Why Can't Tyrone Write:
Re-conceptualizing Flower and Hayes for Black, Adolescent Male Writers

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Abstract

Using qualitative methods and a case study design, the perceptions and writing processes of three African-American eighth grade males were explored. Data were derived from semi-structured and informal interviews, and document analysis. The study concluded that the perceptions of the three participants' writing processes did not adhere to the steps depicted by the cognitive process model of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981) that has become a dominant model for describing the composing processes of students. Recommendations are made for altering the Flower and Hayes model to depict how these three, African-American eighth graders perceive school writing.

Introduction

On December 8, 1975, *Newsweek* published an article entitled "Why Johnny Can't Write" (Sheils, 1975). The cover of the magazine featured an all-American, handsome, middle class White male who struggled to write a competent essay. The article did not answer the underlying question that served as the article's premise. Instead, Sheils (1975) put fear in the hearts of many Americans by explaining the degree of their children's inability to write academically. Sentiments about students' abilities to write have not changed much. American College Test (ACT) (2005) reported that nearly one-third of high school graduates were not ready for college-level English composition courses. College instructors estimate that 50% of high school graduates were not prepared for college-level writing (Achieve, Inc., 2005). In the report, "Are They Ready to Work," employer respondents cited high school graduates, as well as two- and four-year college graduates as "being deficient in written communication" (Partnership of 21st Century Skills, 2006, p. 41).

Today, the face on the cover of *Newsweek* would be the face of Tyrone, an African-American male. I scoured through research to discover that researchers in the field attributed Tyrone's achievement gap in writing to his relatively poor reading skills, high absenteeism, and low engagement (Aud et al., 2011; Delpit, 1995; Kralevich, Slate, Tejeda-Delgado, & Kelsey, 2010; Sheets & Gay, 1996).

Theoretical Framework

Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model

With a listing of over 71 million citations, the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model dates back almost three decades, but its explanation of the cognitive writing processes still influence the way researchers examine writing practices today (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 2012).

Flower and Hayes (1981) identified writing as a complex process of problem-solving, including memory, planning, text generation, and revision (see Figure 1). Elaborating on studies completed by Emig (1971), the researchers further explored the cognitive model of writing processes to include sub-processes writers employ during composition (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Their study was designed to explore the cognition and motivation that surface in the writing processes (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Through the use of protocol analysis, the researchers generated a writing model comprised of three fundamental components: (1) task environment, (2) writer's long-term memory, and (3) writing processes (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

The task environment included different elements within the writing task (i.e., topic, audience, and exigency) and some of the text that had been produced (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Writer's long-term memory was the component in which writers tap into stored knowledge both internally and externally about the audience and topic, as well as general writing plans and goals for completing the task set (Flower & Hayes, 1981). The writing processes
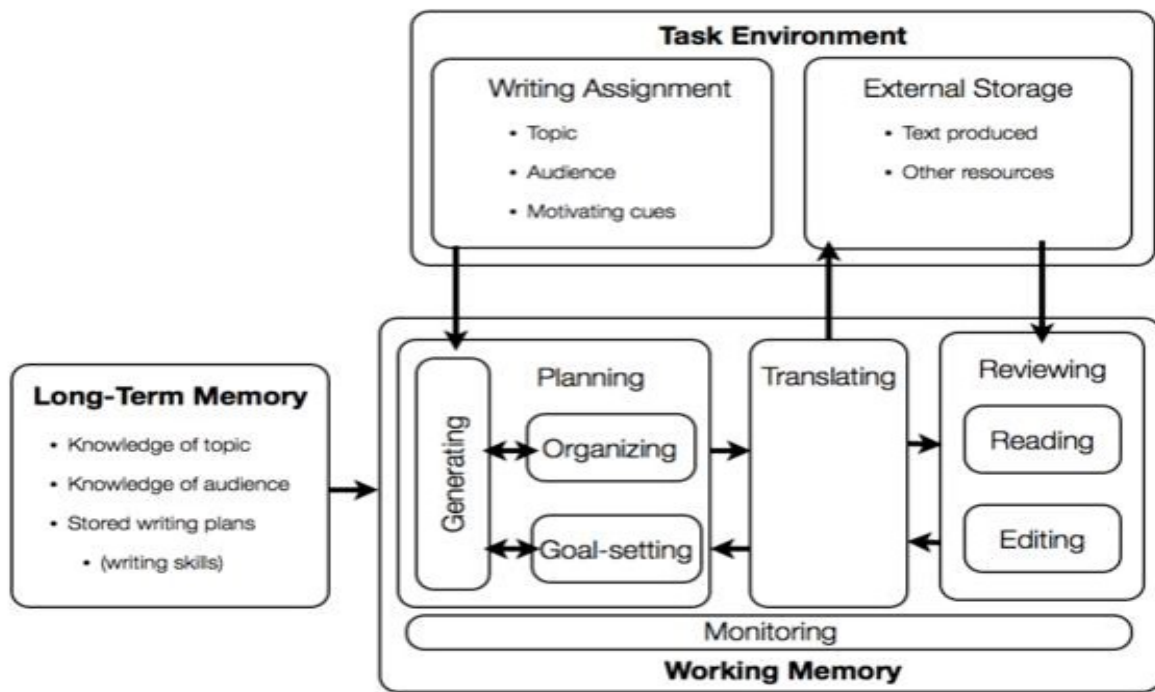
Flower, L., & Hayes, J.R. (1981). A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing. College Composition and Communication 32: 365-387

Figure 1. Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Mode

detailed the cognitive activities that writers engaged in throughout the composition process (Flower & Hayes, 1981). This process included planning, reviewing, transcribing, revising, setting goals, and idea organization and generation (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Cognitive Process of Writing

Psychological research and problem solving inspired early writing research (Becker, 2006). Developing a conceptual language for categorizing the writing mental processes was at the center of examining how writers composed (Becker, 2006). This inquiry led to generalization of the cognitive processes of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1980), which helped differentiate between expert and novice writers and determine that writing was a recursive act (Hayes & Flower, 1986).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983) offered further explanation of recursivity with the addition of the compare, diagnose, and operate planning stages. They created a dual problem space model, including an understanding that the writer may have a goal in mind for the end product of their writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia,

1983); however, if the writer needed to clarify different concepts while writing and before completing the composition, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983) posited that the writer set new sub-goals in an attempt to clarify the different concept. They theorized that the "translation of problems encountered in the rhetorical space back to the subgoals to be achieved in the content space" (Bereiter, Scardmamalia, & Steinbach, 1984, p. 178). Following up on the diagnostic operations during revisions, Flower, Hayes, Carey, Schriver, and Stratman (1986) and Hayes, Flower, Schriver, Stratman, and Carey (1987) made changes to their writing model to include two new sub-stages: processes and knowledge. The processes sub-stage consisted of the involvement of reading to evaluate, select a strategy, and execute revision, and knowledge sub-stage consisted of task definition, plan and text criterion, problem representation, and revision procedures (Flower et al., 1986; Hayes et al., 1987). The researchers considered the importance of the writer's ability to read in relation to recognizing mistakes written during composition and determined that this ability enabled writers to choose the correct rewrite option—which is often tied to long-term memory

(Flowers et al., 1986; Hayes et al., 1987). Flower and colleagues (1986) provided better understanding of the differentiation between novice and expert writers by demonstrating how working memory and long-term memory affected writers' abilities to make surface or substantial corrections within their compositions. Thus, these studies demonstrated a shift in the focus of the cognitive processes of writing to a focus of the writers' recognition of mistakes in compositions.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The paradigm of the dominant culture impacts public education. The dominant culture in America include White-washed curriculum (Newman, 2012; Swartz, 1992; Banks, 1990; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991), ineffective teachers of diverse students (Bloom & Peters, 2012; Harry & Klinger, 2014; Hyland, 2005), and inappropriate and/or invalid assessment methods (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Jencks, 1998; Kim & Sunderman, 2005). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is a "a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469).

The three tenets of CRP include academic success, cultural competence, and cultural consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Operating under these tenets, educators undergo a change in their dispositions in which they infuse education into the culture of the student instead of infusing the dominant culture into education (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers practicing CRP do not allow their biases or preconceived notions about instructing students or students' capabilities influence the education they provide for their students.

The purpose of this study was to use the Flower and Hayes (1981) writing model to explain the writing process as expressed by African-American adolescent males who struggled to write. Two exploratory questions guided this study:

> (1) What are the perceptions reported by three African-American adolescent males related to school writing curriculum?

> (2) What are the perceptions reported by three African-American adolescent males about themselves as writers in school?

Method

An instrumental case study methodology was used for this study, which included a bounded system framework (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995).

Site of Case Study

A Title-I middle school, grades 6-8, in the Midwest United States, was composed of 58.8% of minority/ethnic groups (e.g., African-American and Hispanic) and 71.6% of students who received free and reduced lunches. Fifty-six percent of the student body did not pass the state's core curriculum test and were eligible for Title-I services for reading. Of the 56% of the students, 28% were eighth grade students, and 21% of the eighth grade students who did not pass the reading test were African-American or Hispanic males. In addition, each grade level was equipped with one Title-I teacher.

Participants

Participants included three (n = 3) African-American males in eighth grade who had failed the state core curriculum test or received the grade of "D" or lower for their final semester of English during their seventh grade year. The participants were students in one of the five English classes taught per day by the principle investigator (PI). The PI was an eighth grade English teacher who maintained the role as teacher for the study participants.

Procedure

After obtaining IRB approval, a study invitation and consent form were mailed home to parents of students who met the study inclusion criteria. The PI called each parent who returned a signed consent form to answer questions about the study. Then, the PI met with each student (whose parent had already given consent), invited the student to participate in the study, and obtained written assent from the student. The PI audio recorded student participants during three interviews throughout the school year: October, January, and May. Participants' writing samples were collected twice during the school year. The first writing sample was obtained from the district's benchmark

assessment in December and the second writing sample was obtained from the state's core curriculum test in February. The author used researcher reflective journaling approximately three times per week to record information relevant to participants' writing and capture classroom observations.

Measures

Semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews consisted of open-ended questions about the participants' perceptions of the school writing curriculum and themselves as writers (See Table 1).

Researcher reflective journal. The researcher reflective journal allowed the PI to explore questions, thoughts, issues, and concerns that arose throughout the study and to provide transparency (Janesick, 2004). The journal was also used to capture classroom observations of participants. Classroom observation was used to validate the information recorded during the interviews. Yin (2009) credited the information gained during observation as substantial information that aids during data collection.

Writing samples. The first writing sample was obtained from the district's benchmark assessment in December where participants had 1.5 hours to write an expository essay with a choice of two topics. The second writing sample was obtained from the state's core curriculum test in February where participants had unlimited time to write an expository essay.

Analyses

Audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher and coded by two curriculum and instruction doctoral students. The author and two coders examined the transcripts independently and open-coded the transcripts using a within-case thematic analysis, which allowed categories to emerge from the data (Ezzy, 2002). After reading the transcripts several times, a pattern of topics (e.g., hate for writing, writing engagement, inadequate writing background, difficulty formulating ideas, and lack of confidence) appeared with frequencies and declarations becoming apparent (LeCompte, 2000). Ending with LeCompte's (2000) description of a "jigsaw puzzle," the data were organized using different colored markers to group similar topics (p. 147). An open-coding

procedure was used to record themes that emerged during the cross-case analysis of all data in order to determine commonalities from the participants (Creswell, 2007). To answer the exploratory research questions, the data was condensed into categories of themes. Each theme helped explain the participants' perceptions about the school writing curriculum and perceptions of themselves as writers in school.

Results

In this study, the perceptions of three eighth grade African-American males about school writing curriculum and how they saw themselves as a writer in an academic setting were analyzed. Using a within-case analysis, each of the participants were analyzed independently in order to answer the research questions (Ezzy, 2002). Individual themes from each participant emerged as the data were triangulated (see Table 2).

Tyrone I Case Analysis

Tyrone I passed his state's core curriculum reading tests with a score of "satisfactory" in the third and fourth grades. He failed the fifth, sixth, and seventh grade state reading tests scoring "limited knowledge." The only standardized writing test that he took was the state's core curriculum writing test in the fifth grade. He failed that test scoring "limited knowledge." During his eighth grade year, Tyrone I passed both his reading and writing tests by scoring "satisfactory."

Perceptions about school writing curriculum. Tyrone I's perceptions about school writing included a misunderstanding of how to write: He had trouble formulating ideas when writing and he thought writing was tedious. Tyrone I stated that he did not like to write stories because "they be hard" and "[he] doesn't know what to write about either." I asked him what he meant about "not knowing what to write about," and he replied, "I don't know what to write about, sometimes, if I write something, I don't know what to put…or…I don't know. I just don't like writing." Expanding on those thoughts, I further probed him and asked if he had trouble thinking about what to write. He explained to me,

Table 1

Interview Protocols

Protocol 1	Protocol 2	Protocol 3
1. I like writing stories. Why or why not?	1. What do you know about the pre-writing stage of the writing process?	1. What has been the best story that you have written in class? Why did you pick this story as the best story?
2. Writing is boring. Why or why not?	2. What kind of things have we done in class to help you pre-write?	2. What have we done in class to get you excited about writing? How did this help you to complete your assignment?
3. I like to write in my spare time. Why or why not?	3. Which activity did you like the best? Why?	3. What was your favorite writing assignment that we completed in class? Why?
4. I enjoy writing notes and letters to people. Why or why not?	4. What do you know about the drafting stage of the writing process?	4. Do you think you write more in school now than you do at home? If yes, why has this changed?
5. I like writing at school. Why or why not?	5. What kind of things have we done in class to help you draft?	5. Do you think that the notes or texts that you write to people have become more detailed since you started the eighth grade? Why or why not?
6. I have trouble thinking about what to write. Why or why not?	6. Which activity did you like the best? Why?	6. Do you find that your Facebook or Twitter posts are becoming longer? Do they contain larger words? Are they more descriptive? Why or why not?
7. It's fun to write things at home. Why or why not?	7. What do you know about the editing stage of the writing process?	7. Has your attitude about writing at school changed from the first interview?
8. I like to share my writing with others. Why or why not?	8. What kind of things have we done in class to help you edit?	8. Do you think you still have trouble coming up with ideas for your writing assignments? If no, what has helped you to come up with ideas? What do you do to come up with ideas?
9. Writing is fun. Why or why not?	9. Which activity did you like the best? Why?	9. Do you think it is more fun to write things at home or at school? Why or why not?
10. I wish I had more time to write at school. Why or why not?	10. What do you know about the revision stage of the writing process?	10. How comfortable do you feel publishing your writing pieces? Why?
11. I like to read. Why or why not?	11. What kind of things have we done in class to help you revise?	11. Do you think writing is fun? Why or why not?
12. I think I'm a good writer. Why or why not?	12. Which activity did you like the best? Why?	12. Tell me about the best experience you have had writing for in this class.
13. I like to write. Why or why not?	13. What do you know about the publishing stage of the writing process?	13. Tell me about the worst writing experience that you have had in this class.
14. How often do you write at home? Why or why not?	14. What kind of things have we done in class to help you publish?	14. Have you changed your mind about reading since you began the eighth grade? Why or why not?
15. What kinds of things do you write? (types, topics, or titles)	15. Which activity did you like the best? Why?	15. Do you consider yourself to be a good writer now? Why or why not?
16. How do you feel about writing?		15. What kinds of things do you like to write? (types, topics, or titles)
17. When and how did you learn to write?		16. How do you feel about writing now?
18. What kinds of things do you write at school?		17. Do you think that this year has helped you to learn well enough to go to high school and be successful? How has it help you? How has it not helped you?
19. What kinds of writing do you do at home?		18. How do you think you performed on the big writing test (OCCT writing test given in February)?
20. Why do you think it's important to be a good writer?		19. Do you think your reading more has led you to alternating your styles of writing?
		20. What activities did I do to help you learn to write?
		21. What activities did we complete in class that made you excited to write? Explain.

Table 2

Within-Case Analysis Themes

Participant	Perceptions about School Writing Curriculum Themes	Perceptions about Himself as a School Writer Themes
Tyrone I	- Did not understand how to write - Has trouble formulating ideas when writing - Thought writing was a tedious process	- Improved writer - Lacked confidence in writing abilities
Tyrone II	- Believed it was hard to get started writing - Had an inadequate writing background - Hated writing	- Improved writer - Had low perceptions of his ability to write
Tyrone III	- Thought writing was too much work - Equated grammar and mechanics with good writing - Had trouble formulating ideas when writing	- Progressed by end of the study - Lacked confidence in his ability to write

I get sidetracked and then sometimes, when teachers be teaching, I zone out and think of other stuff, like what I want to do today, and really don't kind of be listening, that's why, and I don't know what to do.

His statements consistently supported a lack of understanding of the accepted school writing curriculum and process. Tyrone I did not know how to process the information to know what to do when the task was writing. Instead of trying to learn the process at this point, Tyrone I allowed for his mind to wander, and he became discouraged with writing because he did not listen when instructions were given so he still did not understand the process of writing.

Tyrone I also perceived that he has trouble formulating ideas to complete paragraphs. When I asked him about creating sequential paragraphs, he told me,

I write everything down, like in the first paragraph that was in my thoughts and then, when it comes to my second paragraph, I don't know what to write

about because I used everything, all my ideas, in my first one.

Tyrone I indicated that he was unable to compose extensive pieces of writing because he answered prompts literally. Instead of seeing the possibilities of where he could expound on writing prompts, he provided a shallow answer in one paragraph. Struggling writers often have trouble generating content, organizing, and planning their compositions (Graham & Harris, 2003).

Tyrone I also perceived writing to be tedious. He stated that he did not like to write at school because he had to write in paragraphs: "We have to write two or three paragraphs instead of five, six, seven…My wrists start cramping up."

PI: Writing is fun?
Tyrone I: Sometimes, I guess, but other times, no.
PI: When is it not fun?
Tyrone I: I don't know…not all the time when you have to write when you really don't want to write. When you're writing too much, that's when it's not fun.

PI: What do you mean, when you're writing too much, it's not fun?
Tyrone I: When your hands start getting stiff and you can't move them well.

Tyrone I seemed to view writing as tedious because he claimed that it was too much work and made his wrists cramp up. I further probed him to ask if he had more time to write and let his wrists rest a little in between would he want to write more.

He further indicated that writing was tedious because it takes too long to write. For instance, we got into this discussion about texting. He indicated that he "texts in slang where it's little words...instead of writing text, [he] put t-x-t, instead of t-e-x-t." I asked him what would be the point of leaving out one letter because it was basically the same word. He replied, "It is still one letter shorter which means less writing."

Perceptions about himself as a school writer. Even though Tyrone I perceived himself to be an improved writer, he still lacked confidence in his abilities to write. In the final interview, I asked him if he felt like he was capable of writing more descriptively, writing with figurative language, or writing longer pieces. He answered, "yes," and elaborated by saying,

> Like I know figurative language means the different types of...I don't know the word I'm looking for, but...like, onomatopoeia and all that stuff. Since I know what that stuff is, I know what I could write about. Like, I can write a idiom or something.

His perception about improving as a writer was noted in the explanation of the figurative language terms that he could incorporate into his writing. I further asked him if he thought that he had become more confident in his writing abilities since the initial interview. He stated that he had become "a little" more confident "because [he] knows just to write about one thing in one sentence, then write about the next thing in the next one." He perceived his writing ability to have improved because he was capable of staying on and alternating topics in different sentences.

Even though he saw himself as an improved writer, he still lacked confidence in his ability to write. In asking him about the drafting stage, he brought up the subject of creating his thesis statement: He told me that his "thesis statements were not good; one of the [points] in his thesis would be good, then the other two, [they] just don't sound right." Tyrone I demonstrated the lack of confidence in his ability because he was not confident enough to continue with the other two points in his thesis.

Furthermore, I asked him about publishing his work in class. Part of publishing in my classroom was having the students to read their free-writes. Tyrone indicated, "Sometimes [he] didn't like to publish because I think some of it be bad. I don't think it be that descriptive or something that will get your attention, so it'll just be a waste of time." The fact that a bulk of these statements were taken from the third interview demonstrated that Tyrone I, even after learning that he had passed the state writing test, lacked confidence in his ability to write.

Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Samples Analyses

The researcher examined Tyrone I's writing samples in relation to the Flower and Hayes (1981) model, and it seemed as if Tyrone I did enter into the three components of the writing model: (1) task environment, (2) writer's long-term memory, and (3) writing processes (p. 368). However, Tyrone I did not explore each component in depth.

For both writing samples, while in the task environment, Tyrone I understood the prompts that were given. This was evident because he managed to write on the same topic for the entire essay. However, his identification and understanding of his audience is not evident. In the writing samples, he should have been appealing to an adult in order to explain his rationale. Yet, it seemed as if he was writing to another classmate as evident in the use of the second person. Thus, his writing took the shape of writer-based prose because he was answering the prompt as he saw fit instead of writing for the audience.

Unit 4 – Practice Prompts

Your Final Essay

Makes an attempt to respond to the task environment; however, he doesn't revise or revisit prewriting to see if writing follows his directed goal.

You should be able to drive at age 16 because thats when you really start to mature and your basicly a young adult. I don't think that age 16 is to young to drive because your only two years from being a legal adult. It's better to get your driver license at 16 because if your parents is too sick to drive to the hosipital or to injured you can drive them because you have your license. What will change if you got your license at age 18? you will still have the same responsibility that you would have had if you got it at 16. Just because your 18 does not mean your not going to do the same stuff that you did at age 16.

I think if people had to wait until they were 18 to get there driver license there would be more car accidents because they would not have a curfew to be inside and they would probaly stay out and party all night and be drinking and then decide to get behind of a wheel of a car while

Thesis?

Why are you writing in 2nd person?

in 2nd person.

* Good job! you'd stayed on topic. However, you jump around a bit. You do take a claim, but you do not have a clear thesis! Furthermore, you are missing 2 paragraphs. Use a 3 part-thesis, and it will be easier for you to write with more organization.

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Figure 2. Tyrone I- First semester writing sample.

Tyrone 1

A way we can make ore school better is by making learning fun. If the teachers made learning fun more people would pay attention and go on to the next grade. More students would not drop out because they would be learning stuff in a fun way.

Instead of having five minutes in the hallway we should only have three so more people will be on time than tordy. If we had three minutes in the hallway it would prevent fights from starting, and it would make the school more safe. Another reason why we should only have three minutes is so we can be in class longer learning stuff. If we had three minutes in the hallway more people will be worried about taken care of there buissness other than crowding

Annotations (left margin): Audience is not clearly defined? Seems like he understands what the task asks him, but he is still unsure exactly what the goal of his writing should be.

Annotation (top right): Thesis?

Annotations (right margin): Thinks of a new idea and uns with idea. Doesn't revisit earlier paragraphs to see if the writing still follows the original goal.

Figure 3 (part 1). Tyrone I- state writing sample.

Name: SHEPPARD, ERRICK

State Student ID: 1001413215

DOB: 11/16/1997

Writing Composite Score: 45.0

the hallways in big groups.

Another way we can make our school a better place is by practicing are drills more because you never know when the school might catch on fire. The reason we should practice drills more is because new students come in everyday and there not going to know what to do when the time comes.

A way we can improve are school is by not littering treat the school like your home if you see trash pick it up and throw it away. We can also improve are school by makeing good grades on are benchmark and crt test. If we got good crt scores we can get off the bottom of the list and go to the top.

Obvious that the student wrote in order to satisfy me by getting four paragraphs. Student does appear to understand what the prompt asks, however, he answers this prompt for answer sake. He doesn't revise or revised different processes in order to compose a coherent piece of writing. Long term memory worked because he was able to relate this to other topics covered in class. Yet, he breaks down in organizing and goal setting.

Figure 3 (part 2). Tyrone I- state writing sample

Tyrone I exemplified that his long-term memory was activated because he was able to relate to, write about, and stay on the topic given to him.

This could largely have been because the prompts were from a real world: The prompts were familiar to him because they related to his life. Therefore, he did not see the prompt as intimidating because it was a subject to which he could relate. However, as indicated in the

interviews, Tyrone I was not well organized in his writing. Neither one of the writing samples included a thesis statement; however, he took a position on the topic which demonstrated understanding, but he struggled in the writing process where he was asked to organize his thoughts. As stated in his interviews, he could not think of what to write next or even how to get started in generating ideas for his compositions.

During the writing processes, it is evident that Tyrone I does not practice recursive writing. The fluidity that is evident in the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model was non-existent in his writing samples. The lack of fluidity stems from Tyrone I's insistence on hurrying to finish his writing assignments without wanting to revise his work. As indicated in the interviews, writing was too much work for him; it was just another assignment that he wanted to finish so he does not get a bad grade. Thus, the directed goal he set for himself in the task environment was diminished because he wanted to finish. Furthermore, there was no evidence in revising because the samples do not come together as a cohesive composition. Tyrone I wrote until he was tired of writing. He did not write to sum up all parts of the essay to reiterate his point to the audience.

Tyrone II

Tyrone II passed his eighth grade reading and writing tests by scoring "satisfactory." It should be noted that on the state writing test in the fifth grade, Tyrone II scored "limited knowledge;" he did not pass. Even though Tyrone II was almost two feet taller than most of his peers, he turned 14 the second semester of his eighth grade year.

Perceptions about school writing curriculum. Tyrone II had three different perceptions about writing: he believed that it is hard to get started writing, he has an inadequate background to write, and he hates writing. When asked about the trouble in thinking what to write, he replied, "Sometimes I can't think of what to write." I further probed him by asking him what went through his thought process in the initial stage of getting something on the paper; he replied, "How am I supposed to write it?" In the third interview, Tyrone II indicated that even after instruction, he had trouble understanding how to get started writing. This time he experienced trouble and much frustration with trying to get started writing his

research paper, "I don't understand some of the work, like writing a thesis and finding a topic for the research paper."

Tyrone II also recognized that he had an inadequate background in writing. Without prompting to talk about his background in writing, he spoke of his previous experiences with writing throughout the interviews. Initially, he maintained that he never wrote anything during his seventh grade year:

> I never did anything in Ms. G's class. This is like my first time doing paragraphs. I never did anything in Ms. G's class because I didn't know what to do. My first time writing was actually this year.

The previous two perceptions, hard to get started writing and inadequate background, all culminated in the fact that Tyrone II hated to write. His negative demeanor and disposition that occurred when he was asked about writing in the interviews or classroom behavior pointed to his hate for writing. Initially, Tyrone II stated, "I don't like to read or write." When asked about writing being fun, he stated his hate for writing again, "Writing is not fun, at all. I hate to write."

Perceptions of himself as a school writer. At the end of the study, Tyrone II perceived himself to be an improved writer; however, he still had low perceptions of his writing ability. Initially, Tyrone II reported that he did not think that he was a really good writer because he "hadn't had a good experience," and he "didn't really feel like he knew how to write." During the second interview, he mentioned, "I get frustrated when I write cause I can't do the work good enough; I don't know punctuation and ideas and stuff." Even though he had a low perception of his writing abilities, he recognized that his writing improved. The evidence of his improvement emerged several places in the third interview. He admitted that he was "kind of" better at writing than the first of the year because "[he] did not know how to do it at all at the beginning of the year."

Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Samples Analyses

In examining Tyrone II's writing samples in relation to the Flower and Hayes Writing Model, it seems as if he does enter into the three components of the writing model:

Tyrone 2   12/9/11

Think about a time when you have either judged someone or someone has judged you.
Explain what is meant by the saying "don't judge a book by its cover?" Your essay must
be at least a page and a half long.

I remember when this
little white boy always
wore cowboys clothes, boot and
every thing until the first day
of school. We went out for recess
and played football and he was
the quarterback and i said hey i cant
throw farther. the nee and
we stood lik 30 yards from
a fence and threw the balls
and his went over the fence
and I said sorry I ever Joggled
him it wont happen again.

Where's the rest of this essay?
One paragraph is not going to suffice. I think your
introduction captured my attention... good job!
You didn't let the essay develop! Come see
me if you are having trouble!

Figure 4. Tyrone II- First semester writing sample.

Tyrone 2

Good intro!

Understands the prompt.

Organization skills are evident.

Is mrs. puccino really letting stu-
dents pick ways to improve (are) school?.
Is she sick or somthing? Probably
didn't get enouh sleep. But since we get
the chance to improve our school. We nee-
d to impove the school by, changing
the time we get (head) to like nine and
the time we leave. can still be 3:15 pm,
take away the aduisory class, and make
bigger plates ate lunch.

good thesis!

Ugh. waking up at six everyday
is hard. if we only had like two or one
extra hour added. I think students wouldn't
be tired, and wouldn't be tardy to class.
With the excuse. "I was in the bathroo-

Uses dialogue!

Figure 5 (part 1). Tyrone II- State writing sample.

Tyrone 2

m.: And if mrs. puccino could change tho-se hours. I think it could improve our school because. Students would come to school everyday ready to work.

Stays on topic but doesn't go back to further his ideas.

Advisory is just retarded there is no reason why we should have to stay in one class for twenty minutes. And not do anything but watch ten or twenty sec clips of lame movies. I think mrs. puccino should get rid of advisory because its boring. And the work doesn't even go to our grades. Thats why I think that will improve our school.

This paragraph is more complete in that he ties it back to the thesis. topic-sentence

Obvious that he had a lot to say about advisory. more complete paragraph... long term memory!

And my third part is important. Its important because its about lunch. I think the lunch ladies need to make m $\frac{food}{re}$ I lik-e to eat man. Come on the people of Lawton Public Schools can do that. A burger, fries and apple sause is not going to fill anybody up. Most of

Figure 5 (part 2). Tyrone II- State writing sample.

Tyrone 2

the time. The Cafiteiria runs out of food anyway. I think this could help because people are still hungry after lunch. And could make the next two classes more satisfying.

Writer stopped the writing process and didn't revise. He wrote to me as his audience because I told the struggling writer to just get the four paragraphs. However, over, the course of the study... the participants practiced writing 5 paragraph essays. This essay lacks a conclusion.

Figure 5 (part 3). Tyrone II- State writing sample.

(1) task environment, (2) writer's long-term memory, and (3) writing processes (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 368). He did a decent job providing explanations for his compositions as he developed more as the study progressed.

While in the task environment, Tyrone II, in the first writing sample, did not show understanding of most of the writing process as defined by Flower and Hayes. Because he finished his essay in one paragraph with some understanding of what the prompt asked, his early writing was indicative of a writer who was not cognitively processing how to write an essay, or a writer who chose not to write.

On the other hand, on the state writing test given almost two months later, Tyrone II functioned very well in the task environment; he wrote a well-developed essay, which meant that he had a better understanding of the "rhetorical problem" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 369). Yet, he still did not understand the concept of audience because he wrote to his classmates instead of addressing the people who would be changing the policies of the school. Upon leaving his introductory paragraph, it was evident that he assessed the "text produced so far" because his essay was organized by the direct goals that he established in the paragraph (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 370).

In speaking of organization, there was evidence that Tyrone II worked within his long term memory in the second writing sample. Throughout the essay, he provided concrete details for the examples that he provided to demonstrate how the school needed improvement. His understanding of the situation allowed him to "tap a stored representation of a problem and bring a whole raft of writing plans into play" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 371). Furthermore, Tyrone II demonstrated that he was able to organize an essay by beginning with a thesis statement and following its structure until the end; he continued to work through the cognitive processes because all of his thoughts followed his initial directed goal. Remembering to rethink and revise in order to compose a cohesive essay showed that he moved from a writer-based to a reader-based prose because he attempted and connected his ideas together for the audience to understand his thoughts.

Thus, there was evidence that Tyrone II thought in more depth in the draft and revision process,

which meant that he conceptualized the writing process. Paragraph development, dialogue inclusion, and distinct examples supported the idea that he was developing cognitively as a writer. The only aspect that lacked was his ability to finish the essay by revisiting his original goal set in the task environment at the end of his essay. Also, his ideas developed, but they could have developed even further if Tyrone II engaged in doing so. His perceptions of hating to write or writing being tedious surfaced here because even though he understood how to write, he stuck with writing to get done without the effort to go back to correct his work.

Tyrone III

Tyrone III failed all of his reading tests (sixth grade - "unsatisfactory;" seventh grade - "unsatisfactory;" eighth grade - "limited knowledge"). On the state writing test that he took as a fifth grader, he scored "limited knowledge." His score on the eighth grade writing test was "limited knowledge," which was not passing at both grade levels.

Perceptions about school writing curriculum. Tyrone III had three different perceptions on writing. He thought that writing was too much work, he perceived that mechanics equated good writing, and it was hard to formulate ideas to write. He began his lament about writing being too much work in the initial interview,

> Well, it's like, if we have like a five paragraph essay, we have to write that and it's like due like on Friday. Then, it's like Friday, we have to type it. We have to, like, do the MLA format and all that. Writing is too much involved; it's a lot of stuff to do.

In his third interview, he explained that completing the class research paper was his worst writing experience because:

> We had to have a works cited, a pro and a con in the body paragraphs, and a thesis. I did not know how I was going to complete this hard work; I was not happy that day or the days I had to write it…even if we had time in class.

Not only did he perceive writing to be too much work, but he perceived it to be the mechanics of writing. Tyrone III mentioned, "Sometimes

people can't read my papers because of the words I spell; they read and be like what's this word? I try to explain, and it's like, wrong, wrong, wrong." I asked him if using spellcheck would improve his writing, and he replied, "Spell check would definitely make a difference because people would know what I am writing; my ideas would make more sense." In the final interview, he noted that his favorite writing activity was "grammar dodgeball," "grammar dodgeball helped me to write the most because I learned how to put better sentences in my writing."

Tyrone III also perceived writing as hard to formulate ideas. Initially, I asked him why he did not like to write at school. He replied, "Because if I wanted to write something, I would sit there and try to think and it's like a long time, I keep on thinking, and then I just like jot down stuff that...I don't know..." I further probed into the idea of him having trouble formulating ideas by asking him if he thought he had trouble thinking about what to write. He shook his head yes and replied:

> If we have to, like, write about uniforms or something like that, I'll sit in class and just try to think of some thoughts and I'm still thinking and, I'll try to write it, but it won't make sense.

He further indicated that when he was expected to analyze writing prompts he could not formulate ideas; he found it easier to write about anything that came to his mind. Even in the final interview after writing instruction in my classroom, he still stated that he had trouble coming up with ideas for writing assignments. He said, "Because when I start writing... when I write, I'll see...because, it doesn't make no sense."

Perceptions of himself as a school writer.
Tyrone III saw himself as a writer who progressed by the end of the study; however, he still lacked confidence in his writing ability. In his final interview, I asked him why he thought he wrote more now at school. He stated,

> Because we get, we get better at it and, when we start writing, it looks hard, but then it started getting easy. We had to like write a free verse about something, I could do that, because it's just like talking about something else or somebody else.

Tyrone III eventually recognized his writing progression because he admitted that the writing got easier as the year progressed. I also asked him if he thought he became a better writer since the first of the year.

> Because, whenever I first came in here, I didn't have...we had a lot of writing assignments and brain teasers and all that. Whenever I saw it up on the board, I would be like, ok, how is this making sense? And then, when it does, I just start writing stuff down.

Even though he saw himself as progressing, he still lacked confidence in his writing ability. He indicated, "I don't like writing in front of others because I'm afraid I'm going to mess up and stuff. If I start saying something, then I'll be like, ah man, that's not right, so that's going to be off track." He further admitted that he does not like the publishing stage in writing (authors share their work with others) because, "I feel like I am going to fail; I don't like publishing."

Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Samples Analyses

In examining Tyrone III's writing samples in relation to the Flower and Hayes model, it appeared that he did not enter all of the components of the model. He became stuck after the task environment. While in the task environment, Tyrone III, in both writing samples, demonstrated that he had an understanding of the rhetorical problem. He began both writing samples restating the problem and then offering some ideas about how he organized the essays. Yet, when he moved to the next components, his thoughts went astray. He did not seem able to organize his essay; it is almost as if he did not have a long term memory because he could not draw from experiences to implement into his compositions. His writing was very much like his interviews because his interviews seemed to venture off topic, and I repeatedly redirected him in order to get him to answer the questions asked. He made great effort to move through the writing processes, but cognitively he was unable to produce cohesive compositions at this time even with repetition of instruction (see Figures 6 and 7).

Tyrone 3

Timothy Thompson

Miss Stormer

English,7th Lottery Essay

9 December 2011

If I won the lottery

Money money money! Yes! I wont the lottery. Now that I won the lottery what will I do with

all this money. First I would go shopping for my nephew and nieces. Then shopping for my self

then save the rest.   thesis should be one sentence.

My nephew is just turning three years old and my nieces are four and two now. So I will go

get them a new bike,toys,and get there ears pierced.

I will go get me some new shoes,clothes maybe buy junk food and drinks.

Where is the rest of the essay? It seems as if you have a thought process going, but you didn't complete your ideas. What happened? You did a great job with the MLA format. We need to work on developing your ideas after you get off to a good start.

Figure 6. Tyrone III- First semester writing sample.

Tyrone 3

Seems to understand the task as it has been given.

However, thought start to go astray when he has to organize and tap into long-term memory.

Wow! Cool (all same.) The principal has asked Students to think about ways to improve your school. We can improve are school by doing the (wright) things like study lisen when the teacher is talking and lots of other things. To help are school out. Other reason is that we can help are teacher out and do good things for them.

For an example for us students we can help other people out and help them do the (wright) things like we can raise money for our school like doing funraiser haveing a car wash garge sale and lots more just to help out are school. Thats one way we can help out our school so that we no we are doing the wright thing that we no we can de to help out are school. | We could have a sing off were people can show us ther talent. |

Starting to breakdown and not know where to go next with the writing.

I don't know if he got confused or just didn't continue explaining how the fundraiser could improve the school and show others how to do the right things.

Where does this last idea enter?

Writer strays from topic because another idea enters and he doesn't know how to explain. Yess hes thinking but not in organization

Figure 7. Tyrone III- state writing sample.

Discussion

This study explored the perceptions of African-American adolescent males as writing in school and themselves as writers in school. Data collected during the interviews indicated that all of the participants had a negative attitude toward school writing because they thought this type of writing was frustrating, they felt they did not have the adequate skills necessary to write, and they could not materialize their thoughts. They all seemed to engage in writing when they were allowed to collaborate with peers or teachers, when there were relevant writing topics (writing topics that related to their lives or subjects that were familiar to them), and when they completed non-structured writing assignments (free-writes; activities associated with non-academic writing). Although they all perceived themselves not to be good writers, they all recognized their growth in their writing skills over the course of the study.

In order to identify where participants struggled in the cognitive writing process, I re-conceptualized the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model to better understand how my students became successful writers. In the process of the reconceptualization, I created the Relational Writing Model, which is rooted in CRP.

Re-conceptualizing the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model

The Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model appeared to be based upon students who were indicative of the student on the front of the *Newsweek* cover in 1975. As written, their model suggested that students came to English equipped with the knowledge to participate effortlessly in the writing process. Given the time in history in which the model was created, not far from the Civil Rights movement, their assumptions were understandable because there were relatively few African-American students enrolled in college. Today, students are expected to learn to write well enough to compete and gain success in the 21st century job market (National Commission on Writing, 2004).

The Flower and Hayes (1981) model did not accurately capture how the Tyrones wrote in school. In being an active participant in this study, experiencing a change in my disposition, and understanding the struggles of the Tyrones,

I revised the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model to reflect my infusion of CRP tenets while teaching them to write and perceptions of how the Tyrones actually wrote.

My reconceptualization of the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model differs in that their model examined the process for students who were writing, and my writing model expounded to providing processes for the practitioner in educating students who struggle with writing. Figure 8 represents my reconceptualization of the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model.

Academic Success

Ladson-Billings (1995) defined academic success as students demonstrating academic competence. The Tyrones were academically successful through relationships with their teacher and peers.

Relationships. Before I implemented writing instruction or advanced cognitive writing skills, I developed a relationship with the participants that allowed me to de-escalate grading. By creating a level of comfort in which the participants felt that they could make mistakes without being chastised through the red pen, I gained their trust because I was not grading their papers to belittle them. Through comments made on their papers, they began to trust that I was in their best interest for writing achievement. Without fostering relationships, the participants would have stayed on the defensive because they, from previous experiences, believed that teachers marked up their papers with the red pen. Coming into this study, the Tyrones did not see me as an agent for change and increasing their writing abilities; they may have seen me as the enemy. Without ensuring academic success through praising the progress of their writing, I would have continued to increase the achievement gap between the participants and my more successful writers. I engaged them in a more positive approach to teaching writing that resulted in a more positive classroom environment where they exceled without the fear of failure.

Prior learned knowledge. It appeared that I needed to address their prior learned knowledge. This allowed me to intensify the relationships between the participants, their peers, and me because I made sure that it was permissible for them to include examples from
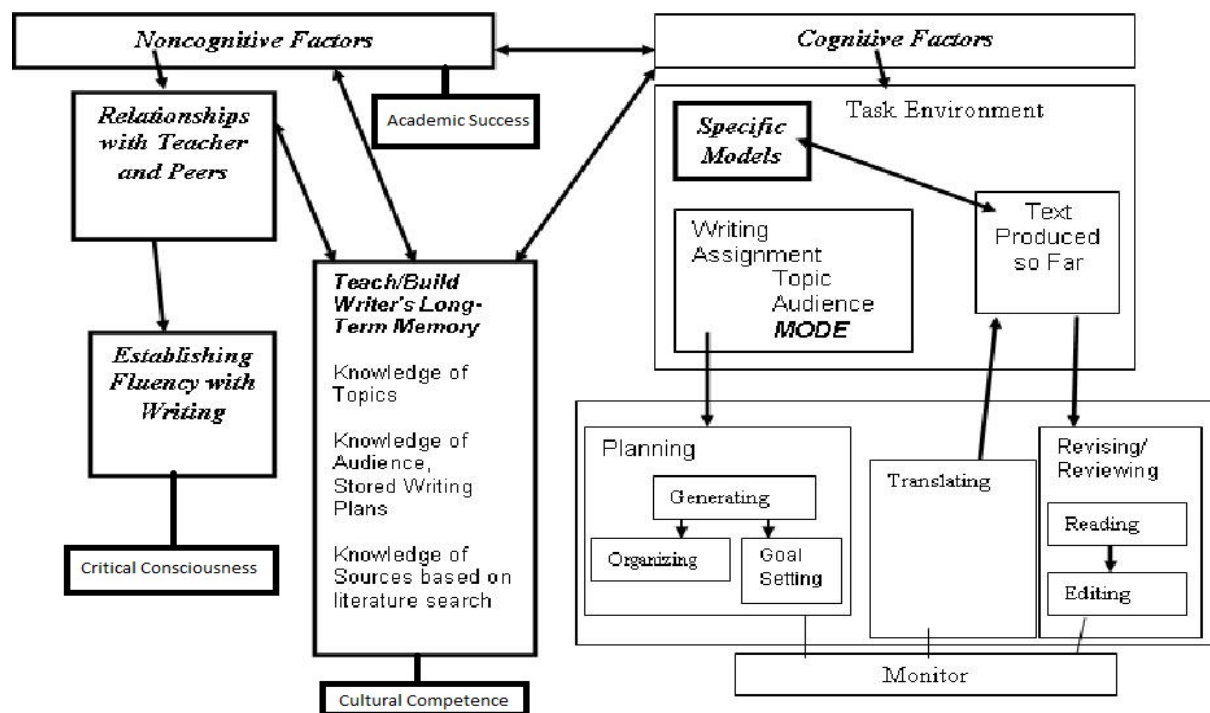
Figure 8. Relational Writing Model

their culture when trying to establish concrete details within their compositions. Because I embraced and encouraged their peers to embrace the Tyrones' cultures by discouraging frowns or chidings about ideas that may not have been socially or academically acceptable, I perpetuated stronger relationships within the classroom community. The Tyrones were not made to feel like their reasoning was invalid or wrong. We, as the classroom community, did not judge or laugh at responses when the Tyrones had an "outlandish" or school-inappropriate statement; instead, as a classroom community, we inquired about such renderings from the Tyrones. Orchestrating an inclusive environment allowed me to further engage the participants in academic success because the beliefs they expressed from their prior learned knowledge was accepted by their peers.

Relevant text/discussion. Relevant text/discussion was another component I implemented in enhancing or creating prior learned knowledge because these were the examples from which the Tyrones drew in order to implement concrete examples into their compositions and made connections with the task environment in the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model. Understanding the correlation between reading and writing, the Tyrones did not have an extensive background in reading text or having relevant discussions about current topics when making connections to the assigned writing assignments. I gave the participants the opportunity to create connections so that they had background knowledge to tap into when they got to the writing process. I made sure that the reading teacher on my team and I infused text into the curriculum that the participants could make connections to from their lives in order to engage them in writing before we tried to implement required text. Enhancing their background knowledge prepared them to make connections in their writing and oral discussions for required texts encountered throughout the year.

Additionally, relevant/text discussions added to their academic success because other students experienced literacy from the Tyrones' viewpoints. By introducing text that was significant to the Tyrones, other students in the classroom learned of a culture that was perhaps different from theirs. Instead of treating the Tyrones like outcasts, other students were encouraged to open their minds to the possibilities of other aspects of society while the Tyrones witnessed a teacher who "valued their

skills and channeled them into academic success" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160).

Flower and Hayes (1981) assumed that writers have long-term memories. However, they do not take into account that not all writers share the same background. For instance, if I had assigned the Tyrones, early on in the year, to write about a time when they went on a vacation, I would have assigned at least one of them a topic that they probably knew nothing about. Like many educators, Flower and Hayes did not take into consideration that not all writers came to the classroom equipped with the same knowledge. I generated or created these experiences through quick write, free write, or relevant text selection/class discussion. As Tatum (2008) pointed out, many educators are focused on finding strategies and instruction that will help African-American males learn rather than trying to understand and infuse their culture into the curriculum. An infusion of their culture into the curriculum led to class discussions and more comprehension of subjects that my participants would be asked to elaborate upon in their writing assessments. By building their background knowledge and listening to their plights, their stories, I educated them. I chose to work with what they had and built upon it to actively engage them in literacy and their education (Tatum, 2008). I learned early on that I could not make any assumptions when it came to the Tyrones; they were not me, and they did not learn like the rest of us in class. I changed my paradigm about teaching writing in order to understand what supports they needed in order to be successful. The relationships that we built helped them to come out of an academic rut and to see that they could achieve academically.

Cultural Competence

Ladson-Billings (1995) defined cultural competence as "a way for students to maintain cultural integrity" while in the learning environment (p. 160). I included cultural competence within the curriculum through the writing exercises that I assigned.

 Quick writes. The long-term memory (knowledge of the audience, topic, and different writing plans) in the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model went beyond experiences with the Tyrones because these young men did not have a sound writing background like other novice writers. I implemented quick writes early

into their writing instruction. Flower and Hayes believed that writers begin in the task environment; yet, my participants did not even move to the task environment because they had little conceptualization of writing. I had them begin writing in increments of time in order to get into the habit of writing. This writing was unstructured and used for the purpose of increasing paragraph and page length. Because this exercise was designed to increase paragraph and page length, I left the writing topics in the hands of the students. For instance, Tyrone II writing about the worst teacher who we ever had, "even you Ms. Stormer, who was your worst teacher ever?" As students wrote about their worst teacher (with the parameters of no names or grade levels but with meaningful description), many students expressed how some teachers did not understand them because of their cultures to include clothing choices, learning styles, and friendships; they felt like teachers punished them for it (see Figure 9).

When he read this aloud, it dawned upon me that he was quoting the late rapper, Notorious B.I.G. Upon this realization, I brought the song he referenced (of course the edited version) into the next class period to scaffold text annotation. I maintained his cultural integrity by utilizing the culture as a vehicle for learning which increased his academic success because he was the expert in these song lyrics; he ultimately led the lesson.

Free writes. I engaged participants in free writes. I gave them the opportunity to write freely without worrying about structure; however, I assigned more of the writing prompts. So much of their previous writing instruction focused on the five paragraph essay, grammar, mechanics, and usage that they did not understand that the content was an important part of writing. These exercises allowed them to write with raw emotion to see their ideas freely written on paper. For example, I asked students to respond to, "Does your clique define you, or do you help to define your clique?" This was a leading way to ask if our cultures or shared experiences define us and to garner more conversations about society's similarities rather than differences. Students went through their journals to compare and contrast their similarities and differences as we continued the discussion of the topic while teaching the importance and the different techniques that writers use to convey content in their writing.
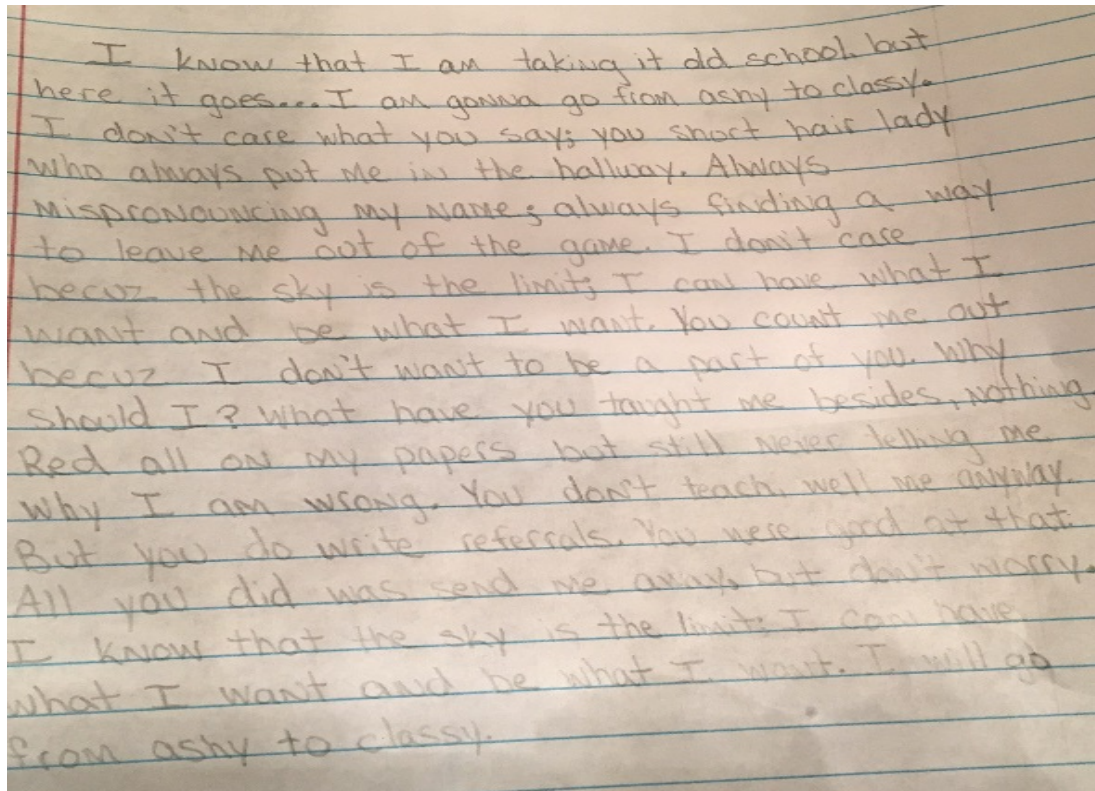
I know that I am taking it old school but here it goes... I am gonna go from ashy to classy. I don't care what you say; you short hair lady who always put me in the hallway. Always mispronouncing my name; always finding a way to leave me out of the game. I don't care becuz the sky is the limit; I can have what I want and be what I want. You count me out becuz I don't want to be a part of you. Why should I? What have you taught me besides, nothing. Red all on my papers but still never telling me why I am wrong. You don't teach well me anyway. But you do write referrals. You were good at that. All you did was send me away, but don't worry. I know that the sky is the limit; I can have what I want and be what I want. I will go from ashy to classy.

Figure 9. Ashy to classy. A writing exercise submitted by the participant that enabled maintaining cultural integrity.

Critical Consciousness

Ladson-Billings (1995) defined critical consciousness as a critique of the cultural norms and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities. I developed students' critical consciousness through their reflection after they began writing with fluency.

Writing fluency. After students wrote with length and content, I built their writing fluency wherein the participants began to think about structuring their writing. Structure referred to the shape in which the composition forms. Flower and Hayes (1981) dove straight into the task environment when looking at the writing process of their participants. They, again, assumed that these writers had a background in composition. For instance, they assume that these writers understood the task, developed a hierarchy of goals, and wrote to relate to their audience. Their assumptions were not true of the participants in this study. If I would have tried to force the participants into writing structured texts before relationships and prior learned knowledge were established, they would have shut down. Making them write with structure

without any foundation would have regressed them to their previous years of writing instruction when they felt like teachers taught them nothing but expected them to compose with accuracy. Their defeated attitudes about themselves as writers and writing being tedious would have effervesced, and they would have quit.

However, in allowing the Tyrones to develop their writing fluency, I, increments, reassured them of their abilities and made sure to give them praise. As they built their confidence and began writing multi-paragraphs, I asked them if this ability to write was an untapped skill because they were removed from class because of their behaviors or if teachers made school writing curriculum easy for them out of pity? I engaged them in thinking critically about the institution of school and how it perpetuated their successes and failures as Black males.

I re-conceptualized the Flower and Hayes (1981) Writing Model to include the tenets of CRP, academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. This re-conceptualization

enabled me to eventually engage the Tyrones in the cognitive processes of writing.

Conclusion

The results indicated the Tyrones were capable of writing within the confines of the school curriculum, regardless of their unchanged perception of themselves as writers in an academic setting. Their perceptions of not seeing themselves as school writers could be attributed to the fact that for their entire academic careers, they had been cast in the role of the struggling learner who was socially promoted out of good behavior or the future criminal who had nothing to offer to the classroom by extension, society. My paradigm shift to stop assuming that I knew how to best teach these learners and begin to inquire into their perceptions of the writing that occurred in my class enabled me to see that the Tyrones can write with teachers who have a culturally relevant disposition.

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