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(Age)ncy in Composition Studies

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(Age)ncy in Composition Studies

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

The number of adult learners entering or returning to institutions of higher education is increasing in general and in relation to the traditional student population, and projections suggest that the trend will continue. As automation and technology impact the labor force, educational access is becoming a national concern and a necessity for more adult learners. Access to higher education impacts minority and economically depressed populations disproportionately and increases the personal and professional success of adult students and the long-term prosperity of their families. Although Composition Studies has a history of recognizing and facilitating student populations as they enter the Academy, adult learners have been overlooked and marginalized within Composition Studies. Through analysis of the foundational disciplinary literature, my research establishes that adult learners played a pivotal role in the development of Composition Studies and argues that Composition Studies can and should play a pivotal role in the success of adult learners in higher education. Locating adult learners in the disciplinary literature and demonstrating their impact on the theories and practices of Composition Studies creates a collective resource of research on which to ground current approaches and from which to launch future research; connecting this literature to the larger literature on adult learners allows Composition to contribute to and benefit from Academy-wide efforts. Stated simply, the goal of this dissertation is to recognize and support adult learners in Composition Studies. Such work is imperative because Composition Studies is continuing to construct adult learners through deficiency narratives and overlook adult learners in the current literature and classroom practices, as evidenced by the research on student-veterans. As a result, I suggest addressing the disciplinary responsibility to adult learners immediately through programmatic responses to the needs of adults in Composition Studies and by using the acknowledgment of their presence to call for institutional resources in support of all adult learners.

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Composition Studies has not recognized adult students in the foundational research of the discipline, which denies their existence as a group and overlooks the role they have played in the development of the field. Analysis and contextualization of major canonical Composition literature including adult learners reveals that adult learners have played a pivotal role in the development of Composition Studies as a discipline and a practice. Demonstrating the significant impact of adult students on the development of Composition Studies serves to situate this population within the work of Writing Studies as a whole and prepares the discipline to conduct subsequent research in order to facilitate the retention and success of adult students. Connecting the work on adult learners in Composition Studies to current work in the discipline also has the potential for immediate impact on disciplinary theories and practices in ways that can facilitate adult learners and perhaps all students in Composition and Writing Studies.

Composition Studies has worked diligently to identify and include the perspectives of various populations as they entered general consciousness and as they entered the Academy. The specific disciplinary significance of identifying the impact of adult learners in and on the canonical literature and recognizing their role in the development of Composition Studies is to expand historical understandings of the discipline, to situate the current state of the discipline, and to build the future of the field. While the research goal is to identify the impact of adult learners on Composition Studies, the initial step of locating adult learners within the foundational literature is also important to the discipline. In addition to expanding a general historical understanding of the field, locating adult learners within Composition

Studies begins the process of historicizing and archiving adult learners within Writing Studies and grounds further work on adult students within Composition and Writing Studies.

Recognizing adult students and their role in the development of Composition Studies will also contribute to the work of Adult Education by designating research on adult students that has not yet been included in their canon and expanding the historical work on the subject within an outside discipline. Recognizing practices developed by teachers and researchers in Composition Studies working with adult students that reflect practices developed by teachers and researchers in Adult Education validates the development of such approaches and confirms their success in Composition Studies. Just as research possibilities in Writing Studies will result from such work, research possibilities in Adult Education will also become explicit in relation to the interdisciplinary opportunities that result from combining efforts and information. Connecting histories across canons prepares Writing Studies and Adult Education to collaborate on research in order to strengthen the prospects and progress of adults entering or reentering the Academy. Connecting practices across current research can also advance classroom learning approaches in ways that facilitate adult learners across and beyond the Academy.

Identifying adult students and their significance within Composition Studies impacts not only the disciplines of Writing Studies and Adult Education; understanding the influence of adult students in the literature of Composition Studies is also crucial to the Academy. Writing is a metadiscipline and plays a role in the success of students across disciplines and colleges and universities. Writing affects all areas of the Academy and many areas of learning beyond the Academy. In effect, the theories and practices of Composition Studies disseminate and develop in different departments and disciplines across different campuses. Ignoring the impact of adult learners on Composition Studies, then, ignores their place in the history of the Academy. Including the role of adult learners in the Academy, instead, can break down barriers that segregate groups of students and locate areas of overlap between all pedagogies and disciplines and learning. Theories and practices originally designed and intended for use with adult learners are moving into classrooms across campuses and proving effective across populations in online

and corporate learning environments. Overtly connecting adult learning theories and techniques to writing pedagogies can advance Composition Studies and prepare the discipline to prepare students for success across institutions.

Better understandings of the place of adult learners within Composition Studies can allow disciplinary scholars to work with university-wide scholars and administrators to support the expanding population of adult learners entering institutions of higher education. Improving the ability of adult learners to succeed in academic settings facilitates these students and supports institutional goals for enrollment, retention, progress, and graduation. Additionally, developing theories and practices that help adults learn can have benefits that reach beyond the Academy and transfer to public and private personal and professional practices and policies related to formal and informal learning.

Research

The growing population of adults entering or reentering institutions of higher education creates both problems and possibilities, many of which can be predicted and prevented or identified and supported simply by knowing more about this population. Such work is being done on a large scale in the literature of Adult Education and in the general policies of post-secondary institutions, but the work, and interest in the work, needs to spread into the disciplines to paint a more complete and complex understanding of adult students in higher education. Understanding the impact of adult learners in Composition Studies is a pivotal step in advancing current work on the population and in the discipline.

To that end, I begin with the foundational literature in the development of Composition Studies, which I define as ranging from the 1960s to the 1980s, in order to establish the potential impact of adult learners in this literature and by extension on the development of the discipline. I narrow the major canonical texts of Composition Studies from this formative period, execute a distant read of the material in search of adult learners, and historicize and contextualize the literature where adults are identified. Applying a hermeneutical model to the texts where adult learners are located, I conduct a close reading of

literature, contextualize and analyze the texts, and synthesize the texts and contexts in order to designate texts where adult learners impacted the research and the discipline.

Locating adult learners in the foundational Composition Studies literature is not the goal as much as a necessary step in addressing the research question. The research questions around which the investigation is organized ask whether the adult learners within each text impact the outcome of the research, and taken together, do the adult learners in the canonical texts impact the direction of the discipline—specifically do they impact the pedagogical turns of Composition Studies from the 60s to the 80s. Stated simply, the answer is a resounding yes.

By reviewing of the foundational literature of the field closely in search of the adult learners, I find that they are hard to find—not because they are absent or rare, but because the role of adult is often overlooked, minimized, or subcategorized. The canonical literature reveals where and how adult learners are and are not and how they are portrayed in the classical scholarship that built the field; it is within these works that instead of being characterized as adult learners, adult students are often categorized according to deficiencies or disabilities. Noticing the overlapping patterns of terms and concepts used to discuss adult learners reveals threads that run through groups of texts. Recognizing that shared characteristics are used to define subgroups of adult learners, such as basic writers, without recognizing them as members of the larger group of adult learners makes it possible to see that similar segregation of adult learners into subcategories, such as student-veterans, remains in the current research and literature of Composition Studies. Parsing adult learners into small segments decreases the scope and impact of the population of adult learners by reducing their presence and profile, which results in smaller and separate funding opportunities, replicated efforts instead of compiled resources and research, and squandered opportunities to share research results that could benefit all adult learners.

In addition to establishing the impact of adult learners on the foundational literature and formative development of Composition Studies, my research provides a solid foundation upon which substantial subsequent scholarship can sprout and spread. The need for a full historical identification of

the adult learners in the literature of Writing Studies and research on current adult learners in current Composition classrooms, as well as continued efforts to connect current efforts to examine adults across the Academy is evident. Recognizing and connecting adult learners within and across disciplines would increase their presence and support requests for funding, research, recognition, and professional development across institutions and nationwide. Connecting my findings to current adult learners in Composition Studies also produces immediate opportunities to identify and address overarching narratives that construct adult learners and execute accessible responses that could impact classroom practices and student outcomes. Other considerations arise in the course of this research, including the question of why adults are often not identified as adults, a question that feeds and bleeds into the implications of the research suggesting a connection between education and the status of adulthood with the potential to expand across and beyond the Academy.

Context

The modern field of Writing Studies is built on the foundational literature of Composition Studies. Explorations of Writing Studies, especially historical investigations, must begin with and be grounded in the canon of Composition Studies. Composition has been linked intimately with pedagogy since its inception as a field. Teacher research, self-study, and classroom ethnographies inform, inspire, and impact the theories, methods, and practices of Composition. Consequently, the aspects, elements, and angles of pedagogy engaged and employed by scholars working in and publishing on Composition influence greatly the design and direction of the discipline. Although pedagogy has come to mean any general or generic method of teaching, pedagogies are neither impartial nor impersonal.

In *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*, North (1987) postulated and demonstrated that methods and pedagogies in Composition are not without their own inherent assumptions and intentions; as a result, examining the pedagogies that ground the discipline is necessary to appreciate a past, situate a present, and envision a future for a field of study. Uncovering and unpacking the assumptions that direct and define Writing Studies requires analyzing the canon of Composition. And as new questions and

concerns surface, the theories and methods that undergird how the discipline is described and disseminated must be continually re-deconstructed within the context of the current considerations of the Academy and the discipline.

Composition Studies has been influenced by many disciplines. Theories and methods from the sciences and the social sciences and cultural studies have all impacted the pedagogies that teachers of Composition have taken into the classroom. But while theories inform pedagogies, pedagogy is a practice; its audience is audience, its subjects are students, and their reactions are results. The theories and methods of pedagogies are generated and transmitted by scholars, but they are received, reviewed, revised, and resubmitted by students.

Writing is a theory-informed practice, but like pedagogy, it is a practice. Composition theories cannot be tested in Petri dishes. The composition of Composition is (a) human matter—the reaction of combinations is rarely replicable, and the outcomes do not survive out of their natural habitat. For those who inhabit Composition Studies, the qualitative is quantitative. Theories inform methods that formulate pedagogies that form practices that transform people. Composition pedagogies are honed and disowned based on function. External theories and practices inform Compositionists who form theories that fill classrooms, but it is the students who combine or combust to transform substances and make or break (al)chemical bonds. Pedagogies are active elements that respond as part of the reaction.

As a result, the students upon whom Composition theories have been tested have transformed hypotheses into theses, theories into practices, and predictions into pedagogies. Stated simply, the composition of Composition classrooms has constructed Composition. The discipline is truly student centered and outcome driven—an important reason to investigate this audience through the lens of lenses. The students who receive and respond and react to pedagogies are the reason pedagogies are created and recreated. In effect, to understand the pedagogies that serve as the foundation of Composition, the students who serve as the materials that compose that foundation must be exhumed, exposed, and examined.

The body of students who compose the classrooms of American institutions has changed considerably since the modern iteration of Composition. As the G.I. Bill, the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, the Immigration and Nationality act of 1965, and federal loans opened doors to higher education, an expanded population received access to college campuses and Composition classrooms. Consequently, overt exclusions based on race, class, and gender faded and student demographics diversified. A secondary result was that students outside of the traditional age range of 18-22 also entered or re-entered higher education. Composition Studies was on the front lines to meet these students and at the forefront of research on adult learners (albeit perhaps unintentionally and unconsciously).

Composition scholars recognized early that adult students and their needs were different. Many seminal works in the foundational literature of Composition Studies were built on research that includes adult learners as subjects in Composition classrooms. But even though Bartholomae (1993), Bizzell (1986), Brodkey (1989), Emig (1971), Freire (1968), Lunsford (1977, 1979), Perl (1979), Shaughnessy (1976, 1977, 1977) and Sommers (1980), among others, have all published articles and/or books influenced by adults as learners of and in Composition, the through line of adult learners and the important impact they have had on the development of the discipline and its theories and pedagogies has not been clearly designated or documented, relegating adult learners to the role of research subjects instead of participants in pedagogies. In contrast to adults as a population in the Composition classrooms, as the Academy began to accept the role of race, class, and gender in the learning and the lives of students, considerable work was done to recognize and respond to these groups within Composition.

Much of the canon of Composition Studies reads as a chronological progression of the efforts made to understand and include newly-acknowledged minority communities in light of race, class, and gender considerations and concerns; the discipline has explored intensely and produced extensive research on race (Kirsch & Ritchie, 1997; Labov, 1970; Prendergast, 1989; Wallace & Bell, 1999), class (Brodkey, 1989; Delpit, 1995; Freire, 1968; Ohmann, 1979; Sullivan, 1998), and gender (Flynn, 1988;

Howard, 2000; Jarratt, 1991; Lunsford, 1995; Royster, 2000) as they impact and are impacted by Composition. So much has been published on the role of these discourse communities within Composition that multiple compilations of articles published within each area abound (Jarrat & Worsham, 1998; Phelps & Emig, 1995; Severino, Guerra, & Butler, 1997; Shepard, McMillan, & Tate, 1998; Shor & Pari, 1999).

The intersection of race, class, and gender within Composition Studies has also received comprehensive examination (Bartholomae, 1985; Berlin, 1996; Brueggemann, et al., 2001; Fox, 1990; hooks, 1989; Selfe & Selfe, 1994), and primary consideration of each has opened Composition scholars to other *othered* subjects and ignored constituencies. The unearthing and excavating of newly-recognized communities within Composition revealed sub-groups yet to be acknowledged and ripe for research: Sexuality (Alexander, 2008; Gibson, Marinara, & Meem, 2000; Howard, 2000; Malinowitz, 1994) and disability (Browning, 2014; Brueggemann et al., 2001; Jung, 2007; Price, 2007; Vidali, 2007; Wilson & Lewiecki-Wilson, 2001), among other categorizations and considerations, are being scrutinized in depth to unveil and understand the place of students who inhabit these groups within Composition. As is the case with race, class, and gender, it is important to recognize these populations and the ways they diverge from and converge with and within other communities because their differences and similarities impact how students in these groups learn and how they inter(e)act with the mixture of peers who and pedagogies that inherit and inhabit composition classrooms.

Noticing unnoticed student populations not only impacts theory, it impacts programs and policies and people. Composition pedagogies and practices have transformed as a direct result of the research findings of investigations into race, class, and gender. How students are seen and what they see, how students see and whom they see, how students do and what they do, how teachers teach and what they teach have all responded to the insights informed by the research on race, class, and gender and how they translate in and through Composition and composition classrooms. The practice of searching for subaltern populations has even translated into approaches and assignments within Composition.

As scholars in Composition, along with researchers in other areas of the Academy, documented and discussed how to recognize and respond to race, class, and gender in the classroom, these categorizations became theoretical lenses through which students were taught to read texts, and by extension, to read the world. The application of lenses enables scholars and students to identify where and how individuals are and are not represented in the pages and on the screens of classrooms and cultures, which not only allows the abject to become subject, it allows the subject to become human. By recognizing and revealing the blindnesses of privilege that make invisible whole groups of people, scholars and students are made aware of contextual inequities and empowered to look for the places where absence becomes visible.

Identifying individuals who comprise uncounted and discounted communities impacts not only pedagogy but also curriculum and the Academy and culture at large. Nouns are transformed into verbs and verbs into proper nouns. Enough people form a critical mass that becomes a population that is noticed—the population is categorized by a concept that constructed these individuals—that context is unpacked and repackaged as a lens through which others can identify the manifestations of that concept in context—after which the population that is made visible is returned to the status of individuals, only now transformed from marginalized subalterns and subjects to humans. Identifying is agentifying. Such is the work of allowing students to impact classrooms and curricula and cultures.

Just as recognizing communities within Composition produces results and rewards in and out of the classrooms, ignoring groups within the Academy levies a cost to all (un)involved. The absence of minority and marginalized populations in the classroom not only leaves these individuals without the perspectives they would gain from participating in higher education, it leaves higher education without the perspectives their participation would offer. Further, the lack of input and insights from unseen and unsung perspectives allows for the reinforcement of racist, sexist, and classist (or any other othering –ists) notions that suggest that their absence is a result of inherent, internal deficiencies on the part of individuals in these groups, furthering their status as marginalized.

Recognizing *that* external factors and environmental elements impact access to and success through institutions of higher education disarms assumptions and arguments that keep discriminated populations excluded from education and the privileges associated with higher education. Recognizing *the* external factors and environmental elements *that* impact access to and success in institutions of higher education arms teachers and students in their efforts to overcome encumbrances that dislocate populations to academic diasporas. Failure to recognize and respond to adult learners as a community within higher education yields not only theoretical and ethical implications but also practical boundaries to access.

Adult students have not received recognition as a community or a discourse community within Writing Studies. The context of their lives, just like concerns of race, class, and gender, influence their role as students, and awareness of and attention to the ways in which adult learners learn can have great impact on their learning and their lives. While scholars of Composition were in ways forerunners of composing literature that included adults as learners, much of that literature tends not only not to identify adult learners as a population unto themselves but it is also inclined to categorize adults primarily as members of marginalized subcategories by focusing on definitions of deficiency such as basic writer, remedial, developmental, community college student, oppressed, unprepared, correspondence, literacy learner, or nontraditional learner.

The task of identifying the adult students within the literature of Composition Studies is neither small nor simple. Because many of the adult students were not identified explicitly as such, locating them requires extensive and close reading of the disciplinary literature. Additionally categorization by age was (and is) not the only population to which adult students can belong. Many adult students also belong to other minority and marginalized groups according to race, gender, class, and disability. Also complicating the task is the distinction not only between the classical literature and the more current literature, but the distinction between the subdisciplines within the more current literature.

Investigating the place and impact of adults within Composition Studies both illuminates how the relationship between adult students has evolved with the expansion of the field into Writing Studies and

establishes the complicated connection between our discipline and adult students. More recent research is more likely to recognize adults and to identify adult students as adult learners (Blair & Hoy, 2006; Donavant, Daniel, & MacKewn, 2013; Guastella, 2009; Navarre Cleary, 2008, 2001, 2012; Navarre Cleary & Wozniak, 2013; Wheaton & Hart, 2012). Nevertheless adult learners are still being categorized as members of populations other than adult learners (e.g., veterans, anxious, professional, part-time, returning, life-long learners, distance learners, English Language Learners, international students, online learners).

While more recent literature is more likely to recognize adult learners as such, they are still often defined and described through classifications—new categorizations that in ways tell a new story but in other ways continue the old story of the early scholarship. Also evident is that adult learners are seen differently in the more recent literature than in the classical literature and that they are seen differently across the subdisciplines of Writing Studies. A distinction between adults who are considered learned and learning and adults who are considered uneducated also appears—even to the extent that it implies a direct link between education and identification as an adult within Composition and perhaps within higher education and beyond.

Employing alternate categorizations avoids addressing the role of being an adult learner as primary in the students' experiences or as essential in the responses of teachers and instead shifts the focus to other considerations, allowing the role of adult learner to remain secondary, at best. Also while current groupings might read as more neutral than negative, situating such categorizations within the overall context of Writing Studies' relationship with adult learners provides the perspective that these classifications may be a continuation of the unconscious abjection of adults. While recognizing adult learners is an important step in the process of academic access and individual inclusion of abjected populations at large, it will also prepare scholars of Writing Studies to respond consciously and conscientiously to current and future adult learners.

Situating adult students within the literature of Composition Studies also provides the groundwork to locate adult students within the current composition classrooms, which would allow for empirical examination such as that called for by generations of scholars in both Writing Studies and Adult Education (Cross, 1981; Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Haswell, 2005; Henschke, 2013; Lang & Baehr, 2012; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner 2007; Pratt 1993; Rachal, 2002; Taylor & Kroth, 2009). Research clarifying and expanding the relationship between the Academy and adult learners will provide evidence to advance study in Adult Education and Writing Studies, but it also has the potential to impact adult learners in institutions of higher education and perhaps institutions of higher education themselves. Ideally such work would extend beyond education and educational institutions and transfer into public approaches and policies.

Writing Studies is uniquely positioned to contribute to the conversation surrounding adult students not only by recognizing adult students in the foundational literature of Composition Studies and establishing the role this population has played in the development of disciplinary theories and practices but also by building future research that greatly expands the history of adult students in Writing Studies. Adult Education and Composition Studies have been working in parallel but not in conjunction to respond to and facilitate adult learners for decades; it is time that these paths converge.

Adult Education and Composition Studies

Both Composition Studies and Adult Education worked to establish themselves as distinct fields of study over the past 60 years. In ways, the two have traced similar trajectories as contemporary disciplines that have fought for respect and an individual identity within a larger discipline, and in ways, both are born of and fight to remain connected to ancient roots. Knowles (1980), the architect of andragogy, asserted that “all the great teachers of ancient history—Lao Tse and Confucius in China, the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Cicero, Quintilian—were chiefly teachers of adults, not children” (p. 42). More recent concepts of andragogy grew out of the experience and experiments of teachers who were struggling to work with adult learners who were struggling to learn.

Knowles recalled that “when adult education began to be organized systematically during the 1920s, teachers of adults began experiencing several problems with the pedagogical model” (p. 40). The response of these teachers was to develop alternative approaches that tailored classroom practices to the needs of adult learners.

The early teachers of adults who first noted the difficulties that adult learners faced when traditional pedagogical approaches were employed suggested that adult learners were resistant “to the strategies that pedagogy prescribed, including fact-laden lectures, assigned readings, drill, quizzes, rote memorizing, and examinations. Adults appeared to want something more than this, and drop-out rates were high” (Knowles, 1980, p. 40). Throughout the 1930s and 40s, the *Journal of Adult Education* published articles by teachers of adult students who were describing the methods and approaches that they had discovered and developed to help adults be/come successful learners. Many of the strategies and activities, such as replacing quizzes with interviews, subverted traditional pedagogical approaches and formed a foundation for the research and analysis published in the 1950s that informed and formed the foundations of contemporary andragogical theories and methods (Knowles, 1980, pp. 41-42). These predate and predict the similar response teachers in Composition offer their struggling students.

Mirroring the progression of andragogical principles and approaches, Composition scholars working in the developmental period of the discipline endeavored to tailor their approaches to their struggling students, many of whom were adults. While Composition scholars attempted to respond to adult learners without the insights of the connections that linked this community or the quantitative research on how best to support this community of learners in light of the ways in which they differ from traditional learners, Adult Education as a discipline was defining and refining informed andragogies. In fact, a significant amount of empirical research on adult learners was published and propagated during the developmental period of Composition:

A great deal of other knowledge about adult learning was accumulating during the sixties from related disciplines—clinical psychology, developmental psychology (especially the new group of

life-span developmental psychologists), gerontology, sociology, and anthropology—both in North America and Europe. By and large, this research-based knowledge supported the intuitions of the earlier teachers, and theorists began fitting the knowledge drawn from both sources into a comprehensive, coherent theory of adult learning. (Knowles, 1980, p. 42)

Because the adult learners within Composition Studies were not identified as such, the research based on classroom experiences with these students was not included in the canon of and on adult learners. Not only did the Academy fail to benefit from considering the Composition research in this conversation, but Composition failed to connect the work being done in the discipline to this larger body of knowledge.

Despite the lack of correlation to adult learners or research on andragogy, many Composition scholars who worked with adult students did what they could to address the needs of these students, and numerous shifts in Composition theories and methods were impacted by the literature that documents a variety of approaches to facilitating adults in Composition classrooms. Composition scholars responded to these students and their struggles by producing and publishing various explanations and examinations that provided various approaches to pedagogies and implications; these responses are demonstrated through the turns of the discipline from the pivotal developmental decades of the 70s and 80s.

Current-Traditional approaches that represented standard pedagogies that responded to traditional students—the traditional students who filled the Composition classrooms of the 1950s—were recognized as insufficient for the new student populations who filled the Composition classrooms of the 60s and 70s. In response, the move toward Process and Expressivist approaches and Cognitive and Developmental approaches throughout the 70s and 80s attempted to address the specific challenges of these students. Both organizational (e.g., from the classical five-step model to prewriting, writing, and rewriting) and developmental (*viz.* Piaget, Vygotsky, Perry, Jung, et al.) templates aimed to progress beyond the rigid skill and drill approach that focused on details and products instead of students and processes. The implications of the responses to students who inspired the major Composition schools and pedagogies overlap overtly with andragogical models and classroom approaches.

Efforts to react to the specific struggles of students is chronicled through the different approaches aimed at addressing similar struggles and through the different terms used to identify and define the struggling students. Villanueva (2011) opened *Cross-Talk in Composition Theory: A Reader* by noting that the selections included in the book record the history of the discipline from Current-Traditional to Process and Expressivism through Cognitive and Developmental to Social Construction and Critical Pedagogy. Much of this progress Villanueva recognized as a result of the students who have filled the classrooms and journals of Composition.

Contending that responses to specific categories of students had been of particular influence, Villanueva supported Hairston's argument "that our changing theories of composition are in part the result of the introduction into our college classrooms of those we have come to call basic writers, those who come to college not quite prepared to undertake college writing, most often people of color and the poor" (p. xv). Villanueva added that "there are always a few in every composition classroom, at every level, from first-year college students to seniors. To ponder how composition might affect the more troublesome, those basic writers, would inform our approach to the less troublesome" (p. xv). With that, Villanueva recognized that the disciplinary responses to basic writers provided the basis for overall approaches to the students who were not considered basic writers.

But who were these basic writers? If a close reading of the literature on basic writers reveals that a significant portion of the population defined as basic writers was comprised of adult students, it will establish that adult learners played a pivotal role in the development of Composition pedagogies and arguably of Composition and Writing Studies. Subsequently, locating adults situated within the foundational texts of Composition Studies can demonstrate that the pedagogical implications of the theories and practices that respond to these populations can be recognized as responses to a significant population of adult learners, which would confirm that Composition Studies was at the forefront of developing responses to adult students. Recognizing the influence of adult learners and the elements of andragogy within Composition Studies will not only credit the discipline for its pedagogical foresight, it

could bolster these practices and perspectives by including the evidence of Academy-wide research, allowing Composition to contribute to research on adult learners within higher education and enhancing the ability of Composition instructors to address the needs of this population directly while discouraging the continued use of alternative classifications. Additionally identifying the pivotal role adult learners played in the development of the discipline will transform those students from subjects to participants.

Positioning adult learners within Composition Studies and thereby within the larger literature of Writing Studies will also allow their perspectives to influence ongoing conversations surrounding the place and purpose of categorizing adult learners within communities defined through alternative classifications—groups such as basic writers. Building on Villanueva’s use of basic writers by employing it as a synecdoche for adult learners provides insight into the impact work on identifying adults within Writing Studies can have on current conversations in the field and beyond. Within Composition Studies, “[t]he existence of basic writing has been contentious since its inception,” and the debate over the category continues today (VanHaitsma, 2010, p. 99). Bartholomae contended that “basic writing once served a strategic function, as a way of marking and staking out a contested space within the curriculum for students whose differences had been deemed signs of their unfitness for higher education”; by the 90s, however, Bartholomae asserted that basic writing was “functioning instead to sort bodies deemed ‘Other’—these are the ‘normal’ or ‘mainstream’ writers; they are the ‘basic’ ones—while erasing rather than engaging productively with class and race differences with the tensions around those differences, and with the challenges they might otherwise make to the social order of higher education” (as cited in VanHaitsma, 2010, pp. 99-100). In response to arguments against basic writing categorizations and programs, Greenberg contended that the “sorting of students is in service of preparing them to succeed, [and] that most basic writing programs effectively enable rather than hinder students’ progress in higher education (as cited in VanHaitsma, p. 100). Applying the lens of *adult learner* to the categorization of *basic writer* will expose overlap and intersection between adult learners and basic writers that could complicate and clarify such disciplinary debates.

What is not up for debate, however, is that when scholars such as Shaughnessy and Lunsford started the conversation about basic writers and developmental students in Composition, their goal was to support this struggling population. Similarly, discussions and publications on race, sex, gender, class, and disability were and are intended to support, not to subjugate, groups of underrepresented and marginalized students as they gained and gain access to the Academy. Adult students need to be included in such investigations and conversations not only to recognize this population but to situate the place of adult learning theories and practices in Composition and Writing Studies. While it is important to develop techniques that facilitate adult students in the composition classrooms, it is not necessarily the case that appropriating the approaches of other disciplines without scrutiny and localization is the best option—to do so would continue to facilitate the myth of “The Adult Learner” as singular and ubiquitous.

Adult learners are defined by context more complicated than age, just as gender is defined by more than anatomy and race is not simply melanin. And while populations can be categorized by race, gender, class, sexuality, dis/ability, and other defining characteristics, it is unlikely that a field within education would (or should) create a standard approach to teaching all females or students of color. Although it is important to construct a picture of this population and to work to facilitate adults, specifically as they enter higher education in mainstream institutions, it is also important to remember that when new populations begin to enter higher education and composition classrooms and the Composition literature in the 60s-80s, Composition does not try to apply an existing set of principles or singular practices to these populations. Teachers and researchers investigate these populations in an effort to understand and respond to their needs as a group and as individuals. Likewise instead of applying external ideas of andragogy to adult learners in Writing Studies, current teachers and researchers must situate this population within the history of our discipline in order to create a foundation upon which this history, once exhumed, can be examined and applied to research on adult learners in composition classrooms—only then can practices and approaches, pedagogies and andragogies, be tailored to support adult learners in Writing Studies.

Identifying adult learners within the major pedagogical turns of the discipline and the disciplinary literature will allow current teachers and researchers to see these students as members of a community of learners who deserve recognition, research, and response. Looking at the past impacts how teachers look at the present. Distinguishing adult students within current composition classrooms without the historical context necessary to understand this community of learners leaves teachers unaware of the need to, let alone the best ways to, respond to these students. When Donavant, Daniel, and MacKewn (2013) identified a dramatic demographic shift within undergraduate classrooms, which were previously primarily occupied by traditional-age college students but which are filling with adults in pursuit of Bachelor's degrees, they reported "that while higher education faculty acknowledged that adult students differ from their traditional-age counterparts and enhance the overall educational environment in mixed-age undergraduate classes, they perceived no need to adapt their instructional approach to accommodate this growing postsecondary demographic" (p. 132). Even when current faculty recognize adult students and the value these students add to their classrooms, they fail to recognize them as members of a community of learners with specific needs. Responding to the needs of these students requires an awareness of the historical presence and impact of adult learners within Writing Studies.

Just as the students entering the institutions of higher education and the composition classrooms of 60s-80s had to be recognized as a group in order to transform from invisible to individuals—from subjects to humans—recognizing adults in the literature of Composition Studies and the development of Writing Studies is a necessary first step in understanding the community of adult learners entering and reentering institutions of higher education. Continuing to ignore the history and role of adult learners within Writing Studies makes it impossible to facilitate the needs of this group and the individual learners who comprise this community. And where adults in the historical literature are acknowledged, they are often constructed through concepts that lead readers and teachers to see these adults as deficient. The significance of the problem institutions of higher education face by not being prepared to facilitate the

adult students who are entering their programs and disciplines is vital when the price of ignoring them and the payoff of including them is calculated.

Possibilities and Responsibilities

The body of students entering our campuses and classrooms is changing again. Recognizing adult learners as a community of learners impacts not only the academic body of knowledge but also the student body. The population of adults in and entering higher education is expanding immensely and immediately, but barriers to access and success remain. The attitudes adults encounter when they enter institutions of higher education impact them and their success. Identifying this population and addressing the individual needs of its members will help institutions open unopened doors, open opened doors wider to more adult learners, and prepare the individuals inside those doors to meet these students as they move into and through the Academy.

The number of adult students entering postsecondary institutions is exploding. The numbers depend on definitions and demonstrate a significant range, which makes the task of providing resources for this population difficult to find and fund. As of 2012, over 50% of undergraduates in American higher education were nontraditional students (Coulter & Mandell, 2012). More specifically, 38% of current undergraduate students are over the age of 25, and by 2019, that number is projected to increase by 23% (National Center for Education Statistics). In effect, the nontraditional students of yesterday are the normal students of today and the majority of tomorrow. As a result, beliefs and practices within higher education must adapt to fit the members of this audience and their goals.

Adult learners constitute a specific, albeit not homogeneous, population with specific, albeit not uniform, needs. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) asserted that dissimilarities create both barriers and opportunities and that it is important to know the backgrounds and experiences of students not only as individual learners but also as members of society and culturally constructed groups because recognizing differences helps educators recognize ways to address differences (p. 430). Adult learners

live different lives than traditional students, and lives impact learning by creating both barriers and opportunities.

Although institutional definitions of an adult learner vary, the adult learner is typically under 40, has a high school education at minimum, works full time, is married with children, and is most likely to be found living a suburb (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). In general, adults are not in college to live in dorms or learn to function away from home or to participate in student services or student activities. In fact, there is “strong evidence that participation in formal adult education is most often tied to career or job motives” (Merriam & Brockett, p. 132). A study by the College Board stated that 85% of adult students cite career reasons as their key college enrollment goal (Kasworm, 2000, p. 6). Understanding adult students requires understanding the goals of adult learners so that efforts are made to make reaching stated goals achievable.

Goals and motivations are impacted by external situations, but those situations result in internal reactions. Aslanian (2001) suggested that most adult learners choose to enroll in college due to personal life transitions and external catalysts and factors. And Kasworm (2000) provided evidence to suggest that adults often enter college as the result of a divorce, a job loss, or a denied promotion (p. 5). Often students who are enrolled in pursuit of higher education as an adult either were not afforded access to education directly after high school as traditional students or they did not succeed in their initial pursuit. Knowles (1980) noted that for many “adults the remembrance of the classroom as a place where one is treated with disrespect and may fail is so strong that it serves as a serious barrier to their becoming involved in adult-education activities at all ” (p. 46). In addition to the fact that there are evidence-based approaches to creating practices that facilitate adult reentry or entry into higher education, simply knowing more about this population can help faculty understand adult students.

Understanding adult students and their goals, motivations, and situations requires considering the barriers that hinder and have hindered their entry to and success in institutions of higher education. The most cited obstacles adults recognize as preventing them from participating in higher education are a lack

of time and money (Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Merriam, Cafarella, & Baumgartner, 2006). Issues of financial aid and tuition that might be annoyance to the traditional students in class could mean withdrawing for an adult student. Along with socio-economic status, race greatly impacts the ability of adult learners to enter and succeed in adult education (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Being an adult student of color adds an additional layer to the role of race in student experience and success.

Beyond living differently and having lived different lives than traditional students, adult learners learn differently. Pedagogy is not the only pedagogy. Andragogy and andragogical approaches differ greatly from pedagogical approaches, and tailoring education to audience and context impacts success. Zmeyov (1998) reported that using pedagogical methods for adult learners has been proven to produce stress and reduce success (p. 104). Not all adult students are the same, but a basic understanding of supportable generalities in relation to adult learners frames the picture of their place within the Academy. Issues of access, such as race and class, when complicated by personal issues, such as past failures and current responsibilities, are all components that create barriers for adult students.

Additionally, considering adult learners within higher education has the potential to impact institutions of higher education and the institution of higher education in America. The increase in adults pursuing formal education is coupled with the decrease of students pursuing traditional education. After decades of growth, college enrollment in the United States declined between 2012-2014 (US Census Bureau, 2014, par. 1). The bottom line for colleges is that this is impacting their bottom line. Appealing to and supporting adult learners can help institutions increase their numbers.

In order for traditional institutions of higher education to best serve the adult learner, programs must be designed explicitly to meet the needs of this population. As a response to this newfound excitement surrounding the possibilities associated with adult students “[t]he vast majority of U.S. colleges and universities are offering and developing programs designed to attract adult students to campuses” (Ritt, 2008, p. 13). Traditional, tertiary education is now being made available to nontraditional students; top-tier and Ivy League colleges and universities are even offering innovative

programs tailored to adult styles of living and learning (Brenna, 2006). Such supports and programs benefit colleges and universities, as well as adult students, but the benefits also expand beyond individuals and institutions.

In addition to generating tuition for institutions, educating adults pays. Beyond the individual and institutional rewards of such programs, educating adults has the potential to impact local communities, improve regional economies, and impact global economies (Ritt, 2008, p. 13). A strong return on investments in educating adults has been confirmed in the United States:

Politically and culturally the education of adults is often a necessary stage in the transformation of national culture. In addition to benefitting the adults in question, it facilitates the education of their children. The education of women, in particular, contributes to a home environment that values education, which influences decisions as to how long, or whether, children remain in school. From all these points of view, while national investments in primary schooling are essential, a sustained effort for adult education is also necessary. And while the establishment of systems of primary education requires investments in buildings and teacher training on a scale usually only possible for comparatively wealthy governments, the costs of adult education are more modest and may be undertaken locally by non-governmental organizations. (Chan, 2005, p. 179).

And the rewards of investing in the education of adults are not limited to the United States.

International research confirms that tertiary education at a college or university impacts individuals and entire economies. According to the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2009), post-secondary or tertiary graduates are more likely to be employed, to stay employed, to earn more, and to continue to increase their earnings as they age. While much of this feels intuitive, such rewards are not limited to earners who received their education in their late teens or early twenties. In fact, “[i]n most countries, the financial rewards for returning to education at age 40 are

sizeable” (OECD “Education at a Glance,” 2009, p. 44). And these rewards are not limited to financial payments.

The OECD also noted that the benefits of post-secondary education include an increase in the health of the individual and the community and an increase in the individual’s degree of civic and community engagement. In particular, “a Dutch study suggests that an additional year of education improves the health state of men by 0.6% and of women by 0.3%” (OECD “Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning,” 2007, p. 14). Specifically, the OECD report cited a “UK simulation analysis which concluded that raising the level of adult women without qualifications to a basic qualification level would reduce the risk of depression at age 42 from 26% to 22%, saving an estimated £200 million annually” (OECD “Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning,” 2007, p. 14). Public as well as personal health and wealth are also at stake.

Public rates of return are impacted positively by both men and women who receive tertiary education at the age of 40 (9.5% for men and 6.6% for women); further, “the social benefits of education extend beyond providing additional income to the government in the form of taxes”; specifically, “better educated individuals are generally healthier, which lowers public expenditure on provision of health care. As earnings generally rise with educational attainment, there is also more consumption of goods and services, and this gives rise to fiscal effects beyond income tax and social security contributions” (OECD “Education at a Glance,” 2009, p. 46). The adult education considered in this report is not vocational or corporate or informal; the education under consideration is based on 40-year-old adult learners who enter or return to colleges or universities—the adult learners we encounter in our composition classrooms.

As Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou put it in her speech on the European agenda for adult learning, lifelong learning “is the key to a flexible, adaptable and above all employable workforce” (as cited in Field, 2013, p. 110); it is not an overstatement to suggest that the learning of adults impacts nearly all aspects of life all across the world. And while much of that education takes place beyond institutions of higher education, the Academy remains the gateway to advanced learning. And Writing

Studies remains the cauldron or stew or salad or gateway to higher education that it was in the 60s and 70s and 80s and 90s.

Composition Studies has a history of welcoming new constituencies into the community of educated men and women and plays a major role in preparing such populations for success in higher education and beyond. The foundational literature of the discipline serves as a record of this history. Situating adult learners within the history of Composition Studies and identifying their impact on the discipline prepares Composition Studies to continue facilitating the access and success of adult learners. Connecting the adult learners of the canonical literature to the adult learners of the current research and in the current classrooms of Composition Studies prepares the discipline to respond to adult students in composition classrooms not only by accessing our history with adult learners and the findings of that research but also by applying the resources and research on adult learners from all areas of the Academy. Further, beginning the process of conducting historical research on adult learners in Composition Studies prepares the field to analyze fully the history of these students and identify the narratives created to discuss and define them, work that is necessary to ground qualitative and quantitative explorations into the current classrooms of Composition.

The research Composition Studies has produced in relation to adult learners can facilitate their success across disciplines and the research produced across disciplines can allow Composition Studies to support adult learners in our classrooms. Taken together, Writing Studies is uniquely positioned and already poised to connect past and present research within and beyond the discipline in order to support current adult learners within the Academy and future adult learners without current access to the Academy. The first step is to review the larger literature of adult learners as located in the works on adult learners in Adult Education and across the Academy in order to ground the work on adult learners in Composition Studies within this larger content and context.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature of and on adult learners within Composition Studies has not been compiled or reviewed to great degree because much of it has not been established as literature on adult learners. The literature upon which my research is built, then, is the literature located across the disciplines that includes adult learners, whether explicitly identified as such or not. While Adult Education serves as the central source for work that focuses on adults as learners, research on and about adult learners has occurred and is occurring independently within disciplines and departments across campuses and across the Academy. Reviewing literature within Adult Education establishes the scope of work that has been conducted explicitly on adult learners. Reviewing literature beyond Adult Education that includes adult learners as a significant part of the research demonstrates that adult learners are present as the subject matter or as the subjects of a wide range of research across a wide range of disciplines. Although adult learners within Adult Education are recognized as a distinct population, beyond the literature and departments of Adult Education, adults are not consistently recognized as a constituency—as is the case in Composition Studies.

Situating my research within the literature of Adult Education and connecting my findings to literature across disciplines confirms that adult learners appear in a wide range of academic literature and function in ways that have impacted individual disciplines and entire institutions, as well as the Academy and beyond. Recognizing the breadth of research including adult learners demonstrates the scope of such work and establishes the value of bringing research findings from across the disciplines to the questions and concerns surrounding adult learners—findings that can allow researchers, teachers, and administrators to evaluate overall services and approaches that have and have not been offered to adult

learners across campuses. Current enrollment numbers and future enrollment projections confirm that more adult learners are entering institutions of higher education. Connecting literature across the Academy that includes adult learners provides a snapshot of the ways the Academy has responded to this population and the major narratives the literature constructs to define adults within higher education.

My research concentrates the often undesignated and generally isolated literature across the early decades of Composition Studies that includes adult learners. By locating adult learners in Composition Studies, my research establishes the place and impact of adult learners in and on Composition Studies and adds value to the discipline by expanding the history of the discipline, grounding additional research on adult learner in Composition Studies, providing support for current adult learners in Composition Studies, and preparing to support future adult students within and beyond the discipline. Through the facilitation of access, support, and understanding of adult learners in and entering higher education, my research also continues the proud work Composition Studies has done to introduce marginalized populations to the Academy and include their perspective and voices in Composition and Writing Studies. Connecting Composition literature to adult learners designates these texts as part of the larger canon of literature on adult learners in and across all disciplines, which benefits Composition Studies, Adult Education, the Academy, adult learners, and perhaps even all learners. Such connections have been made for other communities across Composition and Writing Studies and across the Academy, but the work on adult students within Composition Studies or Writing Studies has not been compiled or considered in conjunction or connected to outside research and resources related to adult learners.

To ground my research, I trace the relationship between adults and education by unpacking the terms and concepts associated with adult learners, I provide an overview of the literature in Adult Education inside and outside of the Academy, and I survey the research on adult learners within the disciplines. Such a substantial review of literature is necessary to demonstrate the range of situations and the scope of subjects included in the work on adult learners in order to establish that the work located in Composition Studies fits well within work designated as research on adult students across the Academy

and to confirm that work on adult learners within other disciplines is not always overtly identified as work on adult learners or connected to the larger literature on adult learners. Seeing the kind of work across the disciplines that includes adult learners and the range of topics covered allowed me to construct my search of the Composition literature. Reading and reviewing this literature has expanded and clarified my understanding of adult learners and their presence in and influence on the Academy. As a result, the contribution of my research has been confirmed and the need for expansion of such work has been substantiated.

In the Beginning

The work of facilitating and understanding adult learners extends beyond education and beyond higher education into professional and personal places. Adult learning exists internationally in institutions and industries and includes English Language Learners in search of a GED, graduate students in pursuit of a Ph.D., employees in need of CEUs and certificates, and lifelong learners enrolled in OLLI, but it also exists in informal settings where adults learn from watching a YouTube video or reading a novel. While all these places and purposes appear disparate, each includes adult learners and adults learning. Informal education is the main contact point for adult learners, but more American adults are accessing formal education and higher education. The relationship between formal education and the adult learner has ranged from seeing adults as the assumed recipients of education to benign neglect or outright marginalization.

The foundation of informal education is situated within the history of adults as learners. Savicevic (2008) argued that the “learning and education of adults have always been an integral part of human activity and of the human aspirations to learn” (p. 365). In fact, the earliest forms of formal education are also grounded in the assumption of learners who are adults:

The history of andragogical ideas (understood as a conception, institutions and practice) shows that in Hellenistic and ancient Jewish cultural circles andragogical institutions were the first to be

founded. It was three centuries later that schools for children education were founded, because the family provided the frame for the children's upbringing. (Savicevic, 2008, p. 365)

Unfortunately, much of this history of adult learners has not only been ignored, it has been erased.

What has come to be known as the history of pedagogy is in actuality the history of andragogy. Savicevic also pointed out that the history of andragogy has been "overlooked or disregarded, and eventually was marked as a history of pedagogical ideas in the traditional history of pedagogy textbooks" (p. 365). To locate adult learners within the history and literature of Writing Studies requires a review of the history of andragogy in its modern incarnation as found in the history and literature of and beyond adult learning and of and beyond the Academy.

The contemporary study of adult learners and the development of modern andragogical methods can be traced to 1833 when Knapp coined the term andragogy while trying to describe the practice Plato exerted when instructing his pupils, who were young adults (Knapp, 1833, p. 41; Reischmann, 2004, p. 1). The current terminology, then, is rooted in an ancient practice. When the Academy and the field of Rhetoric and Composition ground themselves in the history of classical Greece, they tie their origins to adult education and andragogy.

The continued development of the Academy and the discipline are also connected to adult learners. "A Brief History of Rhetoric and Composition" highlighted the role of adult learners in the history of Rhetoric: "The study of rhetoric was manifested, however, in techniques for adult practitioners, for example, in *ars dictaminis*, the art of composing official letters through which church and state business was conducted, and *ars praedicandi*, the art of preaching" ("Medieval and Renaissance Rhetoric," n.d., para. 7). While these connections to andragogy can be made, they are not made explicit or highlighted in the literature of the Academy or of Writing Studies.

The current age of adult education within institutions of higher education began in the early nineteenth century when older students started to seek degrees from American universities (Harrington, 1977). The twentieth century saw the development of Adult Education as a field within the Academy.

Although work on adult learners is gaining recognition across the Academy in light of the substantial increase of this population within institutions of higher education, widespread research on adult learners, especially within the disciplinary literature, is thin and ripe for development.

In the current edition of *The Adult Learner*, Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson (2014) argued that “until recently, there has been relatively little thinking, investigating, and writing about adult learning. This is a curious fact considering that the education of adults has been a concern of the human race for such a long time. Yet, for many years, that adult learner was indeed a neglected species” (ch. 3, e-reader version). Recent recognition is making more educators and researchers aware of adult learners as a distinct population and is allowing andragogical theories and methods to gain more traction as their own distinct set of principles and practices.

As a term and concept and practice and field, andragogy has a long history of development and evolution. Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson (2014) defined pedagogy as “the art and science of teaching children” (p. 61); andragogy, as designated from pedagogy, approaches learning and learners from the “standpoint of how adults learn” (p. xiv). Although Knapp, a German educationalist, is credited with coining the term in 1833, it did not catch on until the 1920s when Rosenstock-Huessy revived the use of the word (Loeng, 2013), and the concept was not popularized until Lindeman extended the idea in 1926 (Ozuah, 2005). Only decades later did the work really begin to flourish.

Knowles traced the origins of contemporary conversations surrounding the theories and practices of andragogy to the 1920s and noted that two camps developed and subsequently established the field. The first was based on the works of Thorndike, a psychologist who approached the topic from the ability and capacity of adults to learn. The second camp was grounded in the work of Lindeman, who considered the more formal setting of adult learning from a social perspective. Knowles charted this history and compared the two environments and approaches, both of which produced legacies still visible in the field and the literature today.

In 1959, Knowles extended Lindeman's work on andragogy and helped develop it into a theory of adult learning (Ozuah, 2005; Zmeyov, 1998). The foundational work in the field of Adult Education and on the topic of andragogy is generally credited to Knowles, who published extensively on the subject from 1950 until his death in 1997. Knowles tackled topics such as developing leaders (1955), group dynamics (1959), self-directed learning (1975), instruction (1984), learning contracts (1986), teacher training (1989), and numerous others in well over 200 articles and 18 books.

Knowles' seminal work, *The Adult Learner*, has been consistently in print since initial publication. For the first four editions of *The Adult Learner*, published from 1973 to 1990, the subtitle was *A Neglected Species*. Starting with the fifth edition in 1989 and in the subsequent three editions, the subtitle has been *The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*. The new title reflects the scope of the work not only because it is a fifth edition and is defined as a definitive classic in the field, but also because it demonstrates that the book and topic have bridged the academic and the corporate worlds.

Pedagogy, for Knowles, was built on various assumptions: (a) learners have dependent personalities, (b) learning is subject-oriented, (c) extrinsic motivation is an essential factor to learning, and (d) learner's previous experience is not relevant to learning (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 1998). Pedagogy placed the importance on the role of the teacher in education (Bedi, 2004). Andragogy was defined as "the art and science of helping adults learn, in contrast to pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children" (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). The assumptions of andragogy were seen as a main point of divergence from pedagogical approaches.

Andragogy was based upon six assumptions: (a) self-directedness, (b) need to know, (c) use of experience in learning, (d) readiness to learn, (e) orientation to learning, and (f) internal motivation (Chan, 2012; Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Charts comparing the assumptions of andragogy and pedagogy serve as the visual foundation for numerous websites and presentations introducing the topic of adult learning and learners. Knowles' theories have been expanded

to create a substantial body of literature; it serves as the foundation for much of the research on adult learning theories and methods and has been updated and extended into the Academy at large, beyond the Academy, beyond the US, and subsequently into the academic disciplines and into the field of Writing Studies.

In America, Knowles is widely accepted as “the best-known modern interpreter and advocate of andragogy” (Rachal, 2002, p. 210); however, he is not necessarily seen as such in all parts of the field or of the world. In Europe and Eastern Europe, the field developed quite differently. The European perspective ties Adult Education to Lindeman instead of Knowles. Because the wars of the first half of the 20th century hindered the education of so many Europeans, facing an uneducated post-war labor force made educating adults vital, and the field and practice of Andragogy began to flourish (Krajnc, 2011). Lindeman, a colleague of Dewey, introduced the term Andragogy into the English parlance in 1927, emphasizing the informal, experiential, and lifelong nature of the andragogical orientation (Davenport & Davenport, 1985). In 1967, Savicevic exposed Knowles to the term Andragogy and connected Knowles’ work to the associated concepts as practiced in Yugoslavian (Knowles, 1989, p. 79). Currently, however, the North American perspectives and perceptions dominate the field.

Fejes and Nylander (2014) analyzed the literature published in *Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ)*, *International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE)*, and *Studies in Continuing Education (SICE)* from 2005 to 2012. Building on work from Rachal and Sargent (1995) that illustrated “a total dominance of North American institutions among those best represented in these journals,” the subsequent work by Rachal and William (2005) that found an increase in the “visibility of non-U.S. and Canadian institutions,” and the more recent work by Larsson (2010) that extended the claim to include the finding that “authors from the same countries seem to draw the vast majority of citations in the field” (p. 225), Fejes and Nylander confirmed the “trends identified in prior studies, that is, a dominance of Anglophone authors and a marginalization of non-Anglophone authors” (p. 235). A geographical concentration of disciplinary input, nevertheless, does not necessitate clarity.

Reviewing the theories and practices of andragogy as they manifest within the disciplines, departments, and literature of the Academy can be tricky because despite the concentration of North American authors, there is no singular form or function of the term. Even within the United States, public, popular, cultural connotations of Adult Education vary. In general, the focus of Adult Education is not narrowed to adult learners within institutions of higher education. In fact, adults within higher education are not often the connotation of the term, as demonstrated by the government of the United States.

The U.S Department of Education has connected Adult Education and Literacy as a singular category located within the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, and the focus of the division is not adult learners in higher education: “The Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) promotes programs that help American adults get the basic skills they need to be productive workers, family members, and citizens” (USDOE “Adult Education and Literacy,” n.d.). Not only are basic skills defined as the goal of Adult Education, the implication is that without such education, people are unable to function professionally, personally, or politically—an assumption repeated in much of the literature on adults as learners and in the words and sentiments of the manifestation of Adult Education programs on a state level.

The Florida Department of Education categorized Career Education and Adult Education together. The mission of the Federal government is repeated almost verbatim on the state website: “Florida’s adult education system includes a range of instructional programs that help adults get the basic skills they need to be productive workers, family members, and citizens” (FLDOE). Further, it is assumed that students involved in Adult Education do not possess a high school diploma: “The major program areas are Adult Basic Education Adult High School and GED[®] Preparation, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These programs emphasize basic skills such as reading, writing, math, and English language competency” (FLDOE). While a potential goal, higher education is separated from the immediate goals of the FLDOE: “Adult education programs also help adult learners gain the knowledge and skills they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education” (FLDOE website “Adult

Education,” n.d.). Public and bureaucratic governmental understandings do not necessarily link Adult Education to higher education and appear not to connect Adult Education to andragogy in any concrete way.

The understanding of Adult Education as it related to governmental programs is also defined by the National Research Council who commissioned *Performance Assessments for Adult Education: Exploring the Measurement Issues: Report of a Workshop*; in it, editors Mislevy and Knowles (2002) explained that “[i]n the United States, the nomenclature of adult education includes adult literacy, adult secondary education, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) services provided to undereducated and limited English proficient adults” (p. 2). Although the definition was being considered in the context of the Workforce Investment Act, which congress passed in 1989 to hold adult education programs accountable, a lack of clarity extends into institutions of higher education in America and beyond.

Adult Education, as a field, studies and applies many theories of adult learning. Andragogy, within the field of Adult Education, is tied to both Knowlesian manifestations of the term and is employed as a broad, generic term intended to include all theories and methods. It is within this sense, as a general contrast to pedagogy, that I use the term, but even within institutions of higher education, different departments define themselves differently even when it comes to basic terminology. Reischmann, the Chair of Andragogy at Bamberg University and board member of the ISCAE (International Society of Comparative Adult Education) recounted that in 1994, his department changed its name from “Adult Education” to “Andragogik,” in an effort to “use the term ‘andragogy’ to label the academic discipline that reflects and researches the education and learning of adults. By this we emphasize the differentiation between the field of practice (‘adult education’) and the scholarly approach (‘andragogy’)” (“Welcome to Andragogy,” n.d.). The title battle is played out in departments across the globe.

Departments outside of the United States commonly use the term andragogy in their title (See: Comenius University, Slovakia; Institute of general Education, Russia; Matej Bel University, Slovakia; University of Belgrade, Serbia; University of Debrecen, Hungary; University of Montréal, Canada). Although some institutions of higher education use both (University of Ostrava, Czech Republic) and some American institutes use Andragogy (Lindenwood University, Missouri), Adult Education is more common in the States. *The Princeton Review* has a category for Adult Education graduate programs, which supports the use of the term and suggests that the field is becoming more mainstream since Adult Education is not simply a subcategory of Education (Grad Programs “Adult Education”). Beyond recognizing the divergent histories of these two constituencies, such variety might be explained through a closer look at the term andragogy.

According to Knowles, the origin of andragogy is the Greek word *aner* (with the stem *andr-*), meaning “man, not boy” or “adult” (Knowles, 1980, p. 42). While the concept is becoming more familiar in and beyond departments and institutions of education, the term andragogy is being replaced in the U.S by the general designation of Adult Education and the related theories and by more specific terms designating iterations of specific theories that include concepts of adult learning theories. Perhaps this shift is a response to the gendered nature of the origin of the term or an attempt at concretizing an American andragogy, or perhaps it is a response to the multiplicity of the concept that mirrors the complexity of the terminology.

Andragogy organizes the broad approaches to teaching adult learners; it “has been alternately described as a set of guidelines (Merriam, 1993), a philosophy (Pratt, 1993), a set of assumptions (Brookfield, 1986), and a theory (Knowles, 1989)” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, ch. 1, e-reader). Numerous terms and concepts are connected to andragogical theories and practices: Adult Learning Theory, self-directed learning, experiential learning, inquiry-based education, problem-based learning, transformative learning, learner-centered approaches, among others. Some concepts moved into theories and practices of adult learning (Cross, Adult Learning Theory; Gagne, Conditions of Learning; Rogers,

Experiential Learning; as well as Bloom, Maslow, and many others), and other ideas and attitudes stemmed from work in andragogy and made their way into mainstream pedagogy.

But elasticity can also be an asset. An unacknowledged ancient history and an unclear recent history feed the scattered state of the field, but this ambiguity has fostered a rich diversity in the literature. Andragogical concepts have been allowed to move freely between the Academy and industry and within disciplines and departments, albeit not often recognized or defined as such. Andragogical principles and practices can be applied anywhere, and so they are; many delivery models, old and new, have been affiliated with adult learning: correspondence courses, portfolio assessment, distance learning, evening programs, vocational education, online courses, corporate/workforce training, and remedial/basic/developmental learning. Much of the research on andragogy, as a result, occurs outside of higher education and often outside of education.

Yet even within the academic scholarship, complexities cloud the conversation. Most of the research has come out of the field of Education and has been published in journals that focus on adult learners: *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Adult Learning Quarterly*, *Adult Learning*, *Adults Learning*, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *New Horizon's in Adult Education*, *Perspectives: The New York Journal of Adult Learning*. There are also international adult-oriented journals within education: *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, *Canadian Journal for the Studies of Adult Education*, *New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning*, *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*. Of these, only *Adult Education Quarterly* and *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* appear on the SJR list of ranked journals, and neither is ranked as a top-tier journal (*AEQ* is Q2 and *AJAL* has vacillated between Q3 and Q4 for the six years it has been ranked).

Some related journals include research on adult learners, as well: *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *Journal of Research & Practice for Adult Literacy*, *Journal of Adult Development*, *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, *Studies in Continuing Education*, *Distance Education*, *Education and Training*, and *Continuing Higher Education Review*, to name a majority. Of these, only

two are ranked as Q1 in SJR: *Distance Education* and *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. While there are journals to publish research findings directly related to the specific subject of adult learners and related theories and practices, few are considered prestigious.

As noted by Fejes and Nylander (2014), “[o]ne of the more influential shifts in recent times is the emergence of an ‘economy of publications and citations’ (EPC; Larsson, 2009, 2010)” (p. 223). The lack of journals with weight in the Academy, therefore, discourages scholars, especially those from outside the field of Adult Education, from researching and publishing on issues directly pertaining to adult learners in their fields. Nonetheless, scholars within the field have produced considerable literature directly on the topic of Adult Education and beyond.

Even within the literature of the discipline, no singular understanding of adult learning prevails. Reischmann (2004) reported:

[A]n unclear use of andragogy can be found, with its meaning changing (even in the same publication) from “adult education practice” or “desirable values” or “specific teaching methods,” to “reflections” or “academic discipline” and/or “opposite to childish pedagogy”, claiming to be “something better” than just “Adult Education.” (p. 1)

And that is within the explicitly defined literature on adult learners.

In part, the lack of clarity is simply a product of an adolescent field. The discipline is relatively young and emerging. When Boshier and Pickard (1979) analyzed citations in the 1968 to 1977 editions of *Adult Education Quarterly* to determine which individuals were cited most, their findings revealed a continual increase of primary-source citations, which they argued represented “a unique body of knowledge (primary literature)” and served as one of the “hallmarks of an emerging discipline” (Boshier & Pickard, 1979, p. 47). The field, albeit still developing and defining itself, continues to find footing, form, and function.

As the practices and understandings surrounding and undergirding andragogy expand and develop, those within the field of Adult Education are creating and cultivating more nuanced and

sophisticated understandings that move beyond andragogy as a singular, monolithic concept to an Adult Learning Theory and ultimately to adult learning theories. Pratt (1993) recognized that “while andragogy may have contributed to our understanding of adults as learners, it has done little to expand or clarify our understanding of the process of learning,” and subsequently, it has never been fully accepted as *a*, let alone *the*, “theory of adult learning” (p. 21). Similar expansions of andragogy can be found in the research across disciplines that is starting to complicate and deconstruct the simplistic understandings and assumptions associated with traditional andragogy by confirming that not all adult learners are self-directed or internally motivated or in possession of all of the characteristics assumed of an adult learner.

But while Adult Education advances the work of developing theories and practicing practices surrounding the learning of adults, it is important that scholars and administrators across the rest of the Academy, and those involved in teaching and learning beyond the Academy, are introduced to the basic ideas and principles involved with the recognition and consideration of adults as learners. Despite Adult Education’s appropriate and necessary evolution beyond andragogy, Pratt admitted that “Andragogy has been adopted by legions of adult educators around the world. . . . [and that] it will continue to be the window through which adult educators take their first look into the world of adult education” (p. 21). While research within Adult Education has rightly complicated these elementary understandings, these early and easy concepts have been and continue to be the entry point for those outside the discipline of Adult Education to take a first look at the ideas associated with adult learners as a population with shared needs and individual lives that impact their learning.

The Academy is beginning to recognize adult(s as) learners and is attempting to reverse the role it has played in neglecting this population by (re)connecting andragogy to the history of adults as learners and by employing andragogical principles. A wide range of research on adult learners addresses a variety of theoretical and practical concerns that impact adult learners. Still much of the research that includes adults as learners and adult learning theories and practices does not explicitly define the subjects or

students as adults and does not recognize the models as andragogical. To locate and identify all such work would not be possible, but my focus on such literature in Composition Studies is practical and applicable.

Grounding such study requires reviewing the literature within the field of Adult Education and the literature within the disciplines beyond Education that acknowledges and addresses adult learners and andragogy. Within higher education, focus on adult learners is moving into the disciplines. In reviewing the literature, I surveyed the publications directly related to Adult Education and then moved into the disciplines in order to establish that work on adults is impacting research across the Academy, albeit rarely in a connected or considered fashion. My original research, reported in chapter four, builds on this foundation to locate the work on adult students within the relevant canonical literature of Composition Studies and establish not only its existence but also its impact on the discipline. To begin, both the psychological and sociological contributions to the discipline of Adult Education and to the work of andragogy deserve review in order to move through these distinctions and see the wider field.

In the(ir) Discipline

The field of Adult Education has produced extensive research related to adults as learners with the goal of understanding this population and facilitating individual learning. Evident in the organization of the field and the literature it produces are the legacies of Thorndike and Lindeman as they manifest into literature grounded in the methods and practices of both Psychology and Sociology. The variety of disciplinary research that grows from this shared origin story has developed psychosocial theories of adult learning and translated theories into international, instructional, technological, industrial, and institutional practices.

The broad work of researching and facilitating adult learning exists beneath a vast canopy. The modern, academic origins of Adult Education as a distinct field within the larger area of interest are truly interdisciplinary. According to Knowles (1980), “A great deal of other knowledge about adult learning was accumulating during the sixties from related disciplines—clinical psychology, developmental psychology (especially the new group of life-span developmental psychologists), gerontology, sociology,

and anthropology—both in North America and Europe” (p. 42). Psychology and Sociology, however, played the main roles.

In *The New Update on Adult Learning Theory*, Merriam (2008) stated that “[t]he first book to report the results of research on this topic, Thorndike, Bregman, Tilton, and Woodyard’s *Adult Learning* (1928), was published just two years after the founding of adult education as a professional field of practice. Thorndike and others approached adult learning from a behavioral psychological perspective” (p. 3). Psychology not only served as a foundation for the work on adult learners, it remains a major research interest.

Applying a psychological perspective to conversations around adults as learners grounds much of the research, which is demonstrated by books addressing the major topic of how adults learn (Howe, 1977; Lovell, 1980) and articles investigating elements of adult learning such as the function of motivation in the learning of adults (Lengacher & Wiles, 2014; Pew 2007), the impact of praise on adult learners (Wlodkowski, 2008), the influence of fear on adult learners (Illeris, 2003), the result of leaving school on self-esteem (Maclean & Hill, 2015), the effect of anxiety on achievement (Rothenberg & Harrington, 1994), the role persistence in adult learning (Comings, 2007; Ponton, Derrick, & Carr, 2005), the psychological impact of teamwork (Favor & Kulp, 2015), and the place of ambiguity as a catalyst for adult learners (Nicolaidis, 2015). While most of this research exists within Education or Adult Education, some resides within Educational Psychology and other related scientific fields.

Neuroscience of Adult Learning, an edited collection by Johnson and Taylor (2006), covered adult learners in relation to the brain, fear, emotions, instruction, experience, consciousness, executive functions, and mentoring. Although Johnson and Taylor explicitly connected the science of psychology and biology to adult education, the book was published by Jossey-Bass, an education-specific publisher with a division on adult education. Research on adult learners that overtly employs psychological methods and approaches includes works on adult learners with disabilities (Campbell & McCue, 2013; Campillo et al., 2014), the benefits of learning on adult cognition (Hatch et al., 2007), adult learning

behaviors as related to math (Tennant, 2012), anxiety in adult education classes (Kitchiner et al., 2009), and learning behaviors in adult mice (Andrzejewski et al., 2011; Meziane et al., 2015). The theories and methods of Adult Education appear tangentially, if at all, in the scientific publications that consider on adults as learners. The theories and methods of psychology, however, undergird much of the work in Adult Education and related educational journals.

If the psychologically-driven literature is introspective, the sociological research appears to focus an external and often critical gaze on adult learners and on the field of adult education. In “The Sociology of Adult Education,” Lindeman (1945) asked the seemingly simple research question that started the conversation: “Why don’t American sociologists do something about adult education”; however, he admitted that a main reason is that the most educational administrators “hold their noses at the mention of adult education” (p. 4). Lindeman also credited his visit to Scandinavian countries for opening him to the meaningfulness of the topic.

A wealth of research stems from sociological questions concerning adult learning and adults as learners. Foundational works in sociology have offered sociological frameworks through which to view adult education (Jarvis, 1985), provided a sociological overview of adult education in America and Britain (Garside, 1970), addressed adult education in developing nations (Jones, 1984), explored the process of conducting sociological research on adult education (Payne, 1990), and (re)viewed adult education as a movement for social reform in communist China (Pu-hsia, 1944). The gaze places Adult Education apart from Sociology.

Literature that makes sociological elements part of the work on adult learners appears less reflective and critical and more social and political covering topics such as violence, educational justice, and poverty in adults (Lange, Chovanec, Cardinal, Kajner, & Acuna Smith, 2015); Adult Education and Learning Policy from a global perspective (Nesbit & Milana, 2015); gender and masculinity in adult learning (Bowl, 2012); the sociology of adult education in Latin America (Torres, 2013); and international political trends in adult learning (Torres, 2015). The same distinction found in Psychology is

demonstrated in the works of Sociology: articles that focus explicitly on adults but include elements of sociology are found in the literature of Adult Education while the literature of Sociology does little to advance the research on the learning of adults.

Yet, in 1991, Hughes' "In from the Margins—Adult Education and Sociology" sounded the alarm and echoed the assertions of others in the field (Else, 1985; Griffin, 1987; Jarvis, 1985; Jones, 1985) who warned that not nearly enough sociological exploration of adult education had taken place. "A Critical Overview of the Sociology of Adult Education" provided another critique of Sociology's role in actions and conversations surrounding adult education; in it, Connelly (1992) argued that due to "the wide range of practices, curricula, and institutions and the gap between theorists and policymakers and practitioners . . . there is no distinct, developed sociology of adult education" (p. 235). Regardless, sociological theories and methods as appropriated by scholars in education have impacted the field greatly.

Lange (2015), who supported her claim that sociology was a foundational discipline for adult education by illuminating the consistent presence of sociological frameworks in Adult Education, admitted that it has been largely unrecognized as such until recently. Lange's article, "(Re)igniting a Sociological Imagination in Adult Education: The Continuing Relevance of Classical Theory," was published in the *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, and Lange is a scholar from a Department of Adult Education. Limited work appears directly in the major publications of either Sociology or Psychology, most instead appearing in Education journals.

Stated specifically, although Psychology and Sociology appear explicitly and implicitly in the literature of Adult Education, Adult Education is less likely to appear in the journals of Psychology or Sociology. Taken together, while sociological and psychological thinking founded and still ground the work of Adult Education, the work of researching adult learners (especially those within higher education) has not even permeated the disciplines that helped found the field. The distinctive research

coming out of Adult Education, nonetheless, encompasses a wide range of topics that have bloomed and blossomed in response to the general trends and insights of the Academy.

A significant body of work has looked at the theories associated with adult(s) as learners, often comparing fundamental assumptions of pedagogy with those of andragogy (Moberg, 2006; Noor, Harun, & Aris, 2012; Pew, 2007; Taylor & Kroth, 2009; Wang & Dennett, 2014). Publications covered topics from book-length general overviews of current adult learning theories (Merriam, 2008) to articles comparing different adult learning theories (Howie & Bagnall, 2015) and combining adult learning theories with outside theories (Carpenter, 2012). Numerous articles relate theories of adult learning to subjects such as professional development (Zepeda, Parylo, & Bengtson, 2014), mentoring (Klinge, 2015), human resource development (Hutchins & Bierema, 2013; Wright, 2013), popular culture (Wright, 2010; Wright & Sandlin, 2009), and transformational learning, narrative learning, and spiritual learning (Foote, 2015). All these are published in education-related journals or by Jossey-Bass.

More work and more of the current work in and on Adult Education has aimed to transform theories of adult learning into instruction by focusing on approaches and practices. The academic literature linking theory to practice includes general books on teaching techniques (Kalamas, 1986; Merriam & Bierema, 2014; Tisdell, Eisen, Tisdell, & Imel, 2000) and general articles on practices for teaching adults (Baskas, 2011; Kenner & Weinerman, 2011). More specific articles covered topics such as teaching new teachers to teach adults (Brockett, 2015), teaching adults to read (Nielsen, 2015), teaching ESOL adults (Paton & Wilkins, 2009), teaching international adults (Rogers & Horrocks, 2010), teaching science to adults (Christa, 2012), distance learning for adults (Tomei, 2010), and teaching adults with technology (Wolfson, Cavanagh, & Kraiger, 2014). Several collections and compilations also addressed transforming andragogical theories into practices.

In the recent anthology, *Adult Learning*, Merriam and Bierema (2014) offered an overview of the field from the foundational theories that ground research and practices on adults as learners (behaviorism, cognitive psychology, social constructivism, situated cognition) to the most current approaches for

teaching adult learners in the digital age (globalization; technology; social networking; formal, non-formal, and informal learning); they also organized and grouped theories and practices (Andragogy; Self-directed Learning; Transformative Learning) and explored the most current areas in the arena (The Body and Spirit in Learning, Experience and Learning, Motivation and Learning, Critical Thinking and Critical Perspectives). Other chapters were devoted to expanding modern approaches to the study of adults as learners (The Brain and Mind, including neuroscience; Intelligence—practical and emotional intelligence, learning and cognitive styles) and moving theories into classroom practices manifests through multiple means.

More recent instructional literature is starting to include or focus on the role of technology in these practices. In “Comparing the Principles of Adult Learning with Traditional Pedagogical Teaching in Relation to the use of Technology: The Tacit Dimension in ICT-based University Teaching,” Ahedo (2009) admitted that adult learning was, until recently, marginalized in most countries and questioned the usefulness of adding information and communication technologies as a dimension of adult learning. Despite possible resistance or reluctance, researching the role of technology in relation to adult learners is trending in practice and in the literature.

Numerous books have addressed connecting theories and practices of adult learning to technology (Gardner, Hill, & Zheng, 2013; Ya-Huei, Damnée, Kerhervé, Ware, & Rigaud, 2015), integrating technology into adult learning (Steinke & Bryan, 2014; Wang, 2010), teaching adult learners in online environments (Kidd, 2010; Palloff & Pratt, 2003), and designing lessons for adult learners that employ technology (Kruse & Keil, 2000; Tomei, 2010). Several journal articles also considered various topics connecting adult learning or adult learners to technology: collaborative learning online (Akyol & Garrison, 2010), adult learners and Virtual Learning Environments (Deggs, Grover, & Kacirek, 2011; Evans & Fan, 2002), course design for adult learners online (DuCharme-Hansen & Dupin-Bryant, 2005), podcasting and adult learning theories (Luna, & Cullen, 2011), outcomes for adults learning with online

technologies (Keengwe, & Kidd, 2010), and Multimedia Systems (Kinshuk, Hansen, & Patel, 2002) among others. In some cases, research on online learning and on adult learners can be conflated.

Adult learners are not always identified as such in the literature beyond the field of Adult Education, but at times, even literature within the field does not define itself or its research population. Titles of works that include terms such as distance learning, continuing education, lifelong learners, online learners, and others often include a large population of adults, even if the research is not intended to focus on adult learning or learners. In *Technology-Based Training: The Art and Science of Design, Development, and Delivery*, for instance, Kruse and Keil (2000) investigated techniques and strategies to design lessons that marry theories of adult learning with technology. Judging a topic by its title, neither adult learners nor andragogy appear to be vital components of the work.

Similarly, *The Virtual Student: A Profile and Guide to Working with Online Learners* examined the needs of the adult learner without Palloff and Pratt (2003) noting the population in their title. Valid reasons might explain the omission, but the two books serve as examples of how finding adult learners even within a select topic and within the literature of the field is not always as easy as a title search. While modern concerns, such as technology, and practical concerns, such as course design, find extensive representation in the literature, interest in this population has moved into the general functions related to administration and student services within institutions of higher education.

The literature of Adult Education has also translated theories into practices by researching how the particular needs of adult learners differ from those of the younger students that modern colleges and universities see as their main constituents. In *Meeting the Special Needs of Adult Students*, editors Kilgore and Rice (2003) curated a set of articles that explored the intersections of adult learners and higher education. Also discussed in the wider research on adult learners is recruitment and retention (Wonacott, 2001), improving retention (Hadfield, 2003; Quijley, 1995), the role of persistence in retention (Comings & Cuban, 2007; Markle, 2015; Park & Choi, 2009), finding funding sources for adults in higher education

(Hatfield, 2003), and the impact of adult learners on faculty and student affairs (Howard-Hamilton, Marbley, & Bonner, 2011). Interest in serving the needs of this population expands to questions of access.

Research has considered how the lives of adult learners beyond the classroom and the campus impact them in the classroom and on campus by investigating the reasons adults pursue higher education (Kasworm, 2003), the reasons adult learners discontinue their education (Frank & Gaye, 1997), the many roles adult learners juggle (Fairchild, 2003), the impact of external obligations on academic success (Guastella, 2009), and the impact of gender on the learning of adult students (Kimmel, Gaylor, & Hayes, 2014). Literature on adult learners extends not only beyond the classroom and campus but also beyond the country.

The body of international research on adult learners is expanding. Savicevic (2008) noted that andragogy was adopted by at least 10 European countries such as Germany, England, Poland, France, Finland, Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. In a book-length, comprehensive international study of adult learning, Hall and Kidd (2014) discussed the role of adult education in international development and considered steps for development that acknowledge the centrality of adult education in developmental actions and decisions. Additionally, Titmus (2014) provided a *Lifelong Education for Adults: An International Handbook* to serve as a resource for international education of adults.

International literature on adult learners has examined adults' satisfaction and perceptions of formal learning (Radovan, & Makovec, 2015), Chinese teaching methods in relation to adult learning (Wang, Dennett, & Bryan, 2014; Wang & Farmer, 2008), adult learners and vocational education in Hong Kong (Leung & McGrath, 2010), adults in Turkish online training workshops (Alsofyani, bin Aris, Eynon, & Abdul Majid, 2012), and the impact of teacher charisma on adult learners in Taiwan (Wu, Hsieh, & Lu, 2015). Despite the wealth of international research, Fejes and Nylander (2014) acknowledged that "the hegemony of English language [does not] allow research on adult education in

non-Anglophone countries to be conceptualized in the best possible way” (p. 236). Nevertheless, andragogy has been interpreted and integrated into teaching frameworks from across the globe.

In “Ubuntugogy: An African Educational Paradigm that Transcends Pedagogy, Andragogy, Ergonagy, and Heutagogy,” Bangura (2005) reported the devastating effects of applying western educational practices and principles in African and their impact on African Culture. Bangura also explored the distinctions between pedagogy, andragogy, ergonagy, heutagogy and ubuntugogy and argued that “the salvation for Africans hinges upon employing indigenous African educational paradigms which can be subsumed under the rubric of ubuntugogy, which the author defines as the art and science of teaching and learning undergirded by humanity towards others” (p. 13). Just as andragogy and other *ogies* have been merged with local practices, traditions, and philosophies to develop localized approaches to education, andragogy has also been merged with international idea(l)s to inform approaches to workforce education.

For instance, in “Ergonagy: A New Concept in the Integration of ‘Kyo-Iky’ and ‘Education’,” Tanaka and Evers (1999) blended the Japanese concept of education, *kyo-iku*, with the ideas of Western education to create Ergonagy, a term derived from the Greek *ergon* (work) and *agogos* (lead). Tanaka and Evers defined ergonagy as learning that facilitates individual's occupational, vocational, and professional potential and helps people learn to work. Ergonagy subsumes andragogy and pedagogy by emphasizing the synergy that exists between to two while also segregating the differences in academic studies and vocational applications. Beyond its value as a piece of international research on adult learning, this article introduces the scholarly conversation linking workforce training for adults and adults in institutions of higher education.

Some research in the literature has connected work-based learning and campus-based learners. Both *Flexible Learning in Action: Case Studies in Higher Education* (Hudson, Maslin-Prothero, & Oates, 2014) and *Handbook of Online Learning: Innovations in Higher Education and Corporate Training* (Schoenholtz-Read & Rudestam, 2002) examined the dis/connections between learning in institutions of

higher education and in corporate environments. And in “Self-directed Learning, Andragogy and the Role of Alumni as Members of Professional Learning Communities in the Post-secondary Environment,” Egizii (2015) underscored the responsibility of the education sector to produce graduates who are not only ready for work but who are prepared to be global citizens in a global economy and considered a stronger focus on andragogy as part of an action plan. Although there is literature on the intersection between industry and the Academy, not enough research is focused on this distinction; meanwhile, a number of works explore the iterations of andragogy in the workforce and in industry.

The multiplicity of andragogical principles as they manifest into practical approaches to teaching becomes clearer when reviewing the literature that applies andragogy outside of the Academy. Workplace resources that include andragogical strategies in their approaches to teaching are plentiful and explore numerous areas of corporate education and training. Bartle (2015) noted:

[o]n the practical level, trainers’ guides, workbooks, and literature based on andragogical principles are directed to specific audiences—for example, those in the health professions, social sciences such as criminal justice, as well as industrial and church settings (Heimstra & Sisco, 1990). Any number of fields that require staff training are eager for successful tools which engage and privilege their adult learners. (para. 26)

As a result, applications of andragogy appear throughout the literature of the workforce.

A variety of research articles have applied andragogical theories and methods to new approaches to workplace learning (Fenwick, 2008), to training new employees (Woodard, 2007), to motivating adults in vocational trainings (Maria & Gabriel, 2011), to the training of managers (Forrest III & Peterson, 2006), to trends in learning architecture (Little & Knihova, 2014), and to the education of governmental employees (William, 2011). A wide array of literature within the discipline also considered how, and from what, adults learn outside of the classroom and the office by looking beyond educational institutions and industry.

The edited collection *The Virtual Learning Organization: Learning at the Workplace Campus* by Prestoungrange, Sandelands, and Teare (2000) explored general work-based learning that included concepts of adult learning theories. Specifically, in “Adult Learning Theories Closure,” Baskas (2011) examined the application of adult learning theories in a program developed to prepare fire fighters and military personnel to obtain their 911 dispatch certification. Research has considered not only how adults learn at work but how and from what they learn at home.

In “Learning on the Margins of Adult Education: Self-help Reading about Health, Relationships, and Career Success” Mclean (2014) found that self-help books do “constitute an important domain of adult learning” (p. 4). Similarly, in “Blogs and Social Network Sites as Activity Systems: Exploring Adult Informal Learning Process through Activity Theory Framework,” Gyeong Mi and Romee (2013) built on the assumption that learning occurs in a web-based space and explored adult user activities and informal learning processes as reflected in their blogs and social network sites. Each represents a recognition that adults learn not only in multiple ways but also in multiple places.

Surveying this literature shows that there are many sources in Adult Education connecting adult learning and adult learners within education and higher education to theory, instruction, technology, and student services, as well as international perspectives on adults in education. Research also extends beyond the campus to look at the lives of students and their personal and professional learning. But while new areas are emerging on the horizon, gaps in the existing scholarship beg for expansion.

Empirical research appears to be the largest area in need of advancement. Numerous calls for empirical research in and on andragogy have been heralded (Cross, 1983; Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Pratt 1993; Rachal, 2002; Taylor & Kroth, 2009). Although some empirical work has been done (Brown, 2004; Knipprath & De Rick, 2015; Nielsen, 1989), not enough research answers the calls for the quantitative. Rachal (2002) pointed out that “empirical examinations of andragogy—its science, one might say—have tended to be inconclusive, contradictory, and few” (p. 211).

In part, that is because it is difficult to test the efficacy of teaching theories, especially when deemphasizing testing is a tenet of the theory.

According to Knowles (1980), “Adults respond less readily to external sanctions for learning (such as grades) than to internal motivation” (p. 55). Perhaps related, the practice and process of grading is underdeveloped in the literature of adult learners. Rachal (2002) reminded us that “for Knowles, tests and grades are anathema to the very idea of andragogy,” and that instead, “Knowles himself implemented andragogy through the use of a learning contract, in which learning objectives, strategies and resources, evidence of achievement, and criteria and means for evaluation are all collaboratively determined by the learner and a facilitator” (p. 211). Unfortunately, finding means through which to grade students is necessary, and while learning contracts work in theory, application can be impractical.

The work that does connect adult learners to grades is not necessarily on grading. Kasworm and Pike (1994) explored the validity of applying traditional models of accessing academic performance to adult students, highlighting the fact that adult students tend to have a lower grade-point average than traditional students, but they did not focus on grading adult students. And while some of the instructional literature touches on general classroom assessment of adult learners, considering the importance of the topic, the area is left wanting in the disciplinary literature.

Assessment in general—internal or external, formal or informal, formative or summative—is not fully developed in the literature of the discipline. Research considers adult learners’ assessment of their class (Park & Choi, 2009), assessment of adult learners progress in online courses (Rosenkrans, 1999), and the impact of self-assessment on the experiential learning of adults at work (Marienau, 1999). Relatively little literature, however, deals directly with assessing adult students or the programs that serve them. The work that does look at assessment focuses on external measurements, not on teachers’ assessment.

In one such article, “A Model for Teaching, Assessment and Learning in Engineering Education for Working Adults,” Lim, Low, Attallah, Cheang, and LaBoone (2012) examined the teaching,

assessment, and learning of SIM University's engineering education programs for working adults. The focus, however, was assessment according to an outside governing body (ABET) and its role in ensuring quality. Similarly, in "The Forgotten: Formal Assessment of the Adult Writer," McNair and Curry (2013) explore the current writing assessment practices and focus on adult learners, admitting that the literature on assessing adult learners is significantly underrepresented; their interest was in the poor fit of the WIAT-III as a standardized assessment instrument for this population, not on classroom grading of adult learners.

In an effort to localize assessment within the discipline, Taylor and Kroth (2009), attempted to take on the task of assessing approaches adult learning. In "A Single Conversation with a Wise Man Is Better than Ten Years of Study: A Model for Testing Methodologies for Pedagogy or Andragogy," Taylor and Kroth created a Teaching Methodology Instrument (TMI) that incorporated Knowles' assumptions and attempted to test the adult learning principles employed by using the Socratic method as applied in law classes. Such work serves as an exception in an otherwise underdeveloped area of the literature in Adult Education.

The absence of emphasis on grading and assessing adults could be influenced by Knowles' discrediting of testing, but it could also be a result of the general discrediting of teacher scoring (Elliot, 2005; Tackitt, Moxley, & Eubanks, forthcoming). Regardless, as the population of adult learners in higher education continues to multiply, gaps must be filled and empirical evidence must bolster existing stories. Rachal warns that "[t]he extensive anecdotal, expository, and polemical writing on the subject (Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Knowles, 1984) has tended to obscure empirical investigations, and most of the latter have been dissertations which rarely reach a wide audience" (Rachal, 2002, p. 211). Moving the work of focusing on adult learners into the disciplines, as I aim to do, is an important step in moving toward the broad range of research needed to facilitate adult learners in higher education and beyond.

As a field and a philosophy, Adult Education is evolving beyond the early theories, practices, assumptions, and terms associated with andragogy. A variety of learning theories related to adult learning

and adult learners have sophisticated the internal questions and considerations facing the discipline. Existing theories and practices are also being connected to strengthen their scope. In “Pedandragogy: A way Forward to Self-engaged Learning,” (2013) Samaroo, Cooper, and Green argued for a “synthesis of the core elements of pedagogy and andragogy” (p. 76). Merging andragogy with external ideas to create concepts such as Ubuntu-gogy, Pedagogy, Andragogy, Ergonagy, and Heutagogy is another way to evolve the range of adult learning theories in order to individualize and localize their application.

But while scholars working in Adult Education continue to advance the work of the field in necessary and important ways, much of the rest of the Academy works to acknowledge the underlying assumptions that the discipline is moving beyond by taking a first look through the concepts of andragogy, as Pratt suggested. Despite the fact that adult learners are present in the publications of numerous disciplines across numerous subjects and topics within the disciplines, the idea that adult learners are a community is only slowly emerging. Exposing the teachers and researchers within the disciplines beyond Adult Education to the research on adult learners in their fields as a connected body of work will allow them to recognize the role of adult learners within their literature and their classrooms.

In the Disciplines

Surveying the research in Adult Education not only exposes the opportunities to advance the scholarship and to facilitate the large numbers of adults entering higher education, it also provides a launching pad to review the literature in the disciplines where adult learners are and are not being noticed. Just as the theories and practices of adult education have moved beyond Adult Education and beyond higher education, they have seeped throughout the Academy and trickled into the disciplines. That leak, however, is a slow drip and is often hidden behind drywall. In Composition Studies, applying andragogical principles and practices often occurs organically as teachers respond to their students, which is why it can remain unknown and unnamed to the teacher and as a result absent from language and literature. There appear to be, however, multiple locations in the literature where applying andragogical

theories and methods occurred intentionally. Much of this scholarship resides in the journals of Education and Adult Education even when it takes on direct material and subjects within a discipline.

The broader literature on adults in higher education includes materials and methods situated on the boundary between Adult Education and other disciplines—located beyond the direct discipline but still in journals that generally focus on education. Scholarship in these margins has addressed topics such as applying andragogical approaches for adult learners with intellectual disabilities (Bowman & Plourde, 2012), situating Marxist-Feminist Theory within theories of adult learning (Carpenter, 2012), and exploring theories and practices of mobile learning that build on and extend andragogy (Brown & Mbatia, 2015). Other literature also exists closer to *in discipline* and outside of Adult Education or Education but still tethered by either a scholar or a journal in an education-related field but not both a scholar and a journal in education.

Research beyond the discipline of education, as defined either by author or publication, includes works on how adult learners feel about math and about themselves in relation to math (Jameson & Fusco, 2014), models for teaching working adults engineering (Lim, Low, Attallah, Cheang, & LaBoone, 2012), utilizing andragogical principles with adult learners in an effort to improve writing proficiency (Wheaton & Hart, 2012), connecting andragogy to peer-reviewed research literature in graduate courses (Japos & Tumapon, 2009), employing andragogical approaches to rubrics in management education (Cohen & Billsberry, 2014), and including andragogical practices in syllabus creation for management courses (Lund Dean & Fornaciari, 2014). Such cases, when the author's discipline and the journal's discipline do not align, do not occur often in the literature of adult learning.

Much of the research on adult learners that exists in the journals of the disciplines is found in the journals focused on education within each discipline. "Andragogy in Community College Communication Courses" (Engleberg, 1984) appears in *Communication Education*, "Interactive Andragogy" (Gitterman, 2004) appears in *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, "Adult Learning Processes: Pedagogy and Andragogy" (Knowles, 1977) appears in *Religious Education*, "Andragogy and

the Aging Adult Learner” (Meyer, 1976) appears in *Educational Gerontology*, “Andragogy and its Implications for Graduate Hospitality Education” (Lefever, 1991) appears in *Hospitality & Tourism Education*, and “The Evolving Nature of Psychoanalytic Supervision: From Pedagogical to Andragogical Perspective” (Watkins, 2015) appears in *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*. Some considerations and conversations on adult learners do appear in the disciplinary journals.

Literature discussing adult learners in journals outside of education *and* by authors within disciplines not related to education can be found on a range of topics in major disciplinary journals. Dahlen (2012) investigated how librarians could use learner-centered approaches from adult education to teach traditional college students information literacy; Attebury (2015) explored concepts of adult education present in library professional development activities; Oprean, Kifor, and Barat (2010) introduced aspects of lifelong learning to manufacturing engineering; Brizer (2004) blended andragogy and student-centered learning with Criminal Justice classroom practices; David and Macgowan (2010) looked at andragogy in relation to evidenced based group work in Social Work; Arndt and La Due (2008) applied andragogical concepts to Physical Geography in an attempt to improve weather and climate literacy; Gilbert, Schiff, and Cunliffe (2013) developed a theoretical framework applicable to face-to-face, online only, and hybrid courses they called “restorative andragogy” in order to blend principles and values of restorative justice with those of adult learning; and Abdullah (2014) discovered that upper-level Accounting students require a blend of pedagogical and andragogical approaches to meet learning outcomes.

Cumulatively, this appears to be significant, but none of the disciplines has produced what could be considered a significant number of publications on adult learners. Regardless, it does represent a wide scope and signify the existence of and an interest in adult learners in each of these many fields. Some fields have taken far more interest in appropriating and applying the theories and methods of adult learning. A considerable amount of research on adult learning theories and practices in the disciplines is found within the medical field—in nursing research, in particular.

An extensive literature review surveyed nursing-related publications that used the term andragogy (Draganov, de Carvalho Andrade, Neves, & Sanna, 2013), the effectiveness of andragogy and experiential learning in nursing were analyzed (Burnard, 1989), and andragogical tenets were assessed for success in long-term oncology nursing continuing education programs (Nielsen, 1989). Adult learning theories and practices are so widespread in nursing that they have drawn backlash. While Darbyshire (1993) asserted that “Knowles’ theory of andragogy has gained increasing acceptance among nurse educators” and “that andragogy has been uncritically accepted within nursing education . . . [he] claimed that true pedagogy has far more radical, powerful and transformative possibilities for nursing education” (p. 86). Despite resistance, adult learning concepts are found throughout the larger canon of medical literature.

Many medical faculty members have presented themselves as open to andragogical techniques in the literature of their discipline. In “First, There was Pedagogy and Then Came Andragogy” Ozuah (2005), Professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Vice Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics, explored andragogy and pedagogy as learning theories in relation to teaching medicine and highlighted the emergence of andragogy as a constituent of educational models. Similarly, in “Literature Review of Residents as Teachers from an Adult Learning Perspective,” Blanchard, Hinchey, and Bennett (2011) connected andragogy to medical education and asserted that andragogical teaching skills be taught to faculty and residents and incorporated into the curricula. The scholarly conversation extends beyond medical faculty to students.

Research in the medical field has trumpeted the successes of andragogy to simplify learning for students (Cheng & Chen, 2013). Medical students also enter the conversation to share their responses to andragogy (Rogers, 2015). Even Pre-med students are considered. In “The Self-directed Osteopathic Medical Student: Bringing Adult Learning into the Osteopathic Manipulative Technique Lab,” Jons-Cox (2014) recognized the importance of transitioning medical students to an andragogical educational format in order to teach techniques of self-directed learning that would be necessary for them to maintain current medical educations as they entered field practice. To achieve this transition, Jons-Cox suggested a model to

introduce andragogical teaching methods into undergraduate medical education as much as possible. But the praise is not in chorus.

Resistance also appears within the medical literature. Misch (2002) asserted that “Andragogy—the study of adult education—has been endorsed by many medical educators throughout North America. There remains, however, considerable controversy as to the validity and utility of adult education principles as espoused by the field’s founder, Malcolm Knowles” (p. 153). Misch’s results found that the andragogical claim that adults are internally motivated is unsubstantiated and that motivations were not that simple and were often unclear, ranging from conscious to unconscious and from internal to external depending on context.

Opposition exists in the literature of Legal Studies, as well. In “Not Quite Grown Up: The Difficulty of Applying an Adult Education Model to Legal Externs,” Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein (1999) provided a brief account of the history of the application of andragogical approaches in Law Schools. After decades of searching for a singular theory or model to distinguish and legitimize experience-based teaching methods, clinical teachers in Law thought they had an answer when Knowles’ andragogy was popularized in the clinical field as a result of Bloch’s groundbreaking 1982 article, “The Andragogical Basis of Clinical Legal Education.” Self-directed learning, facilitated learning, and competency-based education were embraced by teachers of law and legal studies.

In their research, however, Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein found that such methods proved to be frustrating, asserting that “[i]n truth, we experience tensions in treating students as ‘adults’ and, at the same time, making sure they have the quality of externship experience we believe they should” (p. 484). Ultimately they concluded that andragogy does not present a unified theory for clinical legal education and that “[i]n substantial part this is because our students have not always reached the stage of ‘adulthood’ the andragogical method requires, and also because we feel it necessary to teach specific content” (p. 470). With this, Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein illuminate a subtext that reveals a through line in the literature: the question of adulthood.

The U.S. Government warned that the uneducated *adult* would struggle to succeed personally, professionally, and politically. Professors in professional schools countered with the claim that even the educated can fail to be adults if they do not behave in ways that perform adulthood as defined in the field. The main areas of resistance encountered by Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein were students not displaying the behaviors associated with adults as defined in the literature on adult learners, which resulted in teachers feeling the need to be directive: “These tensions arise in large part because a variety of factors inhibit students from being ‘adults’ as learning theorists might define them, and also because, in order to teach content which conforms to our humanistic ideals, some of our processes are necessarily teacher-directed” (p. 482). A closer look at their findings explains what expected adult behaviors were lacking or absent.

In an effort to adhere to the humanistic principles of andragogy, Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein allowed their students, law students working as externs in law offices, to drive their learning by developing their own goals, in effect creating a learning contract where students directed their own learning *in situ*. These approaches were based on the idea of adult learners that Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein encountered in the literature:

In the adult education models, the adult learner not only has a clear idea about what she needs to learn, but is also actively engaged in examining how what she is learning pertains to her needs. In fact, the adult learner may come to the educational setting as a result of self-reflection, which indicates a need or desire for further formal learning. Adult learners see their educational pursuits as opportunities to grow both personally and professionally. (p. 484)

Instead, the researchers found that the students lacked the introspection expected of the adult learners described in most andragogical models.

As a result, Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein were required to take a more directive role and to incorporate external motivations:

Although the ideal adult learner would voluntarily come to us to discuss her externship objectives, participating eagerly in the process, most law students, accustomed to a passive system of learning, do not. Therefore, we structure their entire process of goal formulation, evaluation, and reformulation. Students must meet with us at designated times throughout the semester and articulate their goals each time. Students' timeliness and attitude toward their private meetings with us are part of their grade, thus there are external motivators as well. (p. 485)

The attorneys to whom the extern students reported on site shared similar frustrations.

Just as the medical students lacked the internal motivation described in adult learning models, the law students did not take ownership of responsibilities or make decisions their professors expected of them in order to be given the freedoms that accompany the status of adulthood. Both the medical and legal students function in environments that employ a clinical approach to learning, which may or may not impact their behaviors. The questions that came to light in these environments, however, can help form and inform the questions we ask adult learners throughout the disciplines as we attempt to update and expand our understanding of this population. At the heart of some of the problems encountered by the faculty who engaged andragogical practices is the assumption that adult learners are self-directed.

Questions of self-directedness provide an example of how the assumptions of andragogy can and should be deconstructed and tested in relation to the growing population of adult learners currently entering higher education. Assuming it was ever a fair assumption, is it still the case that adult learners are self-directed, and how does such self-direction manifest? Can self-direction be taught and if so, how? Does the focus on the self-direction that is an assumed product of internal motivation complicate students' relationship with external motivators such as grades, and how do power-laden activities such as grading react and interact with internal motivation? Reviewing the literature on adult learners in Composition Studies will allow for the cultivation of similar questions that can inform faculty and administrators in the discipline of how better to understand and how best to facilitate this community while providing information on questions that exist within Adult Education, such as the practices of

grading adult students. Such research can update and expand the picture of the adult learner(s) within the current Academic setting and within the classrooms of different disciplines, as well as beyond institutes of higher education.

Reviewing the literature on adult learners also reveals the assumption that these practices and theories transfer and translate across arenas. The teaching principles related to adult learners, and the assumptions of these theories and practices, traverse from institutions of education to institutions of industry. Perhaps, as suggested in some of the research on adult learning in professional schools, there is not a seamless transition between these milieu or the identities of individuals who traverse between these spaces. Perhaps the *adult* of the classroom is not the same as the same adult in the ecology of employment, opening the possibility of a potential disconnect between the personae of student and employee and raising the question of personal and professional identities and where the *student* self is situated. If the same person responds differently in the classroom and the workplace, the question of situation complicates learning and suggests that while age and personal life are factors of learning, other factors are likely at play, as well. And perhaps students function differently within the classes of different disciplines. Relating research questions directly to writing and writing classes can provide immediate impacts for the students and the discipline but can also apply to writing as it manifests across disciplines.

Perhaps attempting to cultivate concepts of adult learning that include adults and learning in relation to personal, professional, civic, and societal learning as well as learning within formal institutes of higher education and even within each discipline has painted too broad strokes with too broad brushes. And perhaps these idea(l)s of an ideal learner are dated, and motivations for informal and formal learning may differ resulting in adults who might be self-directed in some environments but not in others. Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein recognized that there existed an “ideal adult learner,” the one described in the history of andragogy and literature of Adult Education, but that most of their students did not fit that description. Multiple definitions, each with multiple elements, have attempted to define this idea(l) of The Adult Learner. As adult learners move into the Academy and faculty work to adjust their ideas and

approaches to these learners, it is possible that each discipline will develop an internal definition of and approach to adult learners in undergraduate classes. The ideas of the average, not the ideal, adult in higher education will be updated and expanded, just as the assumptions of andragogy will continue to be reconsidered and complicated and deconstructed and merged. Such work requires scholars within the disciplines to look at the adult students within their field and learn from them.

Reviewing the literature on adult learners in Adult Education and in the disciplines confirms that substantial work is being done on adult learners across the Academy. Some of the work within the disciplines defines adult learners as adult learners, and some of the work applies different categories of distinction. A wide variety of subjects are explored using a wide range of methods. Closer examination of the work on adult learners grounds the movement of discussions around adult learners into Composition Studies. Identifying works within Composition Studies that are built on and based on adult learners will allow such works to be included with the works in this review, to be counted as a part of the larger work on adult students in higher education, and to contribute to the development of broad responses to this population of students. And by identifying the adult learners in Composition literature and classrooms as adult learners, disciplinary responses to these students can be based in internal research on adult learners in the discipline as well as the extensive body of external literature. Larger research questions can also be situated within Composition Studies in order to determine how to best serve students in composition courses and to determine how andragogical approaches should or should not be appropriated and adjusted to fit the work and the goals of the field. Composition Studies and Writing Studies has long played an important role on the front lines of higher education for all students entering post-secondary institutions and has a history of seeing and serving these populations. Adult learners deserve no less.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODS

I conducted a textual and contextual analysis of the literature of Composition Studies in search of adult learners in order to answer my driving research question regarding the impact of adult learners in the foundational development of Composition Studies, and in doing so, I began the process of constructing a history and cultivating an archive of adult students in the disciplinary literature. The overall body of literature I considered consists of the disciplinary texts ranging from the 1960s to the 1980s, which represents the classical canonical works that developed the modern discipline and that ground the more current work of the current field. Text selection was consciously and carefully rooted in the canonical literature that has achieved preeminence and maintained relevance by searching anthologies in the field. The search included reviewing edited collections and the archives of major journals in the discipline and then supplementing those texts with a general database search for key terms and concepts likely to indicate the presence of adult students.

I performed a distant reading of the potentially pertinent texts in search of characteristics of adult learners and narrowed the selection to texts that overtly or potentially included this population. After identifying and compiling relevant texts, I completed a close reading in search of adult learners and contextualized the literature where adults were implied but not identified by searching records to confirm the presence of intended subjects in the articles. For both the literature where adults are explicitly recognized and for the texts I had to mine to find their presence, I noted patterns and themes in search of narratives that implied meaning and informed discussions. The theoretical underpinnings of this research are hermeneutical; this research was not designed as a narrative analysis and did not intend to determine cause or to make or support claims of thematic content analysis—it was designed to locate a portion of a

population in the literature in order to determine whether, when placed in context, the texts in which they are present and their presence in these texts impacted the development and direction of the discipline.

A secondary outcome was that the location of adult students in pivotal texts serves the historical purpose of initiating the creation of an archive of adult learners in the literature of Composition Studies, but the historical and archival component and its consequences were not intended to be comprehensive or final; on the contrary, this step into the historical task of archiving the adult students in Composition Studies hopes to be introductory in function and outcome. While archiving was not my main intention, I aimed to follow the disciplinary expectations of the method while I searched texts not only for the purposes of scholarly rigor in relation to the project at hand but also with the long-term intention that the search for adult students within Composition Studies and ultimately Writing Studies will be continued in a comprehensive way.

As acknowledged and addressed in the first chapter, the literature of Composition Studies reflects and represents the great work that has been done to identify and acknowledge new populations and their voices and to create responses that facilitate the success and inclusion of these students as they enter the Academy and the classrooms of Composition. Jarratt (1991) and Vitanza (1997) fought to support the continuation of such work by recovering othered voices or hysterics. McKee and Porter (2012) even explored the idea of recognizing the *person-ness* inherent in subjects during historical and archival research. Such explorations involve ethical concerns and professional responsibilities. Writing Studies has recovered many histories and hysterics and has included many marginalized populations, but new old voices and views will always be emerging and requesting resurrection and reconsideration because to identify is to agentify. My research expands and clarifies the history of Writing Studies and seeks to recognize unseen students and acknowledge them as part of a group of underrepresented and underrecognized—and perhaps underserved—students within higher education—and perhaps beyond.

Text Collection and Selection

Although Rhetoric and Composition is relatively new, with the foundations of the modern discipline dating only to the 1960s, the formal study of rhetoric is one of the oldest fields of study, dating to the 5th century B.C.E. (Bedford, “A Brief History of Rhetoric and Composition”). And while a great many historical overviews recount the development of Composition Studies independently and as a part of Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition, a comprehensive understanding of the discipline is still being pieced together. Brereton (1999) recognized a major problem underlying historical research in the discipline: “Rhetoric and composition scholars have been making use of an archive assembled by others, with other purposes in mind” (p. 575). My research recognizes the need for and initiates the work of assembling an archive within Composition Studies to support the development of our own archives in order to construct a more complete history of Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition.

Building archives to categorize and organize the histories of Composition Studies requires locating the materials from which those archives will be built. While the lack of cohesion in relation to the disciplinary history provides numerous opportunities for research, it can also make the location of source material complicated or impossible. During research on an historical element of First Year Composition at Yale, Ritter (2010) found that “there was no archive for the English department or for first-year writing itself. Nearly every other department had a box of archives (or multiple boxes) but not English” (p. 183). The task of compiling and constructing a history provides work for historical and archival researchers in the discipline and allows the field to respond to Brereton’s call to assemble a history and an identity internally and intentionally.

Fortunately, the material of history, the material of archives, is not limited to dusty boxes and dank, departmental basements. The best historical material of Composition Studies is found in the works of the scholars who have published in and on the field. The disciplinary literature serves as a clear if not complete history of the field, which allows for the creation of histories and archives grounded in the literature of the discipline. While the continued search for material remnants and relics will ultimately

complicate and expand the historical work based on the literature, archives are created, as Steedman (2002) suggested, by carefully and consciously selecting historical documentation; so by carefully and consciously selecting and analyzing texts from the foundational literature, my research serves to create a disciplinary archive of canonical material in Composition Studies—specifically the texts in which adult learners are present and more specifically in which the impact of adult learners is felt in the evolution of disciplinary pedagogy.

In *Working in the Archives*, Ramsey, Sharer, L'Eplattenier, and Mastrangelo (2010) recognized that “there are no books or collections of essays that teach rhetoric and composition scholars, both those new to the field and those who are experienced, the basics of archival research or how to use the archive from a rhetorical standpoint,” and they noted that, with only a few potential exceptions, the “[p]ublications that do directly address methods for archival research in rhetoric and composition are few, taking the form of isolated articles in journals or chapters in edited collections that address larger themes” (pp. 1-2). The absence of an expected approach provides freedom, but it also requires the construction of boundaries in relation to the overall research project and in relation to the research design and the text selection, in particular; it also requires a clear articulation of the steps of the process instead of relying on a standard approach or following the structure of a seminal study.

In an effort to bracket research, Ramsey et al. encouraged researchers to think of “archival research as something that varies in scale and scope . . .” because while “the sheer size of many archives can make it seem as though archival research is synonymous with yearlong, if not decades-long research projects, archives can also yield rewarding shorter-length projects. Often, shorter research projects focus on an archive’s specialty and even on specific objects within that archive” (p. 4). I consider the disciplinary literature of Composition Studies the material history that serves as a source of my research. In some ways, that is a boundary in and of itself, but a number of works on the discipline are published in texts that are not in the discipline, which creates a gray area. My goal is to focus on work that can be

clearly argued as situated within Composition Studies—excluding texts on but beyond Composition Studies.

The overall disciplinary literature is not considered an archive, for my purposes. Instead of searching an archive, I aimed to search the historical material in order to create a limited archive of texts related directly to my research. The language can overlap and cause confusion. In a postmodern sense, I am constructing a history of adult learners in Composition Studies instead of simply uncovering an existing History from the literature, and I acknowledge my role as creator more than cultivator or curator. Because the collection of material I aim to create relates to and revolves around a group of people, the adult learners within Composition Studies, I consider this the creation of an archive. So in relation to methods, the location of texts is archival, but in the larger sense, it can be seen as an historical work and a work that constructs a history; however, the larger goal is the reading and analysis of the texts in order to define the impact of adult learners on the literature and the discipline, which remains hermeneutical in nature.

My research began near the beginning of the modern research on and in Composition Studies. I started by limiting the range of acceptable texts to the canonical literature that developed the modern discipline. The early 1960s is generally accepted as the beginning of Composition Studies (Babin & Harrison, p. vii; Bedford, “Beginnings of Modern Composition”). To bookmark the modern disciplinary origin of the 60s, I located the close of the early developmental period with the 1980s. By the end of the 80s, Composition Studies had become an acknowledged and accepted discipline as designated by numerous developmental benchmarks and critical criteria (Bedford, “The 1980s: Social and Historical Approaches to Rhetoric”). By 1987, Chapman and Tate identify no fewer than 53 doctoral programs in rhetoric and composition (McComiskey, 2016, p.4). While Rhetoric and Composition emerged and matured as a field, Rhetoric and Composition remained two individual entities with individual identities within the marriage. Like Composition, Ratcliffe (2010) noted that scholarship on Rhetoric emerged in the 1960s, exploded in the 1970s, and dispersed from the 80s on (Horner & Gaillet, p. 185). The post-

explosion dispersion included the development of many new areas and subjects that now fall under the umbrella of Writing Studies.

In order to focus on the developmental literature of Composition Studies, I focused on works only through the 80s and specifically works of Composition, not works focused in or on Rhetoric. Specifically, I bracketed my working definition of the developmental literature that grounded and constructed the discipline and that currently serves as the disciplinary canon to Composition-related texts ranging from the 1960s to the 1980s. Designating a window of time for this sample was necessary because no defined set of topics can determine the placement of these foundational works. As the subdisciplines developed in the 80s and become more clear and concrete in the 90s and 00s, such segregation of subareas became possible, but from the 60s to the 80s, the field was emerging and developing and the range of topics was more concentrated.

To find sources that can be accepted as canonical, I began with major anthologies and bibliographies in Composition Studies. I also searched for edited volumes that included previously unpublished works. I reviewed the articles in each of the texts I designated as a major anthology in the discipline. These texts comprise the material often offered to graduate students in the discipline, and therefore, these texts construct the narrative graduate students and graduate teaching assistants who have become and will become the scholars and professionals in and of the discipline are exposed to in relation to adult students in Composition Studies. To locate disciplinary anthologies, I started with a general search for Composition anthologies. I searched major graduate programs in the field based on resources from RSA and CCCC to look at their syllabi and collect a list of potential anthologies.

Next I reviewed the *Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing*, *ComPile*, the *NCTE Bibliography*, the *CCCC Bibliography of Composition and Rhetoric* (and its predecessors), and *The Profession: Rhetoric and Composition 1950-1992, A Selected Annotated Bibliography* in search of anthologies in the field. I considered 22 anthologies, and after narrowing based on context and impact, 9 anthologies were included for review (Bizzell Herzberg, 2001; Brereton, 1985; Connors, Ede, Lunsford,

& Corbett, 1984; Graff, Walzer, & Atwill, 2005; Horner, & Gaillet, 2010; Miller, 2000; Murphy, 1982; Ritter & Matsuda, 2012; Villanueva & Arola, 2011). Once I constructed a comprehensive list of anthologies, I located electronic copies when possible and searched for key terms that would indicate the possible presence of adult learners in any of the articles included in the journal. When only print copies were available to me, I read abstracts and searched indexes for key terms while staying open to the larger search for new key terms that might not be in other indexes. When a text in an anthology showed the likely presence of adult learners, the original publication format was located and read. When that text was unavailable, the anthology was used. I also considered the leading scholars in the field (Babin & Harrison, 1999) to make sure their work was considered in the search even if not selected in the sample.

Because some indexes included different key terms, I did not to search only for a limited set of terms. Allowing emergent terms to enter and expand my search list was necessary and purposeful. Determining a stagnant list of terms before my research began was impossible and would limit my search and the research. Ritter (2010) warned those of us interested in the finding or creating the archives of Rhetoric and Composition, specifically those of us in search of othered populations, that “[p]articularly for scholars working with early-twentieth-century or late-nineteenth-century archival materials, remember to consider past parlance for first-year writing. It’s not ‘basic,’ it’s ‘remedial’ (or ‘hospital,’ or ‘dummy,’ or ‘zero’ English, as Andrea Lunsford and Mike Rose have shown in their own historical work)” (p. 184). Terms that live in the past but not the present language of the discipline are not terms with which I would be familiar, and so they would have been omitted from my list and missed in my search. As a result, I allowed terms that emerged during the research to be considered in subsequent searches.

Accepting such openness, while necessary, also required creating boundaries. Archival projects benefit from focus and limitations (Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 4). Limiting the selection size was necessary regardless of the number of search terms, but as anthologies and texts were selected, an additional consideration in the overall number of texts selected was the awareness that search terms would expand and that the number of texts must be honed in order to ensure that the scope of the project did not

snowball. Anthologies were reviewed first and the list of terms expanded through the research. While these anthologized texts created the foundation of my search, I did not want to exclude potential texts that did not make it into an anthology.

To include texts that may have fallen from prominence but might have been included in the reference rotation for prior graduate students who became scholars and instructors in the discipline, I moved beyond the anthologies and collections and used the USF Library search through EBSCOhost to locate outliers that might appear in less well-known journals or that might have been published in journals no longer in print or not directly associated with the discipline. I did not search by journal; I searched across all journals and disciplines. I did, however, limit the selected texts according to their journal of publication and year, focusing on journals in discipline and on articles published no later than the 80s.

Building on the list of terms developed by searching the anthologies, I combined a mixture of search terms that connect the discipline (Composition, Writing, Literacy . . .) with terms likely to indicate the presence of adult learners (adult, adult learner/s, community college, basic writer, developmental . . .). While I allowed the search terms to expand with emergent topics and terms, I did not allow the sources to expand beyond those grounded within publications in the field of Composition Studies; nevertheless, I did search beyond the limited scope of what is currently considered in discipline in order to identify additional search terms and in an effort to strive toward saturation by being be as comprehensive as possible. I also searched directly for special issue publications on adult learners in Composition journals.

I began my efforts to locate Composition journals with the list of major journals considered in discipline by the University of South Florida's English Department handbook:

College Composition and Communication, College English, Composition Studies, Computers and Composition, Computers and Composition Online, Community Literacy Journal, Enculturation, IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory, Journal of Basic Writing, Journal of Business and Technical Communication, Journal of Business Communication, Journal of Literacy and Technology, Kairos, Philosophy and Rhetoric,

PreText, Programatic Perspectives (sic), Quarterly Journal of Speech, Research in the Teaching of English, Rhetoric Review, Rhetorica, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Technical Communication, Technical Communication Quarterly, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, Western States Speech Journal, Writing Center Journal, and Written Communication

Twenty-nine journals are listed in “A Handbook for the Doctoral Degree in English at USF.” To this list, I added the periodicals listed in “The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing”:

ADE Bulletin, The CEA Forum, College Composition and Communication, College English Composition Studies (formerly Freshman English News), Computers and Composition, English for Specific Purposes: An International Journal, English Journal, JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory (formerly Journal of Advanced Composition), Journal of Basic Writing, Journal of Business and Technical Communication, Journal of Second Language Writing, Journal of Teaching Writing, Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, Philosophy and Rhetoric, PRE/TEXT, Quarterly Journal of Speech, Radical Teacher, Research in the Teaching of English, Rhetoric Review, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Rhetorica, TESOL Quarterly, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, Technical Communication Quarterly, The Writing Center Journal, International Writing Centers Association, The Writing Instructor, Writing Lab Newsletter, Writing on the Edge, Written Communication, and WPA: Writing Program Administration

Thirty-one journals appeared on the Bedford list, for a total of 42 journals. Of those, 17 journals overlapped both sources. To this list, I added the Council of Writing Program Administrator list of “Journals in Rhetoric and Composition”:

The ACE Journal, Across the Disciplines, Assessing Writing, Basic Writing e- journal, CCC Online, College English, Community Literacy Journal, Composition Forum Composition Studies, Computers and Composition: An International Journal, Computers and Composition Online, Currents in Electronic Literacy, Enculturation, //English Matters, Harlot:

A Revealing Look at the Arts of Persuasion, Inventio: "creative thinking about learning and teaching", J.A.C.: A Journal of Composition Theory (Formerly Journal of Advanced Composition), Journal of Basic Writing, Journal of Second Language Writing, Journal of Teaching Writing, Kairos, KB Journal: The journal of the Kenneth Burke Society, Literacy in Composition Studies, Philosophy and Rhetoric, Present Tense: A Journal of Rhetoric in Society, PreText, PreText: Electra (Lite), Programmatic Perspectives, Readerly/Writerly Texts, Reflections, RhetNet, Rhetoric Review, Rhetorica, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, Technical Communication Quarterly, Technoculture, Writing Center Journal, Writing on the Edge, The Writing Instructor, Writing Lab Newsletter, WPA: Writing Program Administration, and Written Communication

The WPA list included 43 journals for a total of 60 journals listed across the sources. Of these, 14 journals overlapped all 3 sources, and 15 others overlap 2 sources. Of the 14 journals that overlapped 3 sources, 9 journals fit easily into a subdiscipline:

Composition: *CCC, Composition Studies, Computers and Composition, JAC*

Rhetoric: *Philosophy and Rhetoric, Rhetoric Review, RSQ, Rhetorica*

Technical Communication: *Technical Communication Quarterly*

The others are general journals within the discipline, so I included them in the search: *College English, Journal of Basic Writing, Pre/Text, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, and Written Communication*

When an article found in one of the five journals I am labeling **General** journals within Writing Studies included adult learners *and* fit clearly within Composition, the article was included. To confirm and hone this list, I located the major journals by reviewing their ranking (SJR) to ensure that each was credible within the Academy, not just the discipline. The final list of journals I searched for adult learners within Composition Studies was:

Composition: *CCC, Composition Studies, Computers and Composition, JAC*

General: *College English, Journal of Basic Writing, Pre/Text, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, Written Communication*

Using the websites of each major journal, I searched articles from 1960 to 1990 for key terms and concepts that would reveal the articles associated with adult learners. As noted, the list of key terms was not restricted and continued to grow as new terms emerged and impacted the search. Some of the terms gathered over the course of the search became part of the findings by expanding the ways in which adults were recognized and categorized within the discipline and the literature. Subsequent research across disciplines could locate the absence or presence of those categorizations within other fields to see if adult learners are defined similarly across the Academy and across history.

After compiling anthologies and searching for articles, I applied a distant reading by conducting a thick skim of each article to see if adult learners were present in the sample of students researched or discussed in each article. The presence of key terms, such as adult and age, did not guarantee the presence of adults or adult learners. Many of the texts located as a result of key term searches discussed the development of students in primary and secondary schools, for instance. A skim of such articles easily revealed that they were not relevant to my research despite the appearance of key terms.

When adult learners were identified, or when they were not explicitly identified but were indicated and implied by the presence of likely identifiers, a close reading was performed. First, in the texts where adults were likely but not confirmed, their presence was confirmed, most often through contextual analysis. For example, if a text included research on students in a community college course but did not list the ages of the students, I referenced external sources to confirm the average age of students at that community college at the time of the research.

The example of community college students helps clarify the need to limit the texts to canonical works in Composition Studies and confirms the breadth of the impact of adult learners on the field and in the literature. Entire journals in Writing Studies dedicate their research to community college students, and many of the community colleges I researched have an average student age of over 25 and described

their population as possessing many of the characteristics associated with adult learners (working, marriage, children . . .). To consider all the texts within the foundational period of Composition Studies (let alone the entire history of the discipline) that include adult learners was not possible for me—and might not be possible, at all, honestly—but that is no reason to ignore the population; however, it is a reason to consider the scope of the search and limit the size of the selection for this project.

Once texts were narrowed based on the presence of adult learners, the impact of the adult learners on the text and of the text on the discipline was considered. While the text selection included narrowing texts based on disciplinary impact, the assertion was reinforced by connecting the included texts and authors to major schools and movements that had major influence on the field. Earlier texts often required more contextual analysis and outside evidence to identify the students as adults and more direct associations connecting the practices to andragogy to reinforce the claim that the adults impacted the outcomes. In the later texts, generally those in the 80s, although they are not necessarily defined as adult learners or connected to andragogical principles, the presence of adult learners was more overt. Ultimately texts were narrowed for inclusion based on the role they play in the history—in the creation of a narrative that tells the story of how adult learners played pivotal roles in essential texts that ground pedagogical turns central to the development of Composition Studies. The goal of this research is to read deeply into those identified primary texts and connect their findings to the development of the field. Because the goal is not to move the discussion into the details of the number of times words are used or the number of times adults are located in the literature, the methodological focus is hermeneutical instead of quantitative.

Analysis and Interpretation

North (1987) argued that every developing field requires the making and remaking of a “pedagogical history”—the recovery and preservation of past teaching practices (p. 66). For North, the ground of historical knowledge is narrative, and it requires the researcher to engage the introduction of new texts and/or establish new or alternative connections between texts and events (p. 69). By locating

and cultivating the adult learners in the literature of Composition Studies and demonstrating their impact on the development of the field through the pedagogical practices that result from and reflect those texts, my research will recognize the role this community played in the development of the discipline and contribute to the pedagogical history of the discipline by expanding it to include an andragogical history. The narrative of adult learners and their impact on Composition Studies is made clear by narrowing the many texts where adults exist to the pivotal texts where their existence directly impacts the disciplinary pedagogy.

Once an article was identified as possessing a key term or terms likely to indicate the presence of adult learners, it was investigated to analyze the population included in order to confirm the presence of adult learners. After narrowing the possible articles to those that could be supported as including adult learners, I performed a close reading on the final collection to confirm the presence of the adult learners and to establish what was being said about these students as subjects. While the location of texts applied methods relating to the archiving of material in Composition, the analysis of the texts, once located, applied a hermeneutical approach tailored to research in Composition. In “Toward a Hermeneutic Model of Composition History,” Strain (1993) argued that although “no narrative of our discipline is without its limitations, a hermeneutic model of composition history makes a space for classical, naturalistic, and cultural influences by demonstrating how they function concurrently through a text” (p. 234). Making space for the external influences that reveal the presence of adult learners and construct their impact was necessary to avoid traditional readings of traditional texts that simply reinforced the staid disciplinary narratives.

Some texts identified the population of students as adult learners, even if they used a variation on the term adult learner. Often, however, the population was identified as possessing some characteristics of adult learners, but the population was not overtly or primarily categorized as a group of adult learners. As a result, finding the adult learners often required contextualizing the sample. Strain’s model, in particular, fits well with the search for a marginalized population. “The multivocality of a hermeneutic model of

composition history, then, prods us to ask questions, to engage the ambiguities, and to listen to the marginalized and silenced texts,” suggests Strain; and by “doing so, we find not only a way to explore the contextual richness of composition studies but also a means to participate in a dialectic that is history in the making” (p. 234). To hear the adult learners within these texts required not only asking questions but seeking answers.

If, for instance, an article was written and certain characteristics and key terms indicated the likelihood that adult learners would be present and the date and location of the course under consideration were included, if I could locate the population demographics of that institution at that time, I could assume that the makeup of the course was likely to reflect the demographics of the institution, absent any reason not to assume as much. Inherent in this assumption is an acceptable limitation of this research. Absent a clearly defined sample of students in literature that indicates the likely presence of adult learners, strong contextual evidence was accepted in support of arguments regarding the likely population.

In addition to the search for marginalized voices in texts, a hermeneutic approach allowed for contextualization as interpretation:

A hermeneutic analysis ultimately endorses an alternative way of reading. That is, instead of reading a work for those details which would allow for easy conformation into one of the accepted paradigms, the historian recognizes the agency of the text, allowing it to suggest influences which have shaped it (*Philosophical Hermeneutics* 57). In this way, the historian works speculatively rather than descriptively, participating in a dialectical interplay that permits the text to give evidence to others which have been omitted, left traces, or presented contradictions to the one in question. (Strain, 1993, p. 220)

Often even when it was the case that adult students were identified as adult learners in the information provided to describe the sample of subjects studied in the text, they were not identified as adult learners in the outcomes or implications.

For instance, if an article studied a group of women and analyzed their correspondence, the sample explanation might reveal that the women were adults or that they possessed the characteristics or experiences that would designate them as adult learners, but the categorization of these subjects as part of a larger group, as adult learners, was never considered as part of the research. As a result, despite the fact that the characteristics that defined a sample as including members, all or some, who are part of the larger population of adult learners were listed as part of the text, the work was not included in the larger work on adult learners or in the disciplinary work as a work on adult learners. A major purpose of the close reading, then, was to confirm the existence of adult learners and to acknowledge their presence in a way that had a significant impact on the findings of the text. The fact that the researcher listed the characteristics, experiences, details, or key terms associated with the adult learners implies that these characteristics impacted the findings simply because they were deemed worthy of recognition. That said, when I determined that the number of adult learners was not statistically significant to make them more than outliers or that there were other characteristics impacting the findings in a way that narrowed or superseded the impact of being an adult learner, I included the findings but noted that the impact of other factors, such as being English Language Learners or being visually impaired, did not mean that the fact that the subjects are adult learners should be ignored but that it did require consideration of the influence of other factors.

While an initial reading of the literature focused mainly on confirming the presence of adult learners and recognizing subjects as adult learners, the close reading and analysis established how these students and subjects impacted the outcome of the texts. Once a text proved to possess a significant population of adults and demonstrated that those adults impacted the outcome, the article was contextualized within Composition Studies in order to establish the influence of the work on the field. The organizing question focuses solely on whether the adult learners located within the canonical texts impact the direction of the discipline—specifically is there a demonstrable impact on the pedagogical

turns of Composition Studies? Other considerations arise in the course of this research, such as the question of why adults are often not identified as adults or concerns regarding how they are described.

Ultimately the texts in which adults were found to have impacted an outcome that impacted the discipline were synthesized into a history that argues for the importance of adult learners in the canonical literature of Composition Studies. Strain reminded us that instead of “viewing historical events as links in a chain, a hermeneutic model regards an event as a locus through which other events are continuously woven,” which allows the connections across texts to communicate and relate (p. 220). Having demonstrated how texts were selected and analyzed, we zoom in to see how the adults being located were identified.

Evaluation

An initial step in locating and identifying adult students in the literature of Composition Studies was to decide who would be considered an adult learner and why. Given the substantial literature on adult learners, it should have been easy to find a suitable, functional definition, but it was not. Defining adult learners required defining adult within the context of learning, defining learning within the context of adult learners, and defining adult learners within the context of the Academy and beyond.

Easy and early models defined adult learners by focusing on defining *adult*, and they defined adult based on age (Kirk 1968); to some degree, such notions persist. Age-based, biological approaches to defining adults in education generally accept that students over the age of 25 are “adult learners” (Bowden & Meritt, 1995; Faust & Courtenay, 2002; Merriam & Cafferella, 1999; Springer-Littles & Anderson, 1999; Truluck & Courtenay, 1999). Some early scholars of and in Adult Education defined adult based on age in conjunction with responsibility (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965) or on physical development (Houle, 1972). Others included less concrete factors such as personal acknowledgment of responsibility (Hiemstra, 1976; Knowles, 1980; Verner, 1964) and social roles (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Verner, 1964). More encompassing understandings recognized the biological, social, and psychological awarenesses and assumptions of responsibilities (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).

Researchers and theorists realized and recognized that the lack of consensus on the definition of adult impacted the interpretation and communication of data as evidenced through sample differences and varied population estimations (Long, Hiemstra, & Associates, 1980). That said, even the clear-cut, age-only approach to defining adult learners based on their adulthood (as opposed to their status as *learners* or both) was not without uncertainty.

The legal age of majority in the United States is 18 years old, begging the question of why students do not become adults until 7 years after the rest of the general population. And while age designates the freedom to engage in sexual and marital relationships, different ages are designated in different states. American courts of law, on the other hand, consider factors such as moral comprehension and cognitive competence to determine whether an accused individual possesses the proficiencies required to be considered an adult instead of a juvenile. Factors beyond age, therefore, can be and often are considered in the concept of who is an adult.

Although some ritual passages are driven by age alone (e.g., Bar Mitzvah or Quinceanera), age does not necessarily indicate ability. Further, concepts that consider development can take into account multiple elements. The courtroom considerations display an acceptance of notions that cognitive development is demonstrated by both innate capabilities and acquired skills and therefore requires a pairing of the two (physical development and educational access); alternate explanations of adulthood only require either a passive passage (e.g., initial menstruation) or an active process (e.g., experience, accomplishment, initiation). Being an adult, like gender and race, can be seen as performative, as a construct, instead of natural or biological or concrete. Contemporary, American progression into adulthood has even been linked directly to the completion of formal education.

Young (2011), an Educational Psychologist, noted that for most individuals, the passage to adulthood involves “moving from school to work, establishment of long-term relationships, possibly parenting, and a number of other psychosocial transformations” (p. 1). Societal status, however, does not necessarily translate into personal perceptions; although Young and his colleagues recognize that culture

sees education as a benchmark for adulthood, individuals making that transition do not necessarily accept it as a pivotal shift: “Finishing school and beginning full-time work are not associated with feeling like an adult” (p. 4). In fact, marriage and parenting are proven to be the major factors that cause individuals to perceive themselves as adults (p. 4). And so the concept becomes further sophisticated by notions of internal and external definitions of what and why and how and when one is an adult.

The variety of approaches to defining adulthood in general and in direct relation to education reveals it as a cultural and constructed concept. Adulthood, as such, can be available to all or possessed by few depending on the requirements and expectations for entrance and maintenance of status. In light of these understandings of adulthood and how they impact attempts to define adults within the context of adult learners, it is important to acknowledge that if being an adult requires the possession of special knowledge, those without access to that knowledge can never be accepted as adults—implications of which are discussed in my conclusion.

Attempts to understand adult learners must encompass not only the adult portion of the concept, but also the learning of these learners. Just as the determinations of adulthood expand far beyond considerations of age, defining *learners* must encompass and exclude ideas around what these adults are learning, have learned, and are able to learn. Where they learn can also be an expression of what adults learn. Although traditional academic models of andragogy assume that the learning of adult learners occurs in formal settings of traditional education, to suggest as much not only narrows the understanding of learning and limits the scope of influence of adult learning models, it fails to maintain the ability of the definition to sustain boundaries within contemporary incarnations of education. As a result, ideas around the seat of learning have and are expanding.

Institutions that award Bachelor’s degrees and offer graduate and professional degree programs range from public to private and from nonprofit to for-profit and from classroom based to online, and their reputations range from Ivy League to unaccredited. Within these colleges and universities, disciplines vary from performance arts to social sciences to vocational training. Associate’s degrees and

professional certifications are also available at an assortment of designated community colleges, career colleges, and vocational and technical schools. Skills trainings and continuing education are commonplace within private industry and public service.

Recognizing the range of learning and learning environments encountered and engaged by adult learners impacts theory, but it is important to the direct practice of this historical research, as well. Numerous publications in Composition locate writing and learning beyond the classroom. Articles in Professional and Technical Writing often expand the realm of writing beyond the classroom and the Academy. Many of the articles encountered and included in my research focus on adult students enrolled in post-secondary, public or private, not-for-profit institutions of higher education. Community colleges abound and vocational institutions are found the literature. For-profit schools were not excluded from the search, but they were generally absent in the literature surveyed. Some literature also includes concepts of transfer that purposefully move the learning of adults into the personal and professional realms.

Wide opportunities for education result in broad understandings of learning, which offer more complications than clarifications. In conjunction with an absence of a clear definition of adulthood in contemporary America, merging the two and situating them within the context of Composition Studies requires creating a working definition based on but not limited to the definitions of adult learners in the broad literature on the topic. Recognizing that definitions of who is an adult learner impact how this population is identified and regarded and funded and treated and taught, the ongoing scholarship made possible from this historical account of adult students in Composition Studies can consider the value of and need for more concrete and current definitions of this population. For now, however, creating a working definition for the purposes of this research begins with the existing definitions of *adult learners* in the literature.

While there is a general a lack of clarity around definitions of adult learners inside and outside of education, generalizations regarding adult learners have been necessary to frame the existing conversations and narrow the potential situations. Kasworm (2003) addressed the questions directly:

Who is an adult learner in higher education? Most would answer that all college students are adults, believing that the age of eighteen and above indicates adulthood. However, within higher education, historical patterns of adult student participation have been distinctive; beliefs about adult learner needs for specialized policies, services, and learning delivery structures have been unique; and relationships between the traditional youth environments and the needed access, flexibility, and support for adult learners have been problematic. (p. 3)

The default of Kasworm's work and definition is to assume "in higher education" as the location of adult learners, demonstrating that assumptions around definitions of adult and of learner cannot be divorced from definitions of adult learner. Also noteworthy is the distinction between what "most," implying those outside of higher education, consider the distinct characteristics that define adult learners, as opposed to the definitions of those within higher education. Again, however, Kasworm also noted that even within higher education, "unique" definitions of adult learners exist and policies and services vary, which is considered "problematic." Kasworm's claim of a lack of clarity is not singular or unique.

While Hensley and Kinser (2001) echoed Kasworm's assertion of uncertainty surrounding the definition of adult learners, they also contribute to the continued uncertainty by attempting to offer narrowing specifics that differ from other attempts at narrowing and specifying the definition:

Although the term adult learner has been defined in a variety of ways, most researchers include in this diverse group any student who has *experienced* [emphasis added] at least one of the following: being a parent, working, attending college part-time, being a high school dropout, or delaying college enrollment for at least 1 year. (p. 88)

The main element of expansion Hensley and Kinser offer is that their understanding of adult learners ties the designation of *experience* to the definition and provides a comprehensive list that creates a number of experiences that *could be* included in the designation. Noting that "at least one" but not all of the experiences defines a student as an adult learner not only expands the group of students who can be included, it allows the definition of adult learner to include numerous, varied experiences that link this

population as opposed to one singular experience or characteristic found across the whole population.

Adding this variety is imperative for inclusion but also explains the inherent difficulty in creating a clear but comprehensive definition—a difficulty that impacts the search for this population within the literature and history of Composition Studies and the Academy.

If factors ranging from having a job to attending part time to taking time away from education were used to define students as adult learners, how much would the numbers of traditional students change? And (how) would this impact the approach of teachers if they were asked to take into consideration the context of outside factors and allow those conditions to influence classroom and curricular considerations and consequences? Not only does such expansion move definitions of adulthood away from age toward experience, it expands greatly the students who fit in this category. The variety of definitions of adult learner might also explain the wide range of statistics and projections for the percentage of adult students in higher education now and how that ratio will change over time.

Other definitions construct adult learners based mainly on their situations beyond the classrooms. Lamdin (1997) clarified the definition of adult learner by adding more perimeters and arguing that an adult learner is a student “who is older than the traditional college student (25+); one who is living away from parents and/or is self-supporting; one whose primary role is other than learner (such as worker, parent, spouse, or retiree)” (p. 219). The classification of adult as learner, then, requires *student* not to be the primary identity of the learner. Kilgore and Rice (2003) concurred when they summarized adult students as students who are 25 or older *and* “have taken on what we consider adult roles and responsibilities, such as caring for children and other family members, working full-time, or participating heavily in community activities” (“Meeting the Special Needs of Adult Students,” back cover). Lamdin, like Kilgore and Rice, constructs adult learners as a group of college students who live different lives and have different life stories than those of traditionally aged college students.

Ultimately, even the literature directly related to adult learners does not provide a clear definition. Richey’s (2004) survey of the literature on adult learning includes the claim that “the term ‘adult

learner' is too comprehensive. . . . Some view adult learners in terms of age groupings with characteristic physical changes, others in terms of a person's social and psychological history, and others in terms of typical life events" (p. 10). To conduct the research at hand, however, Richey had to create a working definition and decided to define adult learners as "people over the age of eighteen in an instructional situation, whether formal or informal" (p. 10). The through line in all these attempted definition, as Richey states, is that "life changes have implications for adult learning in terms of learning style, the motivation to learn, and the capacity to learn" (p. 10). Adult learners, as a population, are not homogenous, but they do share distinguishing characteristics that hold them together in a way that creates a community that can be studied and supported.

The arena of education is not limited to higher education, and ideas around adult learners stem not only from the higher education portion of education. As Kasworm recognized, notions of what and who are adult learners exist inside and outside of the Academy. Public ideas of adult learners are more likely to be constructed by public notions and definitions. The American Council on Education defines adult learners as "over the age of 25" and notes that "for almost two decades, adult learners have comprised close to 40 percent of the college-going population, spanning a range of backgrounds and experiences, from Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans and GED[®] credential holders to 55-year-old professionals and skilled workers in career transition" (Higher Education Topics, para. 1). Yet again, a definition of adult learners assumes that they are located in colleges and includes experience as part of the process of inclusion in the group while allowing for a subset of a larger list of experiences to define a member of this population. But different definitions beyond the Academy define adult learners differently.

The Florida Department of Education defined adult learners by default when defining the audience for adult education and stating that adult education programs "are available to individuals that: Are 16 years or older; Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school; Do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent; Want to learn to speak, read, and write the English language" ("Adult

Education”). The state of Florida, then, paints a very different picture of adult learners than the picture painted by the American Council of Education and the scholarly literature and bases that definition within the larger connotation of what it considers adult education.

The wide variety of definitions offered even in the literature directly relating to adult learners demonstrates a progression of the ideas around this population that reflects a possible progression of the population. That said, even if research reflects the reality, the absence of a set definition for this population allows the literature to construct pictures that define the population for the readers, and as a result, for the discipline. The absence of a clear definition of adult, learner, or adult learner makes it easier to understand why researchers could be left to define the population by alternative identities such as worker, parent, or spouse and perhaps why the unidentified adults who made it into the research as members of another category, such as basic writer, are not recognized as adult learners. Subsequently, the lack of clearly defined boundaries around the demographic of adult learners makes it difficult to pin down concrete statistics on the group, a reality demonstrated in the wide variety of statistics, which can also impact funding and support services. Narrowing and honing the factors for inclusion in this population, however, can limit inclusion as access, as well.

Exact definitions elude, but exact definitions also exclude, so for my purposes, I will allow adult students in the literature to be defined in the broadest sense. I am looking for students as subjects who fit any or all of these definitions in order to compile a comprehensive sample from which to cull a conscious history. Subsequent work can recategorize and subcategorize excerpts from the broad population I include.

Limitations, Assumptions, and Expectations

Given the mass of literature in Writing Studies, the major limitation of my research design was simply that not all corners could be cleaned in search of the unidentified adult students. While a limitation, in ways, it is also a call to action and recognition. My current work does not aim to or claim to or need to find every adult student who passed through the classrooms or the literature of the discipline or

the Academy. By creating a piece of history, a piece of a history is created; it is not completed and must be continued and expanded and cultivated and curated and updated. Archiving the works that include adult learners will always be an ongoing process. So by recognizing this population as a population and as a population that has a history, future readers of the literature of Composition and Writing Studies will know to check the corners and consider the samples for the presence of adults as learners; simply bringing their existence to life will allow other readers to locate them in the future, and by being recognized by readers, adult students will move into the consciousness of scholars and teachers of Writing Studies, and eventually they will move onto the pages of Writing Studies scholarship in a conscious and careful fashion.

An intentional limitation, as acknowledged, is that I did not make claims or clarify narratives; instead I aimed to limit that work as a subtext of the main goal, which was to determine whether adults in the canonical literature of Composition Studies impacted the discipline. Future work could build on the identification of emergent themes to narrow the terms and concepts and establish major tropes that appear in the literature, but that is not the goal of the work at hand. Subsequent research can also move into the current classrooms of Composition and study the instructors and students in order to expand and clarify the current situation of adult learners and in order to understand how the literature is impacting adult students of Composition and the instructors who facilitate their learning. Tremendous potential surrounds this topic and general work within the population of adult learners. Such work, however, should be built on an historical understanding of the population and of the place of adult learners in the literature in and beyond the discipline.

An underlying assumption of my work is that adult learners constitute a connected population. Literature in Adult Education has deconstructed such an assumption as an assumption (Pratt, 1993) arguing instead that adult learners possess individual learning styles. Merriam (2004) divided the history of adult learning into three periods along these lines:

Early research on adult learning focused on answering the question of whether adults could learn. By midcentury, adult educators became concerned with the question of how adult learning could be differentiated from the way in which children learn. Finally, since the mid-1980s, adult learning theory has expanded to incorporate several new approaches from disciplines outside the field of adult education. (p. 200)

The second period produced the andragogical principles and practices that the third period is deconstructing and expanding. The deconstruction of andragogy complicates the simplistic idea that all adult learners fit within any one category, but it does not dismiss the idea of this population as a population. In fact, Merriam noted that “[t]he more we know about the identity of the learner, the context of this learning, and the learning process itself, the better able we are to design effective learning experiences” (p. 199). Because my research advances the goal of learning more about the identity of individual adult learners, specifically the identities of individual adult learners in the history and literature of Composition Studies, it supports the deconstruction instead of perpetuation the assumptions of andragogy.

Other critiques of andragogy focus on accusations that andragogy constructs education as apolitical and neutral, supports the status quo, and “promotes a generic adult learner as universal with White middle-class values” (Saladin, 2005, p. 27). In an effort to avoid overlooking these valid critiques, I worked to consider elements beyond age and constructed these students as individuals instead of archetypes that sustain stereotypes. Furthermore, I did not claim to advocate particular practices or principles of andragogy or any adult learning theory; I only aimed to locate the adult students who impact the pivotal, foundational literature of Composition Studies. Nonetheless, I recognize that work related to adult learners cannot exist outside of the context of the work on adult learning.

Research beyond Adult Education also recognizes that learning styles are different (Gardner, 1983), which would suggest that each adult learner has his or her own style of learning. Even though each adult learner will have individual elements that impact her learning, adults as a group can still share

traits—even in relation to the individualization of learning styles. Truluck and Courtenay (1999) observed that the adage claiming that different people approach learning different ways is especially true for older learners who, because of their range of experiences and age, are more likely to have multiple perspectives on learning. Despite the presence of differences, then, even similar differences can be found.

Additional research related to adult learners exists beyond adult education in numerous articles and books on generational learning theories and styles (Buskirk-Cohen, Duncan, & Levicoff, 2016), inter-generational learning (Bratianu, 2010; Bratianu, Agapie, Orzea, & Agoston, 2011; Teece, 2009), emerging adulthood and its impact on basic thinking structures and the brain (Kuhn, 2006; Steinberg, 2007), and a number of other tertiary topics and conversations that in ways overlap with the work in Adult Education but stem from theories and practices (management theories, for instance) that exist slightly beyond the scope of my topic. As such, I did not include these topics or materials in my study, which I acknowledge as another intentional limitation of the work.

Finally, while this work is not ethnographic or intentionally autoethnographic, I acknowledge that I impact the findings and that my research is informed by my role as researcher. In fact, a main reason I elected to draw upon a hermeneutical model, and Strain's model in particular, is the allowance for the voice of the researcher, which expects that the hermeneutical researcher in Composition:

situates a focal text within larger social and cultural networks with a self-conscious awareness of her own prejudgments with regard to the historical context she constructs. Rather than being regarded as a limitation, the historian's interpretive presence within a text may be seen as a positive value, inviting multiple readings and encouraging us to view the past as, according to David E. Linge, “an inexhaustible source of possibilities of meaning” (*Philosophical Hermeneutics* xix). (Strain, 1993, p. 220)

Part of situating self is acknowledging personal connections and motivations without attaching negative intentions.

I returned to college as an undergraduate at 29 years of age while working a fulltime job. I attended a community college, a state university, and a private college—a small liberal arts college with a program designated for adult students. My place at each was very different. During my graduate work, I taught at both the state university and the private college I attended. Having experience both as an undergraduate and a graduate student in situations where I defined myself as an adult learner and having taught in these very different environments in a way that exposed me to the differences of these audiences, I became keenly aware of and interested in adult(s) learners.

My firsthand, classroom experience working with adults exposed me to the ways in which their lives impacted their learning, and by extension, my teaching. Texts I did not think twice about using with traditional students, I found myself deciding against using with adults. I also found that adults brought different lenses to the texts. In a discussion on reading popular culture as text, when asked for his input on a current musical composition, one adult student responded that what he thought of songs depended on whether or not his kids were in the car. The idea of the role of parent as a perspective, as a critical lens, had never occurred to me. And since most of my adult students are parents, the perspective of parent and references to children often serve as shared sources of experience.

The role of shared references was not absent from discussions with traditional students, either. In a discussion of hair politics, I tried to answer a question by describing a finger wave. At a loss for an example to use as a reference, I turned to a google image search. While searching, a student who understood the reference explained to the rest of the class that the style I was describing had been highlighted in one of the *Barbershop* movies, an allusion foreign to me but understood by nearly all the students. My attempt to reference the television show *L.A. Law* had not been nearly as successful (although I suspect that adult students would have understood it). Similarly, I remember clearly the first time I referenced 9/11 under the assumption that it was a shared experience, and my audience of traditional freshmen stared blankly back at me. Immediately I understood why my uncle looked somewhat annoyed when he would recount stories from his days on the USS Vincennes and I offered him

only the same blank stare that for me referenced a disconnect and for him read as a dismissal. Despite all that can be learned from books, experience matters. Identifying allusions and supplementing the text are impacted by exposure and experience. And just as experience impacts learning, so do peers.

Mixing the age groups also highlights differences. On more than one occasion, I had one very young student in a class of adult learners; it was interesting to see how parental the older students acted in response to the young student—perhaps because many were parents to children the same age as their young classmate. In general, the younger student felt special and helped and was helped by the adult students. In fact, research does support the increased successfulness of multigenerational classrooms (Sánchez & Kaplan, 2014) and the effectiveness of reverse mentoring in the multigenerational workforce (Kulesza & Smith, 2013). Overall, however, the adult learners I have worked with have voiced their appreciation of adult peers. When exposed to new stories through literature or film, the adult students often reference other stories, usually older films or television shows, and just like the finger wave, the other adult learners generally understood the shared reference.

I have watched students of all ages draw upon and share personal experiences to make sense of their learning. I have seen 18-year-old freshman share stories of divorce or abuse in ways that only their peers could understand; they grew up with the same movies and music and television and politicians and world events, and they use these experiences as touchstones to make associations that allow them to connect to the material and to each other. The lives traditional students have lived are not the same, but they took place over the same decades and they shared many of the same cultural and historical experiences. The lives of adult learners are not all the same, either, but they overlap in important ways that impact their classroom experience, as peers always do.

I have heard war veterans add to our understanding of a geographic region of the world, even sharing personal pictures. When reading “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” I learned from a student who recounted her march with Dr. King for the class. I have taught students not to hit enter at the end of a line in Word, like they always had on a typewriter, and I have had a Director of IT for a Fortune 500 company

give a class presentation he would have been paid generously to give in an industry training. I have watched students suffer from disease, drop out of class, and die. I have had terminally ill students whose final goal was to finish college, even if their children would be picking up the diploma. I have had many students lose a parent or a job during the term. I have had many students give birth during the term and gleefully share stories and pictures with the class, a very different response than the traditional freshman who came to me about her pregnancy.

In all, I have come to believe that adult learners encounter a variety of variables that are different than the factors that impact traditional students and that just as traditional students are impacted by their lives beyond the classroom and the cultures of their campuses, the lives of adult learners impact their learning. I have watched my life impact my teaching, and I have shifted in many ways as I age and gather experience. Ultimately, I believe that faculty can impact students and that pedagogies and theories can and should consider the lives of adult learners in attempts to facilitate their learning—these beliefs impact and influence my research.

As I narrowed my research to adult learners within the literature of Composition Studies, I anticipated that I would find a significant number of articles that directly related to adult learners as students or subjects and a significant collection of articles that included adult learners in a substantial way but did not define them as adult learners explicitly. While I suspected that the latter would be larger, I assumed that since articles that did not explicitly identify adults as a population would be harder to locate, I would locate fewer. I expected that adult learners would often be constructed in a negative light in the early literature and less so in the more current literature, and I expected that adults would be more clearly and overtly identified as adult learners in the more recent literature. I expected that what could be read as dismissive or disparaging language did not intend to be such and instead was likely the result of earnest attempts to study and facilitate the research subjects. I anticipated finding direct links between adult students and the disciplinary pedagogy that resulted as a response to this population.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

Adult students play a major role in the development of Composition Studies. Within each major pedagogical movement and across each decade in the development of Composition Studies, adult learners fill classrooms and fuel literature that identifies and responds to the needs of students. Examining and contextualizing major names and movements in the history of Composition Studies demonstrates that the material evidence upon which the foundation of the discipline is built records the impact of adult learners and reveals a history of adult students that constructs the narrative of the role they played in the development of Composition Studies, Writing Studies, and ultimately, the Academy.

In the mid-twentieth century, American teachers and researchers of Composition encounter an expanding and increasingly diverse population of students in their classrooms. As it became clear that the standard practices and pedagogies were proving less effective with this shifting population of students, Composition Studies began to respond to the needs of the students by moving beyond the Current-Traditional approaches. The literature of the 60s shares the struggles and successes of classroom stories and provides the foundation for the development that feeds the scholars and schools of the 70s and 80s.

The teacher research of the 60s evolves into Expressivist approaches, and incoming methods and theories fuel Cognitive and Developmental models, both of which comprise Process approaches that attempt to address the struggles of students throughout the 70s and 80s and prepare the way for the Social Constructivism and Critical Pedagogy that fill and feed the field in the 80s and 90s. Each of these expanding pedagogical approaches complicates and sophisticates understandings of composition and Composition Studies in an evolution that expands the field and encourages instructors to move beyond the rigid skill and drill approach that defines writing as an external product instead of an internal process.

Contextualizing and analyzing the pivotal literature of Composition Studies, the canonical literature from the 60s-80s that grounds and defines the field, reveals that the struggling students to whom teachers and researchers are responding are often adult students—a finding that confirms that adult learners play an essential role in the development of Composition Studies. Considering the disciplinary responses to the struggling students in light of the major tenets of andragogy and adult learning theories reveals an overlap in early approaches that reinforces the argument that the disciplinary response to students that inspired major pedagogical turns for the field are heavily influenced by responses to the needs of the adult students in these classrooms. By tracing major movements and major scholars who represent them, the impact of adult learners becomes clear; their influence spans from the classrooms where teachers practice pedagogies, to the publications where such practices are shared and systemized, to the movements that respond to the needs of teachers and students.

The scholars and the scholarship of this canonical period have influenced the teachers and research of the discipline that has been built on these works. As a result, research that responded to the needs of adult students has impacted disciplinary approaches as a whole and in effect, all students in composition classes. Reviewing major works and major authors who had major impact on the pedagogical development of the discipline and who worked intimately with adult learners during the development of their critical theories and practices constructs an historical reading of the development of Composition Studies in which adults are seen to have played a major role.

In the Beginning

Widespread changes start to shift the practice of teaching Composition as a result of the professionalization that begins in the 50s. Before World War II, “Freshman English courses were rarely devoted only to writing instruction. Their main goal was to introduce students to literary study and in the process to correct the writing in students’ literary essays according to long-established standards of grammatical, stylistic, and formal correctness”; when courses were devoted to writing, “they usually patterned their syllabi after Bain’s modes of discourse and justified their existence with arguments similar

to Blair's for the good writer as a virtuous person.” (Bedford, “Progressive Education in Twentieth-Century America”). As part of the professionalization of the field, the 50s witness the development of the Conference on College Composition and Communication and the journal *College Composition and Communication*, both of which work to create the foundation on which the modern discipline is built over the following decades.

The substantial expansion of the 60s results in the movement toward writing as a process and students as the focus. As part of the overall, nationwide educational goals in the early 60s, college writing begins to expand its focus. A major component of the shift is an emphasis on the literature and research of the field: “In 1963, the NCTE published a survey of research to date in composition, compiled by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer. Little valuable work was found, but the study itself encouraged high standards for new research in the field” (Bedford, “Beginnings of Modern Composition”). In order to support and circulate research on Composition, the NCTE begins to publish the journal *Research in the Teaching of English* in 1967.

Attention to research and the professionalization of the discipline also result in the sharing of research through conferencing and professional development. In 1966, the MLA and the NCTE sponsor a conference on the teaching of English at Dartmouth College. The Dartmouth Conference, as it has come to be known, moves the field beyond the “Harvard-model course, which imposed standards on passive students” and develops and promotes “the new Dartmouth-model writing course [which] encouraged more interaction among teacher and students . . . [and] called for writing instruction that takes more notice of students' needs for self-expression as opposed to their adjustment to social demands” (Bedford, “The 1960s”). As a result of the Dartmouth Conference, interest in writing as process and self-expression expands.

The work of the late 60s and early 70s moved Composition beyond the Current-Traditional model and opened doors to new scholars and schools. As the discipline developed throughout the decade, “composition studies searched for a pedagogy to help students find personal writing styles that were

honest and unconstrained by conventions. Such a style came to be termed the writer's authentic voice—an important concept in the work of Ken Macrorie and Peter Elbow. . . . Authentic-voice pedagogy contributed techniques, such as Elbow's freewriting, that became part of every writing teacher's repertoire” (Bedford, “The 1960s”). Elbow’s methods of freewriting and de-emphasizing the role of the teacher influenced not only the practices of every writing teacher at the time but also the theories that undergird the practices that made the discipline what it is today.

Elbow initially applied Macrorie’s concept of free writing as an exercise in his personal life, but after realizing success, the practice transferred from his personal practice into his professional approach, making him his own struggling student (Bogart, 2016). The extent of Elbow’s difficulties caused him to leave Harvard during the first year of his graduate work in English. During his subsequent teaching and work with colleagues, Elbow came to recognize that he encountered fewer struggles with writing when the writing was not tied to an assignment. Upon returning to graduate study at Brandeis University, Elbow developed his interpretation of freewriting (which he forms as one word instead of two) to facilitate his academic writing and found that using this method to get out his thoughts also allowed his writing to take on a therapeutic component (*Writing Without Teachers*, 1989) In effect, Elbow was practicing writing as self-expression and freewriting as a means of allowing internal motivation without focus on external outcome, an experience that eventually transformed his pedagogy.

Elbow, who was in his late 20s at the time, found himself facing many of the same struggles researchers of adult learners recognized and responded to in their classrooms and literature. In what started as a self-study, Elbow found that he struggled more when writing was tied to an assignment. As a result, he practiced freewriting to free himself from the constraints of the assignment and the classroom and the teacher and the grade and all the elements associated with writing for a credit-bearing course and an evaluative audience. Neither personal nor professional writing, from newspapers to novels, is written to be read by an audience who corrects or grades the outcome, Elbow recognized (Bogart, 2016).

Freewriting gave Elbow the opportunity to express himself and include his thoughts and experiences in the process of writing and learning.

Effectually, Elbow found that, as a student, he succeeded when he responded to internal motivation and when he included his experience in his learning, two approaches that match two of the original six tenets of Knowlesian andragogy (Knowles, 1980). Just like the adult students who were struggling with disconnection and the directed approaches of the classroom, Elbow—himself an adult learner—found that he felt constrained when writing for an external audience, applying external approaches, and awaiting external evaluation. In order to improve his writing, Elbow had to accept that his writing would not be right and allow himself to write wrong and fix it in revision.

Elbow also had to leave the classroom and allow himself to write for reasons not attached to external motivations such as grades; in doing so, Elbow discovered and deployed another andragogical approach. Knowles noted that adults were less successful when their work was tied to grades—a belief he responded to by creating learning contracts and considering criteria and evidence to evaluate outcomes that were developed and determined by the learner and facilitator instead of applying a grading system imagined and imposed by an external instructor (Knowles, 1980; Rachal, 2002). Elbow applied what he learned from his experience as an adult learner to the students he encountered in the classroom and began practicing his approach to freewriting with his students.

By thinking beyond standard classroom approaches, Elbow came to find that the priority for learning in the classroom is creating an environment where students feel safe—another major element of andragogical approaches. Ranking students' work changes the writer and the writing. Elbow discovered that removing the act of submission, which he noted as a double entendre, changed the motivation of the student and allowed students to feel liberated by being free to write without judgement, which is why he suggested that the first round of freewriting should not be submitted at all (removing the instructor as audience completely), that the second attempt should be submitted to the instructor but not read (practicing submission without judgement), and the third round of freewriting should be submitted and

read but not critiqued or graded (allowing the writer to practice writing for audience without the anxiety of attaching a grade); such experiences and understandings also informed Elbow's subsequent work on reader responses (Bogart, 2016). Situated in context, it is evident that the outcome of Elbow's experience as a struggling adult learner resulted in a pedagogy transparently akin to andragogy, but Elbow's experience does not result in published pedagogy without being tested and perfected on and by his students.

Elbow's first book, *Writing Without Teachers* (1973), is based in and on his experience teaching for Harvard's Extension School in the late 60s. When working with these students, Elbow experimented with freewriting and writing groups that were not centered on a teacher or teacher input. *Writing Without Teachers* cultivated student-centered practices by shifting the role of teacher to that of facilitator resulting in the proposition of the teacher-less classroom, which is the origin of writing groups that often facilitate informal writing and writing workshops—both of which serve as a staple of in-class learning practices and pedagogies in current composition courses (p. xvi-xvii). Such situations require participation from the group and allow students to become equals, again deemphasizing the assignment and authority and grades in ways that mirror andragogical suggestions.

While he initially served as his own source, the inspiration of Elbow's work is grounded in the fact that his techniques worked for the students with whom he practiced his practices; it is no coincidence that Elbow's students helped him hone techniques that overlap with major elements of adult learning theories. The students who populate the Harvard Extension program are (and were) adult learners, with an average of 33 (Harvard University, "Harvard Extension School"). In the 60s-70s, specifically, many of the Harvard Extension students were Harvard employees or Navy sailors (Shinagle, 2010, p. 96, p.122). Stated simply, the inspiration of the theories and methods practiced and promoted in Elbow's early research is his work with adult learners.

Connecting Elbow's work to andragogy and adult learners demonstrates the impact of adult learners on the initial disciplinary move away from Current-Traditional models and numerous moves

toward modern Composition pedagogies. Elbow's work grounds writing workshops and writing groups, as well as peer-review, which remain important and in use in current Composition classrooms and pedagogies and set the stage for conversations around low-stakes writing and feedback from peers and practice giving critical reviews. Elbow's development and promotion of freewriting liberates students from conventions and mechanics that breed fear and hinder creativity and allows writers to address the formalities after writing instead of occupying themselves with sentence-level concerns at the early stages of production. Elbow's impact continues today even reaching into current home schooling practices (Bogart, 2016) and approaches to teaching English as a second language (Scullin & Baron, 2013).

Elbow's influence cannot be overstated. Elbow's deconstruction of audience, his promotion of process over product, and his attention to the voice of students ground the Expressivist movements. The concept of writing as a process also undergirds the Cognitivists, who seek to unearth elements of the process in the mind by applying the tools of empirical research. And while his work has not been openly or overtly connected to adult learners or adult learning theories and techniques, Elbow's work, when placed in context, not only exhibits elements of andragogical approaches but was inspired by and developed as a result of his work with nontraditional students. In effect, Elbow's work with adult students grounds the two major pedagogical movements of the 70s and impacts the work that comes from them and that defines the field for decades to come.

While making the connection between Elbow and adult learners requires context, the connection between the work of another major Composition scholar in the foundational development of the discipline and adult learners is undeniable. Freire is widely recognized to have based the development of his theories on his work with adults. Despite the fact that it was acknowledged by Freire and others that he was working with adults, Composition Studies did not connect his outcomes to andragogy, focusing instead on his subjects as foreign peasants.

Freire's best known work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was first published in 1968 and subsequently released in English in 1970. In it, Freire reconstructed education by deconstructing the role

of teacher, the place of student, and the impact of and on society. Freire called for a model of education that did not serve to dehumanize individuals and instead made learners active in the construction of knowledge. Stemming from his experience teaching literacy to Brazilian adults, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* offered a class-based analysis of education that argued for a new understanding of the learner and, in particular, of the learners with whom Freire worked. Instead of seeing these illiterate adults as less than, Freire worked to free impoverished individuals from the assumption that their ignorance was inherent by connecting the impact of poverty to learning.

As Elbow's personal struggle inspired his pedagogy, Freire's own experience informed his understanding of the impact poverty has on learning. Freire "recalls in Moacir Gadotti's book, *Reading Paulo Freire*, 'I didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge' (5)" (Bently, 1999, para. 1). The lack of access to education, for Freire, contributed not only to continued poverty and the way in which the poor were seen, he argued that literacy or a lack thereof framed individuals' worldview and ultimately changed their world and the world. As a result, Freire allowed the teaching of writing to become an action with outcomes far beyond the classroom—a social and political action.

In addition to including adult learners in the conversation and the discipline, Freire also allowed education and research to exist beyond the classrooms of the Academy and of the United States, expanding the scope of such work even more. Freire and the impact of his work are truly global. In the 70s, Freire went to work at Harvard and then in Switzerland. His impact is also felt across disciplines; while also claimed by Theology and Education (and Adult Education), Composition Studies lays claim to Freire, who authored or coauthored more than twenty books, including *A Pedagogy for Liberation* with Ira Shor.

Freire's work inspires the scholars of Social Constructivism and facilitates the launch and development of Critical Pedagogy, two major disciplinary turns that evolve from the work of the 70s and

define the discipline in the 80s and 90s. Freire's influence on Composition during the 70s can be seen most acutely in the development of Basic Writing. By working with adults who had not been afforded access to education and arguing that literacy impacts the lives of these learners, Freire made it possible and necessary to focus not only on the literary essays of the privileged students for whom Current-Traditional and previous models were founded. Now the students who populated the night schools and community colleges and offices and correspondence courses were worthy subjects for study and advocacy.

Despite the fact that terms like *basic* and concepts like *developmental* read as connotative of judgment and dismissal in current interpretations, within the historical context of the era in which they originated, they were intended to be agentifying. That said, not all work with adult students holds up as sympathetic and supportive; in the instances where adult learners are overtly the subjects of the research, class judgments and marginalizing language are often evident in much of the disciplinary work of the time. Literature from the 60s includes work on "Ghetto Adults" (Demarest, 1968), while research from the 70s offers Pornography as a pedagogical tool for a group of adults (Rauch, 1978). Still a product of time and place, Freire does not marginalize the adult learners with whom he works, instead serving as their advocate and crusader.

As Composition Studies shifts to the late 70s, the influence of Freire and Elbow form and feed movements. While Elbow impacts Expressivism and Cognitivism, Freire informs Social Constructivism and grounds Critical Pedagogy by connecting learning to social situations and societal outcomes. Those impacted by the work of Elbow and Freire owe the development of their practical and theoretical foundations to the adult learners with whom these scholars worked. But as the discipline developed, new work and new movements continued to draw upon adult students in composition classes.

Expressivism and Cognitivism

The work of Composition scholars throughout the 70s reads as an expansion and extension of Elbow and ideas of writing as a process. While Expressivists study the process as personal, Cognitivists attempt to apply science in an effort to deconstruct the role of thought and language in the process. Eventually Social Constructivism and Critical Pedagogy, as extensions of Freire and responses to Elbow, will include social impact in the process, but the age of writing as a product is over. One major disciplinary expansion of the 70s is the development of Basic Writing as an area of research and practice. Research on writers who were considered basic or developmental can be found across movements playing a major role in the literature and pedagogies of the 70s and moving well into the 80s and beyond, and threads of both Elbow and Freire can be found in the work of Basic Writing.

The 70s, again, sees a wider range of students enter the classrooms of Composition. Among this assortment of students are more struggling students. A great deal of research and literature from the 70s works to address the needs of these students and their struggles. In fact, the first writing across the curriculum programs are developed to support these new populations. In response to concern regarding the poor literacy skills among American university students, the first WAC programs emerge in 74-75 in an effort to enlist faculty from all fields in the teaching of writing (Bedford, “The 1970s”). The WAC movement sought to make use of work on Basic Writers (Northern Illinois University, “A Short History of WAC,” 2016); however, the impact of these basic and developmental students extends far beyond WAC programs and practices.

Recall that in *Cross-Talk*, Villaneuva (2011) agreed “that our changing theories of composition are in part the result of the introduction into our college classrooms of those we have come to call basic writers, those who come to college not quite prepared to undertake college writing, most often people of color and the poor” (p. xv). Villaneuva clarified the argument by explaining that “there are always a few in every composition classroom, at every level, from first-year college students to seniors. To ponder how composition might affect the more troublesome, those basic writers, would inform our approach to the

less troublesome” (p. xv). Closer examination demonstrates that many of the basic and developmental learners who inspire the theories and pedagogies of the discipline are adult learners.

In 1976, Shaughnessy introduced the term “Basic Writers” in “Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing.” For Shaughnessy, creation and use of the category basic writer was not pejorative but was an attempt to focus on practical considerations and seek concrete ways of framing and responding to students and their struggles. As Freire agentified poor Brazilian adult learners, Shaughnessy agentified struggling adult students in America. Instead of assuming that basic writers were without internal processes, Shaughnessy suggested that there was logic in the mistakes of basic writers, and in order to assess and address those mistakes, teachers must find the flaw in students’ logic instead of assuming an absence of logic. Shaughnessy also brought attention to the role teachers played in students’ success instead of focusing only on students.

Shaughnessy worked directly with basic writers while directing SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge), “a pre-baccalaureate program designed to bring small groups of minorities into the City University of New York . . .” and she spearheaded the academic supports that facilitated the population of students who entered the university when open admission began; when CUNY opened admissions in 1970, “almost 90 percent of City College students took some form of remedial instruction in writing . . .” (Reeves, 2002, p. 118). Open admissions vastly expanded access to higher education and to composition classrooms.

Shaughnessy identified basic writers as a population within higher education and recognized that their needs were different. Instead of dismissing or denying basic writers, Shaughnessy asserted that these students were already present in higher education, that they could learn, and that they should be taught: “The work is waiting for us. And so irrevocable now is the tide that brings the new students into the nation’s college classrooms that it is no longer within our power, as perhaps it once was, to refuse to accept them into the community of the educable. They are here” (Diving, 1976, p. 317). Within the “they” who were already “there” were adult learners.

Adults were there then and have continued to enter higher education since then, but even as notions and numbers of adult learners expand, traditional views of traditional students remain the focus of traditional institutions of higher education: “Although ‘traditional’ 18-22 year-old full-time undergraduate students residing on campus account for only 16% of higher education enrollments, the attention given to this group of students obscures the fact that the vast majority of college and university students are ‘non-traditional’—largely working adults struggling to balance jobs, families, and education” (Stokes, 2006, p. 1). Such continued oversight may be due in part to the fact that the adults who were already there then and who impacted the Academy and the discipline remain unidentified even now.

Shaughnessy did recognize that adults inhabited her classrooms. In “Diving In,” she mentioned “young, native-born adults” (p. 315). In “Some Needed Research on Writing” she recognized her students as “beginning adult writers” (p. 319). In *Errors and Expectations*, she acknowledged “young adults” (p. 292). Shaughnessy did not, however, recognize these adults as adult learners.

Other scholars also acknowledged that Shaughnessy was working with adults. Maher (1997) recognized herself as similar to the students with whom Shaughnessy worked because she, like Shaughnessy’s students, attended night classes at CUNY in 1969 as a married, working, adult (p. 51). Similarly, Lyons (1979) also identified Shaughnessy as working with adult learners when he suggested that a major question of *Errors and Expectations* was “how to recognize and stimulate growth in writing skills among ill-prepared young adults, the group usually taught as if they were either conventional college students or much younger learners at an earlier stage of development” (p. 11). Further, Lyons suggested that a “central concern in Mina’s work is represented in one phrase from the passage I just quoted: ‘intelligent young men and women.’ The recognition of the intelligence and the adulthood of basic writing students is the key to virtually all that Mina has to say about the teaching of writing” (p.4). While Shaughnessy and others recognized that these students were adults (and even that designation is tertiary and must be teased from within other classifications), because these adult students were not

recognized as adult learners, the outcome of work with these students is not recognized as work with adult learners impacting the pedagogy of the discipline but only as basic writers impacting the discipline.

Despite all her efforts to include new populations of students entering the Academy and create pedagogies that respond to and support the needs of these basic writers, Shaughnessy did not recognize that adult learners were also already there, that the needs of adult learners were included in the needs of the students to whom she was responding, or that their needs were different than the other basic writers. Regardless of noticing adult students, Shaughnessy never connected the role that being adults could play in their learning; she did, however, respond to basic writers by offering approaches that overlapped with andragogy.

Knowles (1980) points out that adult learners are aware of and highly affected by the approaches and attitudes that teachers exhibit: “The behavior of the teacher probably influences the character of the learning climate more than any other single factor, however. Teachers convey in many ways whether their attitude is one of interest in and respect for the students or whether they see the students essentially as receiving sets for transmissions of wisdom” (p. 47). Not only is the teacher’s attitude particularly important because of its immediate impact on adult students, Knowles also acknowledged that how teachers of adult students see them can impact greatly their performance in the classroom because so many adult learners remember the classroom as a place of fear and failure, a fear that keeps many adults from (re)entering higher education (p. 46). Andragogy, then, acknowledges that the negative attitude of the teacher can influence a negative result from the students.

Shaughnessy also recognized “that teachers and students cannot easily escape one another's maladies,” and she pointed out the bias of educators against basic writers: “Basic writing, alias remedial, developmental, pre-baccalaureate, or even handicapped English, is commonly thought of as a writing course for young men and women who have many things wrong with them” (Diving, 1976, p. 311). Further Shaughnessy acknowledged that the classification of students as basic writers also impacts how teachers see this population. Warning that teachers must not enter the relationship with students assuming

the least of them because the student will know and be impacted, Shaughnessy suggested instead that teachers “‘Always assume,’ . . . ‘that there is one silent student in your class who is by far superior to you in head and in heart.’ This assumption, as I have been trying to suggest, does not come easily or naturally when the teacher is a college teacher and the young men and women in his class are labeled remedial” (Diving, 1976, p. 317). Effectually Shaughnessy admits the labels given students, especially adult students, impact the success of both the student and the teacher.

Both Shaughnessy and Knowles emphasized the impact teacher attitude can have on students, but where Knowles focused on the student, Shaughnessy focused on the teacher, creating complimentary perspectives. While not acknowledging that her suggestions mirrored andragogical principles or practices, Shaughnessy was aware that current pedagogical approaches were not working and that new models were needed: “Somewhere between the folly of pretending that errors don't matter and the rigidity of insisting that they matter more than anything, the teacher must find his answer . . . But as yet, we lack models for the maturation of the writing skill among young, native-born adults and can only theorize about the adaptability of other models for these students” (Diving, 1976, p. 315). Because she did not identify her adult students as adult learners, Shaughnessy could not access the toolbox of research on andragogy.

While Shaughnessy's implications blended andragogies with Composition pedagogies, the available research addressing how to facilitate adults as learners was neither addressed nor cited in Shaughnessy's publications. Consequently, Shaughnessy's work with basic writers also was not included in the literature on adult learners. Nevertheless, work on and with Basic Writers, more specifically basic adult writers, greatly impacts Composition pedagogies and inspires and influences other disciplinary shifts of the 70s, even grounding major Cognitivist work.

Composition Studies experiences a full shift from writing as product to composing as product during the 70s. By transforming the focus from writing to composing, teachers and researchers in Composition began to recognize and acknowledge the role of the cognitive processes that precede and undergird the act of writing. The introduction of cognitive psychology, linguists, sociolinguists, and social

sciences expand approaches and research methods in ways that broaden the work and scope of Composition. Employing the methods of the social sciences and sciences allows researchers to produce empirical research on the composing process as a whole, revealing that it is neither singular nor linear and supporting the Cognitivist and Developmental approaches that become influential in the 70s and progress into the 80s.

Additional factors become researchable variables that can be related to learning and writing and process and outcomes. Emig's (1971) work highlights the role of age, connecting brain development and function to age, and numerous developmental researchers follow models such as Piaget's in search of developmental benchmarks and structures that aim to frame understandings of learning. Along with Hayes, a cognitive psychologist, Flower, a Composition scholar, expands and clarifies the process of writing as hierarchal and recursive, but before Flower and Hayes published "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" in 1981, Lunsford was already considering and promoting a cognitive developmental model of writing as a process through her work with basic writers.

In "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer," Lunsford (1979) expanded on her dissertation work with basic writers and claimed to build on the work of Shaughnessy by adding considerations of Cognitive Development to her work on and in Process to allow considerations of basic writers to span the schools. Lunsford, like Shaughnessy, Elbow, and Freire, recognized that her students were struggling in ways that required her to adjust her approaches to meet their needs. Lunsford was sensitive to the impact of categorizing this population, but she did not recognize the adult learners in her classrooms as such and did not recognize that her findings overlapped overtly with andragogical approaches. Instead, Lunsford located her findings within the context of her work with basic writers.

When Lunsford published "Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer," she had completed the graduate assistantship that allowed her to teach at The Ohio State University while she earned her Ph.D. and wrote her dissertation. The bulk of her teaching experience, however, took place from 1969 to 1973 when she taught at Hillsborough Community College. Lunsford's work at the community college level

exposed her to adult learners. The mean age of an HCC student is 27.3 years old, and the average student is likely to be returning, part-time, employed, and/or a parent (HCC, “Factbook,” iv-2). Within this environment, Lunsford learned to teach by learning to teach basic writers and adult learners.

When she arrived at HCC, Lunsford, who was trained in Literature, admittedly knew very little about teaching writing: “When I began teaching at Hillsborough Community College in the late 1960s, I learned right away that while I knew a good bit about literature and could share that knowledge with students, I had little sense of how to teach writing. *Almost none at all* [emphasis in original]”; she also admitted: “On reflection, I realized that I had been exempted from the writing course offered at my university and that I had never, ever gotten any real instruction in writing from my professors: they assigned writing, but they surely didn’t teach it. I remember near-panic setting in as I thought about what I would do in my writing class (“Teacher to Teacher).” Lunsford found a textbook and taught herself to teach writing, but her practical research took place in the classrooms of HCC.

In her dissertation, “An Historical, Descriptive, and Evaluative Study of Remedial English in American Colleges and Universities,” (1977) much of the literature Lunsford cited was from research on Community and Junior College students, a population widely recognized then and now as nontraditional (“Students at Community Colleges”). Lunsford also cited K. Patricia Cross, a scholar of Adult Education, extensively in her dissertation. Cross’ criticism of the term remedial was, in fact, cited as Lunsford’s inspiration for her creation and use of the term “developmental” as an alternative (1977, p. 16). Even though Lunsford was clearly aware of the literature on adult learners, she did not define or identify her students as adult learners and did not state that any of her implications were based on andragogical principles. Yet as a result of her experience teaching adult learners and basic writers, Lunsford published findings that clearly reflect approaches of andragogy.

Lunsford offered the following “ways in which we [can] organize our basic writing classes and create effective assignments”:

basic writing classes should never be teacher-centered; set lectures should always be avoided. Instead, the classes should comprise small workshop groups in which all members are active participants, apprentice-writers who are ‘exercising their competence’ as they learn how to write well. Class time should be spent writing, reading what has been written aloud to the group/audience, and talking about that writing. Such sessions require an atmosphere of trust, and they demand careful diagnosis and preparation by the teacher. (Cognitive, 1979, p. 302)

Noting that skills and drills and memorizing were ineffective, Lunsford suggested that the “best way to move students into conceptualization and analytic and synthetic modes of thought is to create assignments and activities which allow students to practice or exercise themselves in these modes continuously” (Cognitive, 1979, p. 303). Analyzing Lunsford’s implications in comparison to those listed in *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*, which Knowles published within a year of “Cognitive Development and the Basic Writer” and which served as a culmination of the literature on andragogical principles and practices to date, makes clear the overt overlap.

Lunsford’s assertions can be narrowed to four main points. Stated simply: (1) classes should never be teacher-centered, (2) workshops, group work, and discussion should replace lecture, (3) an atmosphere of trust is required, and (4) skills should be practiced and exercised through immediate activities. Each of these points was established clearly by Knowles: “There is a distinct shift in emphasis in andragogy away from the transmittal techniques so prevalent in youth education—the lecture, assigned readings, and canned audiovisual presentation—toward the more participatory experiential techniques” (1980, p. 50). Specifically Knowles suggested “group discussion, the case method, the critical-incident process, simulation exercises, role playing, skill-practice exercises, field projects, action projects, laboratory methods, consultative supervision, demonstration, seminars, work conferences, counseling, group therapy, and community development” (1980, p. 50). Both statements suggest a classroom that is not teacher-centered and that engages activities such as those suggested by Lunsford.

Knowles' student-centered classroom also created an atmosphere of trust: "andragogical practice treats the learning teaching transaction as the mutual responsibility of learners and teacher. In fact, the teacher's role is redefined as that of a procedural technician, resource person, and coinquirer"; further, he stated that "[e]ven more importantly, the psychological climate should be one which causes adults to feel accepted, respected, and supported; in which there exists a spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint inquirers; in which there is freedom of expression without fear of punishment or ridicule" (1980, p. 47). Knowles also suggested practicing skills immediately because adult learners "attach more meaning to learnings they gain from experience than those they acquire passively. Accordingly, the primary techniques in education are experiential techniques-laboratory experiments, discussion, problem-solving cases, simulation exercises, field experience, and the like" (1980, p. 44). These are but a few of the examples of direct overlap between Lunsford's implications and andragogical principles.

Direct comparison makes it evident that Lunsford's response to working with basic learners, many of whom were likely adult learners, is strikingly similar to the suggestions of Knowles' work in and on andragogy. Elbow's promotion of discussion and workshopping are also evident in the work of Lunsford. Lunsford's work plays an influential role in the pedagogies of Cognitivists and the approaches of Basic Writing, and her influence remains evident through the widespread use of *The Everyday Writer* and *Everything's an Argument*, as well as her continued work at Stanford and on the Stanford Study of Writing.

The impact of Cognitivist scholars is felt not only through the work of Basic Writing but also in the expansion of research beyond coursework and students. Perl advances the movement of empirical observations of writing beyond the classroom to study working writers, helping to create the groundwork for Professional and Technical Writing, as well as future discussions of transfer beyond the classroom. Like Shaughnessy and Lunsford, Perl recognizes that her students are struggling in ways that require her to adjust her approaches to meet their needs and locates her findings within the context of her work with basic writers. Perl, who was conducting research on a similar population at the same time as Shaughnessy

and Lunsford, does not actively acknowledge the adult learners in her midst, but also like Shaughnessy and Lunsford, Perl's research findings overlap overtly with andragogical approaches.

Perl's (1979) "The Composing Process of Unskilled College Writers" is a pivotal piece in the literature on basic writers, but it is also a text on adult learners. Perl's work was based on empirical research that "took place during the 1975-76 fall semester at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College of the City University of New York" (p. 18). Hostos Community College was the first bilingual institution of higher education in the United States. Today, approximately 80% of students are Hispanic, the average student age is 25.7, and 38.5% of students are over 25 (Hostos Community College). From within this context, Perl introduced her readers to Tony.

While Perl's study was based on five students, her in-depth analysis was presented through one: "Tony was a 20-year-old ex-Marine born and raised in the Bronx, New York. . . . As a freshman in college, he was also working part-time to support a child and a wife from whom he was separated" (pp. 25-26). Despite the fact that Perl did not recognize Tony as an adult or an adult learner, based on the characteristics she identified, current understandings of adult learners would include Tony as such. Recall that age-based approaches to defining adults in education generally accept that students over the age of 25 are considered adult learners. As understandings of adult learners became more sophisticated and developed, aspects beyond age emerge as considerations: "most researchers include in this diverse group any student who has experienced at least one of the following: being a parent, working, attending college part-time, being a high school dropout, or delaying college enrollment for at least 1 year" (Hensley & Kinser, 2001, p. 88). Despite that fact that only one match is necessary to receive the designation of adult learner, Tony fits four of the five categories.

Tony can be identified as an adult learner in light of contemporary understandings, but neither the other four students in the study nor the overall student population was identified in enough detail to suggest that a strong basis for Perl's findings could be assigned to her work with a population of adult learners. Research conducted at the same community college, however, provided more detail into the

student population. In “Talking and Writing across the Curriculum: A Tutorial Model for Adult ESL Students in Content Courses” Hirsch (1986) described working with tutors to support the writing needs of the ESL writers who were students at Hostos Community College in the years immediately following Perl’s research.

Hirsch described the subjects of her research as “65 students registered in Advanced ESL and enrolled in one” other course (p. 1). Hirsch did not address the role of age in the learning or in the lives of these students instead focusing on the fact that they were ESL learners, but she did state that “the average Hostos student is 27 years old” (p. 8). As a result, Hirsch not only provided evidence to establish that Perl was working in an environment where the average student was likely an adult learner, but by failing to recognize her students as adult learners, Hirsch also provides evidence to support the claim that Composition researchers and teachers at that period in the discipline were not identifying adults as adult learners.

Like Hirsch, Perl did not explicitly recognize adults in her research and in no way suggested that she saw adult learners as a population with specific learning needs; she did recognize, however, that labeling these learners is not without assumptions and implications: “One major implication of this study pertains to teachers’ conceptions of unskilled writers. Traditionally, these students have been labeled ‘remedial,’ which usually implies that teaching ought to remedy what is ‘wrong’ in their written products” (p. 38). So Perl, like Shaughnessy, Lunsford, and Knowles, accepted the importance of teachers’ attitudes toward this population, but like Shaughnessy and Lunsford, Perl did not connect this to adult learners or andragogy. And like Shaughnessy and Lunsford, Perl attempted to soften the sting of labels by redefining remedial students as “unskilled.” Perl also identified with theories and practices of andragogy without acknowledging or citing any work on andragogy, and responded to the needs of her adult learners with practices identifiable as andragogical in nature. In addition to demonstrating themes running through the work on adult learners in the period, analyzing and contextualizing Perl’s work, work that advanced the

research on the composing process and remains in rotation today, further established the impact adult learners have had on Composition Studies.

While texts of the 60s did not really see adult students as adult learners, often did not see them at all, works throughout the 70s start to recognize adult students and respond directly to their needs. These adults are generally embedded within the works on Basic Writers, and they are generally seen as deficient, but the overall attitude, while occasionally bordering on patronizing infantilization, is one of advocacy that results in efforts to include this population and support their success in and beyond the Academy. The influence of both Freire and Elbow is evident in the development of Basic Writing, which is not only grounded in the prior disciplinary literature of researchers who worked with adult students but is itself developed from direct work with adult students. While Shaughnessy establishes the study of basic writers around her work with adult learners, Lunsford and Perl ground the research of Cognitivism and Expressivism in their experiences teaching community college students. Freire and Elbow also continue to publish, each expanding on prior work with adult students and advancing the theories and practices developed from that work. Other scholars also join in to continue research on freewriting, workshopping, and student-centered pedagogies.

An argument claiming that adult learners influenced the foundational literature and pedagogies of Composition Studies could stand on this evidence alone, but tracing the influence of the identified works and recognizing new works as the field expands into the 80s only strengthens the case. As the literature including adult learners makes the curve with the social turn, the focus of my research requires less evidence to identify adult learners because while they are not always openly identified as adult learners, they are at least more often identified as openly possessing the characteristic we use to identify adult learners. As a result, while I continue to focus on pivotal literature including adult learners, I shift from simply making the case that the works include adult learners and andragogical responses to making the case that prior and current work on adult learners influenced the theoretical and pedagogical questions and conversations that drive and develop the discipline.

The Social Turn

The field of Composition Studies grew in professional respectability during the 1980s as designated by numerous developmental benchmarks and critical criteria: the existence of specific programs and graduate degrees in Rhetoric and Composition in numerous universities; the publication of comprehensive bibliographies in and of the field; the appropriation of funding from the U.S. Department of Education for the Center for the Study of Writing at the University of California at Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon University, which would function as an empirical research institute; the publication of multiple collections, anthologies, and monographs in addition to the bibliographies by university presses; the creation of the History of Rhetoric and Composition and as a scholarly area and as a regular course offering within disciplinary curricula; the development of a professional identity and of individual confidence within the scholars in the field; and a situating of the field within its historical tradition (Bedford, “The 1980s”). But many of the histories that were starting to recount and reconstruct the field served to abstract, if not obstruct, a clear picture of the discipline.

The limitation of such histories is being recognized and addressed. “Dissatisfied with the traditional histories of composition studies that base their evidence for historical progression on white male scholars teaching at elite or flagship institutions with predominately white male student bodies,” McComiskey (2016) noted that “a number of recent composition researchers have turned to alternative sources of evidence for real-life accounts of writing and teaching in populations not often considered do to the process of narrative abstraction” (p. 9). McComiskey pointed out that “several books, published mostly within the last decade, examine single themes that had been neglected in histories of composition” (p. 9). McComiskey argued that these revisionist histories represent a challenge to the traditional methods of selecting what is worth including in history and what is left out; as an example of things omitted now being included, he offered a long list of groups and topics, but nothing on adult learners.

The 80s did see, however, an extension of the work that resulted from adult learners in the classrooms of Composition. Elbow continues to expand and advance his early arguments and approaches

as journaling expands and freewriting spins into shitty drafting (Lamont, 1994) culminating in Bizzell, an architect of Social Constructivism who combines workshopping and peer response. Drawing upon and expanding work in both basic writing and writing across the curriculum, Composition scholars of the 80s begin to focus on the social nature of writing, which informs the continued research on the process of writing and on cognitive factors that impact process. The discipline and the work of the discipline continue to expand across disciplines and grow to include epistemological questions surrounding language and writing (Bedford, “The 1980s”). The inclusion of larger perspectives, specifically the addition of social questions, creates many new lenses through which to see the work of the field and the scope of the profession.

Emerging awareness regarding the impact of race, gender, and class on student writing and learning adds valuable questions and creates invaluable conversations. Freire comes to the forefront again as Composition scholars draw upon his work to develop “pedagogical innovations with an explicitly liberatory political agenda” (Bedford, “The 1980s”). As the work of Composition becomes accepted as social, personal, and political in nature, Social Constructivism comes to define the social turn and paves the way for Critical Pedagogy to continue the social turn throughout the 90s. The work of Basic Writing, an area becoming synonymous with adult learners, expands to include scholars from a variety of backgrounds and provides fertile ground for conversations ranging from literacy to social responsibilities and constructions, which results in work on basic writing and writers that informs and responds to numerous conversations in the literature and consequences in the classrooms.

Just as Expressivists and Cognitivists included research on basic writing in their literature and pedagogies, Social Constructionists continue to include basic writing in their responses and challenges to other theories and pedagogies, as well as in new research on basic writers within in their theoretical and pedagogical work. While work on basic writers is not the only place where adult learners are found, work on adult learners in mainstream Composition courses remains obscure and does not have the impact of the work on basic writers. As a result, the work on basic writing becomes the epicenter of the impact of adult

learners on the discipline in the early literature, work that becomes very clear within the pedagogical and theoretical turns of the 80s. The work at hand, then, moves beyond the basic step of locating adults through historical contextualization and begins to focus on recognizing the work on adults as an extension of earlier work on adult students and demonstrating the impact the work has on the discipline. In fact, the social turn ushers in new work on and around adult learners that frames old questions in the light of new conversations and reveals subtexts that raise foundational questions not only about adult learners and Composition but about learning and the Academy.

In “The Study of Error,” Bartholomae (1980) not only produced new work on adult learners, expanding their footprint, he acknowledged that the basic writers found so commonly in the disciplinary literature were in actually adult students. Bartholomae argued that the work done by the “specialists” who had devised and refined developmental and basic instruction resulted in pedagogies not built on “any systematic inquiry into what basic writers do when they write or into the way writing skills develop for beginning adult writers” (p. 253). Bartholomae not only acknowledged that basic writers were generally adult students, he also emphasized the reality that they had not been duly recognized or researched as a group.

In fact, insisting that such basic research had barely begun, Bartholomae cited Shaughnessy’s argument that the “pedagogies that served the profession for years seem no longer appropriate to large numbers of students, and their inappropriateness lies largely in the fact that many of our students . . . are adult beginners,” a group Shaughnessy recognized as far more dependent on the teacher and the classroom to acquire the skills of writing (p. 253). Bartholomae called for research intended and designed to understand basic writers and noted that if “all non-fluent adult writers proceed through a ‘natural’ learning sequence, and if we can identify that sequence through some large, longitudinal study, then we will begin to understand what a basic writing course or text or syllabus might look like” (p. 268). While Bartholomae does recognize that basic writers are adult learners, and that adult learners are a specific population, a discourse community, he groups them together in ways now easily acknowledged as

unrealistic. There is not one way of being an adult learner, just as there is not one way of being a female learner.

In addition to the fact that he used the work of John, an adult student, as his example of student work demonstrating basic writing, the work Bartholomae analyzed for his discussion on how to respond to basic writing was a piece John “wrote in response to an assignment that asked him to go back to some papers he had written on significant moments in his life in order to write a paper that considered the general question of the way people change” (p. 259). Creating assignments based on reflections of significant life events while expecting a realization of the way an individual has changed over time reads as a prompt tailored to individuals who have survived numerous major life events and experienced recognizable growth—likely an assignment crafted with adult students in mind. Bartholomae provides an unintended example of how the students in a course, or in a categorization such as basic writing that defines courses and approaches, impact not only the pedagogy but the assignments and the material, all of which impact the product and the outcome.

In “*Inventing the University*,” (1986) a seminal work within the discipline, Bartholomae builds on his work with basic writers. Bartholomae defined the struggle to take on the authoritative voice necessary to root work within academic analysis or scholarship as “one of the most characteristic slips of basic writers” (p. 136). While grounded in the struggle he connects to basic writers, whom he has already defined as adult students, Bartholomae extended this recognition to the struggles of student writers in general. Bartholomae then used an example written by his student, who was a mechanic, to demonstrate the student’s use of his own voice to offer a life lesson based in commonplaces instead of succeeding in the appropriation of an academic voice to provide grounded speculation concluding that “for the unskilled writer, the problem is different in degree and not in kind” (p. 159). Bartholomae provides a theoretical and practical perspective of student writing that is based in work with adult students but applied across the discipline—perhaps beyond.

Bartholomae not only addressed questions of Social Constructivism and advanced concerns surrounding basic writers, he deconstructed Expressivism. Pitting current concepts of social considerations against the progression of Expressivism, Bartholomae (1995) participated in an ongoing conversation with Elbow in which both scholars argued for the function of the teaching of writing. Bartholomae asserted that “there is no writing that is writing without teachers”; he extended his argument and criticism of Elbow by adding that “to hide the teacher is to hide the traces of power, tradition and authority present at the scene of writing . . . (p. 481). For Bartholomae, the goal of teaching writing is to teach students to participate in the language and discourse of the Academy, making it a dialogue instead of a monologue.

Elbow, in response, attempted to guard the goal of teaching writing as teaching self-exploration and actualization. For Elbow (1995), “the central question of the conversation was: Whether I should invite my first year students to be self-absorbed and see themselves at the center of the discourse in a sense, credulous; or whether I should invite them to be personally modest and intellectually scrupulous and to see themselves as at the periphery—in a sense, skeptical and distrustful” (p. 496). Elbow shamelessly promoted the former, admitting that he invited first year students “to take their own ideas too seriously; to think that they are the first person to think of their idea and . . . to write as though they are a central speaker at the center of the universe . . .” adding that he did not want his students to feel that “they must summarize what others have said and only make modest rejoinders from the edge of the conversation to all the smart thoughts that have already been written” (p. 496). The conversation extended throughout the 90s and resulted in multiple publications and numerous new conversations. While neither scholar would be immediately associated with adult learners, placed in context it is clear that the research and teaching of each was greatly impacted by adult learners and that their work greatly impacted the pedagogical turns and topics of Composition Studies.

As a scholar more overtly associated with adult learners, Rose criticized narrow constructions of cognition and expanded social construction to include considerations of class and access, again clarifying

questions concerning learners who enter college (or do not) without strong academic skills. Initially, Rose (1985) extended the conversation surrounding students' struggles and errors by suggesting a possible link between bad writing and bad teaching that not only asked teachers to take responsibility for their role in student writing, expanding Shaughnessy's suggestion, but also allowed students not to be seen as the singular source, whether social or inherent in origin, of their learning and writing. Rose's subsequent work challenged limited cognitive explanations and called for recognition of social and cultural contexts that recognize the complexity of cognition as "rich and varied" (1988, p. 359). While Rose often acknowledged the struggles of the educational underclass, many of whom were older and returning students, Rose did not necessarily define these students within the larger context of adult learners.

Rose's work greatly expanded the conversation around the struggles of students unprepared for academic work. Specifically, "Narrowing the Mind and the Page" (1988) questioned the binaries and oversimplifications that characterized major theories of cognitive development (*viz.* field dependence-independence, hemisphericity, Piaget's stages of cognitive development, and orality-literacy studies) as they were applied to basic writers and argued that such models, as applied to writing studies, eliminated individual differences, distracted from a focus on student writing, and reinforced and reflected cultural stereotypes (pp. 356-57). Arguing that "as any developmental psychologist will point out, there are major conceptual problems involved in applying a developmental model to adults," Rose specified that Piaget's theory, in particular, "was derived from the close observation of infants, children, and early- to mid-adolescents; it was intended as a description of the way thinking evolves in the growing human being" and ultimately, applying such limited structures "to college-age students and, particularly, to adult learners is to generalize it to a population other than the one that yielded it" (p. 363). In addition to challenging Cognitivism and championing Constructionism, Rose extended research on adult learners.

Rose (1989) continued these conversations and related student struggles directly to adult students in *Lives on the Boundary*. Building on his work with adult students in night school and returning veterans, as well as his personal experience (like Freire and Elbow), Rose explored the abilities hidden by class and

cultural barriers and argued that student errors ranged from social in origin to attempts at new endeavors, neither of which stemmed from intellectual deficits. Rose was a developmental student who struggled through his freshman year of college—an opportunity only afforded by a high school English teacher who saw potential in Rose. Although he often omitted or overlooked the direct impact of race and gender, Rose did add class to the conversation, suggesting the possibility that work on adults serve to usher in considerations on other social topics that are addressed throughout and beyond the social turn. Rose’s research on nontraditional students greatly expands disciplinary conversations surrounding class and access, work that opens critical conversations and considerations for Composition Studies and work he continues even today.

Brodkey continues the social turn by addressing class as well as gender (or perhaps conflating the two) within conversations around basic learners. Adult students play a pivotal part in the major disciplinary explorations into gender, and while adult students and gender do factor into Brodkey’s research, like Rose, class reads as a bold subtext. Brodkey considers the role of class and gender in relation to adult learners and connects these concerns to larger disciplinary conversations and questions. Brodkey (1989) offered a Foucauldian reading of correspondences “initiated by six white middle-class teachers (four women and two men) taking my graduate course on teaching basic writing and sustained by six white working-class women enrolled in an Adult Basic Education (ABE) class” (p. 643). Analysis of the exchanges revealed less about the writing of the adult learners than it revealed about class-based concerns surrounding education and Composition.

Brodkey found that while the graduate students told “stories representing themselves as guilty about their inability to find enough time,” the responses from the adult students were “most frequently about external threats to the well-being of themselves and their families or their neighbors” and discussions of low pay jobs with little security and second jobs that limit time with family (p. 646). Brodkey noted that despite the clear fact that the graduate students and the adult students “alike told class-based narratives,” the graduate students either failed to respond directly or demonstrated inept attempts to

acknowledge the narratives shared by the adult students, which led Brodkey to surmise that such “refusal to acknowledge the content of their correspondents’ narratives, most explicable as a professional class narcissism that sees itself everywhere it looks, alienates the ABE writers from educational discourse and, more importantly, from the teachers it ostensibly authorizes” (p. 646). Although some of the adult students found ways to place themselves and their narratives within the educational discourse, others were eventually overwhelmed by the exchanges with the graduate students and simply retreated to silence. Even though these communications existed absent a direct teacher-student relationship between the graduate students and the adult students, the discourse of power and privilege was present. Ultimately, the graduate students’ refusal to admit or address concerns of class distanced them from the adult learners and alienated them from their individual role in the exchanges—actions that legitimized and reinforced the elitism of American education and the adult students it abjects.

Brodkey provided little if any other information regarding the women or their Adult Basic Education class leaving the reader unsure if it was a writing class and questioning whether it was a credit-bearing class or even if it was at an educational institution that offers courses for college credit. Further the fact that Brodkey’s students were graduate students allows for the assumption that they, too, were adult students. No such categorization was considered, implying that identification as an adult student is tied to statuses such as remedial, developmental, or basic. In all, Brodkey’s analysis implied that an underlying designation of adult student is class—particularly class as tied to a lack of formal education. In fact, while “On the Subjects of Class and Gender in ‘The Literacy Letters’” denotes the study of gender and class within the letters, gender is not a focus in the article—even to the extent that gender fades into the designation of basic and adult basic.

By bringing class to the conversation in an overt way not only by discussing it, as Rose does, but by demonstrating that class is connected intimately to the designations of adult learners, Brodkey reveals that the different worldview of many adult learners is the result of inhabiting a different world—a realization that ties to larger threads within a larger subtext. As disciplinary conversations built on texts

that explore elements associated with adult learners develop, they move beyond the practical concerns found in the early literature on adult learners—specifically concerns related to classroom practices that support these struggling students. New extensions of these conversations within the context of the social turn return to the theoretical concerns of Freire by engaging questions of access as well as ability. Perhaps some of the emphasis on class and access can be directly connected to the influence of Freire, and perhaps interest in gender can be connected to the inclusion of more female scholars who are interested in the work of feminism, but the social turn also sees overall shifts toward topics and conversations that expose disciplinary assumptions and intentions. Like Brodkey, Bizzell produces influential work derived from and advancing research on adult learners that raises larger questions about Composition Studies.

Bizzell anchors the turn to Social Construction as a major pedagogical and theoretical progression for Composition Studies, and her work has a major impact on the direction and development of the discipline. Just as Rose and Bartholomae challenged the limits of Cognitivism and turned toward the notions of social construction that saw writing as social, political, and communal, Bizzell made a concrete move away from focuses on the internal work of cognition to focus instead on the external work of construction. While Bartholomae suggested that students must be made aware of the conventions of the academic community, Bizzell argued that improving student writing required understanding and explaining conventions, a focus Elbow resisted when he suggested students should be the focus of their own writing. Arguably, Bizzell is the culmination of disciplinary work on adult learners, drawing from Elbow, Friere, Shaughnessy, and Lunsford.

While first struggling to run a writing program, Bizzell discovered Composition Studies when a colleague, Herzberg, gave her copies of Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bizzell admitted that these “two books continue to have a profound effect on me, clearly visible in my work for the ten years after I read them and still strongly present today” arguing even that “Shaughnessy influenced my pedagogical practice, whereas Freire influenced me more in my educational theory” (1997, p. 319). Asserting Freire's place as one of the most influential educational

theorists of our time, Bizzell stated: “I truly believe that Freire has been of profound importance for a whole generation of American writing teachers” (p. 319). Specifically, Bizzell argued that “‘basic writers are very much like Freire’s peasants,’ in need of an intellectual method that will help them penetrate and analyze their surrounding” and “that mastery of academic discourse provides this method analogous to the literacy education Freire provided to his students (see 150)” (p. 320). Building on numerous work built on adult learners, Bizzell’s scholarship undergirds the social turn of the 80s, paving the way for the Critical Pedagogy to come. But in the context of the question of whether adult learners impacted Composition Studies, Bizzell’s work, like Brodkey’s, not only provides evidence of the impact of adult learners on the discipline, it also gives rise to elements important for discussion and implications.

Bizzell (1982) initially argued that from the 60s-80s, students entering composition classrooms lacked academic standards to the extent that teachers started to worry that instead of focusing on teaching students to write, they first needed to teach them to think. At the same time, these students had “so much trouble writing Standard English that we are driven away from stylistic considerations back to the basics of grammar and mechanics,” signaling a need to teach the basic higher and lower order concerns. (p. 366). While Bizzell accepted that “inner-directed research might come up with an heuristic that is useful in Basic Writing classes,” she also argued that “if we use it there, we should not imagine that the heuristic allows us to forget who the students are in Basic Writing classes, where they come from, what their prospects are in short, why these particular students are having educational difficulties” (p. 385). By emphasizing the social perspective within conversations around basic writers, Bizzell served to expand conversations around adult students and connect social context to this specific population

Bizzell (1986) extended this discussion by asking “What Happens When Basic Writers Come to College?” The answer is that they struggle to learn academic discourse in part because they are not only learning a new dialect and genre but are also acquiring a new worldview. Bizzell noted that basic writers were required to face and acquire a new worldview, that of the Academy, and she added that the struggles of these students “are best understood as stemming from the initial distance between their world-views

and the academic world view, and perhaps also from the resistance to changing their own world-views that is caused by this very distance.” (p. 297). When faced with this foreign worldview, Bizzell worried that some “Basic writers may begin to feel that their problem really is that they're too dumb for college, or that they just can't think the way the teacher wants” (p. 296). Expanding upon her prior claim that using psychological models serves to stigmatize basic writers and to ignore cultural differences in thinking (“Cognition, Convention, and Certainty”), Bizzell suggested that perhaps researchers such as Lunsford and D’Angelo turned to cognitive psychology in search of models to understand the intellectual development of basic writers because they believed that “such students really are incapable of college-level thought” (p. 296). With this, Bizzell unearths a subtext, perhaps thinly veiled, that exposes the possibility of two very distinct camps in relation to basic writers, views that might extend to adult students: those who believe these students are really less capable, while perhaps through no fault of their own, and those who believe that these students are as capable but only in need of specific supports.

Where students were defined by their abilities, cognition became one explanation: perhaps these struggling students are built for academic work. Perhaps they simply are not able. Rejecting this possibility, the Social Constructionists look for explanations based in class struggles or cultural differences, distinctions that come to replace the general designation of basic writer. Recall the conversation discussed in Chapter One: The debate surrounding the use of the designation of basic writers. While Bartholomae noted that “basic writing once served a strategic function, as a way of marking and staking out a contested space within the curriculum for students whose differences had been deemed signs of their unfitness for higher education,” by the 90s, he had come to believe that basic writing was “functioning instead to sort bodies deemed ‘Other’—these are the ‘normal’ or ‘mainstream’ writers; they are the ‘basic’ ones—while erasing rather than engaging productively with class and race differences with the tensions around those differences, and with the challenges they might otherwise make to the social order of higher education” (VanHaitsma, 2010, pp. 99-100). Class and race, Bartholomae argued, were being swallowed within *basic* and needed to be parsed to be heard. The camp

of basic learners, once recognized, quickly grew too large not to splinter. But as the adult learners within Basic Writing move within categorizations of gender, class, and race, they remain adult learners only now they fill other research agendas and fuel other scholarly conversations.

The deconstruction of basic writers as a unique and uniform constituency within Composition mirrors the movement within Adult Education that has and is dismantling adults as a singular entity and adult learning as a unified approach with a distinct theoretical basis—a necessary step in the process of recognition and inclusion. Both adult learners and basic writers have progressed from identification to individuation by becoming nouns then verbs then proper nouns. As discussed in the introduction, such is the work of identifying as agentifying: Enough people form a critical mass that becomes a population that is noticed—the population is categorized by a concept that constructed these individuals—that context is unpacked and repackaged as a lens through which others can identify the manifestations of that concept in context—after which the population that is made visible is returned to the status of individuals, only now transformed from marginalized subalterns and subjects to students. While this process continues for both adult learners and basic writers, the work of Composition scholars who facilitated the development and dispersion of basic writers can also support the movement of adult students as they advance toward agency.

Bizzell, and the work of the social turn, unlocks concerns that need to be unpacked and that undergird conversations within Composition for decades to come. The 80s sees more attempts to broaden understandings of adults within their social contexts, as well as more texts that totally overlook their existence, but now in the texts that recognize them as adults without really recognizing them as adult learners, a thread of classism and a deeper assumption of educational elitism suggests that the prior designations were based on an assumption that individuals cannot in theory or practice become adults without education. Freire's connection between education and worldview is also concretized by clarifications of the disconnect between different worldviews and the worlds they inhabit.

The social and political themes of the 80s extended into the 90s and expanded into post-process, post-modern, and post-structural constructions of cultural studies. The work of “social construction was widely accepted as a theoretical basis for understanding language use, as can be seen in the research directions of technical and business communication, English as a second language, and writing centers” (Bedford. “The 1990s”). The histories of Composition come to the forefront and the pedagogy of process comes into question (Delpit, Pratt). Ultimately, the foundation built in the 60s and bolstered in the 70s is evident in the work of the 80s and 90s, and much of this developmental work can now be seen as related to the adult students found in classrooms across each of these decades.

By 1985, at least one Composition scholar had recognized the large number of adults in composition classes and argued that “even with this large population of adult learners enrolled in college campuses across the country, little has been done to address the needs of adult learners. This is certainly true in the literature on composition instruction, which has given scant attention to the specific needs of this population” (Hashimoto, p. 55). Closer examination reveals that there was considerable work on adults in the Composition literature to that point; nevertheless, that claim of a lack of attention to their specific needs holds true across all the literature. To that end, my analysis of the scholars and the scholarship that included adult learners has established the place of adult learners within the foundational literature of Composition Studies and demonstrated their impact on the development of the discipline. Additionally, within these texts and contexts, other uncertainties and unanswered questions surface and request attention and consideration. Both the evidence of the influence of adult learners on the development of Composition Studies and the possible interpretations and speculation that arise from the search for such evidence contain implications that impact the past, present, and future of Composition Studies.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

My findings confirm that adult learners are present in the canonical literature and that they played a pivotal part in the development of many Composition scholars and the theories and pedagogies these scholars practiced and promoted. Adult students have inspired foundational scholars and influenced formative scholarship that grounds and defines major schools and movements in the discipline. By confirming the presence of adult learners in the foundational literature of the discipline and demonstrating their impact on formative scholars and movements, my research begins the process of reconciling the disciplinary oversight of this population and their contribution to Composition Studies.

Beyond establishing that adult learners were present in and were impactful on the canonical literature of Composition Studies, my findings suggest that the impact of adult learners has expanded beyond the early literature in ways that have influenced the discipline as a whole. My findings clearly connect substantial foundations of Expressivism to direct work with adult learners. In 2005, Fulkerson argued that despite the influence of the Social Turn throughout the 90s, Expressivism had and was continuing to expand “its region of command” across the theories and practices of the field (p. 655). As a result, the impact of early work with adult learners can be connected to research and movements that expand far beyond adult learners, Expressivists, and early Composition literature. Stated simply, these formidable scholars and their formative work confirm the impact adult learners have had and continue to have on Composition Studies.

In addition to establishing that adult learners impacted the early literature and practices of Composition Studies and suggesting that adult learners impacted all of Writing Studies, my findings also confirm that researchers who were working with adult learners in their composition classrooms were not

grounding their work in research on adult learners, as established by the lack of references to literature from Adult Education in the articles included in my findings. Despite not citing work on Adult Education, many of the practices and approaches developed in response to the struggling adult students found in the literature mirrored established practices and approaches found in the existing literature of Adult Education. Although my research did not aim to address or answer the question of *how* adult learners impacted and impact Writing Studies and instead focused only on establishing *that* they impacted the development of Composition Studies as evidenced through the foundational literature, my findings suggest the connection between specific writing pedagogies and established andragogies and imply their role as progenitors. In depth study could examine the connection to see if the pedagogical turns located in the Composition Studies literature that responded to adult learners directly mirrored andragogical approaches already in practice in Adult Education at the time of their conception in Composition Studies as a means to reinforce the approaches through their replication in another field.

The fact that similar claims could be levied at disciplines beyond Composition that have more recently moved away from skill and drill practices that andragogical approaches abandoned in the 50s suggests that many modern pedagogies could be andragogies—a larger claim worthy of consideration. More importantly, acknowledging that Composition Studies responded to adult students in disciplinary classrooms without overt recognition of the vast literature on this population can help Writing Studies and current composition teachers and researchers become aware of the value of looking at incoming populations as existing groups for which there may be an existing body of literature and best practices that can be included in disciplinary responses to the population. Most importantly, future work on adult learners in Composition Studies (and beyond) can be built on the assertion that adult learners played a role the development of the discipline and can draw directly from disciplinary literature on adult learners.

Composition Studies is again witnessing an influx of new populations of students into composition classrooms. Recognizing adult learners in the disciplinary literature can prepare us to recognize adult learners in our current composition classrooms. Furthermore recognizing the disciplinary

responses to adult learners in the literature can prepare us to respond to new adult learners gaining access to the Academy. Recognizing adult learners is of immediate importance because Composition Studies is continuing to overlook this population of students, which is impacting classroom practices and student outcomes. Connecting current literature on adult learners to historical literature on adult learners and to the larger literature on adult learners can reconcile this oversight and rectify the impact on current students. The current disciplinary literature on student-veterans can be considered as an example of the immediate impact made possible as a result of my findings.

Analyzing the developmental disciplinary literature on adult learners also reveals major questions that need to be addressed by Composition and Writing Studies. As the population of students entering the Academy shifts again, the role of the Academy must shift in order to serve these new students and their new goals. As a result, the place and purpose of Composition and Writing Studies must be reevaluated in order to identify and acknowledge our disciplinary intentions and achieve our student outcomes. Many such disciplinary questions and conversations have been situated within the conversations surrounding adult learners in our classrooms and our attempts to respond to these struggling students. Much of the literature on basic writers, for instance, reveals disciplinary efforts to reconcile overarching questions—questions that remain and have evolved in light of new waves of adult learners in Composition Studies. A closer look at these threads reveals implications for current disciplinary questions and current Composition students.

Summary of Findings

The organizing question of my investigation considered whether adult students played a role in the development of Composition Studies. Answering this question required first reviewing the canonical literature, which I designated as ranging from the 1960s to the 1980s, to locate adult learners in major texts and then reading those texts to confirm their presence and analyzing the texts to verify their impact. The location and collection of texts in which adult learners are present and purposeful also serves as the beginning of an archive on adult learners within Composition Studies. The result is not only an historical

narrative that constructs the story of adult learners within the development of Composition Studies but also a textual and contextual analysis of the ways in which adult students shape the theories and pedagogies that built Writing Studies. Other questions and considerations that resulted from efforts to answer the driving research question were noted and are included in the implications and discussion. An overview of my findings confirms that the answer to the question of whether Composition Studies was influenced by adult learners is yes.

I considered 22 anthologies and edited collections. After narrowing based on context and impact, nine anthologies were selected. Beyond the anthologies, I reviewed the archives of nine journals and seven special issues. Additionally, I developed a list of more than 30 key terms. Focusing on the work of nine ground-breaking and influential Composition scholars, I demonstrated that each scholar developed a major theory or practice, often both and more than one of each, based on direct work with adult students and that the resulting research played a foundational role in a major school or movement within Composition Studies. Within the research and the rooms of many formative scholars and teachers of Composition adult learners are found. Taken together, the scholarship inspired and informed by adult students tells what is likely to be only a small piece in the large story of the impact adult learners had on the development of the theories and pedagogies of Composition Studies. The lives and the lessons of these scholars tell the stories of their students.

Neither Elbow nor his work has been tied to adult learners or andragogy. Elbow played a fundamental role in the move away from CTR and in the development of Expressivism, as well as the disciplinary turns that responded to the Process Movement. Elbow's work emerged from his personal struggles as an adult student, and his theories and practices were applied and refined through his direct work with adult learners. Elbow's student-centered theories and practices such as workshopping aligned well with major andragogical practices. The role writing played in Elbow's life and the way that he saw it impact his students convinced him that writing could and should serve as a means of creation and self-expression, also an andragogical principle. Elbow drew inspiration from the adult learners who served as

subjects who facilitated his development of theories and practices during the formative stages of his work—work that remains essential to Composition Studies.

Freire and his wide range of works played a central role in the development not only of Composition Studies but also of the fields of Theology and Education. The only Composition scholar openly (if only outside of Composition) associated with Adult Education, within Composition Studies, Freire, like Elbow, helped the discipline evolve beyond CTR. Freire's work also laid the groundwork for the disciplinary work on basic writers, framed the disciplinary movement into Social Construction, and inspired disciplinary work on Critical Pedagogy. Freire's early struggles with poverty informed his theories and practices, which were directly developed based on his work with struggling adult learners. Freire and the theories developed from his work allowed Composition scholars to locate the work of writing and Writing Studies within but also beyond the classroom, a move that shifted the course of the discipline and the work of the field.

Adult students also played a critical role in the research of Shaughnessy, who initiated the work of Basic Writing based on her work with struggling adult students. Basic writers played a vital role in the research of numerous scholars in the development of the discipline and provided the ground for conversations within and across all the major schools and movements. While basic writers constituted a specific set of circumstances, teachers and scholars came to realize that throughout the 60s-80s, more and more students, and more mainstream students, were struggling with writing and with fundamentals that required teachers and researchers to address their needs not only individually and in the classroom but by participating in and contributing to larger conversations across disciplines and institutions concerning the best practices associated with responding to the needs of students. Shaughnessy's work with adult students who demonstrated these characteristics became paramount within Composition Studies and influenced subsequent work on students who entered the Academy less well prepared than the Academy was prepared to support.

Also stemming from work with developmental students, Lunsford's scholarship sought cognitive responses to the needs of struggling students and played a crucial role in the development of Cognitive research. Through Lunsford's work with community college students, many of whom would have been adults, she not only learned to teach but she developed tools and approaches to teaching that directly fed her subsequent teaching and researching. Although many of the practical approaches that Lunsford found to work well for her students not only overlapped and mirrored andragogical practices but were developed from her work with students, her early work is associated with basic students but not openly connected to adult students. Lunsford moved her practices into wide circulation across not only the discipline but throughout the Academy with her handbooks and her work on Writing Studies, both of which remain essential within the field.

Perl's landmark work on the composing process, which was central to the development of Process and helped expand the understanding of writing as a process by arguing that writers internalize their process, focused on her work with adult students. While Perl responded to the work on basic writers by directing attention toward the application of inappropriate categorizations (beginners, remedial) and suggesting that such limited categorizations limit the practice of teaching and the practices of teachers, she did not recognize her "unskilled" writers as adult students. Perl's work not only impacted and expanded research methods, it presented perspectives on and approaches to revision based on her work with a small number of students located in an institution replete with adult learners that received discipline-wide attention and added to broad conversations around the composing process. Perl's scholarship impacted Cognitivism and Expressivism and set the stage for future work in the field by applying a coding method and recognizing the need for more replicable, quantitative studies within Composition.

Bartholomae's work facilitated the disciplinary turn toward all things social and cultural by deconstructing Expressivism and advancing questions of Social Constructionism and concerns surrounding basic writers. Bartholomae acknowledged that basic writers were synonymous with adult

students and that they had not been afforded that proper research or recognition. Extending the conversations on the causes of and responses to student errors, Bartholomae recognized that student errors often related to the students' struggle to assert the authoritative voice needed to enter academic discourses, a struggle he observed within his basic writers. Bartholomae built on his work with adult students to substantiate assertions and takeaways generalized to all students at all levels of writing. Bartholomae's debate with Elbow played a pivotal role in the disciplinary evolution of the 90s.

Inspired by his experience as an inexperienced student, Rose expanded the work of the social turn by including voices of adults and considerations of class. Based on his work with adults in night school and his tutoring of veterans, Rose found that student abilities were impacted by class and cultural barriers and argued that errors in student writing could stem from causes ranging from culture to failed attempts at creativity. Rose also recognized that models developed for other populations cannot be applied to adult learners, implying that new work taking into consideration new considerations was necessary. Rose greatly expanded discussions around theories and practices and advanced work on class through his work with working-class adult learners.

Brodkey played a major role in the development of conversations that moved social considerations into Composition Studies and adult students into social considerations. Brodkey's research brought the perspective of gender to the table but placed class on the mainstage. In her analysis of exchanges between her graduate students and women in an Adult Basic Education course, Brodkey asserted that her graduate students' inability to overcome the class-based differences in the worldviews of the ABE students represented and reflected a disconnect that existed throughout the field. Brodkey, like Freire, equated literacy to democracy and moved her theories into practices to the extent of offering a sample curriculum, translating her impact into theory and practice.

Bizzell exemplified the social turn of the 80s and offered pivotal research in the work of Social Construction and in the development of the field. Bizzell emphasized the social contexts of the struggles of basic writers and argued that struggling students often suffered from the distance between the

worldviews they brought to the Academy and the worldview of the Academy—a perspective with which they must become familiar and in which they must become fluent in order to progress through, and arguably beyond, the Academy. Bizzell also recognized that some voices within Composition Studies believed that some students might simply be incapable of academic success, a consideration dismissed by Bizzell and other Social Constructionists. Bizzell’s work illuminated the world of difference between the educated adult and the basic writers with whom she worked.

Taken together, these researchers and their research establish that adult learners had an impact on the foundational literature of Composition Studies. Elbow and Freire moved the discipline beyond outdated theories and methods by responding to the needs of unique groups of students, which developed the Process and Expressivist movements and initiated the development of the modern Composition field. Shaughnessy, Lunsford, and Perl built on this work to create approaches that responded to these struggling students, which resulted in discipline-wide movements and conversations that moved the field forward and introduced tools and perspectives from beyond the discipline to expand the scope of the work. Bartholomae, Rose, Brodkey, and Bizzell continued to respond to students in the classrooms and advance the work of Composition beyond the classrooms of the Academy by recognizing their responsibility to society and their impact across cultures. And all of these researchers published major works grounded in work with or on adult learners in composition.

While simply recognizing that adult learners have not been recognized is of ethical, theoretical, and historical concern, it also has immediate significance for current work in Composition Studies. As a discipline, Composition Studies—Writing Studies—continues the work of inclusion through efforts to recognize incoming student populations and respond to their needs in the writing classroom and beyond. By not recognizing that many Basic Writers were adult learners, Composition lost the opportunity to draw on the resources of Adult Education to help better understand and respond to this population. Additionally, by not realizing that Basic Writers were adult learners not only was literature on adult learners not utilized, learning related to Basic Writers could not contribute to research on adult learners.

Unfortunately similar oversight continues. One clear example of such oversight is found in work on student-veterans.

Composition Studies is currently invested in researching and supporting student-veterans and their access to the Academy and success in the writing classroom. Viewing the current Composition Studies research on student-veterans through the lens of my research findings—that is to say bringing awareness of the impact that overlooking adult learners can have on inclusion efforts—suggests that veterans are the current Basic Writers of Composition Studies. Recognizing and responding to this situation will not only allow the discipline to correct the theoretical and ethical issues of oversight, it can result in immediate changes to the relationship between Composition Studies and adult learners and the responses to student-veterans.

Immediate Impact

Composition Studies is doing considerable work to facilitate a broader understanding of student-veterans and their place in Composition Studies (Hart & Thompson, 2013; Hart & Thompson, 2016; Hinton, 2013; Martin, 2012; Navarre Cleary & Wozniak, 2013; Schell, 2013; Valentino, 2012). Work is also connecting veterans and writing in disciplines beyond Composition (Copen, 2014; Hartman & Baumgartner, 2011; Krupnick, Green, Amdur, Alaoui, Belouali, Roberge, & Dutton, 2016; Nevinski, 2013; Nguyenvoges, 2015) and in popular media sources (Betts, *Bangor Daily News*, 2015; Cornish, *All Things Considered*, 2012; Driver, *TED Talk*, 2016; Porzucki, *PRI's The World*, 2013). Composition Studies was even offered a discipline-wide call to action to respond to student-veterans. In 2010, Valentino, Chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), directed attention to the “ethical obligation” of Composition Studies to “react responsibly” to student-veterans in composition classrooms and focused specifically on the role of WPAs and their responsibility “to student veterans as a demographic” (Hart & Thompson, 2013, “Reacting Responsibly,” para. 1). As part of the action to their call, CCCC awarded a Research Initiative Grant to fund a two-year study of student-veterans in the writing classroom.

In the findings of that research, Hart and Thompson (2013) confirmed that veteran enrollments at colleges and universities were increasing and would continue to do so for decades to come, and they acknowledged that “the first-year writing classroom (which typically requires close peer-to-peer interaction and conferencing with faculty) is likely to be a place where veteran status is disclosed” (“Ethical,” p. 3). Hart and Thompson found that most veterans entering higher education start at two-year colleges or in online programs, which is due in part to “the flexibility of scheduling that two-year and online colleges provide to veterans, who often return to school while also having families or work obligations that limit their capacity to enroll full-time in classes at traditional four-year institutions” (p. 3). As a result, most student-veterans take first-year writing in these programs—programs that offer fewer resources to support veterans and faculty.

Immediately, the connection between adult learners as a larger population and student-veterans is obvious. As noted, the main individual obstacles facing adult learners attempting to enter higher education are time and money (Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Merriam, Cafarella, & Baumgartner, 2006). Access to tuition and housing benefits, however, address those needs for student-veterans. The main institutional obstacle for adult learners is scheduling that fits within their family and professional responsibilities (Aslanian, 2001; Falasca, 2011; Sohn, 2006). To that end, veterans and adult learners face the same institutional needs. Hart and Thompson do acknowledge that “many of the transition issues that are reported by veterans parallel in significant ways the transition many nontraditional students face when making the move from careers back to college,” and they recognize “the possibility that some of the transitional issues are less about their status as veterans and more about their status as adult learners,” but despite noting this connection early in the white paper, not once more throughout their research in this report or their subsequent research extending these findings is the connection addressed (“Ethical,” p. 4). Close reading of their findings, however, establishes that many of the needs connected to the students’ status as veterans are clearly “more about their status as adult learners.” Further, it is evident that many of

the suggestions offered in relation to student-veterans would be applicable to adult learners—if the connection of student-veterans as adult learners were made explicit.

Hart and Thompson note that despite the increase in the student-veteran population, few faculty are provided with formal training on veteran issues: “On many campuses we visited, WPAs and other writing faculty were either unaware of the presence of Veterans Resource Centers on their campuses and/or had not had any contact with the staff of those offices” (“Ethical,” p. 3). When training was available, it focused “on the deficits of student veterans,” which served to “perpetuate already established stereotypes of the ‘veteran,’ often calling on the simplistic narratives of veterans as heroes or as wounded warriors, and they rarely acknowledge the complex histories of medical traumas such as TBI and PTSD” (p. 4). Such trainings were also found to “perpetuate one-dimensional narratives about what it means to be a ‘veteran,’” and to overlook both individual nuances and overarching facts, such as the fact that a majority of “veterans have not directly experienced combat” and “combat experience is not a universally shared experience among service members”—a finding that exposed the overall lack of disciplinary knowledge regarding veterans, given Valentino’s conference call focused on the goal to “help ease the transition from combat to the classroom” (p. 3). Again, a direct and overt connection to adult learners is evident to readers familiar with research on adult learners. Not only are faculty not trained to work with adult students, narratives, such as those found in the Composition literature, paint the adult learner as deficient.

The findings also connect student-veterans to writing classrooms directly. Hart and Thompson found that “the personal essay, in various forms, continues to be a mainstay of first-year writing classrooms” (p. 4). Because the use of such an assignment will likely call for the student-veteran to expose herself as such, Hart and Thompson reinforced the call for faculty training, specifically in direct response to the questions Valentino noted in her Address as Chair: “what if individuals decide to describe traumatic events? In what manner do we respond on paper, or in person? I have always espoused that we are not trained therapists; however, we do have an ethical obligation to react responsibly” (p. 4). The idea

that personal narratives could reveal sensitive information is in no way limited to student-veterans or even adult learners, which leaves readers wondering why the discipline is not extending this concern to all instructors assigning and commenting on personal narratives who would face similar questions in relation to sexual or domestic abuse survivors or any students who reveal such traumas in their narratives.

Ultimately, the resulting recommendations for WPAs and classroom practices included giving consideration to student-veterans in the construction of syllabi and classroom assignments, being aware of and supporting the expansion of resources for student-veterans, ending deficient training models and narratives, and extending overall trainings—all outcomes equally relevant to adult learners as a population and perhaps even to populations beyond adults. Additionally, in their recommendations for future research, Hart and Thompson suggested examination of the “Veterans Industry,” the term coined for network of schools and services that recruit and support student-veterans, in order to assure ethical intentions and outcomes. Such calls for investigations of the for-profit education industry in support of the adult learners who fill such institutions in search of access to higher education are likely long overdue. Hart and Thompson also called for research on the role of class and socio-economic status, particularly as it related to literacy and preparedness, and for research on degree completion and retention particularly in relation to the high first-year postsecondary dropout rate for student-veterans, which they noted as a specific point of interest where WPAs, writing centers, and writing instructors can have an impact. Yet again, all of the same claims and concerns apply to adult learners in general.

In their subsequent research based on these results, Hart and Thompson (2016) updated the percentage of student-veterans to nearly 5% of college and university students nationwide (and far more in some locations), and they shared research findings that include an analysis of the best composition course constructions and offered suggestions for faculty training based in assets instead of deficiencies. Professional development, in fact, was the through line of their findings. Hart and Thompson noted (again) that throughout their research they “repeatedly encountered anxiety among WPAs or veteran services staff over the need for professional development about veterans on campus” (“Veterans,” p. 359).

The first suggestion for WPAs to respond to student-veterans was to establish their presence on their campus and in their classroom because “program administrators in core fields such as writing have, in Valentino’s words, an ‘ethical obligation’ to investigate and determine the level of need (“CCCC Chair’s Address”)” (“Veterans,” p. 360). Once the population of student-veterans has been established, faculty should be trained to consider the needs of this population in their course constructions and their classrooms. Again the reader is left wondering why no “ethical obligations” apply to all the other adult learners.

After investigating three classroom formats (veteran-only, veteran-focused, and veteran-friendly), Hart and Thompson found that veteran-friendly courses were the most successful and argued that segregating veterans or theming classes was less successful than simply training faculty to pay attention to the needs of vets in the construction of their classroom assignments. In addition to being the most successful model, veteran-friendly class formats were also the most accessible model, only requiring WPAs to provide faculty training instead of requiring programmatic or institutional changes. Since the needs associated with being a student-veteran generally mirror the needs associated with being an adult learner, the suggestion that faculty be trained on the needs of student-veterans and work to consider their needs in the construction of their syllabus and course assignments could just as easily be achieved in relation to adult learners, were there such an obligation to see the discipline’s responsibility to this population.

Ultimately, Hart and Thompson “recommend an asset-based model” of professional development for writing instructors in relation to student-veterans:

According to a report prepared by Drew Lieberman and Kathryn Stewart for Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, presenting post-9/11 veterans in an “asset” frame “produces an even better [perception] than portraying veterans as heroic. It also begins to reorient the way people think about how best to ‘thank’ veterans returning from service by shifting the focus from charity [or accommodation] to opportunity” (Lieberman and Stewart). However, virtually every professional

development module or program we encountered focused on veteran “deficits”: PTSD, TBI, trauma, lack of preparedness for college, absenteeism, disability, substance abuse, gender discrimination, sexual assault, transition issues. Such a deficit-based approach, we suggest, creates “a priori expectations about a student,” which, as Eugenia L. Weiss explains, “can lead an educator to treat the student differently and in accord with those expectations.” (“Veterans,” p. 360)

For Hart and Thompson, such a framing would not only be more effective, it would be more accurate since most faculty found that “veterans tend to be an asset to the classroom. Many bring broad worldviews to complex issues, and all members of the military receive extensive training in leadership and team building” and they noted that “one of the most repeated sentiments was that faculty highly valued student-veterans because of their professionalism, motivation, varied experiences, and maturity” (“Veterans,” p. 361). My research demonstrates that adults in the Composition literature are also viewed through constructions of deficiencies, which suggests that adult learners could also benefit from perspectives that value their assets and reform their narratives.

The narratives that construct student-veterans have, in fact, been considered in the literature of Adult Education. Belzer and Pickard (2015) analyzed the characterizations of adult literacy learners and identified five typical depictions: the Heroic Victim, the Needy (Problem) Child, the Broken (but Repairable) Cog, the Pawn of Destiny, and the Capable Comrade. Arguing that these depictions are “representative of the ways in which adult literacy learners are portrayed in the research literature,” Belzer and Pickard noted that despite the fact that these narratives are not comprehensive, the narratives constructed in the literature “drive the ‘action’ in research, policy, and practice arena” and “may have very real consequences for how adult literacy learning opportunities are provided and the outcomes that can be expected” (p. 250). Because Hart and Thompson did not focus on the student-veterans as adult learners, they could not access this resource. Further, an in-depth, dedicated analysis of the narratives established by the literature on adult students in Composition and Writing Studies could reveal the ways

in which adult learners are constructed in the literature and subsequent work could connect these constructions to the opinions and actions of instructors and administrators in relation to adult students. Connecting such work to Hart and Thompson's work on student-veterans could also allow consideration of an asset-based model of professional development as an antidote to the deficient deficiency narratives. Such valuable work would require recognition of the adult learners in Composition Studies, another example of the immediate impact of my research.

The asset-based pedagogical research Hart and Thompson suggest WPAs apply for professional development is built on the framework proposed in Saltmarsh's suggestion that student assets be "embraced because the experience and knowledge they contribute to the learning process, and the authority of the knowledge they possess, contribute necessarily to the construction of new knowledge," a sentiment that sounds strikingly similar to a major tenet of andragogy ("Veterans," p. 362). Hart and Thompson's closing comments of their combined research exemplified the connection between student-veterans and adult learners:

This is all to say that veterans' lived experiences promise to help shape classroom discussions, and their professional writing experiences stand to enrich students' considerations of various academic and non-academic literacies. Prompting dialogue about what helps veterans on a particular campus learn better will, we believe, prompt greater engagement with different ways of knowing and seeing the world, and such epistemological discussions may consequently help transform our ways of approaching our writing classrooms. Acknowledging student-veterans' needs while also recognizing their assets not only helps us enact good pedagogy, but it is at the very heart of the veteran ethos: service. In this case, to our students. (p. 363)

Not only could this statement apply to adult learners as a population, many of the same sentiments have been repeatedly expressed in the literature of Adult Education. Unfortunately, however, Composition Studies is repeating the sins of the past by doing to veterans what was done to Basic Writers. And again, the literature acknowledges that the students are adults without connecting them to the population of adult

learners. Hart and Thompson even noted that “The American Council on Education (ACE) indicates that the average student-veteran is thirty-three years old” and again acknowledged that student-veterans “often seek community colleges with programs designed to balance academics, work, and family,” but they still do not define students-veterans as part of the larger population of adult learners (p. 349). Despite this continued oversight, progress is evident.

Attempts to connect adult learners and student-veterans have been made. Navarre Cleary and Wozniak (2013) alerted Hart and Thompson of the connection in the 2013 Special Issues of *Composition Forum* on Veterans and Writing (for which Hart and Thompson served as the editors for Navarre Cleary and Wozniak’s piece). Navarre Cleary and Wozniak responded to Hart and Thompson by connecting student-veterans to adult learners and proposed “Malcolm Knowles’s six principles for adult learning as an asset-based heuristic for investigating how writing programs and writing teachers might build upon existing resources to support veteran students” (para. 2). Navarre Cleary and Wozniak also noted that nearly 90% of undergraduate veterans were aged 24 or older and note that many issues student-veterans report in relation to transitioning “parallel in significant ways the transition many nontraditional students face when making the move from careers back to college, suggesting the possibility that some of the transitional issues are less about their status as veterans and more about their status as adult learners” (para. 1). Attention was also given to the importance of not overlooking the distinction that student-veterans were part of the larger community of adult learners.

Navarre Cleary and Wozniak even warned that “claims that ‘student-veterans are inherently different from other students’ (Gann 216) are premised on the assumption that other students are ‘the traditionally-aged student body’ (Gann 214),” and they acknowledge that such an “assumption makes invisible the preponderance of nontraditional adult students in college writing classes and obscures research on adult learning that has taken place since the 1920s. In fact, ‘military veteran students are very similar to non-traditional students’ (Morreale 138)” (para. 3). While Navarre Cleary and Wozniak do draw on some research related to adult learners, they not only apply only the earliest literature, they do

not connect their claims to any of the disciplinary literature in Composition Studies that includes similar work on similar populations, such as veterans or basic writers—which highlights, again, the unique contribution and potential of my research findings. More concerning is that Navarre Cleary and Wozniak’s work did not impact extended work on the topic.

In Hart and Thompson’s 2016 work that served as the culmination of their grant research and extended their 2013 work, they again provided statistics that clearly established student-veterans as a subset of the larger population of adult learners while overlooking the prior work on adult learners, including Navarre Cleary and Wozniak’s work defining student-veterans as adult learners, and they continued to fail to address the wider needs of adult learners by recognizing that their suggestions for student-veterans were applicable to the larger population of adult learners. In fact, the strongest connection Navarre Cleary and Wozniak made between student-veterans and adult learners was the value of valuing their experience. Student-veterans do want to include their experience in the writing classroom, but like adults, they want to write about what they want to write about instead of feeling forced to recall and share events they do not want to write about or share. Despite the fact that Hart and Thompson explicitly and extensively discussed the role of valuing student-veterans’ experience in composition classrooms, they did not connect their research, their findings, or their recommendations to adult learners at large.

Examining the current work on student-veterans reveals the ways in which my research can have an immediate impact on the discipline. Composition Studies continues to categorize adult learners by designations other than adult learner. Even after acknowledging that student-veterans were adult learners and that most of their struggles related to their status as adults instead of their experience as veterans, Hart and Thompson did not connect their research to the research on adult learners and did not relate any of their findings or recommendations to adult students beyond veterans. While Navarre Cleary and Wozniak did recognize that the student-veterans were adult learners, they did not include current literature from Adult Education or address literature on adult learners in Composition Studies. Not only does recognizing

that adult learners are located within Composition Studies and that their role in the discipline has been significant allow current research on adult learners to be connected to research within the discipline, recognizing that adult learners have been ignored allows researchers in Composition Studies to see that they are still being ignored and that these disconnects impact students.

The research on student-veterans provides concrete solutions and opportunities for WPAs to impact student outcomes, but because Composition Studies is continuing to categorize adult learners using other definitions—such as student-veteran—larger opportunities to impact other populations are being lost. Many of the takeaways from research on student-veterans could facilitate adult learners or even all learners. Questions in relation to personal narratives and personal trauma that sparked from considerations of student-veterans, for instance, could feed larger conversations that impact all students and all of Composition Studies. Furthermore, disconnecting student-veterans from adult learners can also impact funding opportunities and services related to the suggested establishment of need based on the presence of a population. Similar side effects impacted support for Basic Writers, as seen in conversations about funding and through disciplinary responses to this population from within a research silo. Connecting adult learners to Composition research and classrooms also connects Composition to Adult Education and all the other disciplinary research in search of the best practices and approaches to facilitate students. As a result, my research on adult learners in the early Composition literature informs current research on adult learners and can impact writing studies today and tomorrow. My research also offers extended outcomes and opportunities, some expected and some a surprise.

Expectations and Implication

I expected to find adult learners within the canonical literature of the discipline, but I expected them to be concentrated in less influential places and people. To be fair, they were there, too, but identifying the impact of adult learners on a scholar as pivotal as Elbow and seeing the thread of that influence move through his scholarship and across the discipline was a surprise. I also expected that adults would be hard to find, and that was often the case. Many examples required extensive research to

locate supplementary contextual evidence. Overall, however, so many sources were located that the larger work became establishing the connection between the presence of the adults and the impact on the text and the larger impact of that text on the discipline. In the case of the nine scholars I selected, no extraordinary measures were required to establish their impact on the discipline because they all remain prominent. Options in addition to the nine had the potential to be included but were less established and would have required more evidence to connect to major movements or pedagogical outcomes. Such cases can be made but were not necessary to answer my research question of whether adult students impacted the discipline because the findings in relation to the nine named scholars served to establish and confirm that connection. Focusing on the works of these prominent authors allowed for extended contextual analysis of these texts to demonstrate the impact of adult learners instead of simply compiling and summarizing works where adults are present.

I anticipated finding direct links between adult students and the disciplinary pedagogy that resulted as a response to this population. What I expected less, however, was the undercurrent—the conversations on topics as heavy as questions around whether education is truly accessible to everyone, and not accessible in physical or financial ways but intellectually accessible. Once recognized, this question cannot be ignored or forgotten. Adults as a community without a doubt impacted these considerations, but I suspect that adult students are not the only available point of entry for such conversations. I suspect access to the same or similar threads is made available through examination and analysis of any number of questions or constituencies in Composition Studies. Further work must consider these questions and seek comparable situations and potential solutions.

I was also surprised by the implication that adult learners served as an entry point for disciplinary work on gender, class, and access in addition to work on questions concerning who can learn and who has the right to learn. Admittedly, when I first read Villaneuva's assertion that the theories of Composition evolved in response to "the introduction into our college classrooms of those we have come to call basic writers . . ." I suspected that it was a bit of an overstatement (p. xv). But I now understand. While there

are adult learners in areas of the literature outside of basic writing, their role in the creation and development and legitimization of Basic Writing changed the discipline, and likely the Academy, immeasurably and permanently. While the case would need to be made, my reading of the literature suggests that work on basic writers paves the way for and grounds the research on gender, race, and class in Composition Studies, as well as the research that stems from these explorations.

While I expected that adult learners would often be constructed in a negative light in the early disciplinary literature, I assumed that what I read as dismissive or disparaging language would not have been intended as such and instead would likely be the result of earnest attempts to study and facilitate the research subjects. The results I encountered were mixed. The tone of some of the work did feel dismissive or elitist, perhaps as informed by the location of larger questions in relation to class and access. Additionally the works that were not at all dismissive, in some cases, read as apologist in nature or perhaps as patronizingly sympathetic. What became overwhelmingly clear to me was that intention was not the focus of my research. As such, I paid less attention to the occasional thoughts I would have surrounding the intentions of the authors, focusing instead on the outcomes of their works.

The main implication for Composition Studies is the recognition of these adult students, the collective they form, and the impact they have had on the discipline. A result of that implication is awareness of the necessary and available work. To start, my research can and should be expanded to create a more comprehensive and complete archive of Composition and Writing Studies literature that includes adult learners. Having demonstrated that adult students impacted the development of the discipline as established by their place and purpose in the literature spanning the 1960s to the 1980s, similar questions should be asked of the more recent literature of the discipline and the subdisciplines.

Adult learners need to be parsed out of the literature grounded in gender, class, race, and ability. Based on what we see in the disciplinary development only through the 80s, it is evident that the literature on these discourse communities and their contact zones is likely to harbor adult learners. Professional and Technical Writing is also ripe for such considerations. Just as adults were and are unnoticed as adults in

the early literature, and just as locations such as Basic Writing and categories based on gender and class signal the possible presence of adult learners, new locations in new works also alert researchers to the possible presence of adult learners. Looking at the literature in the review reveals that considerable work within adult learning was done in online learning spaces. Composition Studies has also done and is doing work with learners in online spaces. Adult learners can be sought in these spaces. Inquiry into the place and impact of adult learners should not cease with the disciplinary literature of the 80s. Adults are still on the front lines of Composition research, and like the adult student-veterans, they often inhabit those front lines without recognition and all the available support.

The impact of this body of literature as a whole can then be considered and recorded. Including adult learners in the history of Writing Studies can also expand the unclear and incomplete history of the discipline. In addition to noting that disciplinary histories present painfully narrow reconstructions of the field and need expansion and reconsideration, McComiskey (2016) also recognized that these histories often fail to deal with the realities of the day-to-day work of the discipline and the students: “Has real teaching been abstracted out of our narratives of composition history? Have teachers and students been erased by the drive for temporal progression and narrative cohesion” (p. 8). Creating a history of adult learners that includes their impact and constructing consequential work that looks at the lives of adult learners in and beyond the classroom can help correct the oversight of both adult students and classroom-related research.

Recognizing adult learners in the literature and the classrooms of Composition Studies opens possibilities for teacher research, self-study, ethnography, autoethnography, and other work that has been done on other populations within the discipline but has not yet considered adult learners specifically as adult learners situated not only within the academic literature on adult learners but also within the disciplinary literature of identified adult learners. Composition syllabi from programs designated for adult students can be compared to syllabi from traditional composition classrooms. Composition teachers who teach in adult programs and in traditional settings can be interviewed to compare their experiences and

consider whether their approaches differ according to audience. Adult students who took composition courses in adult programs and in traditional institutions can be interviewed about their experiences. Composition textbooks and materials can be analyzed for elements of andragogy. Many old topics can receive new consideration in light of adult learners. I encountered numerous possibilities in my research.

For instance, while reading for the disciplinary impact of adult learners, I uncovered a subtext ripe for narrative analysis and thematic content analysis. In the search for the best organization schema, I grouped overlapping elements, terms, and concepts into clusters to form categories that implied narratives. For instance, the theme of struggle and lack of preparation was revealed through connected terms associated with that theme (unprepared, basic, literacy), terms which could be gathered to create a categorization (academically disadvantaged). Enough patterns and themes were located to argue for the presence of major narrative threads. Investigating strands and sentiments related to adult learners in early Composition literature could easily be expanded beyond early literature and beyond Composition. Narrative analysis of the literature on adult learners would serve to advance current research on the representations of adults in academic scholarship and would situate such work within Composition Studies and, as suggested, could extend the work of Belzer and Pickard (2015) to connect the narratives that construct adult learners to those that construct student-veterans and other populations within Composition and beyond. Navarre Cleary and Wozniak's work on student-veterans also made apparent the need to update dated understandings of adult learners and tailor such assumptions to Composition Studies by testing them with our students in our classrooms. Just as the researchers in Legal Studies found that notions of adults as self-directed did not translate into their situations or experiences, monolithic understandings of adult as learners need to be updated and nuanced within Composition Studies.

Expanding research on adult learners also presents ample opportunities for Composition Studies to respond to calls for quantitative research (Haswell, 2005; Lang & Baehr, 2012). Corpus-based work is beginning to emerge in the Writing Studies, and adult students can be included in such work to expand the considered variables, and work specifically focused on adult learners can expand the overall efforts

aimed at better understanding students in and beyond Composition. Researchers can identify different groups within adult students (race, class, gender, ability, veterans, by job and industry . . .) and research these subsets within adult learners to compare them to each other and to subsets of traditional students. Researchers can compare adult learners across different delivery formats. Researchers can locate and examine adults in traditional composition classes and online classes and compare them and their work and their experiences and outcomes to traditional students. Researchers can investigate the topics adult students write about, track the learning of adult students, compare the comments teachers offer adult students to traditional students, and evaluate whether what they learn in composition classrooms transfers to their personal and professional practices. Stated simply, general research topics and trends that are under investigation can include adult learners as a population worthy of investigation.

The many institutions that have dedicated programs for adult learners should be promoting research efforts with this population. Although many institutions have specific programs for adult learners, most of these programs either have residential faculty teach adult students or rely on adjunct faculty; as a result, residential faculty are not trained specifically to work with adults and are unlikely to be familiar with journals tailored to adult learners or the literature upon which they draw (and as noted in Chapter Two, institutional incentives to publish in this area are lacking), making them less likely to be interested in researching this population. Adjunct faculty also have fewer incentives and opportunities. Administrators could easily encourage both of these groups to research and publish on their work within these adult programs. Specialized programs for adult learners often serve as exploratory resources for potential institutional expansions of content delivery formats and offerings within the majors. As a result, internal and institutional research is often conducted on this population but not published or promoted as work on adult learners.

Continued research on adult learners in Composition Studies can also serve to impact other disciplines; ostensibly, this research has already. All the included texts can now be recognized as works on adult learners and therefore added to the texts listed in the literature review section on publications

beyond Adult Education that can be included in the literature on adult education. Subsequent work on adult learners in Composition Studies can also respond to criticisms of the lack of quantitative research in and on adult education (Cross, 1981; Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner 2007; Pratt 1993) and the need for such research to (re)define the work and the field (Henschke, 2013; Rachal, 2002; Taylor & Kroth, 2013). The search for adult learners can also extend to English Language Learners, graduate students, faculty development, corporate training, for-profit and corporate education, and other locations where they are likely to be found in the research or the classrooms. In light of the number of adult learners in and entering the Academy, work to help understand and support this population can have an impact across campuses by grounding not only academic and pedagogical work but also work on how adults live and learn. By knowing more about how adult students function within the disciplines and the classrooms, institutions can respond to their needs through student services and academic assistance such as tutoring to support this population—work that has a direct impact on retention and graduation. Existing literature that includes adult learners, once identified as such, can also support this cause.

In *Whistlin' and Crowin' Women of Appalachia*, Sohn (2006) studied the impact of college education on the literacy skills of Appalachian women—adult learners. Sohn suggested numerous ways that faculty and administrators can respond to the needs of these students: active recruitment and funding, flexible enrollment policies and procedures, more time to complete tasks, and scheduling to fit their home and work lives. Sohn's suggestions align perfectly with literature on adult learners, which acknowledges that for adults to become adult learners, they must be able to maintain their daily lives and existing responsibilities (Aslanian, 2001) and that a fundamental step in overcoming barriers for adult learners is addressing the practical importance of overall institutional organization and classroom approaches to the learning process (Falasca, 2011). Sohn also offered feedback specifically for instructors and administrators of writing urging them to afford at-risk students the time and support necessary to overcome poor basic writing skills, to make clear connections between everyday writing and academic

writing, to help these students build self-confidence and bridge the gap between life experience and academic writing by encouraging the exploration of identity through personal essays, and to support writing across the curriculum.

Sohn's findings and suggestions are well supported by research on adult education, but in order for Composition Studies to recognize this connection, Sohn's work must first be tagged as a work on adult learners, instead of simply work focused on class and gender. Sohn's claim can also be seen as a reinforcement of general findings located specifically within Composition Studies. Work explicitly recognizing these connections can define how the presence or absence of factors necessary for many adult learners to succeed impacts the success of this population within Composition classrooms—work that can serve to facilitate and support this community of learners. Sohn's work and other works on adult learners in Composition Studies can be connected to each other and to the larger canon of texts on adult learners in order to create a ground from which to make informed policies and pedagogies related to adult learners within Composition Studies.

Integrating the work of scholars who worked with adult learners in Composition Studies is an important step not simply in understanding that adult learners played a role in the development of the discipline but also in seeing the connections across works including adult learners in order to make claims about the impact they played. Freire, for instance, was already connected with adult students, but his work was not connected to the overall impact of adult learners in and on Composition Studies. Not only do the adult learners in Composition form a collective, but perhaps the work they form could be seen as a movement.

Admittedly, finding and defining adult learners is complicated, but generating a working definition within Composition Studies will allow teachers and researchers to add age, and the factors that so often accompany it, to questions of agency already acknowledged in research on gender, class, race, and (dis)ability. Adult learners offer different perspectives and experiences to the voices found in academic classrooms and literatures. For instance, Sohn openly admitted and accepted the value of the

knowledge the women she studied brought to the classroom, calling specific attention to their practical experience with raising children. I, too, have recognized the vast difference the experience of parenting offers students and how that experience impacts their understandings of rhetoric and their readings on composition. Researching the perspectives of parents and the impact of parenting on education would provide vital knowledge for educators within and beyond institutions of higher education.

The implications of work with adult learners in Composition is not limited by discipline or location and has the potential to result in outcomes that impact local and national communities. Chapter One discussed immediate outcomes of educating adults and the global economic outcomes, but the future of national and local workforce considerations require attention to questions of access and success for adult learners, as well. Katz, a Harvard labor economist, recently noted that nearly 3% of the American workforce is comprised of drivers—a skill likely to be automated and replaced by the emerging driverless vehicles. Katz also identified these five million workers as members of the same population as many factory workers, meaning mostly comprised of adult males without college degrees—a category already hard hit by the loss of five million manufacturing jobs since 2000. While Katz suggested that the government create public-sector jobs so unemployed drivers are not relegated to long-term or permanent joblessness, similar programs, such as those for factory workers, have resulted in complaints that the new areas of skills-based training also faced a limitation of available positions (as cited in Green, 2016). Automation will continue to change the face of the labor force and impact vocational and skills-based positions, but automation can lead to more jobs—jobs that require investment in more substantial education for adults.

A major fear of automation is that it renders irrelevant large fields of work. But Bessen, a Boston University economist, argued that mass unemployment was not the real concern—job transition was the place conversations about technology rendering skills irrelevant should concentrate. Mass education, however, requires national support and investment. Autor, an MIT labor economist, noted that the United States devotes far less than other countries to retraining and supporting displaced workers, citing the

example of Denmark's spending, which is 25 times more. Autor also provided the example of the 19th century movement away from an agricultural workforce due to automation. The U.S. response was the extension of high school to the age of 16. While this solution required a substantial investment in creation and execution and resulted in the loss of low-cost labor for many family farms, it ultimately created a workforce prepared for the influx of factory jobs, and it prepared the way for the explosion in college attendance that resulted from the end of the Second World War (as cited in Mims, 2016). Recall that it was the post WWII influx of struggling students that prompted early Composition scholars to shift the discipline. In order to open the possibility for this new wave of displaced workers and veterans and other adults to consider seeking bachelor's degrees instead of or in addition to associate's degrees or technical training that may lead to other soon-to-be-automated positions, national attention needs to be given to conditions of access and concerns of prejudice that impact adult learners within traditional institutions of higher education.

Work to facilitate the entrance of adult learners into the Academy and their success within Composition can not only impact institutions of education and society at large, it can also impact individuals. Education is easily linked to employment, but personal outcomes cannot be overlooked. Sohn (2006) noted that although one of the three women she focused on was not able to use her degree to secure full-time employment, she did use what she had learned to read medical literature about Cystic Fibrosis, the disease from which her daughter suffered, connecting parental literacy to the well-being of children. Parental education has also been linked to educational successes within children. In a report on young adult literacy, Sticht pointed out the "significant relationship among parents' education levels, the persistence of their children in school, and their achievement in school," and noted that the connection suggested "that a more intensive effort to educate youth and adults who are present or future parents may produce an 'intergenerational transfer' of literacy that will better prepare preschool children for school" (as cited in Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986, p. vii). Recognizing connections between workforce preparedness

and education is easy, but personal outcomes that are more qualitative can be equally quantifiable, and personal outcomes can have collective results.

Ultimately, the most important implication of my research is that it reveals the need for more research on adult learners in Composition Studies. Far more work needs to be done not only to locate adults in relation to other questions related to the history and development of Composition Studies but also simply to recognize the community of adult learners as a constituency and a discourse community within Composition and Writing Studies. The shifting population of adult learners within institutions of higher education and the need to continue that increase makes it impossible to continue to overlook this group of students and imperative to ground their present place in higher education within a proud past.

Composition Studies has a history of working to identify and integrate new and newly recognized groups of students into the Academy by providing the intellectual and rhetorical skills necessary for continued success within and beyond the classrooms of educational institutions. Composition pedagogies and theories have developed in order to respond to the needs of struggling students and to support and facilitate their access to education, and they must continue to evolve. Having made great strides to overcome institutional prejudices against race, gender, disability, and class, age and the expectations and limitations that result from the lifestyles of adult learners remains an acceptable point of discrimination for many who seek access to education. Including the lens of adult learners in research on the discipline and including the perspective of adult learners within Composition research and classrooms will continue to the progress of Composition research and the progression of the theories, methods, and pedagogies of Writing Studies.

Speculations and Discussions

Advancing conversations around adult learners in Composition Studies by allowing my findings to feed speculations fuels discussions that situate the implications within larger contexts and consider subtexts and subsets. The conversation and implication most in need of discussion surrounds the question of being and becoming an adult and the role education plays in access to that status. An assumption

located in the literature on adult learners within the formative canon of Composition is that formal education is a necessary step in the ascension into adulthood. Additional texts offer a potential explanation of that assumption through the connected implication that there is an academic worldview made available only through formal education. Taken together, these subtexts suggest that it is access to the academic worldview that makes one an adult. Without acquisition of this unifying worldview, an individual remains basic, remedial, unskilled or the individual becomes categorized and defined by race, gender, or class. In effect, access becomes intellectual, albeit build on the economic, social, and political. All the accesses required to get to and into the Academy culminate in the access required to get through the Academy and enter the company of the educated, the adults (a company previously reserved in word and deed for Gentlemen).

The research included in the findings reveals the surface of this conversation. Reading developmental Composition literature in search of adult learners makes it clear that adult students are often not recognized or defined as adults—made obvious by the simple need to search for them at all. For instance, Elbow, Shaughnessy, Perl, Lunsford, and Rose do not overtly recognize their students as adult learners because the identity of adult is secondary to these students' status as defined by skill-based labels—basic, remedial, developmental, unskilled, underserved: such categorizations trump race, class, gender, age, or any other recognized or unrecognized categorization throughout the earliest Composition literature, but when race, gender, and class enter the disciplinary conversations and literature, they replace the skills-based designations and become the new means of overshadowing the designation of adult. While there are places where adults are recognized, even in those spaces, they are not recognized primarily as adults and are categorized instead by other markers or the absence thereof.

In addition to the implication that adults are not seen as adults when they are not seen as educated, the readings included in my results suggest that there is an academic worldview, that it is made available through formal education, and that acquisition of the academic worldview through participation in the academic discourse results in a transformation of the educated individual. Freire, Bartholomae, and

Bizzell cultivate concepts of an academic discourse and the related and resulting worldview, but the ground of the conversation expands to the boundary of my findings within the supplemental and contextual literature—the texts where adults are located or discussed but not in a way directly related to the organizing research questions. These are the texts I reviewed as part of the larger selection process but omitted from the findings due to limited relevance. Connecting the included and excluded texts broadens the scope from which to view the subplots.

A primary assumption of pedagogy is that learners are dependent (Chan, 2010, p. 27). Andragogy counters pedagogy by seeing adult learners as self-directive, revealing that traditional pedagogies assume that students do not possess the self-directedness afforded adult learners. Knowles (1980) related perception of self to definitions of adulthood and adult learners directly: “the psychological definition of adulthood is the point at which individuals perceive themselves to be essentially self-directing” (p. 46). Students in need of direction, in effect, cannot be seen as possessing the abilities required of adult status.

Recall in the literature review that it was the assumption of self-direction that betrayed the faculty-researchers’ faith in andragogy and led Morton, Weinstein, and Weinstein (1999) to “experience tensions in treating students as ‘adults’” and to conclude that their students had “not reached the stage of ‘adulthood’ the andragogical method requires . . .” resulting in the title “Not Quite Grown Up: The Difficulty of Applying an Adult Education Model to Legal Externs” (pp. 484-485). These students, still in the process of acquiring education, were not deemed worthy of the assumptions granted to adults. If the faculty had encountered similar problems with the lawyers with whom the law students were interning, is it likely that the lawyers would lose their status as adults instead of simply being deemed unprofessional or incompetent?

Similarly, Lunsford, and Cognitive Developmental approaches in general, identified a lack of skill development as a lack of development: “In general, my study of basic writers—their strategies, processes, and products—leads me to believe that they have not attained that level of cognitive development which would allow them to form abstractions or conceptions”; Lunsford further noted that

these basic writers were “most often unable to practice analysis and synthesis and to apply successfully the principles thus derived to college tasks” (p. 298). Lunsford even proposed that a majority “of our basic writing students are operating well below the formal-operations or true-concept formation stage of cognitive development” (p. 302). By employing developmental scales, such as those of Vygotsky and Piaget, that equate cognitive development to stages of personal development from childhood to adulthood, Lunsford—along with Berthoff, Bruffee, Ede, Emig, Flowers and Hayes, and others—embraces a connection between educational development and a student’s status as an adult.

Literature within the discipline also confirms that this assumption is not universal and recognizes that not all cultures are built on such assumptions even in relation to the development of children. By working with Alaskan natives, Delpit (1995) recognized the lack of correlation or causation connecting education and an individual’s status as a mature person:

We non-Natives tend to think of children as unformed future adults. We hear about the birth of a child and ask questions like, “What did she have?” “How much did it weigh?” and “Does it have any hair?” The Athabaskan Indians hear of a birth and ask, “Who came?” From the beginning, there is a respect for the newborn as a full person. (p. 100)

Western ideas, on the other hand, see adulthood as a status to be achieved, whether passively or actively through rituals, behaviors, endeavors, or achievements, and as such, not a status necessarily achieved by all—a thread the continues through the disciplinary literature, specifically the literature built on adult learners.

The correlation between development and adulthood is also recognized by Shaughnessy: “it is common these days to ‘place’ students on developmental scales, saying they are eighth-graders or fifth-graders when they read and even younger when they write or that they are stalled some place on Piaget’s scale without formal propositions . . .” (312). Like Shaughnessy, Rose and Bizzell questioned the turn to such cognitive theories and seek alternatives. Rose addressed the connection between these schema and adults directly:

As any developmental psychologist will point out, there are major conceptual problems involved in applying a developmental model to adults. Piaget's theory was derived from the close observation of infants, children, and early- to mid-adolescents; it was intended as a description of the way thinking evolves in the growing human being. Applying it to college-age students and, particularly, to adult learners is to generalize it to a population other than the one that yielded it.

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Inherent in the concept and application of developmental schema is the assumption that these cognitive developments, which are ushered in through education, progress the individual toward the final stage of development—that of a fully formed and functioning adult. An absence of such development, presumably based on an absence of education (whether due to a lack of access or of success), ultimately necessitates a lack of the achievement and actualization of that which is required to be an adult.

The conversation is further clarified through close consideration of Bizzell. Recall that “What Happens When Basic Writers Come to College?” (1986) raised the question of two beliefs within (and perhaps beyond) Composition Studies: the belief that basic writers need specific support to learn and the belief that basic writers are simply less capable of learning. The possibility that some students cannot learn is a fair conversation for any educational exploration, but lightly perched atop this possibility is the suggestion that basic writers, and therefore any writers who have not passed through the academy, are not capable of possessing the same worldview as the educated. When Bizzell asserted that basic writers were required to face and acquire the academic worldview, she concluded that the struggles of these students were “best understood as stemming from the initial distance between their world-views and the academic world view, and perhaps also from the resistance to changing their own world-views that is caused by this very distance.” (p. 297). In other words, the worldview of the Academy is only accessible to those who have passed through it, which is to say that there is a singular worldview associated with the Academy, and that to be in among the educated, the adults, requires possession of (and acceptance of and adherence to) the worldview attainable only through education.

To say that the Academy has a worldview that all who pass through acquire and none who do not do is to say either that all institutions are capable of this or that education, higher education in particular, is exceptional in purpose and product. Do those who pass through religious institutions necessarily acquire the worldview of each institution, and is formal religious instruction necessary or is participation enough? Do those who pass through these spaces become something else by joining the company of educated men and women? The questions mirror discussions of Natural Theology that ask whether access to salvation is possible without formal indoctrination into the church and her teaching—questions that also connect to Liberation Theology and its interpretation of Christianity as a force against social injustice, a movement inspired by the Latin American Marxists who inspired Freire’s concept of education as liberation. When placed in the context of the research at hand, a few questions become clear: Is formal education required to become educated, is there one worldview that results from education, and what do you become by acquiring this worldview? Stated simply, is attaining formal education and acquiring the attached worldview the necessary step required to become an adult? Could that be the reason adult and adult learner are detached in the literature, even the most sympathetic literature?

While it would be helpful to assume that these basic writers bring a consistent worldview with them when they are introduced to what Bizzell sees as the homogeneous academic worldview they encounter when they enter and acquire when they exit the Academy, it is not the case (meaning there are many uneducated, or at least nonacademic, worldviews but only one academically-induced or produced worldview). Although we cannot know the worldview of basic writers, Bizzell offered the scheme of William Perry's college-level intellectual development as a model of the academic worldview:

Perry states that the essential component in the world view of the “liberally educated man” is the willingness “to think about even his own thoughts, to examine the way he orders his data and the assumptions he is making, and to compare these with other thoughts that other men might have” (39). The outcome of his deliberations is that he chooses to make “Commitments” to certain ideas, projects, and people, Commitments which will order his adult life. (p. 298)

Bizzell added that Perry does hold space for the reality that the academic worldview of the educated adult will be influenced by the allegiances created before entering college, but upon entering the academic worldview completely, any concept attached to an Absolute could not be included in the new worldview of the now educated adult (p. 300). Once completed, the educational process results in the individual's acceptance that he is responsible for constructing meaning in his world and fostering that meaning through associations with groups of like-minded people.

Bizzell admitted that if one accepts Perry's construction, "then the academic world view makes a strong bid to control all of a student's experience" (p. 300). Again, if the worldview of the Academy is necessarily different than those constructed without such an education, students who enter the Academy having been raised by those with the Academic worldview will only extend their attachment through fulfillment of the ritual and attainment of membership in the world of their parents. Those who enter the Academy at a young age, even if not raised with an Academic worldview, will have only the worldview of their parents from which to detach, instead of needing to replace a fully formed and functioning worldview that they have attained and practiced as an adult, perhaps even marrying and raising a family within this nonacademic worldview. Adults who enter or reenter the classrooms of higher education prepared, as opposed to those who enter as basic or developmental, demonstrate that they are versed in the language of the Academy and primed to receive the academic worldview. Such students are the adults in Composition classes who blend in and are not written about in the early foundational literature because they are seen as students, not as basic, and do not stick out as members of another or an othered population. Adult learners within Composition, then, are seen as the unprepared students, often those also designated by race, class, or gender—identifications that are conflated with and eventually replace basic writers and adult learners.

The necessity to replace the foundational beliefs upon which one's life has been built is what Bizzell sees as the struggle for many students who do not come to the Academy prepared—meaning either already exposed to but not yet embedded in an academic worldview (through associations with or

relations to those in possession of an academic worldview) or primed to participate in its language and practices (not raised by people or associated with those who hold the academic worldview but willing and able to enter the discourse without resistance or excessive support). Bizzell noted of basic writers:

they will find the stakes for accepting this world view higher than the stakes were for Perry's students—given the greater difference between this world view and their pre-college world-views, basic writers have more to lose in modifying their earlier world views. But precisely because of the hegemonic power of the academic world view, my hypothesis is that they will also find its acquisition well worth the risks. (p. 301)

Bizzell is working to support basic writers, but it is evident that she is attempting to support their struggle through higher education so that they can become one of us—created in our image—transformed into adults.

In addition to referencing Perry as a framing device in “What Happens When Basic Writers Come to College?,” Bizzell also drew explicitly upon Perry’s construction in “William Perry and Liberal Education” (1984) when she acknowledged that for Perry this process of education necessary to become an “intellectually and ethically mature adult” was made possible through Harvard’s model of pluralism and was defined in relation to the traditional, elite college experience of the 1960s (p. 322). Bizzell explained:

Perry's work should make us realize that as we bring our students through the process of liberal education, we are not simply teaching them to think or to grow up, as we sometimes like to say that we are. Rather, we are teaching them to think in a certain way, to become adults [emphasis added] with a certain set of intellectual habits and ethical predilections. We are asking them to accept a certain kind of relation to their culture, from among the range of relations that are possible. Thus Perry's greatest use to writing teachers is to provide us with a sort of philosophical map of the changes liberal education seeks to induce in our students. Such a map can help us understand that certain typical problems students have with writing in college should be regarded

as problems with accepting the academic community's preferred world view and not necessarily as problems with achieving "normal" cognition. This is supported by the rough match between Perry's scheme and the characteristics Shaughnessy and Lunsford note in the writing of students who are different from those in Perry's research sample. (Emphasis added, pp. 325-326)

The students of Shaughnessy and Lunsford, the basic and developmental writers, by demonstrating that they have not progressed through this education, have not become adults—not because these students lack “normal cognition” but because they lack the academic worldview achievable only through academic enculturation as demonstrated by an acceptance of the principles and practices expected of an educated adult and a lack of any other beliefs or behaviors.

Such a construction would result in an academic worldview that saw itself and its members, the liberally educated, as elite and superior to those not in possession of the education and as a result the exclusive worldview—a perspective not available without access and intellectual privilege. In some ways, the Academy has opened its doors to those outside Perry's Harvard construction of rich, white, fully-abled, and male, but a remaining and glaring privilege is intellectual. What if, as Composition scholars warned, some people cannot learn to perform the skills necessary to attain the academic worldview? Remember that this Harvard model is precisely what the Dartmouth Conference and the resulting Dartmouth-model of teaching writing intended to move beyond. But while Dartmouth is perhaps less ivy and ivory than Harvard, it is not accessible to the community college students and the basic writers encountered by the scholars noted in our literature and still wholly overlooks the social contexts that Bizzell and others think they are attempting to include.

Sommers closes the loop of not seeing uneducated adults as adults by seeing educated adults as just that—adults. Because Sommers' work does not include adult learners in Composition classrooms, it is not directly relevant to the findings of this work, but it does inform this investigation of assumptions. Sommers (1980) conducted an empirical study of process aimed at deconstructing the process of process. In “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers,” Sommers compared the

revision processes of “twenty freshmen at Boston University and the University of Oklahoma” to that of “twenty experienced adult writers from Boston and Oklahoma City [which] included journalists, editors, and academics” (p. 45). Juxtaposing student writers with adult writers, Sommers’ work suggested that the experienced adults had more complex understandings of revision and more useful means of revising.

For Sommers, experienced and adult are inextricably interwoven, as if they are adults *because* they are experienced. What the student writers lack is seeing writing as discovery and the process as recursive. While Sommers avoided directly insulting the student writers, they were clearly presented as less sophisticated than the experienced writers. Because the experienced writers are journalists, editors, and academics, it goes without saying that they have received a formal education. In effect, since age is in no way connected to adult status and experience is proved for the experienced writers but not addressed for the student writers, the only clear difference between these groups is that one group is educated and one group is only at the beginning stage of becoming educated.

Effectually to be an adult requires individuals be educated enough to possess and display skillsets available only to the experienced and educated. Such a suggestion implies that uneducated (or possibly undereducated) adults are not adults. Simply being a college freshman obviated the possibility of being an adult or an experienced writer. Sommers did not assume any possibility of overlap or look deeper into the freshman to see if there were adults or professionals in the group. Perhaps the students were less likely to be older or experienced since they were not located at an open admissions program or in a community college, but the assumption that they could not be experienced or adults requires only the fact that they were freshman to serve as ample evidence. Experienced and student are acceptably mutually exclusive, which would mean that adults cannot be learners because to be an adult is to be learned.

While the designation of *experienced* replaces and assumes the presence of the designation of *educated*, to some degree Sommers makes the two potentially interchangeable. But what if a student has experience absent academic education? What if military or industry training afforded the student the experience necessary for a professional position? Perhaps experience can make you an adult, but an

experienced adult, not an educated adult. And what can be made of professionals without a formal education—what does Composition think of professional or technical writers without a degree; they cannot be basic writers because they write professionally, but they can exist without an academic worldview. When tracking the explosion of the literature of Professional and Technical writing throughout the 80s, Roozen and Lunsford (2011) consciously conflated professional and technical writers with adults. Roozen and Lunsford clearly distinguished these writers from those adult learners entering higher education. The implication is that adult learners are not professionals and that professionals have the potential to be the “Adult Writers” of Sommers’ work but not necessarily the liberally educated adults in possession of the academic worldview—creating a liminal space between adult learner and educated adult.

The growth of this liminal population is a source of confusion. For Perry, it was easy to see the manifestations that signaled an educated gentleman, but as access expands, what distinguishes practices that are liberatory from those that are predatory? Professional and technical programs and corporate education have complicated the path to professional employment. In the absence of access to the education now required for entrance into many fields, alternative sources of credentialing have appeared. But would a degree from a for-profit, corporate or career college or a vocational degree be accepted as a source of the academic worldview and result in entrance into the company of educated individuals? And what about the informally-educated educated individuals? Access to informal education was limited due to access to information, but today, any person with access to the internet has access to the material encountered and engaged by students being educated at colleges across every continent. If individuals can find sources of education at home or at work, if adult learners can watch a YouTube video on Heidegger, how should the Academy find and define her role. Perhaps Aaron Schwartz’s attempt to pull back the final curtain reveals the thin sheet separating those with material access to the material of education. If an Alma Mater (which in itself implies that students are children) is no longer a necessary source for the nourishment of education, what does this mean for the Academy and to Composition Studies? Is the work

of Composition Studies still tied to liberation and democracy and the production of worldviews? Or is the purpose more narrow—more practical—more vocational?

The undercurrents of such questions hint at a disciplinary identity crisis made visible in the recent webpages of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Only months ago, *The Chronicle* published a piece in which Teller (2016) argued that because his students cannot write a sentence, he is shifting his teaching of composition away from focusing on process or content or culture and instead accepting that the “writing process is a means to an end”—an approach he admits does “reek of the ‘current-traditional’” but that he stands by regardless. The next month, *The Chronicle* published a response piece in which a fellow composition instructor, Stewart (2016), asserted that the techniques that failed Teller and his students had worked well for her students. Two months later, *The Chronicle* published a subsequent response in which Hesse (2017) defined Teller’s arguments as hyperbole and noted that he and his colleagues had constructed a corpus of 500,000 words of student writing from across their campus and analyzed the corpus to find that well over 90% of the sentences were error free.

The thread of this conversation reveals a number of points relevant to this discussion. The first point is related to the state of the field. Hesse offered a brief history of and a strong defense of the discipline. For Hesse, the defense against Teller and his teaching style is research—the literature that trumps lore and does not substantiate Teller’s lore. Hesse explained that the field had progressed beyond Teller’s stories and toward quantitative research. The audience for Hesse’s argument does not appear to be Teller, who based on his work would be familiar with the information Hesse offered; Hesse’s audience is readers of *The Chronicle* from disciplines outside of Composition. Hesse is reassuring these readers that the field is more professional than Teller would have them believe and has moved beyond such foundational questions (in other words: Please don’t worry about what your students learn in freshman composition. We got this.). The need for such a defense speaks to Hesse’s defensiveness, which implies that the Academy still questions the function (and perhaps the effectiveness) of Composition Studies.

The next implication relates directly to adult learners in composition classrooms. Hesse also noted that Teller's experience was not substantiated by his experience on his campus. Hesse teaches at the University of Denver. Teller, on the other hand, teaches at a California community college designated as primarily a commuter college offering certificates and associate degrees. Stewart teaches at a community college in Texas and described her student population as follows: "About 70 percent of my college's students take classes only part-time, and 73 percent entered this year taking at least one developmental course" (para. 4). Stewart and Teller, then, are likely to work with student populations comprised of a large percentage of adult learners. While Stewart acknowledged some major data points to define the makeup of her student population, Teller did not, and adult learners as a group were not addressed by any of the authors. In other words, adult students are still undergirding and impacting conversations in Composition and debates across disciplines but are still being otherwise categorized.

Exploring this conversation through the lens of adult learners also has implications for research in the discipline. Teller offered lore, and Stewart offered an alternative lore to counter Teller's claims, but it was still lore. Hesse also countered Teller but did not acknowledge Stewart's contribution to the discussion. Instead Hesse eviscerated Teller's claims dismissing them as lore and noting that they do not square with the evidence-based literature. But Hesse also admitted that much of the literature, early literature in particular, is lore. The lore of the early literature and the lore of the current claims of Teller and Stewart include adult learners who impacted and are still impacting the discipline without recognition. But it is unlikely that the corpus Hesse cites does not include adult learners. My early analysis of the *MyReviewers* corpus revealed that based on limited, age-based definitions of adult learner over 7% on the students in FYC courses at USF fit the category. The simple solution is to include adult learners in empirical and quantitative research in Composition and Writing Studies.

The major points of this thread overlap with questions of adult learners in the research on Composition Studies. Stewart describes her students as poor, part-time, developmental students, which demonstrates that adult learners are still being categorized in this way. Teller does not describe his

students at all, which demonstrates that adult learners are still being ignored and that claims around working with them are being generalized across all of Composition. Hesse also does not describe his students, but he is equally willing to generalize. Each assumes not only that his or her way is the best way but that there is a best way to serve students: A right way to teach Composition. One concrete takeaway is that the discipline is still struggling with how to serve struggling students—another point Hesse seems not to want (people) to believe. Composition remains conflicted between wanting to teach critical thinking and create the liberally educated gentlemen with an academic worldview and needing to teach students to write complete and correct sentences so that they can communicate and ultimately find work; such debates are neither new nor limited to Composition.

Current conflicts echo old debates surrounding questions of whether students from populations that have only recently gained access to education (and liberal education) should be taught to think, as DuBois suggested, or trained for work, as suggested by Washington. Read in this context, the debate between Bartholomae and Elbow can be seen as an extension of the same discussion. Questions of whether a group should be offered vocational training or a liberal education presume not only that the two are disconnected, such considerations assume that the group in question (or at least some members) cannot achieve the liberal education and therefore would benefit from the limited vocational education. Adult learners in Composition Studies connect these threads and conversations, which could explain why questions about whether everyone can learn are located in those spaces. Composition instructors and adult students share the front lines in the modern field of this debate. And it is more likely to be Teller and Stewart on the battlefield than Hesse.

Traditional students are screened to avoid making traditional faculty face such situations, albeit perhaps less than when higher education was less accessible. But it is within the classrooms of community colleges and programs designated for adult learners, the major points of access for adult learners, that such students force faculty, often adjunct faculty, not only to ask the question of whether everyone can learn but to provide students with the Academy's ruling on their ability to learn and the

answer to their access; these are also the students more likely to fill more classes as automation guts their field or as professionalization requires them to possess a college degree to be a police officer or a project manager—jobs that did not previously require one (and that perhaps the student has done for decades). The numbers confirm that more such students are coming to four-year colleges and universities—some from two-year schools and some directly—where they will often meet GTAs and adjunct instructors in search of access to the Academy and employment and perhaps even access to the academic worldview and to adult status.

Within this space is where Composition and Writing Studies must locate and create the future of the field in order to answer practical questions about access and move fully beyond Harvard and Dartmouth to public and private four-year colleges, to community colleges, to for-profit colleges, and to industry trainings and certifications. One such question is how disciplinary pedagogies can be updated to match updated disciplinary purposes? As North (1987) cautions, embedded within the pedagogies of Composition are cultural and academic assumptions—assumptions that tie education to adulthood and restrain adults from being identified as adult learners especially when they are basic writers. But North's warning about the inherent assumptions within pedagogies signals not only a risk but the potential of a reward. By incorporating the theories and methods of other disciplines, Composition can transform its assumptions to include the understandings of the other pedagogies, especially when they are not pedagogies. If all pedagogies include assumptions that preclude adults from being categorized in ways that counter the assumptions of pedagogies, only andragogies can offer the perspective to shift such notions.

To situate andragogies consciously and conscientiously within Composition requires that the context of Composition pedagogies be sustained, as well. Consequently to incorporate the theories of andragogy into Composition pedagogies would require the development of Composition pedagogies based on an awareness not only of adult learning theories and techniques but an awareness of the role adult learners have and are playing in the theories and practices of Composition Studies—work started

through this research. Including elements of the work on adult learners would not be a difficult step for Composition Studies or her pedagogies. Knowles even stated that he did not

see andragogy as an ideology at all, but a system of assumptions about learners that needs to be tested out for different learners in different situations. In a sense, it is a system that encompasses the pedagogical model, since it makes legitimate the application of pedagogical strategies in those situations in which the assumptions of the pedagogical model are realistic (1980, p. 59).

New Composition pedagogies would maintain the perspective of adults as Shaughnessy defined them—logical and ready to learn—while allowing andragogical assumptions to replace the opinions that made Shaughnessy counteract with efforts to include basic writers in disciplinary conversations.

Considerations of access must also expand to include conversations of intellectual access.

Perhaps the literature serves as Composition Studies' attempt to reconcile our racism, classism, and sexism. Female scholars published works on gender to complicate our limited perspective (Flynn, 1988; Howard, 2000; Jarratt, 1991; Lunsford, 1995; Royster, 2000). Race, eventually albeit not as completely, came under the microscope for us to face (Kirsch & Ritchie, 1997; Labov, 1970; Prendergast, 1989; Wallace & Bell, 1999). Class as based on capital was addressed (Brodkey, 1989; Delpit, 1995; Freire, 1968; Ohmann, 1979; Sullivan, 1998). The problem with classism based on intellectual elitism is that these voices cannot find a place within the Academy. The closest we can come are the stories of Elbow's struggles to write, the impact of poverty on Freire's early learning, and the misclassification that landed Rose in the vocational track of his high school. But these stories do not end with academic failure. In fact, the experience of struggles that resulted in success for Rose, Freire, and Elbow end with the triumphant story of salvation through education—tales that would make anyone want to proselytize. Such struggling student success stories star the students who occupy our cultural public imagination; movies are made about the teachers who care enough to break (dramatically) through the barriers hindering the learning of these students. But the stories of the students who do not succeed despite the combined efforts of teacher

and student only fill the personal regrets of the teachers who try all they can to break through the unseen walls and the students who try their best to climb over them.

Perhaps this is why Bizzell openly acknowledged the question of whether or not everyone can learn in the ways required to earn a college degree and practice the academic perspective. Students and scholars from every race and gender and class and disability can and do learn the academic discourse and participate in the cultivation and perpetuation of this worldview. But those who cannot speak this language cannot enter the conversation. Perhaps Bizzell and Lunsford were both correct: you have to understand and speak academic discourse in order to enter our conversations, and some barriers to that access can be overcome, but not all. Adult learners represent those who either did not have access to or success within the Academy directly out of high school and did not complete this acculturation as an entrance into adult life in the way most coveted by most Americans—this is the factor that all adult learners share: it is also the factor that makes work with this population so informative and imperative.

Discussions can lead to outcomes, and one outcome of this discussion is that it reinforces the main implication, which is a call for research on adult learners in Composition Studies. As the students and adult students entering higher education and the classrooms of Composition continue to grow and shift, so too must the field and the work. Practices such as literacy provide easy examples of evolution; modern digital literacies are as overtly connected to democracy and liberation as the literacies Freire discusses, and teaching adult learners to read culture critically has taken on new meaning in age of filter bubbles, selective exposure, and fake news. The role of sources and resources of education other than the traditional institutions of higher education also need to be situated within larger conversations about the field and the work of Composition. Being explicit about these populations and conflicts could facilitate clarity and advance the work of the field. Perhaps compromises are also possible—perhaps the educations of DuBois and Washington can overlap. But studying the struggles and successes, as well as the failures, of adult students might indicate that not all students need or have access to the same set of intellectual skills. Open discussions of limitations and possibilities will facilitate the construction of new narratives

that no longer see adult students as broken or deficient while recognizing their needs and assets in ways that will allow Composition Studies to facilitate their success.

Discussions can also have theoretical significance. Work on basic writers served as the location for conversations and larger questions on adult learners within Composition Studies throughout the 70s, 80s, and 90s literature. Examining the work on student-veterans reveals that adults remain the location for attempts to reexamine larger disciplinary questions. For instance, Gallagher argued that “veterans-only writing workshops, for all their promise and good intentions, might fail to accomplish one of their primary (often unstated) goals, which is to help veterans more easily join new communities and to ease their transition from the military to civilian life” (as cited in Hart & Thompson, 2016, p. 358). Embedded in this consideration is the assumption not only of the shared goal of facilitating student-veterans but the existence of a clear, shared goal. Through literature and discipline-wide conference calls, Composition Studies might have a clear goal for student-veterans and even an ethical obligation to them, but what is Composition Studies’ goal and obligation to adult learners, and how can it be more clearly stated and shared? If the goal for student-veterans cannot be the same as the goal for all students, which it does not appear to be, must the goal of the discipline be different for different populations? Has Composition Studies defined our role and responsibility in relation to adult learners and how should our role fit in with larger national goals, such as the 2020 College Completion Goal, and Academy-wide initiatives and responsibilities. Without clearly understanding and responding to such questions and concerns, Composition Studies has not fulfilled her responsibility to all students.

While larger questions evolve and long-term solutions develop, concrete approaches can facilitate the current struggles of current students. For instance, Sohn suggested that writing instructors must recognize the values that students like the women in her research hold and show them how to use what they are learning in college in their everyday lives—arguing even that the role of college educators is “to prepare critical thinkers and problem solvers to contribute those skills for survival in their communities” (p. 93). To do so requires teachers to plan transfer and then be transparent instead of assuming what we

teach transfers, that the transfer is apparent, and that it has immediate impact; to do this requires knowing about the lives and the values of adult learners and understanding and communicating not simply that they can benefit from the skills of written communication and the tools of critical literacy but knowing what kinds of written communication they can benefit from and to which texts they will be applying the tools of critical literacy so that these skills can be included in the classroom and communicated to the students. Offering and communicating the immediate value of a composition course to the adult student, her family, her community could help alleviate fear surrounding concerns about long-term success in college or employability or even a passing grade in the class. Recognizing the needs of adult learners can allow the discipline (perhaps even the Academy) to become an immediate resource for practical tools to improve lives and perhaps to remain a long-term resource for the larger education sought by some.

Programs and departments can also respond to the needs of this population. For instance, suggestions related to veteran-friendly courses and the professional development that facilitates them by making faculty aware the population and their needs can be applied as an accessible approach to any new topic or population entering higher education in a way that allows disciplinary oversight and execution. Simply being aware of the impact balancing family and professional responsibilities can have on adult students can allow teachers in composition classrooms to respond from a position of awareness. Trainings and discussions can also be developed and deployed to support adjuncts in colleges and community colleges so that they do not feel forced to face the decision of whether or not adult learners can advance into the Academy alone. And as we add concerns related to age and status as an adult learner to our professional lenses, we can teach our students to recognize elements of age (in addition to recognizing sex, race, gender, and ability) in the texts they read and engage—a lens that will help each student as she begins to experience the inevitable impact of age and encounter concerns such as work-life balance and parenting that are likely to impact everyone. Including adult students in classroom discussions about such topics can allow their experience to be valued and valuable.

Programs and departments can also respond to the needs of this population in ways that progress the impact beyond basic understandings of adult students in undergraduate programs. In addition to concerns related to course assignments, scheduling, formats, and faculty developments, awareness of the needs of adult learner and the value of including their experiences and voices in the classrooms can inform discussions related to programmatic admissions as an element of access and agency. Recognizing that female adult learners often maintain major household responsibilities and can be place bound in relation to the job market can impact their acceptance into and within graduate programs, but recognizing that their perspectives are valuable to the graduate classroom and disciplinary research can frame the value of such experiences in ways that balance their impact.

Practical solutions related to adult learners in Composition Studies can also reach beyond demographics and disciplines. By recognizing that Composition Studies is not recognizing student-veterans as adult students, we can look for other unrecognized populations, and we can connect the currently disconnected outcomes of research on student-veterans to adult learners. Knowing that student-veterans are likely to drop out in their first year of school and acknowledging the possibility that personal narratives trigger trauma allows Composition Studies to research this connection and extend the implication by considering the impact first-year composition personal narratives could have on adult students and traditional students, particularly on members of population at risk of dropping out. Connecting adult learners in our literature and our classrooms also make Composition and English Departments aware of their responsibility to make administrators aware of the needs of these students. Making known the presence of adult learners can have an impact on student and academic services necessary to support the specific needs of adult learners across disciplines by reinforcing the need and the number of students in need of accommodations as simple as extended scheduling and hours of operation.

Outcomes can also reach across disciplines and departments. Research on basic writers produced practices that spread through and beyond Composition Studies without intention or consideration. Composition Studies and adult learners can become active, agentic participants in this partnership in ways

that could benefit all parties. In fact, andragogical practices are seeping and trickling into all areas of education, so instead of functioning in disciplinary silos, all areas of the Academy could benefit from overt acknowledgment of all adult learners and the combining of duplicated efforts that result from the lack of oversight and shared services. Overarching intentions and outcomes can bring together disparate practices under one umbrella. In 1960, the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults stated that “The goal of adult education is to help people live better” (Havighurst & Orr, p.1). Despite all the changes across time and difference across locations, this clear directive can remain a mission for all of the work related to adult students.

While an answer to the question driving my research has been made clear, many additional implications and subsequent questions have surfaced. The findings related to the impact of adult learners within Composition Studies, as well as the related research not featured in the results, include opportunities and implications relevant to the discipline that feed speculations ripe for discussion. Other questions revealed by reading early Composition literature for adult learners do not have easy answers—some might not have answers at all—but merging calls for empirical research with calls for classroom-based research and connecting them to my call for research with adult learners presents a clear path to progress. There is no question, however, that Composition Studies can, and should, have a substantial impact on adult learners—just as adult learners have had a substantial impact on Composition Studies.

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