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COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR READING AND WRITING PROFICIENCY

Martha Paulina Campusano Rojas, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2023

Student's low reading and writing proficiency in higher education has been the subject of a large body of research (e.g., Bahr, 2011; Bailey, 2010; Carlino, 2005, 2010, 2012; Flink, 2017; Jaggars, 2014; Pacello, 2014; Perin, 2011; Perin et al., 2013). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how students in a first-year developmental Spanish course at the Dominican community college think of the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate courses. The study also explored how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write. Undergraduate education and developmental courses have been widely studied; however, students' knowledge about their own reading and writing skills is still an under-researched area (Lembke, 2021; Perin, 2013). In addition, in spite of an extensive review of the literature, I did not find studies that focused specifically on community college remedial education in the DR, nor any that focused on DR students' understanding of their literacy skills, or how they perceive the issues that may impact their ability to read and write.

Results of this study are significant for educators because it provides first-hand information about how students view the relevance of reading and writing proficiencies for their academic and personal achievements. These findings are important for students who probably have not think about the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in career subjects. This study is relevant for academic leaders to , because it provides data to support their decisions for improving retention and graduation rates and to avoid desertion by development of students' reading and writing proficiency.

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The results of this study are significant for educators because they provide first-hand information about how students view the relevance of reading and writing proficiencies for their academic and personal achievements. These findings are important for students who probably have not thought about the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in career subjects. This study is relevant for academic leaders because it provides data to support their decisions for improving retention and graduation rates, and lowering the attrition rate through the development of students' reading and writing proficiency.

The study was carried out at the first and only community college in the Dominican Republic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 students enrolled in a developmental reading and writing Spanish course. Metacognitive theories served as a frame for the study. The two metacognitive components most related to this study are a) metacognitive awareness and knowledge about oneself as a learner. The basic interpretive approach is used to explore how participants in the study –make meaning of their own lives and experiences (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Data analysis used Marshall and Rossman's (2016) seven phase analytic procedures (a) organizing data, (b) immersion in the data, (c) coding the data, (d) generating possible themes, (e) offering interpretations through analytic memos, (f) searching for alternative understandings, and (g) writing the report or other format for presenting the studio.

Findings in this study suggest that students enrolled in a developmental reading and writing Spanish course do not recognize the relevance of their reading and writing proficiency to succeed in future career subjects. However, these students do connect their reading and writing abilities with achieving their career aspirations and life goals, contrary to previous literature.

This study also found that these students consider themselves –good readers‖ which means that they do not recognize their need for improving their reading ability. In addition, contrary to previous research, most participants in this study recognized their difficulties in writing and some grammar topics. Finally, the study revealed that although most of the students in this developmental course at the Dominican community college recognize having some writing and grammar difficulties, they value the instruction and support received from their professors, and the interaction with their classmates as motivators for their growth in the developmental course.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR READING
AND WRITING PROFICIENCY

by

Martha Paulina Campusano Rojas

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Doctoral Committee:

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2023

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	x
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background	3
The Dominican Education System	6
Problem Statement	7
Purpose Statement	10
Conceptual Framework and Narrative	10
Methods Overview	14
Chapter I Closure	15
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	17
Metacognition.....	18
Origin and Components	18
Metacognition Assessment	21
Applying Metacognition in My Study	22
Students' Awareness of Their Reading and Writing Skills	23
Two Scales to Measure Metacognitive Awareness	26
Research on Remedial/Development Education	29
Role of Placement Tests	30
Student's Success in Remedial or Developmental Courses	32
<i>Studies with Favorable Findings</i>	33
<i>Studies with Non-Favorable or Mixed Findings</i>	35
Students' Perceptions of Their Success Related to Reading and Writing.....	38
Student Perceptions of the Value of Writing Skills.....	38
Student Perceptions of Their Writing Ability.....	40
Student Perceptions of Being in Remedial Courses	42
Chapter II Closure	47

Table of Contents - continued

III. METHODS	51
Reflections on My Identity.....	54
Setting and Participants	55
Setting.....	58
Sampling.....	58
Access and Recruitment	59
Instrumentation.....	61
Data Collection Procedures	63
Data Collection Steps	63
Interview Protocol and Process	64
Trustworthiness in Data collection	65
Data Analysis	65
Organizing Data	66
Immersion in the Data	67
Coding the Data	67
Generating Possible Themes	68
Offering Interpretations through Analytic Memos.....	68
Searching for Alternative Understandings	69
Writing the Report Presenting the Study	69
Trustworthiness	70
Limitations and Delimitations.....	71
Chapter III Closure	72
IV. PARTICIPANTS' NARRATIVES	73
Mary	74
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Her Present and Future Classes.....	75
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Her Career Aspirations and Life Goals	76
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	76
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	77
Ely	78
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes.....	78
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	79

Table of Contents - continued

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	80
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	81
Betty	82
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	83
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	84
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	85
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	86
Rosa.....	87
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	87
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	88
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	89
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	90
Esther.....	91
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	92
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	92
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	93
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	94
Anny	94
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	95
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	95
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	96
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	97
Angie	98
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	98
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	99
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	100
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	101
Cristine	102
Reading and Writing in Relation to Present and Future Classes	102
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	103
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	103

Table of Contents - continued

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	104
Luisa	105
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	105
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	106
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	107
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	108
Martina	110
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	110
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	111
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	112
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	113
Andy	114
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	115
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	116
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	117
Understanding Issues That May Impact His Ability to Read and Write	119
Joe.....	120
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	120
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	121
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	123
Understanding Issues That May Impact His Ability to Read and Write	124
Mayra	125
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes	126
Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals	126
Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course	127
Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write.....	128
Chapter IV Closure.....	129
V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	130
Presentation of Themes	130
Awareness and Management of Cognition-Related Themes.....	134
Knowledge about Oneself as a Learner-Related Themes.....	136

Table of Contents - continued

Students' Expectations for Success in Remedial Course-Related Themes	139
Students' Expectations for Success in Future Content Course and for Achieving Career Aspirations and Life Goals-Related Themes	141
Chapter V Closure	143
VI. FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	144
Research Question Analysis And Connection To Previous Research	145
Research Question 1	145
Research Question 2	147
Research Question 3	148
Discussion Of Major Findings And Connections To Previous Literature	149
Recommendations	153
Recommendations for Further Research	153
Recommendations for Leaders	154
Chapter VI Closure.....	155
REFERENCES.....	156
APPENDICES.....	175
A. IRB and Institutional Approvals	175
B. Flyer Spanish and English versions	177
C. Informed Consent in Spanish and English versions	180
D. Interview Protocol in Spanish and English Versions	186
E. HSIRB Approval Letter	193

LIST OF TABLES

1. Background Information of participants	73
2. Summary of Themes	132
3. Summary of Overarching Findings.....	153

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of students' low reading and writing proficiency in higher education has been the subject of a large body of research (e.g., Bahr, 2011; Bailey, 2010; Carlino, 2005, 2010, 2012; Flink, 2017; Pacello, 2014; Perin, 2011; Perin et al., 2013). Low proficiency in these areas is a well-known problem that worries faculty, students, and academic leaders, and impacts universities and community colleges (Cheriff, 2013). In the United States of America (U.S.), around two-thirds of students who enter community colleges, and over one-third of students entering less selective four-year colleges, are considered underprepared to face the type of coursework they need to accomplish in math and language skills at this level (Jaagars & Stacey, 2014; Skomsvold, 2014). Other higher education institutions around the world face a similar situation (Molina, 2014). Carlino (2005, 2011) explains that in Latin American, European, and even Australian universities, there is a discrepancy between the writing skills expected of students and the ones they have developed in secondary education. This fact seems to contribute to increasing students' failure and attrition rates, especially in students that come from families less connected to an academic culture (Carlino, 2011).

Within higher education institutions, issues related to reading and writing skills and attrition rates are more evident in community colleges than in four-year colleges. These are higher education institutions that offer associate's degrees and continuing education. One essential characteristic of community colleges is their inclusivity (Mellow & Heelan, 2014), in which the main goal makes it possible for less advantaged individuals to access higher education (Cohen et al., 2014). Indeed, community colleges represent a stepping stone for around 41% of all higher education American students (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2019) on their path

to a four-year institution, or a two-year degree or certificate that allows them to access the labor market. The open-door characteristics of community colleges enable nearly all students to attend, although many still have specific academic abilities they need to develop. Among the skills that students frequently need to reinforce are reading, writing, and math (Attewell et al., 2007; Bailey, 2009; Jaagars & Stacey, 2014; Perin, 2011).

As a way to fulfill students' needs in higher education, institutions seek to understand issues that prevent them from achieving their desired degrees. Recent literature covers higher education institutions' efforts to implement —developmental (or remedial) instruction in search of better results (Jaagars & Bickerstaff, 2018). However, the reading and writing abilities of students in developmental courses are still an under-researched area (Perin, 2011). Furthermore, few studies over the last 10 years have focused on students' views of their own reading and writing skills. Being proficient in reading and writing is essential for students to succeed in learning endeavors and formal education (Gruwenbaum, 2012; Moss & Bordelon, 2007). Although reading and writing have different aspects which could be studied, these two skills are firmly connected and often inseparable in academic settings (Perin, 2013). For this reason, I planned to focus on these two language abilities in my proposed study. Via my research, I sought to contribute to the understanding of the reading and writing skills of community college students, in one particular developing country, the Dominican Republic (DR).

My proposed study examined how students in a developmental Spanish language community college course describe their reading and writing proficiencies, and how they connect these proficiencies with achieving their learning and life goals. The setting for this study was the first and only community college within the DR, the Instituto Tecnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC);

this setting allows exploring perceptions of reading and writing development of a segment of the Dominican student population that, here-to-fore, was not likely to pursue higher education.

Background

The reading and writing proficiency of undergraduate students has been a concern of higher education institutions since the 1970s (Perin, 2013). For many students, academic reading and writing represent a real challenge; therefore, they need to work hard to complete more complex assignments. The main difficulty that such students face is their poor reading comprehension and fluency, which affects their opportunity to perform properly on college assignments (Flink, 2017).

Language skills are directly related to the failure or success of students when they come to college (Cheriff et al., 2013). If students have not adequately developed language skills such as reading and writing before the college level, they face difficulties in understanding some academic processes and accomplishing the expected tasks in college. The importance of these language skills has motivated the search for strategies to help higher education students increase their competency levels within these areas.

Most higher education institutions address students' lack of preparation by offering different programs that help them increase their academic competence. One such initiative adopted by higher education institutions is offering remedial or developmental courses to students not adequately prepared for first-year college courses (Bailey, 2009; Levin & Calcagno, 2007; Pacello, 2014). Other strategies that universities use to help increase students' literacy include tutoring, offering different composition courses, as well as adopting writing across the curriculum programs (Carlino, 2005; Molina, 2014). These strategies are present in both American and Latin American higher education institutions (Carlino, 2012). However, remedial

(also called developmental) courses are the most frequently implemented strategy to prepare students socially and academically at the beginning of their careers (Leing & Calcagno, 2007). To this end, I used the terms developmental and remedial/remediation interchangeably throughout this study.

Developmental courses are programs planned to meet the needs of participants who, at the beginning of their career, have not developed the necessary skills to accomplish the tasks as required by the institution or by faculty (Levin & Calcagno, 2008; Grub, 2013). In some colleges, students need to take two or three reading, writing, or math remedial courses before taking other courses. Despite these efforts, some have found that remedial or developmental education is not working correctly because a significant number of students drop out before completing their required sequence of pre-requisite remedial courses (Bailey & Jaggars, 2016). For this reason, in recent years, in the U.S., there has been a push for co-requisite courses to reduce the number of required remedial courses. These "acceleration programs" try to move students toward the college level by helping them more quickly develop the academic abilities expected for this level (Bailey & Jaggars, 2016).

In Latin America, higher education institutions have recently founded writing centers, as many other American higher institutions have been doing since the last century (Carvajal & Cáceres, 2018). The main goal of these writing centers is to help students develop their writing skills, thus increasing the possibilities of completing their careers. Writing centers and other initiatives like supplemental instruction, success courses, and learning communities (Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018), support this goal of improving students' retention and career completion.

In the case of the DR, which was the context chosen for this study, there are also a significant number of students who come underprepared for higher education. Furthermore, in a

recent Program for International Students Assessment (PISA) assessment, the DR was the country with the lowest score for the science and mathematics tests, and the second to last for the reading test (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2018). Thus, the topic of language skills and math proficiency in higher education is crucial for this country. In the first and only community college in the DR, around 61% of students registered for the third term of 2021 were not successful in the language component of their admission test (E. Salazar, personal communication, October 22, 2021).

Although public data about students' performance are not as readily available in the DR as in the U.S., some data exists. For example, Instituto Tecnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC) admission test data indicated that during the first registration process for this new community college, 70% of their applicants tested below the basic reading proficiency levels deemed necessary for success in undergraduate studies (ITSC, 2013), which is similar to U.S. test results. Moreover, the PISA data noted previously for the DR was from the second time the country participated in such assessments, and the reading performance of secondary students decreased by 16 points in comparison with the score in 2015 (OECD, 2018). The high volume of students with low reading and writing proficiency is worrisome since it will impact their ability to complete higher education programs.

Most universities and community colleges have implemented developmental instruction all around the world, and this Dominican community college is not an exception. At ITSC, students who do not score high enough on the placement test must enroll in a mandatory remedial Spanish reading and writing course. Also, students can take elective tutoring, orthography courses, and workshops. Spanish instructors offer these alternative programs not

only to students enrolled in the developmental courses but also to all students who want to improve their language proficiency along with their studies at the ITSC.

The Dominican Education System

The Dominican education system includes both formal and non-formal education (Cedeño, 2014). Formal education includes preschool to higher education, and is distributed in levels, periods, and grades; there are also modalities and subsystems. Formal education includes three levels (preschool, elementary, and secondary), and two cycles (first and second) per level, in K-12 education. Non-formal education is described by Cedeño (2014) as a process in which students learn the same contents and skills as in formal education but via an alternative program. It is called an education subsystem. These programs are for particular groups defined by their age or any exceptional nature. The two subsystems in the DR are adult education and special education. Special education focuses on the population that has any type of disability (Cedeño, 2014). There is also a literacy program that seeks to reduce the illiteracy level in the country (DIGEPEP, 2018). Adults can complete an accelerated basic education program in 4 years or more (Cedeño, 2014).

Most students, who register in community colleges in the U.S. and elsewhere, come from lower-income families (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2018). They live in areas in which the overall population lives at disadvantage, and many are considered non-traditional students (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). Within this group, there are young individuals who for different reasons could not attend a four-year higher education institution after completing secondary school or those who did not complete secondary education in a regular school, but a particular program or certificate. It also includes students

who have dependents, like family or older parents to care for; therefore, they have work responsibilities (NCES, 2017).

Students who attend ITSC are not an exception to this rule. Like in other community colleges, students have the characteristics mentioned above. A high number of these students must enroll in remedial reading and writing classes, due to their low scores on the admission test (NCES, 2017).

Problem Statement

Some studies reported that as high as 68% of incoming first-year students in community colleges, and around 40% at public four-year colleges, in the U.S. need remediation (Flink, 2013; Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018), and only about half of those students will complete the developmental sequence (Zachry & Schneider, 2011). What is worse is that 60 to 70% of students who attend developmental education never achieve a postsecondary degree or certificate (Zachry & Schneider, 2011). Bailey (2009) considers that this situation is complicated due to the excess of remediation assessment and cutoff points to decide if a student should attend or not developmental education in the U.S.

In the case of ITSC in the DR, there has been a consistent percentage (at least 40-60%) of students who needed to enroll in a remedial Spanish or Math course (or both) due to the low grade obtained on their placement test (E. Salazar, personal communication, October 22nd, 2021). Previous research has shown that if such students are not able to improve their language proficiency, then they are not likely to succeed in other courses and complete their career programs (Bahr, 2011; Bailey, 2009; Perin, 2013).

In countries like the DR, this means these students are deficient in their home language of Spanish, which will impact their success in all required courses taught in Spanish. It will also

impact their ability to complete the four required English proficiency courses at ITSC, a means to ensure at least a basic proficiency in this second-world language. This makes the reading and writing proficiency concerns even greater since these students are also required to learn an additional language.

Developmental education is expected to meet the needs of participants who, at the beginning of their academic career, have not developed the necessary skills to accomplish the tasks as required by the institution or by faculty (Levin & Calcagno, 2008; Grub, 2013). Many higher education institutions offer a placement test and based on the test results, students may be placed in remedial math, sciences, or reading and writing courses. Some institutions offer multiple levels of remediation, which increases the amount of time they need to complete their degree, as they are not allowed to enter the required academic courses until remediation is complete. Students who do not finish the remedial sequence in math and/or language face difficulties in earning a degree of any kind or transferring to a university (Bailey, 2009), while those who do complete the remedial sequence require more time overall to complete their degree program (Bahr, 2011).

High rates of dropouts from developmental sequence provoke great concerns about the effectiveness of traditional developmental education because "it appears to have limited success" (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 2). Furthermore, some scholars like Jaggars and Stacey (2014) state that remedial education sometimes has a negative or no effect on students who are near the cutoffs in the placement test.

Reading and writing competencies are crucial for students to understand and accomplish their coursework in higher education (Winneburg, 2006). However, it is not clear how students who apply and are admitted to community colleges are aware of their reading and writing

abilities, and their readiness to handle basic undergraduate studies. It is also not known how first-year community college students perceive the relationship between their reading and writing skills and the acquisition of knowledge in undergraduate courses. Overall, undergraduate education and developmental courses have been widely studied; however, students' knowledge about their own reading and writing skills is still an under-researched area (Lembke, 2021; Perin, 2013).

In addition, despite an extensive review of the literature, I found no studies that focused specifically on community college remedial education in the DR, nor any that focused on DR students' understanding of how they perceive the issues that may impact their ability to read and write. It is important to explore how students enrolled in remedial Spanish in the ITSC describe their experience in reading and writing, and their opinions about the relevance of these skills for their achievement in both remedial courses and future content courses. Only through understanding how students perceive issues that impact their reading and writing can we partner with them to resolve them. For example, if a student believes that the world is divided into "smart" and "not smart" people, and sees himself/herself/themselves in the latter group, this student will be unable to learn (Tärning & Silvervarg, 2019).

Having such research knowledge is significant for educators because it provides first-hand information about how students view the relevance of reading and writing proficiencies for their academic and personal achievements. It is important, as well, for students who may not have considered the link between reading proficiency and their performance in content courses that are necessary to accomplish their careers. It is of great relevance, as well, for academic leaders to have data to make the correct decisions regarding the support for improving the retention and

graduation rates at the ITSC, particularly through the development of students reading and writing skills.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at ITSC view the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and life goals. I also seek to explore how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write. To explore what these students think of their reading and writing proficiencies I conducted a basic interpretive qualitative study. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do community college students enrolled in a remedial Spanish course think of their own reading and writing proficiencies in relation to their present and future classes, their career aspirations, and their life goals?
2. How do such students view the importance of enrollment in that remedial Spanish course?
3. How do such students understand issues that may impact their abilities to read and write?

Conceptual Framework and Narrative

I used metacognitive theories to frame this study. Metacognition is the kind of process that involves individuals' learning, the self-knowledge obtained, and the self-regulation of this knowledge (Proust, 2010). Thus, metacognition can be inferred as the awareness of learners of what they have or have not learned. The metacognitive theory explains that it is essential for

learners to regulate and guide their learning process (Sternberg, 2009). Unfortunately, not all of the students enrolled in remedial education develop metacognitive abilities. Also, many of these students consider that general courses, and also developmental courses are unnecessary, or an obstacle for them to move forward in their careers (Cox, 2009).

In this study, metacognitive theories helped analyze and interpret the experiences and perceptions of students enrolled in a developmental Spanish course at the ITSC. I sought to discover how students understand their reading and writing skills, and if they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in the use of these abilities. Asking students to reflect on their experiences with these skills also engages them in a metacognitive activity and promotes awareness about their reading and writing skills (Pintrich, 2002).

Figure 1 profiles the connection between students' awareness of their reading and writing skills with other concepts mentioned in the research questions. First, it is the interaction between students' awareness and their success in a remedial course, where they are expected to enhance their language abilities and reach an adequate level for academic coursework. Then, the diagram presents the connection with students' success in future content subjects and, finally, with the achievement of their career aspirations and life goals. All these are framed by their metacognitive ability, with the two types of metacognitive elements that better relate to this study: knowledge about oneself as a learner, and awareness and management of cognition (see Figure 1).

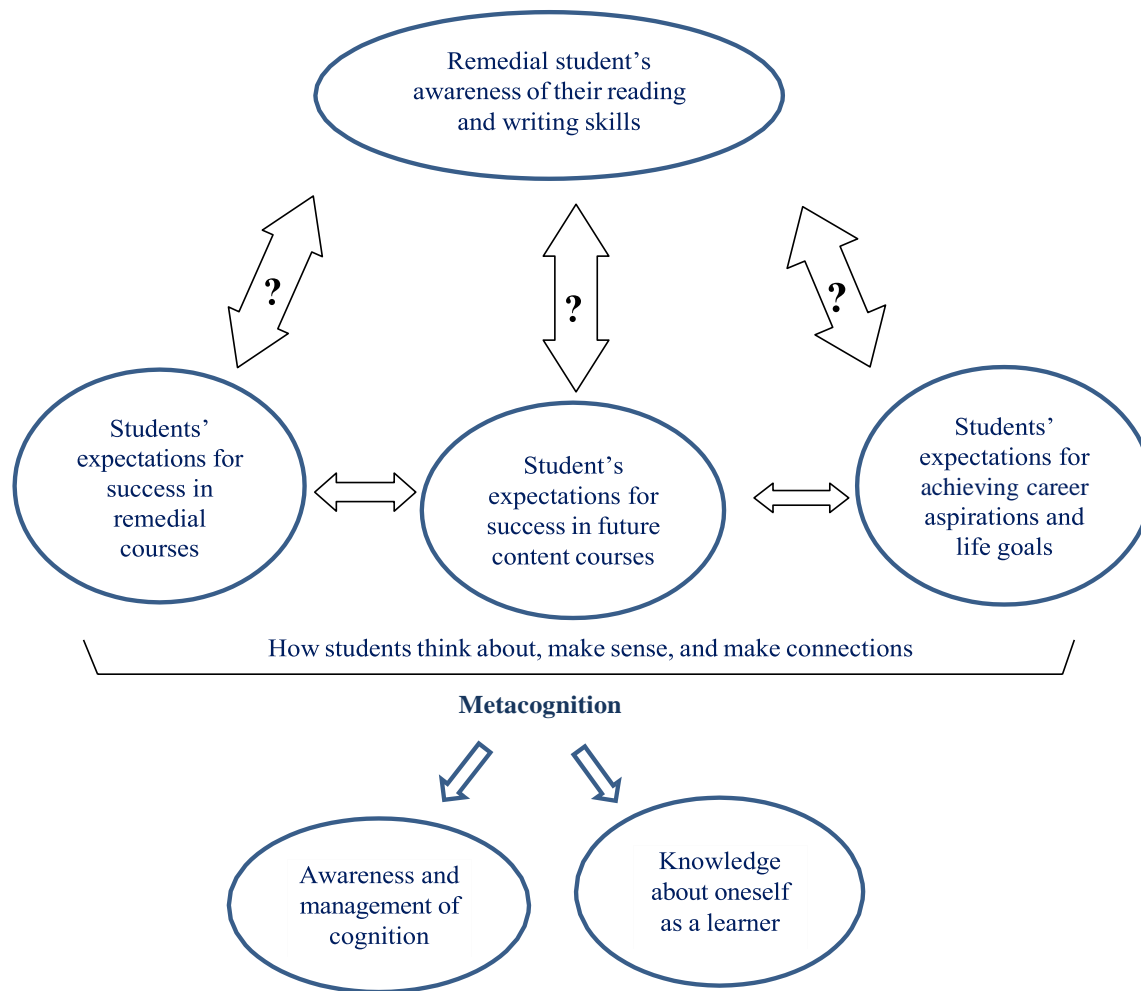


Figure 1. Conceptual framework map (Campusano 2023)

Developmental students' awareness of their reading and writing proficiency is a key point of the study because it is expected that students develop these skills to be successful in both their current and future undergraduate courses. It will help to see if students give importance to reading and writing for the achievement of their career aspirations and other life goals.

Reading is the understanding of ideas and information in any language presented in a written code (Lesgold & Welch-Ross, 2011). Reading is a skill that derives from two elements: decoding, which implies the deciphering of words; and linguistic comprehension, which refers to

discovering the deep meaning of language (Perin, 2011). It takes time to become a fluent reader because reading is a complex skill that requires many hours of practicing to be acquired (Lesgold & Welch-Ross, 2011). A person is a proficient reader when he or she does not have any problems with one or two of the components of reading skills (Perin, 2013). Instructors need to be aware of this characteristic of reading and expose students to as many texts as their teaching permits. Practicing might allow students to become experienced and fluent readers. It is also necessary that professors identify in which of the two components (decoding and deciphering) their students are facing problems, so they can help them to develop the needed element. Writing is the production of texts that will be read by others, including the author (Lesgold & Welch-Ross, 2011). There are different types of writing, depending on the purpose of the text (e.g., learning, communication, entertaining, tabulating, persuading). Writing competency is more complex because being proficient in one type of writing does not mean being proficient in another one. For example, someone can be competent in writing for persuading, but not for tabulating. Being proficient in writing refers not only to handwriting but also to digital writing. A competent writer needs to develop a variety of basic writing skills, strategies, and motivational processes that vary according to the assignment and goal of the writer (Lesgold & Welch-Ross, 2011).

Students' success in remedial courses goes beyond the grade obtained in this subject since remedial education was designed to help students to develop cognitive skills, so they can effectively complete academic courses (Bailey, 2009). Students' success in remedial Spanish is related to the development of language skills, such as reading and writing, to a level that allows students to understand the concepts of the courses. In other words, it is expected that participants

of developmental courses overcome the obstacles that prevented them from succeeding on the placement test (Fowler & Boylan, 2010).

One of the biggest challenges for students who are enrolled in developmental education is the completion of a degree (Bailey, 2009). Career aspirations in the conceptual framework of this study, it is related to the successful completion of subjects and achievement of the degree and the future practicing of this career. It is important to explain that degree completion is a challenge for many community college students because many academic and non-academic issues impact these students (Fowler & Boylan, 2015). Although community colleges offer opportunities for entering higher education, and despite their flexibility and geographic convenience, the number of students who complete their degrees is relatively low. As mentioned before, only around 22% of community college students achieve their degree in three years (Shapiro et al., 2017).

The components explained in this conceptual framework are key aspects in exploring students' understandings of their reading and writing abilities and the relationship between those abilities and their coursework and, ultimately, their career and life goals. As such, participants responded to questions about concepts mentioned in these components, sharing insights into how they think of their learning to read and write in remedial Spanish courses. As they did this, they reflected on their learning process, thus, they applied metacognitive strategies.

Methods Overview

My philosophical viewpoint aligns with constructivism, which is an epistemological doctrine that asserts a reality that is socially constructed and transmitted to various members of society (Gall et al., 2007). For this reason, I selected a qualitative methodology to conduct this study. Qualitative research is interested "in how meaning is constructed, how people make sense out of their lives and their worlds" (Merriam, 2002, p. 38). This methodology could give a better

response to my research questions because qualitative methodology focuses on individuals' lives and experiences to reach a deep understanding of a problem (Creswell, 2013). Thus, I interpreted interpret patterns and associations in the data generated from students' statements about their experiences when I interviewed them.

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore students' interpretation of their reading and writing abilities. Chapter 3 contains further explanation of this methodology and the procedures I followed to conduct the study.

Chapter I Closure

A great number of students enter community college with a low reading and writing level (Gruwenbaum, 2012), and they are placed in remedial courses (Bayley, 2009). However, these students may or may not know how low their reading and writing skills are. They also may be unaware of how their lack of abilities could impact their undergraduate studies at community college (Krugger & Dunning, 1999) and how they also impact the achievement of their future career aspirations. The purpose of this study is to explore how students who are enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at ITSC view the relevance of their language abilities in connection with their performance in both current and future undergraduate coursework; and eventually, in connection with their professional and personal achievement. The study also seeks to explore how these students see the importance of their developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write.

This study is important for ITSC faculty to know how students view the relevance of reading and writing proficiencies for their academic and personal achievements. It is significant, as well, for students who may not have considered the link between their current and future content courses to accomplish their careers. The study is of great relevance, as well, for academic

leaders, who need data to make the correct decisions regarding the support for improving the retention and graduation rates at the ITSC, particularly through the development of students reading and writing skills and students' self-reflection on their abilities.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A high number of students come underprepared for higher education and need to take developmental reading, writing, and/or math courses (Bahr, 2011; Bailey, 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014; Perin, 2011). What is worse is that 60-70% of students who take such developmental courses never do complete a postsecondary degree or certificate (Zachry & Schneider, 2011). Previous research has shown that if such students are not able to improve their language proficiency, then they are not likely to succeed in other courses and complete their career programs (Bahr, 2011; Bailey, 2009; Perin, 2013). Although developmental education has been widely studied, the reading and writing proficiencies of higher education students who take developmental courses are an under-researched area (Perin, 2013). Furthermore, few studies explore what students think about their reading and writing proficiencies and how these skills relate to their success in other courses.

The purpose of my study is to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at a community college in the DR view the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and life goals. I also seek to explore how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write. I used metacognition as a lens to frame this study, develop the research questions, and analyze and interpret the experiences and perceptions of students enrolled in a developmental reading and writing course.

The first section of this literature review chapter, offers a general idea about metacognition, the role of this construct in higher education, and how it connects with students' perceptions of their

skills. The chapter is organized as follows: a) metacognition, b) students' awareness of their reading and writing skills, c) Research on remedial or developmental education, and d) students' perceptions of their success related to reading and writing.

Metacognition

Origin and Components

Metacognition is defined as a process in which learners become conscious of their learning process (Proust, 2010). It is also seen as a higher-order cognitive construct because it involves different processes of using and evaluating knowledge (Siddiqui & Dubey, 2018). Thus, individuals need to put into practice several strategies to develop metacognition. Metacognitive strategies are systematic procedures that a person puts into practice to control the acquisition of any knowledge and to achieve a specific goal. Developing a metacognitive ability or strategy involves some actions like planning, evaluating, monitoring, and self-regulating the learning processes (McKeon & Beck, 2009). Among other benefits, developing metacognitive strategies provides students the merit of learning by themselves and it augments their self-confidence, which helps them to have better accomplishments (Siddiqui & Dubey, 2018). In addition, metacognitive strategies allow students to transfer what they learn to another environment, and to self-evaluate their learning process to enhance their performance. Thus, metacognition is of great importance for learning and motivation (Chen et al., 2009).

The research on metacognition started in the 1970s with John Flavell and Ann Brown (Kraayenoord, 2014; Mahdavi, 2014). Flavell (1979) explains that there are two main components in metacognition: metacognitive knowledge, which implies using declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge; and metacognitive experience or regulation, which

implies planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the cognitive process. Studies about metacognition have been useful to explain how individuals think about their learning processes, and how they monitor their knowledge.

Other scholars defined different components of metacognition. For instance, Brown et al. (1983) described four components or roots of metacognition: a) the fact of taking verbal report as data; b) the concept of personal control, c) self-regulation of the learning process, and d) the transfer of control in learning from another person to self. Later, Paris and Winograd (1990), when talking about metacognition and academic learning, explained that students can improve their learning by developing awareness of their learning process when they read, write and solve problems. Thus higher education instructors should promote activities that help community college developmental students to develop an awareness of their thinking because it will enhance their learning. Faculty can encourage students' awareness by orienting them about useful problem-solving techniques and discussions about their cognition (Paris & Winograd, 1990).

Pintrich (2002) describes three types of metacognitive knowledge: strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, and self-knowledge. Strategic knowledge refers to general approaches that a person uses to think, learn, and solve problems. Knowledge about cognitive tasks refers to the information that a learner accumulates and could involve the use of different cognitive strategies and activities. Self-knowledge relates to understanding a learner's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, McKeon and Beck (2009) stated that some components of metacognition that Brown et al. (1983) described are important for reading comprehension because readers need to be involved in processes like planning and self-monitoring, to read and understand what they read.

Lai (2011) summarizes the metacognitive components previously described by other authors and synthesizes the terminology to name the different types of metacognitive knowledge and strategies. Similar to Flavel's (1979) Model, Lai (2011) classifies metacognition into two main components: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. The first of these two main components include knowledge about oneself as a learner and factors affecting cognition, awareness, and management of cognition including knowledge about strategies, and knowledge of why and when to use a given strategy. The second component, which is metacognitive experience or regulation, includes attending to and being aware of comprehension and task performance, assessing the process and products of one's learning, and revisiting and revising learning goals.

The two types of metacognitive knowledge most related to my proposed study are metacognitive awareness and knowledge about oneself as a learner. *Metacognitive awareness* is the type of knowledge that students develop when they are conscious of where they are in the learning process (Siddiqui & Dubey, 2018), and it involves the management of their cognition and knowledge about when and how to use strategies (Lai, 2014). *Knowledge about oneself as a learner* is the type of knowledge that allows students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and issues that impact their learning process. Thus, my study focuses on how determining conscious students in developmental courses are of their learning processes, and if they can manage and monitor the strategies they use to learn. In the next section, I explain some issues that should be taken into account when exploring if a learner develops metacognition or one of its components.

Metacognition Assessment

Assessing metacognition in both K-12 and higher education implies facing certain issues and realities about this process (Lai, 2011). Some situations impact the assessment of this construct in schools and any other institutions where metacognitive processes —can be detected, measured, tracked, and modeled with more precision and accuracy (Azevedo, 2020, p. 95).

Metacognition is a complex construct, and for this reason, researchers normally select only one or some of the components for conducting any assessment. Thus, instruments also measure only one or various components of metacognition (Lai, 2014). For instance, my study focuses on two metacognitive components, which are knowledge about oneself and awareness and management of cognition. In addition, due to the importance of metacognition, it is strongly recommended that schools teach and apply metacognitive strategies from kindergarten through higher education (Avargil et al., 2018).

Indeed, one of the most studied metacognitive components is self-monitoring (Schneider, 2008). Some metacognition studies focus on meta-memory; consequently, the results of these studies depend on what students remember from a specific activity previously proposed. Another frequent data collection method is using self-report questionnaires or rating scales (Azevedo, 2020; Lai, 2014).

One issue that researchers face is recognizing if a learner has developed metacognition. Another issue is that methods requiring students to describe the use of a metacognitive strategy, strongly depend on the subject's capacity for verbal communication (Whitebread et al., 2009). That is the case with my study, which strongly depends on students' explanations of what they think about their language skills. In addition, techniques that use think-aloud methods could be wrong in measuring a subject's metacognitive ability, because not all individuals are conscious of

their knowledge (Lai, 2014). It is useful for researchers to recognize these issues to make appropriate decisions when conducting a study that involves metacognition or any of its components. In the next section, I explain how I will apply metacognition in this study, and what components are most related to what I intend to investigate.

Applying Metacognition in My Study

To carry out my study, I focused on the metacognitive awareness of students' reading and writing skills and their knowledge about themselves as learners. These components of metacognition permit me to analyze whether or not participants in the study could explain if they find a connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance, in both their current developmental course and future undergraduate courses. It also allowed me to notice how these students understand issues that may impact their reading and writing skills.

Metacognitive awareness is about students' consciousness of their learning process. Knowledge about oneself as a learner, also called self-knowledge by Pintrich (2002), is related to personal reflection about one's learning process. This type of knowledge promotes independent learning (Paris & Winograd, 1990). This reflection motivates students to identify and think about issues that could affect their cognitive process (Cross & Paris, 1988). Moreover, knowledge about oneself is related not only to reflecting on the own knowledge but having an accurate awareness of one's cognitive process. I used these concepts to develop the research questions for this study and to frame the analysis of the data generated from students' answers to the research questions. Thus, they support the analysis and discussion about students' perceptions of their own experiences with reading and writing skills. I was also open to identifying any other components of metacognition that appear in my análisis, such as planning, self-regulation, or any statement that demonstrates interviewees were aware of comprehension and task performance.

Students' Awareness of Their Reading and Writing Skills

Students' awareness of their literacy proficiency is very important for developing the necessary skills for success in academic coursework (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Thus, students must be aware of their knowledge for reaching the desired competence in social and intellectual domains (Pintrich, 2002). As previously explained, metacognitive awareness implies the management of cognition, including knowledge about strategies. It is also called procedural knowledge and strategy knowledge. Some studies linked the development of metacognition to enhancing reading and writing skills. For instance, Pacello (2014) in his qualitative study of students' perceptions of their metacognitive experiences with reading and writing in a developmental course, at a four-year college in New York City, found that metacognitive strategies helped students to connect to literacy demands of academic, professional, and personal contexts. Furthermore, students' discussions about their writing from the perspective of a reader demonstrated that students were able to read and reread their texts from the point of view of the audience and that they considered it a valuable part of their course. It will be interesting to see if participants in my study mention any connections they can make between what they learn in the actual developmental reading and writing course, and their future content courses.

Some research exists to analyze the extent to which inexperienced people tend to overvalue their abilities. For example, Kruger and Dunning (1999) conducted four studies on this issue, finding that in valuing their abilities, inexperienced people may make incorrect choices and results, and they may not have the metacognitive skills needed to understand that they are wrong. These studies involved tests that assessed students' ability in the domains of humor, logical reasoning, grammar, and competence belief calibration. The number of participants changed in every study, for a total of 334 psychology undergraduates at Cornell University. Findings suggest that

participants overvalued personal proficiency and their performance in the tests of humor, grammar, and logic. Such misunderstanding of their abilities is considered as a low metacognitive level, which may exist in many college students because metacognition is a complex ability that takes time to develop (Lai, 2011).

Kruger and Dunning's (1999) findings connect to my proposed study because one of the concerns in carrying out this study was not knowing whether students in a developmental course even think about their reading and writing skills in connection with future knowledge. Another concern was that I did not know if they could recognize any lack of knowledge or ability. Thus, I was open to finding different levels of awareness in participants of the study, including the Dunning-Kruger Effect.

Indeed, Linderholm and Wide (2010), in their study of student's beliefs about their reading understanding and test performance, found that when reflecting on their reading skills, students think their comprehension and their test results (past and future) were greater when they read to study than when they read for enjoyment. Participants in the study were 94 English-speaking students at a large southeastern university. The study involved reading a series of texts for entertainment or study purposes, and then, answering questions about the texts and their beliefs about future and past results on the test. However, their actual test performance did not show any difference related to their reading purpose. These findings suggest that, although reflections of students on their reading skills are not accurate, they are positive for students to enhance their literacy proficiency. Thus, reflecting on their reading and writing skills may be a worthy goal for participants in my proposed study.

Some other researchers investigated metacognitive awareness of writing skills. For instance, Negretti (2012) in her study of metacognitive awareness, explored how higher

education students develop skills to participate in communicative coursework and how they develop rhetorical consciousness. Her study also explored how students change this consciousness as time passes by, and how it connects to their perceptions and strategies, and self-evaluation of their writing skills. A grounded theory approach was used to analyze students' compositions throughout a semester to verify qualitative changes in their writing. The study was carried out within a North American community college; participants were anonymously recruited from three courses of a beginning college composition course. Two groups from a face-to-face classes, and one group from an online class. Negretti (2012) discovered a link between students' task perception, metacognitive awareness, and performance evaluation. She also realized that there is a reciprocal relationship between students' self-regulation and the development of their writing skills. These findings justify the use of metacognitive theories to explore developmental students' awareness of their literacy skills.

Another study that explored a metacognitive component is that of Robinson and Burton (2009). Their study explored students' self-assessment and goal setting at the start of the term using a survey that asked students to reflect on their writing experiences, identify their strengths and weaknesses as writers, and set personal writing goals for the course they initiated. The study was conducted at Oregon State University, with 22 faculty and 256 undergraduates participating. Results suggest that self-assessment motivated students reflect on their writing skills, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and set personal goals for the course. They also found that the main benefit for students when reflecting on their writing ability was that they could focus on developing their writing and subsequent activities along a course. Therefore, self-assessment could improve students' awareness of their learning process. Similarly, I hope that participants in my study obtain great benefits from their insights about their writing skills.

The next section is about two scales that measure metacognitive awareness. In the section, I included information about studies that use any of these scales.

Two Scales to Measure Metacognitive Awareness

One of the most common methods to measure metacognition is using self-report questionnaires or scales (Azevedo, 2020; Lai, 2014). I found two commonly used scales to measure metacognitive awareness: one is the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI), and the other one is the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Skills Inventory (MARSİ). These scales have been useful for quantitative studies, identifying actions that students take and the metacognitive category or component they might indicate (e.g., declarative, procedural knowledge, planning, monitoring, use of strategies, evaluation). Although my proposed study is qualitative, with students not being asked to complete a self-report scale, knowledge of items from within these scales will help me analyze what my participants share in their interview data; therefore, I share information in this literature review about some research studies that used these scales.

The first scale, the MAI, was developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994) to measure both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation (Young & Fry, 2008). For instance, Kallio et al. (2018) conducted a study using the MAI scale to explore if self-evaluation can be predicted by other elements of metacognitive awareness. The study was carried out in Finland, and they empirically tested the model on 578 vocational students. Results of the study show that it is possible to predict other components of knowledge or regulation, and especially self-evaluation, by measuring, planning, or conditional knowledge. Kallio et al. (2018) also found that the conditions and goals that students choose predict the selection of contents and strategies

related to self-evaluation of their learning. The results of this study corroborate that planning and knowledge of conditions ensure success in learning.

Similarly, Harrison and Vallin (2017), in their study of evaluating the MAI scale using empirical-factor structure evidence, validated the classification of this inventory in two dimensions: knowledge and regulation of cognition, which confirms that the scale can be used in longitudinal studies. The study examined the scores of 622 undergraduate students. They used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and multidimensional random coefficients multinomial logit (MRCML) item–response modeling to examine how well MAI connected to the data of the population under analysis. Findings from the study validate a classification of MAI in two dimensions: knowledge and regulation of cognition. However, findings also indicated that there is a poor fit on item 52 of the instrument. The results of these studies corroborate that the MAI scale is useful for measuring knowledge and regulation of cognition.

Sperling et al. (2010) also used MAI, but they added a Learning Strategies Survey and a Motivated Strategies for Learning questionnaire, to conduct two studies. The studies were carried out in a northeastern state college in the U.S.; participants were 109 first-year students enrolled in an academic strategies class. Findings found there is a strong relationship between metacognition and academic monitoring, The study also revealed a positive connection between metacognition and strategy use of metacognition and motivation, which suggests that the MAI scale is also useful to measure different components of metacognition.

The second common scale is the MARSI, which is a self-report instrument that measures the metacognitive awareness of reading skills of students; specifically, the scale measures adolescent and adult readers' perceptions of their skills in academic readings. This instrument was created to increase students' metacognitive awareness of their reading strategies. It includes

Global Reading Strategies, Problem-Solving Strategies, and Support Reading Strategies. The scale contains a list of 30 actions that students can take when reading a text; depending on the actions selected, the teacher can see the level of metacognitive awareness that the student developed. Information from this scale is also helpful for me to understand what to listen for as I interview participants in my study.

When exploring the use of reading strategies and self-perceptions of striving developmental college readers, Hong-Nam and Leavell (2011) used the MARS scale to measure strategy acquisition in three areas before and after the intervention. The study was conducted at a large Southwestern university in the U.S. and included 32 college students enrolled in two developmental reading classes (23 males and nine females) majoring in different disciplines (including social sciences, humanities, engineering sciences, and undecided). Findings in the study revealed that reading strategy instruction has positive impacts on students' metacognitive reading skills, thus it enhanced their Global Reading Strategies.

Chen et al. (2009) also used the MARS scale to explore higher education students' reading awareness in school-related texts. The study was carried out at De La Salle Manila University; the random sampling was 300 participants. The findings in this study confirmed that five factors of reading (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Reading Fluency, Vocabulary Development, and Reading Comprehension) are elements of the reading process that involves metacognition. The results of the study confirmed that the MARS instrument is useful for measuring strategies that students use when they read.

Both, the MAI and MARS scales are useful for seeing the metacognitive awareness level of students, but they cannot explain how students view the connection between their reading and writing skills and their performance in their remedial and future undergraduate coursework.

Neither could explain how students view the importance of these skills for them achieving their career aspirations and life goals. They rather focus on the strategies or actions that students take to demonstrate that they have developed a certain type of metacognitive strategy. Studies that use just the MAI and MARS scales do not explore a deep interpretation of how students think about their language skills and make sense of the connections between their language skills, their collected coursework, and their ultimate career and life goals. I am not using any of the scales in my proposed study because I do not want students to see the interview as a test situation. My goal is to get participants to speak authentically, and off the top of their heads. I want the interviewees to feel comfortable when they participate in the study, and I feel that completing the scale might degrade the comfort of the interview interaction.

Research on Remedial/Development Education

In the U.S., a high number of students fail to complete a college degree for different reasons (Cheriff et al., 2013). For this reason, the study of factors that could prevent students' achievement is important for colleges and universities, as is a study of factors that contribute to students' success in higher education. Such student success is related to the accomplishment of the required process for approving a subject or obtaining a degree. According to Kuh et al. (2006), "student success is defined as academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational outcomes, and post-college performance" (p. 7).

While this covers overall success in higher education, students' success in remedial or developmental education refers to students' acquisition of the skills they need for future academic coursework, or the effectiveness of these courses in contributing to students' improvement of their reading and writing abilities. This is in contrast to success in content

courses, which is more related to the completion of subjects and understanding concepts and theories related to their knowledge area, which will guide students to achieve the desired college degree.

Despite the lack of consistency in defining college outcomes, Robins et al. (2004) explain that students' success is traditionally measured by students' scores, standardized tests, and GPA. Other factors considered important for students to succeed in higher education are psychological such as motivation, self-efficacy, and institutional commitments. Indeed, Russell and Petrie (1992) discovered that many non-cognitive factors influence students' outcomes in higher education. These factors are connected to metacognition: motivation, self-confidence, perceptions of support from the higher education institution, emotional impact, study behaviors, and campus involvement.

Before we look at a summary of research studies looking at the success of remedial courses, we need to briefly review the role of placement tests, which is the first step in the process for a student to become enrolled in such purposes.

Role of Placement Tests

One common tool used in higher education is the placement test. Such placement testing is the starting point of developmental education since students are enrolled in reading, writing, or math course after receiving a low grade on the placement test (Bailey, 2010). The best desire of students is to obtain the needed score that allows them to begin their first language course as soon as they enter higher education. For this reason, placement test accuracy is of great importance for students' pathways. To this end, higher education systems have implemented some initiatives to avoid developmental education, such as early assessments and dual

enrollment programs, which help identify and support students while still in high school (Zachry & Scheider, 2011).

The majority of higher education institutions use placement test scores to place entry-level students in remedial courses, but this is more frequent for math than for reading (Fields, 2014). It has been noted that when students need developmental courses and are placed correctly in them in the first term, they are more likely to complete the developmental sequence than students who needed remediation but were not enrolled in any type of developmental courses in the first term (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012). Therefore, the accuracy of the placement process is extremely important for newly enrolled students in community colleges. The Center for Community College Student Engagement conducted four surveys to assess how connected students are to their studies, their classmates, and faculty, the study also explored 13 best practices for students' success. These surveys were conducted on community college campuses and they focus on different perspectives of student engagement. The number of participants varied from one survey to the other.

It is also known that placement tests in community colleges are more useful to predict which students are likely to succeed than those who are likely to fail. Scott-Clayton's (2012) study, in which she studied the predictive validity of one of the most commonly used assessments to enter higher education, included data from 42,000 new candidates to enter a large, urban community college system. Results revealed that placement tests are more accurate to predict math than the language skills of students. In addition, Scott-Clayton indicated that conducting multiple measures is useful for reducing misplacements of students in remedial courses. Misplacement in remedial courses produces a negative or null impact on developmental education on students and reduces some positive effects that learners could obtain in case of

being correctly placed. Jaggars and Stacey (2014) also discussed this last point in their research overview about developmental education outcomes, in which they offer findings of different aspects of remedial education; such as methodology, student's progress in remedial sequence, effects of remediation on students, inaccuracy placement in developmental courses, among others.

Regarding students' enrollment in developmental courses, Woods et al. (2019) studied reading and writing enrollment and the success of underprepared students. Their study focused on first-time-in-college individuals, and the population was limited to students who began higher education in 2014. The sample consisted of 16,796 students from Florida, where a significant reform of developmental education occurred in 2013. Findings in the study revealed that students with some preparedness in reading and writing had better opportunities to pass language courses in comparison to severely underprepared students. This happens in institutions that include a reading test to place students in developmental courses if necessary.

Despite the importance that placement tests have for students' pathways in a developmental sequence, no studies could be found that had explored students' perceptions of the placement test scores received by students. In the next section, I summarize research related to the effectiveness of remedial education on students' skills.

Student's Success in Remedial or Developmental Courses

Students' success in developmental education is normally measured by criteria like students' scores, progress through specific levels in a developmental sequence, course pass rates, persistence, and graduation rates. Overall, the research is mixed when it comes to student success. Some research reveals how some programs contributed to students' progress. However, there is significant controversy about the efficacy of this type of course (Bahr, 2009), or the

success of students in developing the required skills for academic coursework. These courses seem to push or preclude students' success in different ways depending on the state, institution, or academic readiness (Boatman et al., 2013). As such, there is a vast diversity of studies defending, or criticizing developmental courses' efficacy.

Studies with Favorable Findings

Many studies reveal favorable findings regarding the effectiveness of developmental education. Indeed, a detailed review of the literature on this issue completed about a decade concluded there were more positive than negative outcomes. Goudas and Boylan's (2012) work studied the continuum of the latest studies, the data that supported these studies, the conclusions of their authors, and the principles upon which they based their conclusions. These authors included less frequently cited studies to offer other sights of the current situation of developmental education, and concluded via their analysis that when taking into consideration all studies related to the effectiveness of developmental education, one finds more positive outcomes, than negative. They note that findings depend on how one defines developmental education, how one defines success, and how one interprets data within a larger context.

Some studies revealed positive impacts on persistence. For instance, Bettinger and Long (2009), in their study of the needs of underprepared students in higher education, found that students who complete developmental education courses usually persist in college more than students with similar backgrounds who did not attend remedial courses. The study was conducted in Ohio, using data from over 28,000 students, between 18 and 20 years old, to examine the effects of remediation on them.

Some studies looked at academic success in future courses. For example, Bahr's (2010) study analyzed data that the Chancellor's Office of California Community Colleges collects each

academic term as a census of the students, including transcripts, demographics, financial aid awards, degree/certificate awards, etc. Their analysis explored relationships between the depth and the extent of students' under-preparation, successful performance in remedial courses, and academic achievement. The study used a two-level hierarchical multinomial logistic regression to analyze data from (N = 167,982) students. Bahr's research revealed that despite the deficiency that students bring when they enroll in college, students who do attain the needed college-level skills in English and math via remedial courses obtain similar levels of achievement as other students not required to take such courses. In addition, Boatman and Long (2018) found that developmental education does offer positive effects for students with lower preparation. Like many other scholars, Boatman and Long used a regression discontinuity design to examine the influence of developmental courses in students with different academic preparation on short-, intermediate-, and long-term results of community college and university students. The study included data from the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). The results of this study indicate that remedial education can help or affect students based on the support they receive when they come to postsecondary education.

Some initiatives are effective in increasing students' literacy skills as measured by course or assignment grades within the remedial courses. For instance, Kalamkarian et al. (2015) found positive results of remedial education on students' success in a study conducted in the community college systems of Virginia and North Carolina. In both states, there was an intense reform and it involved the redesigning of their remedial education systems, and although it was a short time since the reforms, preliminary findings suggest that there is some success. The number of students placed in remedial courses decreased and the number of those who completed math and English prerequisites increased.

Similarly, Lavonier (2016) found that instruction implemented in two developmental courses was effective. The findings of this study revealed that both courses were successful in improving the reading comprehension skills of students at a community college in the southwestern U.S. The study analyzed traditional textbook-based instruction and strategic-reading instruction. The sample included 64 participants; half ($n = 32$) of the participants were in the control group and the other half ($n = 32$) were in the experimental group. Based on the findings of this study, Lavonier encourages community college leaders to measure the impact of different instructional methods used in remedial courses to ensure that vulnerable students in community colleges receive the benefits of the approaches that better help them to succeed.

Although these researchers found positive results of developmental education on students' literacy skills, some scholars do not recognize the efficacy of these courses. In the next section, there is information about studies that found diverse results about the efficacy of remedial courses.

Studies with Non-Favorable or Mixed Findings

Some research has revealed that while developmental education might have some initial impact, it does not necessarily help students make long-term progress in obtaining a degree. For example, Bailey (2009) determined that developmental education does not fulfill the expectations of helping students to overcome their difficulties, partly because most of the students referred for developmental education do not complete the sequence of courses that they need to take before enrolling in credit-bearing courses. Therefore, many students look for any exception to avoid developmental education, or they abandon their careers. This study explored data from National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) about students who enter community college without the required skills. The study included more than 250,000 first-time students at

colleges participating in the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count initiative. Findings suggest that nearly 60% of students take at least one developmental course. Bailey offers several recommendations for a comprehensive reform based on research about students' experiences in college, clarifying the standards for developmental and –college-level students.

Crisp and Delgado (2014) also explored the impact of remedial education on first-year community college students, but they focused on the options for perseverance and vertical transfer of these students. The study used data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, which collects data about students' transfer patterns, co-enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment. The sample included students (n = 23,090) who first enrolled at a post-secondary institution during the 2003-2004 academic year. Findings in this study suggest that developmental education reduces community college possibilities for transferring to a university, and it affects students that enroll in this type of education. These findings also revealed differences in gender, ethnicity, first-generation status, academic preparation, high school experience, and delayed college entry, between students enrolled in remedial classes and those who entered directly into their careers.

Other scholars including Jaggars and Stacey (2014), Xu (2016), and Boatman and Long (2018) support the idea that the impact of remediation on students is not significant for developing students' literacy skills. In their overview of developmental education, Jaggars and Stacey (2014) discussed the findings of several rigorous studies about the effectiveness of the traditional system of developmental education in helping students to succeed in college-level coursework. They compared the outcomes of students who scored just below the limit in the placement test for college enrollment with those who scored just above that limit. The methodology to compare students was the regression discontinuity approach. Findings from all

the studies they reviewed suggest that the traditional developmental system has a null or a negative impact on students' outcomes for those students near the cutoff of the placement test. According to Jaggars and Stacey (2014), the effectiveness of remedial education differs depending on student demographics and level of academic preparation.

As another example, Xu (2016) examined the impacts of different levels of developmental reading and writing on students' outcomes. The study was carried out in Virginia Community College System; it used a regression discontinuity design to explore various short-term and long-term results. The study included around 46,000 students from 23 community colleges. Findings in the study indicated that developmental education harms students in the lowest level of the developmental sequence.

Although studies referred to above demonstrate the controversy about the efficacy of developmental education, Bailey (2009) offers several recommendations for a comprehensive reform based on research about students' experiences in college, clarifying the standards for developmental and –college-level students. This reform may improve the level of students' success in developmental education, and facilitate the growth of students in college. Jaggars and Stacey (2014) also consider that remedial education could benefit from a profound reform.

Researchers interested in such reform might find it advisable to begin by developing a greater understanding of how students who are required to take remedial reading and writing courses (as a part of a developmental approach to support student success) think about and make sense of the role of such remedial courses for themselves.

The next section will explore the literature on students' perceptions of success related to their reading and writing competency.

Students' Perceptions of Their Success Related to Reading and Writing

While the previous section focused on more quantifiable outcomes related to developmental education, this section summarizes research related to the students' perceptions regarding writing and related issues. First, it will focus on studies examining students' perceptions of the value of Good writing skills, followed by a section on studies focused on students' perceptions of their writing skills. It concludes with a section on studies ascertaining students' perceptions of the value of being engaged in developmental education.

Student Perceptions of the Value of Writing Skills

Some studies explain that oral and written communication skills (oral expression and writing skills) are among the top five skills that employers look for in their future employees (Hurst et al., 2018). However, although the most wanted skills by employers are well known, students' belief of the skills they will require in the workplace is not well documented (Griffin et al., 2014). Communication skills are in the third place importance of most wanted skills (Adams, 2014), but students' opinion on their importance is diverse. This statement suggests that not all of the students recognize the relevance of their reading and writing skills in developing their careers.

For example, Hurst et al. (2013) explored the development of communication skills in graduate students, in their study of professional skills that online graduate students seek. The study conducted pre- and post-workshops surveys and focus groups for 61 participants in three online workshops. Participants were recruited from the Faculties of Graduate Studies in Canadian universities. Findings revealed that students recognize some crucial writing skills that include some complex texts like developing an argument or writing a thesis. Students appreciate using different tools and practicing with them. They also appreciate the interaction with other

students and find it useful to be involved in discussions. It means that some students identify the usefulness of oral interaction and writing practice for the development of these skills.

Similar results were found by Harris and King (2015) in their study of the perceptions of community college students on employability skills and level of competency. A Web-based survey was conducted in one rural Mississippi community college. Participants were 124 students eligible to graduate from an academic or career-technical program. Harris and King (2015) found that both academic and career-technical community college students recognized their verbal and writing skills as the three most important abilities. However, this perception is different for other careers. For instance, business students in universities seem to have different perceptions of the skills they need for the workplace. This was also found by Maloni et al. (2019) in their survey of business students' career work expectations, which was carried out at seven different U.S. universities. This study found that business students do not necessarily focus on developing their reading, writing, and other soft skills. They rather focus on developing strong skills for the advancement and stability of their careers.

Contrary to Harris and Kings (2015), Griffin (2012) concludes that students give importance to all employability skills, but the writing was in the lowest position of importance. Griffin's research included the perceptions of both senior students and faculty about employability skills. Regarding the development of their skills, students considered that they possessed some growth in writing. This statement seems to show that students are not too sure about their writing competence, and it contrasts with faculty that complains about the students reading and writing abilities.

Writing attitude is also one of the concepts related to students' achievement of writing competence. For example, Ekholm et al.'s (2017) literature review of studies between 1990 and

2017 agrees that there is a direct connection between the writing attitudes of students and writing quality. In addition, students normally have a more positive attitude toward any task related to the language domain than toward any task related to other subjects like math, science, or social studies. The fact is that in the English Composition class students receive writing instruction and evaluation of their progress in the development of this ability. Nevertheless, they need to develop their reading and writing skills to succeed in other domains.

It is necessary to explore how students understand the importance of reading and writing skills beyond college. They could see that these language skills are useful for their professional life, or could become a profession. For instance, Brandt (2005) studied people who write for a living; these writers find that their work involves codified knowledge and economic exchange and competition. According to Brandt, writing is nowadays like a manufacturing product, and organizations invest a great amount of money, time, space, and workforce to manage communication and maintain the quality of texts. These statements have important implications for community college students. They should recognize the importance of reading and writing skills for every professional because these abilities could become for them, as it is for others, a means of production in this society.

Student Perceptions of Their Writing Ability

Although it is important to investigate the relevance that students give to writing, as a tool for personal and professional life, it is also necessary to know how students perceive their ability to write. Some studies explore how students perceive their skills to write, and the results of these studies show the relevance of interaction with instructors for the development of writing skills in higher education. For example, Lingwal and Kuehn (2013) explored the self-perceptions of 860 journalism and mass communication students. The study was carried out at 13 public state

universities in the mid-Atlantic region, and researchers used the MWSP scale to explore what students think about their writing ability. Findings in the study reveal that in many cases, millennials do not connect to present instruction, thus it is necessary to implement a new teaching methodology to help them develop deep writing abilities.

Brownell et al. (2013) also studied students' perceptions of their writing skills. They realized that students obtained both benefits: perceptions of their learning about scientific papers and their abilities using scientific language level, which reveals that a single program can teach communication skills and basic science in undergraduate courses. They discover this in their study to explore the results of an undergraduate science course that trained 41 participants in the comprehension and writing of scientific literature at Stanford University.

Other scholars focus on students' perceptions of the feedback about their writing. For instance, Demello (2017) conducted a qualitative multiple case study at a private Bible college in New England to explore how undergraduate students see, regulate, and respond to instructors' criticism of their writing work. Participants included 10 students from different gender and background. Results of the study reveal that students consider the feedback as quite important for their improvement before submitting a task. However, Zainuddin and Shariff (2017) found that students have a bad opinion of their teachers' feedback about their writing skills even though teachers offer positive comments on their tasks. Zainuddin and Shariff's study explored students' perceptions of teachers' comments on students' reflective essays and occurred within an English course at a public university in Malaysia.

For some scholars, reading performance is insignificantly correlated to self-perceptions in both reading and writing skills. For instance, Cequeña (2020) conducted a quick experimental study about the correlations of students' perceptions in reading, writing, and reading and writing

performance. Two groups of 38 college students (each group) participated in the investigation. Findings about the correlation between reading and writing indicate that if an individual has a positive view of reading, that person will have the same perception of writing, which probably explains the reason for having more studies to explore the writing perception of students and few studies to explore their reading skills. These statements confirm the strong interaction between these language skills, and it explains again one of the reasons for studying these two abilities together, as my proposed study will do. The fact that self-perceptions of reading and writing skills are so strongly correlated is an opportunity for developmental education instructors to encourage students to improve their writing by developing as well their reading skills. This encouragement could be easy if instructors and academic leaders understand how students perceive their enrollment in a remedial or developmental course. The next section shows literature on this topic.

Student Perceptions of Being in Remedial Courses

Some studies explored students' perceptions of their reading and writing skills in developmental education (Millar & Tanner, 2011; Schnee, 2014; Venezia et al., 2010; VanOra, 2019). Most of these studies were traditionally quantitative, thus they did not explore developmental courses in depth (Villareal & García, 2016), and most were carried out in universities. However, I located some qualitative studies on how community college students think about their experience in developmental education in community colleges. These scholars found that students come to a community college environment with little, or misguided information about readiness requirements and the type of academic work that they would face (Millar & Tanner, 2011; Venezia et al., 2010). This misguided lack of information on behalf of the students implies that they are less probable to succeed in taking wrong academic decisions, or

not having an accurate awareness of their abilities. It also implies that these students are less inclined to recognize the importance of their reading and writing skills for their academic achievement along with their careers.

For example, Millar and Tanner (2011) studied the issue of community college dropouts. They compared students' perceptions of their preparedness before and after entering the community college, to verify if there was any cognitive dissonance, an issue that could be the reason for a large number of drop-outs in community colleges. The study was carried out at nine community colleges in the Central Valley of California. To explore students' perceptions, researchers administered a survey to 759 first-time-in-college participants before beginning their first term, and they applied it again between the third and fifth weeks of instruction. Then, they performed a Wilcoxon signed ranks test to analyze the data collected with the survey. Millar and Tanner (2011) found that new community college students have an inconsistent idea of what they will find in college and what they experience at the beginning of their careers. This could explain one of the important reasons for dropping out of community college.

One of the issues that impact students as soon as they enter community colleges is the poor, or lack of precise previous information about placement tests and remedial courses enrollment. Venezia et al. (2010) examined and described policies and practices that shape placement in California's community colleges, and they explored students' perceptions of their placement experiences. They conducted 28 focus groups with a total of 257 students and 12 interviews with counselors. They also completed surveys which staff at 73 colleges of the system. Then, they analyzed survey data with SPSS: they performed variation analysis to verify interesting variations by colleges. Findings in the study revealed that many students are not aware that the results of the placement test would affect whether they would take credit-bearing

courses, or that these results would impact the time to complete a degree. In addition, students complained about a lack of communication with the counselor about the placement test and registration.

Schnee's (2014) study also explored students' feelings and perceptions about the absence of accurate information about placement tests and developmental sequences. This study was conducted over three years at an urban community college in the Northeast U.S. and included 15 participants. Findings in the study reveal that there is a change in students' view of their placement in remedial language courses once they were in them. Some students considered the remedial course helpful, but others thought it was socially and academically restrictive. The study also reveals the relevance of listening to developmental students to be clear about their understandings and experiences. These findings emphasize the need for effective counseling, especially placement tests and mandatory remedial courses.

Regarding students' experience, VanOra (2019) conducted a study that, like my proposed study, explores students' experiences with developmental courses and their opinion about the importance of these courses for their long-term success in college. The study was conducted in Kingsborough Community College, in the CUNY system, and involved 15 students (six women, and nine men), who were tracked over 3.5 years. This researcher used institutional records to find long-term results of participants and used semi-structured interviews with some students to explore what they perceive about the advantages of remedial courses. Results of the study revealed that students placed in the lowest level of the developmental sequence had a negative reaction to the enrollment in this course; many of them expressed their surprise and also disappointment for being considered underprepared to begin their careers. However, by the second interview, despite the negative feelings at the beginning of developmental courses,

students' opinions evolved. Students affirmed that developmental courses helped them not only to be better readers and more skilled writers but also to enjoy reading and to think critically about what they read (Van Ora, 2019).

Nodine et al. (2012) explored the students' perceptions of students' success in community colleges in four states: Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas. They found that students spoke of having a positive experience with developmental courses, but they criticized that these courses were taught in a manner that does not help them to get ahead, especially in mathematics. Students complained about placement and the lack of information about different levels of remediation.

Some studies also conducted in universities explored the perceptions of students about their success in developmental reading and writing courses. For instance, Simkin (2012) investigated why some students do not recognize the importance of writing skills in their careers and how students perceive themselves as good writers when they are not. The study consisted of a survey used to gather information from the students. It included 140 subjects at a 15,000-student western university in the U.S. Findings in the study suggest that more than 95% of students consider themselves as –regular or above average and less than 5% recognize their weaknesses, which reveals that one of the reasons for lack of college-level writing skills is their tendency to erroneously consider themselves as good writers.

In addition, Wahleithner (2020) examined the perceptions of 18 college students enrolled in the First Year Program (which focused on students with low scores on the college placement tests). The study was carried out at Central University, in California, and the researcher conducted two interviews to examine the experience of students with their Reading and writing skills. The results of this study demonstrated that students normally complain about academic

coursework in the first semester of college. Moreover, after the first semester, most of the students still claim that they feel unprepared for higher education because, in high school, reading and writing work was about reading novels or summaries of readings, but in college, they have more complex tasks for which they complain about receiving little introduction.

Howard et al. (2018), in their study of perceptions of students on the benefits of a reading and study course, found that participants appreciated learning study skills and strategies that helped them understand course materials. They also valued strategies that they could transfer and apply in college courses and beyond. Howard et al. (2018) noted it is important that students develop their learning skills, but it is also necessary that they can transfer these abilities to content courses. Similarly, Smith (2017), conducted a single case study of stances on reading based on Rosenblat's distinction of reading, in which they explored how community college students who struggle with reading and writing can develop a sense of success. Smith (2017) found that students who feel like successful readers in one assignment could transfer the same emotion to future assignments and it promotes a disposition for developing writing skills and transfer. The study was carried out at Kingsborough community college.

As researchers referred to above, Hass and Osborn (2009) explored previous experiences of students in search of their reflections on the situations, strategies, and methods that they think influenced their success. After analyzing students' reflections they found that students considered their writing successful when it involved engagement, assurance, cooperation, a systematic approach, and opportunities for external validation. These reflections were useful to identify what students recognize as correct writing and the strategies that they consider as efficient to instruct them to write high-quality writing. Thus students' reflections can be used to plan effective writing assignments.

Chapter II Closure

This literature review offers an overview of the large body of research that addressed topics related to literacy skills, metacognition, and the perceptions of students of their reading and writing skills, and respect to remedial education. Some researchers explored the problem of students' low reading and writing proficiency in higher education (Bahr, 2011; Bailey, 2010; Carlino, 2005, 2010, 2012; Flink, 2017; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014; Pacello, 2014; Perin, 2011; Perin et al., 2013; Zachry & Schneider, 2011). Most of these researchers investigated different aspects of developmental education. However, the reading and writing proficiencies of higher education students who take developmental courses are under-researched areas (Perin, 2013). Furthermore, I found that few studies explore what students think about their reading and writing proficiencies and how these skills relate to their success in other courses.

Metacognitive theories are the frame for this research study, then, this literature review, offers a general idea about metacognition, the role of this construct in higher education, and how it connects with students' perceptions of their skills. Metacognition is defined as a process in which learners become conscious of their learning process (Proust, 2010). It is also seen as a higher-order cognitive construct because it involves different processes of using and evaluating knowledge (Siddiqui & Dubey, 2018). Developing a metacognitive ability or strategy involves some actions like planning, evaluating, monitoring, and self-regulating the learning processes (McKeon & Beck, 2009).

Metacognitive awareness implies the management of cognition, including knowledge about strategies. Thus, here this review presents studies about students' awareness of their literacy proficiency. Most of the studies found to measure metacognitive awareness measure writing rather than reading ability and they refer to the impact or benefits of students' reflection

on their own learning process. These studies linked the development of metacognition to enhancing reading and writing skills: Kruger and Dunning (1999); Negretti (2012); Pacello, (2014); Linderholm and Wide (2010); Robinson and Burton (2009).

This review included an explanation of two scales that measure the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) and the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Skills Inventory (MARSİ). These scales measure the metacognitive awareness level of students. I also provided details about studies that used one of these scales. For instance, Harrison and Vallin (2017); Kallio et al., (2018); Sperling et al. (2010) Young and Fry, (2008) used the Mai scale, which was developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994). In addition, Chen et al. (2009) and Hong-Nam and Leavell (2011) used the MARSİ scale in their research.

Equally important for this review are the studies about remedial education. But before addressing these topics, we briefly review the role of placement tests, which is the first step in the process for a student to become enrolled in such purposes. Thus, there are studies about the prediction of students' success in remedial or developmental education, for example, Scott-Clayton (2012); Jaggars and Stacey (2014); Woods et al. (2019). Despite the importance that placement tests have for students' pathways in a developmental sequence, no studies could be found that had explored students' perceptions of the placement test scores received by students.

In the next section, I summarized research related to the effectiveness of remedial education on students' skills. Some research reveals how some programs contributed to students' progress. However, there is significant controversy about the efficacy of this type of course (Bahr, 2009), or the success of students in developing the required skills for academic coursework. Some studies show favorable findings about the efficacy of developmental education on student's proficiency: Boatman and Long (2018); Goudas and Boylan (2012);

Kalamkarian et al. (2015); Lavonier, (2016). Although these researchers found positive results of developmental education on students' literacy skills, some scholars do not recognize the efficacy of these courses. For instance: Bailey (2009) Crisp and Delgado (2014), Stacey (2014), Xu (2016), and Boatman and Long (2018), Jaggars and Stacey (2014).

After, you find in this review studies about students' perceptions of the value of writing skills. Some studies investigated the value that students give to language skills for career aspirations and work. For instance, Adams (2014); Ekholm et al., (2017); Griffin et al., (2014); Harris and King (2015); (Hurst et al., 2018); Maloni et al., (2019).

Additionally, some studies explored how students perceive their skills to write, and the results of these studies show the relevance of interaction with instructors for the development of writing skills in higher education. For instance, Brownell et al. (2013); Cequeña (2020); Demello(2017); Lingwal and Kuehn (2013); Zainuddin and Shariff (2017).

Finally, but not less importantly, you will find in this literature review studies that explored students' perceptions of their reading and writing skills in developmental education Hass and Osborn (2009); Howard et al. (2018); Millar & Tanner, (2011); Nodine et al. (2012); Schnee, (2014); Simkin (2012); Smith (2017); VanOra, (2019); Venezia et al., (2010); Wahleithner (2020). Most of these studies were traditionally quantitative, thus they did not explore developmental courses in depth (Villareal & García, 2016), and most were carried out in universities. However, some are qualitative studies on how community college students think about their experience in developmental education in community colleges: Millar and Tanner (2011); Venezia et al. (2010); Schnee (2014); VanOra (2019).

As noted, while there is previous research on developmental education, as well as metacognition as it relates to college students, no studies could be found that look at these issues

within developing countries like the DR. Let us now turn to Chapter III, which details the methods for my study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at ITSC think of the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and life goals. I also seek to explore how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write. As such, this study seeks to capture the perceptions of first-year community college students enrolled in remedial reading and writing courses to explore their awareness of their reading and writing proficiencies. The study of these language skills is necessary because the reading and writing proficiency of higher education students is an under-researched area (Perin, 2013). In addition, this study will be shared with higher education leaders and faculty about how students enrolled in developmental education view the importance of their proficiencies.

In this chapter, I give a detailed explanation of the study design: methodology, sampling, data collection, and analysis methods. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do community college students enrolled in a remedial Spanish course think of their own reading and writing proficiencies in relation to their present and future classes, their career aspirations, and their life goals?
2. How do such students view the importance of enrollment in that remedial Spanish course?
3. How do such students understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write?

Research Design, Approach and Rational

I used a basic qualitative approach to conduct this study, focused on how students understand their reading and writing abilities. A qualitative method helped me capture data to address my research questions because qualitative methodology focuses on individuals' lives and experiences to reach a deep understanding of a problem (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research assumes that reality is socially constructed and that there is more than one interpretation for each event (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I conducted this qualitative study using a basic interpretive approach, which is the most common type of qualitative research in educational studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The overall purpose of using this methodology was —to explore how people make meaning of their own lives and experiences (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). In other words, the aim was to understand —how they create their worlds, and what meaning they give to their experiences (Merriam, 2009, p. 38). The term *interpretive* refers to the fact that when using this approach, researchers not only offer a description of a phenomenon; instead, they seek to identify patterns and associations in the data (Thorne, 2016). The basic interpretive approach was appropriate for my study because it allowed me to interpret how first-year students experience being enrolled in a remedial Spanish course and the meaning of that experience in their world. To collect the data, I conducted in-depth interviews with students and I analyzed the data generated, seeking the themes and patterns that emerged for answering my research questions.

The interviews in my study were conversations with my participants that permitted gathering information and helped elucidate (interpret) the data about the topic, including the elements controlled by the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016); that is, the participants have

certain –control or –power because the meanings that I, as the researcher, find in data depend on what each interviewee chooses to reveal.

Since interviewing allows a focus on the researcher's experience, it requires that the researcher provides a reflexive stance (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thus I must analyze my viewpoints on this topic. In the next section, I discuss how my ontological and epistemological stance connects to the topic of this proposed study.

Ontological and Epistemological Stance

I embrace the ontological assumption that there are multiple ways to describe the same reality and that every individual understands events around them according to their view of the context. Thus, my ontological perspective about how students view their reading and writing skills connects to how individuals interpret their reality, and how they make meaning of their world (Creswell, 2013). I strongly believe that individuals can be self-aware of their knowledge. As discussed in the literature, individuals can be aware of their abilities (Flavell, 1979; Madavi, 2014; Pintrich, 2002) and it has been widely measured to what extent higher education students could be aware of their reading or writing skills (Balcikanly, 2011; Harrison & Vallin, 2017; Kallio et al., 2018; Schraw & Dennison, 1994).

Before beginning this study, I had the perception that reading and writing are language skills that individuals can develop through enhanced personal commitment and effort. I also believe that identifying their strengths and weaknesses in this process helps people to increase their competence in these language skills (Jumbran et al., 2014). This ontological perspective relates to my epistemological perspective that connects to constructivism. Constructivism is an epistemological doctrine that asserts a reality that is socially constructed and transmitted to

various members of society (Gall et al., 2007). In constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2013, p. 21). This doctrine supports my study design since I will explore how students understand their experiences related to reading and writing skills. Since conducting this qualitative study implies that I interpret what participants experience, it is of great importance that I reflect on my own biases related to the topic (Creswell, 2013). My primary motivation to conduct this study comes from my work as a professor in a community college. For this reason, in the next section, I include my reflections on how my experience as an instructor can influence this study and how I will manage my own biases to avoid that they harm the study's trustworthiness.

Reflections on My Identity

My career as a Spanish professor in the DR began in 1997. First, I taught Spanish to foreigners, then, to native speakers. During my career, I worked for four years as a Spanish textbook author for a prominent editorial group in Santo Domingo, the capital city of the Dominican Republic. This experience gave me great knowledge about the reading and writing abilities that students need to develop from their early childhood and how their language skills relate to students' thinking skills.

At present, I am a Spanish professor at the first and only community college in the DR. Although I do not teach remedial Spanish, I offer tutoring via this college's developmental department, and I have great concerns about students' language abilities in higher education. I have noticed from my experience as a professor, textbook author, and scholarly literature, that a great percentage of our population does not have the required reading abilities, and they have writing difficulties as well (Carlino, 2005). I suspect that many of the students may not be aware of the importance of their reading and writing skills for achieving academic goals. In my classes,

I can see that some students do not recognize their limitations in reading or writing, which could represent a weakness to overcome (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). I observe as well, how often they misunderstand written commands in-class activities and examinations. In addition, faculty members complain because a great number of students do not attend tutorial classes when recommended to them, since they feel that it is not necessary. This fact suggests that some students could be experiencing the Dunning-Kruger Effect, which is defined as the lack of metacognitive ability to recognize one's limitations in any social or intellectual field (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

Despite my assumptions, I awaited the completion of my study to make any determinations. I attempted to not impose my assumptions on this research, and I followed the data analysis steps until discovered what the generated data reveals. This practice is called bracketing in the phenomenological research tradition (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and it implies that the researcher temporarily sets aside his own beliefs about the phenomenon before conducting a study. However, it is almost impossible for a researcher to totally set aside his knowledge and beliefs; thus, I will be carefully aware when my bias and assumptions arise, to avoid that they impact the analysis negatively. For this, I kept a self-reflection journal to keep –an ongoing record of my experiences, reactions, and awareness of emerging assumptions (Morrow, 2005, p. 254).

Setting and Participants

Setting

This study was conducted at the Instituto Tecnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC). This is a higher education institution located in San Luis, a township of Santo Domingo Este, which is the

most populated municipality within the Dominican Republic (ONE, 2016). Founded in 2012 by the Dominican government, ITSC is the first and only institution in the DR founded under the American community college model. The institution offers the opportunity to award associate degrees to students from different towns and provinces around Santo Domingo and, as such, from different backgrounds. As with other community colleges, most of the population that attends the ITSC are non-traditional students.

The education initiative for the foundation of the ITSC came from the Business Council of Santo Domingo. This council conceived the proposal for the foundation of this educational institution as a means to fulfill the demands of the business sector and the needs of qualified technicians in companies, according to the characteristics of Dominican communities. The project was seen as an opportunity for the private sector to have a link with an institution that offers superior technical education (ITSC, 2018).

Before establishing the ITSC, governmental authorities conducted studies, inquiries, and meetings with local authorities and different economic and social sectors within East Santo Domingo before the municipality elected to set up the new college. They also offered training for future academic and administrative employees so they could understand the community college model (ITSC, 2018).

In 2005, the Dominican government accepted the proposal for creating the ITSC because it was conceived as a strategy to fulfill the demands of Dominican society. The process of creating the new institution was assumed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, the federal agency that governs post-secondary education in the DR.

The ITSC initiated teaching activities in January 2013. The curricular offerings consisted of 27 careers in seven different areas: health, information technology, arts, tourism, construction, industry, and electro-mechanics. In the first two terms, 1,850 students registered at the new community college, and 35% of this group enrolled in remedial Spanish or Math courses (E. Salazar, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Some courses are common to all the careers at the ITSC: Spanish, English, Mathematics, Social Dominican History, Basic Physics, and Information Technology. In Health Sciences, two other subjects are mandatory for all careers in that area: Chemistry and Basic Biology. All students take a placement test called the Orientation and Measurement Academic Test (*Prueba de Orientación y Medición Académica* [POMA]). It covers verbal and mathematical concepts, knowledge of natural and social sciences, perceptive and figurative levels, and human behavior assessment (Díaz, 2007). The verbal concepts component of this test only evaluates the Spanish reading proficiency of students, not the writing proficiency. The test is offered to identify which students require additional support in any specific area (Universidad Dominicana O&M, 2019). After receiving their grades, students are placed in remedial Spanish reading and writing or math courses depending on the proficiency shown in the results of the test.

I focused on this population since most students who attend remedial education face difficulties in completing a degree or certificate (Bailey, 2010). Thus, it is necessary to understand how they view their reading and writing proficiency after receiving a test and being placed in a remedial course. In addition, we do not often hear these voices in the literature; most of the studies related to this topic are quantitative, which also is a good reason for selecting a qualitative methodology.

Sampling

I used criterion sampling to select participants for the study, meaning that I only accepted individuals who possess certain characteristics (Creswell, 2013). This sampling strategy is appropriate when all the population in the study has experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Thus, criterion sampling was appropriate for my study, because it allowed me to select participants with similar characteristics. To participate in this study, individuals must meet the following criteria: a) be enrolled in a remedial or developmental reading and writing course at ITSC, and b) be a native Spanish speaker.

Enrolling in a remedial Spanish course indicates that the student has taken the admission test, and results in the language section of this assessment indicate that they need additional assistance in their language skills. Being a native Spanish speaker indicates that the first language they learned to speak and communicate, and probably read and write, was Spanish, thus they can talk about the development of the skills under study in their first language. The number of participants that fit these criteria according to the last report from the Developmental Courses Department of the institution is over 294 students (Edwin Salazar, personal communication, October 22, 2021).

The exclusionary criteria were: a) that they are native in a language other than Spanish, and b) that they have attended a tutoring session with me. Being native in a language other than Spanish indicates that probably, the participant learned to read and write in a language different from Spanish, and the study is not focused on second language skills. In addition, students who attended my tutoring classes were not accepted into the study because they could have a sense of being forced to participate (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This could happen because they could feel a direct authority, due to the power dynamics in the student-teacher relationship (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

In qualitative research, it is necessary to recruit an appropriate number of participants to be able to answer the research questions of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2013) considers that in phenomenological studies the researcher could select between 5 to 25 participants to obtain the desired saturation that is finding the same ideas in the information that participants provide. Merriam (2009) suggests 15 to 20 participants for a study, although this number is not definite. For this study, I aimed to recruit and interview a sample of 10-15 students who meet the study criteria. This number of participants should be able to provide enough information to generate data that produces robust categories, themes, and findings for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In other words, with this number of participants, I am attempting to achieve saturation in the responses to the interview.

Access and Recruitment

After receiving the required permission from the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB), and from ITSC authorities (Appendix A), I recruited potential participants by posting a flyer in every Spanish classroom at the ITSC (See

Appendix B for Spanish and English versions of the flyer). Note that students were recruited and interviewed using their native language of Spanish. I invited students interested in participating in the study to contact me via e-mail or phone. Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, I did not visit developmental Spanish classes to explain to students what the study is about and to invite them to participate. Instead, I sent the flyer to the Developmental Spanish and Tutoring coordinator, and I share it also with professors. The coordinator and also professors enthusiastically collaborated with this project sharing the flyer with their students. After some days, students contacted me by telephone

After a student communicated their desire to participate in the study, I reviewed with them the inclusionary and exclusionary criteria and scheduled an appointment for their interview. I kept in my notes the contact information, such as email and phone number, of all interested potential participants. The day before the interview, I contacted the participants to confirm the interview time and their facilities to connect through the Webex platform. Since there was still a risk to have Covid-19, I conducted virtual interviews through the Webex platform. In two cases, students needed to reschedule their appointment for the interview, because they had poor Internet connection for the Webex platform.

The day before the interview day, I sent them the informed consent, thus they could print and read it and make any questions about participating in the study. On the interview day, I explained to participants the purpose, benefits, process, and known risks of participating in the study, we reviewed the informed consent form before the interview. Then, I asked them to sign the Spanish and English versions (See Appendix C). After the interview, they send me the signed document. I interviewed them about their experiences with reading and writing skills (see Appendix D for the Spanish and English version of the Interview Protocol). During this

recruitment process, only two students who contacted me refused to participate in the study. They asked if their participation would give them some points for their final grade in the developmental course, as I explained to them that their participation did not interfere with their grades, they refused to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with students. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, which is the native language of the participants, but the results and relevant data were translated into English for reporting (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). I informed participants of this in the consent letter. Another source of data, apart from the information collected from participants answering, was the reflective memos that I wrote throughout the study. The third source of information was the notes that I took when interviewing participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

I have created an interview protocol in Spanish and English (Appendix D) that aligns with my research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To develop this instrument, I created a chart showing each interview question, and how it relates to both the main study question and the relevant connection with the literature. Questions were formulated in a language that allowed participants to understand what is expected from them, to ensure the collection of relevant data for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These open-ended questions allowed participants to share their insights about the inquiry of the study (Seidman, 2013). For instance, I asked them how they describe themselves as readers and writers, and also how they think their reading and writing skills influence their success in the classes they will take in their college program. Based on the answer of participants, I also asked follow-up or probing questions when necessary, because follow-up questions regarding how participants feel or react toward certain experiences

can provide valuable information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). At the end of the interview, I asked participants to offer any information that they consider relevant that I have not asked about. The goal of these questions was to incite participants to share their thoughts about their experiences with reading and writing skills. Some of the participants enthusiastically talked a little bit more about their reading, and their writing, and some wanted to talk about their experience in the developmental course. Some others were very shy and did not add any other comments after the interview questions.

In 2018, I conducted a pilot study conducted at the ITSC, which resulted in substantial revisions to my initial interview questions and interview protocol. This is expected because a pilot study is a way to improve the instrument questions and other procedures in a research project (Creswell, 2013). Pilot studies are also invaluable for providing the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on all of the steps in the study and to enhance their abilities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In my pilot study, I chose a small sample of five participants who adhered to the same criteria as this dissertation study: being enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course and being a native Spanish speaker. Conducting the pilot study helped me refine the scope of the study, which resulted in modifying the research questions. Consequently, the protocol questions related to the research questions changed, too. The experience was priceless training to face self-doubt and personal bias in analyzing data. Furthermore, conducting a preliminary study helped me to test and improve my skills as an interviewer (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). It enhanced my abilities to conduct interviews for collecting data for this research, manage the data collected, and write memos throughout the study.

Data Collection Procedures

Data Collection Steps

As in the pilot study, I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect the data for this study because this type of interview is useful to get deep information about the meanings that individuals give to their experiences (Guest et al., 2013). As the name suggests, this type of interview involves less structured, flexible questions. Therefore, I formulated questions or issues to explore the topic, but I did not follow a predetermined or strict order (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This flexibility permitted me to respond to any situation or idea about the topic that emerged during the interview. I chose semi-structured interviews because they permit the interviewee to offer the information for the study, and they will allow me to clarify or introduce any follow-up questions when necessary (Merriam, 2009). Thus, I asked participants to explain more about any topic in which I considered that more information is necessary to respond to the inquiry of this study.

An in-depth interview is defined as a strategy focused on individuals that try to take the hidden implications of the lived experience of participants as expressed in their own words (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This approach allowed me to obtain insight into participants' experiences; it helped the researcher to discover aspects of experiences that make them meaningful for the interviewee (Guest et al., 2013). Thus, it helped me get an insight into the view of students about the importance of their reading and writing skills for their learning process.

I also collected information from reflective memos that I wrote during the data collection process to record my insights about any ideas that emerged after interviewing participants, or

while analyzing the data. A memo is a text that the researcher writes to record ideas or insights about the study. A memo can be data because it is part of the researcher's reflection, and the researcher is an active element of the topic under study (Richards, 2015). I recorded my thoughts and feelings about topics that dominate the data or processes to explore key categories. In addition, memos are useful to let the reader know what the researcher saw or reflected at different points throughout the study (Richards, 2015). Thus, I wrote them contemporaneously with an idea that emerges while collecting or analyzing the data. Later, during the analysis, I reviewed memos that I wrote after every interview and others that I wrote when I was transcribing the interviews.

Interview Protocol and Process

I anticipated that the interviews will last approximately 60 minutes. Interviews took place through Webex platform videoconferences. I used the WebEx tool with a video component because these are more likely to be face-to-face interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This kind of interaction allowed me to create rapport with participants and better understand their answers by observing their bodily communication. In addition, these means allowed video recordings, which permitted reviewing participants' nonverbal communication (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), when I needed to see other moments of the study.

Before interviewing participants, I clarified the many doubts that they had. I asked them for their verbal permission to record the interview, and all of them agreed to record the interview. It seems that due to the pandemic, virtual classes reduced the stage fright of students and they get used to cameras. During the interview, I took field notes to register some non-verbal and relevant ideas that were meaningful to the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). At the end of every

interview, I thanked the participant for collaborating, and I informed them about the next phases in the study.

Trustworthiness in Data Collection

Trustworthiness in data collection refers to gathering data in a way that ensures the credibility of the study. One of the strategies to ensure this credibility is triangulation. It consists of having more than one source of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this reason, I used memos, notes, and in-depth interviews for collecting data that informs the study. Another strategy to ensure the credibility of the study is member checking (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thus, I shared a summary of interview transcriptions and interpretations with participants to ensure I have captured their intended meaning (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I asked them to read the summary and to inform me if this reflect what they say in the interview. Only four out of my 13 participants wanted to add some ideas that they forgot to say in the interview. The rest of the participants consider that the transcription reflects what they mean in the interview.

In addition, I kept a log related to all the data collection and data analysis processes. In that log, I kept a record of all my decisions, issues, as well as ideas that emerged during my contact with the data. The log allowed me to document all decisions and changes that were made to the study as it was being conducted. In the next section, I explain how I analyzed the data that I collected for the study.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data in a basic interpretive approach involves the researcher identifying recurrent patterns that characterize the data (Merriam, 2016; Thorne, 2016). These patterns or

themes become the data. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the best way to analyze qualitative data is to do it simultaneously with the data collection process. Thus, data analysis will begin as soon as I conduct and transcribe the first interview. It will permit me to review the interview process and consider what changes are necessary (Richard, 2019) to continue with the study. Any change or decision taken is informed to the reader.

Once I have completed the first interview, I transcribe it to begin the analysis in Spanish (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I transcribe the first interviews using Nvivo software, but later, I changed to OTranscribe, because this software is more friendly to transcribe documents verbatim. I transcribed all the interviews verbatim because that is the ideal way to have a valuable analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) since it ensures that no information is missing and it helps ensure precision. I used Marshall and Rossman's (2016) seven-phase analytic procedures for the data analysis: (a) organizing data, (b) immersion in the data, (c) coding the data, (d) generating possible themes, (e) offering interpretations through analytic memos, (f) searching for alternative understandings, and (g) writing the report or other format for presenting the studio.

Organizing Data

The first step in analyzing the data of this study is organizing the information that participants provided during the interviews, i.e., the transcription, then logging the data according to the participant that provided the information. Thus, I identified every interviewee with a code and I logged every transcription with this code to be sure that I recognized the information that everyone offered (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As previously mentioned I shared a summary of the transcription of the interviews with participants, so they correct them

and ensure that the statements attributed to them represent what they wanted to say. After this step, I edited the transcripts according to the participants' corrections.

Immersion in the Data

This step involved exploring the data by reviewing all the information that the participants offered in the interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I read and re-read every transcript to become familiar with the information. Then, I identified salient points that emerged from the information provided by participants. I wrote field notes with ideas that came to my mind when I was reading the transcripts, and these notes helped me later to analyze and interpret the data.

Coding the Data

At this point, I identified descriptions or dimensions derived from the literature review. As part of my coding frame, I used two elements of metacognition: knowledge about oneself as a learner, and awareness and management of cognition. *Knowledge about oneself as a learner* allowed me to identify what participants say about how they see themselves concerning their learning experiences, their strengths, and weaknesses, or issues that may impact their abilities to read and write. *Awareness and management of cognition* were useful to recognize when participants in the study referred to their understanding of where they are in the use of their reading and writing skills, how they manage their cognition, and knowledge of these abilities, including the use of any strategies.

These salient points were the exact words of participants (Creswell, 2013). This process involved reading the information provided by participants and identifying small categories or evidence from the data used in a study. Thus, at this step of the analysis, I initiated a process

called open coding (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), in which I was open to the salient points, or key ideas, or patterns that emerged from the data; and wrote notes near these segments that could be relevant. For this process, I did not use the qualitative research software to assist me with coding, because it took a long time to get used to the software tools. I conducted multiple rounds of coding (Saldaña, 2016).

Generating Possible Themes

Generating themes is an important step that follows the coding process; it consisted in classifying the codes that the researcher finds in qualitative data (Creswell, 2013). At this step, I identified connections among the emergent categories and look for clusters that related to the same type. I tested out different ways the codes could be clustered around certain ideas that this study is seeking to understand. I did it several times until I discover connections between categories. Later, I found thematic statements that capture the essence of each category, and I grouped these categories into thematic groups.

Offering Interpretations through Analytic Memos

Along with the analysis of data, I wrote my thoughts about how the data was coming together in groups or patterns (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I wrote any insights that motivate me to analyze what emerged from the information provided in the interviews. I interpreted the meanings of the codes, patterns, and categories, and I explained the connections, offering conclusions and inferring connotations from these emergent categories (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I selected the most prominent concepts that emerged from the data under analysis to crystallize the findings into thematic statements.

Finally, I used these thematic statements to describe the essence of the story, and explain how those themes work together to answer the research questions and explain the phenomenon under study.

Searching for Alternative Understandings

This step involves a careful review of the interpretation given to patterns (i.e. coding categories) sub-themes, and themes. I reviewed the data, my field notes, and memos to ensure that the data was accurately interpreted and that I am not applying my own biases (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I gave summaries of my interpretations to participants in the study, and I asked them to react to the analysis. I worked closely with my advisor regarding coding and interpretation of data before writing the report of my findings. I asked my advisor to review both the process and results of the study.

Writing the Report Presenting the Study

During this step, I wrote a description of participants' understanding of their reading and writing skills and how they understand the issues that may impact their ability to read and write. The metacognitive component permeates this final report about participants' thoughts on their reading and writing development and how they connect these skills development to their college coursework and career/life goals. I choose words that summarize the complexity of data, but in a way that the reader can understand (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Thus in the final report, I included quoted segments of the interviews that support the interpretation offered.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to establishing: (a) credibility, (b) dependability, (c) confirmability, and (d) transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Credibility is related to the internal validity of a study. It implies analyzing data by thinking, exploring, and deciding what information is relevant and what themes are descriptive of the experience that participants narrated (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Enhancing credibility involves different strategies like triangulation, persistent observations, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, member checking, or referential adequacy (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For peer debriefing, I counted on the expertise of my advisor to review the findings of the study and the process to obtain these results.

Dependability refers to the possibility of replicating the findings of a study by reviewing the process and assuming that they are consistent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One of the strategies to confirm dependability is an audit trail, which is a record of all the processes of data collection and data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I kept this record and it helped me put into practice a rich, thick description, which is one of the useful techniques to ensure transferability. Transferability is a strategy that refers to the possibility to confirm that the findings of the study can be transferred to another context, time, or similar populations (Creswell, 2013). Transferability is a way to provide the research with certain external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I implemented a rich, thick description by detailing every step along the study in the log in sufficient detail, thus it could be replicated.

To add to the trustworthiness of the study, I additionally implemented other strategies like reflexivity, prolonged engagement, and negative or discrepant case analysis. Reflexivity is

described by Lincoln and Guba (1986) as an attitude of attending to the context of knowledge building, especially to the influence of the researcher in every stage of the study. Thus, I was aware of my influence or bias to ensure that the findings are the result of what participants communicated in the interview (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, I expressed my relationship with the topic and my perspectives, assumptions, values, and beliefs throughout the analysis of data and the discussion of the study. To confirm the prolonged engagement, I read and re-read the interview transcriptions, and I collected strong supporting evidence about the topic under study. Furthermore, I carefully reviewed that evidence to look for patterns and conclusions that explain the more relevant data in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations in qualitative research refer to the aspects of a study out of the researcher's control that could have an impact on the interpretation of the findings. Limitations statements clarify what the study is about; they also explain the boundaries in the contribution of findings of a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). One of the limitations of the present study is that it depended on the participant's decision to call and participate. Participants had the option to abandon the study at any time; in that case, I would need to recruit new participants (Patton, 2002). Fortunately, none of the participants abandoned the study.

Another limitation was that the findings of this study depended on the openness of students to offer relevant information about their reading and writing skills.

Delimitations refer to the boundaries that the researcher chooses to impose on the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2013). To establish this limit, I conducted the study at the ITSC, and I

only included students who attended the remedial reading and writing Spanish course, who are native Spanish speakers, and who never participated in tutoring with the researcher.

Chapter III Closure

The purpose of this study is to explore how students that attend a remedial reading and writing Spanish course view the importance of their reading and writing skills for their performance in present and future subjects, as well as with their personal and professional goals. It also explores what participants think about the issues that may impact their reading and writing skills. Basic interpretive is the approach selected for the study because it seeks to understand how people make meaning of their reality (Merriam, 2009). Thus using this approach allowed me as a researcher to explore how participants think about their learning and development of reading and writing skills, and if they found any connections between their reading and writing skills with future content subjects, and their career aspirations and life goals.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT NARRATIVES

This chapter offers my 13 individual participant narratives, which are rich thick descriptions of their stories. Each narrative is divided into four parts in alignment with the research questions that guide this study. These parts include (1) reading and writing skills in relation to their present and future classes; (2) reading and writing skills in relation to their career aspirations and life goals; (3) the importance of being enrolled in the remedial Spanish reading and writing course; and (4) understanding issues that impact their ability to read and write. These narratives are offered in the order in which I had interviewed them. Table 1 offers a summary of key demographics for my participants in the order in which they are presented in this chapter.

Table 1

Background Information of participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Career desired	Father educative level	Mother educative level	Socio economy c status (SES)	Learning problems in elementar y school	Type of elementar y school
Mary	F	27	Nursing	Elementar y	Elementary	Low	Yes	private
Ely	F	19	Culinary Arts	Secondary School	Accountant	Low- Middle	Yes	Public
Betty	F	20	Dental Hygiene	Elementar y	Elementary (Died)	Low- Middle	Yes	Public School
Rosa	F	20	Dental Hygiene	Elementar y	Elementary	Low- Middle	Yes	Private
Esther	F	18	Dental Hygiene	Secondary	Higher Education	Middle	Yes	Private
Anny	F	20	Dental	Elementar	Secondary	Upper-	Yes	Public

Table 1- continued

			Hygiene	y		Middle		
Angie	F	20	Dental Hygiene	Secondary	Elementar y	Middle	Yes	Public
Cristine	F	22	Dental Mechanic	Elementar y	Elementar y	Low Middle	Yes	Public
Rosa	F	28	Culinary Arts	Illiterate	Elementar y	Low	Yes	Public
Martina	F	18	Dental Hygiene	Secundari a	Associate Degree	Middle	Yes	Private
Andy	M	19	Computer Programmin g				Yes	
Joe	M	21	Graphic Design	Higher Education	Secondary School	Middle	Yes	Private
Mayra	F	19	Nursing	Illiterate	Secondary	Low	Yes	Public

Mary

Mary is a 27-year-old female who comes from what she described as a working-class family. Her parents did not attend higher education. She attended different schools since her early childhood; thus she did not have a normal process to develop literacy skills. At that time in her life, she does not remember having strong support from her family. Mary explains that since elementary school she developed a learning problem related to a lack of retention of information after reading it. She finally finished secondary school in 2013, and this year she registered at the community college to study nursing. She had previously started studying this career, at the public university of the Dominican Republic, but she had only taken a few general studies courses. At

the present, she has the support of her couple and she does not have a job, she has a small business at home.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Her Present and Future Classes

Despite being enrolled in developmental reading and writing classes, Mary considers herself an efficient reader. However, she recognizes that she has some difficulties in several language aspects, like accent marks, and writing to explain her ideas about any topic. She thinks that it is easier if she needs to write a description or a narration, but other texts are very complex for her.

I have always considered myself as if I know... I mean, as a good reader. My experiences are still fine and I think I am making progress. I consider myself a good reader, but, as I told you, I have some difficulties with accent marks.

Mary is not very clear about the connection between reading and writing abilities with future undergraduate courses, but she considers that they should have a positive influence on her learning process. She thinks that her reading and writing abilities will help her to get and keep the information, and it is important because she will deal with human subjects when graduating from nursing school.

I would say that reading and writing will influence me well, in the way I pay attention and the way I learn. Especially in the nursing career... How can I say? I mean...I need to know very well what I do, I need to have a clear idea of what I will do, and of what I am going to do because when I complete the career program, I will deal with human subjects' lives.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Her Career Aspirations and Life Goals

At the present, Mary does not have a job, she has a small business. She is clear about the importance of reading and writing abilities for her present and future jobs. She considers that there is a strong connection between reading and writing skills and any type of professional success. For this reason, she understands that reading and writing are important for her to work as a nurse, once when she obtains a degree.

Reading is the basis for success,...for instance, when I go shopping for any recognized brand, it is easier for me, I know what product I am buying, because I know the brand, but if I do not know how to read, I cannot know what I am buying. I understand that reading and writing are the basis for any kind of success. In my career, it is primordial to learn how to read a prescription before talking to the patient.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Although Mary did not have too much previous information about the developmental course, she recognizes the importance of this course for her learning process. As she explains, the course has been important for her to improve her reading, oral expression ability, and self-correction strategies in the writing activities. Mary understands the importance of approving the remedial course to begin her career.

Well, the course is helping me, especially in oral expression, to not be afraid to talk. The teacher is also very helpful when she allows students to communicate their ideas, or to share what they invest.

Mary understands that the course has been important to develop her writing skills because, since the beginning of the course, she needed to write many texts. She also explains that this practice of writing is helping her not only for academic purposes but also for her small store.

I write more at the present, because I am working in my business, thus I need to do all the accounts in a notebook. The teacher also assigns a lot of work. I have been writing a lot.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Mary recognizes that some situations affected the development of her reading and writing skills. One of them is the lack of family support. She lived with her mother, but she worked the whole day and did not have time to help her daughter to practice reading and to do homework.

My mother's absence affected my learning by 50% because when someone does not have any support, no matter what you do, you have some deficiencies.

Another issue that affected her development was her shyness; this attitude prevented her from participating in class, although she had the correct answer to any question made by her teachers. Later, after she finished secondary school, Mary spent a long time out of school and she thinks that this time affected her performance on the admission test because she forgot a great amount of what she learned before.

I grew in oral expression because in the past I was very shy; for instance, if the teacher made a question, I could have an idea of the answer. I remained silent because I was afraid of not having the correct answer, and when somebody else answered, I thought: Oh!, I had the same idea....

Mary thinks that a long time out of school after secondary school affected her reading and writing abilities significantly. During that time she feels that she had forgotten a high percentage

of what she learned in elementary and secondary school. For that reason, she did not perform as expected on the admission test.

The time out of school after secondary school did not help. It affected me because there were many things that I did not remember at that moment in the admission test.

Ely

Ely is a 20-year-old student who lives with her family in a populated quarter of Santo Domingo Province. She comes from what she considers a low class. Ely is the first generation in higher education in her family. She finished secondary school at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, and during the quarantine time, she did not study at all. Furthermore, she did not read or write any book or text. Ely lives in a poorly connected area where sometimes she needs to get out of the house to have the proper Internet connection. She does not have a computer, tablet, or smartphone, thus she uses her mother's cell phone to take classes. She does not have a job, she considers that the opportunity of studying at the community college is important for her to succeed labor market or start her business.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Ely considers that language skills are very important for this course and much more for future courses. Thus, she decided to make her best effort to learn as much as possible and improve her language skills. Ely explains how she values class discussions about a text that she read, and after writing about this text, she can participate in discussions and offer her opinion. She considers that this interaction allows her to obtain different meanings about that text.

Language is a very important subject for this course and my career. I know that I have to work hard to improve my reading and writing. The teacher asks us to read long pieces of

texts, and then, we discuss them. I write about the text in the notebook, and in next class we share our opinions. Although I have my own opinion about the text, I learn different ideas, in that way, I obtain more than one meaning of the text.

Ely recognizes that developing her reading and writing abilities will help her to overcome the difficulties that make her enroll in the developmental course. She considers herself as a good reader. Ely studies Culinary Arts, and she knows very well how she will use her language abilities to write menus and recipes. Furthermore, she is very clear about the need of writing correctly in career subjects, because she will write about food and beverages, and she should not commit mistakes about their names.

In my career, incorrect writing would be a shame. I study Culinary Arts and I cannot imagine myself writing *pollo* (chicken in English) with y. For this reason, I need to learn how to write correctly to not commit such a mistake. In the beginning, I was surprised that I needed to take this course, but now I understand that this course is helping me to understand what I read and write better.

I consider myself as a good writer. I know that I am not excellent but I am a good reader.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Ely considers that reading and writing are the most important life skills because individuals always need them in their daily life. She thinks that reading and writing are very important not only for achieving a career but also for most human activities.

This is the most important in what you do because you always need to talk, read a text, or write something. Thus, it is always necessary, although one does not study to achieve a career it is always necessary to learn how to read and write. It is the most important in life.

Ely explained how she could apply her reading and writing abilities at work, once she finishes her career. According to her, language skills are a part of a person's identity. For this reason, those who better develop reading and writing offer a better image of themselves to others. She thinks that especially in the Tourism career employees should work with upper-class people, thus they need to communicate appropriately to do a good job and offer the correct service.

Well, at work I will need to talk to customers and explain to them the menu, and the ingredients of dishes. I think that the best way and the best image of a person is their oral expression and having correct writing, I mean... in Tourism one has to work with high-class people. One has to grow to their level to offer the correct service...

One of Ely's most important goals is to be a writer. This dream motivates her to value reading and writing skills in connection to her future. She is aware of the relevance of these skills for her to achieve this dream.

Well... I do not know, but... I would like to write, to become a writer. And probably, if I take that decision later, Reading and writing skills can help me a lot, because nothing is better than a well-written book in which all of the words are well written, and that has a nice vocabulary.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Ely explained how surprised she was when she was enrolled in the remedial reading and writing course because she considers that she has developed these language abilities. She thought that she would take the admission test and then she would select the career subjects for the first term. She is aware of some difficulties with Math because she realizes that she is not so good at Math.

I did not know that I would need to be enrolled in a developmental course. I thought that I would take the admission test and one week after that I would enter career courses. I never thought it would be like that. However, I like the developmental course, and I am learning a lot.

Ely recognizes that the developmental course supports her academic success because what she learns in this course will help for future class work. She communicates her motivation to study hard in the present remedial course to obtain good grades in all of her subjects.

I want to approve all my subjects with good grades, and for this reason, I will focus on them. And I want to learn as much as I can, what I want is to improve my knowledge.

Ely thinks that in the developmental course she is growing in developing her literacy skills. She explains that coursework is helping her to remember what she had forgotten.

I think that I am improving my skills because the teacher leave assignments and is necessary to write a lot, and it is good for practicing... in this way I am improving my writing.

I think that more than learning I am remembering because I have studied all theses topics of the developmental course in secondary school. I think that I become familiar with these topics because I have already studied them, but I had forgotten them. Now I remember all these themes. .

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

According to Ely, some issues may have impacted her abilities to read and write. She explains that when she was a child, at school she used to write very fast, and forgets everything very easily. For instance, she does not remember how she learned to write and who helped her in that process. Another issue is that she is a very shy person. Thus, when needs to read aloud, she

stammers because she got nervous. Furthermore, she recognizes that if she were not so shy, she would have been a better learner.

I do not remember when I said: –I know how to write because I do not remember that moment. But I remember that I wrote very fast, at school, I always did the writing activities very fast. Sometimes, when I read, I stammer because I felt nervous. The embarrassment... I feel embarrassed...if I would have stopped being like that, I would have learned more.

Lack of practice seems to be another issue that impacted Ely's ability to read and write. She says that at some moment when she was at school, for some reason that she did not explain, she lost her reading and writing habits; therefore, her abilities decreased. After she finishes secondary school, she spent more than one year without reading or writing anything but the shopping list. That lack of practice drove her to forget much of the contents learned at secondary school. As she communicates, she came to the community college for an admission test without refreshing or reviewing any content.

Well, probably when I was a little bit lazy and I did not read as I did before. Since I lost the habit of reading and writing, probably for that reason I am not such a good reader or writer now.

Betty

Betty is a 20-year-old student who considers her family as a low-middle class one. She wants to study Dental Hygiene at the Dominican community college. She was grown by her aunt, and her mother's relatives because her mother died when she was eight years old, thus her family bring Betty to Santo Domingo to allow her to have a home and to educate her. Betty

remembers that learning to read and write was an arduous process because she learned slowly. But her aunt helped her to learn to read and write.

I had a low learning process, it was my mother, she is my aunt, but she is like a mother because she grew me and educated me. I learned because she helped me, it took a long time, of course. I lived in the countryside, and my mother's family brought me here to have a stable life, like a normal girl, thus I do not go from one house to the other in the neighborhood, because my mother was sick. My mother's family supported me. My aunt taught me how to read and write, but I had a difficult time because I had a problem keeping the information, I had problems learning. However, she helped me to learn new vocabulary, I learned how to write clearly, and she also taught me how to write in different handwriting styles.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Betty considers that her reading and writing skills will be very useful for the present course and future classes because she recognizes that she failed in the admission test. After all, as she assumes, she did not know how to approve the exam. Although Betty thinks that she is a good reader, she thinks she needed that developmental course because if not, she would not be able to achieve a career. As she explains, she had forgotten all about secondary school.

I feel fine because at the present, I know how to read. I am a good reader. Because reading is not only read a paragraph, it is also understand what is in the text, understanding the them. That is reading.

I think that my abilities to read and write will help me a lot because I know that I did not know enough to pass the admisión test, I failed. However, the developmental course helped me a lot, if I would not enroll in that developmental course, I would not be able to

attend the community college to achieve a career because I did not remember all the contents that they are teaching me. I had forgotten all that. Now, I learned them for my whole life.

Apart from this statement, Betty does not explain how she thinks that her reading and writing skills will be helpful for her success in the present course, and future content courses.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Betty connects the importance of reading and writing with having a correct oral expression, which is considered very relevant to interact with people. She also thinks that people who do not develop their writing and correct oral expression will always live at disadvantage. She feels fine because she has some development in her oral expression and she knows how to write.

Writing and learning are about learning how to interact with other people. If a person does not know how to speak, then other people will undervalue them. If you do not know how to speak correctly you will have a life of humiliation, without anything. When someone does not know how to write, other people humiliate them. I thank God that I know how to speak, and I know how to write.

One of my goals is to become a professional in writing, a professional of words. I want to have a rich vocabulary, and it will help me in achieving my career aspirations because if you are a professional and you do not know how to speak correctly, then you are not a good one.

Betty also values reading as a tool for continuous learning in professional life. She thinks that reading helps a person's growth. She understands that learning how to read is not enough, that the person needs to continue reading along her life, to grow and to get new knowledge.

Although I am working, every day I think that one should continue reading, because when you read, you grow, it is like feeding your brain. You should not be content with learning how to read, you have to unlearn what you learned in the past to continue learning. Thus you have to read to grow and have a more prepared brain to live in this society.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Betty thinks that the developmental course is very important for her because she had forgotten most of what she learned in secondary school and now she is recovering all this information in the course. She feels fine because now she knows how to read. She ensures that before the developmental course she did not know how to read. In addition, she did not pronounce the s at the end of a syllable. Now she can read and understand what she is reading.

I appreciate the great job of my professor on the developmental course because when I finished secondary school I forgot everything. I did not know how to read, and I had already finished secondary school, and I did not mention it but the professor taught me how to read and understand what I read in a text. I understand that reading is not only going through a paragraph, but exploring the meaning of what is written, it is understanding the topic.

Betty mentions some topics addressed in the developmental course that she considers important for developing her language skills: she learned how to recognize punctuation, and how to respect pauses in reading. She thinks that this is a key point for understanding the contents of a text. Other relevant topics for her are accent marks and spelling, which are helping her to avoid orthography mistakes.

Reading texts is where I am learning the most, because the professor taught me how to read and see where are the points, and the pauses, and respect every pause, because if you read and you do not stop when necessary, then you do not understand what the text is about..... I think that in the developmental course, everything is helping me. The professor proposes many interesting activities every day that are helping me learn, but something that is helping the most is learning how to put the accent mark and how to spell correctly. Spelling is helping me avoid mistakes when I write.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

As Betty explained, she had some problems learning how to read and write in her childhood. However, her aunt patiently taught her how to read and write. Her elementary school and secondary school were fine; however, at the end of secondary school, she had some problems due to family situations.

In elementary and secondary school everything was fine; however, at the end of secondary school, I had some difficulties because I had some family problems.

Betty considers that attending public school did not help her too much because in public schools teachers do not have too much time to pay attention to every student, thus students should be more independent. She thinks that if her mother would be alive or her father would have a better economic situation, she would have attended a private school and gotten better opportunities.

Attending a public school did not help me too much, because as you know, at a public secondary school teachers do not pay too much attention to students, if you pay attention, then you learn. In a private school, things are quite different. If my mother were alive, or my father would have a lot of money.... I would attend a private school, but... as I do not

have economic resources, I know that I came to this world to go through the mil... thus I should keep a positive attitude..... I think that my family situation affected my learning, but not so much. I think that in public schools teachers explain their classes very well, but nobody sits down next to the student to follow up. It is like at the university, you have to watch the blackboard, you have to keep your attention on what the teacher says, you have to be independent and keep the attention by yourself.

Rosa

Rosa is a 20-year-old female student who lives in Santo Domingo province. She comes from what she considers a low-middle class, although her parents did not reach secondary school. Rosa wants to study Dental Hygiene at the Dominican community college. She considers herself an average reader and writer.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Rosa thinks that her reading and writing skills will be an important influence on her as a person, to be a better person, and to have nice behavior toward other people. She also thinks that these skills will help her to develop a correct oral expression to communicate in different contexts. She considers herself as an average reader.

I think that my reading and writing will influence me to be a better person, and to behave correctly with others, and in this way, I will know how to talk correctly in different places, in this way I will be a person who knows how to defend herself speaking what is necessary for different situations.

Although Rosa recognizes the relevance of her reading and writing skills for present and future courses, she is not very clear about how these language abilities will help her to complete future career courses successfully.

I think that reading and writing will help me to endure all my classes, and if I pay attention to what teachers say, and if I understand the way they explain content, in this way I think these abilities will be useful.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Rosa thinks that her reading and writing skills are very important for her career and life goals, but she is not very clear about how these language skills will apply to achieving what she seeks in life. She has some idea of what she wants to do in the future, but she did not explain it in detail.

Developing my reading and writing skills will help me to become a better person and do what I want to do in the future: helping people who live at disadvantage.

As for her explanation, Rosa understands that reading and writing abilities influence people's behavior due to the possibility to improve oral expression. She thinks that once a person develops reading and writing abilities, these abilities influence professional achievement because the person tends to talk to others with respect and courtesy.

Reading and writing can help me to achieve my professional goals, because they will make me value others because after learning how to speak effectively, then I will not offend others so much, I can learn how to control myself for not to offend a person, and I will better keep silence.

Rosa considers that in future jobs, the influence of reading and writing skills in her behavior will be positive for her interaction with others. She thinks that she will learn how to communicate correctly and effectively with both supervisors and coworkers.

I think that these abilities will help me at work because I will know how to talk showing respect to my supervisors and coworkers, and I think it will help me to value them as people.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Rosa states that she did not receive the information about the developmental course, thus she did not understand what was the course about. However, she recognizes that in this course she is learning a lot. She explains that along the course she is improving her reading comprehension, improving spelling, and also accent marks, which is an important topic in the Spanish language.

I did not know anything about the course, thus I did not know what they would teach me, but I am learning a lot in this class. I am understanding the readings, and I am learning where, for example, the words need to receive the accent mark. Also, I am learning to write many words that I did not know exactly how to write, I am learning to write them much better..... As I told you before, this course is helping me to improve in writing; I recognize the letters that I used incorrectly in the past. Now I can write them correctly. In reading, now I can understand texts from the first time I read them, I do not need to read them many times to understand them, as I needed to do in the past.

Rose remarks on the importance of the professor in the developmental course. She values the professor's methodology and the constant recommendations for practicing reading at home. Rose considers that this constant recommendation is a good strategy that motivates her to read.

The professor in the developmental course is a very good one, I love the way she teaches, and the way she explains the contents. I like that she always recommends reading, reading, and reading, in every class her constant recommendations read, read and read, this is something good that she reminds students to practice reading at home.

Rose remarks on the connection of the developmental course with the improvement in her oral expression. She explains that in this course she is learning how to speak with better pronunciation because in the past she did not pronounce the *s* and the *z* at the end of a word. In addition, in this course, Rose is learning how to identify the meaning of words, because, before this course, she misunderstood the meaning and gave words the wrong meaning.

In this course, I learned how to develop many aspects, like learning how to speak correctly, because, in the past, I used to not pronounce the *s* and the *z* at the end of a word. In addition, I used to change the meaning of words, and I gave them a meaning different from the real one.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Rosa explains that since elementary school she had a problem with her writing. The problem was that her handwriting was awful, and some of her classmates helped her to improve it by modeling some writing in her notebook for her to practice it. In this way, little by little she learned how to write in a way that her handwriting could be understood.

I remember that when I was in eighth grade, my handwriting was not readable, I wrote very ugly. I had a group of friends, two male, and two female, and they taught me how to write better. They wrote calligraphy in my notebook and then I improved my handwriting.

One of Rosa's main issue is that she does not keep concentrating on the text when she is reading, she can distract very easily, thus she commits mistakes and misunderstands what is in the text. Therefore, she loses her motivation to read.

For instance, if I am reading a text, anything, it looks like I distract myself very easily, very soon, and I do not understand very well, this... it is as if discourages me and I do not want to continue reading that text.

Rosa remembers that since elementary school she suffered from stage fright so it was difficult for her to aloud in class activities, or participate in expositions. As she explains, she obtained good grades, although she was so shy to participate in activities that required reading aloud.

Since elementary school I had stage fright, thus I did not like to participate in class activities, especially those in which the teacher asked me to read aloud. It was so difficult for me to participate in expositions and group presentations... I was as so afraid of reading in front of everybody... Despite this, I got good grades.

Esther

Esther is an 18-year-old female student who describes her family as a middle-class one. She learned to read and write at a private school in her neighborhood, in East Santo Domingo. Esther wants to study Dental Hygiene at the Dominican community college. As for her explanation, Esther had a very good experience in pre-school that allowed her to learn how to read and write without significant issues.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Esther understands that her reading and writing skills will have a positive influence on the developmental course, and also in future career courses. However, she is not clear about how she is going to apply these abilities in future courses because she does not know what subjects she will study in her career.

I know that my reading and writing skills will help me to pass this course and they will influence me very well for future classes because... ¿how can I explain it? I did not have them before, but now I find new opportunities to increase my reading and writing, in the past, I did not have them well-developed, but now I have them. At the present, I do not know what classes I will study in my career for me to put into practice the reading and writing abilities that I acquired.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

At the present, Esther considers herself as a good reader. She considers that both reading and writing skills will be very helpful for achieving her career aspirations. For instance, she thinks that reading can have a positive impact on her oral expression, but she is not clear about how these skills will help her to obtain her career aspirations and life goals.

Regarding reading, I think it will influence the way I talk because when you read, you learn more... thus... also writing will help me a lot, because when you are a professional, It does not look fine to talk about nonsense. I think that reading and writing will work very well for me, but I do not know how to explain you now.

Well, in reading I consider myself at a level of 8 out 10. I cannot say –I know, but I cannot discourage myself.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Esther explains that, in the beginning, she felt disappointed about being enrolled in the developmental course, but with time, she recognized the relevance of this course for improving her reading and writing skills. She also explains that along the developmental course, she felt pressured because there were many assignments and there were many activities to do in class.

At the beginning of the course, I felt disappointed, I did not want to take the course.

Later, teachers recommended we not give up, they raised our self-esteem. Now, I see the difference. The developmental course is helping me to write better. In this course, I acquired knowledge that I already had, but they were not developed. Now I am developing it..... I feel fine in the developmental course, although since the beginning, I felt pressured because there are many assignments and there is a lot of work in class.

Teachers ask us to complete many activities, and long practices, but in the end, it is good to help us to learn.

Esther informs that in the developmental course she is experiencing some growth in reading. After all, now she is having better comprehension because she is learning to find the meaning of texts. She is also learning to look for the meaning of words and put the accent mark. Along with the developmental course, she is also improving her spelling. Esther ensures that she is improving her writing in this course because in the past, she completed assignments just to fulfill class requirements and she did not pay much attention to correction. Nevertheless, now she is using self-correction strategies to correct the texts that she writes.

As I told you before, in the course the teacher is helping us to read and understand texts. I am also learning how to look for the meaning of words and how to put the accent mark correctly, and how to speak correctly, too.

I am improving my writing, too. In the past, I used to complete tasks to get out of trouble, but in this course, I am doing differently, I normally read and do the task. And I try and correct my writing until I feel it is good enough.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Esther explains that she started her learning process in a preschool, thus when she was registered at a school, she had some basic knowledge like vowel sounds, numbers, the alphabet, and so on. For this reason, learning to read was an easy process for her.

Well, eh...I.. eh... I learned to read and write when I entered my first year of elementary school because before entering preschool I attended a small private school, thus I already had my mind opened to learning, I mean that I already had some initial learning like the vowel sounds; I already knew the numbers and this kind of knowledge.

Different from learning how to read, writing represented some challenges for Esther. She explains that in elementary school she had some difficulties developing her handwriting because she did not write on the line. Thus it took some years, around fifth or sixth grade, for her handwriting to become appropriate for the course.

As I remember, I had the problem that I wrote out of the line, I mean I had bend writing. Then, my writing evolved, and in the fifth, or sixth year I knew how to write correctly on the line.

Anny

Anny is a 20-year-old female student who lives in Santo Domingo province. She comes from a family which she considers an upper-middle-class one, although she studied in a public school. Anny comes from a supportive family that helped her to develop her language skills in

her childhood, despite her strugglings to develop these skills. She wants to study Dental Hygiene at the community college.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Anny considers that her reading and writing skills will influence her performance in this developmental course and future content subjects. She thinks that these abilities are important because if she knows how to read and write correctly, then we would have good results. Anny recognizes that in Dental Hygiene, which is the career that she plans to study, it is necessary to read a lot of texts, and write many papers; thus, reading and writing skills are of great importance for learning in future classes.

I think that reading and writing will influence my participation in other classes. If I would not be in this developmental course, if I would receive a reading and writing class in secondary school, if I would use capital letters correctly, I would not need to be enrolled in this course to overcome the many difficulties that I have. I would write correctly. But, since this did not happen I need the course to write better..... I am sure that reading and writing abilities are very important for me because I want to study Dental Hygiene, and I heard that in this career you need to read many materials, and you have to write a lot of homework. For this reason, I am learning here in the developmental course for this knowledge to be useful when I have these classes in my career.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Anny does not have a job, but she thinks that her reading and writing skills will be helpful for her professional development. She considers that will need these abilities in every aspect of her career. She thinks that her reading and writing skills can help her to reach a high position in

her career and develop new abilities in every place where she works. One of Anny's dreams is to open her dental clinic and put into practice what she learns in her career. She is clear about the necessity for improving her reading and writing skills for approving the developmental course and starting her career very soon. However, Anny does not have a clear idea about how to apply her reading and writing skills in future jobs.

I think that my reading and writing skills will help me to develop as a professional. In that way, I can reach a high position in this career. My goal is to have my dental clinic; therefore, I need to improve my reading and writing because they will help me in every area of this career. Also, they will help me to approve the developmental course to start my career next term. In the future, I plan to take some time to read in my free time.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Anny recognizes the importance of the developmental course for improving her reading and writing skills. She ensures that in the developmental course she is learning topics that if she would not be in a remedial course, she would not know that she needed to learn to write correctly.

I think that this developmental course is very important for students to learn what is necessary for academic courses. In the course, I am improving my reading and writing skills. I am learning to interpret what I read. I am learning to write correctly, for instance, I already learned when I should write capital letters. I feel very happy that I needed to be enrolled in this course because if I would not be enrolled in this developmental course, I would not be aware of many topics that I still needed to learn to.

Anny remarks on the important role of the instructor in the developmental course for her to achieve a better understanding of the contents. She also thinks that interaction with other

classmates and the support received from the professor are motivating her to study hard to understand what she is supposed to learn in this course.

The teacher is excellent and he explains everything very well, and he gives us many interesting readings, and we have many interesting activities in the classroom. I love his teaching and all the activities in class with my classmates. The –practices|| that he asks us to complete are helping me a lot because I spent time studying them hard and concentrating to learn the topics in them.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Anny explains that she faced some difficulties in the process of learning to read. When she began elementary school, she did not know how to read. However, she had the teacher's support and her mother registered her for tutoring. She also counted on her mother's support during this process. As Anny explains, she also had some problems with her language skills when she attended secondary school. For instance, she had some difficulties putting the accent mark on other punctuation. Fortunately, she found a Spanish language teacher who helped her to overcome these difficulties.

My experience in elementary school was difficult at the beginning because I needed to make some effort, and I also needed the help of some teachers, to learn how to read. Thus I was enrolled in tutoring, and my mother helped me with reading practice at home, too... In secondary school, I had some difficulties with grammar and orthography. For instance, I did not know how to put accent marks and other punctuation correctly. Fortunately, I found a very helpful Spanish language teacher who helped me to identify the differences between similar words, and she also taught me how to punctuate, and how to put the accent mark on words.

Anny thinks that another issue that affected the development of her reading and writing abilities was her shyness. Anny was extremely shy, thus she did not risk asking any questions in class because she always thought she was wrong. This situation did not allow her to clarify her doubts.

I think that my nervousness and my shyness affected the development of my reading and writing abilities. When I had any doubts I never asked teachers because I was very shy. In addition, my class participation was very limited, if the teacher made any question, I never answered because I always thought that I was wrong. I did not have confidence in myself.

Angie

Angie is a 20- year-old student who comes from a suburban área of Santo Domingo province. She comes from what she thinks is a middle-class family. She lives with her parents, who although completed secondary school, never gained access to higher education. She learned to read and write in a public school in her neighborhood, and she also counted on the support of her sister and her parents during the process t of learning to read and write. Angie does not have a formal job, but sometimes she works in a lottery-tickets store. She wants to study Dental Hygiene at the community college.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Angie thinks that reading and writing skills will help her in both the present and future classes because in every class she will need to read books and materials and then, it is necessary to hand in different types of academic work. Thus it is necessary to learn how to use these abilities correctly. She considers herself as a good reader. She thinks that the contents of the

developmental course are helping her to read and write better. She also thinks that these abilities will help her in future classes by improving her reading, and giving her the possibility to verify if what she writes is correct.

My reading and writing abilities can help greatly because it is necessary to read and write a lot of materials, and I need to hand in coursework, thus I need to learn how to write everything. Contents of this course can help me to read better and verify if my coursework is correctly written.

Well... I feel that I read well, I do not know if I am an excellent reader, because sometimes one fails, but whenever I receive a correction, I improve my reading.

Apart from this statement, Angie does not seem to have any other idea about how her reading and writing skills will be useful for her to succeed in this developmental course and other future classes.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Angie recognizes the importance of her reading and writing skills for her career aspirations because, in every career that a person chooses, it is necessary to read and write correctly. At the present, she sometimes works in a lottery ticket store, thus in this place, she needs to read and write every day. She also has to autocorrect what she writes because she has to verify every ticket that she sells, and she should write reports or notes when necessary.

Reading and writing can help me in future jobs because it is necessary to learn how to read and write for every activity. I work in a lottery ticket store, and I feel that in this job reading and writing help me a lot because I need to verify everything and verify that tickets are correctly written, I also have to write notes and reports every day.

In the future, Angie wants to become an odontologist, thus she thinks that reading and writing skills are essential for her future jobs. She understands that as an odontologist we will read publications about her career, and she will write patients' medical history, prescriptions, records, and many other documents related to dental health.

Reading and writing are essential for me to work in the future. In my case, I will read and write a lot if I have the opportunity to become an odontologist. For instance, when I receive a patient I will write what problem they have; I will complete their medical history, prescriptions, and all these medical documents. I know I will read many books related to my career.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

According to Angie, this remedial course is contributing to her growth as a reader and a writer. She notices that after this course started, class activities made her remember many language structures that she had forgotten. For instance, in the remedial course, she has studied verbs, syllables, punctuation, and accent marks.

Since the course started I think I am having some growing reading and writing every day. The fact is that sometimes one forgets how to write properly and in this course, I can learn, and remember things that I already learned in the past. In the developmental course I learned about verbs, we studied the syllables, and many other topics like using a comma, and also accent marks.

One of the aspects of the developmental course that Angie considers contributes to her growth is having many reading comprehension activities. In addition, she is developing self-correction skills along with writing activities. Thus, she writes an assignment and re-reads it to confirm if she wrote it correctly.

I think that I am learning in this course because they ask us to read many readings and I notice that now I can read and understand everything. Also, when the teacher asks me to do an assignment, I read what I wrote, and then, I read it again to verify if I did it well.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Angie recognizes that since elementary school she faced some difficulties to learn how to read. She thinks that learning how to read and write was not easy; however, she has a very supportive family and they helped her in the process. One of these issues was a great confusión with sounds, another one was that she only read the beginning of a word, and she did not read all the syllables.

When I was in elementary school, sometimes I was confused with sounds, for instance, *a* and *e*. But my mother and my father helped me with the alphabet and then, I learned to identify these sounds. They were very supportive, and thus I could develop my reading and writing skills because this process was not easy for me.

I remember that I could not read a complete word... I mean, if the word was *mama*, (mother in the Spanish language) I used to read *ma* ', only the beginning of the word.

Despite being enrolled in a developmental course, and earlier declaring some reading and writing problems when attending elementary school, Angie considers that she is developing her reading and writing skills very well. She thinks that she can write correctly, and her reading ability is average because she can read and identify punctuation.

Well, I am doing very well in the developmental course, because I can write fine, I can read more or less, and I can identify all the commas.

In another moment during the interview, she considers that her writing is average, and she explains that she still has some problems with her reading ability.

Teachers in the developmental course can help me more by making my understanding better, I mean, if she asks me to read more, because my writing is average, but I do not know how to read words exactly because I feel as if I freeze myself and I cannot read them completely.

One of the issues that worries Angie the most is that sometimes she cannot understand class instructions. She considers that this was one of the difficulties for her to take better advantage of the developmental course.

The situation that I think that is affecting me in the developmental course is that sometimes the teacher indicates something to do and I do not understand what exactly she wants students to do.

Cristine

Cristine is a 22-year-old student who lives with her family in a neighborhood in North Santo Domingo. She considers her family a low-middle-class one. She registered at the community college to study Dental Mechanics and she has great expectations for what she would do after she finishes this career. Cristine learned to read and write in a public school, near her house. She explains that this was a difficult process because she had some learning problems. Fortunately, she comes from a very supportive family, thus her parents and her sister helped her in the process to learn to read and write. They even registered her to receive tutoring after class as a way to help her to learn to read and write, although they never reached secondary school.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Cristine thinks that reading and writing skills are of great importance for future classes because they will be the tool to learn and analyze content in career subjects. However, she has a vague idea about how she could connect these skills with the present course and future career

subjects. She explains that reading and writing will be useful to analyze every coursework along the career.

Well, I think that reading and writing relate a lot to the subjects that I am going to study in my career. I think with these abilities I am going to achieve a lot of knowledge in career subjects, like analyzing everything in the subjects.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Cristine also has an uncertain idea about how her reading and writing skills will contribute to achieving her career aspirations and life goals. She thinks that these skills will influence her performance at work, but she is not sure how it will happen. She considers that if she does not develop her reading and writing abilities properly, she will face many difficulties and challenges. For instance, she is sure that any reading and writing deficiency would be a challenge in obtaining a very good job.

I think that reading and writing could influence my future Jobs because if you work in a company like to be a secretary, you need to read to review carpets, to analyze if they are in the correct order, and so on.....I think that if a person does not read and write well, she will have difficulties finding a good job. She could have a job, but not a respectable one.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Christine explains that the remedial Spanish course is relevant for her to remember all the contents studied in elementary school. For instance, she remembers types of texts. She feels that she is improving her spelling; consequently, her writing is much better now than before beginning the course.

Well, that developmental course is helping me a lot to recall many contents that I learned in elementary school and things like that. In reading I am improving a lot; for instance, I am getting a lot of knowledge about the types of text that the Spanish language teacher asks us to analyze. I am improving my spelling, and it helps to gain better knowledge about the use of the Spanish language.

Another improvement that Cristine thinks she is obtaining in the remedial course is that she is developing the ability to self-correct what she writes. She understands that this is good for her writing skills.

In writing, I am improving, too. I think so because when I am writing I analyze all the words to see if they are correct or incorrect, and I learn to correct mistakes with some letters.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Cristine explains that the process to develop reading and writing skills in her childhood was a difficult experience because she had a learning problem that prevented her from remembering what she learned. However, little by little she finally learned to read and write. She ensures that she made a great effort to complete all her coursework. Her family supported Cristine by registering her in a tutoring service, but it was for a short time because she did not receive the appropriate instruction in that place.

Well, my learning experience was a little bit difficult, but at last, I learned how to read and write. The learning problem was that I did not remember very well, but little by little I learned. My mother helped me to practice Reading at home. Then, they registered me to take tutoring, but it did not work because they did not teach me very well. Thus I continued attending only school, without external tutoring.

In addition, Cristine thinks that she did not receive adequate instruction in elementary school and for that reason, she did not develop her reading and writing skills properly.

Something that interfered with my learning process was that at school I did not receive the appropriate teaching. I would receive the appropriate teaching, I would have learned to read and write in a shorter time, and better.

Luisa

Luisa is a 28-year-old student who comes from what she assumes is a low-class family. She was grown up by her godmother, in a rural area near Santo Domingo City. Her grandmother started to teach her how to read; then, Luisa attended a public school for some years, but her education was interrupted for several reasons and she forgot most of what she learned in her early childhood. At the age of twelve, Luisa went to live in another house with a family that supported her in exchange for domestic work, but she could not attend school for about 5 years. She always lived in a house different from her parents' one because she needed to work to help her family's economy. Finally, at the age of eighteen, Luisa attended an adult education program and completed secondary school. Although her parents have a very simple academic level, Luisa kept an interest in getting an education, despite the many interruptions that she had since elementary school.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Luisa does not have many ideas about the relationship between her abilities to read and write and future classes. She connects these abilities with the need for reading and writing recipes in Gastronomy classes.

Well... I need read and write very well you know, because in this career there are cookbooks, and it is necessary to read. Students always need to read to learn... the recipes and other texts. Sometimes could be possible that I write a recipe or something like that.

Luisa recognizes the importance of reading and writing for the developmental course, but she is not clear about how to apply her abilities, not for future career courses. Apart from needing to read and write recipes, Luisa states that she does not have any idea about how these skills could be useful in future classes.

In my opinion, many students do not like the developmental course, because they just want to finish to get out of it. In my case, I do not want to get out of it, I want to learn to read and write very fine to complete this course.

Well, I wanted to say that I just think about Gastronomy classes, and working in the kitchen, I think that I will read and write recipes, but in other courses, I could not say, because I do not know what they will teach.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Luisa does not have an idea about how she could apply her reading and writing skills to achieve her career aspirations and life goals. She only thinks that she will probably use these abilities in case of working in a restaurant, she will probably take any order.

I do not know, it depends on what. Could be that I need to take any order if I work at a restaurant...I will do at work.

One of Luisa's goals is to have her cafeteria or restaurant. However, she does not connect her reading and writing abilities with achieving this goal. Although she recognizes the

importance of having these abilities in her professional life, she does not know how reading and writing could help her to succeed in obtaining this objective in her life.

In the future, if God allows me, and if we are alive, I would like to open my cafeteria or food store. I just know that developing my reading and writing abilities is important, but I cannot think about how they can help me to achieve my business. I cannot think about it.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Luisa emphasizes the importance of faculty in a developmental course. She explains that these professors taught about topics that she never saw in secondary school. She considers that these topics are good for students to increase their language knowledge.

I think that in the developmental courses there are very good professors. In the course, I am learning about many topics that I did not learn in secondary school, for instance, the classification of words according to the accent mark, and syllables classification, among others. I think these are important topics for students to grow in the learning of the language..... In my opinion, teacher's disposition is something that helps students in developmental courses. It does not mean that other teachers in the past did not teach well. The fact is that teachers in the developmental course focus more on helping students, they always ask if we have any doubts and explain everything very well.

Luisa recognizes that she is improving her use of language skills if she compares how it was before the developmental course, and after the course started. However, she thinks that she should improve more although her reading is not that bad at present. As she explains, in the past, her reading was not fluent and she did not pay enough attention to punctuation.

Well, I think that I should improve my language skills a little bit more, although it does not mean that I read so awful; but one never knows... for instance, before the developmental course, I use to read –eating|| commas and periods, but now I do not read like that.

Luisa identifies some improvement as a reader, but she cannot explain it. She considers that she had some growth in her knowledge of grammar categories, such as the verbs system, or she clarified some confusion that she had about this topic. Regarding writing skills, she confuses this with knowledge of grammar, and other language aspects like an accent mark.

As a reader? I am having some improvement as a reader, but I do not know how to say it... I am improving my learning of verbs, I remember that they explained verbs to me, but I do not remember so much, because I forget things very easily. What I thought was a verb, the teacher explained to me that it was not... Then the teacher explained to me that verbs are something like actions. I am also learning how to classify words according to the accent mark.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

As Luisa narrates, her schooling during her childhood was intermittent, thus when she came to a new school, she had forgotten most of what she learned before. Her first time at school was in a rural school, then she was taken to other municipalities near Santo Domingo city. She explains that for different reasons, she did not attend school for some periods. One of these reasons was that she did not have a birth certificate to be registered at school. Other reasons were related to her family situation and socioeconomic status. Thus, in recent years, she decided to enroll in a program to complete secondary school.

First of all, I grew up with my godmother, and she taught me vowel sounds and other basic concepts. When I was around four years old, they registered me at the school; by that time we lived in the countryside. Then, I spent some years out of school. After some years, they took me back to school, but I had forgotten all that I had learned before. I moved to another municipality, in this case, I lived in the house of a woman who could pay for my studies, but they could not register me at school because I did not have a birth certificate. Later, I went to an adult education program and completed primary school.

Luisa explains that one of the main difficulties in developing her reading and writing skills was strongly related to a lack of schooling. When Luisa was around thirteen years old, she lived in the house of a family, who agreed with Luisa's parents to support her and pay for her education. However, at the moment of attending school, they asked her to do housework. For this reason, Luisa decided to abandon school.

I lived with that family because they would help me and pay for my education, I had to help to take care of their children. However, whenever the time to go to school was close, I noticed that the mom asked me to do many chores. I got mad at her and I decided to abandon the school. At that moment I did not think that it was damage to myself.

Although an adult education program allowed Luisa to achieve a secondary school certificate, she recognizes the limitations of this type of program if compared with a regular secondary school. She thinks that in adult education programs, students do not learn what they are supposed to learn to complete secondary school.

I think that in this program everything is different from the normal school. I think that one never learns all the information that one is supposed to learn... imagine... in such a short time...At the weekend, you have to learn what regular students learn for a week.

Martina

Martina is a 21-year-old student who lives with her family in a neighborhood in the East Santo Domingo municipality. She comes from a low-class family. She learned to read and write in a small private preschool near her house. Her first teachers were very close to her family, thus she felt comfortable at school. In addition, she practiced reading at home with her mother and her sister. When attending elementary school, Martina was a very shy person who could not read aloud in front of her classmates. However, with time she overcame this situation and now she can read in front of her classmates.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Martina considers that she is not such a good writer, but she thinks that she reads very well and she has a broad vocabulary. She considers that one of her most important abilities is that she respects punctuation when reading aloud in class. She has the opinion that punctuation is something very important that every good reader should learn and take into account for having better reading and writing skills.

I am not a good writer, but I read very well, and I have a broad vocabulary. When I read, I respect punctuation like commas, colons, semicolons, periods, and all these punctuations. It is something that some people do not take into account when reading aloud, and I think that these punctuations are very important for reading and writing, and everybody should learn how to use them correctly.

Martina recognizes the importance of her reading and writing skills for both, this developmental course and for future career subjects. She wants to study nursing, and she thinks that her reading and writing abilities will help her to obtain a greater understanding of the contents, as they are helping her at the present, in the developmental course; therefore, these can

help to develop herself as a learner. She considers that reading and writing can be useful for improving oral expression for communicating in class.

I want to study nursing, and I think that reading and writing will help me a lot, and also in the developmental course, they are helping me to learn all the contents that the professor is teaching. I think that reading and writing are helping me to develop myself and understand everything. They are helping me to learn how to communicate better in class.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Martina is sure that her reading and writing abilities are extremely important for her career aspirations and for achieving other life goals. Since she wants to become a nurse, she knows that she will need to read prescriptions and many other materials in a hospital. She is also sure that she will need to explain

I think that reading and writing will help me because nurses need to read a lot, especially prescriptions and other things. Nurses also need to learn to listen to patients and sometimes we need to explain things that they do not understand.

According to Martina, people who develop reading and writing abilities can be successful in areas like literature or journalism, because they can write a tale or a novel, or they can write articles to publish in the newspaper; or any other type of writing. She also explains that she would like to write a novel or tales. Martina is sure that she needs to improve her reading and writing skills to achieve her dream of becoming a good writer. She thinks that to be a writer she needs to learn punctuation, accent mark rules, and other grammar structure.

People who can read and write could be successful at the time of writing a tale or novel, even writing in a newspaper, or at the time to write a pamphlet, or any other piece of writing that people can read.

In addition, to become a nurse I would like to write a novel, and I would like to write tales, too. Ant these are dreams that one could achieve with reading and writing skills when one learns to develop or improve these skills. One can also achieve these dream when one learn how to apply accent mark rules, punctuation, and grammar structure.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Martina confirms that the developmental course helps her to develop her reading and writing abilities because the teacher has taught some language contents that she considers very important for writing and also for interpreting the meaning of ideas when reading.

Yes, the developmental course is helping me to develop a greater reading level, because, as I mentioned before, the teacher taught accent mark rules, verbs, and diphthongs, and these are useful for Reading and writing, too. For instance, the comma is a very small punctuation mark, but it is very important for writing and for Reading, too. The comma divides the ideas, and they do not have the same meaning when you use the comma as when you do not use it.

Martina remarks on the importance of developing her reading and writing skills in the developmental course, before enrolling in career subjects. She is clear about the relevance of topics addressed in this developmental course, although they seem to be very simple, or basic contents. She connects reading and writing abilities with improving oral expression.

I hope that when I start attending career subjects I would have learned all these topics that the teacher is teaching in the developmental course because, although they seem to be basic contents, they are very important to read, write, or communicate orally.

As for Martina's statements, the developmental course not only teaches students how to improve their language skills but also makes them develop computer skills. She explains that

having a virtual component for this course was a good experience, and she learned how to use the virtual classroom, complete assignments, and interact with her classmates. Although virtual classrooms were not completely new for her, she did not have the opportunity to complete tasks by herself in a virtual platform when attending secondary school.

Well, in the developmental course I learned how to use the Moodle platform,

I am learning to manage it successfully. I thank God because I can upload assignments. I also learned how to interact more with my classmates, and it has been a beautiful experience. In addition to class, we talk about other topics, laugh, and have fun. I learned a lot when reading because, in secondary school, I never had the opportunity to read a text and answer questions in a virtual classroom.

Martina gives great importance to the interaction with other participants in the developmental course. She considers that this interaction is relevant for her learning process because they can share opinions and students explain to others what they do not understand. Martina thinks that having other classmates with the same goal of moving forward is something that brings great benefits.

The fact of having some hardworking classmates, who always meet with me and work together, and who write our opinions and conclusions about texts, is a great support. It is really helpful having such classmates who, like you, want to move forward and who help you to understand what is difficult for you and vice-versa.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Regarding the issues that may impact her ability to read and write, Martina recognizes that she had some learning problems when attending elementary school. She explains that the process

of learning how to read was not so difficult, because she used to read everything around her during that process.

Since I was very young, I was a person to whom class was not easy to learn, but when I decided to pay attention, I used to understand; and thanks to God my process to learn how to read was not so complicated, to tell the truth, because I learned to read in a short time, especially because I developed the habit of reading everything around me.

When talking about secondary school, Martina explains that she was very shy and could not read aloud in front of other classmates. It took some time for her to be confident enough to participate in activities that required reading aloud in the classroom.

Before secondary school, I could not read aloud in class, and after some time, I get acquainted with some of my classmates, and I began to read a little bit more, then I could read correctly and as I wanted.

Martina accepts that in the past, she had some spelling problems, thus when she did not know how to write some words correctly, she normally asked the professor. She feels that after some time she did not have any problem with her spelling because she always had a teacher to help her to correct any mistake.

Well... in the past I had some spelling problems, but when I did not know how to write any words, I used to ask my teachers, no matter what, because people attend schools to learn, thus I asked the teacher. After some time I did not have any other problems, thank God, I always had someone to teach me what I did not know.

Andy

Andy is a 19-year-old student who understands that his family is a low-middle class one. He lives with his family in one of the neighborhoods in the east of Santo Domingo province.

Since elementary school, Andy attended a private school in his town. He counted on the support of his parents and sisters to learn to read and write. Like many young guys, he is passionate about technology; thus he decided to study Informatics Support at the community college. When he obtains his associate degree, he plans to transfer to a university to achieve a bachelor's degree in Computer science.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Andy recognizes the importance of language skills for all daily life and academic activities. He also understands that developing reading and writing skills will help him in future career subjects as it is helping in the developmental course. He explains that one of the subjects in which he will apply his reading and writing abilities is Programming. As he said, these language skills will help create new programs, and for writing correct commands in these programs. He considers himself as an average reader.

First of all, language encompasses everything because it is something that we use every day. Learning how to use language properly is useful to speak correctly. Learning how to read and write very well will help me when I study Programming. For instance, when the teacher asks me to create a new program, I will need to write the commands of the program correctly.

At the present, I would describe myself as an average reader, and also writer, because I do not read very frequently, but whenever I can, I take some time to read.

Andy is conscious of the importance of reading and writing for foreign language classes, which is mandatory for all ITSC careers. He thinks that what he is learning in Spanish classes will be like a model for English lessons because it is a language, thus they need to learn the same features. English as a foreign language will be similar to learning their language when he was a

child. Therefore, it is necessary to learn basic language sounds and structures. He remade the importance of reading, and that he will need to practice reading in English more than in his mother language which is Spanish.

I will need to start from scratch; I will need to learn the alphabet again, but now in English. I could say that I will learn the same that I am learning in the Spanish course. Reading will be very useful when I take English classes, and I will need to practice reading in English more than in Spanish because this is a different language. It is as if I am an adult in my language but in the English language, I will be a baby.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Andy recognizes the importance of reading and writing abilities for professional life, for further studies, and also for different types of occupations. He plans to transfer to a university to study Computer Engineering as soon as he finishes his studies at the community college.

Language is fundamental because when you work in an office, you have to write too much... Or for working in a newspaper, or a tv channel, in these environments language abilities, are fundamental for working in these places.

I plan to finish university studies to obtain a degree in Computer Engineering, after I finish my studies here at the community college I will transfer to Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago to study Computer Engineering.

He thinks that reading and writing skills will help in that process, because of the importance of language for all of the basic subjects that he will need to attend at the university.

Well, reading could help me a lot because when you start a career you have to take some basic subjects like Language, Mathematics, and other... For example, have to take Informatics

1... When I attend these subjects, my teachers will notice if I have fluency in the language. Thus, reading and writing skills will help me a lot in this matter.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

Andy recognizes that being in the remedial Spanish course has been very important for improving his language abilities. In the course, he is learning important grammar topics like an accent marks. He also values the learning of some reading practices and strategies, like the reading of tales for improving reading abilities. Along the course, he also improved his writing skills due to the frequent practice of text structures through the identification of paragraphs and sentences.

The developmental course is helping me a lot, and I think it will continue helping me because I am improving my reading and writing skills. I also learned how to put the accent mark correctly in a word. The teacher always asks us to read tales and many texts. In this class, we have to identify and differentiate paragraphs and sentences....In the developmental course, I am having a good performance, especially in reading, because most materials are for reading rather than writing. I think this is good for me.

According to Andy, the course helps students to refresh what they learned in primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, he explained that he is conscious of having some knowledge, but this knowledge was not very clear to him, and in the developmental course he remembered a lot of this knowledge received in previous education. He thinks that this situation not only happens to him but also other students in his class.

In the developmental course, some information was not what I could say -learning,|| it is as if the contents were there, but they were not very clear. In the developmental course, I refresh what I learned in primary and secondary courses. It is what happens in a

developmental course. And I think that this happens to most of us in my class... I suppose.

One of the aspects that Andy considers as a key in the developmental course is that teachers make students immediately put into practice what they are learning in class. He thinks that this makes a difference to other classes, because they practice when the teacher's information is still fresh in students' minds, thus they can answer questions easily and could complete any task.

Well... In that way, I can complete activities easily because the contents explained in class are fresh in our minds, and I can easily get the key to answering any question. In the developmental course, the teacher asks us to immediately put into practice what we learn, different from other classes, in which teachers explain contents and leave practice for another moment.

The interaction with teachers when attending on-site classes is something that Andy considers quite relevant for students' achievement in developmental classes. He also values that in these classes the intense practice of writing guided him to develop his writing ability.

On-site classes are helping me a lot. I consider that on-site classes are better than virtual classes because the interaction with the teacher is better and students learn more. In these classes, the teacher takes advantage of time in a better way....Something that is helping me to develop my writing ability is that we have many writing practices.

Andy explains that in the developmental course he also learned how to work with his classmates as a team, and in the interaction with them, he developed the sensibility to help his classmates.

One of the strategies that I am developing in the developmental course is team work. In this class I am interacting more, and helping my classmates when they need it.

Understanding Issues That May Impact His Ability to Read and Write

Andy recognizes that he has had some reading difficulties since primary school. As he explains, he reads very fast, but he commits many mistakes. In addition, he had some difficulties learning to write, because he is a left-handed person. Thus, it seems that it took longer for him to find the correct way to handle the pencil and to put his arms on the table in the process of learning how to write.

Oh! Yes. There were many difficulties with reading, because I had the habit, or I still have that habit, of reading fast, like –broken reading as we, the Dominicans, say. And in writing, in the beginning, it was very uncomfortable for me, because I am a left-handed person. It was...eh... since I am left-handed, and left-handed students need to put the elbow to the front part of the table, and then turn the arm and the wrist on the table, I needed to find the right position to handle the pencil and it made it difficult learning how to write.

According to Andy, many distractions interfere with the development of his reading and writing skills. He refers to the normal noise of the area where he lives. He lives near a highway, consequently, apart from the noise that comes from cars, trucks, and motorcycles, it is normal to listen to loud music coming from neighbors' houses. Andy also has many distractions at home because he has a great interaction with his family. He lives with his mother, his father, and two sisters.

At present, I live in a very busy área. If one of the neighbors does not have a commotion, another one will have it. Many cars and motorcycles are passing by the avenue and loud music... and also here at home. There are a lot of distractions at home.

Joe

Joe is a 21-year-old male student who comes from a family that he considers middle-class. He lives in the peripheral área of Santo Domingo city. Joe wants to study Graphic Design at the community college. He learned to read and write in a private school in his neighborhood, and along this learning process, he received great support from his mother, who works as a secretary at a school. At the age of 18, Joe finished secondary school and entered the University to study Medicine. At the present, he is not attending the university, and he will study Computer Graphics at the community college. After completing this career, he plans to continue studying Medicine.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Joe thinks that his reading and writing skills will totally influence his success in the present developmental course, and also in future classes because in all of the subjects students need to read to learn the contents. He considers himself as a good reader, and he thinks he is an average writer.

I think that my reading and writing abilities will influence a hundred percent because all of the subjects entail reading, other subjects involve mathematics... in my opinion, if I know how to read and write very well it is a benefit, and I feel fine to be in this course. I would say that I am a good reader. But I think I should continue in the developmental course, because I need to get ahead, I need to learn more.

Joel considers that his reading and writing abilities will be helpful for him to develop the use of computers in Graphic Design classes. He wants to achieve certain fluency when writing on the computer. He also thinks that his reading and writing skills will help him to be patient to learn and become an expert in the use of the computer to write.

I think that my reading and writing will help me to be patient to learn things regarding digital writing. I would like to develop the ability to write correctly on the computer, I do not have the ability for writing fast on the computer, and I know that what I am learning in this developmental course, will help me a lot, and it will be useful for me to apply in the Graphic Design career.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Joe works for his father at a company that manufactures pajamas for medical doctors. I think that my reading and writing abilities are very important for this job and future jobs. According to him, reading helped him to develop some virtues like patience, and perseverance at work. Thus he ensures that reading and writing skills are influencing his behavior.

I work for my father at a company that manufactures pajamas for medical doctors. I think that my reading and writing abilities will help me in the career that I choose: Graphic Design. Through these abilities and all that I am learning in the developmental course, I have learned to be patient, I have developed some other virtues. I have learned that I have to devote myself to the job in this company, and in my career to be successful.

Although Joe does not consider reading and writing skills as peremptory for his present job, he recognizes that these skills will be more relevant for future jobs, after completing his career at the community college. He is sure that if he develops his reading and writing skills,

they will be able to become a better professional, he will be able to learn about new technologies and work better with all computers related work.

As I said before, in this job I do not consider reading and writing relevant; this is a normal job where I can learn with experience. But I am sure that in future jobs when I finish my career, reading and writing will be very important for me to be a great professional, and do my work excellently, they will also help me learn more about all kinds of work related to computers and other new technologies. I know that my reading and writing abilities will help me a lot in the future.

Joe considers that his reading and writing abilities are helping him a hundred percent to complete this course, and he is sure that these abilities will help him to achieve his multiple goals. Furthermore, he considers that all that he learned is due to reading skills. In the past, Joe entered the public university of Santo Domingo to study Medicine, and he considers that in Medicine all is about reading, thus he remarks on the importance of this ability to achieve his goals. He explains that he plans to continue studying medicine, and among other projects, he plans to open a drugstore.

My reading and writing abilities are helping me a hundred percent to approve this course, and they will help me because I learned everything through reading. In Medicine, all is about reading: reading prescriptions, reading about drugs, reading contraindications, I mean... everything is related to reading..... Apart from this career, I have many projects in my mind. I want to open my drugstore, and I plan to continue studying Medicine. I want to achieve many things in my life, and I know that I need to learn many things, and I am sure that these reading and writing skills will help me to learn more to achieve my projects.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

According to Joe, one of the important aspects of being in the developmental course is that he had the opportunity to unlearn to learn what he has seen in secondary school and college. He recognizes that he had a misunderstanding about many concepts or ideas about reading and writing, or there were things that he did not learn before.

I would say that participating in the developmental course impacted me personally in the sense that I already knew some concepts about reading and writing; but when I was enrolled in this course, I found that many things were different from what I had learned. I feel fine, because I had some knowledge, thus I can manage the topics and learn again..... I mean, the professor explained again what I received in the past at school and in higher education. It makes me feel fine because in this course I am learning many things.

Joe remarks on the important role of the professor in this process. As he says, the professor's behaviors and instructive style make it easier for him to learn what was expected. He also explains that the teacher's instruction is helping him to discover strategies to develop reading and writing skills.

This course is helping me so much because I have an excellent professor. He is a very calm, and patient instructor who clarifies every topic, and explains the meaning of structures or anything that I need to understand. I feel that I am receiving solid instruction. He explains every point easily, and he gives me strategies about how to go ahead with reading and writing skills.

According to Joe, participating in this developmental course is motivating him to develop reading habits. He also values that in the developmental course he is paying more attention to

searching for the meaning of what he reads, he values a lot the education that he is receiving in this institution.

I think the course is making me grow a little more, you know, because sometimes I am alone at home, and I take a book and read, or I take any other material. Also, I pay more attention to understanding the meaning of readings. I am receiving a great education at the community college.

Joe explains that his participation in the developmental course has been a fluent experience, and he has not faced any incidents along the course. He clarifies that he receives clear instructions from the professor, and he follows his guidance, to succeed in the course.

There are no incidents until this moment to complete the course. On the contrary, the professor always explains what we need to do to succeed, and we follow his instructions.

I pay attention to all his instructions.

Understanding Issues That May Impact His Ability to Read and Write

Joe explains that although he learned to read very early in his childhood, he had some imbalance in his reading ability in elementary school. He had a very supportive mother who always helped him to develop his literacy skills. Fortunately, in secondary school, he found a teacher who helped him to improve his reading ability. However, it was in higher school, at the university, when he started enjoying reading.

To be honest, my process to learn how to read started very early, at the age of 3 years old.

I thank God because my mother always was there teaching me, and helping me.

However, in elementary school I started to have some instability with my reading skills, I lost some of my reading abilities. Fortunately, in secondary school, I found a teacher that

helped me to recover my reading abilities. Later, I started to study at the university. I learned a lot and I started to enjoy reading.

Joe recognizes that he always had low writing abilities. He remembers that since his childhood he knew he needed to work hard on his writing skills. Joe explains that his mother offered great support to make him exercise his writing and spelling. For this reason, he does not have spelling mistakes when he writes.

Well, I always was... How can I say? I was not a skilled writer. Since I was a child, I was always clear that I had to make an effort to improve my writing skills. My mother helped me by making me exercise my handwriting and spelling. She always followed me up with this type of handwriting book. Her support helped me writing write without spelling mistakes.

Joe explains that his lack of discipline in secondary school interfered with the development of his reading and writing skills at that level. He refers that he and a group of classmates spent most of the time having fun and making jokes, and sometimes they did not make homework; they focused on entertainment.

In secondary school, I had some distractions... I had a group of friends, and we made many jokes and had fun in class. We were about 6 or 7 teenagers. Sometimes we did not make homework or pay attention to class, we did not study because we were having fun at school. I recognize that by that time I was very lazy about reading.

Mayra

Mayra is a 19-year-old female student who lives in San Luis, near the community college. She comes from a family that she considers a lower-class one. Mayra learned to read and write in a public school in his neighborhood. Since elementary school she had some difficulties;

however, she has a very supportive mother who helped her along the process. At the present, Mayra works in the groceries store of her family. She wants to study nursing at the community college.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Present and Future Classes

Mayra is clear about the importance of reading and writing abilities to succeed in future career subjects. However, she says that she is not quite clear about how she could apply what she is learning in the developmental in future content courses. She thinks that she could share what she already knows with other classmates, to improve her abilities.

I am glad to be in this developmental course because I know that reading and writing abilities are very important for everything. But I am not sure how I will apply this to career classes. I think I could share what I am learning in this course with my classmates, I do not know...

In contrast to her statements or doubts, Mayra recognizes that as a nurse she will use her reading and writing skills to read prescriptions, and for writing a lot of information in forms and records. Thus she will use these two abilities in her academic life and after.

I think that my reading and writing skills will help me a lot, you know... being a nurse is not only about providing pills or injections to patients. As a nurse, it is necessary to give information to patients, read prescriptions and write pieces of information on records. The nurse also reads receipts and other documents.

Reading and Writing Skills in Relation to Career Aspirations and Life Goals

Mayra thinks that reading and writing are necessary for every activity. Nevertheless, she distinguishes the connection between reading and writing to work better than the connection of

these abilities with academic work. For instance, she explains that she needs to use reading and writing skills in her family's groceries store where she works, but she is not clear about how she is going to use these abilities in future works.

Well... I think that it is necessary to learn to read and write very well because it is useful for everything. For instance, when I am working in a groceries store, if a customer sends a list of products, I need to read it, and sometimes I need to write on it if any product is missing. I also have to read the invoices and the lists of merchandise when one of the suppliers comes to the store and my father is not here..... Regarding future jobs, I am sure that I need to continue learning because in every situation it is necessary to know how and how to interpret what I read, and sometimes I will need to write to explain something. But I do not know what job will be suitable for me...or what type of job I will have in the future. For this reason, I do not know how I will apply my reading and writing skills in a job in the future.

Importance of Being in the Remedial Spanish Reading and Writing Course

According to Mayra, in the developmental course, she is learning new content that will be useful for her future. She values the interaction with her classmates and the dynamics in the classroom. Along this interaction, she discovers that all of them together have talent, and despite they did not know each other before the developmental class, there is collaboration to work and learn the topics and to develop activities in the classroom.

I like the developmental course because I am learning new things that I know are good for my learning. The best of the course is that my classmates and I are cultivating a great friendships. They are very nice and we help each other. Although we did not know each other before the course, we see that we have talents, or. ...no matter what did not know

before, all of us are interacting, collaborating, completing the exercises together to understand the topics, and so on... All this is helping me to grow more in the developmental course.

Mayra appreciates that along the developmental course she is improving her language skills and her knowledge of grammar. She enjoys some basic knowledge that she forgot and she is learning again in this course. For instance, syllables, diphthongs, verb conjugations, accent marks, and reading comprehension and writing texts.

I like this course because I am learning a lot about the Spanish language, I am learning some grammar topics that I forgot. The teacher taught us diphthongs, syllables, and how to put the accent marks correctly. We also learn more about verb conjugation. In every class, we read a text and the teacher makes questions to see if we understand the text. In every assignment, we have to write about any of the topics discussed in class.

Understanding Issues That May Impact Her Ability to Read and Write

Mayra tells that she faced some struggles in the process of learning how to read and write. As she explains, it was a long process, especially in writing skills, because she could not understand her handwriting. Fortunately, Mayra's mother was very supportive and always helped her along this course.

I learned to read and write at school, and also at home. I started this process with difficulties because I could not understand my handwriting, it was awful. I had to struggle with different handwriting practice notebooks. The process of reading was similar, it took some time for me to learn how to read. I learned some things at school, and then I needed a lot of practice at home. Fortunately, my mother always helped me with this practice.

According to Mayra, during elementary and secondary school she did not have any other situation with her reading abilities. She thinks that she did not have any difficulty in elementary and secondary school. She understands that she was not an excellent reader, but she could manage her coursework without greater difficulties. However, she continued struggling with writing.

As soon as I learned to read, I could manage class activities and I read books and participated in expositions when necessary. I was not an excellent reader, but I could manage it. With writing things were different.... It was... For me it was really difficult. I learned to manage it a little bit, but not totally.

Chapter IV Closure

Participants in this study showed a great interest for sharing their experiences and understandings of their reading and writing skills in developmental education. These students answered all the questions in the interview, although some of them seemed to be a little bit shy about being interviewed. At the end of the interview, all of them informed of learning something about themselves due to the conversation about themselves and their abilities. In the following chapter I will analyze what these participants said about their reading and writing skills. I will look for themes that emerge from their opinions about their abilities to read and write.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at ITSC view the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and life goals.

To explore students' opinions and thoughts about their reading and writing skills, I collected and used qualitative data. This data was collected through in-depth interviews with 13 students enrolled in a developmental reading and writing Spanish course. The study will also inform about how these students view the importance of the developmental course, and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write.

Presentation of Themes

Data generated from interviews were analyzed to identify and report patterns or themes found. In the information that participants provided in the interview, some situations or facts are common, or significant to them. These patterns reveal part of the lived experiences of students who participated in the study, and how they understand these experiences, facts, and issues that may impact them.

Metacognitive theories explain how individuals think about their thinking, thus it explains how individuals think about their learning process. Metacognition is a complex construct that includes two main components: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation (Flavel, 1979). Metacognitive knowledge includes knowledge about oneself as a learner, and factors affecting cognition awareness and management of cognition including knowledge about strategies, and knowledge about why and when to use a given strategy. The second component,

which is metacognitive experience or regulation, includes attending to and being aware of comprehension and task performance, assessing the process and products of one's learning, and revisiting and revising learning goals.

Pintrich (2002) describes three types of metacognitive knowledge: strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, and self-knowledge. Strategic knowledge refers to general approaches that a person uses to think, learn, and solve problems. Knowledge about cognitive tasks refers to the information that a learner accumulates and could involve the use of different cognitive strategies and activities. Self-knowledge relates to understanding a learner's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, metacognitive theories can explain how students understand their learning process, and how they view the strategies they use for learning. Metacognitive theories believe that students are capable of understanding their strengths and weaknesses.

Regarding reading skills, metacognitive components make clear that readers need to involve in processes like planning and self-monitoring for their comprehension (McKeon & Beck, 2009). Metacognitive theories believe that students can improve their learning process if developing awareness of their learning process when they read, write and solve problems (Paris & Winograd, 1980). In this study, metacognitive theories helped me analyze and interpret the experiences and perceptions of students enrolled in a developmental Spanish course at the Dominican community college. The two metacognitive components most related to this study are: a) metacognitive awareness, which is the type of knowledge that students develop when they are conscious of where they are in the learning process (Siddiqui & Dubey, 2018), it involves the management of their cognition and knowledge about when and how to use strategies (Lai, 2014); b) the knowledge about oneself as a learner, which is the type of knowledge that allows students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and issues that impact their learning process.

As broken down by four core components of metacognitive, Table 2 offers a summary of themes, with an 'x' indicating participants for which a given theme was true. Details for each theme, as well as illustrative quotes are offered in future sections.

Table 2

Summary of Themes

Themes	Mary	Ely	Betty	Rosa	Esther	Anny	Angie	Cristine	Luisa	Martina	Andy	Joe	Mayra
A. Awareness and Management of Cognition													
A1. Participants described difficulties in their childhood when learning to read and write	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
A2. Most recognized their difficulties with writing and grammar	x	x		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
A3. Some value classmate interaction in the developmental course as a motivator for learning	x									x	x		x
B. Knowledge about Oneself as a Learner													
B1. Most consider themselves as —good readers	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x
B2. Most value support from their family for learning to read and write in their childhood	x		x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x

Table 2- continued

Themes	Mary	Ely	Betty	Rosa	Esther	Anny	Angie	Cristine	Luisa	Martina	Andy	Joe	Mayra
B3. For many, personal behaviors affected development of reading and writing skills	x	x		x		x	x			x	x	x	
C. Students' Expectation for Success in Remedial Course													
C1. All had little previous info about the remedial course, but came to realize its value	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
C2. All value the instruction and support received from their professors	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
D. Students' Expectation for Success in Future Content Courses & For Achieving Career Aspirations and Life Goals													
D1. Many not clear about connection between their reading and writing skills and future content courses	x		x		x	x	x	x	x				x
D2. All recognize the importance of reading and writing skills for career aspirations	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Awareness and Management of Cognition-Related Themes

(A1) All Voiced Difficulties in Learning How to Read and Write During Childhood

All of the participants recognized that they had some difficulties learning to read and write (see Table 2), and some of them even explained that they remained with these difficulties along the elementary, or secondary school. This theme demonstrates that these participants have a certain consciousness of the complications they had to develop literacy skills. Participants considered that learning to read and write was a laborious process, in which they needed family and teachers support to get ahead.

For instance, Mary stated: —My mother's absence affected my learning by 50 percent because when someone does not have any support, no matter what you do, you have some deficiencies.‖ Also, Ely explained: —Sometimes, when I read, I stammer because I felt nervous.‖ Similarly, Rosa informed: —I remember that when I was in eighth grade, my handwriting was not readable, was not readable, I wrote very ugly.‖ Anny remembered: —My experience in elementary school was difficult at the beginning because I needed to make some effort, and I also needed the help of some teachers, to learn how to read.‖ In addition, Andy explained:

There were many difficulties with reading because I had the habit, or I still have that habit, of reading fast, like —broken reading‖ as we, the Dominicans, say. And in writing, in the beginning, it was very uncomfortable for me, because I am a left-handed person.

As a final example, Angie explained:

When I was in elementary school, sometimes I was confused with sounds, for instance, *a* and *e*....I remember that I could not read a complete word...I mean, if the word was *mama* (mother in the Spanish language) I used to read *ma*, only the beginning of the word.

(A2) Most Participants Recognized Their difficulties in Writing or Grammar

Most participants in the study (10 out of 13) seemed to be aware of their complications with some grammar topics, and with their writing skills. These participants are conscious of where they are in the use of grammar and their writing abilities. The tendency of college-level students is erroneously to consider themselves as -regular or -above average (Simkin, 2012); however, participants in this study recognized their weaknesses, which is crucial to reach the desired competence (Pintrich, 2002).

For example, Martina stated, -I am not a good writer. Similarly, Joe expressed: -Well, I always was... How can I say? I was not a skilled writer. Since I was a child, I was always clear that I had to make an effort to improve my writing skills. In addition, Mary recognized: -I consider myself a good reader, but, as I told you, I have some difficulties with accent marks. In like manner, Angie recognizes: —The fact is that sometimes one forgets how to write properly.

(A3) Some Think That Interaction With Classmates Is A Motivator For Learning

Some of the interviewees (4 of 12) remarked that one of the most important aspects of the developmental course was the interaction with other classmates. They consider that this interaction motivated them for learning and completing coursework. Awareness of cognition implies that individuals reflect on their learning process (Pintrich, 2002), which includes identifying what motivates them to learn.

For example, Ely remarked on the importance of interaction in class when she stated:

I write about the text in the notebook, and in the next class we share our opinions.

Although I have my own opinion about the text, I learn different ideas, in that way, I obtain more than one meaning of the text.

Martina expressed:

The fact of having some hardworking classmates, who always meet with me and work together, and who write our opinions and conclusions about texts, is a great support. It is really helpful having such classmates who, like you, want to move forward and who help you to understand what is difficult for you, and vice-versa.

Similarly, Mayra stated:

They are very nice and we help each other. Although we did not know each other before the course, we see that we have talents, or.....no matter what did not know before, all of us are interacting, collaborating, completing the exercises together to understand the topics, and so on... All this is helping me to grow more in the developmental course.

Finally, Andy expressed: –One of the strategies that I am developing in the developmental course is teamwork. In this class, I am interacting more, and helping my classmates when they need it. |

Knowledge About Oneself As A Learner-Related Themes

(B1) Most Voiced Being “Good Readers”

Knowledge about oneself as a learner is a metacognitive component related to a deep reflection on one's learning process (Pintrich, 2002). This type of knowledge is related to students' development of independent learning skills (Paris & Winograd, 1990). Furthermore, knowledge about oneself as a learner is connected with an accurate, precise awareness of the own cognitive level. This type of knowledge is relevant for developmental students since an accurate understanding of their level is the first step for developing learning strategies to improve the desired abilities.

For instance, Mary declared: –I have always considered myself as if I know... I mean, as a good reader.‖ In like manner, Ely stated, –I consider myself a good writer. I know that I am not excellent, but I am a good reader.‖ Similarly, Andy explained: —At present, I would describe myself as an average reader, and also writer, because I do not read very frequently, but whenever I can, I take some time to read.‖ Angie stated: –Well... I feel that I read well, I do not know if I am an excellent reader, because sometimes one fails, but whenever I receive a correction, I improve my reading.‖ And Martina stated: –I am not a good writer, but I read very well, and I have a broad vocabulary.‖

(B2) Most Valued Family Support in Learning How to Read and Write During Childhood

Knowledge about oneself as a learner implies that students identify issues that could impact the cognitive process (Cross & Paris, 1988). In developmental courses, many academic and non-academic issues impact students (Fowler & Boylan, 2015). Students must identify what affects their abilities to read and write. Thus, understanding these issues could help students look for solutions to their inconveniences (Tärning & Silvervarg, 2019). Parental encouragement is one of the important aspects for children to develop their literacy abilities. Parents' encouragement to read at an early age is related to reading frequently, having positive attitudes towards reading, and considering reading as an important ability to reach personal goals in adult age (Clark & Hawkins, 2010).

In my study, 9 of 13 specifically stated that they valued their family support for learning how to read and write during childhood. For instance, Betty explained:

My aunt taught me how to read and write, but I had a difficult time because I had a problem keeping the information, I had problems learning. However, she helped me to

learn new vocabulary, I learned how to write clearly, and she also taught me how to write in different handwriting styles.

Similarly, Angie informed:

When I was in elementary school, sometimes I was confused with sounds, for instance, *a* and *e*. But my mother and my father helped me with the alphabet and then, I learned to identify these sounds. They were very supportive; thus I could develop my reading and writing skills because this process was not easy for me.

Also, Joe expressed: –My mother helped me by making me exercise my handwriting and spelling. She always followed me up with this type of handwriting book. Her support helped me writing write without spelling mistakes,|| while Anny stated: –I was enrolled in tutoring, and my mother helped me with reading practice at home, too.||

(B3) Many Think That Their Behaviors Affected Development Of Reading And Writing Skills

Knowledge about oneself as a learner includes reflection on the personal attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that support, or complicate learning. Metacognitive theories explain that individuals can reflect on their behaviors, and how these behaviors and beliefs help them (or not) in their learning process. Many participants in this study (8 out of 13) ensure that some behaviors affected the development of their reading and writing skills.

Rosa, for example, explained: —Since elementary school, I had stage fright, thus I did not like to participate in class activities, especially those in which the teacher asked me to read aloud.|| Similarly, Anny stated: –I think that my nervousness and my shyness affected the development of my reading and writing abilities. When I had any doubts I never asked teachers because I was very shy.|| Also, Mary informed me:

I was very shy; for instance, if the teacher made a question, I could have an idea of the answer. I remained silent because I was afraid of not having the correct answer, and when somebody else answered, I thought: Oh!, I had the same idea.

Equally, Joe stated:

In secondary school, I had some distractions... I had a group of friends, and we made many jokes and had fun in class. We were about 6 or 7 teenagers. Sometimes we did not make homework or pay attention to class, we did not study because we were having fun at school. I recognize that by that time I was very lazy about reading.

Students' Expectations for Success in Remedial Course-Related Themes

(C1) Although They did Not Have Much Previous Information about the Remedial Course, All Came to Realize its Value

Students' success in a remedial language course goes beyond obtaining a grade (Bailey, 2009), it is related to developing the necessary skills for academic coursework, such as reading, and writing. In other words, students need to overcome the difficulties that prevented them from succeeding in the placement test (Fowler & Boylan, 2010). However, most students come to the community college with poor non-information about the requirements and the type of academic work that they will face (Millar & Tanner, 2011; Venezia et al., 2010).

One of the issues that impact students as soon as they enter community colleges is the poor, or lack of precise previous information about placement tests and remedial courses enrollment (Venezia et al., 2010). That is the case for students at the community college of the Dominican Republic. Participants in this study express the poor information that they receive about the developmental course. Some of them were surprised, some others were upset when

they were informed that they needed to take this course before career subjects. However, along the course, they came to realize that they needed the instruction in this developmental course.

Ely, for example, informed me:

I did not know that I would need to be enrolled in a developmental course. I thought that I would take the admission test, and one week after that I would enter career courses. I never thought it would be like that. However, I like the developmental course, and I am learning a lot.

Similarly, Rosa stated: –I did not know anything about the developmental course, thus I did not know what they would teach me, but I am learning a lot in this class.‖ Esther explained: —At the beginning of the course, I felt disappointed, I did not want to take the course Now, I see the difference.‖ Additionally, Angie stated: –Since the course started I think I am having some growing reading and writing every day.‖ Likewise, Andy expressed: –In the developmental course, I am having a good performance, especially in reading, because most materials are for reading rather than writing. I think this is good for me‖.

(C2) All Participants Value the Instruction and Support Received from Their Professor

All 12 of the participants in the study remarked on the instruction and support received from the faculty in the developmental course. All these students came from different courses, which meant they had different professors, but all talked about the great instructor they had. They emphasized their teaching abilities and also teachers' behaviors as motivators for learning in the course.

For example, Mary considers –The teacher is also very helpful when she allows students to communicate their ideas, or to share what they investigated.‖ Similarly, Betty stated:

I appreciate a great job of my professor on the developmental course because when I finished secondary school I forgot everything. I did not know how to read, and I had already finished secondary school, and I did not mention it but the professor taught me how to read and understand what I read in a text.

In like manner, Luisa emphasized:

In my opinión, a teacher's disposition is something that helps students in developmental courses. It does not mean that other teachers in the past did not teach well. The fact is that teachers in the developmental course focus more on helping students, they always ask if we have any doubts and explain everything very well.

Also, Joe explained:

I have an excellent professor. He is a very calm, and patient instructor who clarifies every topic, and explains the meaning of structures or anything that I need to understand. I feel that I am receiving solid instruction. He explains every point easily, and he gives me strategies about how to go ahead with reading and writing skills.

Students' Expectations for Success in Future Content Course and for Achieving Career Aspirations and Life Goals-Related Themes

(D1) Many Participants are Not Clear About the Connection Between their Reading and Writing Skills and Future Content Courses

Many of the participants in this study (8 out of 13) expressed that they are not clear about the relationship between what they are learning in the developmental course and their success on future career courses. However, previous studies noted that it is important for students to develop their learning skills, and it is also that they can transfer these abilities to content courses (Howard et al., 2018). Although these participants recognize the importance of reading and writing skills,

they confess that they do not see the connection between these abilities and their success in future career courses, or they offer a vague idea about this connection.

Mary, for instance, stated: —Here I do not have a clear idea. Also, Betty explained: —Well, reading and writing will be very useful, because in the past I did not have the knowledge and I failed the admisión test.‖ Similarly, Esther expressed: —At the present I do not know how reading and writing will help me in future courses because I do not know what subjects I will study to put into practice these abilities.‖ In like manner, Cristine stated: —I think that they have a relationship, I think so.‖

(D2) All Participants Recognized the Importance of Their Reading and Writing Skills for Achieving Their Career Aspirations and Life Goals

All 12 of the participants in the study identified different ways to apply their reading and writing abilities in a professional environment. They not only think about the use of literacy skills at work but also in achieving personal dreams like being a writer or having their business. For example, Luisa noted: —Could be that I need to take any order if I work at a restaurant,‖ while Martina expressed: —I think that reading and writing will help me because nurses need to read a lot, especially prescriptions and other things.‖ In more detail, Mayra informed me:

I think that it is necessary to learn to read and write very well because it is useful for everything. For instance, when I am working in a groceries store, if a customer sends a list of products, I need to read it, and sometimes I need to write on it if any product is missing. I also have to read the invoices and the lists of merchandise when one of the suppliers comes to the store and my father is not here.

Also, Anny explained:

I think that my reading and writing skills will help me to develop as a professional.... My goal is to have my dental clinic; therefore, I need to improve my reading and writing because they will help me in every area of this career.

Similarly, Angie added:

I will read and write a lot if I have the opportunity to become an odontologist. For instance, when I receive a patient I will write what problem they have; I will complete their medical history, prescriptions, and all these medical documents.

Chapter V Closure

In this chapter, I explained the themes that emerged from the data generated by the interview of participants in this study. I also include the sub-themes and I offer direct quotes as evidence for each. In the next chapter, I explain how these themes shed light on the research questions that guided this study.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this Chapter, I explore how the data generated from interviews answer the research questions that guided this study. I analyze the themes that emerged from the data under the lenses of the literature review presented in the second chapter of this dissertation. Finally, I offer recommendations for higher education leaders who manage developmental education.

Metacognitive theories served to support this study. Metacognition is a complex construct integrated by two main elements: metacognitive knowledge (declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge), and metacognitive experience or regulation (planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the cognitive process). Studies about metacognition have been useful to explain how individuals think about their learning processes, and how they monitor their knowledge. The two types of metacognitive knowledge directly related to this study are *metacognitive awareness*, which is the type of knowledge that students develop when they are conscious of where they are in the learning process (Siddiqui & Dubey, 2018), and it involves the management of their cognition and knowledge about when and how to use strategies (Lai, 2014). Also, *knowledge about oneself* is the type of knowledge that allows students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and issues that impact their learning process.

As a reminder, the purpose of this study has been to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at a community college in the Dominican Republic view the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and

life goals. I have also sought to explore how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write.

Participants in this study involved native Spanish students enrolled in remedial reading and writing Spanish courses at the first and only community college in the Dominican Republic. These students were enrolled in this mandatory developmental course because, after taking the admisión test, results of the language section of the test indicated that they need additional assistance in their language skills. Only native Spanish speakers were accepted in the study because being native to a language other than Spanish indicates that probably, the student learned to read and write in a different language.

I recruited 13 students, and conducted semi-structured interviews with all participants. As profiled in my previous Chapter V, 10 themes emerged. Within this chapter, I relate these themes with different elements in my conceptual framework, and I use them also to answer the research questions that guided this study. I also share how my findings connect with previous research on this topic, and offer recommendations for practitioners and researchers.

Research Question Analysis and Connection To Previous Research

Research Question 1

My first research question seeks to explore how students enrolled in a developmental Spanish course think of their reading and writing skills in connection to their present and future classes, their career aspirations, and their life goals. Themes that emerged from participants' statements explain how aware of their reading and writing proficiencies these students are. Metacognitive awareness refers to what a student think of their learning, how conscious they are

of what they know, and how conscious they are of what they do not know (Flavel, 1979; Pintrich, 2002; Proust, 2010); it implies the management of cognition, and knowledge about strategies (Pintrich, 2002).

All of the participants in this study recognized the importance of reading and writing skills for their career aspirations and life goals (Theme D2). Recognizing the importance of these language skills could become a motivator for students to improve their proficiency. These participants seem to think differently from students in other environments in which not all of the students recognize the importance of literacy skills for the workplace (Adams, 2014; Griffin et al., 2014; Harris & King, 2015; Maloni et al., 2019). However, many of the participants in this study are not clear about the connection between their reading and writing skills with the career subjects that they will study in the future (Theme D1). As found in previous literature, community college students are less inclined to recognize the relevance of their reading and writing skills for their academic achievement along with their careers (Millar & Tanner, 2011; Venezia et al., 2010).

In addition, most participants revealed they have difficulties in writing and some grammar topics (Theme A2). This means these participants are aware of what they do not know in these areas. Nevertheless, all of the participants consider themselves –good readers‖ (Theme B1), which means they think that their reading abilities are well developed. This is despite them being enrolled in a developmental reading and writing course because they did not obtain the desired results in the reading section of the admission test.

Previous studies found that in valuing their abilities, inexperienced people may make incorrect choices and results, and they may not have the metacognitive skills needed to understand that they are wrong (Krugger & Dunning, 1999). It is called the Dunning-Krugger Effect. Participants

in this study seem to have developed a certain level of the Dunnin-Krugger Effect since they are conscious of their difficulties in writing and grammar, but they have a false perception of their reading proficiency. Krugger and Duning (1999) remark on how important is for students to have an accurate awareness of their skills to overcome their inconveniences and to develop the necessary skills.

Research Question 2

My second research question explores how participants in the study view the importance of enrollment in the remedial Spanish course. Although participants in this study complained of having little previous information about the developmental course, all came to realize the value of the instruction received in the course (Theme C1). During the interview, all informed me that thanks to the course, they are increasing their reading and writing abilities; they also talked about understanding different grammar topics they had forgotten. Some participants also appreciate the interaction with their classmates in the developmental course as one of the greatest aspects of the course (Theme A3). They think this peer interaction helped motivate them to learn.

All participants emphasized that the instructor in the developmental course is one of their most important motivators for learning (Theme C2). Some participants remarked on the professors' behaviors or disposition; other participants remarked on the instructors' expertise. For instance, they stated: –I feel that I am receiving solid instruction,|| or –the fact is that professors in the developmental course focus more on helping students, they always ask if we have any doubts, and they explain everything very well.¶

Previous research also found how community college students complain about little or misguided information about placement tests, remedial education, or about the type of academic work in higher education (Millar & Tanner, 2011; Nodine et al., 2012, Schnee, 2014; VanOra,

2019; Venezia et al., 2010). But previous research has also found that once students experience developmental education, they value their experience and growth in these courses.

Research Question 3

The third question of my study explores how students understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write. In the interviews, all participants described the inconveniences that they faced in their childhood in their process of learning how to read and write (Theme A1). Some explained that they carried these difficulties along elementary or secondary schools. Nevertheless, most of the participants (nine out of 13) appreciate the support of their families for them to overcome the difficulties with their literacy skills (Theme B2). They shared that mainly their mothers made them practice reading, or helped them to learn to write. Others had the support of their sister or other family members to practice reading, and improve their writing. These participants explained how hard they worked to develop their literacy skills, and some are still struggling, which can impact their possibility for success in the developmental course. In this type of course, previous research has found that effectiveness in these types of courses depends on students' student demographics and level of academic preparation (Boatman et al., 2013; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014).

Many participants in this study considered that some personal behaviors affected the development of their reading and writing skills (Theme B3). For instance, some students explained that shyness prevented them from participating in class activities, or reading allowed in class when necessary; as they said, these have happened since elementary school, and are still occurring within the developmental course. Previous studies about the factors influencing students' success in higher education, consider psychological, or non-cognitive factors as important for students' outcomes (Robins et al., 2004; Russell & Petrie, 1992).

Apart from these issues, students who participated in this research did not recognize other issues that impact their abilities to read and write. For instance, none of the interviewees mentioned factors like attending public, low-income schools; their parents' academic level, their socio-economic status, teacher's motivation, or lack of learning materials. These factors are considered issues that could limit people's abilities to read and write (OECD, 2018).

Discussion Of Major Findings And Connections To Previous Literature

The purpose of this study has been to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at ITSC think of the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and life goals. I also explored how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write.

Themes that emerged from the information provided by participants in this study reveal that many students enrolled in developmental education do not make a connection between their reading and writing skills and their academic achievement. This poor connection can impact the motivation of students to develop their reading and writing skills to the desired level to fulfill the academic work. This finding aligns with results in other studies conducted in higher education environments (Lingwal & Kuehn, 2013; Millar & Tanner, 2011; Venezia et al., 2010). Students enrolled in a developmental or remedial course should understand the importance of reading and writing for them to develop the necessary skills to accomplish their academic work and be successful in future career subjects (Venezia et al., 2010).

All participants in this study consider themselves –good readers, which proves a lack of awareness of their limitations in their reading competence. This perception of their reading

capacity contrasts with the fact that they were enrolled in the developmental course because of their poor results in the reading comprehension section in the admisión test. This finding relates to previous research (Krugger & Dunning, 1999; Simkin, 2012). The inaccurate perception of their ability is known as the Dunning-Kruger Effect, which makes people with poor ability overestimate their capacity. Consequently, these students might not be able to motivate themselves to improve their reading comprehension because they think that the way they read is correct.

One of the most interesting findings in this study is that all of the participants recognized the importance of reading and writing skills for achieving their career aspirations and life goals. This finding contrasts with previous research (Adams, 2014; Griffin et al., 2014; Harris & King, 2015; Maloni et al., 2019), that informed how higher education students do not often recognize literacy skills as very relevant for their workplace. The fact that participants in this study considered reading and writing abilities as relevant to their career aspirations and life goals could be explained by their intention to achieve an associate degree in a community college, which will allow them to access the job market.

Regarding metacognition and its relationship with academic learning, theory explains that if students develop an awareness of their learning when they read, write, and solve problems, they can improve their learning process (Paris & Winograd, 1990). In this study, I found that most participants (10 out of 13) are aware of their writing ability issues. This finding reveals that these students have a great opportunity to experience growth in their writing in the developmental course since they have already recognized their difficulties with their writing skills.

Similarly, all participants described difficulties in their childhood when learning to read and write. In the interviews, some of these participants explained that they carried their reading and writing issues along the elementary school, and some others along the secondary school. This finding reveals that these students did not overcome all of the inconveniences with the literacy skills that they had in early education because nowadays when they are starting higher education, they still need support to improve their language skills. Like in American community colleges, students enrolled in developmental education in the Dominican community college come from communities that live at disadvantage, and most of them learned to read and write in public, low-income schools. Furthermore, according to the last PISA test, the Dominican Republic was in the second to the last position for reading comprehension in secondary students (OECD, 2018). Thus, these students could need more support from higher education programs and faculty.

Equally important is to find that all participants value the developmental course, although some of them were upset or discouraged to study because they did not receive enough information about the remediation course before they were required to take it. In the interviews, they informed me they are experiencing significant growth in the course. This finding is similar to how the literature describes students' perceptions of being in a remedial course. In the beginning, students normally have an inconsistent idea about what they will experience in the community college (Millar & Tanner, 2011), and they complain about developmental courses because they think they are wasting time. Then, they realize they need this instruction and come to value it. In this study, participants consider that interaction with other classmates helped them to grow in their learning process, and that their instructors were very helpful.

Indeed, participants in this study realized the importance of this course, and one of the aspects of the remedial course that all of them highlighted was the great instruction and support received from their professors. This finding suggests that instructors in developmental reading and writing Spanish courses in the community college of the Dominican Republic have work to motivate their students, which is recognized by students as well as the instructors' good manners with students. Provided that students' success in higher education is influenced by non-cognitive factors, such as motivation (Russell & Petrie, 1992), students enrolled in these developmental language courses find in their professors the source of motivation, and inspiration to succeed in this program.

Overall, in Table 3, I show the relationship between the overarching findings of this study with previous literature.

Table 3

Summary of Overarching Findings

Campusano (2023) Findings	Related Literature
All participants described difficulties in their childhood when learning to read and write (Theme A1).	Supported by OECD (2018).
<i>Most participants recognized their difficulties in writing and grammar (Theme A2).</i>	Contrary to Simkin (2012)
All students enrolled in remedial courses consider themselves as —good readers.. (Theme B1)	Similar to Kruger & Dunning (1999); Simkin (2012)
<i>Many think that their behaviors affected the development of reading and writing skills. (Theme B3)</i>	Russell and Petrie (1992)

Table 3- continued

<i>Although they did not have much previous information about the remedial course, all came to realize its value (Theme C1).</i>	Similar to Venezia et al., 2010; Millar & Tanner, 2011; Nodine et al., 2012; Schnee, 2014; VanOra, 2019.
<i>All participants value the instruction and support received from their professors (Theme C2)</i>	Not previously found, thus a new finding
<i>Some think that interaction with classmates is a motivator for learning (Theme A3)</i>	Not previously found, thus a new finding
<i>Many participants are not clear about the connection between their reading and writing skills and future content courses (Theme D1).</i>	Similar to Lingwal and Kuehn (2013), Millar and Tanner (2011); Venezia et al. (2010).
<i>All participants recognized the importance of their reading and writing skills for achieving their career aspirations and life goals (Theme D2).</i>	Contrary to Adams, 2014; Griffin et al., 2014; Harris & King, 2015; Maloni, et al. 2019.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Further Research

This study sought to gain a better understanding of students enrolled in a community college's developmental courses. Deeper research could explore what metacognitive strategies could faculty include in their practice to help students connect their reading and writing skills with their future content courses. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate which faculty behaviors, qualities, and skills contributed the most to motivating students in the developmental program at the community college of the Dominican Republic.

All participants in this research explained their difficulties with the Spanish language in early education, and most still face writing and grammar inconveniences in the developmental course. For this reason, I think it is necessary to explore which specific problems these students bring to higher education, and which grammar topics represent a greater challenge for them.

Results from these suggested studies would help educative authorities to find solutions in elementary and secondary schools for students to overcome their issues before coming to higher education.

Recommendations for Leaders

All participants in this study expressed their satisfaction with the instruction and support received from faculty in the developmental course. I recommend faculty keep motivating their students in developmental education, which is an important step for their academic achievement. I also strongly recommend academic authorities and faculty remark reading activities in their classes, and integrate metacognitive strategies in their academic programs. As a result, students could encourage connecting their reading and writing proficiency with their performance in future content subjects. These metacognitive strategies could also help students identify their reading issues; then, they could develop their reading skills to the necessary level for the academic environment. Faculty can also use metacognition to review their practice. They can explore which of their behaviors and strategies help their students better.

Students' reading and writing skills are at present one of the biggest challenges for the Dominican educative system. The Dominican Republic is in one of the last positions for educative systems in the world which use the PISA and Latin American ERCE assessments (Jiménez, 2023). To overcome this situation, I recommend the Ministry of Education develop a great national plan to develop reading and writing skills from early education, thus Dominican students come to higher education with a solid education that does not need remediation. Research on best teachers' practices, teacher training and evaluation, and regular measure of student performance should support this national plan.

Chapter VI Closure

The purpose of this study was to explore how students in a first-year developmental Spanish course at the Dominican community college think of the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate courses. Findings in this study suggest that while these students do not recognize the relevance of their reading and writing proficiency to succeed in future career subjects, they do connect their reading and writing abilities with achieving their career aspirations and life goals, contrary to previous literature.

This research also found that these students consider themselves –good readers‖ which means that they do not recognize their need for improving their reading ability. In addition, contrary to previous research, most participants in this study recognized their difficulties in writing and some grammar topics. Finally, the study revealed that although most of the students in this developmental course at the Dominican community college recognize having some writing and grammar difficulties, they value the instruction and support received from their professors and the interaction with their classmates as motivators for their growth in the developmental course.

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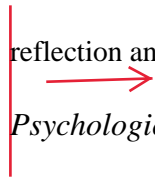
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Appendix A

IRB and Institutional Approvals



Instituto Técnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC)
VICERRECTORÍA ACADÉMICA
Año de la Innovación y la Competitividad

Santo Domingo Este, Rep.Dom.
Martes 26 de noviembre 2019.

Instituto Tecnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC)
Carretera Mella, Km 14 La Colonial de San Luis
Santo Domingo Este, DR 11806


Asunto: Aprobación de ubicación para investigación.

A quien pueda interesar:

Esta carta reconoce que he recibido y revisado una solicitud de Martha Paulina Campusano Rojas para llevar a cabo un proyecto de investigación sobre **“El desempeño en la lecto-escritura de los estudiantes que asisten al ITSC”** en el Instituto Técnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC), quien suscribe aprueba que esta investigación se realice en nuestras instalaciones.

Una vez el investigador reciba la aprobación para su proyecto de investigación de parte de la Junta de Revisión Institucional / HISRB de la Western Michigan University, acepto brindar acceso al proyecto de investigación aprobado. Si tenemos alguna inquietud o si necesitamos información adicional, nos comunicaremos con el departamento HISRB de Western Michigan University al (269) 387-8293 o a Julia.mays@wmu.edu.

Atentamente,


Ing. María Corporán, MA.
Vicerrectora Académica (ITSC)
María.corporan@itsc.edu.do





Instituto Técnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC)
VICERRECTORIA ACADEMICA
Año de la Innovación y la Competitividad

Santo Domingo Este, Rep. Dom.
Martes 26 de noviembre, 2019

SITE APPROVAL LETTER

Instituto Tecnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC)
Carretera Mella, Km 14 La Colonial de San Luis
Santo Domingo Este, DR 11806

Subject. Site Approval Letter

To whom it may concern:

This letter acknowledges that I have received and reviewed a request by Martha Paulina Campusano Rojas to conduct a research project about "**Community College student's reading and writing proficiency**" at Instituto Tecnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC) and I approve of this research to be conducted at our facility.

When the researcher receives approval for her research project from the Western Michigan University's Institutional Review Board/HISRB, I agree to provide access for the approved research project. If we have any concerns or need additional information, we will contact the Western Michigan University's HSIRB at (269)387-8293 or Julia.mays@wmu.edu.

Sincerely,


Ing. Maria Corporan, MA.
Vicerrectora Académica (ITSC)
María.corporan@itsc.edu.do



Appendix B

Flyer Spanish and English Versions

Do you attend Developmental
Spanish?
Is Spanish your first language?



My name is Martha Campusano , I am a Doctoral Candidate at
Western Michigan University
to fulfill the Ph.D. requirements, I am recruiting 10 to 15
students for a research study

Native Spanish speakers that attend Remedial Spanish have the
opportunity to participate in the study:

*Community College Students' Awareness of their Reading and
Writing Proficiency*

¡Share your experience!

Further Information
Contact



martha.campusano@itsc.edu.do



(829)-799-1611

¿Asistes a Español de Nivelación?
¿Es el español tu idioma nativo?



Mi nombre es Martha Campusano, soy candidata a doctora en la Universidad de Western Michigan. Para cumplir los requisitos del programa de Ph.D. Es necesario entrevistar de 10 a 15 estudiantes

Estamos reclutando a estudiantes nativos del idioma que asisten a Español de Nivelación para que participen en el estudio:

"Autoconocimiento de las Destrezas de Lectoescritura en los Estudiantes de los Community Colleges"

¡Comparte tu experiencia!

Contactar a
Martha Campusano



martha.campusano@itsc.edu.do



Llamar o escribir al
(829)-799-1611

Appendix C

Informed Consent in Spanish and English Versions

Western Michigan University
Educational Leadership, Research and Technology

Principal Investigator: [Louan Bierlein Palmer, Ed.D.]
Student Investigator: [Martha P. Campusano Rojas]
Title of Study: [Community College Students' Awareness of their Reading and Writing Skills]

You have been invited to participate in a research project *titled "Community College Students' awareness of their reading and writing skills"*.

Study Summary

This project will serve as Martha P. Campusano Rojas, for requirements of the Ph. D. in Educational Leadership at Western Michigan University. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely; and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

The purpose of this study is to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at ITSC view the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and life goals. I also seek to explore how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write.

Your participation in this research includes an interview of approximately 60 minutes. Participating in this project does not put you at any risks, apart from a strong emotion that could come from talking about your own experience. This participation is voluntary and you can

decline to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. There are not costs or compensation associated to your participation in this qualitative research.

The information that we provide in this consent form will give you more detail about this research. Please ask any questions if you require more information that could support your decision to participate in the study,. Your participation in this research and signing this consent form does not affect your legal rights. Once you read all of the questions and any doubt is clarified, if you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

What are we trying to find out in this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore how students enrolled in a first-year remedial Spanish course at ITSC view the connection between their reading and writing abilities and their performance in both their current and future undergraduate coursework, and eventually, in achieving their career aspirations and life goals. The study also seeks to explore how these students view the importance of the developmental course and how they understand issues that may impact their ability to read and write. Previous literature shows that although a great number of students that attend community college are enrolled in developmental or remedial education, it is not known how first-year community college students perceive the relationship between their reading and writing skills and their success in undergraduate courses. Thus, students' knowledge about their own reading and writing skills is still an under-researched area (Lembke, 2021; Perin, 2013).

Who can participate in this study?

Students enrolled in remedial Spanish courses whose first language is Spanish, can participate in the interviews that will be conducted to carry out the study. I plan to recruit and interview 10 to 15 participants for the study.

Inclusionary Criteria:

- Students who are enrolled in a remedial or developmental Spanish reading and writing course at ITSC
- Being a native Spanish speaker

Exclusionary criteria:

- Students who are native in a language other than Spanish
- Students attend a tutoring session with the researcher

Where will this study take place?

To carry out the study, the researcher will conduct interviews through WebEx virtual platform.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?

The time for participating in the study will be a 60 minutes appointment.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to answer questions about your reading and writing experience. The interview will be in Spanish, and the results will be reported in English.

What information is being measured during the study?

This study will describe student's opinions about their own reading and writing skills. This research also measures how students think about their reading and writing in connection with their success in present and future courses, their career aspirations, and life goals. Also, the study seeks to measure how students view the importance of the developmental course and how students interpret the issues that may impact their reading and writing skills.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

Your participation in this study could produce strong emotions, because you will speak about your own abilities and personal experiences. However, during the interview, you do not need to respond to any question that produces a strong emotion on you.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

The main benefit that you are going to have from participating in the study is that you are going to talk about you and your learning experience, thus you could have insights about yourself and your learning process. Also, this study will provide educators first-hand information about how

students view the relevance of reading and writing for their academic and personal achievement. Only through understanding how students perceive issues that impact their reading and writing, faculty can partner with them to resolve these issues. This study is of great relevance, as well, for academic leaders to have data to make the correct decisions regarding the support for improving the retention and graduation rates at the ITSC, particularly through the development of students' reading and writing skills.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?

There is no cost associated to participating in this research.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

There is no compensation for participating in this research.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

The researcher is the only person who will have access to the information collected during this study. Participants in the study will be assigned pseudonyms, and any identifying information will be removed before reporting results. Findings on this study will be part of Martha Campusano's dissertation and might be presented at a conference or published in educational journals and newspapers.

What will happen to my information collected for this research project after the study is over? The information collected about you for this research will not be used by or distributed to investigators for other research. The audios or videos will be deleted after transcription, and information will be kept for at least 3 years by the researchers, after close of the study in a protected location.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?

You can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the principal investigator, Dr. Louan Bierlein Palmer at (269) 547-7819 or l.bierleinpalm@wmich.edu or the student investigator, Martha Campusano Rojas, at 829-799-1611 or marthapaulina.campusanor@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix D
Interview Protocol in Spanish and English Versions

PROTOCOLO DE ENTREVISTA

Gracias por reunirse conmigo hoy para hablar sobre sus experiencias con el aprendizaje y el uso de la lectura y la escritura en su vida. Hablaremos sobre cómo aprendiste a leer y escribir.

También hablaremos sobre cómo ha usado su lectura y escritura en el pasado, además de cómo espera usarlas en los estudios en el *community college* y cómo cree que necesitará usarlas en su carrera y trabajo después de graduarse. Finalmente, hablaremos sobre cómo se ve actualmente como lector y escritor, sus objetivos para desarrollarse como lector y escritor, y cómo espera alcanzar esos objetivos. Para ayudarnos a cubrir todos estos temas, he preparado una serie de preguntas. Por favor, siéntase libre de responder esas preguntas en formas que las sienta reales y verdaderas para usted. Escucharé atentamente y puedo pedirle que hable más sobre algunas cosas porque me ayudan a comprender mejor su experiencia y sus aspiraciones para leer y escribir. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta antes de comenzar? (*Tómese el tiempo para responder sus preguntas*).

1-Comencemos por recordar sus experiencias aprendiendo a leer y escribir. Comience hablando de sus primeras experiencias aprendiendo a leer y escribir. Luego, hable sobre cómo desarrolló sus habilidades de lectura y escritura hasta el punto en que comenzó su programa en ITSC.

Sondeo: ¿Dónde aprendió a leer; y a escribir? ¿Quién le ayudó en este proceso? ¿Qué desafíos enfrentó al aprender a leer? ¿Y para aprender a escribir?

2-En cuanto a su experiencia antes de comenzar su curso de español aquí en ITSC, hable sobre lo que ayudó y lo que interfirió con su desarrollo como lector y escritor.

Sondeo: ¿por cuánto tiempo recibió la ayuda o la interferencia? ¿Cómo se sintió al respecto?

3- ¿Cómo se describiría como lector y escritor en este momento de su programa en el *community college*?

Sondeo: Cuénteme un poco sobre sus hábitos de lectura, ¿con qué frecuencia lee? ¿Lee por placer, o simplemente para completar su curso? ¿Qué tipo de textos prefiere? ¿Qué tipo de textos personales (correo electrónico, mensajes de texto, notas, etc.) escribe normalmente? ¿Qué tipo de textos profesionales (memos, informes, etc.) escribe?

4- ¿Dónde y cómo cree que has crecido como lector y escritor desde que comenzó su programa en el ITSC?

Sondeo: ¿Qué nuevas estrategias ha desarrollado? ¿Qué nuevos aprendizajes ha obtenido?

5- ¿Qué te ayudó a crecer como lector y escritor desde que comenzaste tu programa en la universidad? ¿Qué ha interferido con tu crecimiento como lector y escritor?

Sondeo: ¿Qué contenidos, tareas o actividades le han ayudado más? ¿Qué ha afectado su proceso de aprendizaje? ¿Por qué piensa eso?

6- ¿Qué espera lograr en su clase de español y por qué? ¿Qué tan dispuesto(a) está a esforzarse por este logro?

Sondeo: ¿Qué expectativas previas tenía sobre esta clase?

7-Por favor describa cómo el curso [de nivelación de español] le está ayudando o no a desarrollar sus habilidades de lectura y escritura.

Sondeo: ¿Qué podría hacer el instructor del curso que ayude / dificulte su habilidad en la clase? ¿Qué actividades le gustan / disgustan en el curso? ¿Por qué?

8-¿Cómo cree que las habilidades de lectura y escritura influirán en su éxito en las clases que tomará en su programa universitario?

Sondeo: ¿Cómo cree que puede aplicar los primeros aprendizajes de este curso en futuras clases?

9- ¿Cómo crees que las habilidades de lectura y escritura influirán en tu éxito en tus trabajos actuales y futuros?

Sondeo: ¿Qué oportunidades cree que puede el desarrollo de habilidades de lectura y escritura pueden aportarle en el futuro? ¿Y qué desafíos si no los desarrollas bien?

10 - ¿Cuáles son sus objetivos profesionales a largo plazo relacionados con si logra o no el desarrollo de esas habilidades?

Sondeo: ¿Cómo cree que sus habilidades de lectura y escritura influirán en sus logros profesionales? ¿Cómo cree que puede aprovechar sus habilidades de lectura y escritura en el trabajo?

11- ¿Hay alguna otra cosa sobre su experiencia con la lectura y la escritura que no le haya preguntado y que quiera compartir?

12- ¿Qué aprendiste sobre ti mismo en esta conversación con relación a la forma en que piensas sobre tu nivel de lectoescritura?

Sondeo: ¿Este dialogo te ha permitido descubrir algo nuevo sobre la forma en que piensas sobre tu nivel de lectoescritura? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué has descubierto?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for meeting with me today to talk about your experiences with learning and using reading and writing in your life. We will talk about how you learned to read and write. We will also talk about how you have used your reading and writing in the past – plus how you expect to use it in studies at the community college and how you believe you will need to use it in your career and work after you graduate. Finally, we will talk about how you currently see yourself as a reader and writer, your goals for developing as a reader and writer, and how you expect to achieve those goals. To help us cover all of these topics, I have prepared a series of questions. Please feel free to answer those questions in ways that feel real and true for you. I will listen carefully and may prompt you to talk more about some things because they help me to better understand your experience and aspirations for reading and writing. Do you have any questions before we start? (Take time to answer their questions).

1-Let's start by thinking back to your experiences learning how to read and write. Please start by talking about your earliest experiences learning how to read and write. Then talk about how you developed your reading and writing skills up to the point you started your program at ITSC.

Probe: Where did you learn to read or write? Who helped you in this process? What challenges did you face learning to read? And to write?

2-In your experience before starting your Spanish language course(s) here at ITSC, talk about what helped and what interfered with your development as a reader and writer.

Probe: For how long? How did you feel about it?

3- How would you describe yourself as a reader and writer right now at this point in your program at the college?

Probe: Please tell me a little bit about your reading habits, how frequently do you read? Do you read for pleasure, or just to complete your coursework? What type of texts do you prefer? What

type of personal texts (email, text messages, notes, etc...) do you normally write? What type of professional texts (memos, reports, etc...) do you write?

4- Where and how do you think you have grown as a reader and writer since starting your program at ITSC?

Probe: What new strategies did you develop? What new learnings did you obtain?

5- What helped you grow as a reader and writer since you started your program at the college? What has interfered with your growth as a reader and writer?

Probe: What contents, assignment, or activity helped you the most? Which one affected your learning process? Why do think so?

6- What do you hope to accomplish in your Spanish class and why? How willing are you to push yourself for this accomplishment?

Probe: What previous expectations did you have on this class?

7-Please describe how the [remedial Spanish] class is or is not helping you grow your reading and writing skills.

Probe: What might the course instructor do that helps/hinders your ability in the class? What activities do you like/dislike in the course? Why?

8-How do you think reading and writing skills will influence your success in the classes you will take in your college program?

Probe: How do you think you can apply early learnings from this course in future classes?

9- How do you think reading and writing skills will influence your success in your current and future jobs?

Probe: What opportunities do you think that developing reading and writing abilities can give you in the future? And what challenges if you do not develop them well?

10 – What are your long-term career goals related to whether or not you achieve those goals?

Probes: How do you think your reading and writing skills will influence your professional achievement? How do you think you can take advantage on your reading and writing skills at work?

11- Is there any other thing about your experience with reading and writing that I did not asked about and that you want to share?

12- What did you learn about yourself in this dialogue related to the way you think about your own status as a reader and writer?

Probes: Did this dialogue help you discover something new about the way you think about your own status as reader and writer? If your answer is affirmative, what did you discover?

Appendix E

HSIRB Approval Letter

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: February 28, 2022

To: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Principal Investigator
[Co-PI], Co-Principal Investigator

Re: Initial - IRB-2022-38

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR READING AND WRITING PROFICIENCY

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR READING AND WRITING PROFICIENCY " has been reviewed by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB) and **approved** under the **Expedited 7**. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., ***add an investigator, increase number of subjects beyond the number stated in your application, etc.***). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation.

In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB or the Associate Director Research for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Sincerely,

Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair
WMU IRB

For a study to remain open after one year, a Post Approval Monitoring report (please use the continuing review submission form) is required on or prior to (no more than 30 days) February 27, 2023 and each year thereafter until closing of the study.

When this study closes, submit the required Final Report found at <https://wmich.edu/research/forms>.

Note: All research data must be kept in a secure location on the WMU campus for at least three (3) years after the study closes.