how long it takes students to take Math classes, many students still prefer the classroom environment. There are, however, legitimate reasons for not liking the lab. There is the classroom dynamic that includes the personality and practice of a teacher and the interaction with other students. For many students, these are more desirable. Why is this an intermediary step? Students are being conditioned, not only by their personal interactions with a variety of technological devices, but also by educational labs such as this. As students become more accustomed to self-discipline, self-regulation and self-motivation which are required in such settings, perhaps the next step to moving fully to an online experience is not far off in the future. Of course, this is happening already, but many students still prefer the classroom. This may change, although I personally don't believe it will and I, frankly, hope it doesn't.

There is, however, a problem. At Olive-Harvey, BW students are often struggling with poverty, lack of quality education (K-12) and, in many cases, gang violence and, less so, the issue of police brutality. These students often do not understand what it means to be a student and how to implement that understanding in daily practice. There are also too many distractions, which I addressed in the Statement of the Problem section of Chapter One. It is currently not feasible to believe that these students are ready for online

education, although there are some exceptions. Therefore, in relation to future practice in relation to CTL, BW and PD, it would appear that these intermediary steps will increasingly become a part of the experience of BW students. Although students could miss out on any grammar instruction "for" writing, which I now combine with grammar instruction "in" writing, there is the potential of receiving the latter in the environment of an English lab, and students can definitely receive individual instruction in relation to whatever problems they are struggling with in their writing. It should be noted, however, that such grammar instruction "for" writing could occur via something like the videos I created for Case Study Three/Chapter Six in this dissertation: the embedded contextualized instruction method.

In relation to PD for BW instructors in this changing environment of intermediary steps, from the classroom (and I would add the hybrid classroom) to the lab to the online class, future practice asks faculty to transition while, at the same time, learning how to analyze students' writing and offer the specific grammar instruction individual students need in whichever environment instructors find themselves. The benefit/problem I see for BW faculty is time; what I mean by that is that with the contextualization of grammar instruction "in" writing – at least the way I am presently doing it – requires that I only analyze and instruct students' writing in our computer lab time once a week (or during my office hours). I no longer take students' papers home to comment on their drafts as a form of grammar instruction "in" writing. This is a huge time-saver, and so far, I am not seeing any significant difference in the degree to which my students' writing improves. I believe this would also be true if we build an English lab; however, the online class presents a problem in terms of time. The only way to do grammar instruction "in" writing

would require extensive comments on students' papers. I've been down that "road" and it leads to burnout. This is because the average BW instructor teaches at least four classes a semester, which can translate to almost a hundred students. Multiply that by at least four writing assignments and it is not uncommon to be constantly commenting and grading papers. This is too much, and in my experience, it is not any more effective than what I am presently doing. In fact, I'm beginning to believe what I am doing is more effective. "Less is more." Although there are some students who will take extensive comments (written or typed on students' papers and returned to students for revision, editing and proofreading) to heart, most will be overwhelmed because of the number of grammatical problems BW students tend to have. By commenting on students' papers in a lab, neither the instructor nor the students are overwhelmed because comments are given out "piecemeal." There will also, most likely, be a number of tutors available as well.

If these intermediary steps are the wave of the future, BW instructor will have to "ride" that wave, and continue to attempt to fulfill the mandate we have been given. And finally, if faculty are implementing their own small-scale projects/studies, perhaps researchers will take note and follow – rather than attempt to lead. Perhaps researchers will take their cue from what BW instructors are actually doing and build on that work, rather than continue down the same path of what is seen as impractical to most BW instructors. This is not to suggest research in the field of BW has no value, it just has very little, if any, practical application when it comes to helping these instructors fulfill the mandate they have been given. To prepare these students for writing success in their future classes and their future careers is paramount; addressing societal issues, which is terribly important, can be done elsewhere in the academy. In effect, it takes a village.

Conclusion

The implications for current and future research and practice indicate that CTL, BW and PD may yet provide an answer to the problem of remediation (in writing) for community colleges, and that remedy may lie in a new form of CTL: grammar instruction "in" writing. As for the research, I would argue that it must break away from work being done elsewhere in the academy and focus on practical solutions that instructors can actually implement in their classrooms to make a difference not only in the content of students' writing, but also the quality. Researchers in the field of BW must begin to go where they have not gone in a long time. The voices of the dissenters should be heard and encouraged. And finally, in relation to practice, BW instructors must continue PD and begin to experiment with this new form of CTL. Given that we do not know what the future holds, instructors must begin to adapt to the possibility that education may change in significant ways – forcing us to discover new and better ways to make a difference in the lives of these poor, urban, and often minority, underprepared college students. If these students are to succeed, not only in college but also in their future careers, BW instructors must fulfill the mandate they have been given. There are no excuses and "hope" is not a solution. It is, however, one part of the whole we have yet to fully understand.

And finally, if these steps are taken, faculty (and student) experience will result in a faculty response that increases interest, engagement, retention and success for both faculty and students – because, when faculty do better, students do better; and when students do better, consequently, faculty do even better. This circle of reciprocity, as has been demonstrated in this study and dissertation, is the key to success for students and career satisfaction and personal fulfillment for teachers.

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Appendix

Contextualization:

A Professional Development Handbook

for the Study Participants

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Purpose:

The purpose of this handbook is to orient the participants of the study to the teaching and learning strategy of contextualization, to explain and illustrate the variety of ways this strategy can be utilized, and to provide instruction for non-English faculty in how to teach basic writing skills. The content is derived from my tenure-track project, the dissertation I am currently working on and fifteen years of teaching experience.

Given that the study is being conducted this semester and possibly during the summer session as well, each participant should make sure that he or she fully understands what contextualization is, which teaching methodology he or she will be using, and the degree to which the contextualization will occur. I will be contacting each participant to answer any questions, address any concerns and to help facilitate the preparation of each participant for the semester.

Note: I will keep in contact with each participant during the semester and will be available to help in any way I can. Remember, beyond what each participant chooses to do in the classroom, all that will be required is that we meet for an interview. The interview will be recorded.

Thanks, Dennis

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What is Contextualization?

Contextualization is a teaching and learning strategy designed to address the

problem of remediation by increasing student interest, engagement, retention and

success. Mazzeo (2008) further defines contextualization as follows:

A diverse family of instructional strategies designed to more seamlessly link the learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in a specific context that is of interest to the student. (p. 4)

To better understand this definition, it should be broken down into its component parts:

I.   <u>The main purpose of contextualization is to seamlessly link foundational or basic skills (reading, writing, Math) to academic or occupational content.</u>

What does this mean? In the context of academia, the instruction of basic skills are typically separated from the discipline-area content to which they will later be applied. The problem with this instructional paradigm is that it does not facilitate a "seamless" link between basic skills and academic or occupational content. In other words, there is very little transfer of learning. What was supposed to have been learned in developmental classes is often not utilized by students when they are asked to perform assignments in discipline-area classes.

Frustrated discipline-area teachers, therefore, who are supposed to reap the benefits of basic skills instruction, understandably wonder:

1. Why can't my students adequately perform the work required in my classes?

2. Is the problem with the school's developmental education program in which the basic skills are supposed to be taught?

3. Is the problem with individual faculty members or adjuncts who teach these courses?

4. Is the problem with the variety of teaching strategies represented by so many different teachers?

5. Is the problem with the students and their lack of quality educational experiences, ranging from the home to the school to the community, as well as to the larger society?

These are all important questions to which contextualization offers a potential solution. However, one final question remains that frustrated discipline-area instructors, once again, understandably ask:

Why do I have to do "your" job?

Why is it necessary that discipline-area instructors also teach basic skills? Barring problems related to questions 1-4, the best answer is because our students are typically not college-ready. In fact, this is a national problem, manifested in ALL students (especially at community colleges) – but more so in relation to students of color, the population with whom we largely work.

Therefore, it may be more helpful for discipline-area instructors to understand that the paradigm for K-12 education preparing students for college largely no longer works and that it is not entirely possible for developmental educators to make students with such debilitating deficiencies college-ready in one or two semesters. The reason why is: progress in relation to basic skills is always incremental and requires a great deal of effort on both the part of faculty and students. For most students, one or two semesters is not enough.

The point is, there are many obstacles to overcome and time is not on the side of developmental faculty or students who have to try to make up for many, many years of neglect by society, by our communities, our schools, our families, and even neglect on the part of the student.

Contextualization, therefore, suggests that the solution potentially lies with no longer separating basic skills and the discipline-area content to which they are to be applied. We must erase this false dichotomy, if we are to "seamlessly" link the teaching of basic skills and academic or occupational content – which again, is the main purpose of contextualization. In effect, discipline-area instructors must continue and build on the work that developmental educators begin, with contextualization being the means to that end.

This, of course, raises another question.

II. How is the main purpose of contextualization achieved? It is achieved by focusing on concrete (as opposed to abstract) applications (assignments) – via the utilization of three teaching methodologies: contextualized instruction, integrated contextualized instruction, and embedded contextualized instruction.

Contextualized Instruction:

According to Perin (2011), "Contextualized basic skills instruction involves the teaching of academic skills against a backdrop of specific subject matter to which such skills need to be applied, and is taught by reading, writing, and math instructors" (p. 1).

First, it is important to note that since this study is specifically about the contextualization of basic writing skills, there will be no examples related to reading or math.

It is also important to note that "subject matter," as mentioned in the quote above, is not a reference to the subject matter of discipline-area instructors. For example, as an English instructor, I have used the following specific subject matter during the last two years: Career Development, Education, Hip Hop and Gangs. Each was focused on as the "backdrop" for the teaching of basic skills. Discipline-area subject matter of other disciplines was not used because such subject matter is not in the area of my expertise.

Because of this, of the subject matter listed above, only Career Development easily lent itself to what is typically thought of as a real-world application – documents students would have to create that are utilized after college and in their future careers. That was the creation of a resume and cover letter. I would argue, however, that a college paper is a real-world application of basic writing skills – given that many of our students transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Some may even go on to earn a graduate degree.

Writing college papers, therefore, is quite relevant in the process of earning a degree – which is also quite relevant in obtaining a career. College papers are likewise a way of thinking critically about discipline-area subject matter and learning how to express that in an appropriate manner – demonstrating what students have learned and their readiness for their future careers. It also teaches them how to organize their ideas and to communicate them in a professional manner, something every career requires to one degree or another.

Integrated Contextualized Instruction:

Pearson, Moje and Greenleaf (2010) define integrated contextualized instruction as: "the incorporation of reading, writing, or math instruction into the teaching of content. Integrated instruction is taught by discipline-area instructors, with the academic skills serving as a means of developing critical thinking about disciplinary content" (qtd. in Perin, 2011, p. 1).

In this scenario, a discipline-area instructor would teach the normal subject matter of a course, but would "integrate" basic skills instruction in relation to those areas students struggle with most – whether that be reading, writing or math. Typically,

these would be mini-lessons and possibly even exercises given at the discretion of the discipline-area instructor. In other words, the instructor would have to ascertain where students need instruction and offer such instruction to the degree the instructor sees fit – at the same time meeting the time constraints and content demands of the course.

This can be problematic; however, it should be noted that instruction does not have to be a 15-20 minute formal lesson. For example, in relation to writing, if it has been ascertained that students struggle with punctuation, a short 1-2 minute lesson can be given during an assignment explanation and/or after an assignment is returned. Instructors must think outside the box and recognize that even a comment in passing can function as instruction. A handout related to the lesson could also help to facilitate the instruction. Students can likewise be individually asked to meet with the instructor during office hours or be asked to meet with a tutor in relation to a particular writing issue.

Embedded Contextualized Instruction:

This is a teaching methodology not addressed in the literature on contextualization, but a simple explanation will justify its inclusion.
Embedded contextualized instruction can be manifested in two ways:

A. The first way occurs when a basic skills instructor is embedded in the classroom of a discipline-area instructor. In the spring of 2014, I was embedded in a Supply Chain Management class as part of my tenure-track project. I went to the class once a week and gave a 30 minute lesson (with a group activity) on basic writing skills.

B. The second way occurs when a basic skills instructor is "embedded" in a course via voice-over power-point lessons or short videos (or some combination of both) students can access via Blackboard. This allows a discipline area instructor to utilize basic skills instruction to address problem areas the class (or individual students) may have. Power-points and short videos can also be assigned as homework. This second way is probably the most practical and convenient for discipline-area instructors who may not feel qualified to evaluate where students are struggling and/or to offer the appropriate instruction. This option is also attractive because it does not require class time for instruction, and it requires very little effort on the part of the instructor.

C. Given that the main purpose of contextualization is to seamlessly link basic skills and academic or occupational content, and given that this is accomplished by focusing on concrete applications (via the utilization of the three aforementioned instructional methodologies), how is student interest achieved? Student interest is achieved by making sure the applications

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(assignments) are in a specific context (subject matter) that is of interest to the student.

Contextualized Instruction:

In my English classes, I chose "background" subject matter that is of interest to the student. Again, the specific contexts of Career Development, Education, Hip Hop and Gangs were chosen. Those are all examples of contextualized instruction. Students wrote about each context and instruction was given in basic writing skills in order to help facilitate their writing. Note: instruction was also given in relation to each specific context and discussions were held in class to facilitate critical thinking in relation to the subject matter – whether that was Career Development, Education, Hip Hop or Gangs.

Integrated Contextualized Instruction:

An example of integrated contextualized instruction could be an Economics class in which the instructor includes some instruction in basic writing skills – making no changes to the subject matter of the course; however, unless the subject matter of the course is already of interest to students, learning may not take place. Therefore, the instructor could, for example, focus the course or some aspect of the course (a lesson, a unit, an assignment, a project) on poverty in Chicago, how to escape poverty, how to create wealth, or how to manage personal finances. As students write about any one of these categories of interest, the instructor could address whatever problems the students are having in relation to basic writing skills. Thus, basic writing skills would be integrated into the class.

One real-world application could be the creation of a personal budget or a financial plan. I would also argue, once again, that a college paper is a real-world application of basic writing skills. As I have already stated, this is one of the most significant ways students learn to think critically about and to express themselves about discipline-area subject matter.

Another example of integrated contextualized instruction could be a Sociology class in which the instructor includes some instruction in basic writing skills – making no changes to the subject matter of the course; however, unless the subject matter of the course is already of interest to students, learning may not take place. Therefore, the instructor could, for example, focus the class or some aspect of the class (a lesson, a unit, an assignment, a project) on a sociological issue of interest to students: given our population, this could be related to racism as manifested in racial profiling and police brutality. As students write about either of these issues, the instructor could address whatever problems the students are having in relation to basic writing skills. Thus, these skills would be integrated into the class.

Note: in both examples an additional "layer" of contextualization is suggested; however, it is not required. The instructor need only integrate basic writing skills

into the normal subject matter of the course, making none of the suggested changes in the focus of the course or some aspect of the course. This is because it may be that the content of the course is already of interest to students.

Embedded Contextualized Instruction:

Since embedded instruction requires very little effort on the part of the instructor, nothing needs to be stated here. Practical matters, such as making the embedded instruction available to students on Blackboard, can be addressed individually. A better understanding of what is meant by student interest, however, is imperative for all study participants.

D. Student Interest

What qualifies as student interest can range anywhere along a continuum that has personal interest at one extreme and professional interest at the other. It also should be noted that a context (subject matter) that is of student interest does not guarantee a student's undivided attention over a long period of time. This is always the goal, but from my experience, student interest waxes and wanes due to any number of distractions.

Depending on the student population and the factors associated with their geographical location, these distractions can include family responsibilities and work, lack of college preparation (manifested not only in intellectual knowledge of subject matter but also in experiential knowledge of how to be a student), time management issues, lack of motivation, lack of discipline, lack of perceived relevance of developmental subject matter, negative attitudes, attendance issues, lack of quality instruction, ineffective developmental education programs, dysfunctional family dynamics, relationship problems, and a variety of technological distractions – as well as such larger societal issues as poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and finally, gang violence.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these possible distractions, it is the "job" of an instructor to choose a specific context (subject matter) of student interest and attempt to engage and motivate students.

Why do I mention this?

Simply because no one should have unrealistic expectations about how much of a difference contextualization can make. Contextualization is not a cure-all. Education is a two-way street: students must engage and instructors must attempt to engage student interest. Unfortunately, students have been conditioned by at least 12 years of education that, for many, has not taught them what education really is and what a difference it can make in their lives. They may understand

this intellectually, but they have no experiential knowledge – or at least very little. Therefore, they are often not motivated.

I have, however, seen progress in relation to students for whom I have been able to "capture" and maintain their interest, but there are always those students who are disengaged no matter what an instructor does. This is why I have concluded that without motivation contextualization cannot be a successful teaching and learning strategy. Instructors must learn how to motivate students and students must learn how to self-motivate. It, frankly, takes effort on the part of both. In fact, during the first semester of my tenure-track project in the spring of 2013, I began using contextualization in my English classes. At the end of that semester, my retention and success numbers actually went down a little, but once I incorporated the dual concept of motivation (see above) into the content of my classes in the fall of 2013, my numbers went up and above where my numbers were before I used contextualization as a teaching and learning strategy. I included motivation because I saw that once the novelty of contextualization wore off, students were no longer motivated by the specific content of interest. I quickly realized that contextualization without motivation does not result in student interest, engagement, retention and success.

I also realized that I couldn't just talk about motivation, I had to learn how to actually do it. Why? Because motivation has to be authentic. I have to be authentically motivated if I am going to authentically motivate my students – because, in relation to the classroom, motivation comes from without (as in the instructor) and in time engenders motivation within (as in the student), teaching students the value of motivation and, in time, how to actually self-motivate and to then self-direct. In other words, I must exemplify what I am asking my students to exemplify. This is a tall order and something I will probably have to work on for the rest of my career, because it is about who I am both as an instructor, and more importantly, as a person.

Therefore, one of the most significant lessons I learned from my tenure-track project is that contextualization alone is not sufficient. Other strategies, motivation for example, are a necessity. This is why contextualization is defined as a diverse group of teaching and learning strategies. It is also why those strategies are left undefined. It is up to the instructor to incorporate the strategies that he or she believes are necessary for success – based on his or her own experimentation in the classroom.

Incremental change, therefore, is what instructors should expect of both themselves and their students. Motivation takes time and basic skills do not change overnight. After all, for a multitude of reasons, our students are not college-ready. What should have been taught in 12 years of education cannot be made up for in one or two semesters. Some progress can be expected, however, if the instructor is able to engage student interest via the use of this teaching and learning strategy and via the act of motivation.

E. Student Interest and Relevance

It should also be noted that the idea of student interest is closely tied to the idea of relevance. Is what is being taught relevant? And, more importantly, does it FEEL relevant. It is one thing to explain to students the relevance of basic skills, and we must do that, but it is an entirely different thing to get students to FEEL that basic skills (or discipline-area subject matter) are (is) relevant.

How is this accomplished? For most students, unfortunately, relevance is only felt because a grade is attached to the class. Basic skills and the assignments to which they were to be utilized feel especially relevant near the end of the semester – when students ask, what can I do to raise my grade? Can I do extra-credit? Instead of feeling the relevance during the semester with each assignment, students appear to not be able to connect with that feeling until it is too late. Feeling relevance due solely to grades, however, is stressful and it is not the feeling of relevance students need most.

What students need most is an intellectual and experiential understanding of how what they are learning in relation to basic skills will be utilized in the rest of their education and in their future careers. They also need to understand that writing is the best way for students to learn how to think critically about discipline-area subject matter and to learn how to express their thoughts in a logical and organized manner – free of distracting grammatical errors.

Finally, real-world applications, as in assignments, are the most important means to the end of helping students to connect with the feeling of relevance. Relevance can be explained, providing students with an intellectual awareness of the relevance of basic skills, but when students are given an opportunity to gain experiential awareness of these skills, relevance will be felt.

F. Other Lessons

Here is a list of the other lessons I learned from my tenure-track project. In other words, here are the other strategies I now strive to make a part of MY family of diverse strategies by which I define contextualization:

1. Quality Instruction - The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because if students perceive the course is taught well, that an instructor has thoughtfully assembled the course and works hard to present the material and to motivate students, then student engagement, retention and success will increase.

2. Authenticity and Friendliness – The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because when a teacher is authentically him or herself and is genuinely friendly, students will develop a "relationship" with that instructor – even if some students never talk to the instructor outside of class. How students FEEL about an instructor can have a

significant impact on how they FEEL about the content of the course. This strategy should not be underestimated.

3. Relevant and Culturally Appropriate Subject Matter - The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because if subject matter is demonstrated to have relevance to a student's education and career goals, student interest results in engagement, retention and success. Subject matter must also be culturally appropriate if students are to find the subject matter engaging.

4. Age Appropriate Instruction - The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because age often determines what students find relevant. For example, Hip Hop was the subject matter of my English 101 classes – which were largely made up of students just out of high school. Age also impacts the degree of self-directed motivation and self-regulated learning that must be taught. Non-traditional age students tend to need less instruction in these matters.

5. Real-World Applications and Assessments - The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because real-word applications (assignments) and assessments are relevant and reinforce instruction in self-directed motivation and self-regulated learning, as well as have practical implications for a student's education, career and personal life.

6. Balance and Fairness – The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because when a teacher assigns too much work students will naturally develop negative feelings about the course, the subject matter and often times, the instructor. A balance should be achieved between enough and not too much when it comes to assignments. This is, of course, a personal opinion based on my own experience in the classroom, but I have found that less is more. With less assignments, I can go more in-depth in relation to whatever is being taught. Not enough work, however, results in less challenge, and students will – believe it or not – FEEL that a course without much challenge is not relevant. This is a delicate balance that takes time and experimentation to achieve.

7. Curiosity and Critical Thinking – The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because critical thinking is facilitated by curiosity. REAL curiosity can also drive motivation. From curiosity comes the questions that lead to the type of critical thinking students

need in order to grow in intellectual and experiential knowledge related to being a student and their future careers.

8. Instruction in Self-Directed Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning - The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is because, although quality instruction is motivational, instruction in self-directed motivation and self-regulated learning is intended to teach students how to motivate themselves and how to tap into that motivation on an as-needed basis. We are, after all, seeking to develop life-long learners. Teachers cannot always be there to motivate students.

9. Collaborative Learning - The reason I believe this is a strategy that should be combined with contextualization is manifold: collaborative group work involves the student in the social construction of knowledge around the topic being contextualized, it provides students with an experience of learning, it stands in contrast to the teacher-centered classroom (lecture only), it encourages critical thinking, it enables students to "teach" one another, and it allows relationships to develop which are crucial for student support and motivation. And finally, it prepares students for the way work is typically done in professional environments – through collaboration.

G. How to Teach Basic Writing Skills

There is no ONE way to teach basic writing skills; therefore, this is not intended to be a comment on any other teaching strategy. What is offered here is based on my own experience and education as it relates to writing, and after 15 years I have concluded the following:

1. When it comes to writing, students are generally not college-ready. In fact, even after taking developmental English classes, many students are still not college-ready.

2. Writing, as a basic skill, does not FEEL relevant to most students and many even doubt its necessity. As a result, they do not sufficiently learn this skill

3. English teachers at the college-level cannot make up for the 12 years in which students either did not receive (or choose to receive) the appropriate instruction and/or experience to prepare them for college-level writing – UNLESS what is taught is limited to what students HAVE to know in order to write at the college-level. In other words, students do not have to know everything there is to know about the English language in order to become proficient writers of college papers and the documents their future careers will likewise require.

4. Limiting the content related to basic skills in writing makes the instruction of these basic skills more manageable for both the instructor and students. Taking what is often experienced as an overwhelming proposition for students who are not college-ready, not only removes a great burden from the academic backs of our students, but it also – in time – has the net effect of making basic skills instruction FEEL more relevant. In other words, we are not "wasting" their time teaching things they will never remember, which is one explanation for why there is so little transfer of learning. This, of course, is where demonstrating the relevance of these basic skills is imperative. We must back up what we say by giving students an experience of the relevance of basic skills – that does not overwhelm them with TOO MUCH information.

5. After 15 years, what I have learned is that at the college-level students generally struggle with the following areas when it comes to basic writing skills:

A. Pre-writing strategies

   1. How to generate ideas for a paper by utilizing various strategies for generating ideas

   Note: students should also be taught the difference between generating ideas and plagiarism.

   Ideas can be generated by using one or more of the following strategies:

      a. Asking questions
      b. Talking with and listening to others
      c. Observing people, places, and things
      d. Watching television, movies, documentaries, news programming, etc.
      e. Surfing the internet
      f. Reading
      g. Researching
      h. Listing
      i. Free-writing
      j. Clustering

B. Planning (Outlining)

   1. How to organize the ideas in a paper by creating an outline and REALLY using it as a guide when writing the paper

   Mainly, outlining is about academic writing structure. In other words, what are students supposed to do in an Introduction, each body paragraph and the Conclusion? In essence, this is an outline for a five-paragraph essay. If

assignments are longer, simply add more body paragraphs. What students are supposed to do remains the same.

Introduction:

1. Introduce topic and provide relevant background. (Order can vary.) Do not begin with thesis.

2. Transition to thesis.

3. State thesis: the main idea of the paper, what the writer will prove and how it will be proved. The thesis is also the answer to whatever question the paper is actually asking, whether or not that question is ever raised. Note: sometimes, the transition can be a good place to raise the question, followed by the thesis which answers it.

   I teach my students to raise a question and to write a thesis in which an answer is stated and a list of the three arguments (topics of the three body paragraphs) is included. The reason I do this is because I believe it better prepares them for writing research papers which do require a research question that is answered in a thesis that also indicates the main arguments that will be made in the body of the paper.

   I also think the five-paragraph model works for research papers because students can take the pattern of the three body paragraphs and expand that into a research paper with three sections. Of course, this is not the only pattern students can use, but it brings continuity and simplicity to the organizational model for writing structure – making it easier for students to remember, understand, and hopefully transfer to assignments given in discipline-area courses.

Body Paragraphs:

1. Topic sentence (Note: I do not teach students to imply topic sentences because they generally are not ready to do that well, and requiring a topic sentence reinforces what the argument is and ties it to the thesis. For now, it is better that they learn a pattern that is logical and is easy for readers to follow.

2. One or more arguments that are stated, explained and illustrated (Note: these are not necessarily three separate things. Students should simply ask if all three things have been accomplished in relation to any given argument.)

    3. Transitions between arguments

    4. Closing sentences (Note: Closing sentences are sometimes optional. It all depends on how much is argued in any given paragraph and whether it feels like it needs a concluding thought or if the arguments need to be summarized. The closing sentence can also be a transition to the next paragraph.)

Conclusion:

    1. Restate the thesis and provide closure. (Order can vary.)

C. Grammar

    1. How to express the ideas in a paper utilizing Standard English

Note: since research writing is not taught at the basic skills level, nothing will be said regarding it – although it is certainly true that students struggle with research and research writing. Discipline-area instructors who require research papers may want to ask students if they have ever done research and written a research paper. This is because students do not always take English 102 (which is the class in which research and research writing are taught) before they take discipline-area courses and are asked to meet the requirements of such an assignment. Ascertaining this, will indicate which students need additional instruction. If time is an issue, such instruction can be facilitated by our librarians (how to do research) and writing tutors (how to write a research paper). There are also a number of websites that students can use to help them understand the process of research and how to write a research paper. Purdue University's Purdue OWL is a good example.

In relation to grammar, my experience has taught me that there are five basic areas in which students struggle:

a. punctuation
b. subject-verb agreement
c. pronoun agreement
d. verb tense
e. vocabulary

6. Limiting the content of basic writing skills, as outlined above, makes instruction in basic writing skills more manageable. <u>Instructors who are contextualizing basic writing skills need only focus on three areas: generating ideas, planning how to use those ideas, and expressing those ideas.</u> Students who are learning basic-skills also find this more manageable and less overwhelming. Again, limiting what is taught only to what students HAVE to know, helps facilitate a FEELING of

relevance. In other words, students will FEEL that the instructor is not "wasting" their time.

As a result, the following questions will no longer be asked by students: Do I HAVE to know this? Will I REALLY use this in my future career? They are no longer asked because students will understand that, yes, generating ideas, planning how to use those ideas, and expressing those ideas is relevant for every career. Moreover, all careers will want future employees to be able to express those ideas in a professional manner (Standard English) – ranging from something as simple as an email to any kind of document that may be required. And, as already stated, Standard English is relevant for their entire education as well, which will help them achieve their future careers.

7. Explanations and examples, therefore, should be given to students as to WHY basic writing skills are relevant, but these explanations and examples (if they are to FEEL relevant) must be linked to writing assignments (real-world applications) that will demonstrate the relevance of these skills. This is where contextualization comes into play. If the subject matter that is being focused on is of interest to students (subject matter that ranges from the personal to the professional), then students who are engaged will begin to FEEL the relevance of basic writing skills. Instructors, however, will need to help students make those connections. Do not underestimate the benefits of any explanations given. If explanations make sense and line up with the writing experiences of students, relevance will be felt. And, if they are given examples that illustrate such relevance, relevance will be felt.

8. Relevance felt = increased student interest, engagement, retention and success.

9. Relevance felt also contributes to self-motivation and more energy for students to self-direct their learning.

H. How to Teach Standard English

Given that all teachers should be able to address how to generate ideas and how to plan to use those ideas (outlining), the area where instruction is needed most for the participants of this study is in relation to grammar. This, of course, is an overwhelming proposition for both teachers and students. That is why in the section on How to Teach Basic Writing Skills, letter C, I noted only five areas in which students tend to struggle at the college level:

a. punctuation
b. subject-verb agreement
c. pronoun agreement
d. verb tense
e. vocabulary

After sixteen years of teaching, I am increasingly persuaded that, when it comes to students and basic writing skills, less is more. My teaching philosophy now drives me to find ways to limit the number of things I try to accomplish – in order to go more in depth and to not "clutter" students' minds with TOO MUCH information. After all, I am in most cases not preparing future English teachers, I am preparing students who will have to write many college papers and will have to continue to write to varying degrees in their future careers.

Thus, I have had to ask myself, given the time-constraints of developmental writing classes (as well as English 101 and 102), what do students HAVE to know in order to learn to write in a professional manner – and by professional manner I mean Standard English?

Here is what I tell my students:

1. The best way to learn any language is through immersion. For example, when children begin to speak they mimic everything they hear. No one teaches a baby or a toddler grammar. Therefore, if a child grows up in a home where Non-Standard English is spoken, that child will inevitably struggle when it comes to learning the difference between Standard and Non-Standard English. This does not mean that every word that comes out of that child's mouth is non-standard; it does, however, mean that there will be certain words and phrases that will suggest to the uninformed that this child is not intelligent and capable. And, if this child never learns to use Standard English fully, as an adult, his or her career prospects will be severely limited.

2. In our society, Standard English is considered the norm. This is because the majority in any society determines what is standard. This is also why there is no right or wrong when it comes to Standard and Non-Standard English; there is only the student's pragmatic response to the reality of the world as it currently exists. Students must understand that as long as they choose to buy into the way the world is structured in relation to professional careers, Standard English must be learned and used, at the very least, in professional environments. This, I believe, includes the college classroom – with respect to writing assignments, oral presentations, and if done in an appropriate manner, even classroom discussions. And, if time allows, I will even "correct" student's emails.

   However, the only way students can respond in a positive way to any form of "correction," is if students experience an instructor as competent (not perfect), caring, compassionate, non-judgmental and that all "corrections" serve the overall goal of teaching students Standard English. In effect, I'm not "correcting," I'm instructing. It also helps to be authentic, friendly and have a sense of humor. Being overly serious and appearing to be judgmental will "kill" student interest and confidence.

3. Before I attempt instruction, however, I explain to students that immersion in Standard English is better than learning the rules of grammar. Why? Simply because this continues the natural pattern of how human beings generally learn – through "osmosis." We are constantly taking in information (both consciously and unconsciously), making sense of that information, and using that information to do something. I also encourage immersion because students will not remember "memorized" information. Whatever we do not USE, we LOSE. Therefore, the best way to learn Standard English is to read it, read it, read it, read it.

   Another option is to listen to it. I tell my students that watching the news, documentaries, and any other programming in which Standard English is the norm, will help facilitate their progress. I tell them that the more they read and listen to Standard English that eventually the "scales" will tip, and one day, perhaps to their own surprise, they will be able to effectively speak and write Standard English. Mimicry will help as well.

4. Of course, this is appealing to students in the abstract. It doesn't sound like a lot of work, and it doesn't have to be – but the reality is that many of our students will not do this on their own. This is where examples of Standard English related to whatever content the instructor chooses can be utilized in the form of short reading assignments (or videos) done during class. For example, an excerpt from an article, perhaps a few paragraphs in length, can address the content of the lesson and illustrate Standard English. Readings can also be assigned as homework, but unfortunately, students often do not follow through on such assignments – which is why I bring examples to class. As for videos, examples of both Standard and Non-Standard English can be played for the purpose of comparison.

5. Once the concept of immersion is fully explained, the actual instruction related to Standard English can begin. It is very important, however, that students understand that an inability to speak and write Standard English is not about the student's I.Q.; rather, it is about life experience. Thus, what we are attempting to do is to give students the life experiences that will eventually tip the "scales" in the opposite direction, resulting in an ability to speak and write Standard English. Hopefully, they will cooperate and seek more of these life experiences that we recommend.

6. In the meantime, and because we cannot assume students will actually "immerse" themselves in Standard English, instruction in punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tense, and vocabulary must be undertaken. Some instruction must first be done, however, in relation sentence structure and the parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions,

prepositions and interjections), but only for the purpose of giving students an understanding of what a sentence is and a vocabulary for the various functions that words have in a sentence, and finally, because such an understanding helps students to fix grammatical errors.

Of these eight parts of speech, the only ones I emphasize are nouns, pronouns and verbs. Students do not necessarily have to understand and be able to identify the other five parts of speech in order to speak or write professionally. Why is this? In my experience, students do not make as many errors in relation to adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections. They do, however, make many errors related to nouns, pronouns and verbs. This is also where Non-Standard English manifests itself most. Therefore, they do have to understand and be able to identify them in order to fix such grammatical errors as subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement and verb tense. The point is, we can't address everything; we need to focus on where the problems lie most.

However, before I begin any instruction, I explain that a sentence is a complete thought. To illustrate this, we look at examples of complete thoughts and incomplete thoughts (later identified as fragments). Students are encouraged to read these sentences out loud and to HEAR what a complete thought sounds like and, in contrast, what an incomplete thought sounds like. The goal here is to begin to internalize the concept of students reading everything they write out loud – in order to hear what works and what doesn't work. This can also be utilized in relation to punctuation and other grammatical issues.

7. Reading out loud in order to hear what works and what doesn't work is a foundational strategy that students must understand and utilize – because the degree to which students immerse themselves (or are immersed during class) in Standard English, will eventually teach them that it is possible to speak and write professionally without necessarily knowing ALL the rules of grammar. If Standard English is internalized, students will over time be able to "catch" their own grammatical errors if they read what they have written out loud and then revise, edit and proofread their papers to be sure they sound professional. In other words, they won't always know why a sentence is problematic, but they will – in time – know what they should have said and how they should have said it.

This is a tall order and requires student engagement. This is also why progress should be understood to be incremental. Some students will never develop an "ear" for what sounds right and an "eye" for what looks right on the page – because they are not willing to immerse themselves in Standard English; others will realize that this is an exciting concept and that what seemed impossible before, now is within their grasp.

The goal is to reach and motivate ALL students with the possibility that they can learn to speak and write professionally – IF they embrace the concept of immersion. Again, the beauty of this concept is that learning can take place even when students are making no effort to learn. Simply taking time to read and listen to Standard English will eventually result in the internalization of a professional language. I tell students it is no different than when they immerse themselves in Hip Hop, and thus are able to understand the lyrics in ways that others cannot. Standard English is simply another "language."

8. Once instruction has been accomplished in relation to the idea of a sentence being a complete thought and that reading out loud is imperative, the next thing I do is a lesson in which the parts of speech are presented – but more importantly, the idea that each word in a sentence has a function. Then, when I surprise students by "throwing out" five of the eight parts as "irrelevant," I immediately "catch" their attention and nouns, pronouns and verbs begin to FEEL relevant. This is because I explain and demonstrate their relevance.

9. The next step is to begin instruction related to punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tense and vocabulary. However, before explaining such instruction, allow me to summarize:

   1. A sentence is a complete thought
   2. Reading out loud will help students to catch errors – in time – if they immerse themselves (or are immersed by the instructor during class) in Standard English
   3. Every word in a sentence has a function (as in the parts of speech) – but students only need to understand the most relevant parts (nouns, pronouns and verbs)
   4. Grammar instruction should focus on the five areas in which students struggle most: punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tense and vocabulary

If an instructor integrates these concepts into his or her class in creative ways, there is no reason that such instruction has to take time away from the subject matter typically being taught. This is doable!

What follows are the individual handouts I provide my students: lessons and exercises related to punctuation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb tense and vocabulary. Note: there is also an introductory lesson and exercise related to what we call sentence structure. Suggestions for how to utilize the lessons and exercises either in or outside of class are included for study participants. Files for these documents can be received simply by sending a request to dgiven@ccc.edu.

Instructors are responsible for placing these documents on Blackboard and/or having copies printed for students.

Note: The actual lessons and exercises will be provided to participants.

Curriculum Vitae / Dennis Given

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Educational Background

- BA Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio / Major: Pre-Seminary Bible and Theology / GPA: 2.08 / Graduation date: June 1979

- MA Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio / Major: Composition and Literature / Thesis written, defended, and approved / GPA: 3.85 / Graduation date: June 2002

- Ed.D. Education: Indiana University at Bloomington / Major: Curriculum and Instruction / Minor: African American Studies / GPA: 3.8 / Graduation date: December 2016

Professional Experience in Education

- Olive Harvey College, Chicago, Illinois (Spring 2010 – Present): Developmental Writing, English Composition I, and English Composition II

- Morton College, Cicero, Illinois (Spring 2010 – Summer 2012): English Composition I and English Composition II

- Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, Indiana (Summer 2004 – Summer 2007; Fall 2009): English Composition I and II, Developmental Writing, Developmental Reading, and Technical Writing

- Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, Indiana (Fall 2004 – Fall 2006): English Composition I and II

- Franklin College, Franklin, Indiana (Fall 2004 – Summer 2005): English Composition I

- Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (Fall 2002 – Spring 2004; Fall 2007 – Fall 2009): English Composition I and Black Literature, Public Speaking, and a graduate class in Education (Teacher Education)

- Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio (Fall 2000 – Spring 2002): English Composition I and II

Community / Civic Activities and Offices Held

Board Member and Facilitator at the Dayton Lesbian and Gay Community Center

in Dayton, Ohio. (1998-1999)

Non-Academic Publications

- September 1998 – September 1999, The Spectrum (Gay Newspaper distributed in Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus, Ohio). Columnist, assistant editor, assistant layout and design editor, and distribution coordinator

- March 1993 – August 1998, The Catalyst (Gay Self-Published Desktop publication distributed in Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus Ohio with mail delivery to various parts of U.S.). Publisher, editor, and writer for entire publication, as well as layout and design editor, and distribution coordinator.