Finding ‘A Heart to Continue:’ A study of constructive-developmental diversity and academic literacy learning experiences in the adult English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classroom

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Finding ‘A Heart to Continue:’

A Study of Constructive-Developmental Diversity and Academic Literacy Learning Experiences in the Adult English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) Classroom

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOPIC

When I began teaching English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) to adult immigrants and refugees in a community-based Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, I was committed to implementing the best teaching practices I had just learned in my MA ESL classes. I applied adult learning principles by designing lessons informed by the challenges of my learners’ lives, created learner-centered activities, ensuring choice and active roles in learning, and looked for ways to accommodate and include the multiple language levels and cultural backgrounds in my class.

Sometimes, however, I found myself stumped at gaps between what I asked learners to do and what they were able to do – gaps that didn’t appear directly connected to language level or cultural background. After weeks of occasional musings on learners’ sometimes unexpected responses to activities with a friend steeped in adult developmental theory, she visited my learning center, where a group of adult refugee learners were studying the words *before* and *after* with a graphic of a one-week, Monday through Sunday calendar. All learners were able to answer, “What day comes before Tuesday?” and “What day comes after Friday?” They could see it on their graphic. However, when asked, “What day comes after Sunday?” about a third of the class looked up blankly. “To a concrete thinker,” my friend explained, “there is literally nothing after Sunday.”

This was the first time I realized that something other than language or culture was influencing how adult ESOL learners made sense of what I asked them to do in the classroom. I hadn’t, in my adult ESL training or anywhere else, encountered the idea that adults make sense of the world in qualitatively distinct ways, or that asking a question about a graphic could make
perfect sense to one learner and beguile another. Compelled to understand how developmental differences might shape how my learners understood classroom experiences, I became a student of Kegan’s Constructive-developmental Theory (CDT), which demonstrates that contrary to the conventional notion that development flat-lines around age 18, cognitive, emotional, and inter/intra-personal growth can continue through adulthood (Kegan 1982, 1994). The stage, or developmental perspective, from which an adult constructs meaning has a coherent logic of its own with both strengths and limitations, and mediates how a learner makes sense of experience, including learning experiences. Adults, I learned, can experience the same curriculum and activities in qualitatively different ways, depending on their developmental perspective (Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan et al., 2001). I began to question, whether I meeting learners where they were at, not only linguistically and culturally, but developmentally? Or was I, as Drago-Severson (2004) put it, “unknowingly attuned to one way of knowing while neglecting others?” (p. 15).

I carried this question with me as my sphere of teaching widened to include pre-college ESOL writing. Rooted in my MA ESL applied linguistic training, I conceptualized ESOL writing as a form of language learning. I taught language structure, syntax, and academic language conventions in the context of paragraph writing. I soon discovered, however, that just as challenging as writing grammatical sentences, for many students, was weaving them together into a coherent paragraph with a main idea, supporting ideas and relevant details. A determined female Somali student toward the end of a semester described her learning journey this way: “Before, I was just writing. Sentence, sentence, sentence! Just writing, no thinking. Now, I know. I must think. The sentences,” she explained, waiving her arm to illustrate, “they must connect. Now I know. They must connect.”
My student described her writing learning not in terms of the grammar I had taught, but as a change in *how she was thinking*. Her reflection reminded me of Kegan’s (1982) CDT, which describes connecting ideas as a *developmental capacity* that some learners might struggle with more than others, depending on how they construct meaning.

A few years later, after formally studying Kegan’s CDT within my doctoral program, I conducted a qualitative study examining how developmental perspectives mediated academic literacy learning of six pre-college ABE learners (Ouellette-Schramm, 2015). This study found learners’ successes and struggles with summarizing an article consistent with what might be predicted by Kegan’s CDT. Learners with more concrete ways of making meaning – the developmental perspective from which my friend suggested “there was literally nothing before Monday” on the calendar graphic – struggled with abstract tasks such as identifying the main idea in passages, and were more likely to mistake facts for main ideas. In contrast, one learner who had developed an abstract meaning-making capacity was more successful with the same abstract task, improved more quickly, and could take a more robust perspective on her own learning. While this study confirmed my hunches, it also raised questions, including what learners’ successes and challenges looked like from their own developmental perspectives, and how to best support and challenge them in developing academic literacy skills.

These experiences have led to this dissertation, which explores how ABE/ESOL learners describe their academic literacy learning experiences - particularly through the lens of summarizing, an academic literacy skill required for success with the General Education Diploma (GED) test and post-secondary education - and how understanding their constructive-developmental perspectives can help educators be more effective with developmentally diverse learners building academic literacy skills.
Statement of the Problem

Despite my student’s success with understanding that “the sentences must connect” over the semester I worked with her, I don’t know whether she was successful in her own goal, to be accepted into, and eventually graduate from, an Associate Degree in Nursing program. According to the assistant academic dean of the institution, (K. Mills, personal communication, March 26, 2014), more than half of the learners who passed through the developmental writing class that I taught were either never admitted to a degree program, or were admitted but failed out during the first semester. This reflects a larger national trend in developmental, or remedial, education within post-secondary institutions, in which fewer than 25% of students who take a developmental class will ever go on to pass a credit-bearing class, much less obtain a credential (Bailey & Cho, 2010). Many ABE/ESOL learners who transition to post-secondary education, upon taking a post-admission standardized placement test, are required to take developmental classes (Pimentel, 2013).

To better prepare ABE/ESOL learners for post-secondary education without needing remediation, federal College and Career Readiness (CCRS) standards were recently published to guide programs across states to more closely align curriculum and instruction with the expectations of colleges and workplaces within a knowledge economy (Pimentel, 2013). The CCRS framework emphasizes academic reading, writing, and language skills, such as identifying an author’s purpose, main idea, intent, and line of reasoning, and communicating complex concepts using abstract language. This focus on academic reading and writing also appears in the new 2014 GED test that many ABE/ESOL learners aim to pass, which requires making logical, cohesive arguments with claims supported by evidence (GED Testing Service, 2013). More and
more, ABE learners need to learn not only “basic skills” but complex academic literacy skills to reach GED and post-secondary goals.

As ABE/ESOL programs are increasingly focused on teaching academic literacy skills, and more importantly, ABE/ESOL learners increasingly need to develop these skills to reach GED and post-secondary goals, understanding how these learners experience academic literacy learning, and how those experiences are differently mediated through their distinct constructive-developmental perspectives, will help educators become more equally attuned to the different developmental perspectives and corresponding learning needs likely represented in their classrooms.

**Research Questions**

The overarching question this study aimed to answer was, How do ABE/ESOL learners describe academic literacy learning experiences in a college and career preparation reading and writing class, and how can understanding their constructive-developmental perspectives help educators more effectively support developmentally diverse learners?

This overarching question is broken down into the following specific questions, which guided this study:

1. What constructive-developmental perspectives do ABE/ESOL learners in a college and career preparation class bring to their academic literacy learning experiences?
2. How do they describe their academic literacy learning experiences including motivation, success and challenge in the college and career preparation class?
3. How do they experience academic literacy skill learning in the class, especially in a recent summarizing unit?
4. How do learners’ academic literacy learning experiences (Q2-3) relate to their constructive-developmental perspectives (Q1), including important similarities of experience from similar perspectives, and important differences from different perspectives?

**Brief Definition of Terms**

In its broadest sense, *academic literacy* refers not only to the traditional literacy definition of reading and writing, but to “the complex set of skills” (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002) increasingly necessary for success in academic contexts, including digital literacy, cultural literacy, and media literacy (Blue, 2010b). In this dissertation, which focuses on academic literacy experiences in a college preparation reading and writing class, the term academic literacy refers to the subset of reading and writing skills needed to succeed in academic contexts.

The theoretical framework of this dissertation is Robert Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory (CDT), which will be elaborated on in chapter two. In brief, CDT comes from the Western tradition of developmental psychology and is among the neo-Piagetian theories that extend through adulthood the principles of Jean Piaget’s (1952, 1972) developmental stages in childhood. It takes the constructivist view that we actively construct, rather than merely passively receive, meaning from our experiences; also, that the ways in which we construct meaning *develop* in the direction of greater complexity over time. While Piaget’s developmental stages correspond to age ranges in childhood, adult constructive-developmental stages are only very loosely associated with age, as it is the types of challenges and supports in a person’s life, and the continuity thereof, that contribute to development, rather than age or phase of life.
Finally, while the term *constructive-development*al is used throughout this dissertation to refer to Kegan’s (1982, 1994) and related theories, a more general use of the word *developmental* also refers to one of Kucer’s (2014) dimensions of academic literacy. In the Dimensions of Academic Literacy section of the literature review, the term *developmental* refers to the progression of literacy skills across linguistic, socio-cultural, and cognitive domains, and *cognitive-development*al refers to the development of cognitive skills that impact literacy skills.
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I present an overview of the literature surrounding academic literacy learning. Reflecting my view of learning as a complex phenomenon, I employ Kucer’s (2014) view of literacy, including the linguistic, socio-cultural, cognitive, and developmental. I conclude this section with an overview of adult ESOL and ABE issues, and review literature to date focused on adult ESOL academic writing learning experiences.

Because I am examining adult ESOL academic literacy learning experiences through the lens of Kegan’s constructive-developmental theory (CDT) of adult development, I then introduce CDT and related theories, and review applications to adult learning experiences, including those of college writers and ABE/ESOL learners.

Dimensions of Academic Literacy

The concept of academic literacy has been a theme in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for many years, but has now become a field in its own right (Blue, 2010a). Related to academic literacy is academic language, which refers not only to reading and writing, but oral academic language skills (Zwiers, 2008). Written language extends from oral language, both historically, and in each individual’s language development process. Thus, as Rubin (1987) states, “No one is a native speaker of writing” (p. 3). The primacy of oral over written language is also reflected in the emphasis on oral skills in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories (Polio, 2014). Since written language has evolved to serve distinct purposes from oral language, written and oral language have distinct internal features, social functions, and processing demands, as can be explicated through the four dimensions of literacy learning noted above (Kucer, 2014).
Linguistic Dimensions of Academic Literacy

Linguistic views of literacy emphasize language and textual aspects of reading and writing (Kucer, 2014). Linguistic properties of text vary systematically depending on the purpose it is being used for, or its *language function* (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Schleppegrell, 2004). Written language has different functions, and therefore features, than oral language (Cummins, 1979; Kucer, 2014; Schleppegrell, 2004). Kucer (2014) states that while oral language is immediate, occurs in real time, and takes place person-to-person, written language is delayed, occurs over space and time, and with a removed and often impersonal audience. He explains that oral language is linear and controlled by the speaker, whereas written language is recursive and is controlled by the reader. Both oral and written discourse, he elaborates, can be planned or unplanned, which impacts their respective internal features. Written language, while diverse across regions and disciplines, is generally planned, creating more opportunities for reflection and revision (Kucer, 2014).

While academic language has existed for hundreds of years (Zwiers, 2008), it became recognized as a linguistically distinct *language variety*, a form of language that develops in a community of language users, when bilingualism researcher Jim Cummins (1979) distinguished *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS) from *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP). Cummins (1979) describes BICS as social, informal and easier to acquire, while CALP is “strongly related to overall cognitive and academic skills” (p.198) and includes being able to relate complex ideas and information through language. Cummins argues that learners proficient in CALP in their first language can more quickly and successfully acquire CALP in a second language. Kucer (2014) similarly states that in academic language, linguistic and cognitive complexities are closely intertwined; Zwiers (2008) likewise describes academic language as “a
set of words, grammar, and organizational strategies used to describe complex ideas, higher-order thinking processes, and abstract concepts” (p.20).

Academic text contains distinct characteristics (Cummins, 1979; Kucer 2014; Schleppegrell, 2004) that reflect its primary language function, to understand and communicate abstraction (Fang, 2008, 2012; Zwiers, 2008). Zwiers (2008) explains that academic text generally demands explicitness, or stating and defining concepts potentially unfamiliar to a removed audience. It also emphasizes logic and reason rather than feelings and opinions to create a formal register of authority, created by linguistic features described below, and requires the writer to support claims with evidence.

To accomplish its unique purposes, academic text is marked with high technicality, expressed in discipline-specific vocabulary (Fang, 2008). Zwiers (2008) states that academic texts are also replete with “often untaught, yet integral words that hold complex ideas together” (p. 22), e.g., connectives such as therefore and whereas; prepositions such as within and behind; and pronouns such as each other and themselves. They also include cross-disciplinary words, or words that appear in academic texts across domains, used to convey complex thought including verbs such as maintain, differ, and outweigh; nouns such as consequence and ramifications; and adjectives such as inevitable. Figurative expressions such as boils down to and crux of the matter are also used to express academic thought.

Academic grammar, or syntax, combines words into grammatical structures suitable for conveying complexity and abstraction (Zwiers, 2008). Common features of academic syntax include long sentences with multiple clauses; passive voice, where the subject, or agent of an action is not explicitly named; and nominalizations, or condensing sometimes lengthy verbs/verb
phrases or adjectives/adjective phrases into a single abstract noun (Schleppegrell, 2004; Zwiers, 2008). All of these syntactic features contribute to the abstract nature of academic text (Fang, 2008; Zwiers, 2008).

Academic texts are also distinct in their organizational, or rhetorical, structures, depending on genre and function. Swales (1990) defines genre as a class of communication events with common features, such as stories, historical accounts, or essays (Zwiers, 2008). Martin (1989), describing genre as “how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them” (p. 250) distinguishes three academic writing genres as personal, reporting on first-hand experience; factual, presenting factual information; and analytical, investigating and evaluating information. Advanced literacy tasks are primarily factual and analytical (Schleppegrell, 2004). These expository genres contain “complex organizational and cognitive demands that differ from narrative writing,” requiring students to learn “how information is organized, connected, and categorized” (Zwiers 2008, p. 199). Zwiers (2008) states that while narrative writing is temporal, or time-ordered, in structure, much expository writing is based on presenting a main point and supporting it with evidence, requiring the ability to analyze, explain, and show relationships between concepts, as well as “to establish logical ordinate and subordinate categories of information, which are often abstract in nature” (p. 199).

A common analytic genre in academic contexts and a “gatekeeping milestone” in schools is the expository essay (Schleppegrell, 2004). In expository essays, students are expected to present a thesis supported with examples and evidence (Martin, 1989; Shleppegrell, 2004). Supporting ideas with examples also requires a clear use of transition signals between ideas (Schleppegrell, 2004). Crowhurst (1980) states that expository essay writing is both linguistically and cognitively demanding, requiring students to explain the “logical interrelationship of
propositions” (p. 230). Students are also expected to present “reasoned, concrete, and developed presentations of their points of view” (Gada 1995, Analytical Writing Placement Examination: Design and Expectations, para. 5) which requires synthesizing the writings of others.

Because expository essay writing requires supporting claims with information others have written (Swales & Feak, 2012), summary writing can be considered a sub-skill of essay writing. While summarizing is sometimes regarded as a “basic” task (Kissner, 2006; Van Duzer, et al., 2003), it contains complex cognitive and linguistic demands of its own (Guido & Colwell, 1987). Summary writing requires understanding the text being summarized (Swales & Feak, 2012), distinguishing key ideas from supporting or unimportant ideas, and constructing logical connections between those key and supporting ideas (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011). This in turn requires recognizing how primary and subordinate ideas are organized within a text (Leki, 1998; Zwiers, 2008). Syntactically, summarizing requires constructing complex sentences with subordinate clauses with appropriate “reporting” or “belief” verbs (Hinkel, 2004), e.g., “The article states/notes/observes that...”. It requires understanding and applying the academic writing convention of using the simple present tense (Hinkel, 2004; Leki, 1998). To avoid plagiarism, it also demands carefully using synonyms (Swales & Feak, 2012) and re-casting sentences into new grammatical structures (Kissner, 2006).

Learners who have grown up with Standard English, or the variety of English spoken by the mainstream majority culture, have an advantage in acquiring academic literacy skills such as essay and summary writing in English; those who grew up with a language other than English (Gibbons, 2009; Swales & Feak, 2003, 2012), or a nonstandard English variety (Schleppegrell, 2004; Zwiers, 2008) need to explicitly develop academic literacy and language skills to successfully navigate academic English texts. Schleppegrell (2004) also points out that the
language of school reflects the social context of school, which some learners’ backgrounds have made them more familiar with than others, as explored in the following sociocultural dimension of academic literacy.

**Sociocultural Dimensions of Academic Literacy**

Sociocultural views on literacy emerged in response to previous “autonomous models” that had not accounted for the influence of social and political contexts (Gee, 1990). The sociocultural dimension of literacy is concerned with the ways it is socially and culturally constructed, especially as connected to group identity and power (Kucer, 2014). Heath (1982) states that literacy events, or social events in which literacy plays a substantive role, are governed by the rules of the groups in which they occur. Gee (1990, 2012) distinguishes *Discourse*, with an upper-case D, referring to the rules of language use that must be followed to be considered a member of a particular social group, including “not only language itself, but also ways of behaving, thinking and being” (Kucer, 2014), from *discourse*, with a lower-case d, referring to the language patterns that simply make sense to a particular group. Kucer (2014) states that it is Discourse, including the ways in which Discourse communities distribute power, that the socio-cultural perspective on literacy is primarily concerned with.

Kucer (2014) states that Discourse communities, or groups of people who distribute power based on mastery of the language patterns it uses (Davies, 2005), may be cultural, socioeconomic, familial, religious, educational or other, and individuals may belong to more than one Discourse community (Kucer, 2014). Gee (1990) states that learners *acquire* their first Discourse, but must *learn* their second. Sociolinguists maintain that learners who acquired literacy use patterns in Discourse communities outside of the majority culture, including ESOL
learners, need to explicitly learn the rules of academic Discourse communities in order to succeed in them (Bartholomae, 1985; Gee, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004).

When learners from diverse communities enter academic Discourse communities, where valued patterns of language use generally reflect discourse patterns of the majority culture, they are often unprepared for the literacy demands they will encounter, and teachers may be unaware that and how the Discourse demands they are making differ from a learner’s first Discourse (Kucer, 2014). Zwiers (2008) points out that many diverse students encounter language and literacy activities characterized by organizational structures and rules that are different from and sometimes in direct conflict with the skills and values they’ve grown up with. Heath (1983) conducted a landmark study on home and school discourse patterns within three communities in the southeastern United States: Maintown, where both European Americans and African Americans resided and self-defined as “mainstream”; Roadville, a European-American mill community; and Trackton, an African-American mill community. She found that to a large extent, the literacy patterns in the schools of Maintown reflected children’s home literacy practices, where they were “expected to develop habits reflecting their membership in a ‘literate society’” (p. 51). These children came to school already practiced in the literacy expectations they would encounter, and were more successful. The children in Roadville grew up with literacy practices that in some ways matched literacy norms in schools. At home, there was a focus on reading books, but unlike the Maintown children, Roadville children were encouraged to listen rather than respond to text. Roadville children were initially successful in school, but began to fall behind around third grade, when the demands of responding to text increase. Heath found that the Trackton children’s home literacy practices were most unlike literacy practices in schools. Reading, on the relatively rare occasions that it occurred, was a social event. The ability
to tell stories was more valued than reading, and the stories children learned to construct followed different patterns than stories in schools. Trackton children learned to tell stories by building a context, engaging their audience, and maintaining the floor. While Trackton children were asked to create analogies to texts, they were not called upon to cite examples in texts to make comparisons. When Trackton children encountered the school demands of answering “what” questions and citing evidence in texts, they often failed. Scollon and Scollon (1981) likewise found cultural conflicts between the discourse demands of school and home in their work with Athabaskan Native Americans in Northern Canada and Alaska, who are taught not to express their views to adults, but to observe and learn from them. The literacy lesson expectations they encountered in school, to express their knowledge and views, ran counter to the rules in their original Discourse communities. Kucer (2014) explains, “In a sense, these children cannot successfully participate in such lessons unless they take on norms and values that are in direct conflict with their own, their culture’s” (p. 247).

Academic Discourse demands can be seen in all academic writing genres including essay and summary. Both genres require learners to “adopt the word-, sentence-, and rhetorical-level conventions of writing” in order to “realize” the values of an academic context (Schleppegrell, 2004). The essay is a western expository tradition (Schleppegrell, 2004) that values a western, analytic approach to critical thinking (Brookfield, 2012) and employs modes of expression that are subtle, detached, and authoritative (Zwiers, 2008). In his chapter, “Inventing the University,” David Bartholomae (1985) states,

Much of the written work that students do is test-taking, report, or summary – work that places them outside of the official discourse of the academic community, where they are expected to admire and report on what we do, rather than inside that discourse, where
they can do its work and participate in a common enterprise (p.144).

While socio-cultural theorists argue that the discourse structures of oral language are equally complex as written discourse and caution against interpreting failure to comprehend linguistic complexity as cognitive in nature (Gee, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004), cognitive views of literacy emphasize the relationship between the complex linguistic and cognitive demands of academic texts.

**Cognitive Dimensions of Academic Literacy**

Kucer (2014) states that because oral and written language events take place in different situations, situational and real-time, respectively, they make distinct cognitive processing demands. Oral language is usually situated “in here-and-now situations,” takes place person-to-person, and is immediate, whereas writing takes place over time, often for a distant audience, and with a delay between the time a written piece is composed and read (Kucer, 2014). Attention to the cognitive processes of academic literacy tasks entered the scene in the 1980s, emphasizing the mental processes used to construct meaning in reading and writing. Cognitive process models also attend to behavioral differences between more and less proficient readers and writers (Kucer, 2014).

Cognitive process theories of writing replaced previous product models (Best, 1995) that had described what writers produced, rather than how. Flower and Hayes (1981) introduced a seminal cognitive process writing model that continues to be researched and refined today (Becker, 2006; Hayes, 2012; Moran & Soiferman, 2010). In this model, they described the writing process as “cognitive actions in a hierarchical format” that reflect the recursive nature of writing. By understanding the steps, thinking patterns, and decisions that occur throughout the
writing process, they aimed to help struggling writers to develop strategies used by stronger writers (Becker, 2006; Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Flower and Hayes (1981) maintain that the processes of writing are directed by the writer’s goals, which may evolve and change through the course of writing. Their model includes the elements of task environment, long-term memory, and writing processes. They describe the task environment as “all of those things outside the writer’s skin, starting with the rhetorical problem or assignment and eventually including the growing text itself” (p. 369), and state that long-term memory is where the writer has stored information about the topic, audience, and writing plans. The writing processes in this model include planning, which involve the sub-processes of goal-setting and organizing ideas; translating, or putting ideas into writing; and reviewing, including the sub-processes of evaluating and revising. Later versions of that evolving model include motivation, the role of long term and working memory, and time spent writing and revising (Hayes, 2012). Regarding the first, Hayes (2012) now argues that motivation impacts willingness to engage in writing, as well as whether and for how long adults write, and to what extent they attend to quality.

Cognitive process-based models, in making thinking processes during writing explicit, create a framework for comparing the thinking processes of struggling and skilled writers (Kucer, 2014). While strong writers conceptualize writing as recursive and approach revision globally, attending to overall organization, struggling writers tend to conceptualize revision as punitive (Becker, 2006). Struggling writers fail to engage in macro-processes, over-attending to surface-level issues such as such as spelling and grammar (Beal, 1993; Hayes, 2012; Kucer, 2014). Moreover, novice writers struggle to detect both surface and global level errors (Becker,
2006; Flower & Hayes, 1981) and are unable to categorize problems into meaningful patterns (Becker, 2006; Hayes & Flower, 1986).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) distinguish the “knowledge telling” of less skilled writers from the “knowledge transforming” of skilled writers. While the knowledge-transforming processes of skilled writers involve actively revising thoughts and considering whether what they have written is what they want to say, the “knowledge-telling” or “associative writing” (Kellogg, 2008) of struggling writers consists of readily available knowledge presented in the order that the writer thinks of it. This process, they explain, extends naturally from oral conversation, and requires no goal-setting or planning.

Differences between skilled and unskilled writers are similar to those of skilled and unskilled readers. Kintsch (1989) explains that among skilled adult readers, comprehension simultaneously involves micro-processes such as deriving meaning from words and syntax, or word order patterns; middle-level coherence processes such as connecting pronouns to their referents; and higher level macro-processes such as forming hypotheses about what is or isn’t important. She describes lower skilled readers as processing text line by line rather than globally, and not recognizing contradictions or hierarchical organization of texts while reading.

While cognitive models of academic literacy explore the processes of skilled reading and writing and corresponding behaviors, the developmental domain of literacy describes how these processes develop over time, and look at the epistemological development underlying academic literacy development.

**Developmental Dimensions of Academic Literacy**

Kucer (2014) describes the developmental aspect of literacy as growth in the ability to effectively engage in the linguistic, sociocultural, and cognitive dimensions of literacy in an
increasing range of contexts. Linguistically, literacy development begins as children collect data about text structures, then generate, test, and modify rules, tacitly rather than consciously acquiring written language conventions. Academic literacy continues to develop as they encounter increasingly complex language structures throughout elementary, middle school, high school, and eventually college texts (Swierzbin, 2014). From a sociocultural perspective, literacy development involves an individual child acquiring the written Discourse rules of the social group (Halliday, 1994; Kucer, 2014). Cognitive dimensions of literacy development focus on growth in mental processes involved in constructing text (Kucer, 2014).

Kucer (1983) states that the cognitive development of literacy is not linear, but recursive, and continues in a “to-and-fro” manner which continues throughout adulthood, even among more proficient language users. In his study of struggling college writers, he found that while most students, over the course of a semester, improved in overall organization and ability to control coherence in essay writing, their performance varied significantly from one assignment to the next, and that content of the essay played a role in performance variation.

Zins and Hooper (2012) frame capacities such as organization and coherence in writing as cognitive capacities, arguing that overall cognitive development underpins and is implicated in theories of writing development, and advocate making that connection explicit. They describe how formal writing instruction begins during school-age years of six to twelve, when logic emerges and short-term memory increases to being able to hold three or four chunks of information at a time. During adolescence, frontal lobe development contributes to an increasing ability to reason abstractly, and writing skills such as planning, goal-setting and problem solving expand. At this point, they explain, it becomes possible to engage in the recursive components of the writing process described in the Flower and Hayes’ (1981) cognitive process model of
writing. Similarly, Berninger and Chanquoy (2012) state that “true cognitive writing” emerges at the same time as *concrete-operational* thought, a stage in child development where it becomes possible to link two concrete dimensions at one time. Belinda Poulsen (1998), in her dissertation on the relationship between persuasive writing and Piagetian developmental reasoning ability, similarly states that among third, fourth, and fifth-grade students, developmental stage directly correlates with children’s ability to write persuasively. Furthermore, children at higher developmental levels improved after instruction in persuasive writing, while those at lower developmental levels did not. Interestingly, whether English was the first or second language did not have an impact.

The development of the linguistic, socio-cultural, and cognitive aspects of academic literacy are complex, even in a first language. When developing academic literacy in a second language, the variables increase, and complexities multiply.

**Second Language Academic Literacy Learning**

Second language, or L2 reading and writing research have both overlapped with first language, or L1 research, and with Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories (Koda, 2014). While some of the challenges that L2 readers and writers face are unique to second language learning, struggling L2 readers and writers appear to have much in common with struggling L1 readers and writers.

Koda (2014) states that on the linguistic level, a core issue of L2 reading is the *transfer* of L1 to L2. Two major hypotheses of L1 to L2 transfer include *script-dependent theory* and *central processing theory* (Gholamain & Geva, 1999). Script-dependent theory maintains that decoding skills are attained in some languages more quickly than others because of greater and lesser
degrees of regularity in sound-symbol correspondence. Central processing theory explains that underlying cognitive factors such as working memory are primarily responsible for differences in L2 reading achievement and abilities. Koda (2014) states that central processing theory is consistent with and rooted in Cummins’ (1979) *common underlying proficiency* theory which states that cognitive capacities underlie academic literacy capacities and account for differences in learner proficiencies, noting that reading abilities among bilingual school-age children are similar in L1 and L2 (Cummins, 1979, 1991). Kruidenier et al. (2010) similarly note that many struggling adult ESOL readers who had difficulty integrating and synthesizing information from complex texts also tested at lower reading levels in their L1.

Polio (2014) and Carson (2001) state that to date, research in L2 writing has not substantively intersected with SLA theories, which traditionally describe oral language acquisition. Much L2 writing research, rather, has been rooted in L1 composition research (Leki, 1996; Polio, 2014). Polio explains that while there are thorough models of the L1 writing process, particularly the Hayes and Flower (1980) model explaining the recursive processes of planning, text generation, and revision, L2 writing process models have not been comprehensive. Existing models focus on uses of L1 and L2 during the stages of the writing process. Both Zimmerman (2000) and Wang and Wen (2002) have proposed models of L2 process writing in which L2 writers use L1 during planning and organizing, but L2 in text generation and revision. Zimmerman’s model also suggests that L2 proficiency may need to have reached a critical level before L2 texts will be impacted by planning.

Leki (1996) states that L2 writing process research suggests that among ESOL learners, experience with writing impacts writing processes more than language background. Cumming’s (1989) research has shown that writing processes of inexperienced English Language Learners
ELLs) writers more closely paralleled those of inexperienced native English speakers than those of more experienced ELL writers. Inexperienced writers, whether writing in English as a first or second language, demonstrated difficulty conceptualizing their writing and struggled to keep larger chunks of meaning in mind during the writing process. Likewise, experienced ELL writers had more in common with experienced native English speaker writers than with inexperienced ELL writers. Once learners attained intermediate or advanced levels of English, they used similar writing strategies as in their L1. Perhaps more strikingly, once learners had reached an intermediate level of English proficiency, while L2 language proficiency enhanced overall writing product quality, it no longer impacted their ability to engage in effective writing process strategies (Cumming, 1989). Leki (1996) elaborates,

> Expert L2 writers with less language proficiency are not impeded in their use of global cognitive strategies in writing by their lesser ability in language; by the same token, inexperienced writers with greater fluency in English are not able to tap into more effective writing processes by virtue of their greater proficiency in English (p.28).

Because cognitive capacity and working memory are limited, and some of this capacity is needed for functioning in a second language, higher functions of the writing process may not be accessible at full capacity for L2 writers (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Leki, 1996). Not surprisingly, L2 writers also struggle more than L1 writers with word choice (Leki, 1996).

Most research on adult second language reading and writing has been carried out with educated participants who are highly literate in their L1 (Bigelow & Watson, 2014; Mathews-Aydinli, 2008). Complexities in adult literacy learning, however, increase once again when
learners have limited formal education or are not highly literate in their L1, which is typical in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs.

**Factors Impacting ABE/ESOL Academic Literacy Learning**

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in the U.S. traditionally serve economically and educationally disadvantaged learners, many of whom are women, people of Color, immigrants and refugees (D’Amico, 2004). By definition, ABE learners test below a twelfth grade functioning level in reading, writing, or numeracy skills in English. Therefore, ABE learners may be American-born, 1.5 generation – people who immigrate before or during their early teens – or ELLs. According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly half of the approximately three million learners enrolled in federally funded adult education programs in 2006 were ELLs (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2006). Foreign-born ELLs in ABE have a wider range of educational backgrounds than U.S.-born ABE learners, with census data showing that one third of foreign-born adults generally, and two thirds of Mexican-born adults living in the U.S. have not completed high school (Kruidenier et al., 2010). Some adult ELLs enrolled in ABE programs may not have had access to formal education previously, and in their ESL classes may even be learning to hold a pencil for the first time (Parrish, 2004).

Kruidenier et al. (2010) state that adult learners with low levels of literacy in their L1 require more time to learn to write in English. They go on to explain that at lower levels, ELLs face typical L2 writing challenges connected to vocabulary and use of syntax, and at higher levels, face challenges related to L1 interference. Additionally, they explain, some higher level ELLs may struggle due to “insufficient exposure to more sophisticated language structures and from lack of practice in more cognitively demanding academic forms of English” (p. 29).
Bigelow and Watson (2014) suggest that limited L1 literacy and formal education have not only linguistic but cognitive implications. They state that Ong’s (1982) argument that literacy practices shape intellectual habits and ways of understanding the world continues to influence research today. Research rooted in Ong’s tradition, they explain, characterizes thought processes of oral cultures with a preference for pragmatic, operational thought, while viewing thought processes of highly literate societies as marked with abstractness, hierarchicalization, and hypothesis (Bigelow & Watson, 2014). Drawing on this line of research, Bigelow and Watson (2014) propose that adults with significantly limited educational and literacy backgrounds may not have had the necessary experiences to stimulate the levels of cognitive stage development characteristic of highly literate societies. They review Piaget’s (1952) stages of cognitive development model, including the sensori-motor (ages 0-2), preoperational (2-7), concrete operational (7-11) and formal operations (11-adult) stages, explaining that each stage is necessary and sequential. They conclude that “it may be instructionally useful to consider the extent to which non-literate people may be lodged in preoperational or early concrete operational thought” (p. 469).

Further challenging academic literacy learning among ABE ELLs is the challenge of persistence, or hours of attendance over a period of time, in educational programs (Comings, 2009), with about a quarter of learners leaving school before completing one educational level (Mellard et al., 2013). Factors impeding persistence among ABE learners fall into three categories including situational, such as transportation, family and work obligations; dispositional, such as attitudes, perceptions, and previous experiences with schooling; and institutional barriers such as program fees or class scheduling (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2003). Related to dispositional factors affecting persistence is
motivation, including intrinsic motivation within a particular learning situation or to achieve a longer-term goal; self-efficacy, or the belief in the ability to succeed in a particular learning context; learning goals; and task value, or the value one assigns to what they’re learning (Mellard et al., 2013). Comings (2009) reported that persistence in ABE programs was higher for learners with social support networks and personal goals, and lower with conflicting demands of daily life, lack of social support, and lack of motivation. Acquiring academic literacy skills, then, which takes longer than acquiring communicative literacy (Cummins, 1979), presents ABE ELLs with unique challenges.

While few studies have explored how a lack of formal education, degrees of L1 literacy, and persistence factors impact the academic literacy learning of ABE/ESOL learners, even fewer have focused on their academic literacy learning experiences.

**Adult ESOL Academic Literacy Learning Experiences**

Leki (2001), in her review of the limited literature on ESOL academic writing language experiences, comments on “how dim our students’ voices are in the literature about them” (p. 26). In one study, being labeled “ESL students” was found to have negatively impacted learners’ identities, as they saw themselves as functioning with a perceived language “handicap” (Harkalu, 1999). The subsequent few studies of academic literacy learning experiences focus on linguistic, socio-cultural, and affective challenges and supports.

Rahilly (2004) studied 21 ESOL learners enrolled in adult education and early college academic writing classes who wanted to improve their writing skills in English to further their career and academic goals. Most learners felt similarly about their writing experiences in English as they felt about their L1 writing learning experiences, including confidence level and perceived difficulty of tasks. Learners in this study also described the challenge of writing in the rhetorical
forms of English academic genres; half of the participants said that their schooling had not prepared them for the types of compositions now expected of them. In particular, several learners described the difficulty of organizing ideas in an essay.

Themes emerging from Booker’s (2012) phenomenological study of Hispanic female students’ experiences of college composition included frustration in writing courses, desire to succeed in prospective careers, teacher influence, importance of family and instructors for emotional support and confidence-building, and the need to culturally assimilate while maintaining cultural identity. Several women struggled to balance the cultural need to respect teachers with their perception and frustration that some teachers did not take enough time to help them.

Finn’s (2011) study of four Chinese female adult learners in a community-based writing class focused on the ways learners responded to encouragement, ranging from needing encouragement, to not needing but appreciating encouragement and taking a leadership role to provide encouragement to others.

The themes of relationship, support, encouragement, and negotiating cultural identities found in adult ESOL learning experience studies also appear in constructive-developmental explorations of adult learning experiences, in which they are viewed as developmentally constructed (Kegan et al., 2001; Khan, 2010; Lindsley, 2011). However, few if any studies to date have taken a constructive-developmental perspective on adult ESOL academic literacy learning experiences.

**Kegan’s Constructive-Developmental Theory of Adult Development**

Kegan’s CDT belongs to a family of constructive-developmental theories rooted in Western psychology that describe how meaning-making can become more complex over time.
Constructive-developmental theories, and Kegan’s in particular, rest on the tenet of *constructivism*, “that persons or systems constitute or construct reality” (Kegan, 1982). Critically, they are also founded on the empirically supported theory of *developmentalism*, which maintains that the logics through which people construct reality develop over time and follow predictable patterns, moving hierarchically toward increasingly complex ways of knowing (Baxter Magolda, 1999; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Loevinger, 1976; Perry, 1970). Each constructive developmental theory expands on the work of Jean Piaget (1952, 1972), who was the first to demonstrate that children grow through qualitatively distinct and sequential stages of meaning-making. He described each stage as an epistemological *balance point*, or equilibrium that is maintained for a period of time. No stage can be skipped, and each must be passed through before the next. Piaget’s description of developmental growth is rooted in the *subject-object relations* of ego development. Kegan (1982, 1994) describes what we are *subject* to as that which we can’t see and are identified with, or the lens we are looking at life through; as development occurs, what could previously only be looked through becomes *object*, or something that can be looked *at* and acted upon. Piaget and Inhelder (2000) describe epistemological growth as a process of *assimilation* which is “comparable to biological assimilation in the broad sense” (p. 5) and *accommodation*. During assimilation, a person incorporates new input from the world into her existing schema, or epistemological structure. When new information cannot be assimilated in the existing epistemological structure, it begins to accommodate, or grow and become more complex. This process of accommodation constitutes the heart of developmental growth.

The primary stages in Piaget’s developmental model are the *sensori-motor* stage associated with ages zero to two, after the journey from being *subject* to reflexes and movements to *having* reflexes and movements. At this stage the self and objects are fully distinguished and
the concept of object permanence – that an object still exists when the child doesn’t see it – has been achieved (Singer & Revenson, 1997). At the next pre-operational stage, associated with ages two to six, reflexes and body movements have become object, but the child does not yet realize that people and things have characteristics and perceptions distinct from her own (Kegan, 1982). This child can classify objects, but only according to her own perceptions. Others and self are defined according to how the child feels in the moment. At the next concrete operational stage, associated with ages seven to eleven, perception and impulses become object. New cognitive skills include the ability to sort objects according to physical characteristics rather than perception, the ability to recognize logical relationships, and, as illustrated through Piaget’s famous beaker experiment in which the same amount of water is poured from a shorter, wider beaker and a longer, taller one, the ability to understand that quantity and volume are independent of appearance (Piaget & Inhelder, 2000). The final formal operational stage, associated with ages eleven and up, introduces a movement away from the immediate present and concrete, an orientation toward the hypothetical, and an ability to hold abstract ideals and values (Piaget & Inhelder, 2000).

Contrary to the conventional notion that development flat-lines in late adolescence or in the early twenties (Kegan, 1980, 1982), adult constructive-developmental theories extend Piaget’s basic principles throughout the span of adulthood, and expand his focus on logic and cognitive development to include emotional reasoning and inner experiences of growth. Kegan’s (1980, 1982, 1994) CDT describes how adults construct meaning in different domains including cognitive, emotional, inter- and intra-personal, and moral, and has been described as a “meta-theory” consistent with other models of development (Lindsley, 2011). Kegan’s model is related to other models including Kohlberg's (1981) and Gilligan's (1982) models of moral development;
Loevinger's (1976) theory of ego development; Perry's (1970) stages of ethical and intellectual development in the college years; and Belenky’s (1986) stages of women’s development. Also consistent with Kegan’s model are Baxter Magolda’s (1992) model of cultivating self-authorship and King and Kitchener’s (1994) model of developing reflective judgment, both during the college years.

**Instrumental.** In Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental framework, a concrete, or instrumental knower makes meaning with the same concrete, black-and-white logic that characterizes Piaget’s concrete operational stage. At this stage, physical properties and impulses have become *object*. An instrumental meaning-maker therefore recognizes that physical objects have characteristics of their own, e.g., that people and houses don’t actually shrink when looked at from an airplane. They also have control over their physical and emotional impulses. However, one’s own needs and wishes are *subject*. An instrumental meaning-maker is *embedded* in her needs and wishes, which are not perceived as *part* of her, rather, from her perspective, they *are* her. Therefore, others are perceived in direct relationship to how they help or hinder her needs and wishes. An instrumental knower, using black-and-white logic, is concerned with the one “right” way to do things as deemed by the appropriate authority, e.g., the right way to study or to do a job, and with concrete rewards and consequences, e.g, *What will I get? Will I be punished?* (Drago-Severson, 2004).

Kegan describes the underlying epistemological structure of the instrumental stage as *categorical*, meaning that cognitively, emotionally, and interpersonally, a person can perceive one category of information at a time. Popp and Portnow (2001) explain that instrumental knowers are likely to describe themselves in external or behavioral ways; are dualistic thinkers, and orient toward a black and white conception of right and wrong. Adult learners constructing
meaning from an instrumental perspective conceive of knowledge as a possession that comes from an external authority, and consider the purpose of education to “get” something (Drago-Severson, 2004; Portnow, Diamond & Rimer, 2001). For these learners, education is conceived of as the teacher motivating the learner and disseminating information (Portnow, Diamond & Rimer, 2001). Instrumental learners view good teachers as someone who “gives them their knowledge and the rules they need to follow to get the right answers,” (Drago-Severson, 2004, p. 108). Drago-Severson (2004) emphasizes that while instrumental knowers orient toward their own needs and interests, they can be as kind and generous as anyone else; they simply express kindness and generosity in a concrete way.

Cognitively, because instrumental knowers cannot yet cross-reference categories of information or perspectives, they are “not capable of abstract thinking or making generalizations” (Drago-Severson 2004, p. 25) and have trouble forming logical relationships between abstract concepts (Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001). Taylor (2006) describes the writing that instrumental learners are likely to produce as “a brain dump,” of disconnected and unedited thoughts (p. 207), and Kegan (1982) describes an instrumental learner’s understanding of summarizing as relating one event after the next in the sequence they occurred, or come to mind.

Kegan (1994) states that while fewer than five percent of North American adults construct meaning entirely from an instrumental way of knowing, up to 36 percent are partially instrumental knowers. Constructive-developmental studies of non-Western adults, including ABE/ESOL learners, have also found adults constructing meaning in part from an instrumental stage (Kegan et al., 2001; Lindsley, 2011; Villegas-Reimers, 1996).
Socializing. Kegan (1982) explains that with the socializing way of knowing, which follows the instrumental stages and corresponds to Piaget’s formal operational stage, the needs and wishes that they were embedded in, or subject to, as instrumental knowers have become object. That is, socializing knowers are no longer defined by their needs and wishes, and can see them as separate from their identities. Therefore, they can subjugate their own needs for the good of a relationship or another person, and thus meet societal and cultural obligations and expectations. Instead of being identified with their needs and wishes, a socializing knower is identified with his valued relationships, both individuals and community, including the needs, values, and perceived beliefs of valued others. Not only can a socializing knower be emotionally impacted by how another feels, his very identity is determined by how and what others think and feel, e.g., What does my teacher want me to do? Will my friend still accept me if I disagree with her? (Drago-Severson, 2004). Drago-Severson states that socializing knowers “do not have the capacity to consider that point of view from a distance and evaluate it or have perspective on it” (p.25). That is, a socializing knower does not have the capacity to consider what her teacher thinks she should do from the perspective of her own values and standards. Popp and Portnow (2001) describe socializing knowers as defined by an abstract sense of identity; more likely to feel responsible for someone else’s feelings; concerned with abstract, psychological consequences; and intolerant of ambiguity because of a need to understand and meet the expectations of others.

The underlying epistemological structure is cross-categorical, meaning that socializing knowers are able to hold, or see, more than one category at a time. This creates the capacity not only to take another’s perspective and therefore empathize, but to create generalizations and
abstractions from several pieces of information. Because socializing knowers think cross-
categorically, they are able to identify abstract patterns among different pieces of information,
cross-reference categories, and, vital for academic literacy tasks (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011), make
abstractions, inferences and generalizations. Adult learners constructing meaning with a
socializing perspective conceive of knowledge as something to help fulfill social roles, and
consider the purpose of education to be something or someone who meets societal or cultural
expectations (Portnow, Diamond & Rimer, 2001).

**Self-Authoring.** At the next *self-authoring* way of knowing, the relationships and
opinions of others that were subject at the previous socializing stage have become object. Self-
authoring knowers, that is, are able to take an internally-generated perspective on their
relationships and others’ beliefs and opinions, and rely on self-generated values and their own
perspective rather than the opinions and beliefs of others. Self-authoring knowers have grown
from having been concerned with what *Will I still be accepted if I disagree?* to, *Am I acting with
integrity and living up to my values and standards?* This knower sees the perspectives of others,
even of others in authority, as one among many perspectives that can inform, rather than
singularly define, her own. For example, a learner constructing meaning from a self-authoring
perspective may value a teacher’s perspective on the best way to study, but will consider that in
relationship to her own perspective and experience.

Popp and Portnow (2001) describe self-authoring knowers as concerned with competence
and personal integrity; able to hold and manage contradictory feelings and demands, both inner
and outer; and able to evaluate others’ perspectives in relation to what they believe is important.
Self-authoring adults can examine and take responsibility for their own thinking, feelings and
patterns, which Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000) describe as “the mainspring of adult
development” (p. 30). These adult learners conceive of knowledge as something to help them become more competent in meeting their own standards, and to deepen their sense of self and the world, and they approach education with the purpose of becoming something or someone aligned with their own ideals (Portnow, Diamond & Rimer, 2001). The limitation self-authoring knowers face is an “inability to reflect on the purposes of the organization they are running” (Dragosieverson, 2004, p. 28) due to being subject to and therefore identified with their own ideology.

Table 1 summarizes these three most common constructive-developmental stages in adulthood.

Table 1
*Overview of the Constructive-Developmental Stages/Perspectives of Adulthood (Drago-Severson 2004; Kegan 1982, 1994)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage/perspective</th>
<th>Way of thinking</th>
<th>What is ‘object’ (has perspective on)</th>
<th>What is ‘subject’ (is identified with)</th>
<th>Guiding orientations</th>
<th>Meaning of knowledge, education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Instrumental      | Categorical:    | Physical and emotional impulses       | One’s own needs, desires, purposes    | ● Orient to concrete rules, consequences  
|                   | thinks through categories. Uses black and white logic |                                      |                        | ● Orient to self-interest, e.g., what can I get if I (get my GED, go to college, etc.)?  
|                   |                 |                                      |                        | ● Knowledge is a possession something to acquire  
|                   |                 |                                      |                        | ● Education is to “get” something, to serve one’s concrete needs |
| Socializing       | Cross-categorical: thinks abstractly | One’s own needs, desires, purposes  | Valued others’ points of view, expectations | ● Capable of abstract thinking, reflection;  
|                   |                 |                                      |                        | ● Orient to mutuality, obligation  
|                   |                 |                                      |                        | ● Knowledge is a way to “be” someone  
|                   |                 |                                      |                        | ● Education is to meet social/cultural expectations |
| Self-authoring    | Manages, integrates contradictions | Others’ points of view | One’s own ideology | ● Relies on internal authority  
|                   |                 |                                      |                        | ● Orient to competence, achievement, growth  
|                   |                 |                                      |                        | ● Knowledge is a way to increase competence, learn about self, enrich one’s life |

CDT also describes a fourth, *inter-individual* way of knowing, in which adults have become able to take their own construction of ideology and identity as object (Kegan, 1982).
However, levels of development beyond self-authoring in adulthood are very rare, making this stage beyond the scope of this study (Kegan, 1994).

Drago-Severson (2004) explains that developmental growth is gradual and progressive, and that adults “evolve gradually from a simpler way of knowing to another, more complex way of knowing, and they do so at their own pace, depending on the supports and challenges provided by the environment” (p. 21). Kegan (1982, 1994) frames developmental growth as a process of transcending and including previous stages of development. Drago-Serverson (2004) explains, “During transitions from one stage to the next, the self gradually incorporates the former way of knowing into a newer, larger, and more complex way of organization” (p. 22). That is, when someone moves from an instrumental to a socializing way of knowing, they don’t give up their previous way of knowing, or the self-interest characteristic of that stage; they are simply not limited by it, and can take perspective on it. Likewise, when someone develops from a socializing to a self-authoring way of knowing, they still care about their relationships with others, but are not defined by them. In Kegan’s model, as in other constructive-developmental models of growth, development takes place over time, and in response to the supports and challenges in a person’s life rather than at a certain age or because of intelligence. The supports, challenges, and continuity thereof in an adult’s life constitute what Kegan describes as a holding environment.

**Holding Environments**

The concept of the holding environment is integral to Kegan’s constructive-developmental model of development, “liberating psychological theory from the study of the decontextualized individual” (Kegan, 1982, p. 115). Kegan (1982) stresses that there is never “just an individual,” rather, the individual is always embedded in a psycho-social context. The
term and concept of a *holding environment* originated with D. W. Winnicott (1965), who stressed that there is never “just an infant.” Kegan (1982) elaborates that the concept of infancy also implies a caretaker who is both part of the infant and who provides the context for the infant’s growth. Kegan’s CDT maintains that not only in infancy, but throughout adulthood, there is always a context that “holds” a person and their growth process. Kegan (1982) describes the many holding environments people have during the journey of adulthood as *cultures of embeddedness*, or “the particular form of the world in which the person is, at this moment in his or her evolution, embedded… the very context in which and out of which, the person grows” (pp. 115-116). A good holding environment, Kegan explains does three things well. It *holds* the person in their current way of meaning-making, confirming how they make sense of their experience and the world; it *challenges* their way of making sense of the world, providing enough disequilibrium to encourage expanding the current meaning-making system – including *letting go* when the individual is ready; and it provides *continuity*, or a stable environment, to support the process of integrating what was formerly subject as object in a new, more complex sense of self.

**Holding.** Kegan distinguishes the importance of *holding* a person in their current experience and sense of self from holding *onto*, or constraining. *Holding* involves being present for another, affirming their experience without seeking to change it, and, Kegan stresses, is a hallmark of “competent psychological help” in a therapeutic environment. A good holding environment in an educational context, Drago-Severson (2004) explains, “recognizes who the person is and how the person is currently making meaning, without frustration or urgent anticipation of change” (p. 35). This includes the element of support in a classroom holding environment, or meeting a learner in their current way of making meaning.
**Challenging.** All constructive-developmental theories describe growth as spurred by disequilibrium – something that can’t be assimilated, or satisfactorily made sense of with the logic of the current meaning-making system (Kegan 1982, 1994; Piaget, 1952). To grow from the current way of making meaning, adults must also be consistently challenged. In adult educational environments, this can include constructing a logical argument in support of a position that the learner disagrees with, and being exposed to multiple perspectives and ways of looking at things, especially disagreements among experts (Daloz, 1999). With no challenge to the current way of making meaning, there is no reason or stimulus for growth to a more complex way of making meaning.

**Continuity.** A stable holding environment can provide continuity and stability as a person grows. Kegan (1982) explains that growth is not just about “a new relationship between self and other” but “a new construction of self and other” (p. 131). A stable environment supports this reconstruction, providing a consistent environment “so that relationships can be known and reknown and reconstructed in a new way – a way that supports who the person has grown to become” (Drago-Severson, 2004, p. 35).

Drago-Severson (2004) states that while shorter-term educational programs may not be able to provide continuity over an extended period of time, all programs and classrooms can emphasize the elements of challenge and support that are essential for supporting adult learning and growth. Holding environments and adult developmental growth within them have been one area of focus in educational studies focusing on adult learning experiences from a constructive-developmental perspective.
Adult Constructive-Development and Adult Learning

Hoare (2006) states that the field of adult development, which stems from Western developmental psychology, and the field of adult learning, rooted in the field of education, have only actively intersected since the 1980s. In that time, the “interrelated and reciprocal” (Hoare, 2006, p. 3) phenomena of growing and learning in adulthood have been explored. Constructive-developmental theories of adult development, including William Perry’s (1970) model of intellectual development in college years, King and Kitchener’s (1994) levels of reflective judgment, and Baxter Magolda’s (1992) levels of knowing have been used to understand growth toward more complex ways of knowing in college contexts, including the relationship between epistemological development (Perry, 1970) and writing and rhetorical development (Burnham, 1982; Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1989; Krupa, 1982; Shapiro, 1984). Kegan’s (1982, 1994) CDT has been used to understand adult learning in contexts ranging from leadership in the workplace (Wagner & Kegan, 2006), higher education (Boes, 2006), internationally (Lindsley, 2011; Villegas-Reimers, 1996) and learning experiences in Adult Basic Education (ABE) contexts within the U.S. (Bridwell, 2013; Kegan et al., 2001). This section will elaborate on the two applications most germane to this study, Perry’s (1970) model for understanding writing development, and Kegan’s (1982, 1994) model for understanding ABE/ESOL learning experiences.

Perry’s Model and Writing Development

William Perry’s (1970) seminal model of adult intellectual development grew over 15 years of interviews with college students at Harvard University. Helsing, Broderick and Hammerman (2001) explain that Perry was the first developmentalist to investigate the meaning-making of adult learners and to create a predictive adult developmental stage framework. Perry’s
developmental framework outlines stages ranging from a categorical view of knowledge to more complex, independent and ultimately contextualized view of the world (Perry, 1970).

Perry’s scheme has been applied to a span of college learning domains. Particularly during the 1980s, during the shift in writing research to cognitive process models of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), a number of studies investigated writing development and rhetorical maturity through the lens of Perry’s model of intellectual development (Burnham, 1982; Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1989; Krupa, 1982; Shapiro, 1984). Burnham (1982) and Krupa (1982) both argued that Perry’s scheme illuminated the challenges of developing writers and offered promise on how to better teach them. Kiedaisch and Dinitz (1989), in their study of early college students working on persuasive writing, stated that Perry’s stage of dualism, similar to Kegan’s (1982, 1994) instrumental stage, helped explain why some writers oriented to looking for the “right answer” and assumed everyone would agree with them when they found it, and that the stage of relativism, similar to Kegan’s (1982, 1994) early socializing stage, explained why some students could not think of any topic worth writing a persuasive piece about because everyone is entitled to their own opinion. In a dissertation study examining 70 college essays, Shapiro (1984) found Perry’s levels of cognitive development were statistically highly correlated to overall writing competence and audience awareness.

Kegan’s CDT and Adult Learning Experiences

Studies applying Kegan’s (1982, 1994) CDT to adult learning have extended to non-Western cultures both in the United States (Bridwell, 2013; Kegan et al., 2001) and abroad (Lindsley, 2011; Villegas-Reimers, 1996). Studies have also found that adult learners constructing meaning with instrumental, socializing, and self-authoring ways of knowing experience learning in qualitatively distinct ways (Boes, 2006; Bridwell, 2013; Kegan et al.,
2001, Lindsley, 2011), and that learners at different stages of development express competence in ways consistent with the characteristics of their stage (Boes, 2006; Popp & Boes, 2001). Longitudinal studies of ten to fourteen months have shown that in developmentally intentional holding environments, or contexts of continuous challenge and support (Kegan, 1994), some adult learners have grown in meaning-making complexity, or have experienced developmentally transformative (Cranton, 2006; Drago-Severson, 2004) learning (Bridwell, 2013; Kegan et al., 2001; Lindsley, 2011).

Studies within and outside of the United States have found that adult learners describe their learning experiences in ways that are consistent with what would be predicted by Kegan’s (1982, 1994) CDT, based on their developmental perspectives. Boes (2006) found that eight college students in a service learning class experienced aspects of the course differently depending on their socializing or transitioning to self-authoring perspectives, and that those constructing their experiences with more self-authorship were better equipped to meet the course competencies of understanding community organizing and themselves due to their ability to see themselves as generating, and to take responsibility for, their own emotions. In her ten-month study of six low-income African American women in a shelter-based GED program, Bridwell (2013) found that learners’ motivations for enrolling in the course were consistent with their developmental perspectives, and that some learners’ perspectives became more complex over the ten months of programming. Lindsley’s (2011) study of 22 Burmese adult learners in an adaptive learning program on the Thai-Burma border found that learners constructing meaning from a socializing perspective described their learning as a vehicle that enabled them to better meet the needs of their organization, while learners transitioning into a self-authoring way of knowing began to describe their learning experiences in relation to their own values, and expressed more
concern with effectively applying what they had learned. Some participants also showed developmental growth in their adaptive learning program, whose curriculum and design was informed by constructive-developmental theory.

A seminal study (Kegan et al., 2001) through the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) examined the learning experiences of three different cohorts of adult learners, at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) in Boston, an Even Start Family Literacy program, and a workplace ABE/ESOL program at Polaroid. This study found that learners’ developmental perspectives shaped learning experiences, including their goals and motivations for learning and their conceptions of teacher-learner relationships and learning supports. Furthermore, construction of competence and descriptions of competency challenge were consistent with developmental perspectives (Popp & Boes, 2001; Portnow, Diamond & Rimer, 2001).

Goals and motivations for learning. Helsing, Broderick and Hammerman (2001) illustrate how learners at Bunker Community College growing from instrumental developmental positions emphasized utilitarian motivators in choosing a major, such as potential to make a good salary, job availability, and the amount of work and time that it would take to complete their degree. Socializing learners also considered utilitarian, practical factors in their decisions, but were more compelled by internal factors such as their dispositions and interests, as well as family opinions and wishes. Learners transitioning toward self-authoring described self-generated motivations for their goals and were less influenced by the opinions of friends and family.

In the Even Start family literacy cohort, learners across developmental perspectives described their motivations for education as “being somebody” and avoiding “being nobody”
(Portnow, Diamond & Rimer, 2001). However, developmental constructions of these motivations varied. Learners growing from an instrumental way of knowing, Portnow, Diamond, and Rimer explain, described their motivations for learning in both concrete utilitarian goals and in terms of an emerging abstract sense of self. For example, one learner described learning English as allowing her to be successful with concrete tasks such as reading labels, but also to no longer feel bad for being unable to help her kids with their homework. Those constructing meaning with a socializing perspective emphasized the need to better communicate in English to relate in a reciprocal way. These learners also emphasized wanting to know enough English to do work that they liked, and to be successful in meeting expectations of work and family. Learners growing into a self-authoring perspective expressed similar motivations to those constructing meaning solely from a socializing perspective, but also began expressing more self-directedness and a desire to live up to their identities as life-long learners.

In the Polaroid cohort, Drago-Severson and Berger (2001) explain that learners with instrumental perspectives described their motivation for getting a GED as being a better role model for their children, and having more opportunities for job promotions. A socializing learner described her motivation for obtaining a GED as making her children feel proud of her. A learner growing into a self-authoring perspective described his priority as learning math and writing, and also found intrinsic value in learning.

**Conceptions of learning relationships and supports.** In describing their conceptions of learning, Helsing, Broderick and Hammerman (2001) showed how learners at BHCC growing from an instrumental perspective described learning in concrete terms and literal steps, and believed that studying a lot would automatically lead to good grades. They knew they were successful in a class if they received good grades or got the right answer. They appreciated
applying factual knowledge that they learned in college to their lives. Socializing learners described learning effectiveness and success in terms of abstract qualities like having a positive attitude, a will to learn, and being strong. They also described having an inner voice that tells them when they’d “gotten” something. These learners appreciated learning things in college that helped them take more perspective on others’ experiences. Learners developing a self-authoring capacity placed more importance on holding themselves to an internal standard than receiving validation from a teacher, and also evaluated teachers according to their internally-generated values.

In the Even Start family literacy program, learners growing from an instrumental perspective described the teacher as giving them knowledge, confidence and rules, and showing them the right way to do something. Those constructing meaning from a socializing perspective described a good teacher as kind and supportive, and needed to feel like their teacher cared for them. While socializing learners looked to their teacher as the authoritative source of knowledge, learners growing into a self-authoring perspective viewed teachers as just one source of knowledge, and also viewed themselves as a source of knowledge.

In the cohort of learners at Polaroid at the beginning of their program, Drago-Severson (2001) describes a participant constructing meaning from a fully instrumental perspective as “equating learning with doing” at the beginning of the program. A fully socializing knower in the cohort described deriving a sense of worth from his teacher’s evaluation of him, and saw it as his teacher’s responsibility to make him feel self-confident and to ensure his learning. Drago-Severson and Berger (2001) illustrate the transition toward self-authoring through a learner who believed that both the teachers and the students were responsible for student learning, and during group work, took responsibility for helping others in areas where he had more expertise. In this
cohort, learners who experienced developmental growth over the 14 months of their program later described developmentally more complex motivations for having participated.

**Developmentally distinct constructions of competence.** Framing competence as an ability to apply knowledge to everyday life, and as a process rather than an endpoint, Popp and Boes (2001) examined developmental constructions of competence in each of the three cohorts described above. By analyzing participant responses to scenario vignettes, they found that learners constructing meaning from different developmental perspectives demonstrated competence in distinct ways.

The Bunker Hills Community college cohort was presented with a scenario in which a student is faced with casting the deciding vote on adhering to the teacher’s instructions for a group project or pursuing a different route suggested by another group member. Popp and Boes (2001) explain that an instrumental learner demonstrated competence in this scenario by knowing and respecting that the ultimate authority lies with the teacher. A learner growing into socializing knowing began to show concern for her relationship to both the teacher and the other students in the group. A fully socializing learner showed her competence in knowing she needed to check with the correct authority. A learner growing into self-authorship, along with respecting external authority, began to express confidence in her own authority. A fully self-authoring learner viewed rules as guides rather than hard and fast, and didn’t see the teacher’s rules as the ultimate way to do things right. This ability to balance the teacher’s authority with his own, Popp and Boes (2001) explain, is his competence.

Participants in the Even Start family literacy cohort were presented with a vignette about a parenting dilemma involving two siblings, one of whom was always late, and the other who was on time, but sometimes missed the bus waiting for the other. They found that learners
constructing the problem from an instrumental perspective oriented to changing behavior through making a rule and implementing a consequence. Popp and Boes (2001) note that the competence in this approach is the ability to see rules as a way of shaping behavior, and identifying which rules and consequences will be effective. Those growing out of an instrumental perspective also relied on rules, but began to display sensitivity to the child’s feelings. From a fully socializing perspective, Popp and Boes explain, learners placed rules in a larger social context, and expressed a desire to understand both children. A learner transitioning into self-authoring knowing took perspective on her own response to the situation in relation to how she thought the child would respond. Popp and Boes explain that this learner’s competence is her ability to distinguish between her goals for her son and how he will experience them, to take a broad perspective on her feelings as well as the kids’ feelings and behaviors, and create a strategy based on all factors involved.

Learners in the Polaroid cohort, Popp and Boes (2001) explain, responded to a scenario in which they were faced with the decision of whether and how to report a work-based problem. A learner constructing meaning from a fully instrumental perspective, they note, displayed her competence in knowing exactly which rule to follow and how to execute the plan. A learner constructing meaning from a fully socializing perspective demonstrated a respect for authority. Popp and Boes explain that her competence is to know and respect the line between her own and her supervisor’s authority. A learner growing toward self-authoring knowing likewise respected the supervisor’s authority, but also had a growing sense of his own competence and internal authority. This learner’s competence, Popp and Boes state, is to see the big picture and feel confident in his ability to navigate the many perspectives in the scenario.
**Developmentally distinct experiences of writing.** While experiences of discreet competencies such as writing were not the focus of the NCSALL study or of the BHCC cohort within it, some learners described their experiences with essay writing.

At BHCC, a learner constructing his essay writing experience from an instrumental perspective described his difficulty with abstract writing assignments and his preference for concrete topics:

We write many essay. Sometimes she give us writing out of psychology. We write what is a famous person or what is the important thing in your life like this. Some very hard to write sometimes if you write how like “openness” or like “language,” like how you feel about doing, how this importance our life. But when you can write about the sport, you can write.

By contrast, a learner growing into self-authoring expresses a relatively confident experience with essay writing. Helsing, Broderick and Hammerman (2001) state that his description suggests that he thinks of his ideas as containing multiple layers:

I can use the English writing to express my thought, my feeling. For example, now I don’t feel very difficult to express what I want to say in paper. I think maybe my sentence is not beautiful, but I can express my meaning clearly. Because I live here, I must know how to write English sentence, how to write English essay. I think that is life cure for me. At least I think if I used the dictionary, I can write something. I can express my thought. Recently our speaking class give me a topic. At 11:00, I have a final examination in speaking. I will talk my topic. Because I learn a lot of writing skills so I can write myself essay. Because I write it, I have a deeply
impression that I can talk it. So writing help me talk, you know.

**Summary of Chapter Two**

Developing academic literacy skills is becoming increasingly high-stakes for ABE/ESOL learners to succeed in educational goals like passing the GED or preparing for post-secondary education without remediation (Pimentel, 2013). Existing research uses several lenses to investigate ESOL academic literacy learning including linguistic, emphasizing the language and textual aspects of academic literacy; cognitive, emphasizing the mental processes used to construct meaning in reading and writing; sociocultural, emphasizing the ways academic literacy is socially and culturally constructed; and developmental, looking at growth in strategies and engagement with academic literacy tasks across contexts (Kucer, 2014). Several themes within the literature support the applicability of constructive-developmental theory to adult ESOL academic literacy learning, including that ESOL academic literacy learning is not only a linguistic, but epistemological phenomenon (Cummins, 1979), and that academic literacy learning involves mental processes that are framed as developmental capacities by CDT (Kegan, 1982, 1994). The literature surrounding the linguistic dimension of academic literacy learning highlights Cummins’ (1979) concept of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), stating that the linguistic and cognitive dimensions of academic literacy are inter-related, and that academic and cognitive factors impact success with academic literacy skills. This is consistent with the constructive-developmental view that generalizing and making abstractions is a developmental capacity (Kegan, 1982, 1994). The literature on the cognitive dimension of academic literacy learning introduces mental processes used by skilled writers that Kegan’s (1982, 1994) CDT frames as developmental competencies, such as organizing ideas in the planning stages of writing, conceptualizing a piece of writing as a rhetorical whole, and
organizing and relating concepts (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Jitendra & Gajria, 2011). Furthermore, the characteristics of unskilled writers such as not attending to organizational structure and “knowledge-telling” described in the cognitive literature (Beal, 1993; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) is consistent with Taylor’s (2006) description of the writing that instrumental learners are likely to produce as “a brain dump,” of disconnected and unedited thoughts (p.207), and Kegan’s (1982) description of instrumental learners’ understanding of summarizing as relating one event after the next. These suggestions that academic literacy learning is constructive-developmentally informed bears out in research correlating Piaget’s and Perry’s stages of development with writing development and rhetorical maturity (Burnham, 1982; Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1989; Krupa, 1982; Poulsen, 1998; Shapiro, 1984).

The literature using the lens of CDT to investigate adult learning experiences has shown that developmental perspectives shape qualitatively distinct learning experiences and ways of demonstrating competence in a variety of learning domains (Boes, 2006; Bridwell, 2013; Kegan et al., 2001; Lindsley, 2011). Two learners in Kegan et al.’s (2001) study applying CDT to ABE/ESOL learning experiences begin to offer glimpses into their developmentally diverse ways of experiencing essay writing, as a learner spoke from a partially instrumental perspective about his difficulty writing about abstract concepts and preference for a concrete topic, while a learner growing toward self-authoring knowing displayed a more complex perspective on the levels of writing, along with greater ease and confidence with it.

ESOL academic literacy learning is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but an epistemological phenomenon, and must therefore be impacted by learners’ epistemological complexity. CDTs demonstrate that in adulthood, epistemological complexity doesn’t flat line, but can continue to grow through predictable, internally consistent and increasingly complex
developmental perspectives (Baxter Magolda, 1999; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Loevinger, 1976; Perry, 1970). The literature demonstrates that developmental perspectives shape qualitatively different levels of writing maturity among native English speakers (Burnham, 1982; Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1989; Krupa, 1982; Shapiro, 1984). There is reason to believe, then, that ABE/ESOL learners’ academic literacy learning may also be shaped, in part, by their constructive-developmental perspectives, and that understanding their developmental perspectives, and how those perspectives mediate academic literacy learning, could help educators effectively challenge and support all learners developing not only linguistically, but cognitively complex academic literacy skills.
CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Research Questions

This study explored the academic literacy learning experiences of nine Adult Basic Education (ABE) English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) learners in a College and Career Preparation Reading and Writing class, and the ways that each learner’s constructive-developmental perspective mediated her or his learning experience. It was concerned with how learners perceive their own goals, successes and challenges with the class, and how they experienced the academic literacy competencies within it, especially summarizing. It used grounded theory and constructive-developmental theory as two analytical lenses to understand the meaning learners construct from their experiences.

The overarching question this study aimed to answer was, How do ABE/ESOL learners describe academic literacy learning experiences in a college and career preparation reading and writing class, and how can understanding their constructive-developmental perspectives help educators more effectively support developmentally diverse learners?

The following sub-questions guided this study:

1. What constructive-developmental perspectives do ABE/ESOL learners in a college and career preparation class bring to their academic literacy learning experiences?

2. How do they describe their academic literacy learning experiences including motivation, success and challenge in the college and career preparation class?

3. How do they experience academic literacy skill learning in the class, especially in a recent summarizing unit?

4. How do learners’ academic literacy learning experiences (Q2-3) relate to their constructive-developmental perspectives (Q1), including important similarities of
experience from similar perspectives, and important differences from different perspectives?

**Philosophical and Theoretical Framework**

I bring the philosophical perspective to this study that the ways in which adults experience learning is multi-faceted and complex. I also take the *constructive-developmental* perspective that meaning is constructed, cognitively, emotionally, inter- and intra-personally, through the internal logic of an adult’s developmental perspective at any given time, and that adult learners constructing meaning from different developmental perspectives learn and experience learning in qualitatively distinct ways. Because adult ESOL educators are typically not trained in adult constructive-development, they may be unaware of the developmental demands implicit in their curriculum and learning activities, or whether they may unknowingly assume and favor a particular developmental perspective over another. Furthermore, academic literacy tasks make demands that constructive-developmental theory frames as developmental capacities. This study, therefore, aims to understand how developmental perspectives shape academic reading and writing experiences so that adult ABE/ESOL educators can better understand and support learners who are building academic reading and writing skills within diverse and distinct developmental perspectives.

I find Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory (CDT) a compelling lens for examining academic literacy learning experiences because of its breadth as a theory of meaning construction in cognitive, emotional, inter- and intra-personal domains, its consistency with other developmental frameworks that have been used to understand writing development (Piaget, 1952; Perry, 1970), and its prior success with understanding ABE/ESOL learning experiences (Kegan et al., 2001).
As educational research tends to lack the perspectives and voices of learners, I agree with Sharon Merriam’s (1998) view that research focused on the perspectives of learners themselves offers the greatest promise of contributing to the knowledge base and practice of education.

**Research Design**

I used a qualitative framework for this study because I was interested in understanding how participants experience learning, over production, or what they learn (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Merriam, 1998). A qualitative framework was appropriate for this study, which investigated meaning-making rather than performance, with the assumption that reality is not fixed, but “constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (Merriam 1998, Chapter one, section 2, para. 2). A qualitative paradigm is also appropriate for extending an existing theory to a new context (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), in this case, Kegan’s CDT to ABE/ESOL academic literacy learning experiences.

A qualitative case study, in particular, is appropriate for gaining a deep understanding of the meaning of a situation from the perspectives of those involved in it (Merriam, 1998). This qualitative study took the form of an instrumental case study, which seeks to understand the phenomenon of ABE/ESOL academic literacy learning experiences through an “in-depth exploration of a bounded system” (Creswell, 2008, p. 344) such as a program or group (Merriam, 1998), in this case, nine ABE/ESOL learners enrolled in a college and career preparation class. The secondary questions addressing connections between learning experiences and constructive-developmental perspectives bring an explanatory element (Yin, 2009) into this case study as well, using Kegan’s (1982, 1994) CDT to explain learning experiences.
Guiding Theory

The guiding theory and lens for interpreting ABE/ESOL learning experiences in this study is Robert Kegan’s (1982, 1994) CDT. Kegan’s theory recognizes four unique meaning-making stages that people can pass through during adulthood, as the mind becomes increasingly able to take as object what was previously subject, or becomes increasingly able to take perspective and act on what it was previously identified with and therefore unable to see. These stages, as described in the literature review, include instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and inter-individual. Kegan’s CDT also describes and recognizes “sub-stages” between each primary stage, each of which an adult may hold for an indefinite period of time on the developmental journey. For example, an adult may construct meaning from a fully instrumental perspective, a fully socializing perspective, or from one of four sub-stages between those two primary stages. In the first sub-stage, the instrumental perspective is primary, and the socializing is only beginning to emerge. In the next sub-stage, the new socializing perspective is fully developed, or “fully operational,” but the instrumental perspective is also still operating, and remains dominant. In the next sub-stage, the new socializing perspective is dominant, but the instrumental perspective is still operating simultaneously. In the final sub-stage before the fully socializing stage, the old instrumental perspective is no longer fully operating, but in times of stress or in certain situations may temporarily take hold. At this sub-stage, the adult may feel the need to guard against that old perspective to keep from slipping back into it. With four primary stages, and four possible sub-stages between each primary stage, Kegan’s CDT recognizes sixteen possible developmental perspectives.

While Kegan’s CDT aligns with other constructive-developmental theories, as described in chapter two, it is unique in that it has a valid and reliable measure, the Subject-Object
Interview (SOI) (Lahey et al., 1988); in that it has been tested for cross-cultural validity (Villegas-Reimers, 1996); and in that it has been used successfully for research with non-Western populations (Kegan et al., 2001; Lindsley, 2011). While Kegan’s CDT describes developmental stages as alternately oriented toward interdependence and independence, it also, in its distinction between content and structure of meaning-making, recognizes the possibility of culturally collectivist or individualistic values at any stage. Therefore, it is a suitable framework for distinguishing cultural values from meaning-making complexity in studies with culturally diverse participants (Lindsley, 2011). Table 2 shows terms and definitions in Kegan’s (1982, 1994) CDT.

Table 2

Terms and Definitions in Constructive-Developmental Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental stage/perspective</td>
<td>The “lens” through which an adult constructs meaning at a given point along the developmental journey. This lens has its own internal logic. At each stage, the person can take as “object” that which they were “subject” to at the previous stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-stage</td>
<td>A distinct and measurable meaning-making balance point between developmental stages. Between the Instrumental (2) and Socializing (3) stages, for example, a person could construct meaning from any of the following sub-stages: 2(3), in which the Socializing stage has only begun to emerge; 2/3, in which the Socializing stage is fully operating, and the person sometimes constructs meaning in more Socializing ways, but the Instrumental perspective is still dominant; 3/2, in which both Socializing and Instrumental perspectives are fully operating, but the Socializing perspective is dominant; and 3(2), in which the Instrumental perspective is no longer an active perspective, but one that in certain and sometimes stressful situations, a person slips into.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>The aspects of a person’s experience, identity, and meaning-making that she cannot see. This is like the “lens” that a person can look through, but not at. What a person is subject to appears as simply “the way things are” rather than the way she sees things. A person is unconsciously identified with what she is subject to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>The aspects of a person’s experience, identity, and meaning-making that she can see, take perspective on, and act upon. When one aspect of experience, identity, or meaning-making that used to be subject becomes object, it may appear to the person as “the way I used to see things.” A person is no longer unconsciously identified with what she can take as object.</td>
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</table>
Site Selection and Participants

The college and career preparation class that was the focus of this instrumental case study was purposefully chosen for its typicality (Merriam, 1998), for some distinctive qualities, and for its accessibility. Critically, this class served ABE/ESOL learners, and intentionally built academic literacy skills including summarizing. In that sense, it met the criteria for a typical ABE/ESOL academic literacy class. However, typicality of ABE/ESOL classes must be understood in the ABE/ESOL context, in which a comparatively small number of classes focus on college preparation skills. Most ABE/ESOL teachers in the state of Minnesota report emphasizing non-academic language skills (Johnson & Parrish, 2010), instead emphasizing ESOL “life skills” such as renting an apartment, shopping, or banking (Parrish, 2004) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) such as communicating in everyday situations (Cummins, 1979). The relative newness of an academic skills focus in ABE is reflected in that it was only in 2013 that federal adult education guidelines were published emphasizing academic reading and writing (Pimentel, 2013). While I considered potential drawbacks of situating research on academic literacy learning experiences in a class focusing on both college and career preparation, rather than academic preparation exclusively, I knew from personal connection to the class that it was structured to meet the needs of the learners it serves, who often describe the dual goals of furthering both education and career goals. Also, college and career preparation literacy skills are framed in an integrated way in this class, for example, learners may study literary critiques in a college preparation unit, followed by employer critiques in a career preparation unit.

According to Comings, Reder, and Sum (2001), research on adult education should be conducted in high-quality programs. The college and career preparation class that was the focus
of this study was taught by a lead teacher with an MA in TESOL and over ten years of teaching experience with ABE/ESOL populations. She conceptualized and designed the class in response to expressed needs of the adult learner community it serves, and continually created and adapted units in response to adult learner input, thereby meeting Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) best practice standards for adult ESL programs (TESOL, 2002). The college and career preparation class reflected Second Language Acquisition (SLA) best practices in that it was comprised of two integrated yet distinct components, reading/writing and speaking/listening; learners thus received integrated language instruction (Parrish, 2004). Finally, as a colleague of the classroom instructor for five years, and her supervising manager for the past four, conducting formal and informal class observations, I had seen consistently high levels of cognitive engagement among most learners in class, indicative of high-quality instruction (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2012-13).

As an employee of the organization delivering this class, I had access to it, a longstanding trusting relationship with the teacher, and a baseline familiarity and friendly rapport with some of the learners; therefore, the case of this class was both a convenience sample, and one in which I was well-poised to develop “productive relationships” with participants based on rapport and familiarity (Merriam, 1998).

The ABE/ESOL learners in this study hailed from different countries, had different language backgrounds, different levels and types of formal education backgrounds, and had been speaking English and living in the United States for different lengths of time. Some were co-enrolled in other classes at the same learning center such as ESL or GED. Learners who had been attending the college and career preparation reading and writing class regularly for a minimum of two weeks were invited to participate in the study, and participants were selected by teacher
recommendation based on regularity of attendance, availability to complete the two interviews comprising the primary data in this study, and a minimum English reading level of High Intermediate ESL. High Intermediate ESL learners are generally able to engage in basic conversations (National Reporting Institute, 2015). While the learners in this study were not tested for speaking and listening skills in English, the teacher and learning center coordinator allowed High Intermediate learners into the class based in part on their perceptions that these learners had high verbal skills. This also made it more likely that the High Intermediate ESL learners in this class would be able to successfully complete conversational interviews in English. While class enrollment was approximately 20 at the time of this study, only nine met these criteria and chose to participate in the study.

Data Collection

My data collection methods included the Subject-Object Interview (SOI), class observations during a three-week summarizing unit, and a Learning Experience Interview (LEI). I also collected demographic information such as language and educational background and current ABE/ESL reading levels as measured by standardized reading test scores.

Prior to data collection, I conducted four days of informal class observations to gain entry to the field and develop rapport with participants. Next, I conducted an SOI with each participant, which allowed me to understand learners’ developmental perspectives, as well as their broader experiences in the class around themes of motivation and experiences of success. Following the SOIs, I observed a three-week summarizing unit to understand how they may have experienced learning activities and to contextualize their descriptions of their learning experiences. The observations also helped me tailor some of my LEI questions. I conducted the second qualitative interview, the LEI, after the summarizing unit to dig more deeply into their
academic literacy learning experiences, particularly experiences with academic literacy skill learning, prompting experiences with recent activities in the summarizing unit. I gathered demographic information via a questionnaire at the time of the SOI, and asked follow-up and clarification questions where needed when I met with participants for the LEI. I gathered reading test scores for each participant from a database, selecting the test score for the date closest to the period of the study.

Because the same situational barriers impacting participants’ attendance limited their availability for interviews, and because of the high risk of attrition with ABE learners, the entire data collection period, including first interviews, class observations, and second interviews was limited to eight weeks.

**Subject-Object Interview**

To understand participants’ constructive-developmental perspectives and how CDT may help explain their learning experiences, I administered the SOI, a valid and reliable measure created by Lahey et al. (1988) to assess the complexity of an individual’s meaning-making as per CDT (Appendix A). This semi-structured interview uses a uniform set of prompts (such as “important to me,” “success” and “anxious”) around which participants describe real-life experiences. The interviewer asks follow-up questions to understand how meaning is being structured. Because constructive-developmental perspectives are assessed by how participants structure their experiences, rather than the content of their experiences, the SOI can be situated in any context. To acquire additional information about how participants understood their learning experiences in the college and career preparation reading and writing class, I situated the SOI within that class as much as possible, starting with the prompts, “important to me” and “success” and moving on to other prompts chosen by participants as time allowed.
Because participants had English reading levels of High Intermediate and above, and potentially even higher verbal skills, and based on Kegan et al.’s (2001) success administering the SOI with ABE/ESOL learners, I anticipated that participants in this study would be able to participate successfully in the SOI, with them and me using the same clarification strategies we might use in a conversation. To ensure participants understood the interview prompts, I checked participants’ understanding of the words and phrases contained in them such as “success” and “important to me” before the interview, providing clarification and eliciting examples where needed. I encouraged participants to let me know if they didn’t understand something or wanted to check their understanding, and told them I’d do the same. Throughout the interviews, as recommended for all SOIs (Lahey et al., 1988) I recapped my understanding of what participants said, inviting them to correct possible misunderstandings. Where needed, I simplified the language of my follow up questions. For example, sometimes I asked, “What was the most good thing about that for you?” instead of “What was the best thing about that for you?” if participants appeared not to have understood my initial question. Many participants, at some point in the interview, apologized for their English, searched out loud for a word, or stated that they wished they could say exactly what they meant. While each participant may have liked to say more, or speak “more correctly,” each was able to offer rich responses to my questions and follow-up questions.

I was confident that despite interviewing in a second or other language, that the data from the SOIs allowed for accurate identification of developmental perspectives. Firstly, while participants sometimes appeared to search for words during the SOIs, and I sometimes had to ask a question in another way or clarify what I was asking, communication did not appear to break down – a situation I believe, after ten years of teaching ABE/ESOL learners, I would recognize –
and I never had to stop a line of questioning prematurely. In instances where interview data was unclear due to language issues such as word choice or intelligibility of pronunciation in the recordings, I excluded that data from the developmental analysis. Developmental analysis of the SOIs involves identifying interview “bits” that demonstrate how participants structure meaning, and rich enough data to see these patterns multiple times and to rule out both more and less complex developmental perspectives. In each SOI, I found that the data contained rich and ample “bits” for the analytical process according to the robust standards of the guide (Lahey et al., 1988), and my co-scorer, one of the nation’s foremost experts on the SOI, was likewise confident in integrity of the analytical process.

**Participant Observations**

To gain context and a reference point for tailoring the LEI to each participant (Merriam, 1998), and to contextualize participants’ descriptions of their learning experiences, I conducted class observations during a three-week summarizing unit in the college and career preparation reading and writing class. Because many of the participants were co-enrolled in the speaking and listening class, which also focused on summarizing during the period of my case study, I observed that class as well, to understand the full context in which the participants experienced learning summarizing. Of the twelve days of instruction during the unit, I observed eleven, opting to conduct a rescheduled SOI with a participant who had been absent on the day of her first scheduled interview during a speaking/listening class. During my observations, I used an observation grid (Appendix B) to guide my descriptive field notes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).
Learning Experience Interview

To understand participants’ academic literacy learning experiences, I conducted a one-hour LEI with each participant (Appendix C). The LEI was a semi-structured interview protocol designed to understand how participants made sense of their experience as learners, based on the Experience of Learning Interview in the NCSALL study and informed by similar adapted interviews used in studies investigating learning experiences through a constructive-developmental lens (Boes 2006; Bridwell, 2013; Kegan et al., 2001; Lindsley, 2011). Because I wanted to understand not only broad learning experiences, but experiences pertaining to academic literacy learning, including summarizing, I situated many questions within the summarizing unit that I observed. Because learners were present to different degrees and on different days of the unit, I focused particularly on learning experiences on the day a given learner was present. At the beginning of this interview, I also asked questions to clarify responses to demographic questions via the questionnaire.

Demographic Questionnaire

Because participants in this study hailed from different backgrounds, including years of formal education, literacy and literacy instruction in the first language, which could impact English academic literacy learning experiences, I collected a demographic questionnaire from each participant (Appendix D). Where responses were ambiguous, I clarified during the second interview.

Standardized Assessments

Because the class was comprised of learners within a range of reading levels, I also collected recent standardized Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) or Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) scores, which measure and differentiate reading levels in
English. I had access to these test scores through a Minnesota Adult Basic Education (MABE) database that I had access to as an employee of the organization where I conducted this study.

**Reflexivity**

To help reduce possible bias in data collection due to basic familiarity with the teacher and some of the learners, based on having occasionally visited it and substitute taught it prior to the study, I kept a field log throughout the data collection, recording my visits to the class, along with a reflex journal, tracing initial interpretations of and reactions to my observations (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Keeping records of my visits, interpretations and reactions helped me make my thinking more transparent to myself (Charmaz, 2006) during this phase of the research process.

**Data Analysis**

This study used grounded theory and constructive-developmental theory as two theoretical lenses through which to interpret participants’ learning experiences. The phases of data analysis corresponded to the research questions.

**Research Question One**

_What constructive-developmental perspectives do ABE/ESOL learners in a college and career preparation class bring to their academic literacy learning experiences?_

The first stage of analysis was focused on understanding what constructive-developmental perspectives learners brought to their learning experiences. Each SOI transcript was read and independently coded and scored by me, and by an expert committee member with over 30 years’ experience administering and scoring the SOI, and with extensive experience training others to do the same. We are both certified raters, which is accomplished through
training and practice culminating in accurate analyses of at least eight of ten SOI transcripts. We scored the interviews using the method established and described in the guide to administering and interpreting the instrument (Lahey et al., 1988). The fact that we are both certified raters increased the inter-rater and construct reliability of the developmental findings, as described in the guide (Lahey et al., 1988).

The SOI analysis method involves identifying bits of data that provide structural evidence for what a participant holds as “subject” or “object,” and makes arguments for ruling out other hypotheses, thereby identifying from what developmental perspective the participant constructs meaning. The result of this analysis is a score that distinguishes between each meaning-making system, or balance point, and between four possible sub-stages between each balance point. There are sixteen possible scores, or developmental perspectives, in all.

In the SOI scoring system, developmental stages are represented by whole numbers. Instrumental is represented as “2”, socializing as “3”, and self-authoring as “4”. There are four possible sub-stages between any two stages. During the first sub-stage, the new, more complex stage is not yet “fully operating”. That is, the adult does not yet show the capacity to construct meaning from the more complex perspective. Rather, the next perspective is only showing signs of beginning to emerge. The SOI score for an adult making meaning from the first sub-stage between instrumental and socializing is represented as “2(3).”

The next sub-stage between two stages is when the more complex stage has become “fully operating”. That is, the adult now demonstrates the capacity to construct meaning from the more complex perspective she or he is evolving toward. However, the earlier stage is still predominant. Between instrumental and socializing stages, this sub-stage is represented in the SOI scoring system as “2/3.”
During the next sub-stage between two stages, the new, more complex stage has become predominant, but the adult still demonstrates meaning-construction from the perspective of the previous stage. Between instrumental and socializing stages, this sub-stage is represented as “3/2.”

At the final sub-stage between any two stages, the new stage is primary, and the old stage is no longer fully operating; however, the new, more complex “self” must still guard to keep from falling into the old way of thinking or being. Between instrumental and socializing stages, this sub-stage is represented in the SOI scoring system as “3(2).” The range of possible developmental stages and sub-stages and corresponding SOI scores is represented in Table 3.

Table 3
Possible Subject-Object Interview (SOI) Scores for Instrumental (2), Socializing (3), and Self-authoring (4) Developmental Perspectives.

| 2   | 2(3) | 2/3 | 3/2 | 3(2) | 3   | 3(4) | 3/4 | 4/3 | 4(3) | 4   |

Research Questions Two and Three
How do ABE/ESOL learners describe their academic literacy learning experiences including motivation, success and challenge in the college and career preparation class? How do they experience academic literacy skill learning in the class, especially in a recent summarizing unit?

The next phase of data analysis focused on understanding how participants experienced academic literacy goals, successes and challenges in the class (Q2) and academic literacy skill learning within it, especially in a recent summarizing unit (Q3). To address these questions, I coded data from the SOIs and LEIs using constructivist grounded theory methodology, which emphasizes giving voice to participants’ reality, as socially constructed (Charmaz, 2006). A constructivist approach to grounded theory explicitly recognizes that the researcher’s
interpretations are also a construction of reality, rather than objective reality, and therefore places a strong emphasis on reflexivity and encourages transparency and self-transparency about bias and positionality (Charmaz, 2006). Reflexive steps I took during data gathering and analysis included memoing several times per week during to track my own process of theorizing and to reflect on my theoretical bias and assumptions. While I purposefully brought a theoretical lens to this study, this step of grounded theory analysis allowed themes to arise from participants’ own words and experiences.

In this analytical process, I first identified units of text that answered how participants experienced academic literacy learning in the class. This included motivations, experiences of success and challenge, and responses to activities in the summarizing unit that I observed. In order to reduce the likelihood of projecting assumptions or theoretical bias onto participants’ meanings, I conducted line-by-line coding in approximately one third of the interviews (Charmaz, 2006), before developing tentatively focused codes. As I analyzed each interview, the codes from previous interviews helped inform the parsing of the data in a grounded theory process known as constant comparison (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1965). Throughout this process, I continued to group data based on similarities in meaning and experience, continually refining codes to more tightly fit the data (Charmaz, 2006). I re-reviewed the codes at several stages to assess the soundness of the distinctions and make changes as necessary. As a final step, I re-read the interviews toward saturation of each category (Glaser & Strauss, 1965), coding any initially missed supporting data, as well as any data that was in dissonance with the themes I had developed.

To further understand how participants experienced and responded to academic literacy experiences within the summarizing unit, I used grounded theory analysis to code the in-depth
field notes from my class observations during the summarizing unit. I first identified incidents that were helpful in understanding how participants responded to activities, and then coded those incidents using the grounded theory method described above. Because I was coding my own notes about classroom incidents, and only brief quotes from participants, I coded these notes incident-by-incident rather than line-by-line (Charmaz, 2006).

Research Question Four

*How do learners’ academic literacy learning experiences (Q2-3) relate to their constructive-developmental perspectives (Q1), including important similarities of experience from similar perspectives, and important differences from different perspectives?*

The final analytical step was to understand learners’ described experiences in relation to their constructive-developmental perspectives, including similarities in learning experiences among participants constructing meaning from similar perspectives, and differences among those constructing meaning from different perspectives. For this step, I used findings from research question one, the constructive-developmental perspective (Kegan 1982, 1994) each participant brought to his or her learning experiences, to re-examine the grounded theory codes generated about participants’ learning experiences in research questions two and three. I first analyzed grounded theory codes against developmental perspectives, identifying which codes and themes held across more than one developmental perspective, and which codes and themes emerged only within specific developmental perspectives. I then repeated the process of grounded theory analysis with interviews grouped by similar developmental perspectives, focusing on data directly related to the teaching and learning of academic literacy skills from distinct developmental perspectives. Interviews were grouped into dominantly instrumental (SOI score 2(3)); socializing (SOI score 3); and transitioning between socializing and self-authoring (SOI
scores including 3/4 and 4/3). This process resulted in the discovery of developmentally unique ways in which learners described common experiences, along with developmentally unique ways of experiencing academic literacy skill learning.

**Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research carries the possibility of bias in both data collection and interpretation. To help minimize bias in the data collection phase, as described in the previous section, I maintained a field log and reflex journal (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), in which I noted initial interpretations and the assumptions and biases that may be informing them. Also, prior to my formal observations of the three-week summarizing unit, I conducted four informal observations of the college and career preparation class to build on my existing familiarity with it, increasing the likelihood that my understanding of learners’ experiences was contextualized by a rich understanding of the class context. This helped increase the likelihood that learners were comfortable discussing their experiences openly (Maxwell, 2005). Toward this end, I also assured participants that this research is for my own learning, and in no way an evaluation of them.

During data collection, I engaged in memoing several times per week, as described in the previous section, on the ways my own values, experiences, and relationship to the class may have shaped my interpretations (Charmaz, 2006). While conducting class observations, I immediately typed and fleshed out my notes upon completion of each observation (Erickson, 1986). After the summarizing unit, I also met with the class teacher to share my observations, which included participant behaviors and interactions that she was part of or may have seen. This conversation allowed me to check some of the observations that we both remembered, corroborating what she had noticed in addition or differently. Lastly, as I made interpretations, I
considered hypotheses that could not be explained by developmental theory, asking, “How might I be wrong?” (Maxwell, 2005), and considering my data not only through the lens of developmental theory, but the literacy learning lenses in my literature review and the lenses of my own MA ESL training. I also regularly discussed findings and interpretations during the research process with an experienced colleague not connected to my research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) but with expertise in qualitative interview analysis, inviting alternate interpretations to my own during the process (Krefting, 1991). Some of my colleague’s comments, in fact, influenced two of my analytical codes.

**Presentation of Findings**

The findings of this study are presented in the order of the research questions. To contextualize the findings, chapter four introduces the college and career preparation class in the context of the literacy learning center in which it was offered, and then introduces the participants through brief narrative descriptions summarizing personal, educational, and language backgrounds. Findings on participants’ developmental perspectives are then presented for each participant, and broken down into three categories of like developmental perspectives.

Chapter five presents the findings for question two, how learners experienced academic literacy learning on the levels of motivation, support success, and challenge. Themes emerging in chapter five were common to learners across two or more of the three developmental categories that emerged among these participants. However, even among these common themes, developmental analysis revealed notable distinctions. In chapter five, those developmental distinctions are highlighted to illustrate how developmental perspectives mediated learning experience across shared learning themes.
Chapter six presents the findings for question three, how learners experienced recent academic literacy skill learning, especially during the summarizing unit. Themes emerging in chapter six were, like those in chapter five, common to learners across more than one of the developmental categories in this study. However, while many themes in chapter five were shared across all three developmental categories, the themes in chapter six emerged only from the interviews with socializing learners and those transitioning toward self-authorship. Instrumental learners described quite different ways of academic literacy skill learning, which are explored in chapter seven.

Chapter seven presents the findings for question four, exploring themes that emerged specific to learners constructing meaning from similar developmental perspectives – instrumental, socializing, or transitioning into self-authoring. These findings hone in on experiences most directly relevant to academic literacy teaching and learning in the classroom, in service of the overarching purpose of this study, to explore how understanding participants’ diverse developmental perspectives can help ABE/ESOL educators more effectively support developmentally diverse learners wanting to develop academic literacy skills. In this chapter, similarities of academic literacy learning experiences among participants constructing meaning from similar developmental perspectives are explored, along with contrasting experiences between developmental perspectives.

As is considered good practice in qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006; Maxwell, 2005), direct quotes from the interviews are used to support data analysis. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms have been used for the participants and class teacher, and references to the host institution and non-participant learners in the class have been anonymized. The quotes are exact, edited for clarity with occasional ellipses, and with removal of repeated words and
figures of speech such as “um”. Given the English language learner status of the participants, in some instances light grammatical edits have been made to increase intelligibility and readability. Where interviewer words are included in an excerpt, they appear in all caps. Citations for quotes appear in the following format: (Name, Data Source), as in, (Illyas, LEI). Citations for observations are made in text, categorized by participant, as in “Sofiya. On day nine of the summarizing unit…”.
CHAPTER FOUR – INTRODUCTION TO THE CONTEXT, LEARNERS AND RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

This chapter introduces the college and career preparation class in the context of the literacy learning center in which it was offered, and in which several participants were co-enrolled in additional ESL, GED or career preparation classes. It then provides brief narrative profiles of each participant in this study, including background information as part of their story, and context for the demographic chart at the end of the chapter. Finally, it presents findings answering research question one, *What constructive-developmental perspectives do ABE/ESOL learners in a college and career preparation class bring to their academic literacy learning experiences?* Findings in this chapter are supported primarily by data from the Subject-Object Interviews (SOI), demographic questionnaires, and recent standardized reading tests scores, with supporting evidence from the Learning Experience Interviews (LEI). Anecdotal comments from the class teacher are occasionally included to help provide context.

The College and Career Preparation Reading and Writing Class

The college and career preparation reading and writing class that was the context of this case study was one of several classes offered at an educational nonprofit learning center in Minnesota. It was situated on a major street in a busy urban neighborhood, on a public transportation route, and near several ethnic neighborhoods home to largely Somali and Latino populations. The learning center served learners from several regions of the world, with the largest percentages identifying as East African and Latino. Many learners co-enrolled in more than one class including English as a Second Language (ESL) classes from beginning through advanced levels, Graduate Education Development (GED) test preparation classes for American-born along with ESOL learners, and citizenship test preparation courses. The college and career
preparation class was designed to help learners at Intermediate ESL levels and above begin or
continue developing language and academic skills to pass the GED, prepare for post-secondary
education, or advance in careers. Reading levels in the class ranged widely, ranging eight
possible National Reporting System (NRS) levels from High Intermediate ESL up to Low Adult
Secondary (nine NRS levels are listed in order in Table 4 for reference). Because of that wide
range, High Intermediate ESL learners were allowed to enter the class only if they appeared to
have strong verbal skills and if the learning center coordinator and or teacher believed they
would be successful in the multi-level class. The college and career preparation class, like most
classes at the learning center, operated under an open enrollment policy, allowing learners to
begin or leave the class at any time based on their scheduling needs. Class units were usually
three or four weeks long, alternately emphasizing college or career preparation skills in an
integrated fashion. For example, during one unit, learners studied literary critiquing, and in the
next, they studied work-based critiques in the context of performance feedback. While this
research focused particularly on the reading and writing section of the class, which took place
Mondays and Wednesdays, many learners in the class and study were also enrolled in the
listening and speaking section, which took place Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Introduction to the ABE/ESOL Learners**

The nine learners participating in this study were diverse in many ways, hailing from
Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea, Mexico, Guatemala, and China. Their educational and linguistic
backgrounds were similarly diverse, as were their constructive-developmental perspectives, as
described in this section. The learners are introduced in the following section with biographical
information, English reading level as measured on by the National Reporting System, explicated
in Table 4, and constructive-developmental perspectives, represented in Table 4 by SOI scores.
Sofiya

According to Sofiya’s school records, she was a 73-year old woman from Somalia, although she emphasized that she was “72 in American number… it’s not a real number (laughs)” (Sofiya, LEI). She was a wife, mother and grandmother, and was attending school in America as an adult for the first time in her life. While she didn’t have the opportunity to go to school in Somalia, she said, she was able to read and write in Somali and was largely self-taught. She’d had relatives who went to school, she explained:

So always I like to write almost every night, so when I go back to sleep, before the sleep I read the book. I don’t know, I got not go in school, but I like to read something. So, when I go and coming, I’m like student. I read like student. (Sofiya, LEI).

Sofiya had attended ESL classes at another learning center before enrolling at the center in which this study took place; when the study began, she had been enrolled in the college and career preparation class for two weeks, but at the learning center for about two years. She had taken ESL classes and was also taking a medical careers class. At the time of this study, she was planning an upcoming three-month trip to her home in Somalia. Although she attended eight of twelve days of the summarizing unit, she stopped coming shortly thereafter, and was only attending the medical careers class.

Sofiya’s level of reading in English at the time of this study was High Intermediate ESL. Like all of the Intermediate ESL level learners in this study, she was permitted to enroll in the college and career preparation class by virtue of the teacher’s perception that she had strong verbal skills. Analysis of the SOI indicated that Sofiya was constructing meaning primarily from
an instrumental perspective, with a socializing perspective just beginning to develop. Her SOI score was 2(3).

Maria

Maria was a 40-year old woman from Mexico, who had been living in the U.S. for ten months at the time of this study. She was from Cancun, where she had worked for several years as a jewelry saleswoman. Maria had finished high school in Mexico, and had studied accounting in college for a year without finishing a degree. She came to the United States to be with her wife, originally from Puerto Rico, who, Maria said, was a teacher and aspiring principle. Maria had originally come to the learning center for ESL classes, but when she learned about and sat in on the college and career preparation class, decided to take it because it looked “interesting.” Unlike most ABE/ESOL learners at the center, which served primarily low-income adults, she appeared to reside in a living-wage household. While she didn’t describe an immediate need to find work, she hoped that her studies would help her to re-enter a career in sales. She explained, “the positive, here, because I happy with my wife, but I hope I can get the same work, the same job” (Maria, SOI). Maria had been enrolled in the college and career preparation class for six weeks when this study began, and attended nine of twelve days of the summarizing unit.

Like Sofiya, Maria’s reading level in English at the time of the study was High Intermediate ESL. Analysis of her SOI showed that her developmental perspective was in transition, and that she was constructing meaning from both socializing and self-authoring perspectives. Her SOI score was 3/4.
Leticia

Leticia was a 30-year old woman from Mexico who had lived in the U.S. for eleven years at the time of this study, and had been studying English for nearly two. She expressed regret that she had not started studying English sooner, explaining:

My husband said, no, we go back to Mexico, so why do you need to speak English. You don’t go to work, so you stayed at home. And I was at home. But I was wrong. So, I lost that time. Now, sometimes I say, why I didn’t go to school. And now, I doing. So, maybe it’s not too late. (Leticia, SOI).

Leticia was the first in her family to have finished high school in Mexico, traveling each day from her family’s ranch to the next town to sell bread while also attending school. At the learning center, she was co-enrolled in GED classes, and wanted to prepare for college, which she said she was not yet eligible for because of her legal status. However, she said, “I know I will have the opportunity, and I taking this class. So when the moment came, I’m ready” (Leticia, SOI). A big part of going to college, for Leticia, was to set a good example for her son.

At the time of this study, Leticia tested at a Low Adult Secondary reading level and was co-enrolled in a GED classes with native English speakers. Analysis of the SOI showed that she was constructing meaning from a socializing perspective, and her SOI score was 3.

Louam

Louam was a 40-year old woman from Eritrea who has been attending school in the United States for 14 months. Her vision was to complete college so that she could return to Africa as a missionary. Having completed high school in Eritrea, and having taken some developmental, or remedial, courses at a local community college, Louam was aware of the
challenges of reading and writing in college, and at the advice of a college ESL teacher, was working on those skills in a tuition-free ABE program. She explains,

I went to college, I start my reading class, it’s okay, but the writing was hard for me, or write essay… When I see my English in my reading class, it’s too low for me, the English, so I came here to learn more. (Louam, SOI).

She hoped to enroll in college the following semester. At the time of this study, Louam tested at a Basic Beginning ABE reading level. Analysis of the SOI showed that she was constructing meaning from a socializing perspective, and her SOI score was 3.

Masha

Masha was a 30-year old woman and ethnically Khazak, but from China. She was multilingual, having spoken Khazak at home, and Chinese in school. She explained, “My grandma is Kurdish, so I can hear Uzbek, Kurgis, Khazak, and also Chinese” (Masha, LEI). She explained that in China, after grade eight, she had transferred to a teacher training school, which went through grade eleven, and culminated in a teaching credential for elementary schools in China. However, her degree was not recognized as a high school equivalent in the U.S., so she needed a GED before she could realize her dream, unique among ABE learners, of attending art school. She explained:

I want to be a great artist. That’s what I want it….I throw everything, just coming to here, so that’s my dream, going to the abroad country, study more. Global related, or… anything for art. (Masha, SOI).

Masha had been living in the United States for four years, and had attended school for a total of fourteen months. At the time this study began, she had been enrolled in the college and
career preparation class for two weeks. Masha, like Maria, was an atypical ABE learner in that she appeared to be part of a living wage household. She was also the only learner in the study to express ambivalence about the class. On one hand, she said, “I interested that class… because teacher’s good, she teaching, then you can go communicate and study something” (Masha, LEI). On the other hand, she explained that although she hadn’t known what to expect from the adult education system in the U.S., she’d hoped that her classmates would already have gone to college and be professionals: “I expected is like a college student … for example my classmate already they doctor, lawyers” (Masha, SOI). Although from my observations during the summary unit and the teacher’s anecdotal comments, Masha appeared appropriately challenged by the class, she complained in her interviews that the class sometimes moved slowly, and considered herself a fast learner. She attended only four days of the summarizing unit, and by the end of the study was attending infrequently.

At the time of the study, Masha’s English reading level tested at High Intermediate ESL. Analysis of her SOI showed that like Maria, Masha was in transition between developmental perspectives, socializing and self-authoring, with an SOI score of 3/4.

**Nabil**

Nabil was a 26-year old ethnically Somali man who spent many of his growing up years in Kenya, where he completed high school. He had been in the United States for one year, and was eager to attend college. He explained:

In reading and writing class, we take English class, so I’m just improving my language.

So, it might be helping me in my future or when I go to college, maybe it might be helping me a lot. (Nabil, SOI).
Nabil hoped to enroll in a local community college within a semester or two, once he became eligible for financial aid. He had been enrolled in the college and career preparation reading and writing class for four weeks when the study began, and he attended eleven of twelve days during the summarizing unit.

Although he had studied English for eleven years in Kenya, Nabil’s reading level measured at High Intermediate ESL at the time this study began. Analysis of his SOI showed that he was constructing meaning from a socializing perspective, with a score of 3.

Illyas

Illyas was a 45-year-old Somali man who had lived in the United States for two years. He’d been in school for six months in the U.S., and in the college and career preparation class for three months at the time of this study. He had attended school through grade eight in Somalia, and also finished a three-year nursing credential in Somalia. Later, in a refugee camp in Ethiopia, he also completed a two-year management degree. He was married and struggling to support a large family. He had enrolled in the college and career preparation class, he said, “For me is very important for reading…so reading is little difficult. Because when I read couple of paragraphs, it’s difficult, sometimes meaning” (Illyas, SOI). He also explained that he hoped to go to college and get a better salary. Meanwhile, at the time of this study, Illyas was looking for a job, and had begun doing some temporary work. Perhaps for that reason, he attended only three of twelve days of the summarizing unit.

Illyas tested at an Advanced ESL level at the time this study began. Analysis of his SOI showed that he was constructing meaning from a primarily instrumental perspective, with an SOI score of 2(3).
Teresa

Teresa was a 23-year old woman originally from Mexico who had lived in the U.S. for eleven years, since she was twelve years old. She’d gone to school for eight years in Mexico, and in the U.S., had completed grade eleven. At the time of this study she was also enrolled in GED and medical careers classes. Like Leticia, she wanted to attend college, in large part to set a good example for her son and show him that anything is possible. She explained, “makes me feel proud that I’m showing my baby how to get all the goals he wants” (Teresa, LEI). She had been enrolled in classes at the center for about a year, with a break when she had her son.

At the time of this study, Teresa’s reading level in English was High Intermediate Basic Education. Analysis of her SOI showed that she was constructing meaning from a socializing perspective, with an SOI score of 3.

Salazam

Salazam was a 42-year old man from Ecuador who had been living in the U.S. for 25 years. He’d completed grade eight in a rural Ecuadorian school, and had driven to the U.S. with some peers 25 years ago with no English and in search of more opportunities. He explained:

The purpose coming here to, to class is to… enhance my reading and writing, even though I have my GED, got a way back, but I have been away from school for a while, and now, I decided to go a technical school for at least two years but… my writing, I need to improve my reading, writing and comprehension, because those three main things I have to focus on it. (Salazam, SOI).

At the time of this study, Salazam’s reading level in English was Low Adult Secondary. Analysis of his SOI showed that like Maria and Masha, he was transitioning between socializing
and self-authoring perspectives, with his self-authoring perspective more dominant. His SOI score was 4/3.

**Developmental Diversity among the ABE/ESOL Learners**

As described in the literature review, Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory describes three common developmental perspectives in adulthood, instrumental, socializing, and self-authoring. As illustrated in Table 3 in the data analysis section, constructive-developmental theory’s (CDT) methodological assessment tool, the SOI, identifies eleven meaning-making perspectives within the stages most common in adulthood, along a continuum that includes four sub-stages between each primary developmental stage.

Developmental perspectives among learners in the college and career preparation class, as measured by the SOI, class fell into three categories, including dominantly instrumental, with an SOI score of 2(3); socializing, with an SOI score of 3, and transitioning from socializing to self-authoring, with SOI scores including 3/4 and 4/3.

Notably but predictably, developmental perspectives did not consistently correspond to other demographic data. For example, two of the three participants constructing meaning on the journey toward self-authorship, Masha and Maria, had relatively high prior educational levels including high school and a year of college respectively, but the participant constructing meaning from the most complex perspective, Salazam, had only an eighth grade education in his rural hometown in Ecuador before coming to the US, where he later passed the GED. Likewise, while one of the participants constructing meaning from an instrumental perspective, Sofiya, had no formal schooling before coming the U.S., the other participant constructing meaning from an instrumental perspective, Illyas, had completed two college certificates while living in a refugee
camp. Similarly, while the learner constructing meaning from the most complex developmental perspective tested at a high reading level in English, Low Adult Secondary, Masha and Maria, also transitioning toward self-authorship, tested at High Intermediate ESL reading levels, which was lower than some learners constructing meaning from socializing and instrumental perspectives. This lack of clear correspondence between educational background or language level with developmental perspectives reflects the multi-faceted nature of developmental growth in adulthood, which is impacted by an individual’s challenges, supports, and continuity thereof, over time, rather than by any one factor or input.

Table 4 displays participant demographics, reading levels, and SOI scores. Participants are grouped according to SOI scores.

**Discussion of Chapter Four**

Participants brought a great deal of diversity to this study including language, educational backgrounds, and levels of reading in English. Notably, they also brought developmental diversity, with perspectives including instrumental, socializing, and transitioning toward self-authoring. Learners in this study were constructing meaning from three distinct categories ranging from primarily instrumental with an SOI score of 2(3) up to transitioning into self-authoring with a high SOI score of 4/3. This range is similar to developmental ranges found in the seminal NCSALL study applying a constructive-developmental lens to ABE/ESOL populations (Kegan et al., 2001), but with a higher number of participants constructing meaning from partly self-authoring perspectives. The developmental diversity, or range of developmental perspectives, in this group was higher than other constructive-developmental studies (Boes, 2006; Bridwell, 2013; Lindsley, 2011; Ouellette-Schramm, 2015), where developmental
diversity spanned two rather than three main categories. Table five presents participants’ demographic data along with their SOI scores.

Table 4
*Demographics, English Reading Levels and SOI Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Yrs. school in home country</th>
<th>First language(s)</th>
<th>Yrs. in U.S.</th>
<th>Yrs. school in U.S.</th>
<th>ESL/ABE reading level</th>
<th>SOI score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illyas</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&gt;1</td>
<td>Advanced ESL</td>
<td>2(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High Int. ESL</td>
<td>2(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leticia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Low Adult Secondary Ed.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louam</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tigrigna</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>Beg. Basic Ed.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabil</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt;1</td>
<td>High Int. ESL</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High Int. Basic Ed.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt;1</td>
<td>High Int. ESL</td>
<td>3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masha</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Khazak, Uzbek, Kurgis, Chinese</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>High Int. ESL</td>
<td>3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salazam</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Low Adult Secondary Ed.</td>
<td>4/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABE/ESL reading levels included scores within the following NRS level range, from low to high: High Intermediate ESL, Advanced ESL; Beginning ABE Literacy; Beginning Basic Education; Low Intermediate Basic Education; High Intermediate Basic Education; Low Adult Secondary; High Adult Secondary.
Table 5
**Participant Developmental Overview** (Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan 1984, 1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental category</th>
<th>Developmental category description</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>SOI score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrumental</strong></td>
<td>Underlying structure: categorical (thinks through one category at a time)</td>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>2(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orients to one’s own needs, wants, and purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Views the world in black-and-white</td>
<td>Illyas</td>
<td>2(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orients to rules and doing things ‘the right way’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orients to what is visible, concrete, and tangible; does not make abstractions, generalizations, or assign abstract symbolic value to experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Authority is vested in people holding certain roles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge is a “thing” to be “gotten” and to help meet concrete needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socializing</strong></td>
<td>Underlying structure: cross-categorical (thinks through more than one category at a time)</td>
<td>Leticia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orients to living up to standards set by valued others, e.g., valued social, religious, or cultural group</td>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Makes abstractions and generalizations; assigns symbolic value to experiences</td>
<td>Louam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge is to “be” someone, or to help meet social or cultural expectations</td>
<td>Nabil</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitional</strong> (socializing toward self-authorship)</td>
<td>Constructs meaning between two meaning-making systems, with one being slightly more dominant</td>
<td>Masha</td>
<td>3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-authoring meaning-making characteristics</td>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orients to internal authority, own values, and to living up to one’s own standards</td>
<td>Salazam</td>
<td>4/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Takes perspective on and responsibility for one’s own mental and emotional patterns, and learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge is seen as something to achieve greater competence and deepen understanding of self and world.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE – RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

This chapter focuses on findings for research question two: *How do ABE/ESOL learners describe their academic literacy learning experiences including motivation, success and challenge in the college and career preparation class?* The data presented in this chapter includes themes and subthemes that were shared across two or more of the three developmental categories in this study, as opposed to themes that were specific to a particular developmental perspective, which are presented in chapter seven. Two overarching themes emerged from learners across developmental perspectives: finding hope and inspiration for learning, and navigating classroom support and challenge. Subsequent developmental analysis of these themes also revealed developmentally distinct ways of making sense of these shared experiences, and those developmental distinctions are highlighted throughout this chapter. Evidence in this chapter is drawn from the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) and Learning Experience Interview (LEI).

**Finding Hope and Inspiration for Learning**

Participants’ aspirations for their own lives, and the lives of those close to them, were prevalent in their descriptions of choosing to attend the college and career preparation class. Four distinct sub-themes emerged connected to finding hope and inspiration for learning, including 1) wanting a better future for self and others; 2) feeling encouraged by progress and applying learning to life; 3) preparing for college or professional-level writing; and 4) wanting to be recognized as educated and competent. Sub-themes one and two applied to learners constructing meaning from all three developmental perspectives in this study. Only learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and transitioning to self-authoring described sub-themes three and four.
Wanting a Better Future for Self and Others

Whether participants held college as an immediate or long-term goal, or aspired toward a better job, each connected their choice to attend the college and career preparation class to a desire to improve their lives and opportunities, and in doing so, to help others. These aspirations align with the overarching purpose of Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, to help low educated adults attain skills to access post-secondary education or better jobs. However, depending on personal priorities and on constructive-developmental perspectives, these learners painted unique pictures of a better life and what it meant to pursue one.

Illyas was responsible for supporting a large family and was striving to find permanent work to get off of governmental assistance. He explained that understanding more in the college and career preparation class could lead to getting a GED or going to college, which would in turn lead to more opportunities. From his instrumental perspective, Illyas focused on how more opportunities would allow him to meet his family’s material needs:

If I cover family need, a house… and food, clothes, and many things, and money expenses. If I cover, that’s good for my family… If I cover my family, that’s good. That’s my goal. (laughs). That’s my target! (Illyas, SOI).

Illyas also explained that he wanted to help others. From his instrumental perspective, helping others was connected to his own needs and interests. When asked what would be good about being able to help others, Illyas described how God would in turn help him:

And also, another people….If you see something… or some human, some people, another people… that you can help, God will help you… God will help you. God will help you every time. Because God will help us and how many resources we have. (Illyas, SOI).
Sofiya, like Illyas, wanted a better future for herself and family, and hoped to go to college someday to become a nurse. She saw college and a better job as a long way off, explaining, “I still ESL, you know” (Sofiya, SOI). However, she explained: “If I successful the Chantal’s class, I will choose the college, community college. I like to learn the nursing or something” (Sofiya, SOI).

Like Illyas, Sofiya, through her instrumental perspective, emphasized the utilitarian benefits of college such as getting a better salary: “Actually, everyone need a good salary, you know? That’s the one that I told you, everyone need good salary, to help hiself” (Sofiya, SOI). Sofiya, also like Illyas, focused on helping others, so that God would in turn help her:

But my goal is not just salary. It’s how I help the people. Elderly people and children, people, and even my family and myself. And also I have to get salary, good salary (laughs)…Because as I told you before, I get benefit after I die, so I have to, the poor people. Sometimes I have to built it up, house, some people they without house, homeless, also hospital, so I get benefit. That’s I like, I happy for that. If I get, good, good benefit… I can look up, that God will be evaluation after I die. Because after I die I will come life, so my God will give me permission. Evaluation, or whatever that called. (Sofiya, SOI).

Illyas’ and Sofiya’s concern with meeting basic concrete needs, of course, is not unique to adults with instrumental perspectives. Unlike their classmates, however, they focused solely on utilitarian benefits, whereas their classmates constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond, when prompted, cited additional levels of motivation for building better lives.
Teresa and Leticia, for example, both constructing meaning from socializing perspectives, characterized by identification with abstract values and relationships with valued others and a desire to live up to social roles, held relationship-oriented motivations for going to college and getting better jobs. They also described wanting to go to college in order to fulfill expectations of a social role. Teresa’s goal, once she completed her GED, was to become a certified nurse. When prompted to elaborate, she oriented internally and to an abstract sense of identity, describing what kind of career she wanted and what type of person she wanted to be. She also oriented to fulfilling her role aspirations:

The most important… that I’m gonna do what I wanna do, and what I wanna be, and a better future for me and for my baby boy, and my baby can be proud of me… that I achieve my goal. (Teresa, SOI).

Cuz as he’s growing, he can see that I’m a fighting… woman. Yeah, ‘cause, you know my goal is to be a nurse, and I know that I’m gonna do the goal. So that way my baby can say oh, if he wants to be something in life, he can be, I can be the… (sighs).

ROLE MODEL?

Yeah! Yeah. (Teresa, SOI).

Leticia, like Teresa constructing meaning from a socializing perspective, wanted to go to college. She was also motivated to be a good role model for her son. For her, college also held the symbolic value of overcoming her obstacles, a value she wanted her son to see she could live up to. When asked what her goal of going to college would mean to her, she explained:
I start here (points to far right), and I go to college (points to far left), and I go in the middle, (points in the middle), and if I here, I say, I didn’t stay. The obstacles that were in my way, in my road, they didn’t stop me. I continued. (Leticia, SOI).

When we look out in other persons, they have better life. Not exactly be rich, but better life. So, that’s mean we have to not stop and try to do something for us. Now, I am here, and this school learning English, my son said one day, ‘Mom, why you don’t go to school all day?’ I say, ‘I in school!’ But, ‘No, why you don’t go to college?’ so, I want to be an example for him. Yes. Not only help him with homework, when I told him do something, don’t say but why, you are not doing, or why you didn’t. (Leticia, SOI).

While many participants’ aspirations for a better future for self and others were rooted in overcoming difficult socioeconomic conditions, including the four participants above, neither Masha nor Maria described that need. Both, however, wanted more or different opportunities. As introduced in chapter four, Masha held an uncommon aspiration for an ABE learner: “I want to be a great artist. That’s what I want it” (Masha, SOI). From her developmental perspective transitioning toward self-authorship, this goal was expressed as a desire to develop and express her individuality: “I wanna follow up my score, and then, diploma, then go to college, then, also I’m doing going to the art school, and then I have doing my own different idea” (Masha, SOI).

Like the other learners in this study, Masha’s goals for herself were also tied to an aspiration to help others. In her case, she wanted to share what she hoped to learn in art school with her artist community in China:

Because they didn’t abroad country, they don’t understand, also the society, also the politics controlling of the what kind of knowledge, what kind of educated they have… so
that is very important what did I get more information, but I didn’t get yet, but I will, I hope. (Masha, SOI).

Maria and Salazam, also transitioning toward self-authoring perspectives, characterized by a growing concern with personal competence and living up to one’s own ideals, anticipated that having more opportunities would lead to greater self-satisfaction. Maria explained that the purpose of having more opportunities was, “I think first for feel better myself. And then, for get a job like that I want” (Maria, SOI). In describing why it was important for her to do well in the class, she reiterated, “I think it’s something personal for me. I think it’s make me feel good. It’s just for me…that will be a success for me” (Maria, SOI).

Salazam, also on the journey toward self-authorship, described several levels of wanting a better future and more opportunities. He felt stuck in his current job, and wanted more opportunities for advancement. Although he, like Illyas, was responsible for a family and was even concerned about the possibility of losing his house, far more than the house itself was at stake. When asked what would be worst about losing his house, Salazam explained:

Losing independence. Losing independence, that’d be it. Losing independence. I like being very independent. (Salazam, SOI).

In his growing self-authorship, pursuing a better future, Salazam described attending the class to help meet his growing need for self-satisfaction:

When I came here it was always do something, pursue education. But it’s always in my mind, now, I feel I’m not satisfied, satisfied with myself, where I am, because I haven’t achieved my, (chuckles) my goals. And so, I’m still pursuing. (Salazam, SOI).
When asked what it would mean to him to achieve his goals, Salazam explained, “Oh.. it change my life. It change my life” (Salazam, SOI).

**Feeling Encouraged by Progress and Applying Literacy Learning to Life**

Most learners in the college and career preparation class drew inspiration by seeing progress they were making in class, and by applying class learning to real-life contexts. Success can beget encouragement at any age, and applying skills learned in the classroom directly to present, real-life circumstances is a hallmark characteristic of adult learning. However, as with wanting a better future for self and others, learners described developmentally distinct conceptions of classroom success and applying learning to life. Nabil and Sofiya illustrate how learners constructing meaning with contrasting developmental perspectives gain encouragement from progress made in class in developmentally distinct ways. Salazam and Illyas likewise illustrate developmentally distinct perspectives on applying class learning to work. Louam and Leticia demonstrate how their socializing capacity to relate abstract ideas allowed them to relate learning in the college and career preparation class to other academic contexts.

Nabil and Sofiya described feeling encouraged when they saw that they were learning. Nabil, from his socializing perspective, characterized by seeking approval from valued others, described feeling encouraged by positive feedback from the teacher:

I can say the most confident I get when Mrs. Chantal read for me, read this one and mark for me, she have not, encourage me, she said, you did good. So that one can (laughs) give me heart to continue to another one, maybe. (Nabil, SOI).

Sofiya, like Illyas, described taking heart from positive feedback. From her instrumental perspective, she oriented to visible, concrete demonstrations of approval by her classmates:
I like the ‘oh, thank you, we understand!’ (claps)

SO YOU LIKE IT WHEN THEY SAY OH, WE UNDERSTAND, AND THEY CLAP.

Yeah!

WHEN THEY SAY ‘WE UNDERSTAND’ AND THEY CLAP, WHAT’S THE BEST PART ABOUT THAT?

That’s my heart told me okay, you know English, more English. (Sofiya, SOI).

Salazam and Illyas both described gaining confidence and a sense of independence by successfully using literacy skills to increase success in the domain of work. Salazam, on the journey toward self-authorship, where competence and self-authority become important, described how increasing vocabulary and spelling skills could empower him with confidence:

When sometimes my at my job, I have native English speakers, they’ve been trying to spell words, how to spell certain words, and I’m there too. I’m there too, I’m spelling too, because I’ll already know the word, and positively I’m not gonna make mistake because I really know this, how this word is spelled. Then I give, ‘Do you know the word too?’ I’ll say, ‘Yes, I know that!’ (Salazam, LEI).

Illyas, like Salazam, felt encouraged by applying literacy learning to work. From his instrumental perspective, he described his success through concrete actions of filling out a job application:

I am last week I go somewhere, I apply job, they did give me a form. I fill my own. And I’m first name, last name, middle name, social security … and state, experience, education, and that’s I fill my own writing.

AND HOW WAS THAT FOR YOU? WHEN YOU FILLED YOUR OWN?
Well, it’s very, (chuckles), I’m happy… Because, nobody not helping me. I, only, I’m write my hands. (Illyas, SOI).

Louam and Leticia, both constructing meaning from socializing perspectives, in which relating abstract concepts becomes possible, could see how their classroom learning was contributing to success on their academic journeys. Louam attributed her feeling of near college readiness to the writing confidence and subsequent practice she was gaining from class:

I start to write my idea, my letter to different offices, for example to Immigration…. I was not doing that, even though I have something to write, but I don’t have, I was not have confidence, to write is even is not clear what I wanna say when I write. But this time, I came a couple of months… So I start writing and (chuckles) when I writing they… respond me, because they understand my writing (laughs). I hope. (Louam, SOI).

I feel more confident to write the text, my idea to friends, and email… and then, this is in a few months, if I keep more, I’m gonna be ready for the college, I’m thinking. (Louam, SOI).

Leticia, also constructing meaning from a socializing perspective, felt encouraged by connecting concepts she learned in the college and career preparation class to success in her GED class:

Use not only in the class but in other class. I have to, for example I have been in the reading and writing, I learned the figurative language, so when I am in the GED class sometimes they explain about figurative language, what is metaphor, simile, and I know, because I remember from the class. So, there are other things that I have, I have been learning in reading and writing, that is help, is helping me in GED now. (Leticia, SOI).
Preparing for College or Professional-Level Writing

Several participants in this study constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond, with their capacities to relate abstract ideas, knew that the “type” of writing in college and career contexts is different than everyday writing, and saw themselves as preparing for that type of challenge. Louam and Nabil described actively preparing for college-level writing. Teresa, also preparing for college, connected the writing she was doing in class to the type of writing she expected to do as a nurse. Salazam, transitioning toward self-authoring, described preparing for professional writing in terms of his longing for a greater sense of authority.

Nabil and Louam both hoped to enroll in college the semester after this study. Louam had been to college before, had struggled with writing, and had enrolled in the college and career preparation class at the advice of a former college instructor. She knew she needed to improve her college-level writing skills to reach her goals.

In the writing and reading, especially the writing, I need more to write like a college. I mean, to be educated. I need to be educated. More education, professional. So I need to work with professions things… Learn more and writing and reading is, that’s the way the college is, I mean it’s high level there….at the high level is the English. What I have is lower level, like not a college standard. (Louam, SOI).

Louam explained how the connection she saw between what she was doing in the college and career preparation class, and what she would need to do in college, encouraged her to learn:

This similar is like special the reading and writing, it’s how to write, and how to explain, and how summarize… similar when I start the English, reading, at the college… so I more awake and interest to learn. (Louam, SOI).
Nabil had never been to college, but hoped to register soon. He described the college and career preparation class as an opportunity to get familiar with college writing expectations:

At least I have a clue how to write, how to read, and maybe how to spell the word, and maybe I have same kind of vocabulary they tell me to write an essay or conversation. At least I have an idea what to write. So if they tell me, ask me to summarize, or make a conversation, I have an idea for all that. It will not be my first time to write that one… So it will help me a lot. (Nabil, LEI).

Teresa and Salazam saw themselves as building writing skills that they would use both in college and at work. Teresa, who wanted to become a certified nurse, connected the “type” of writing she was learning in the college and career preparation class toward that goal:

For medical career, you need to write what a patient is trying to say, ensure, you don’t need to write the whole every speech, or every single word, you need to… conceal?

CONDENSE?
Condense! You need to condense, you need to condense, and you need to be a clearly writing. (Teresa, SOI).

Teresa also described her reason for taking the college and career preparation class as preparing for the writing challenges she expected to see in college:

I wanna go to college. So, that class makes me prepare more, and learn more, about writing, how to speak, so that way, when I get ready to college, I’m gonna be more prepared, and more, I can say more advanced. That will be more kind of easy, ‘cause I know college is not easy. (Teresa, SOI).
Although Salazam had not been to college, he knew something about what college writing demands might look like, and saw himself developing needed skills for that:

I never been college, but several similar. They have similars what they…what you choose a topic, and then you get the hook, then they give you the main idea, thesis statement, at least gotta have three different points. And you gotta explain each one of those points, each one of the points making a paragraph, and each paragraph gotta be indented, and then you give a summary, or a restatement of the thesis statement, you restate and use different words. I have done it, but it’s kinda not good, but I need to practice. Will be, have a well-developed writing, you know? I need to improve that. (Salazam, LEI)

From his growing self-authoring perspective and increasing attention to the intrinsic value of learning, Salazam was particularly motivated by the more challenging readings in class that would help him get ready for college, and at the same time, broaden his mind:

It’s hard because this assignment has two pages, four pages. It’s not a simple one-page topic. It’s broad. But it’s challenging. It’s challenge, but challenging is better… It’s more broad thinking. It expands my knowledge. My knowledge, and give me more, my ability, my skills. It helps me develop here, helps develop my skills. I have expand, I have broader knowledge, gives me broader knowledge. (Salazam, SOI).

In his developmental transition toward self-authorship, Salazam also hoped that more professional literacy skills would help him ‘take charge’ at work:

I can be involved where I work, doing essays, writing reports. Or maybe, take charge. Take charge, instead being just a regular team member, being, maybe a like a supervisor or a team lead. (Salazam, SOI).
Wanting to be Recognized as Educated and Competent

Coming from challenging socioeconomic circumstances, and navigating society as both ethnic minorities and second-language speakers, several learners in this study described wanting to be seen as competent, educated and professional as they developed more advanced literacy skills. Teresa and Salazam described developmentally distinct motivations for this shared desire. From her socializing perspective, which orients toward living up to ideals of valued others, it was important for Teresa to be someone who is educated and properly preparing herself for college:

When you speak, you can use words that are not poor… So it’s kind of hard for me, ‘cause my goal, it’s to use not simple words, academic words… For me it means to prove that I’ve been study, that I’ve been getting prepared, like I’m getting education, so to prove that I’ve been learning a lot, and I’m not just, when you don’t go to school, you’re not prepared, your language, it’s really different… So, that’s my goal, to show, to prove that I’m getting prepared.

WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST PART ABOUT BEING ABLE TO PROVE THAT? (Gasps and smiles). Oh! Great, make me feel proud of me. (Teresa, SOI).

Salazam described his desire to be seen as competent from the dual developmental needs of being recognized by others, a priority from his socializing perspective, and from his desire to exercise competence and authority in a supervisory position.

I can be able to demonstrate I have well-develop vocabulary, and I can take a supervisor level position, say, I can do this, I can even (slaps table) do the job … I can tell my employers that I’m smart too. I have brains too, you know. (Salazam, SOI).
Navigating Classroom Supports and Challenges

Learners constructing meaning from all three developmental perspectives described their experiences with classroom supports and challenges within three clear themes. Whether seeking correct answers or constructive criticism, learners described relying on the teacher’s explanations, examples, and feedback to understand class material and gauge learning. Learners constructing meaning from all developmental perspectives also described learning by interacting in the classroom. Lastly, many of the learners in this study described the challenges of making time for school and homework. While each of these themes was expressed by learners across developmental perspectives, many of the ways in which learners understood these experiences were again developmentally distinct.

Looking to Teacher Explanations, Examples and Feedback

Nearly all of the learners in this study described the teacher’s explanations, examples and feedback as a critical part of their learning in the college and career preparation class. Salazam and Nabil described clarifying features of the summarizing genre through the teacher’s explanations, and Teresa and Louam described how direct explanations from the teacher were more helpful than getting information from an external source like the internet. While some of the ways learners described benefitting from explanations applied across developmental perspectives, others were developmental in nature. From her instrumental perspective, Sofiya described listening to the teacher as a rule to be followed, while Masha and Maria, both developing toward self-authorship, described teacher explanations and feedback in connection with their more self-defined priorities.
Salazam and Nabil described how teacher explanations cleared up initial misconceptions they’d had about summarizing. Salazam offered an example of when he’d been struggling with how to write a sentence incorporating the title of the article:

I did not understand, and how do you do this? And she told me, you better do this, do this way, it was how to add the title to the summary… I didn’t know that there was many ways to write. (Salazam, SOI).

Nabil’s initial struggle had been around summarizing a short article. He explained how he had initially included irrelevant details and his own opinion when summarizing, and described his improvement following a step-by-step explanation:

That one, I have not write down properly. Because I hope it was the first one, and I don’t even know what to write. So, when Mrs. Chantal tell us to write, I even forget (laughs) what to write. I just go another way. It’s not supposed to be. I left the main details and the more important ones behind, and take some, maybe it’s not even necessary… right now I can differentiate, which one is the most important and which is not more important. Right now I can differentiate, but that time, I have no idea. (Nabil, LEI).

Louam and Teresa described the importance of being in class to get the teacher’s explanations, describing how looking up missed content online or in a dictionary is not the same. Louam explained:

If I miss a class, I will not get that explanation or teaching, that’s what we come to learn. Explanation, to understand, to learn more…. something new, learning, you don’t know something you learn, and it’s help you more than you do by yourself… when I’m in school, more than I do by myself, when I in school, I more understand. (Louam, LEI).
Like Louam, Teresa explained how she learned better from the teacher’s explanations than independently, because the teacher can continue providing examples or simplify the explanation until she understands:

The best way to learn is to have the teacher explain you, what was the package about. I can search internet or dictionaries, but it’s not the same as the teacher can explain… ‘Cause she can give you examples. If you still don’t understand with examples, she can try another ways to explain you, until you can understand. (Teresa, LEI).

While learners across developmental perspectives described learning best from the teacher, Sofiya, from her instrumental perspective, rather than reflecting on learning from explanations, described listening to the teacher as a rule to be followed through explicit, visible behaviors:

Ok, so I have to listen teacher. Listen well. And I have to take the pen or pencil, I have to write what teacher said. Otherwise I won’t remember. Because teacher talking and maybe one, two, three, four, or subject. So I have to write down, then ask teacher question. If I don’t know or understand, I say, ‘teacher I have question’. I’m not say, ‘ah!’ (makes noise to indicate shouting over others). I have to wait if someone talking. Example someone say, ‘oh teacher’, you cannot say same time, ‘oh teacher’! You have to good student. (Sofiya, SOI)

While Sofiya oriented to listening to the teacher to be a good student, Masha, on her journey toward self-authorship and ambivalent about being in the class, found it important not to simply follow the teacher, which she described as childish. She valued learning independently and at her own pace, which she saw as faster than the pace of the class:
You can study, read everything is by yourself. Some student for example, they not real studying. They just say something, one word, they say follow the teacher. That is like same thing like I’m teaching my children. Same thing. When I wake up like that, they following. But we are adult, I think. Have to be searching everything by yourself.

(Masha, LEI).

Maria, also on the journey toward self-authorship, not only valued teacher feedback, but, aligned with her increasingly self-authoring orientation to personal competence, valued constructive feedback:

When come from your teacher or your boss, the feedback is very important for me, or for any people I think, because in that way you can grow up or you can learn more about that, something in the specific… you can grow up, because the feedback can be, make you better person. Or what they give you a very good feedback can be constructive… Constructive, that is much better. Yes, because some points, not all people do very well things, but if they can give a feedback, and why, how, what can I do, for do very well. In the next time. That is good for you. (Maria, LEI).

Learning by Interacting in Class

Several learners described learning by interacting in class. As in other themes, the ways they understood learning through interaction were developmentally distinct. From his instrumental perspective, Illyas oriented toward the number of things a group could remember over just one person, while Leticia and Teresa, from their socializing perspectives, reflected on inner learning moments during class interactions.

When prompted to describe his experience working with his group on an article from the summarizing unit, Illyas described the benefit of collectively remembering more information:
Group work is good, is better than one person (chuckles). Everyone will remember something...because you remember something, and me, I remember something, and another person remembers something. (Illyas, SOI).

Teresa and Leticia, from their socializing perspectives, were able to reflect on and clarify their own summarizing processes by hearing a classmate demonstrate something they’d been struggling with. Teresa described how hearing what she considered a well-done summary from a classmate clarified how she might do the same:

The last summary, it was really, really good. And I really pay attention on that summary, [classmate name], she made a summary, and it was really good, and I heard the others too, and it was really good too, but for me, the best it was the summary that [classmate name] made. ‘Cause she explain very well, and she didn’t add words, she used like two, but she used quotes. So it was really good. And that helped me, when I heard or when I read something my classmate made. That helps me a lot. (Teresa, LEI).

When prompted to elaborate on how listening to her classmate’s summary helped her, Teresa explained:

Listen to them, listen, how they work, and sometimes if I don’t know how to work in something, for example, sometimes it’s hard for me to follow the steps. Listen to my classmates makes me more helpful, to listen them, and, see ‘oh, so that’s what she meant, she followed this step, after this, oh, okay’. (Teresa, LEI).

Leticia also reflected on a learning moment that occurred when listening to a classmate share her summary. By listening to a classmate state the main idea of an article in her own
words, she explained, she realized that she could, and should, use her own words rather than copying when summarizing:

> When someone give the idea, the main idea, but not from the passage, not directly from the passage. With their own words. So then I have to do, I don’t have to copy, I have to give the main idea but, I have to gave my main idea, but in my own words, not copying from the passage… I understand, I don’t have to copy, I have to say what I understand from the passage… Because I copy the main idea, but the other classmates give the main idea in his own words. So I understand that I don’t have to highlight or copy. I have to say in my own words. (Leticia, LEI).

**Struggling to Find Time for Valued Attendance and Homework**

A resounding theme and tension among many of the learners in this study was on the one hand, seeing regular attendance and completing homework as essential to success in the class, while at the same time, struggling to make time. As with previous themes, the ways in which learners made sense of this tension reflected their developmental perspectives. With their instrumental orientation toward right answers and concrete learning, Illyas and Sofiya regretted getting a wrong answer or missing a sentence when they missed class; Sofiya also described a compensatory rule. From their socializing perspectives, Louam and Teresa saw missing class as missing not just information, but learning. Salazam and Masha, transitioning toward self-authorship, described their attendance and homework choices in connection with their own goals.

Illyas, who attended three of twelve days of the summarizing unit, explained his obstacles to regular attendance from his concrete perspective:

> Still I’m not summarizing, ‘cause I didn’t get time. ‘Cause last week I’m looking for jobs. I didn’t get time to summarize… Because I have family. Kids. And I’m in rented house.
Yes, and there is a lot of something they needs, so I need to work, I need to some, I have sometimes appointment in the hospital or some else, so there’s a lot of things. (Illyas, LEI).

Illyas also described feeling sad when missing class resulted in being unable to answer a question the next day:

Sad is if you get test, and sometimes I’m busy, sometimes I’m working somewhere. I didn’t get more any time, so I can’t feel my homework. So another day, next day, if you know there is questions, if you can’t answer well, you become sad. (Illyas, SOI).

Sofiya, like Illyas, described feeling bad when she missed class, especially if she missed for a social reason, rather than a “justifiable” reason like work. With her concrete orientation to learning, she focused on how missing a class meant, in turn, missing a sentence:

Sometime I miss the class, a little bit worry… if I working it’s okay, I tell the teacher, but without work, I miss the class, any reason, sometime the guest come with me, going moving or somewhere. So that’s I get worried… I don’t like to miss, so that’s why I worried.

WHAT IS THE WORST PART ABOUT MISSING THE CLASS? WHAT MAKES YOU WORRY?

Because I know I missed sentence.

YOU MISSED A SENTENCE.

A new sentence, yeah. (Sofiya, SOI).

From her instrumental perspective, in which learning is equal to “doing,” Sofiya described a rule she could follow to make up for a missed class and sentence:
I missed yesterday the class, next I have to more, get more. Double class. Yeah, double class… Because as I said I have to improve my English. I have to know what I miss yesterday… Example, I missed yesterday the sentence or class, so I have to take that class today. (Sofiya, LEI)

Teresa and Louam described the frustration they felt when they missed class, and reflected on the learning and teacher explanations they missed when absent. Teresa, a new mother, lamented that she was not performing as well as when she attended regularly, before her baby. Responding to a question about a time she’d experienced success in the class, she explained:

For this year I don’t think so, ‘cause I’ve been absent a lot. Last year, I can say yes, ‘cause I was coming every day. So I didn’t miss anything. And this year I’ve been absent a lot… when she explains something, I miss that… So, that’s why sometimes affect me…I can say the test, quiz. I used to do those well. (Teresa, SOI).

Louam also connected attendance directly to class success:

If I miss a class I will not get that explanation or teaching, that’s what we come to learn. So when we miss, we miss that, I mean what if we miss class, I miss the learning, or too. (Louam, LEI).

Salazam, developing toward self-authorship, where learners become able to own and take perspective on their patterns and challenges, attributed not improving at the rate he’d like to not doing homework regularly. He explained some of his conflicting obligations, but held himself responsible for prioritizing and managing his time:
The classes here is very excellent, excellent, but why I haven’t been successful here is because I haven’t been doing enough homework that is required to do. It’s not because the class, no, the class is excellent. (Salazam, SOI).

I trying to do more, I’d been doing well if I’m doing my homework at home, put some extra time besides class. But I’m trying to manage time, maybe, prioritize, prioritize. Even though education’s my priority, I haven’t put in enough time. I mean, time. More time to do this. (Salazam, SOI).

Masha, also on the journey to self-authorship and ambivalent about being in the class, described attendance as a secondary priority. Her first priority reflected both the socializing aspect of her meaning-making system, to live up to her desired role as an artist, and her growing self-authoring desire for independence: “Focusing my goal too, I’m coming, but I also doing my art, and my life. So I also have my life, and doing my thing” (Masha, LEI). She elaborated, “Even though DaVinci great artist, they not teaching study at the school, they study by themselves” (Mahsa, LEI).

**Discussion of Chapter Five**

This chapter presented findings for research question two, *How do ABE/ESOL learners describe their academic literacy learning experiences including motivation, success and challenge in the college and career preparation class?* The developmentally distinct ways in which learners described shared learning experiences, and the two sub-themes in which instrumental learners did not appear, are consistent with Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental stage descriptions, and with previous findings in the constructive-developmental literature, particularly the seminal NCSALL study. These themes and their developmental
variations also reveal that learners’ experiences of issues within ABE learning and programming can be quite different depending on constructive-developmental perspectives.

**Finding Hope and Inspiration for Learning**

Learners across all three developmental categories in this study described arguably strong motivations and inspirations for developing academic literacy skills, including wanting a better future for themselves and others and finding encouragement by seeing progress and applying literacy learning to life. These motivations affirm the overall purpose of ABE programs, to help adults develop skills to improve their lives by preparing for post-secondary education or better jobs (Comings, 2009), and echo the adult learning maxim that classroom learning should support adults’ real-life challenges (Finn, 2011). The developmentally distinct ways that learners described these motivations, however, suggest educators should not assume that widely-recognized maxims of ABE and adult learning are understood in the same way by all learners.

**Wanting a better future for self and others.** Learners across developmental perspectives described wanting to develop academic literacy skills to help them build a better future for themselves and others. While many learners described wanting to improve work opportunities and economic conditions, when prompted, learners with socializing perspectives and beyond described relational and symbolic reasons for doing so. Instrumental learners described solely utilitarian aspects of a better future, such as being able to afford “a house… and food, clothes, and many things, and money expenses” (Illyas, SOI). This is consistent with NCSALL study findings in which dominantly instrumental ABE/ESOL learners described concrete learning motivations such as wanting more job opportunities (Drago-Severson & Berger, 2001) or a better salary (Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001).
Socializing learners in this study described wanting to be good role models for their children, wanting their children to be proud of them, and wanting to do work that they liked, consistent with socializing learning themes in the NCSALL study (Drago-Severson & Berger, 2001; Helsing, Broderick & Hammerman, 2001). These learners also described wanting to live up to the expectations of a valued group and to “be” a certain type of person, a learning motivation theme that emerged in the NCSALL study (Drago-Severson, 2004).

Learners transitioning toward self authorship described how more opportunities would lead to greater self-satisfaction, similar to those in the NCSALL study who wanted to live up to their identities as life-long learners (Drago-Severson & Berger, 2001).

**Finding encouragement by progress and applying literacy learning to life.** Learners across all three developmental perspectives in this study described finding encouragement for academic literacy learning by seeing progress they were making in the class itself, or by seeing ways in which they were applying literacy learning from the class in their lives. On one level, these findings affirm the concept of self-efficacy, seeing the ability to be successful in class, and the importance of learning being relevant to learners’ goals, as described in the literature on ABE persistence (Mellard et al., 2013). These findings also affirm the importance of relating adult ESL learning to real-life challenges (Finn, 2011; Parrish, 2004). However, the ways in which learners understood progress and the types of connections they made between class learning and life were developmentally distinct. These findings suggest that learners may realize self-efficacy through success in quite different ways, depending on their developmental perspectives. Instrumental learners such as Sofiya, who was encouraged when she saw visible demonstrations of approval, and Illyas, who felt successful when he accomplished the concrete task of filling out a job application in English, may need clear-cut evidence of approval and explicit, concrete
relevance of class learning to goals to experience self-efficacy in the learning environment. Socializing learners such as Nabil may find self-efficacy through more abstract forms of feedback and assurance from the teacher, and like Louam and Leticia, be more equipped to connect class learning to success with goals outside of class of their own accord. Learners such as Salazam, who are transitioning toward self-authorship, may experience heightened self-efficacy when class learning relates to success with a life goal important to the learner’s sense of personal competence.

**Preparation for college and professional-level writing.** Learners describing preparing for college or professional-level writing found motivation by making connections between the types of literacy activities they were doing in class to their academic and professional writing goals. The fact that only learners constructing meaning with socializing perspectives and beyond described this connection supports the constructive-developmental tenet that only as learners transition into socializing knowing do they develop cross-categorical reasoning (Kegan, 1982, 1994), allowing them to connect one category, such as the “type” of writing being practiced in class, to another category, the “type” of writing required in college. From a constructive-developmental perspective, these learners were using their developmental capacity to relate abstract categories to make these connections, and in all but Masha’s case, to thereby increase their motivation.

In addition to employing their cross-categorical capacities to relate classroom learning to academic goals, these learners also appeared to have some explicit knowledge that and how academic writing in college is different than everyday writing (Cummins, 1979; Schleppegrel, 2004). Louam had taken college classes before, as in, “similar when I start the English, reading, at the college” (Louam, LEI), which appears to have helped her develop a conceptual framework
of academic literacy. Salazam, perhaps through getting his GED, also seemed to have had a framework for thinking about academic texts, as in, “They have similars …what you choose a topic, and then you get the hook, then they give you the main idea, thesis statement...” (Salazam, LEI). Nabil was aware that the reading and writing he was learning were directly relevant to college writing, as in, “At least I have an idea what to write. So if they tell me, ask me to summarize, or make a conversation, I have an idea for all that” (Nabil). The fact that learners themselves distinguished academic literacy as a skill they needed to develop supports Cummins’ (1979) distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), and his argument that CALP is more complex to learn. While this notion challenges the sociocultural stance that oral language is just as complex to learn as academic language, it supports the sociocultural tenet (Gee, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) that ELLs need to explicitly learn the conventions of academic English.

**Wanting to be seen as educated and competent.** Learners constructing meaning from fully or partially socializing perspectives in this study also described wanting to be seen as educated and competent, consistent with socializing learners in the NCSALL study who didn’t want others to think they were “stupid” because they were still learning English (Drago-Severson, 2004). Teresa, from her socializing perspective, wanted others to know that she was doing what was necessary to be prepared for college, as in, “So, that’s my goal, to show, to prove that I’m getting prepared” (Teresa, SOI). Salazam’s desire to be recognized at work reflected his socializing perspective on one hand, but on the other, his self-authoring orientation toward wanting to exercise more authority, as in, “I can be able to demonstrate I have well-develop vocabulary, and I can take a supervisor level position, say, I can do this” (Salazam, SOI). These findings suggest that learners developing into and beyond socializing perspectives may gain self-
efficacy by making progress in goals intertwined with their sense of self, as developmentally connected to living up to both external and growing internal standards.

Navigating Classroom Supports and Challenges

Learners across developmental perspectives also described three common sub-themes of navigating classroom supports and challenges, including learning from the teacher’s explanations and from interacting in class. An overwhelming majority also described the tension of, on one hand, valuing attendance and homework, but on the other, struggling to find time. These findings, on one level, are consistent with what would be expected from learners in a program balancing strong instruction with interactive learning (Parrish, 2004), and with the situational barriers one might expect ABE/ESOL learners to describe facing (Comings, 2009). However, the developmentally distinct ways in which learners understood teacher explanations, learning from class interaction, and their own situational barriers to attendance were also developmentally distinct, aligning with Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental stage descriptions, and some themes were consistent with NCSALL study findings on developmentally distinct teacher and learner role conceptions (Drago-Severson, 2004). These developmental distinctions suggest that well-known maxims and issues in ABE/ESOL teaching and learning are understood differently by learners depending on their developmental perspectives.

Looking to teacher explanations, examples and feedback and learning by interacting in class. Learners from all three developmental perspectives in this study emphasized the importance of teacher explanations, examples and feedback, as well as learning by interacting in class. This finding on one level suggests the dual importance of learner-centered, communicative language learning environments reflecting best practices in adult ESL (Parrish, 2004), along with a teacher who effectively responds to questions with explanations and examples. Additionally,
the fact that much of what learners described gleaning from teacher explanations and from each other was related to genre conventions of summarizing, as in Salazam’s learning on how to incorporate a title in a summary, Nabil’s clarification on not including his opinion or writing too much, and Leticia’s insight around using her own words, affirms the sociocultural notion (Gee, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) that ELLs need to explicitly learn the conventions of academic English. However, the developmentally distinct ways in which learners saw themselves as learning from teacher examples and explanations, and from each other, suggest that depending on their developmental perspectives, learners make different sense of those class supports. Instrumental learners like Sofiya and Illyas may see listening to the teacher and interacting in class as means to “get” more information, an instrumental orientation to learning also found in the NCSALL study (Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan et al, 2001), whereas socializing learners like Teresa and Leticia may be more likely, during teacher explanations or class interactions, to reflect on their own processes or clarify understandings. Learners developing toward self-authoring perspectives with an increasing focus on personal competence, such as Maria, may be particularly interested in constructive feedback.

**Struggling to make time for valued attendance and homework.** Learners constructing meaning across all constructive-developmental perspectives represented in this study described the tension of needing to attend class and complete homework to be successful, but struggling to consistently make time. On one level, these findings affirm the reality of high situational barriers facing ABE populations (Comings, 2009; Mellard et al., 2013; National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2003). They also suggest, however, that ABE/ESOL learners understand this tension in different ways, depending on their developmental perspectives.
Learners across developmental perspectives described many of the same situational barriers to regular attendance mentioned in the literature, such as having to balance school with work and family, in Salazam’s and Illyas’ cases, or with taking care of a young child while relying only on family members for childcare, as in Teresa’s case. Whatever their developmental perspectives, with the seeming exceptions of Maria and Masha, these learners’ situational barriers to persistence reflected that ABE serves primarily economically disadvantaged learners (D’Amico, 2004). Masha’s barrier aligns with what the literature described as dispositional barriers, including a seeming lack of “task value” assigned to some learning activities in class and perhaps a decreased sense of self-efficacy due to the “distance” she saw between where she was and where she wanted to be. However, the distinct ways that learners described this tension shed a developmental light on well-known persistence issues in ABE. Instrumental learners were concerned with the concrete consequences of missing class, such as missing a sentence or getting the wrong answer upon returning; Sofiya’s solution of “doing a double class” to make up for a missed day is consistent with the NCSALL study’s finding that instrumental learners conceptualized learning as “doing” (Drago-Severson, 2004). Socializing learners, while also citing lower performance when they missed class, reflected on the learning they missed when absent. Learners transitioning toward self-authorship described attendance in connection with how they saw class supporting their own goals, with Salazam wanting to better manage his time to attend more often and do more homework, while Masha wanted to prioritize her “real life” over regular attendance.

While developmental perspectives shaped learners’ conceptions of attendance struggles, they did not appear to directly impact attendance patterns during the summarizing unit. Sofiya, who saw it as possible to do a “double class” to make up for missing one, attended eight of
twelve days of the unit, while Salazam, who saw the class as helping him in his immediate goal of moving up at work and his longer-term goal of going to college, and saw himself as needing to prioritize attendance and homework more in order to succeed, attended only five days of the unit. This suggests that while development may shape how learners think about attendance, situational factors in these learners’ lives likely impacted attendance as well.
CHAPTER SIX – RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

This chapter focuses on findings for research question three: How do ABE/ESOL learners experience academic literacy skill learning, especially in a recent summarizing unit? Two overarching themes emerged answering this question: learning a new genre in a new language, and participating in stages of writing. These themes and their sub-themes are explored in this chapter. Evidence in this chapter is drawn from the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) and Learning Experience Interview (LEI), and supporting evidence is drawn from observations during the summarizing unit. While the themes presented in chapter five applied to learners across all three developmental categories in this study, the themes in this chapter emerged for only two out of three developmental perspectives, socializing and transitioning toward self-authoring. Instrumental learners appeared to make different meaning from academic literacy skill learning, explored in chapter seven.

**Learning a New Genre in a New Language**

During the summarizing unit in the college and career preparation class, learners were being asked to read texts and write summaries with specific conventions that were new for many of them. While they came to this learning experience with different degrees of formal education and proficiency with English, they described similar experiences around three themes: understanding the text first, and working harder in English; using different approaches to find the main idea of a text; and grappling with new writing conventions specific to summarizing.

While in previous themes, developmentally distinct ways of understanding similar experiences were notable, the striking developmental distinction of the subthemes of learning a new genre in a new language was that they only appeared among participants constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond. That is, participants whose developmental
perspectives oriented toward reflecting on their own thinking were able to take perspective on their challenges and strategies with learning summarizing in English.

**Understanding First, and Working Harder in English**

The importance of understanding a text before summarizing it in a second language, as described in the second language writing literature (Swales & Feak, 2012), was very apparent to the ESOL learners in the college and career preparation class. Learners describing this experience from socializing perspectives and beyond, including Louam and Nabil, saw understanding the text as a first and necessary step in a larger process. Maria and Leticia, echoing the literature connecting Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in first and second languages, drew parallels between summarizing in English and Spanish, explaining that the former requires more time and effort. Louam described reading multiple times, highlighting, and finding the meaning of new words to ensure she understood the text before starting to write a summary:

> It’s hard for us, for second language English, it’s hard to understand, if you don’t understand what to write, even we can read, but if you don’t understand what we are reading, it’s hard, nothing can do. (Louam, LEI)

> By reading more, one topic or one page, one unit, first time you don’t understand, later, if you read more, you will understand it, and you can write. (Louam, LEI).

Nabil also spoke to the need to understand the text first, and described the challenge of finding words in English to paraphrase already new words:

> The challenge was… maybe some words you cannot get, when you try to use your own words, what the author write down, and you change it, when you try to change your own
words, maybe you cannot get exact what can be similar to what he means. So, it’s kind of trial. (chuckles). It’s kind of trial… For example, here they are talking about the drugs they have given to the patient, so they give the drug ‘regimen,’ so I try to find out another name which I can use, ‘regimen’. So later on I get ‘care’, I just said ‘drug care’. So it was tough to get another meaning, or another word which can similar to the ‘regimen’. So it was tough…because I have no idea, before. (laughs). I didn’t know before. (Nabil, LEI).

Letica and Maria, both of whom had graduated from high school in Mexico, compared summarizing in English, and having to understand the text first, to summarizing in Spanish. Leticia offered:

I know how to do in Spanish, but is different in English. And many things, and then are different in English than in Spanish… Because Spanish is my language, I understand at the beginning how to do it. But when it’s in English… makes me take more time to understand what to do. At the end, is almost, is the same.

Maria remarks that if she were summarizing in Spanish, it would be faster and easier: “Because it’s my first language, and I think, I’ll do very fast. Because I understand everything, every word” (Maria, LEI). When asked if it would be hard to decide on the main idea of the article if it were in Spanish, she explained that it would take a few readings, but ultimately be easier: “Probably take, I’ll take a time, for reading minimum three or four times for do something well. But my first language I think it is, was more easy” (Maria, LEI).

**Approaches to Finding Important Ideas in the Text**

Several participants constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond described approaches they used to identify important ideas during summarizing exercises. Leticia
and Teresa described the challenge of discerning the main idea among many details, and described using a strategy from their step-by-step “Writing Summaries” handout, answering wh-questions to identify the main idea. Nabil and Louam described a strategy not explicitly taught in the unit, comparing ideas to decide which was most important.

**Answering the wh-questions.** Leticia described the challenge of finding the main idea in longer articles with many details. To help, she used the strategy of first answering the “wh” questions – who, what, when, why, and where – about the article, and from those answers, crafting a main idea:

Sometimes I’m confused with the major details, and the minor details, because the minors just support the major details. But we have to find the main idea, that what is talking about the title, because we, when we read a book, is maybe five hundred pages, and I have to say, is someone asked me, what is talking about the book, or what is saying the book. (Leticia, LEI).

When asked about the greatest challenge in the summarizing unit, Leticia described the challenge of choosing important details among many and discarding others, and how she used the wh-questions to distinguish which details were most important:

I say the major details and the minors details, because we have to say… discard. Discard some things that are not important, so sometime, support the major details, but sometimes we don’t need it… we have to read and understand, the story, and try to answer the questions. If we understand what answer the questions, and we understand that there are things in the passage that we don’t need it to write a summary.

**WHEN YOU’RE ANSWERING THOSE QUESTIONS, HOW DO YOU DECIDE IF SOMETHING’S A MAJOR OR MINOR DETAIL?**
Because I answer the questions, and that’s tell me. (Leticia, LEI).

Teresa, like Leticia, described finding the main idea in longer articles as a challenge:

For me, when I saw like long articles, (laughs)… it makes me feel like, oh my god!
(laughs, making crying noise). It’s hard for me to identify main idea. It’s hard. Still.

WHAT IS THE HARDEST THING ABOUT IDENTIFYING THE MAIN IDEA?
Sometimes I identify two main ideas, and I need to decide which one is the main idea.
It’s confuse for me. And it’s hard, I can stay that still for me. (Teresa, LEI)

Responding to a question about what’s hardest about longer articles, Teresa elaborated:

It’s long, you need to find the main idea, the major idea, and the details. And when it’s
long, for me, it’s hard to find those specific details. Yeah, ‘cause sometimes it’s make
me confuse, like, ‘oh here is a detail’. And I keep reading. ‘Oh, here’s another detail. And
I’m like, ‘which one it’s the more important detail? Which one goes in the summary, this
or this?’ Yeah that, that makes me feel more, it’s more hard for me. But I know in
college, the articles are really long. Not short. (Teresa, LEI).

Like Leticia, Teresa described how answering the wh-questions helped her identify which
of the many details in longer texts were most important: “You are answer those important
questions, the most in a summary you need to explain what, why, where, when. It’s the most
important” (Teresa, LEI).

Comparing ideas to find the main idea. Using their socializing capacities to relate
abstract ideas, some learners also described comparing or relating ideas in the text to find the
main idea. Nabil described deciding what was important in the text by comparing details within
it back to the overall main idea: “When you read the story, you can differentiate, what will be the main concept of the author, what he, what this author talking, talking mostly” (Nabil, LEI).

When asked how he knew which details were important, Nabil described relating those ideas back to the main idea:

Because when you are reading the story, you understand the main concept… When you’re reading the story first time…you need take some notes. And what you write down that time, the first reading, you might be include your summary. So I think the only way you can differentiate is to compare them with the main, how this one become main, and how this one become detail. So you can compare, when you have the article, you can compare. (Nabil, LEI).

When asked how she decides what’s important in a text, Louam likewise described relating what she reads back to the main idea to determine which details in the text are important:

Express more, the idea, the topic, the main point. It give explanation. For example, like this one, this is about the doctors, and explain when they start, and what they do, and how they go, it’s everything…It’s connects all the message. It will give you more to understand what is the main. (Louam, LEI).

Louam went on to provide a metaphor from her own language to explain the relationship she looked for between details and the main idea:

It’s connected the idea from one, to one, to the next one. So the main idea, you get it or supporting details, it’s explain. In my language they call it like when a plant is connected. They call it harek. It’s connected, when it’s grow the leaf, it’s like design. So the idea is coming together, and explain the message, the topic. (Louam, LEI).
Grappling with New Summary-Writing Conventions

Several learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond explained the challenge described in the literature (Gee, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) of learning and using conventions of a new genre. Despite having a high school education in Mexico and the U.S. respectively, Leticia and Teresa described “using my own words” as a new expectation. Relatedly, Maria described the challenge of using her own words to describe someone else’s idea. Nabil, Louam and Salazam described trying to be concise when writing summaries.

Using my own words. Leticia explained that having to write in her own words when summarizing was a new writing rule, one that was confusing at the beginning of the unit:

Sometimes we have to read the article and find the main idea. But, in this case, we don’t have to find the main idea, we have to write in our own words the main idea, so that’s why I was confused, and I only copy the main idea. Another sometimes in GED class, or in Chantal class, we have to find the main idea. But in this case, we have to summary the main idea. So that’s why I was confused. (Leticia, LEI).

Leticia later described how she had learned the importance of using her own words, ensuring she didn’t ‘steal’ ideas from the author, when asked about the most important things she learned in the summarizing unit:

Stick with our own words, that we don’t have to copy, or to use the words from the author, and when we use, we have to say the name of the author and use the quotation marks… Sometimes we take the part of the article like belongs to us, and that is not good… when we do that, we are… plagiarism, and it’s a big problem. We can go to the
jail (both laugh). So we have to be careful with that, don’t do that, to write and try to summarize in our own words. (Leticia, LEI)

When asked about how summarizing was similar or different to previous writing experiences, Teresa, like Leticia, explained that having to use her own words was new:

Summarizing, you don’t need to copy nothing from the article, you don’t need to use any words from the article, you can use some words, but not copy.
AND THAT’S DIFFERENT.
Yeah. That’s really different, ‘cause yeah, it’s really different.
SO WHEN YOU WERE IN SCHOOL BEFORE,
Well not summarizing, I used, when I have some worksheets asking me questions about the article, I can copy what’s the answer. But for the summarizing it’s really different.
Yeah, it’s a big different.
 HOW IS THAT DIFFERENT FOR YOU?
Well, for me, it’s like, you can’t copy. You need to understand very well the topic, and explain by your own words. (Teresa, LEI).

When describing one of the summary activities she completed in the unit, Maria likewise reflected on the difficulty of using her own words, when those words, in English, were limited:

That part is a little, I think is hard, because I have to put my own words. But no my opinion. My own words, no copy, nothing about the title, the article, but is something, write, exactly that the authors speak, or wrote.
WHAT’S THE HARDEST PART ABOUT DOING THAT?
(Laughs) Oh my god. Do the summarize, okay, choose the words, or, probably if I don’t know if I write the correct words. (Maria, LEI).

**Being concise.** Just as Leticia and Teresa had described using their own words as a new writing rule to follow, Nabil explained that even though he’d done some summarizing in high school, having to be concise was new:

Actually when we were in high school...I understand clearly right now, at that time I have not understand it. At that time we are trying to focus on it, to write down something, or maybe whole page, sometimes we write down the more than the article, two page, three page, just continue. But right now, we can condense, we can make it shorter than maybe one paragraph, two paragraph, if it’s more. So that’s a difference. (Nabil, LEI).

Louam also described the need to be concise when writing a summary as new, and described how a graphic organizer with circles that she had to write within had helped her be concise because “it’s more limits” (Louam, LEI). When asked to elaborate, she explained, “It’s the summaries not have to write a lot. I don’t have to write a lot, so it’s gonna limit me, not to go far. (laughs)” (Louam, LEI).

**Participating in Stages of Writing**

In their interviews, and during the summarizing unit observed in this study, participants constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond described and demonstrated participating in various stages of writing. Leticia and Salazam described following a step-by-step writing process. Maria, Louam and Nabil described taking the reader’s perspective, and thereby working to make their writing more clear or appealing. Corroborating their descriptions of engaging in stages of writing, during class observations of the three-week summary-writing unit,
learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond demonstrated active engagement in activities focused on main ideas and summary drafting.

**Following Steps in a Process**

Several learners described following steps in summary-writing activities, including Leticia and Salazam. Leticia described the steps she took to write her summary, including answering the wh-questions, writing a sentence that included the article title, and then writing sentences that answered the wh-questions:

I took the main idea from the passage, and I wrote the passage, but then I have to write with my own words. So, then I did answer the questions, but then we have to include the title, and the author, and with my own words, said what is talking about, or what is saying the article. And then I wrote the title, and the author, and then I answered the question, what is talking about, who is talking about the monkey, what the monkey learn, the too much the words in the computer, and how she learned observing his mother. So, when I answered the questions… then I wrote the main idea, and Chantal said was very good. Just it was very good summary (Leticia, LEI).

When asked to elaborate on how she’d used the “Writing Summaries” handout, which had outlined some of the steps she’d described, she elaborated on the steps she followed:

The steps, how to write summaries… we have to take the title, we have to write the first, read the article, right? And then the take notes. So I try to take the notes. And answer the question. So that’s why I have the key words. For take notes. Then, I try to answer the question, what, where, when, who and why. And then… I can start with this
introduction… And then take the main points. And I try. And I try to write. (Leticia, LEI).

Salazam, in his description of summarizing the same article, described the steps of first writing the title of the article, then the author, then taking steps of composing a summary.

When I did a summary… I put ‘A Chimp off the Old Block’, I put, ‘by Curtis Rist’, then I had my summary from my own…I pick up the main idea…And I put kind of summarize… Then I put little one, I restate, I have short. (Salazam, LEI).

Taking the Reader’s Perspective

Several learners described taking the reader’s perspective in their process of writing. Maria, referring to the same “Writing Summaries” handout Letica had found helpful when following steps in a writing process, described the purpose of those steps as making the summary clear for the reader. When asked to elaborate, she explained:

Because they explain about you, you can write a good summarize, point for point. And the summarize can be short, clear, very, very clear for the other people read, understand you. Or, no understand me. The article. Yes. Not me. (Maria, LEI).

When asked about her most important milestone in the summary unit, Maria described how following the steps on the “Writing Summaries” handout, ultimately, helps to make summaries clear for the reader:

If I follow this steps, this step help me, for make a good summarize. Because if I want to make in my way, I think will not good for me… Because I think the people, when they read your summarize, the people understand that you talking about. I think. For that is the
rules! (laughs). If the people understand you, means that you made a good job. (Maria, LEI).

Louam, like Maria, was concerned with making her writing clear for the reader, and described correct grammar and punctuation conventions as serving that goal: “To make clearer the idea, writing, and to put in a place what you write… Clear writing, to understand people when they read, to understand …what I write” (Louam, LEI).

While Maria and Louam focused on wanting their writing to be clear for the reader, Nabil described wanting to make his writing appealing. For Nabil, incorporating similes, metaphors or proverbs was a strategy toward that end:

It can maybe attract the reader, or the one who’s going to mark for you, conversation or essay, it can help him… to attract his mind. Yeah, so that you get his mind interested, continue reading when you use maybe some similes, some other personification, metaphor, and some maybe proverb, some maybe those stuff when you put them together, it can be maybe very sweet to read, very interesting (laughs). (Nabil, LEI).

**Engaging in Main Idea and Summary-Writing Class Activities**

The summarizing unit that was the context of learners’ academic literacy learning experiences described above lasted for three weeks, or twelve days (Monday through Thursday). During the class observations in this unit, all learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond demonstrated engaging with main idea and summary writing class activities, as evidenced by speaking up, taking an active role in a discussion, or visibly writing notes or summary drafts. This section provides an overview of the summarizing unit for context, then examples of how participants engaged with main idea and summarizing activities within it.
**Overview of the summarizing unit.** During the three-week, twelve-day summarizing unit, learners were introduced to the purpose and conventions of summarizing, practiced reading and writing summaries of expository texts of different lengths, and took part in class activities to practice identifying main ideas, major details and supporting details, as well as drafting summaries. The reading and writing class, which met on Mondays and Wednesdays, emphasized creating written summaries, while the listening and speaking class, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, emphasized listening to texts or talks, and often times, taking notes that would be used to write summaries later. Table 6 provides a brief overview of each day of the summarizing unit, including reading and writing as well as listening and speaking days.
Table 6
Overview of the Summarizing Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>(reading &amp; writing)</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>After being introduced to new vocabulary, learners read a handout titled “Writing Summaries” as a class. In pairs, they read a short article, “What Will our Towns Look Like (If We Take Care of Our Planet)” in the same handout, highlighted big ideas in one color and supporting details in another. As homework, they were asked to complete the assignment if they hadn’t done so in class.</td>
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<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Learners began class by comparing and contrasting features of summary writing with features of critique writing, the focus of the previous unit. Next, they listened to a brief “lecture” on the purpose of the college and career preparation class, taking notes related to the main idea and major details. From their notes, they were asked to write a summary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>After a whole class review of Monday’s article, “What Will our Towns Look Like (If We Take Care of Our Planet),” learners worked in small groups to read four summaries of the article and decide which one was best. Their homework was to take another reading home and write a summary of it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>No observation of this lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Learners read a new half-page article from the Day 1 handout, “A Chimp off the Old Block” about a young chimp named Ayumu who began to learn basic literacy skills in Kanji by watching his mother connect Kanji symbols to images on a computer. Individually, they wrote a main idea sentence, and reviewed those sentences as a class. They then continued writing individual summaries of the article. As homework, they were asked to finish the summary if the hadn’t by the end of class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>After reviewing the article “A Chimp off the Old Block” and distinguishing major and minor details as a whole class, learners worked in pairs to peer-edit summary paragraphs they’d written.</td>
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<td>Day 7</td>
<td>After previewing vocabulary as a class, learners read a four-page article called “Doctors without Borders” with comprehension exercises and follow-up activities attached. Learners chose to read the article independently or in groups. Some groups who finished reading the article started answering comprehension questions and working through activities in the packet, including reading excerpts from the article and writing “M” for major detail or “S” for supporting detail. Some continued with the packet as homework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 8</td>
<td>Learners reviewed the purpose of summaries and what they’d learned and done in the summary unit so far. They then listened to a three-paragraph passage from the “Doctors without Borders” article they’d read the day before. While listening, they took notes in one of three circles on a teacher-created graphic organizer, each of which was headed with the first sentence of a new section of the text as a prompt to help learners separate details according to text section. Learners volunteered to read what they wrote to the class. A class volunteer co-taught the class and read the passage.</td>
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<td>Day 9</td>
<td>As a whole class, learners reviewed the “Doctors without Borders” article. They worked on the packet from day seven in small groups, and at the end of class, learners volunteered to come to the overhead and write “M” for major details and “S” for supporting details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 10</td>
<td>Learners watched a TED Talk called “The Danger of a Single Story” by novelist Chimamanda Adichie. While listening, they took notes that became the basis for writing a summary of the talk. As homework, they were asked to complete the summary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 11</td>
<td>After reviewing yesterday’s TED Talk, “The Danger of a Single Story,” learners read one of four quarter-page articles relating to the longer “Doctors without Borders” article. They were asked to summarize that short article.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 12</td>
<td>Learners watched a talk by Michelle Obama on child obesity, in which she petitioned restaurant owners to offer healthier meals for kids. After watching the talk and taking notes, learners worked in small groups to create summary posters with the main idea and supporting details in the speech.</td>
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Observations of engagement during the summarizing unit. The descriptions in this section come from observations and in-depth field notes of participants during the three-week summarizing unit in the college and career preparation class, and reflect one of two themes that emerged from those observations – visibly engaging with activities centered on finding main ideas, and in various stages of summarizing. They stand in contrast to observations of instrumental learners disengaging, or “otherwise engaging” during those same types of activities, which are presented in chapter six. The observations below provide brief snapshots of what participants said and did that showed engagement with main idea and summarizing activities.

**Leticia.** Leticia attended five of twelve days of the summarizing unit. Chantal, the class teacher, said that she completed most of the optional homework in the unit, and also completed some of the work done in class on the days she was absent. On day eleven, she independently completed an activity which she had missed on the previous day, in which she read through examples of statements from an article and chose either “M,” indicating that it was a major detail, or “S,” indicating that it was a supporting idea. On day twelve, when reading a new article in class, she wrote wh-question prompts in her notebook – who, what, why, where, and when – and drafted answers to them as she read through the article in preparation for writing a summary. Writing answers to the wh-questions aligned with her description of using this strategy find the main idea of an article in her interview.

**Louam.** Louam attended seven of twelve days of the summarizing unit. On day three of the unit, she brought her article from day one, on which groups of words were highlighted, indicating that she’d attempted to highlight main ideas, as instructed, rather than simply highlighting unfamiliar words. Later that class, when working with her small group to decide on the best of four summaries, she argued that the fourth summary was too long and also included
an opinion. On day six, when she was supposed to be working with a partner to peer edit, she confessed, “I didn’t read,” then followed by saying, “but it is an opinion, you cannot include. Ok, now let’s read.” On day twelve of the unit, when working in a small group to create a summary poster, Louam read from her own notes to make suggestions to the partner writing the main ideas and supporting details on the poster.

_Teresa_. Teresa, who had a newborn son and relied on family members for childcare, attended four of twelve days of the summarizing unit. On day three, when working in a small group, she made a case for what she thought was the best of the four summaries, which the group had to collectively decide between: “I think summary three. For me, it’s three.” “So I think it’s summary three ‘cause I found the part why I believe.” She went on to point out an opinion in each of the other summaries, including the words “I hope,” pointing out to her group that those words indicated an opinion. She reiterated, “that’s why I think summary three is right.” When the class reconvened so that each group could say which summary they thought was best, a member of another group said it was summary four. When it was Teresa’s group’s turn, she asked, “Can I say why summary four is wrong?” and proceeded to do so. On day nine of the unit, when drafting a summary of “A Chimp off the Old Block” in class, she had what appeared to be notes written on the top half of a page in her notebook, with a line drawn beneath them; below it she had begun a summary draft.

_Nabil_. Nabil attended eleven of twelve days of the summarizing unit. On day ten, the class had listened to a TED Talk by Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie called “The Danger of a Single Story,” and were debriefing which details were important. Nabil responded to the teacher’s question about how the speaker’s story of realizing that she held a stereotype about Mexicans supported the main idea of her speech. Nabil offered, “They have similar view of
immigrants.” While not necessarily accurate, Nabil seemed to be making a connection to the theme of the talk, the dangers of stereotyping. When the class later wrote a summary of the speech, he wrote a draft in his notebook. On day ten, when learners read one of four short articles, Nabil took notes on a separate piece of paper while reading the article, and then drafted a summary. When Chantal read his summary draft, she told him, “Very good. That’s excellent.”

**Maria.** Maria attended nine of twelve days of the summarizing unit. On day six, while distinguishing major from minor details from “A Chimp off the Old Block” as a class, Maria stated, “It’s important because his mother never teaches… just observing his mother.” On day twelve, small groups listened to a speech by Michelle Obama on child obesity, and wrote summary posters. When Chantal instructed, “You don’t want to write everything,” Maria nodded and said, “only important.” With her small group, she took the role of the writer, continuously leaning in to talk with her group members before writing. She then reviewed her notes and one of the group members said, “main point;” Maria responded, “Yes.” Later she said to her group, “Something very important. Advertising promote healthy food.” At one point, she said to a group member, with a serious expression and waving her pen, “no, no, no, no, no… the more important the children. Said that the children have many problems…”

**Salazam.** Salazam attended five of twelve days of the summarizing unit. During an initial whole-class discussion on summarizing on day one, he offered that a ‘thesis’ is “your plan” and said that after writing a summary, you need to “revise”. On day five, when the class read the article, “A Chimp off the Old Block,” and then wrote a main idea sentence about the article, he composed, erased, and re-composed several times on the line where he was to write the main idea. He initially wrote, “Researches are always astounded that A’s may be teaching himself” then erased a group of words and re-wrote. When the class regrouped as a whole, he read his
sentence aloud: “A chimp can learn literacy skills by observing his mother, which astounded researchers at Kyoto University.” On day ten, he asked Chantal, “I have a question. I read this article a second time, so I don't wanna look at it again, but - you said I could rephrase it… I can do it in my own words, right?” to which Chantal responded, “Not when it’s the name of the article.” Salazam responded, “Ohhhhhhh. When I don't state where it comes from, I can restate it in my own words.”

*Masha.* Masha, who expressed ambivalence about being in the class, attended four of twelve days within the unit. On the first day of the unit, she asked Chantal to look at her drafted summary before volunteering to read it aloud to the class. On day eleven, when working with her group on a summary poster of the speech on child obesity, she said to her group members, “She talks about food, healthier food, food, healthy food” then wrote in her own notebook. When Nabil, one of her group members offered later, “She also talks about how we can take care our health,” Masha wrote what he said on the poster.

What is striking about these participants’ engagement with main idea and summarizing activities in class was not what they learned or how well they did, but that they actively participated in activities asking them to engage with main ideas and summary writing. These observations contrasted with those of participants constructing meaning from an instrumental perspective, who disengaged or “otherwise engaged” during main idea and summary-writing activities, as presented in chapter seven.
Discussion of Chapter Six

The academic literacy learning themes presented in chapter six appeared among learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and transitioning toward self-authoring. These themes, learning a new genre in a new language and participating in the stages of writing, align with much of the academic literacy literature, as articulated by learners rather than through theory alone. The fact that data from instrumental participants did not appear in these ways of experiencing academic literacy learning themes suggests that they apply to some, but not all learners, and may be developmentally mediated. These findings shed a developmental light on academic literacy literature related to second language acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiencies (CALP), and align with but developmentally qualify the sociocultural argument that learning academic literacy is a language-learning issue alone. These findings also align with and extend previous research exploring academic literacy through a developmental lens.

Learning a New Genre in a New Language

Socializing learners and those on the journey toward self authorship described the challenges of learning a new genre in a new language, echoing some themes in the academic literacy literature from learners’ perspectives. Louam and Nabil described understanding the text as a first and necessary step in a larger process, as in, “even we can read, but if you don’t understand what we are reading, it’s hard, nothing can do” (Louam, LEI). This sentiment echoes Swales’ and Feak’s (2012) tenet that when summarizing, the text needs to be fully comprehended first. Nabil’s illustration of the challenge of finding a synonym for a word just learned emphasizes this notion, and the related tenet that ELLs need to carefully choose synonyms when summarizing to paraphrase (Swales & Feak, 2012). While Leticia and Maria
describe summarizing in English as comparatively difficult in English versus Spanish, the fact that they conceptualize the genre in both their first and second languages is consistent with Cummins’ (1979) argument that ELLs with CALP experience in their first language can carry that knowledge into second language academic literacy learning.

In their descriptions of using different approaches to find the main idea, particularly answering the wh-questions, learners spoke to the challenge of distinguishing the main idea among many, as in, “sometimes I’m confused with the major details, and the minor details, because the minors just support the major details” (Leticia, LEI). This emphasizes the inter-related cognitive and second-language demands of summarizing, distinguishing key ideas from supporting or unimportant ideas, and constructing logical connections between those ideas (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011; Leki, 1998; Zwiers, 2008). Learners’ descriptions of grappling with new summary-writing conventions such as using their own words and being concise reinforced the shared perspective of Cummins (1979) and socioculturalists (Gee, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) that ELLs need to explicitly learn the conventions of academic English. These new writing conventions, according to the learners in this study, require time and practice.

The fact that learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond were wrestling with these new academic literacy demands while learning summarizing substantiates the sociocultural (Gee, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) warning not to mistake lack of academic language experience for cognitive limitations. That is, all of these learners, from a constructive-developmental perspective, were cognitively capable of the abstract reasoning that academic writing requires (Kegan 1982, 1994). A particularly striking illustration of already having the cognitive capacity but still struggling to learn the conventions was Salazam, the most developmentally complex learner in this study, who described struggling with “how to add the
title to the summary” (Salazam, LEI) and learning from the teacher’s explanation. In fact, the teacher anecdotally recalled that in response to being instructed not to use the author’s words, Salazam had changed the title of the article when referring to it in his summary, presumably because the title was written in the author’s words. One might expect someone with Salazam’s complexity of meaning-making to have inferred that this rule may not apply to the title of the article. However, he appeared not to have enough contextual knowledge to have made this inference. This example illustrates how even with complex reasoning skills, one needs practice with and exposure to new writing conventions.

**Participating in Stages of Writing**

Just as learners constructing meaning from socializing and transitioning toward self-authoring perspectives described aspects of learning a new genre in a new language, they also described and demonstrated participating in different stages of writing. These findings illustrate some stages described in the writing process literature, and demonstrate some of the behaviors attributed in the academic literacy literature to more experienced writers. They also align with Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental descriptions of the abstract reasoning capacities of adults constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond. These findings, and the fact that they applied only to learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond, suggest that some of the processes associated with stronger or more experienced writers in the literature may reflect not only levels of literacy experience but developmental perspectives.

Several learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond, when asked how they went about summarizing assignments, described a step-by-step process, some of which align with the Flower and Hayes (1981) writing process model, particularly planning,
including goal-setting and organizing ideas, and translating, or putting ideas into writing. These stages can be seen, for example, in Louam’s description of first planning: “we have to write the first, read the article, right? And then the take notes. So I try to take the notes. And answer the question. So that’s why I have the key words. For take notes. Then, I try to answer the question, what, where, when, who and why” (Louam, LEI), and subsequent description of translating: “And then… I can start with this introduction… And then take the main points. And I try. And I try to write” (Louam, LEI). Furthermore, some learners seem to view translating itself not as just one step, but as a process involving several steps that reflect the rhetorical components of summarizing, including an introduction with author’s name, a main idea, and a conclusion, as in, “I put ‘A Chimp off the Old Block’, I put, ‘by Curtis Rist’, then I had my summary from my own…I pick up the main idea…And I put kind of summarize… Then I put little one, I restate, I have short” (Salazam, LEI). These learners, by virtue of experience and possibly writing levels, may be categorized, at least in some ways, as struggling; however, they also demonstrate awareness that writing has more than one stage, and that the conventions of the genre need to inform their writing choices. They also appear to understand that writing in a new genre, summarizing, requires not only vocabulary- and sentence-level attention, but attention to global text structure, an awareness associated in the literature with more experienced writers (Cummings, 1989). From an academic literacy perspective, these learners appear to be developing writing process proficiencies. From a constructive-developmental perspective, they are using their abstract reasoning capacities to do so.

Just as learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond appear to be using their abstract reasoning capacities to follow steps in a process, they also seem to be using their developmental capacity to take another’s point of view to envision a reader’s
perspective, and in turn, using that perspective to shape choices they make in their own writing. This finding is consistent with Shapiro’s (1984) study correlating Perry’s levels of cognitive development with audience awareness. This finding suggests, as constructive-developmental theory would suggest, that audience awareness is not only a writing skill but a developmental capacity.

The ways in which learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond described engaging with stages of a writing process were corroborated by the descriptive observations of their patterns of activity engagement in the summarizing unit. While these learners all seemed to be “struggling” in their own ways to learn summarizing in English, they all actively engaged in class activities involving abstract reasoning, such as considering which of four summaries best described an article (Louam & Teresa, Day 3), hypothesizing while reading which ideas may be important, and highlighting them (Louam, Day 3) or attempting to draft a summary (Masha, Day 1; Nabil, Day 10) rather than copying the text verbatim into their notebooks. This active engagement in activities involving abstract reasoning, along with Kegan’s (1982, 1994) description of the abstract meaning-making available from socializing perspectives and beyond, suggest that for these learners, there was a fit between the developmental demands of the learning, or “holding environment”, and their developmental ways of making sense of what they were asked to do. Instrumental learners, by contrast, appeared to understand summarizing through a quite different concrete lens, as explored in chapter seven.
CHAPTER SEVEN – RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

This chapter explores themes responding to research question four, How do learners’ academic literacy learning experiences (Q2-3) relate to their constructive-developmental perspectives (Q1), including important similarities of experience from similar perspectives, and important differences from different perspectives? Evidence in this chapter is drawn from the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) and Learning Experience Interview (LEI), with supporting evidence from observations during the summarizing unit. While themes in previous chapters emerged from grounded theory analysis of interviews across developmental perspectives, the themes in this chapter emerged by analyzing data specific to one developmental category at a time. Six themes unique to instrumental learners emerged in this analysis, and two themes emerged unique to learners on the journey toward self-authoring. Additionally, a new theme emerged with three developmental sub-themes illustrating developmentally distinct ways of understanding the same academic literacy concept.

Developmental Commonalities in Academic Literacy Learning Experiences

Developmental analysis of interview and observation data separated by developmental category showed that participants constructing meaning from primarily instrumental perspectives described and demonstrated developmentally distinct way of experiencing academic literacy learning through six themes. While learners transitioning toward self-authoring perspectives described several learning experiences in common with socializing learners in chapter six, they also described two unique themes explored in this section.

Instrumental Commonalities

The first striking commonality between the two participants constructing meaning from a primarily instrumental perspective was that the academic literacy themes in chapter six, learning
a new genre in a new language, and engaging in a writing process, which appeared for socializing learners and those transitioning toward self authorship, did not apply to them. Rather, instrumental learners seemed to be making sense of academic literacy learning in a different way. As instrumental meaning-makers, these participants oriented to concrete successes, challenges and rules in the college and career preparation class. Rather than seeing understanding as the first step, and working harder in English, as their classmates described in chapter five, these learners described understanding as the end goal. Rather than using different approaches to finding the main idea, these learners described the main idea as what was important in an absolute way, or to me, and at times responded to the text with free-association. Rather than grappling with summary-writing conventions and engaging in summary-writing activities, these learners appeared to disengage, or ‘otherwise’ engage, with those activities during the summarizing unit.

**Orienting to clear-cut successes, challenges and rules.** Sofiya and Illyas’ orientation to concrete successes and challenges appeared within various learning themes in chapter six. For example, in the sub-theme, struggling to find time for valued attendance and homework, Sofiya had explained that the worst part about missing a class was that she knew she had missed a sentence. From her perspective, the learning she would miss was quantifiable and something she could “get” or “do.” As a rule-oriented meaning-maker, she also identified a clear-cut solution: when she returned to class the following day, she had to do a “double class.” From her instrumental perspective, a class can be viewed as a “thing” that can be “doubled.” Illyas, likewise, described feeling encouraged by progress and applying learning to life in a way that oriented toward clear-cut behavioral successes, as he listed one by one in each part of a job application form he had filled out, explaining, “…nobody not helping me. I only, I’m write my
hands” (Illyas, SOI). Of course, the satisfaction of writing in a new language with one’s own hands could be important from any developmental perspective. However, from an instrumental perspective, the concrete satisfaction of writing with one’s own hands held – and required – no additional symbolic value.

Illyas described another way in which he oriented to clear-cut success, which he experienced when he got the right answer to a discrete task or by learning a satisfying number of new words each day. In response to being asked about a success with the reading and writing class, he offered the following two examples:

We have dictation in the class. It’s easy to write, words, spelling. I can spell and write well… because teacher give us dictation, and we write our name, and words, and then I get answer… If you get, if you take ten words, and if you write ten words, it’s good. You understand, you improve… If you understand ten words every day or every other days, you can get more words, and you learn more English. (Illyas, LEI).

Illyas’ focus on learning ten words each day or every other day was echoed in his orientation to visible and surface aspects of reading. When asked about what was important in the reading and writing class, Illyas emphasized the importance of grammar. While Louam, in chapter five, had described using correct grammar as a way of writing clearly for a reader, Illyas described punctuation and verb tenses as important in and of themselves:

Verbs, and prepositions, and connection, interconnection, and sentence. And also you know, apostrophe, period, exclamation. That’s also very interesting. It’s important, and the grammar, and preposition also… If you understand that time, and the verbs, past time, and future time… if you understanding well, you can understand the sentence,
meaning…And, it’s important, ‘ed’, ‘ing’, and ‘have’, ‘had’, ‘has’, and apostrophe, period, like that. That’s important. (Illyas, LEI).

By accumulating such punctuation and verb tense knowledge, Illyas went on to explain, he would reach his goal of understanding more, which then leads to “going up,” getting a GED, and meet his instrumental desire to get “more benefit”.

Sofiya also oriented to the concrete aspects of literacy learning, emphasizing rules for reading the right way. One important rule from her perspective was memorizing texts. When asked what a learner should do if they want to be successful with summarizing, she explained:

If you don’t write everything or don’t do memorize, you cannot get successful. (Sofiya, LEI).

When I learn something for reading or writing, I like to make memorize, or writing or homework or everything I have to know, I learn, I have to get result. (Sofiya, LEI).

If you read well, or more time, you spend time, you memorize, you memorize, you can remember. Because to give the time, the reading. More than three times, or two times. So you memorize. (Sofiya, LEI).

Sofiya’s orientation to clear-cut rules also framed her recollection of a reading success, which involved learning when and how to pause while reading aloud. Sofiya seemed to equate mastering this rule with knowing “how to read” the text:

Sometimes reading the three page, or four page, or five page, how you stop, how you read…how you share the people…how you stop… I wanna get my goal, so I have to
know how to read English. So I have to know how to stop, I have to know how to share
the people. So that’s my successful. To know how to read that. (Sofiya, LEI).

Just as literacy successes for Sofiya were explained in terms of correctly following rules,
so was the right way to deal with literacy challenges. She described her current struggles with
writing, a rule for improving, and how following that rule would lead to her goal:

I try to improve my writing. My writing is, okay. My writing, I have problem with
writing. I have to more improve….Still I’m not getting the successful, but still I have
goal…So you have to write every day, three or four or two sentence. So that’s improve
my write… That’s my success. (Sofiya, SOI).

When asked how she would know she’d been successful with writing, Sofiya explained
her goal in clear, concrete terms:

Because I have to show the Chantal what I write… so sometime she circle that what I
weak, she say, ‘Oh this is past, present,’ so I have to do. So I will know with her. If she
say, ‘I’m sorry, everything is okay.’ Oh! You reach your goal.

SO THAT’S WHEN YOU KNOW YOU REACHED YOUR GOAL, IF SHE SAYS
EVERYTHING IS OKAY.

Everything is okay, yeah. Or was two circle. Sometimes she circle. Now she circle three
or four or five. But when my goal is, she have to circle one.

WHAT WILL BE THE BEST PART IF SHE CIRCLES ONLY ONE OR TWO?

Oh! That’s my success. I feel success. One or two is okay. Nobody perfect, you know.
(Sofiya, SOI).
**Seeing understanding as the end goal.** Many of the concrete successes and rules that Illyas and Sofiya described in the previous section, including learning more words, accumulating punctuation and verb tense knowledge, and memorizing texts, served an ultimate goal of understanding the text. Of course, in a second language classroom, understanding a new text, for any learner, is important and can be challenging. However, while learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond described understanding the text as the first step in a larger process, instrumental learners described understanding the text as the end goal, and described summarizing, in turn, as understanding, then writing something.

Echoing Illyas’ sentiment on the importance of learning a certain number of sentences, Sofiya explained that for her, understanding is success:

Even one sentence, if you understand one sentence, that’s successful… you feel happy.

You feel happy, the reason you come to class is how to more sentence, or more English.

If you don’t understand anything, that’s not successful. You have to ask teachers question, you have to know why you come here. The reason you come here, come to class… sometimes I read something before I didn’t know. But now I know what the meaning. That’s my successful, period.

Illyas likewise described understanding the text as the end goal, including readings from the summarizing unit. When asked what was most important about his notes from the “Doctors without Borders” article, which consisted of words from the article with definitions, he described vocabulary and definitions as priority, relating them to the ultimate goal of understanding:

This is very important (pounds table). This vocabulary.

AND WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT ABOUT THIS VOCABULARY?
It’s very important and writing and reading (pounds table). Because you write one word, and then you write more explanation here (points to notebook where he has definitions written next to word). This ‘charity’, but there is ‘donation’, also it’s another word, ‘money, goods,’ and ‘donation’, ‘money, and apostrophe, goods, time, funds, money collected for special purpose’ (is reading his definition). ‘Conflict: problems, two people or groups. Aid: help’.

WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT ABOUT THESE NEW VOCABULARIES?
It’s very important (slaps table).

CAN YOU SAY MORE? WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU?
Because you get a new words (slaps table), and you understand (slaps table). You know more English. (Illyas, LEI).

Illyas framed learning as understanding, and described the clear-cut rules for understanding when asked what helped him the most when learning something new in class:
You have to read, you have to see dictionary, and new words. You can read more times, more than three times, you have to read. And then remember that, and then you’ll understand something. (Illyas, LEI).

Illyas described learning challenges in terms of not understanding the text, or not understanding fast enough. Understanding, he explained, also leads to choosing the correct answer when comprehension questions come around:
Reading is little problem for me. I am in the middle class. But I’m feeling that reading is, because I need to understand fast. Paragraph, paragraph. And I understand if there is another behind questions. If you understand fast, you can answer, you know questions
well. But if you are not understand reading well, you become late… Late, you are reading one paragraph, more time. (laughs).

SO YOU’RE READING ONE PARAGRAPH, AND THE REST OF THE CLASS IS READING NEW PARAGRAPHS.

Yes.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU’VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL WITH READING?

Because if you are successful reading, you can answer question, or you can go for examination… If you understand well reading, you can choose or you can answer the question….and for example sometimes, we have reading classes, and there is choose question, A, B, C, D. And if you are understanding well, paragraph and reading, you can easy, easy to answer. A, B, C, you can choose easily. Otherwise it’s difficult. (Illyas, SOI).

**Understanding, then writing something.** If the purpose of reading in class is to understand the text, it follows that summarizing, from an instrumental perspective, could be understood as understanding, then writing something. Sofiya, scanning over the “Summary Writing” handout, oriented to a statement that it’s important to understand the text before summarizing. She agreed and elaborated:

A summary need to have a true understand, that’s true. Or the original article. Yeah, that’s true, because if you don’t know the original article, you cannot tell the story. Because already you miss, you know.

AND IF YOU DO READ THE ARTICLE, THEN WHAT?

Then you can… memorize something or you can write something. (Sofiya, LEI).
In describing her summary of a short article about an earthquake in Haiti, Sofiya illustrated her process of understanding, then writing something by first recounting what she remembered, then explaining:

I said the many countries happen earthquake this year, also Haiti is the one of them, a lot of people injured and died, but the doctors without borders helping them…So I remember what I did, what I write. (Sofiya, LEI).

Illyas, in describing his attempt to write a summary of the “Doctors without Borders” article from class, described a similar process, which involved first understanding the story, then writing his “own idea” without looking back at the story, implying the importance of remembering it:

This important for me, to understand the story. And to write something. My own idea… Own idea, when you understand the story, you can write, ‘cause when you take something, a concept, that story, you can write your own word, without read, without looking anything. (Illyas, LEI).

Explaining how he decided what to write in that same summary, Illyas described understanding, then writing something: “First I read paragraph. And I understand something in the paragraph. And I write something” (Illyas, LEI).

**The main idea as what’s important in an absolute way, or to me.** While participants constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond described approaches to finding the main idea in chapter five, such as using wh-questions and relating parts of the text, participants constructing meaning from instrumental perspectives described the main idea as something important in an absolute way, or something important to me.
In the “Doctors without Borders” article, Illyas recalled being asked to highlight main ideas in the text. Re-reading the text during the interview, he noted salient nouns and verbs, explaining that they could be highlighted as main ideas. He then landed on a sentence he saw as important:

We highlighted some ideas, main ideas. “Doctors without Borders”. (Pauses, re-reads a passage from the article). ‘Religion’ or ‘political’, you can write this words. You can highlight it this ones, ‘disasters’, ‘epidemics’, ‘victims’. Or, in ‘origin’, also you can highlight it ‘natural’, or ‘human’, or ‘origin’. ‘Natural’ means ‘earthquake’…Maybe ‘nature’, some nature is ‘earthquake’, or ‘floods’, but and ‘human’, ‘origin’ also, ‘fighting’. Some like that. Or so they are not looking, and this is a Christian or Muslim or something, they are free, religion or political something, or borders, everything they are free, not looking religious or colors or political.

AND WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU HIGHLIGHT THOSE WORDS?

So you can make highlighted main importants, main ideas. (Illyas, LEI)

When prompted to describe what was important about that idea, rather than referring back to the article, Illyas framed the importance of that idea in an absolute sense, explaining that these doctors are saving lives:

‘Cause it is good that are, what they do. That’s what they do….because they are only going to survive, that victims or problems, that epidemic or something.

AND WHAT’S IMPORTANT ABOUT THAT?

That is they serve too much people, or they make, they help to people. (Illyas, LEI).
When asked what he would *not* highlight, Illyas reiterated: “You will not highlighted all. But you’ll highlighted some main ideas” (Illyas, LEI). When asked for additional examples of main ideas he would highlight, Illyas pointed out a minor detail in the passage, that administrators help run the organization. Then, as with the previous passage, he noted salient words, and landed on a concluding sentence. He described this process as giving the main idea:

For example (reading the passage), ‘this operations are run by more than… doctors, nurses, medical professionals, sanitation, engineers, sanitation engineers. And administrators.’ There’s also administrators, not only doctors. And not only sanitation. There’s also administrators.

**WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THAT?**

You can highlight it like this. ‘Sanitation’, ‘engineers’, maybe ‘professionals’, ‘nurses’, ‘doctors’. You can highlight like that. Administrations. Countries, 45 countries, ‘These people work with 15000 people who are hired locally to provide medical aid to underdeveloped areas… doctors without borders can’t continues to find and to confront some of the greatest challenge in the world today.’

**AND HOW WOULD YOU DECIDE TO HIGHLIGHT THAT?**

You highlight main idea only. (Illyas, LEI).

Sofiya similarly oriented to what was important in an absolute sense in her readings, which, from her perspective, was also important to remember. Describing the same activity Illyas recounted above, when asked how she decided what to highlight, Sofiya explained:

Because if it was important. It was important to remember. So that’s why you highlight. If you don’t highlight, you don’t remember, oh, ‘where?’ So you have to important to highlight.
HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH WORDS, WHICH PART TO HIGHLIGHT?

It was highlight the “Doctors without Borders”…I think it was, hundred and thousands of people, that number I highlighted.

WHAT MADE YOU HIGHLIGHT THAT NUMBER?

Because it’s a big number. A big number. (Sofiya, LEI).

When asked how she would decide what not to highlight, Sofiya described how she only highlighted what was important, to her:

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT NOT TO HIGHLIGHT?

Well, because it’s not important for you. If you don’t highlight, maybe you skip, because it’s not, or something already you know.

AND HOW DO YOU DECIDE EXACTLY WHAT’S IMPORTANT, WHAT’S NOT IMPORTANT?

Because you see the story. Some stories important for you. Some stories that’s the similar or minor. (Sofiya, LEI).

Responding to the text with free association. In the previous section, as Illyas described finding the main idea of the “Doctors without Borders” article, he appeared to engage in a sort of free-association, saying what came to mind as he reviewed the text, as in, “…you can highlight it ‘natural’, or ‘human’, or ‘origin’. ‘Natural’ means ‘earthquake’…maybe you know ‘nature’, some nature is you know ‘earthquake’…some like that” (Illyas, LEI). Sofiya, likewise, appeared to start one thought about her writing, then follow with the next thing that came to mind, as in, “I decide the many country that happen, earthquake, but even though, ok, I said the many countries happen earthquake this year, also Haiti is the one of them…” (Sofiya, LEI). As Illyas and Sofiya went on to describe their written responses to texts in the summarizing unit,
they each at times appeared to follow an internal sequence of associations. When prompted to describe writing a main idea sentence of another article from the summarizing unit, “A Chimp off the Old Block,” Illyas recounted information in the article, and then appeared to state what that information had brought to mind:

Write the main idea. Yes. This you know I think main idea. And, what Ayumu doing and how Ayumu is understanding this and how to learning this computer. And something Japanese characters, colors and shapes on the computer skills, and it chimpanzee… And this animal close to the human. Monkey, I think. (Illyas, LEI).

Sofiya, similarly, responded to a question about an activity with an article by scanning over the article and seeming to free-associate not about the topic of the article, as Illyas had, but about the word “factory” which appeared within it:

Because the reason I remember, my memorize is we have factory. So that’s why… always I like the factory…because I like product, something product. If you, in my country, example, we have product from the rice, spaghetti, or sugar. Or clothes. (Sofiya, LEI).

Sofiya continued, explaining why she liked factories:

Because people, product, they help another people, so that’s why I like. It create something new, that’s product. I told you, if you remember, I like to help people. So I like something product. So of course. (Sofiya, LEI).

**Disengaging with main idea and summary-writing activities.** If from an instrumental perspective the primary purpose of the college preparation reading and writing class was understanding the readings; if the purpose of summarizing was understanding, then writing
something; if finding the main idea was a process of seeing what was important in an absolute way, it follows that abstract discussions on main ideas and in class and activities focused on stages of summary writing would not hold the purpose or logic for instrumental learners that it would for their classmates constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond. Indeed, whereas those classmates actively engaged in main idea and summary-writing activities, instrumental learners showed signs of disengaging, or “otherwise engaging,” specifically during main idea and summary writing activities in class. Notably, these learners otherwise appeared as engaged and participatory as other learners in other activities.

Observations of disengagement during the summarizing unit. The descriptions that follow come from observations and in-depth field notes of participants during the three-week summarizing unit in the college and career preparation class, and reflect a second theme that emerged from those observations – disengaging, or in many cases “otherwise engaging” with activities centered on finding main ideas and stages of summary drafting. These observations stand in contrast to the engagement with the same or similar activities among participants constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond, presented in chapter six. In these observations, ‘disengagement’ or ‘otherwise’ engaging took several forms, and did not necessarily show disengaging from learning. As instrumental meaning-makers, Sofiya and Illyas likely responded to these more abstract activities in ways that made sense to them.

Sofiya. Sofiya attended eight of twelve days of the summarizing unit. On the first day, learners read an article and were asked to highlight major ideas in one color, and supporting ideas in another. Sofiya highlighted one two-word phrase in that article, “impossible dream,” in one color, suggesting that she was highlighting new words rather than main ideas or details. On day three, when working in small groups to decide on the best of four summaries, a group
member posed the question, “Which one is better?” Sofiya repeated, “We have to know which one is better.” As the other group members continued that discussion, however, rather than engaging in the discussion about which one was better, Sofiya re-read the article and underlined seemingly new words. When a group member, Teresa, made a case for “summary three” being the best, Sofiya leaned in, listened, and said, “okay, okay.” As their conversation continued, however, she put her pencil on the table, checked her cell phone, and began talking with a classmate in Somali. While the class regrouped and debriefed on which summary was best, Sofiya polished her nails on her skirt, looking down.

On day five of the unit, participants read the article “A Chimp off the Old Block” and drafted summaries of it in class. When initially reading the article, Sofiya appeared engaged, checking her understanding of the phrase “teaching herself how to read” by asking, “without a teacher?” During the time learners were asked to take notes on the article in their notebooks, Sofiya re-read the article, briefly looked back to her “Writing Summaries” handout, then, following words one-by-one with a pencil, read the article again. After she began writing in her notebook, the teacher came around, looked at Sofiya’s notebook, and asked, “Where are your notes? It looks like you’re copying from here.” Sofiya laughed, closed her notebook and patted the teacher on the back. Once the teacher moved on, and there were five more minutes left of class, Sofiya checked her phone, then stood up to leave the room, saying to no one in particular, “A little bit hard.”

Ilyas. Ilyas, who was searching and interviewing for temporary jobs during the summarizing unit, attended four of twelve days. On day five, as learners read the article, “A Chimp off the Old Block,” Ilyas underlined the words ‘coached,’ ‘precocious,’ ‘vending,’ and ‘prowess’ – presumably, words he didn’t understand rather than main ideas or details, as
instructed. As learners began drafting summaries, Illyas copied the first sentence into his notebook. When Chantal came around to check his work, she said to him, “What notes are you taking, Illyas? Are you taking notes or are you copying?”

On day six of the unit, during group peer review, Illyas sat to the side, re-reading the article.

**Commonalities on the Journey toward Self-Authorship**

Among the learners who were transitioning from socializing toward self-authoring perspectives, two unique themes arose. The first was learning for personal development, and the second was beginning to self-monitor learning.

**Learning for personal development.** All three learners who were transitioning toward self-authoring perspectives described their learning motivation as, on one level, personal development. Maria described how she was gaining new ways of seeing life and feeling more informed in the college and career preparation class. Salazam also liked learning more information, emphasizing how not only class content, but group activities, were helping him grow in ways that were important for his goal of moving up at work. Whereas Maria and Salazam expressed a sense of satisfaction with the learning and growing they were doing in the class, Masha described wishing for more “community learning,” with different types of classmates.

Maria described the books and articles she read in class with enthusiasm, including *The Color of my Words*, a novel about a family living in the Dominican Republic under a dictatorship. When asked what was most important about getting introduced to that book, she explained, “Because you discover another world. With the book. And different stories, you learn about the different cultures, different like mine” (Maria, SOI). When prompted, she elaborated:
I think when you read different books, give you the opportunity for you to know different topics… for maybe you don’t know, and when you discover that world, that book – I think it’s good for myself.

CAN YOU SAY A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THAT? WHAT IS THE BEST PART ABOUT THAT FOR YOURSELF?

For me, because I think that when you read the book, your mind is more open, yes, you learn many things… it’s amazing. (Maria, SOI).

When asked how she might use what she was learning in the college and career preparation class outside of school, Maria replied, “I hope to know about the many books, that I know, I never read, or different topics. I like learning every day. Every day! (laughs).” When prompted to elaborate, she gave the example of listening to a TED Talk by Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie, who in her talk described realizing she’d held stereotypes of Mexicans living in America, a group that Maria belonged to. When asked what she liked about that talk, Maria explained, “I think have information for myself” (Maria, LEI).

Salazam, like Maria, described liking to feel informed, and felt like the content in the college and career preparation class was helping him to do so:

Inside, I feel, I learn a lot about things, things that I didn’t know didn’t know about, like about daily life. Sometimes I bring teacher a topic, a topic to learn, different topics that I haven’t, I was not aware before. And I’m learning, so, and it makes me… I thought I knew everything, but I say I am not. I’m still learning. (Salazam, SOI).

Salazam also described a reading that had struck him, a “wonderful lesson” he remembered from a previous class unit on U.S. history. When asked what was important to him
about that reading, he described feeling inspired by learning about people overcoming challenges that he likewise had faced:

   It wasn’t easy, before the people come to here was struggling, struggle, and society wasn’t perfect. And still isn’t perfect, but people, society, trying to improve, trying to live together as one nation… Is very important because, the equality the government has grant equality for all of us, no matter where you come from… comparing in other parts of the world, people struggling, and here we have… I call more peace. It’s not a lot of unrest… I learn it wasn’t easy for this country to come together, it was a lot of struggle… What’s important is, he has taught me a lesson. No matter… where you come from, but if you want to succeed… you want achieve a goal, you can do it. You can reach a goal…You can move up. You can be something. (Salazam, LEI).

   Salazam described experiencing self-development not only from class content, but participation:

   It helps develop my skills, it’s teach me skills, to participate, because what I’m doing here, participating here, if I go outside the class, I’ll go in the job field somewhere, so, those skills I’m learning here, that are use, in outside the class somewhere in my daily life. So I’m building skills here.

   IF YOU CAN TAKE THE SKILLS THAT YOU’RE BUILDING HERE AND USE THEM IN YOUR DAILY LIFE, WHAT WILL THAT MEAN TO YOU?

   It be much better for me, better for me, much better for me. I be able, this class here is teaching me kind of leadership skills. I’m learning here, then if I go outside the class in my daily life, I can participate in other things in my job, somewhere. It teach me leadership skills. (Salazam, SOI).
While Maria and Salazam found the college and career preparation class content aligned with their goals, Masha, seemingly disappointed with the nature of Adult Basic Education classes in the U.S., described wanting something different from the class, more than the English language skills she saw the class as focused on, something she labeled “community studies”:

Here, is just for focus for English language, and then that is not too much helpful for community studies. I don’t have community studies here, just focus on the language.

**CAN YOU EXPLAIN COMMUNITY STUDIES TO ME? WHAT YOU MEAN BY THAT?**

Community studies is all kind of studies, I think like people have to be not for English, ‘she’, ‘he’, ‘it’, grammar… you can study that thing, but generally study things, for more thing. (Masha, LEI).

**Self-monitoring learning.** One hallmark of self-authorship is having internal benchmarks by which to measure success, rather than relying solely on external authorities. Masha, Maria, and Salazam, while still relying on the teacher and her feedback to gauge their success, also used their growing self-authorship to begin relying on their own judgment to monitor their learning. Masha explained how she would, in time, judge her own learning:

What did you learn, what are you learning, maybe at school, maybe online… what you are putting in your mind… maybe here, maybe I learn, maybe I didn’t learn… then I have to be adding my improvement together, then I can see how much did I improve or not improve. That I think so. (Masha, SOI).

Maria also describes gauging her own learning, describing experiencing success as a ‘sensation’: “Well, I know successful for me, because… I feel very good, very, very good. I don’t know, it’s a sensation… And that make me feel success” (Maria, SOI).
Salazam described a similar way of knowing for himself when he’d been successful in class: “It’s inside of me. You know. It’s in my ego” (Salazam, SOI). He illustrated self-monitoring in addition to relying on teacher feedback while describing how he envisioned knowing he’d written a good essay:

Once my teacher make a correction, they say it is more correct, she’s reviewing, say no corrections, if I keep still writing, and there’s no fewer mistakes, fewer mistakes, that make me feel more comfortable, like I’m doing fine. And I say now, I’m doing fine, and it’s no mistakes, I’m doing fine. And I say no, and maybe I don’t have to show my teacher, I’m doing fine after all. (Salazam, SOI).

**Developmental Differences with Writing with Cohesion**

Developmental analysis yielded one domain in which participants constructing meaning from all three developmental categories described qualitatively distinct experiences. Participants across developmental perspectives, in developmentally unique ways, described the importance of writing with cohesion. Sofiya, from her instrumental perspective, concretely illustrated the importance of writing “the one way.” Learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives described working to connect ideas in their writing. Salazam, on his journey toward self-authorship, took perspective on what he saw as his struggle to write cohesively, which he could see when self-editing.

**Instrumental: Writing ‘The One Way’**

From her instrumental perspective, writing with cohesion, for Sofiya, was a rule to be followed:

Always when you write a topic, you have to… focus the one way. One way, the what you talking… So you have to start, then end, you have to one way. Good topic….The one
way is, example, if I talking like, how you come successful or good student, I have to start, I come to school… the year or whatever the month. Then I learn blah blah whatever you take. Then included the conclusion, you have to say, you have to say thank you for your teacher or whatever.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY EXAMPLES ABOUT DOING THAT?

… So the topic was the mother. Every, what I write, she say whatever you, mother or father or teacher or whatever you want, or when you come America.

SO THE TEACHER GIVES YOU A TOPIC.

Topic, yeah, she said, it’s your choice. You take ‘father’, you take ‘mother’, good topic.

AND THEN WHEN YOU GET YOUR TOPIC, YOU STAY WITH ‘ONE’.

One, one direction. Yeah. But she say, ‘my mother’, you can’t say ‘my father’… If you start ‘parents’, it’s okay. If you say, start the topic’s ‘parents’, that’s okay, you can say ‘my mother, blah blah’, then ‘my father’. Because you say the topic was parents. But topic was ‘my mother’. You have to go the one way, your mother.

THIS MIGHT SOUND LIKE A FUNNY QUESTION, BUT IF I HAVE THE TOPIC ‘MY MOTHER’, AND THEN I WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT MY FATHER, OR MY COUSIN, WHAT’S THE PROBLEM WITH THAT?

Okay, you keep that, you skip that away, little bit, you are not, you know, you mix something. You’re still, you are not, you have to just your mother… Maybe you student, you have excuse, because you a student. Maybe teacher tell you, ‘okay thank you, but don’t do again’. Because you are still student, you are not teacher. But example for you, you can’t do that, because you are not student, maybe you, I don’t know, I’m not ask you, what are you, maybe teacher or manager or whatever.
I DO BOTH, YEAH. (BOTH LAUGH). SO FOR ME I CAN’T DO THAT, IS THAT WHAT YOU’RE TELLING ME, IF I WRITE A PARAGRAPh I SHOULD STAY…

Yeah, one paragraph. But if you say ‘my family,’ you take all of them, because ‘father’, ‘mother’, ‘children’, ‘husband’, all, because title was ‘family’. It’s not just one person like mother or father. So what else? (Sofiya, LEI).

Socializing: Striving to Connect Ideas

Nabil and Louam, both constructing meaning from socializing perspectives, described the need to connect their ideas in writing, and working to do so. When asked how he felt his “Doctor without Borders” summary went, Nabil explained that he thought he’d been successful by including several important points in one paragraph. In his brief summary, he explained that he had included several pieces of information from the article:

So I can say this one it can touch many area… Yeah touching many areas, the how is the purpose of doing the summarizing. Need to take small statement which can touch many area. (Nabil, LEI).

When asked how he decided to start with his first sentence, Nabil described connecting different parts of the summary, in order:

According to me, it’s the main, maybe it can be main idea. And main idea supposed to come first, and maybe, details come later. Minor one, they can come after the main one. So main, first of all you need to write down the main details. So, according to me, this the main details. (Nabil, LEI).

Louam, like Nabil, knew that summaries and all pieces of formal, academic writing had component parts that needed to relate, and in a certain order. When asked whether she might use
anything she learned in the college and career preparation class later, she explained, “Writing, how to write like a college student, to organize writing. Like, introduction, supporting details, and conclusion. And summaries too” (Louam, LEI).

When prompted to elaborate, she explained that writing in an organized way leads to clear writing. Furthermore, she explained, it requires a different type of thinking:

To clear, the idea. Clear what are you, what I write to make clear, and professional writing… I learn, is different than what I was thinking to write when I come the class... I was thinking write just the idea to write, but that education is like, have order, to write, what to write first, what to write second, and what write the end. It’s have like the rule for… not writing a letter (laughs)... Letter is like just you write… anything is come in your mind. But writing at a school, it’s have a topic, and introduction, and support, it’s in order, to put in order. That’s an order. Letter is just you write it special, for if it’s for job, it’s have instruction too, but it’s for any letter, just write what is coming in your mind or what you think. But in school is have instruction, order, an order, and specific topic, and about the specific idea, to write, and to, and organize. (Louam, LEI).

On the Journey toward Self-Authoring: Taking Perspective and Self-Editing

Like Nabil and Louam, Salazam knew that academic writing requires cohesion. When asked about one of his summaries, he explained how his knowledge of cohesion informed his writing decisions:

You give the topic… and then you give a details. You gotta make a thesis statement.

Yeah, you make a thesis statement, then you give details, after you have you know outline, details you know for each thesis. (Salazam, LEI).
Despite this understanding, however, he said that cohesion could be a struggle. With his self-authoring capacity to take perspective on his own learning, he described being able to see this struggle in his own writing when self-editing:

Writing’s my weakest, and I need to improve it…When I write about something, I kind of get discouraged…Not able to… write in the complete formal writing, and I get discouraged when I know I make a lot of mistakes, that are grammar mistakes, sometimes my thoughts are not clear. Not clear, and I still gotta improve… I don’t have sometimes concrete ideas to put into it…the concrete ideas is sometimes, two sentences don’t come, don’t match. Yeah, don’t match, don’t match, sentences don’t match, or sometimes it’s not clear. Mismatch… I will say if I’m using a sentence, one sentence in, I put one example, irrelevant. When one word, one sentence is not relevant to the other.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF ONE SENTENCE IS RELEVANT TO ANOTHER OR NOT?

When my teacher tell me. This is not relevant.

IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY THAT YOU ALSO KNOW, OR IS IT ONLY WHEN SHE TELLS YOU?

Sometimes when I go editing, and then I’ll go, ‘oh, this is no’. (Salazam, SOI).

Discussion of Chapter Seven

The developmentally distinct ways of making sense of academic literacy learning presented in chapter seven provide insight into how the increasingly important skill of academic literacy is made sense of from different developmental perspectives. By investigating not how learners perform, but how they experience academic literacy, it becomes possible to see the internal logic behind their sense-making. Instrumental academic literacy learning themes, on one
level, look like struggle; however, these themes also present an internally consistent understanding and pursuit of academic literacy success, as understood through these learners’ instrumental perspectives. Themes unique to learners on the journey toward self-authorship suggest engagement with academic literacy learning on multiple levels. Findings of developmentally distinct themes of writing with cohesion illustrated contrasting ways of viewing the same academic literacy phenomenon from distinct developmental perspectives. These findings are consistent with previous literature on development and rhetorical maturity, and offer a developmental perspective on literature describing struggling versus strong writers and readers. They are consistent with Kegan’s (1982, 1994) stage descriptions and with some previous constructive-developmental findings on developmentally distinct ways of experiencing learning in adulthood. Perhaps most importantly, they paint developmentally distinct pictures of academic literacy learning from the voices and experiences of learners themselves.

**Instrumental Academic Literacy Learning**

On one level, and from the perspective of how an educator might want a learner to engage with academic literacy learning, the learners constructing meaning from instrumental perspectives in this study faced unique challenges. For example, they appeared not to grasp that a main idea refers to an important idea in the context of a text, rather than something important in an absolute way, or to me. They don’t seem to know that summarizing involves more than merely understanding the text, then writing something. At times, these learners responded to the text by free associating, and they disengaged during main idea and summary-writing activities in class. However, these themes, illuminated through the lens of Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive-developmental theory, also reflect a logically cohesive way of striving for success, as understood through their meaning-making perspectives.
An instrumental knower, Kegan explains, constructs meaning through the logic of durable categories and black and white thinking. They are also subject to, and therefore identified with, their own wishes and needs. Because they construct experience through one category at a time, they do not relate categories and make abstractions. Rather, they think concretely and literally.

This logic permeated each academic literacy learning theme unique to instrumental learners. These learners oriented to clear-cut successes, challenges, and rules, as in, “… if you take ten words, and if you all write ten words, it’s good. You understand, you improve” and “…you have to write every day, three or four or two sentence. So that’s improve my write” (Sofiya, SOI). For these learners, learning was not something that happened internally that could be reflected on, because they do not orient toward an inner world. Rather, learning was something to be done, quantified, and measured through getting the correct answer or making a low number of mistakes. Similarly, seeing understanding as the end goal, rather than as one step in a summary-writing process, is logical because the processes in summarizing, beyond understanding, such as distinguishing key ideas from supporting or unimportant ideas, constructing logical connections between those key and supporting ideas (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011), and examining how primary and subordinate ideas are organized within a text (Leki, 1998; Zwiers, 2008) only become logical and meaningful through an abstract, socializing perspective. Understanding the text, by contrast, is rooted in an instrumental learner’s direct experience; she can certainly distinguish whether she has understood or not, and once she has, she can then “write something.” When instructed to identify what was important in the text to find the main idea, it makes sense that an instrumental learner’s frame of reference for understanding what’s important would be what’s important in an absolute way, since from an
instrumental perspective, reality is absolute, as in Illyas’ rationale for an important idea he’d identified in the Doctors without Borders article, “they serve too much people, or they make, they help to people” (Illyas, LEI) or Sofiya’s description of finding a main idea, “I think it was, hundred and thousands of people, that number I highlighted…because it’s a big number” (Sofiya, LEI). It also follows that an instrumental learner, subject to her own interests, would interpret being asked to find what’s important in the text as finding what’s important to me, as in, “Some stories important for you. Some stories that’s the similar or minor” (Sofiya, LEI). It is also logical that instrumental learners would ‘otherwise’ engage in class discussions on the main idea, such as sitting off to the side and re-reading the text while others discussed the main idea or which summary was best, as Sofiya did, or copying, rather than attempt to draft summaries, as Illyas and Sofiya did. These learning behaviors, while not consistent with the likely intent of the activity, were consistent with these learners’ perspective that understanding is the purpose of coming to class, and summarizing is understanding the text, then writing something. From the logic of their own perspectives, these learners were doing precisely what they needed to in order to be successful.

Instrumental ways of engaging academic literacy learning found in this study are consistent not only with Kegan’s developmental stage descriptions, but with anecdotal findings on how ABE/ESOL learners in the NCSALL study conceptualized writing, in which an instrumental learner described difficulty with abstract essay writing assignments and his preference for concrete topics: “Some very hard to write sometimes if you write how like ‘openness’ or like ‘language,’ …but when you can write about the sport, you can write” (Popp & Boes, 2001). These findings are also consistent with the Kiedaisch and Dinitz (1989) study of early college students working on persuasive writing, which found that Perry’s stage of dualism,
similar to Kegan’s (1982, 1994) instrumental stage, helped explain why some writers oriented to looking for the “right answer,” assuming there is only one right answer. The free association to the text that the instrumental learners in this study at times responded with aligns with what Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) distinguish as “knowledge telling,” and corroborates ways of writing attributed to instrumental learners such as “a brain dump,” of disconnected and unedited thoughts (Taylor 2006, p.207), or relating one event after the next in the sequence they occurred, or came to mind (Kegan, 1982).

Responding to the text via thoughts as they come to mind, rather than writing with a rhetorical structure in mind, also mirrors behaviors of struggling readers and writers described in the literature, e.g., not engaging with rhetorical aspects of writing and revision, attending only to surface features of reading and writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Kellogg, 2008; Kintsch, 1989). This connection suggests again that some behaviors of inexperienced readers and writers may be developmentally mediated, as well as impacted by experience with reading and writing.

**Transitioning toward Self-Authoring Academic Literacy Learning**

Just as academic literacy learning themes unique to instrumental learners were consistent with Kegan’s (1982, 1994) developmental stage descriptions, so were the two themes unique to the learners transitioning toward self-authoring perspectives, learning for personal development and beginning to self-monitor learning. Learning for personal development echoed previous findings that self-authoring learners oriented to the intrinsic value of learning (Portnow, Diamond & Rimer, 2001). Self-monitoring learning reflects the increasing reliance on one’s own judgment that comes with self-authoring meaning-making (Kegan, 1982, 1994), explaining why learners developing self-authorship, while still relying on the expertise of the teacher, would begin looking to their own judgment and standards to gauge their learning. This finding is
consistent with findings in the NCSALL study on how learners developing toward self-authoring saw their teacher as one source of knowledge, but also saw themselves as a source of knowledge (Drago-Severson, 2004).

**Developmental Ways of Writing with Cohesion**

Learners’ developmentally distinct ways of describing writing with cohesion provides a rich illustration of how development mediates academic literacy conceptions. In their developmentally distinct ways, learners from each developmental category understood that in a piece of writing, ideas need to fit together. As with previous academic literacy learning themes, these understandings were consistent with and expressed through their developmental lenses as per Kegan’s (1982, 1994) developmental stage descriptions. Sofiya’s instrumental description of writing “the one way” showed her understanding of a rule for the right way to write, which she illustrated through concrete examples that either match or don’t match, as in, “start the topic’s ‘parents,’ that’s okay, you can say ‘my mother… then ‘my father’… But topic was ‘my mother.’ You have to go the one way, your mother” (Sofiya, LEI). Socializing learners, by contrast, used their cross-categorical capacity to relate abstract ideas as they placed attention on making their ideas connect in their own writing, as in, “how is the purpose of doing the summarizing. Need to take small statement which can touch many area” (Nabil, LEI) and “writing at a school, it’s have a topic, and introduction, and support, it’s in order, to put in order” (Louam, SOI). Salazam, lastly, was able to take perspective on what he saw as his struggle to write with cohesion, and could see sometimes in his own self-editing that one sentence was not relevant to another, as in, “oh, this one, no” (Salazam, SOI).
CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated how ABE/ESOL learners experience academic literacy learning, and how understanding their constructive-developmental perspectives can help educators better reach developmentally diverse learners developing academic literacy skills. Chapter four presented the developmental diversity of the nine learners in this study. The themes and their developmental variations presented in chapters five and six, along with the developmentally unique themes presented in chapter seven, demonstrate that developmental perspectives matter for ABE/ESOL learners’ academic literacy learning, shaping qualitatively different learning experiences. While understanding learners’ developmental perspectives does not have predictive power, it can offer educators insight into differences that ABE/ESOL learners bring to academic literacy learning, and their developmentally unique learning needs.

This chapter first briefly revisits developmental orientations to motivation, support, success, and challenge from the three developmental categories in this study, and discusses implications for supporting learners constructing meaning from each. Second, it recaps developmentally distinct experiences with academic literacy skill learning, particularly summarizing, and provides recommendations for supporting and challenging developmentally diverse ABE/ESOL learners in developing these skills. Given that most educators won’t necessarily know the developmental perspectives of their learners, this chapter then discusses implications for supporting developmentally diverse learners within the same class. Lastly, drawing on findings from the longitudinal NCSALL study of ABE/ESOL learners (Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan et al., 2001), this chapter shares recommendations for creating holding environments that support not only learning but growth, which may in time help learners take
increasingly complex perspectives on the multilayered and challenging endeavor of second language academic literacy learning. This chapter concludes with a summary of this study’s implications and areas for future research.

**Developmental Implications for Motivation, Support, Success and Challenge**

Most educators would agree that it’s important to harness learners’ natural learning motivations. For ABE/ESOL learners wanting to develop academic literacy skills, motivation is also an important element in persistence (Comings, 2009; Mellard et al., 2013) and therefore success. Learners with higher motivation have been found to persist in ABE/ESOL programs more than learners with low motivation (Comings, 2009), and motivation has been acknowledged as intertwined with the academic writing process itself, impacting willingness to write, time spent writing, and attention to quality (Hayes, 2012). Motivation as framed in the literature as a dispositional aspect of persistence, including seeing a particular learning situation as important in achieving a longer-term goal, believing in the ability to succeed in a particular learning context, and assigning value to learning tasks in class (Comings, 2009; Mellard et al., 2013). Seeing the ability to succeed, of course, impacts how learners conceive of success.

Learners in this study demonstrated how motivation and conceptions of success can be seen in different ways from different developmental perspectives. The developmentally unique ways learners described motivation, success and challenge may in turn impact how they see learning as related to their goals, how they see the task value of learning activities, and the options they see for managing attendance challenges, with implications for developmentally effective support and challenge.
Supporting Instrumental Learners

Instrumental learners in this study were motivated to attend the college and career preparation class by the utilitarian aspects of having more opportunities and better jobs, including better salaries, meeting their families’ material needs, and helping others so that God would, in turn, help them. In concrete ways, they also connected class learning to progress toward a real life goal, as in Illyas’ description of filling in a job application with his “own hands.” Instrumental learners did not, however, relate the academic literacy activities they did in class to the “types” of learning they might do in college or at work, which requires more abstract reasoning. In fact, by the time of her second interview, Sofiya had stopped attending the college and career preparation class, because, she’d said, she was getting ready to go back to her home country of Somalia for an extended visit. However, she was still coming to the medical careers class at the same learning center, perhaps because from her instrumental perspective the literal connection between a medical careers class and becoming a nurse was more compelling. In order for instrumental learners to see the connection between a skill such as summarizing and the goal of becoming a nurse, instrumental learners may benefit from an explicit, concrete connection from the teacher such as that most college teachers in Minnesota say summarizing is very important in college (Johnson & Parrish, 2010) or via a class presentation from an outside expert, such as a community college representative. Drago-Severson (2004) also recommends a goal-setting curriculum to support a range of ABE/ESOL developmental needs. Supporting instrumental learners in making goals explicit by setting and revisiting them could support them in making connections between academic goals and academic literacy learning in class, helping to increase and sustain motivation (Comings, 2009). Such goal-setting activities could also create
opportunities to begin thinking about goals in more abstract ways, perhaps through class readings and discussions about others’ journeys toward similar goals.

Connected to sustaining motivation is seeing progress and experiencing success with learning (Comings, 2009). For the instrumental learners in this study, academic literacy successes were clear-cut and quantifiable, including learning a certain number of words and sentences and receiving a limited number of circled mistakes on a piece of writing. Instrumental learners may therefore benefit from clear feedback through assessments such as vocabulary quizzes, reading comprehension questions, unit quizzes or “exit tickets” with clear right and wrong answers.

As they struggled to make time for valued attendance and homework in the college and career preparation class, instrumental learners oriented to consequences and rules. Just as these learners prefer to avoid negative, concrete consequences such as missing a new sentence when they miss class, they may find motivation in concrete rewards for attendance such as certificates, attendance wall charts, or clear attendance expectations and rewards (Drago-Severson, 2009).

**Supporting Socializing Learners**

Socializing learners in this study described motivation to create a better future in terms of relationships, social roles and an abstract sense of identity, and framed goals in relationship to inner dispositions and interests. These learners were developmentally inclined to make connections between class learning and progress in life, academic, or work goals, which contributes to experiences of success and relevance of class learning to goals, two factors in adult learner persistence (Comings, 2009). For example, socializing learners described how learning in the college and career preparation class helped with success in GED class and at work. Those
with an existing conception of what college level writing entails also described learning skills they expected to need in college. These learners may sustain motivation through opportunities to further explore their inner dispositions and interests in relationship to post-secondary education and potential career paths through activities such as interest inventories and researching post-secondary and career paths. These learners may also benefit from periodically reflecting on these connections in a formal way through a goal-setting curriculum (Drago-Severson, 2004). This could provide an opportunity to experience valued relational support from classmates and the teacher, and may also provide an opportunity to begin looking to their own selves and views (Drago-Severson, 2009) in relation to goals.

Socializing learners seemed aware that that attendance impacts progress, and described regretting missing class because they knew it meant missing learning. Socializing learners who regularly or unavoidably miss class might benefit from the opportunity to do homework and get feedback to practice competencies they’ve missed. Leticia, for example, chose to complete all optional homework assignments in the summarizing unit, even though she only attended five of twelve days. In navigating the tension between outside obligations and attending class, socializing learners, with their developmental orientation to living up to societal and familial expectations, might be particularly vulnerable to feeling “pulled” (Kegan, 1994) when faced with attendance conflicts, and may benefit from being gently encouraged to consider choices, albeit difficult ones, that could allow them to attend class more, perhaps by hearing or reading examples from others. These learners may also be more easily able to resolve this tension if they see regular attendance as required, such as managed enrollment or a strict attendance policy.
Supporting Learners on the Journey toward Self-Authoring

Learners in this study who were transitioning toward self-authoring perspectives had much in common with their fully socializing counterparts in terms of motivation, deriving encouragement from success, and describing the tension between valuing attendance and homework but struggling to find time, in part, presumably, because they were all still constructing meaning from a partially socializing perspective. Two developmentally distinct ways of describing motivation included a desire for greater self-satisfaction, in the context of wanting a better future for self and others, and a unique developmental theme of learning for personal development. These learners also looked at how learning was related to helping them build competence and self-satisfaction in relation to their own learning agendas, which as Masha’s case illustrated, may or may not be aligned with the goals of the program. To sustain motivation and persistence (Comings, 2009), learners transitioning toward self-authoring perspectives may sustain motivation through regularly revisiting and discussing their goals and learning agendas, and self-evaluating progress. Learners such as Masha, who didn’t seem to make connections between the summarizing learning she was doing in class and passing her GED to eventually go to art school, might also benefit from a consultation with a teacher or learning center manager about what academic literacy skills are on the GED, and how the college and career preparation class relates; such a conversation might also create an opportunity to discuss learner and program fit, supporting the learner in weighing costs and benefits in relationship to self-defined priorities, and making a conscious choice about continuing or not.

In describing orientations to attendance and homework, the learners transitioning toward self-authorship in this study uniquely expressed a sense of choice regarding how often they came to class. In fact, the learner with the most apparent situational obstacles to regular attendance,
Salazam, was most explicit in describing himself as responsible for managing his time so that he could come more often and do more homework. Educators, by knowing and encouraging these learners’ self-defined goals, and supporting their ability to measure progress toward them, may help learners transitioning toward self-authoring maintain motivation, one factor in helping them to overcome situational barriers (Comings, 2009), as in Salazam’s sentiment, “all that time… that I’ve some little sacrifice, that sacrifice is worth it, it’s worth it going school” (Salazam, LEI).

Table 7 summarizes developmental orientations to academic literacy learning experiences of motivation, support, success and challenge, with recommendations for developmental supports and challenges for each perspective.
### Table 7

**Developmental Orientations toward Motivation, Success and Challenge with Appropriate Supports and Challenges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Perspective</th>
<th>Orientation to Motivation, Support, Success and Challenge with Academic Literacy Learning</th>
<th>Developmental Supports</th>
<th>Developmental Challenges / “+1”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Primarily Instrumental [2(3)] | • Describe utilitarian learning motivations such as having more opportunities and better jobs, including better salaries and meeting their families’ material needs.  
• Measure their own learning success by concrete feedback (test scores, number of correct answers or circled mistakes).  
• Connect class learning to real life in tangible ways, such physically writing discreet answers on a job application.  
• May only assign “task value” to class activities that explicitly and directly relate to concrete goals.  
• Feel sad when they miss class and therefore miss information (e.g., a sentence) or get a wrong answer; do not consider missed learning beyond information. | • Provide opportunities to make goals and concrete steps toward them explicit, making tangible connections between academic goals and academic literacy learning in class.  
• Provide opportunities to develop self-efficacy by seeing concrete learning successes such as in-class quizzes or daily “exit tickets” with clear right and wrong answers.  
• Increase “task value” of activities such as summarizing by showing an explicit, concrete connection to learners’ goals.  
• Encourage motivation for attendance through visible rewards such as a wall chart or attendance certificates. | • Provide opportunities to think about goals and success in more abstract ways (Drago-Severson, 2004), perhaps through class readings and discussions about others’ journeys toward similar goals.  
• Provide opportunities to consider abstract connections between class learning and life goals through class readings or goal-sharing with classmates (Drago-Severson, 2004). |
| Socializing (3) | • Describe learning motivation in terms of relationships, social roles, and an abstract sense of identity to create better futures.  
• Are likely to consider inner dispositions and interests when setting goals.  
• Are naturally inclined to connect their learning to progress toward their goals.  
• Regret missing class because they know they miss learning; may feel “pulled” between outside and school obligations. | • Encourage sustained motivation by creating periodic structured opportunities to periodically reflect on connections between learning and goals.  
• Ensure these learners have opportunities to learn about common academic literacy assignments in college, if they don’t already know, so they can see the relevance of class activities.  
• Encourage exploring inner dispositions in relation to goals and opportunities through activities such as interest inventories and researching post-secondary and | • Provide opportunities to look to own self and views (Drago-Severson, 2004) in setting and revising goals, perhaps through reading stories of career changes or going against the tide to realize a dream.  
• Encourage this learner to consider difficult decisions or sacrifices to attend class versus being unable to attend, perhaps by hearing or reading examples from others. |
career paths.

- Consider providing optional homework and feedback for learners who must miss class regularly; and/or, enforce an attendance policy that reduces potential inner conflicts around prioritizing class when possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitional: Socializing to Self-Authoring (3/4 – 4/3)</th>
<th>Describe learning motivation in terms of self-satisfaction and an orientation to personal competence to learn and create better lives.</th>
<th>Allow time for exploration and dialogue about self-determined goals (Drago-Severson, 2009) and learning agendas in relation to academic literacy learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are likely to arrive in the class with more self-defined learning agendas aligned with goals and preferences.</td>
<td>• Orient to personal growth as well as learning.</td>
<td>• Provide class leadership opportunities that relate to learners’ self-defined, real-life goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are more likely to see attendance as a choice, even in the face of situational or external barriers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Supports above also apply to these learners, who construct meaning partially from socializing perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Support reflective and conscious decision-making on continuing or dropping class where differences exist between personal and program goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage these learners to consider viewpoints of others or take leadership “turns” with others who they may not agree with.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developmentally Distinct Forms of Academic Literacy Challenge and Support

Themes in chapters six and seven demonstrate that development makes a difference in how ABE/ESOL learners experience and engage with academic literacy competencies such as summarizing. By understanding learners’ developmental perspectives, educators can gain insight into differences in how ABE/ESOL learners respond to academic literacy learning. For example, instrumental learners’ ways of making sense of academic literacy activities, from an educator’s perspective, may look like confusion or struggle, but also reflect an internally logical pathway toward success from the meaning-making perspective of the learner. Learners on the journey toward self-authorship, by contrast, may arrive in the classroom looking for personal growth, more equipped to self-monitor learning, and with their own learning agendas.

While most educators won’t know the precise developmental perspective of the learners they work with, by keeping developmental diversity in mind, educators can avoid “unknowingly favoring one way of knowing while neglecting others” (Drago-Severson, 2004), and understand how qualitatively different forms of support and challenge can help developmentally diverse learners more fully benefit in their academic literacy learning. This section reviews academic skill learning experiences, especially summarizing, from each developmental perspective in this study, and recommends a variety of pedagogical approaches to respond to developmentally distinct learning needs.

Recommendations for Instrumental Learners

As they engaged with learning to summarize, instrumental learners in this study oriented to clear-cut successes, challenges, and rules, and described understanding the text, not as a first step, but as a final measure of success. Summary writing, by logical extension, meant understanding the text, then writing something. To this end, in class, while others engaged with
main idea discussions and multi-step writing processes, instrumental learners continued working toward success as they conceptualized it – re-reading the text, and when prompted to summarize, copying it in their notebooks. Copying the text, while inconsistent with the teacher’s instructions, was consistent with ensuring understanding through repetition, and with Sofiya’s goal of memorizing what she read, which she described as helpful with understanding. As Taylor (2006) predicts for instrumental learners, because they do not yet take perspective on their own thinking, these learners tended toward free association when asked about a text. When prompted to highlight or write main ideas or major details, these learners, reflecting their developmental assumption that reality is absolute, focused on what was important in an absolute way, such as the fact that Doctors without Borders are saving lives, or in Sofiya’s case, that they helped a clearly “big number” of people. With the instrumental orientation to self-interest, it was also logical that for Sofiya, what is important in the text means what’s important to me, as in “Some stories important for you. Some stories that’s the similar or minor” (Sofiya, LEI).

Instrumental learners developing academic literacy skills such as summarizing are likely to need bridging between the way they conceptualize summarizing, and the way it’s conceptualized within the academic discourse and Discourse community (Gee, 1990; 2012) they seek entrance to. Such a bridge, Kegan (1982) states, needs to be “firmly anchored on both sides.” Such bridge-building is often referred to as scaffolding. Taylor (2006) describes developmental scaffolding as the distance between what a learner can do independently and with support, likening the concept to Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of proximal development, “the space between” what a learner can independently and with help. Taylor goes on to recommend creating multiple opportunities for learners to experience, with support, constructing knowledge just beyond the level of complexity that they can construct independently.
Perhaps one of the most organic strategies to scaffold summarizing for instrumental learners is to start with their already strong focus on understanding the text, which is indeed a first necessary step in summary writing (Swales & Feak, 2012). Understanding the text can be measured through answering comprehension questions, as Illyas described: “…if you are understanding well, you know paragraph and reading, you can easy, easy to answer. A, B, C, you can choose easily” (Illyas, LEI). Comprehension questions can be framed as the wh-questions that many of the learners with socializing perspectives and beyond found helpful in identifying the main ideas in their readings. As Teresa put it, “… answering those question, it’s like answering what’s going on in the article” (Teresa, LEI). Instrumental learners may feel encouraged knowing whether they’ve gotten the right answer to these questions. Once they’ve identified appropriate answers to the wh-questions, as one self-contained task, instrumental learners could build on that success to engage in a new challenge, writing not just “something” but a main idea sentence about the text. This could also help learners write main ideas rooted in the text itself, rather than “writing something” guided by free association or what’s important to me. Until and as they develop the cross-categorical capacity to relate different ideas in the text together, it may also be helpful to put the answers to more than one question in sentence frames (Zwiers, 2008), which can provide a template for connecting more than one idea in one complex sentence. Using Salazam’s sentence from the article “A Chimp off the Old Block,” a filled-in sentence frame might look like, “This article [describes/shows/claims] a chimp [who] can learn literacy skills [what] by observing his mother [how].”

As instrumental learners work to build a conceptual framework for summarizing, they might also benefit from reading example summaries that resemble the language and text level they would be likely to initially produce. These learners could begin learning genre components
of summaries by labeling component parts, such as ‘introduction,’ ‘main idea,’ ‘supporting detail #1,’ and ‘supporting detail #2’ (Ouellette-Schramm, in press). Another helpful scaffolding tool in adult ESL (Parrish, 2004) and academic literacy (Zwiers, 2008) classrooms are graphic organizers, which can visually isolate elements of academic literacy tasks, encouraging learners to think about one text element at a time, compatible with instrumental learners’ categorical thinking. For example, a learner could fill out a graphic organizer resembling a sandwich, with an introduction and conclusion as the sandwich “buns” and the main idea with a few supporting details in between. With guidance to carefully consider each supporting idea in relationship to a main idea, one at a time, instrumental learners may gradually begin to engage in the cognitive demands of summarizing, relating ideas together to distinguish key ideas from supporting or unimportant ideas, and constructing logical connections between those key and supporting ideas (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011). Because instrumental learners think through one category at a time, they will likely do best if faced with one learning task at a time and get feedback before continuing to the next. Rather than be asked to fill out an entire graphic organizer, it may be more effective with these learners to first or with guidance write a main idea statement, get feedback, and then proceed to looking for a directly connected supporting detail. Because these learners are developing the capacity to relate ideas, it may be best to start with texts in which the connection between main ideas and supporting details is explicit.

Finally, because instrumental learners think through one category at a time, and because they are bridging the conception of “understanding, then writing something” to a new concept of summarizing, writing the main idea of a text with supporting details, it may be particularly important for these learners to summarize texts at or somewhat below their reading level. This could help them feel confident that they’ve succeeded in understanding so that they can move on
to the next task, and keep cognitive capacity available for the more complex task that they are beginning to engage with (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Leki, 1996). Working with manageable texts could also allow a teacher to challenge instrumental learners to begin thinking about their thinking through explicit instruction and practice with metacognitive reading strategies during reading and writing such as think-alouds. These metacognitive strategies can also affirm instrumental learners’ current priorities by helping with text comprehension (Berne, 2004), while at the same time “bridging” to a more complex way of thinking. Instrumental learners may also be appropriately challenged to begin considering a reader’s perspective through peer review and feedback. They may also be challenged to begin viewing learning not only as product, but process, by keeping and periodically reviewing a writing portfolio.

**Recommendations for Socializing Learners**

As they learned summarizing, socializing learners used their capacity for abstract thinking to conceptualize a process with several steps, understanding the text being step one, and compared summarizing in English to what they imagined it would be like in Spanish. As they worked toward finding main ideas, they stayed within the text, using their cross-categorical capacity to infer that the context of the article influences content, or what is important within it. They also used strategies to identify the main idea, including answering the wh-questions and relating and comparing ideas within the text. Participating in the stages of writing, these learners reflected on decisions made in a step-by-step process and on conventions they were learning such as using their own words and being concise. They also used their socializing capacity to take another’s perspective to consider the vantage point of an imagined reader, motivating them to write with clarity, or in Nabil’s case, to “attract the mind” of the reader. These learners also
worked to make ideas relate in their writing, a concept that Louam, in her socializing capacity, described through the metaphor of a grapevine, or in her language, “harek”.

Despite the comparative strengths socializing learners brought to their learning experiences, however, most described summarizing in English as a difficult process requiring practice and support. While they are already engaging in the cognitive demands of summarizing, distinguishing key ideas from supporting or unimportant ideas, and seeing and constructing logical connections between those key and supporting ideas (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011; Leki, 1998; Zwiers, 2008), socializing learners may benefit from regular structured practice to continue making their own processes explicit, perhaps also through explicit metacognitive strategies (Anderson, 2002; Berne, 2004). Just as graphic organizers may help instrumental learners in making the steps of summarizing explicit, they may also help socializing learners reflect on choices more explicitly by making them visual. Graphic organizers may also help socializing learners approach increasingly complex tasks such as identifying and relating several important ideas from separate parts of a text, as described by Louam:

Divided, the divided is from one to another… just more than one places, chose more than one… if a letter… even we learn right now some cover letter, it’s have parts. It’s not only in one, if it’s only one circle, can be summarize, but not with the details, maybe some short ideas. Not all of them, I think so, at least.” (Louam, LEI).

Socializing learners in this study also emphasized the value of learning from classmates’ examples, as in Leticia, in hearing the way a classmate wrote something in her own words helped her see that and how she might write an idea in her own words, as well. Because of their ability to reflect on their own processes by comparing with others, socializing learners might
particularly benefit from small group work in which learners share their writing and perhaps ask each other structured questions about choices they made in the writing process. Socializing learners may also benefit from working with example summaries, to have the opportunity to reflect on ways of writing in a new genre. They may also experience self-efficacy and success by applying criteria learned from the teacher, as a valued expert, to critique different summaries, as in day three of the summarizing unit. Receiving feedback in peer review could give socializing learners the opportunity to compare the reader’s perspective they imagined when writing to a real reader’s perspective. Socializing learners may also benefit from explicitly learning metacognitive reading and writing strategies, which could expand the repertoire of reading and writing process choices they might make, and provide opportunities to make choices about strategies that are most effective for them.

While socializing learners will want and need to receive feedback from a teacher on their developing writing, they may also benefit from being challenged to begin self-monitoring and evaluating their writing, and even their writing learning processes, e.g., through keeping and reflecting on writing portfolios over a period of time. In choosing texts for socializing learners, they may develop an interest in not only learning, but growth, through rich, relevant, and interesting readings, on a variety of topics from more than one perspective. These learners might also benefit from reading and writing about different and conflicting viewpoints on the same relevant current events issue.
**Recommendations for Learners on the Journey to Self-Authoring**

In developing summarizing skills, learners on the journey toward self-authoring engaged in many of the same processes as their socializing counterparts, described above. From a constructive-developmental perspective, as well as a sociocultural perspective, the writing conventions and processes they were learning were new *content*, rather than a qualitatively new way of thinking, as the instrumental learners were developing. However, these learners still described learning this new content as challenging. Maria emphasized the difficulty of making a decision about most important among many details, and thought summarizing would still be formidable, though more easily accomplished, in her first language. Salazam described being confused about requirements of the genre, such as how to include the title of the article in a summary. At the same time, they brought unique needs and capacities to academic literacy activities, including an interest in not only learning but growth, as in Maria’s description of learning about “other worlds” through readings such as *The Color of my Words* or Salazam’s appreciation for articles that “broadened [his] mind.” These learners also brought to the classroom a capacity to self-monitor and self-edit, even as they were building the very skills they were self-editing.

Many developmentally effective academic literacy learning supports for these learners overlap with those relevant to socializing learners, given their shared socializing perspective and the fact that to some degree or another, they are all learning a new genre in a new language. Engaging in peer review may also allow these learners to exercise informal class leadership, and learning and practicing metacognitive strategies may offer a menu of options for improving writing, creating choices that these learners could make to support their own goals. These learners’ growing tendency for self-monitoring could be leveraged by explicitly learning and
practicing self-editing techniques. Teachers could also make text choices that would capture these learners’ interest in personal development through readings and discussions with themes relating to their own journeys of growth, learning about others’ perspectives and realities such as in Maria’s description of *The Color of My Words*, or civil rights reading around overcoming societal obstacles that Salazam described. Just as socializing learners may be appropriately challenged by considering different viewpoints on an issue, so might these learners. They might be additionally challenged to identify what may be valid in an argument they disagree with.

Table 8 summarizes developmentally distinct academic literacy learning experiences and supports and challenge strategies for each developmental perspective.
### Table 8
**Developmental Orientations toward Academic Literacy Learning with Appropriate Supports and Challenges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Perspective</th>
<th>Orientation: Motivation, Support, Success and Challenge with Academic Literacy Learning</th>
<th>Developmental Supports</th>
<th>Developmental Challenges / “+1”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Primarily Instrumental [2(3)] | • Orient to clear-cut successes, challenges and rules.  
  • See understanding the text as the end goal, rather than as part of a larger process.  
  • Conceptualize the main idea as what’s important in an absolute way, or to *me*.  
  • Tend to respond to the text with free association.  
  • May disengage or “otherwise engage” during activities making abstract reasoning demands summarizing unit, e.g., re-reading the text and unknown vocabulary, or copying the text.  
  • View writing with cohesion as writing ‘The One Way’. | • Affirm and respond to desire to understand the text through wh-comprehension questions with clear right and wrong answers.  
  • Use answers to wh-questions to write main idea sentences using sentence frames (Zwiers, 2008).  
  • As they build a conceptual framework of the writing process beyond understanding the text, break subsequent steps in the process down into discrete, visually concrete activities, e.g., with graphic organizers, ensuring that they receive clear instructions and feedback for each step before proceeding to the next.  
  • As learners work to relate relevant ideas in a text, structure activities so that they can compare ideas, such as a supporting detail to a main idea, or an important vs. unimportant idea, one at a time.  
  • As learners develop the cognitive skills of academic literacy competencies like summarizing, manage the overall cognitive load by ensuring that the text they are summarizing is written at or slightly below their English reading level. | • Support learners in building a conceptual framework of the writing process beyond just understanding, or “understanding, then writing something,” e.g., through examples close to what the learners might achieve as a next step.  
  • Challenge learners to begin thinking about their own thinking through explicit metacognitive strategies, e.g., using “think-alouds” while reading.  
  • Challenge this learner to begin considering a reader’s perspective through peer review activities.  
  • Challenge these learners to begin reflecting on learning not only as product but process by keeping and periodically reviewing a writing portfolio. |

| Socializing (3) | • See writing as a process with multiple steps.  
  • Deliberately use strategies to identify main ideas, e.g., answering wh-questions or relating ideas.  
  • Consider the reader’s perspective when making writing choices.  
  • Attempt to meet expectations for writing with cohesion – • Provide opportunities to make choices during the writing process explicit, e.g., through an increasing range of choices of learning strategies to identify main ideas, use one’s own words, or write concisely.  
  • Use graphic organizers to help reflect on choices more explicitly by making them visually explicit, and to approach increasingly complex tasks, e.g., identifying and relating several important ideas from separate parts of a text.  
  • Provide opportunities for these learners to reflect on their own processes, decisions, and understandings | • Challenge these learners to begin self-monitoring learning, while still ensuring valued teacher feedback, e.g., through reflective portfolios.  
  • Encourage learners to see possibilities for not only learning but growth through rich, relevant, and interesting, with a variety of topics and perspectives.  
  • Challenge learners to engage in considering different and conflicting perspectives. |
Consciously work to relate ideas in writing, by comparing/sharing writing and writing choices with classmates.

- These learners may experience self-efficacy by applying learned criteria to critique examples of writing, e.g., to choose the best of more than one summary.
- Provide opportunities for these learners to compare an imagined reader's perspective to real readers' perspectives through peer review.
- Support these learners in becoming more aware of choices in reading and writing processes through explicit metacognitive strategies, and thus being able to make increasingly effective choices regarding what helps them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitional: Socializing to Self-Authoring (3/4 – 4/3)</th>
<th>Viewpoints by reading differing perspectives on the same topic or issue, e.g., learners might summarize brief articles with differing perspectives on a relevant current events issue.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• May be looking for personal development in addition to content learning.</td>
<td>• Support above also apply to these learners, who construct meaning partially from socializing perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arrive to the class with a capacity to self-monitor learning.</td>
<td>• Choose readings that support these learners in feeling informed (e.g., history or current events) and that offer them different perspectives and experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for leadership with peer review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leverage learners’ growing tendency for self-monitoring by having them explicitly learn and practice self-editing and revision techniques, and by having them keep a writing portfolio, periodically reflecting on growth and progress over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Challenge learners to not only consider different and conflicting viewpoints by reading differing perspectives on the same topic or issue, but to identify what is valid an argument they disagree with.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations for Teaching Developmentally Diverse Learners

Most educators won’t know the precise developmental perspectives of their learners. However, anticipating “hidden” developmental diversities, along with the familiar diversities of ABE/ESOL learners, can illuminate an important dimension of what learners bring to the classroom that will impact their learning experiences. In turn, educators can use a developmental lens as another way to understand what may be influencing differences in learning experiences.

While learners bring developmentally diverse learning needs to the classroom, educators don’t need to teach separate classes to meet learners’ developmental needs. Drago-Severson (2004) describes developmental diversity as a “new pluralism” that “introduces a new definition of the ‘resource-rich’ classroom, one that includes good pedagogical matches to a broad variety of adults’ learning needs and ways of knowing” (p. 15). The developmentally specific learning strategies in the previous section can be seen as a pedagogical toolbox that educators can draw from to differentiate support and challenge in the academic literacy classroom just as they might differentiate instruction for more familiar diversities such as language level or learning styles.

Recommendations for Supporting Development

In the seminal NCSALL study applying a constructive-developmental lens to ABE/ESOL learning, three cohorts of ABE/ESOL learners demonstrated developmental growth, as measured by the Subject Object Interview (SOI), during the space of only ten months – shorter than in previous constructive-developmental studies of growth in adulthood (Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan et al., 2001). In her book based on that study, Becoming Adult Learners, Drago-Severson (2004) recommends ABE/ESOL program and curricular elements that can support development over time. At the program level, she emphasizes the critical role of a learning cohort. On the curricular level, she suggests making connections between class content and learners' lives,
applying skills to real life, and collaborating in peer groups. These strategies align with best
practices in adult ESOL (Parrish, 2004) and with how learners in this study described motivation
and learning. As mentioned in the previous sections, Drago-Severson also recommends a goal-
based curriculum.

Drago-Severson argues that implementing features of cohort design can support
development among learners constructing meaning from all developmental perspectives.
Examples she offers include having learners meet in small “communities of connection” to
discuss topics relating to their lives, current events, workplace issues, or to engage in peer
support and tutoring. Drago-Severson (2004) also notes that cohort design elements can
positively influence retention among ABE/ESOL learners (Comings, 2009).

Drago-Severson’s recommendation to support development by relating learning to life
also aligns with good practices in teaching ABE/ESOL (Parrish, 2004), and learners in this
study, in developmentally distinct ways, described feeling inspired by applying learning to life.
Kegan et al. (2001) and Drago-Severson (2004) both describe how relating learning to life can be
developmentally supportive, stressing that instrumental learners would likely find a skills-based
curriculum relevant to their lives, while learners constructing meaning from socializing
perspectives and beyond would benefit from more opportunities for reflection on these
connections.

Academic literacy pedagogical approaches above included Drago-Severson’s
recommendation of a goals curriculum, which, she argues, not only supports learning but
development, supporting learners in transferring learning from one context to another.
Instrumental learners, she explains, can consider concrete steps that will help them reach their
goals, while learners constructing meaning from socializing perspectives and beyond could derive encouragement from reformulating goals with the support of teachers and peers.

**Summary of Implications**

The findings of this study have implications for teachers and administrators concerned with academic literacy preparedness of ABE/ESOL learners. This study revealed how learners’ developmental perspectives shaped the ways they experienced and engaged with academic literacy learning. The findings of this study raise questions about how to best support and challenge developmentally diverse learners with academic literary skills.

This study contributes to the literature on ABE/ESOL development and learning by linking the SOI to learning experiences. It contributed a new developmental dimension of consideration to familiar academic literacy learning issues related to the broader levels of motivation and navigating success and challenge, and contributed to the relatively small amount of literature using constructive-developmental theory to understand academic literacy learning, particularly by studying not writing performance, but the expressed experiences of learners themselves. The college and career preparation class provided a rich academic literacy learning environment for the learners in the summarizing unit, but also illustrated how the abstract challenges of academic literacy learning can be challenging for instrumental learners to fully engage with. As ABE/ESOL educators strive to support learners in developing increasingly challenging and high-stakes academic literacy skills, these findings provide an opportunity to surface and question assumptions about how adults construct meaning, and how they learn best.
Limitations

As a qualitative case study with nine participants, the findings on how development mediated learning in this study are not generalizable. Also, connections between developmental perspectives and ways of making sense of academic literacy learning, while explanatory (Yin, 2009) cannot be assumed to be causal. Furthermore, while this study brought a constructive-developmental lens to understand the academic literacy learning experiences of the nine learners in this study, their experiences could likely be further elucidated by analysis through other theoretical lenses, including the linguistic, sociocultural, cognitive, and literacy development lenses in this study’s literature review.

While developmental stages appeared to mediate learning experiences among the learners in this study, they also brought many diversities to their learning experiences, including age, gender, ethnicity, first language(s), educational backgrounds, and, within a range, levels of English. None of these differences were explored in systematic depth in this study, and all surely informed learning experiences. Learning experiences may also have been influenced by other factors not analyzed in this study such as culturally influenced thinking patterns (Vorobel & Kim, 2011).

Lastly, while many qualitative studies are marked by duration over a period of time and iterative data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), in this study, due to the attendance and persistence challenges (Comings, 2009; Mellard et al., 2013) of the ABE/ESOL participant population, the data collection period was restricted to eight weeks, with three weeks of classroom observations. This time frame did not allow for extensive iterative data collection. Finally, while grounded theory provides a rigorous method to ensure that themes arise from learners words and own meaning, as constructivist grounded theorist Charmaz (2000, 2006)
argues, the notion of researcher objectivity in any study, including this one, is a misnomer. Other researchers analyzing the same data using the same methods may, through their own theoretical biases and experiential inferences, would provide other valuable interpretations of these nine learners’ academic literacy learning experiences.

**Future Research**

Having found that development makes a difference in academic literacy learning experiences, it would be helpful to conduct action research within a developmentally diverse ABE/ESOL classroom to understand how learners constructing meaning from different developmental perspectives respond to developmentally intentional pedagogical approaches with academic literacy learning. Just as helpful as it would be to better understand the strategies that best challenge and support learners constructing meaning from different developmental perspectives, it would be particularly useful for educators to know if and what pedagogical strategies might best support academic literacy learning with across developmental perspectives. The concept of universal design, originating in the fields of architecture and engineering to refer to spaces designed to be as fully utilizable as possible by all (Story, Mueller, & Mace, 1998), has been applied to education, including ABE, to reduce barriers for particular learners and thereby enhance learning for all (Leininger, 2014). It would also be useful to investigate whether there are developmentally inclusive ways in which educators can best facilitate academic literacy learning.

This study explored how developmental perspectives mediated academic literacy learning experiences over a limited amount of time. A longitudinal study over a period of ten months or more would provide a more in-depth picture of developmentally mediated learning experiences, and would make it possible to examine how not only developmental perspective, but possible
developmental growth, shape academic literacy learning over time. Investigating competency performance along with learning experiences would also make it possible to explore how developmental perspectives and growth interact with academic growth in academic literacy performance.
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APPENDIX A

Subject-Object Interview Protocol

Adapted From:


and


The Subject Object Interview (SOI) is a measure developed by Dr. Robert Kegan and colleagues to assess the complexity of an individual’s meaning-making as per the epistemological balance and transition points described in his book, The Evolving Self (1981). The procedures for administering and assessing the interview are described in detail in A Guide to the Subject-Object Interview. Its Administration and Analysis, by Lisa Lahey, Emily Souvaine, Robert Kegan, Robert Goodman, and Sally Feliz.

The Subject-Object Interview lasts approximately one hour, participants describe experiences connected to words written on index cards. For example, in response to a card labeled “important to me,” a participant might describe a recent experience trying to meet an important goal. The interviewer asks follow-up questions to understand how the participant constructs meaning about that experience, for example, “What did that mean to you?” or “How did you know whether you were successful?”

Materials

Ten subject cards; pencil; tape recorder and ninety (90) minute tape Participant needs to know s/he:

a. is participating in a 60 minute interview;

b. the goal of which is to learn “how you think about things”;

c. doesn’t have to talk about anything s/he doesn’t want to.

d. Do you understand the words on the cards? (explain as needed)

e. Let me know if they don’t understand something or want to check their understanding, and tell them that I’ll do the same

Generating Content: The Inventory

The participant is handed ten (10) index cards, each with a word or two printed on it:

1. Angry (especially in reading/writing class)
2. Anxious, Nervous (especially in reading/writing class)
3. Success (especially in reading/writing class)
4. Strong stand, Conviction (especially in reading/writing class)
5. Sad (especially in reading/writing class)
6. Torn (especially in reading/writing class)
7. Moved, Touched (especially in reading/writing class)
8. Lost something (especially in reading/writing class)
9. Change (especially in reading/writing class)
10. Important to me (especially in reading/writing class)

The participant is told that s/he can warm up by writing notes about experiences related to the word(s) on the card, that the interviewer will not look at the notes, and the cards will be thrown away after the interview. The cards, slightly adapted for these English Language Learners, will say angry, anxious/nervous, success, strong stand (strong feeling/opinion), sad, torn (pulled in two directions), lost something, change, moved/touched, important to me.

Before the interviewee takes notes on the cards, because these participants are English Language Learners, I will check understanding of the meaning of the words on the cards and provide brief examples if needed.

I will periodically ask participants, during the interview, if they feel they are able to express what they want to say in English. I will also reflect my understanding back to learners, as with any other SOI, giving them the opportunity to correct possible misunderstandings. I will also encourage participants to let me know if they don’t understand something or want to check their understanding, and tell them that I’ll do the same.

When the participant is finished taking notes, the interviewer explains, “You will choose which card to start with. We will talk only about the topics you choose. I’ll ask you questions about what you tell me. Sometimes, my questions might sound silly, or like I’m asking you the same thing over again. If that happens, it’s because I want to make sure I understand. If I ask you a question you don’t want to answer, just tell me you want to move on, and we will. What card do you want to start with?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in reading/writing class, is there a time you felt angry about something, maybe even very angry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious/nervous (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in reading/writing class, is there a time you felt nervous about something?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in reading/writing class, is there a time you experienced success? Where you overcame something that was difficult for you, or achieved something you weren’t sure you could achieve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stand/conviction (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>reading/writing class, is there a time you took a strong stand for something, or a time you had a strong belief or feeling about something?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in reading/writing class, is there a time you felt really sad about something? Maybe something that even brought you to tears?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torn (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in reading/writing class, is there a time you felt pulled in two different directions? Where maybe one thing was pulling you in one direction, and something or someone else was pulling you in another direction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost something (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in reading/writing class, have there been any times that you lost someone or something important to you, or when you were afraid you might lose someone or something important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last year or few years in reading/writing class, are there ways that you can see that you have changed in some way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved/touched (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If you think back over the last couple of weeks of months in reading/writing class, is there a time you felt moved or touched by something you saw or thought or heard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to me (especially in reading/writing class)</td>
<td>If I were to ask you, what is the most important thing to you right now in reading/writing class, what are a few things that come to mind?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the interview, the interviewer asks open-ended follow-up questions, stays focused on the interviewee’s experience (rather than trying to re-frame, alter or change it), follows the interviewees own words, and tries not to make assumptions about what the interviewee means, rather ask for elaboration or clarification.

**Prompts**

- What was that like for you?
- What did that mean to you?
- What was most important to you about that?
- What was hardest/worst/best for you about that?
- How did/do you know/decide what the best or right thing to do is/was?
- How do you know when you’ve been successful?
- How do you know when you’ve done the ‘right thing’?
• What would it mean to you if ---- had/had not happened?
• What is it like for you when someone you care about or respect challenges you on something important to you?
• When you said _____, can you say more about that?/explain that?
• Can you give me an example of when _____ actually happened and what that was like for you/what that meant for you?
• What about this has had the biggest impact on you? In what way?

• What does it mean to you when…
• How do you know if…
• Tell me about your decision to…
• How do you handle it when you have to…[make that decision]
• Can you describe that experience a bit?

Avoid

• Why did you feel that way?
• Why did you do it that way?
• How did that make you feel?
• How do you think s/he felt about that?
APPENDIX B

Participant Observation Protocol for the College and Career Preparation Class

Time/Date

Unit being taught

Number of students present

Names of participants present

What do I notice about what is being taught?

What do I notice about how participants are responding to the lesson?

Where do participants appear to experience success?

Where do participants appear to experience challenge?

What challenges and supports do I notice?

How do participants seem to respond to challenges and supports?
APPENDIX C

Learning Experience Interview Protocol

Purpose of the Interview:
To understand the relationship between the structural and pedagogical design of the college and career preparation course design and each student's learning experience.

Participant Needs to Know S/he:
1. Is participating in a 60 minute interview
2. There are no right or wrong answers; this is about their experience in the reading/writing class
3. The interview will be in English
4. The participant can ask for clarification or restatement of questions any time
5. The participant does not have to talk about anything s/he does not want to, may refuse to answer any question, and can stop the interview or move on to a new question at any time.
6. Participation is voluntary, not compensated, and can be stopped at any time without penalty.

General LEI Core Areas and Question Stems/Probes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core area</th>
<th>Question stems/probes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of the class</td>
<td>• What got you interested in participating in (taking) the college/career preparation class – especially reading/writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What were you hoping to learn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Did you have any apprehensions (worries)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What did you know about the class before coming?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How has it been similar (the same) or different than you thought?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How has it been similar (the same) or different from your learning experiences (school or classes) before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning take-aways</td>
<td>• What are the most important things you’re learning in the reading/writing class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why are these things important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your greatest challenge being in the reading/writing class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What made that difficult for you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Process of learning

- How do you think you learned these things?
- What contributed to this learning?
- What made it harder?
- When you think of your time in the reading/writing class so far, are there specific points/things that are important to you? Describe. What is most important about them?

Summarizing Unit LEI Core Areas and Question Stems/Probes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core area</th>
<th>Question stems/probes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning take-aways</td>
<td>• What are the most important things you learned in the Summarizing unit? (walk me through your notebook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why are these things important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your greatest challenge in the Summarizing unit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What made that difficult you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of learning</td>
<td>• How do you think you learned these (important) things?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What contributed to this learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What made it harder?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• When you think back on the Summarizing unit, are there specific points/things that are important to you? Describe. What is most important about them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addl.</td>
<td>• Walk me through your notebook over the past weeks, and tell me what stands out to you as important or challenging. (follow up questions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• When you had to do ________, how did you decide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How successful were you at ________? How do you know?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Probing Questions


- What was that like for you?
- What did that mean to you?
- What was most important to you about that?
- What was hardest/worst/best for you about that?
- How did/do you know/decide what the best or right thing to do is/was?
- How do you know when you’ve been successful?
- How do you know when you’ve done the ‘right thing’?
- What would it mean to you if ---- had/had not happened?
- What is it like for you when someone you care about or respect challenges you on something important to you?
- When you said _____, can you say more about that?/explain that?
- Can you give me an example of when _____ actually happened and what that was like for you/what that meant for you?
- What about this has had the biggest impact on you? In what way?
- What does it mean to you when…
- How do you know if…
- Tell me about your decision to…
- How do you handle it when you have to…[make that decision]
- Can you describe that experience a bit?

Avoid

- Why did you feel that way?
- Why did you do it that way?
- How did that make you feel?
- How do you think s/he felt about that?
APPENDIX D

Demographic Questionnaire

Background Information

1. Name

2. How long have you been in College and Career Preparation Reading and Writing class?

3. What other classes are you taking? For how long?
   a. College and Career Prep Speaking and Listening?
   b. Medical Careers?
   c. Computers?
   d. Intermediate ESL?
   e. Advanced ESL?
   f. GED?

4. How did you find out about College and Career Prep Reading and Writing, and why did you sign up?

Demographics

5. What country are you from?

6. What is your first language? Other languages?

7. What year did you come to the U.S.?

8. May I ask how old you are/what year you were born?
Educational history

9. Did you go to school in your country? How many years/what grade did you complete?

10. In your country, did you study reading and writing? If yes, what kind of assignments did you do? Were they similar or different to what you do in this class?

11. How long have you gone to school in the U.S.? What classes?

12. In your other classes in the U.S., have you studied reading and writing? If yes, what kind of assignments did you do? Were they similar or different to what you do in this class?
Dear College Prep Reading and Writing Student:

My name is Jen Ouellette-Schramm. I am a doctoral student at Hamline University. I am interested in ESL learners who study college prep reading and writing. I would like to hear your experiences in the College Prep Reading and Writing class at Open Door Lake Street, including the Summarizing unit you will do. I hope this study will help me and others become better educators, because we will better understand your learning experience.

If you would like to be part of the study, there will be two one-hour interviews. The first interview will be before the summarizing unit. The second interview will be after. We can do the interviews at school, during class time, or you can set another time and place. During the second interview, I will ask you to bring your notebook with all your Summarizing unit work. I will also look at your test scores to understand your reading level in English.

Because your time is important, I will bring you a gift certificate worth $10 to the first interview, and $20 to the second interview. Below, you can choose the gift certificate you prefer.

Thank you,

Jen Ouellette-Schramm
Jouellette01@hamline.edu, 612-735-5380

If you would like to be part of the study, please fill out the information below.

Name: _______________________________________________________

Phone numbers: _________________________________________________

I can do the interviews:

_____ During Advanced ESL class, 9:00-10:00 a.m.

_____ During College and Career Prep class, 12:15-1:15 p.m.

_____ Other day, time and place: ________________________________
I prefer a gift certificate for:

_____ Rainbow Foods
_____ Cub Foods
_____ Metro Transit “Go To” card (for bus or light rail)
Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral student in Education at Hamline University. I also work with Open Door at the Minnesota Literacy Council. I am interested in ESL students who study college prep reading and writing, and would like to invite you to participate in my study.

Please read this consent carefully before you decide to participate. If you do not understand something, please tell me and I will explain it.

Purpose of this study:
The purpose of this study is to understand your experience with college prep reading and writing, including the Summarizing unit you will do. I want to understand your goals for the class, what is difficult, and what helps you.

What you will do in this study:
If you decide to participate in this study, I will interview you two times for about one hour. The first time will be before the summarizing unit. You will fill out a short form about your educational history and bring it to the interview. The second time will be after your Summarizing unit. You will bring your notebook with Summarizing class work to that interview. The interviews will be tape recorded. I will observe classes during the Summarizing unit, and will ask you to bring your Summarizing work in your College Prep Reading and Writing notebook to that interview. I will ask you to fill out a demographic questionnaire, and also look up your recent CASAS or TABE test scores to understand your reading level in English.

Risks:
There are no known risks for participating in this study. If you at any time you feel uncomfortable in an interview or want to skip a question or change the topic, just tell me. We can skip any question, change the topic or end the interview.

Benefits:
You will receive a $10 gift certificate for completing the first interview, and a $20 gift certificate for completing the second interview. You will also have the opportunity to share your experiences as an ESOL student learning college prep reading and writing in English. I hope this study will help other teachers and students, and you will contribute to that.

Confidentiality:
Other people will read this study. Also, the findings from this study may be published. To make sure your interviews and other information in the study is confidential, I will use a pseudonym in any reports or publications. A pseudonym is a fake name. I will keep the code connecting your name and pseudonym in a separate, secure location. When I type, or transcribe, my interviews with you, I will leave out information that could identify you.
After I transcribe your interview, I will delete my recording of the interview. I will keep electronic copies of your interview transcription in a password-protected file. If you allow me to make copies of the work you do in this class, I will keep my copies in a locked file for seven years, then shred them.

**Participation and withdrawal**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. That is, you are not required to participate. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate. You can also withdraw from, or quit the study at any time. You can withdraw by telling me you no longer want to participate. No one will ask you any questions if you decide to withdraw.

**Contact information**

If you have questions about this study, please contact me at:

Jen Ouellette-Schramm  
Jouellette01@hamline.edu, 612-735-5380

You can also contact the professor supervising my study:

Dr. Walter Enloe  
Sanders Professor of Education  
Hamline University  
MS-A1710  
1536 Hewitt Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55104  
wenloe@hamline.edu

Who to contact about your rights in this study

Hamline University Institutional Review Board  
Matthew Olson, chair  
mholson@hamline.edu, 651-523-2430

Print your name here:

___________________________________________________

I agree to participate in this study with Jen Ouellette-Schramm. I understand that this information will be used for educational purposes. I understand I may withdraw from the study at any time.

And sign your name here: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________