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Unpacking Students' Writer Identity in the Transition from High School to College: A Mixed Methods Study

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Methods Study

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Acknowledgement

The process of writing a doctoral dissertation about students' writer identity has been an interesting experience on so many levels. I initially became interested in this topic to better understand why so many students I encountered and taught described themselves as "really bad at writing." However, as I immersed myself into the long process of writing this dissertation, I had many periods where I began to question my own ability to successfully write such a daunting documentation of what I've learned in my four plus years as a doctoral student. Perhaps it was my own periodic crises of writer identity that fueled my motivation to unravel the mystery of this construct for the first-year students in this sample.

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Abstract

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SCHOOL TO COLLEGE: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

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Since the 1975 publication of Newsweek's article asserting that "Johnny" can't write,

many have continued to support the claim that students graduating from American high schools

and universities can't write. This criticism has led many students to believe the problem lies

exclusively with them. Efforts to improve students' writing have had little effect, as reflected in

continually concerning scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Recently,

researchers have begun to suggest that the problem should be addressed by working to change

students' identification as a bad writer. Two constructs have emerged from these efforts: writer

and authorial identity. Research on these constructs, however, is relatively recent and therefore

limited. Further, the constructs have been investigated in separate literature bases, divided almost

exclusively between English composition studies (writer identity) and psychology (authorial

identity).

This study seeks to investigate students' writer and authorial identities right at the entry point into college. Expectations for writing are different in college than they are in high school. College students, many of whom fall into the emerging adulthood phase of development, may experience difficulties writing in college if these different expectations aren't made explicit. In addition, this study explores whether writer and authorial identity are two distinct constructs, or whether similarities between the two exist. Data were collected from a diverse sample of first-year undergraduates at a large, urban, public university in the southeastern United States. Using a mixed method research design, quantitative data on authorial identity were collected using a modified version of an existing scale to measure authorial identity; open-response questions provided the qualitative data. Mixed analyses of the quantitative and qualitative findings found areas of significant differences between the two constructs, but also areas of overlap. These findings suggest that authorial identity may be a more specific form of writer identity, one in which the writer's authentic voice and knowledge are effectively represented in what is written. Although this study is a first step in trying to identify why "Johnny" can't write, it provides evidence that viewing the problem through the lens of students' writer and authorial identity warrants further investigation.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The 1975 publication of "Why Johnny Can't Write" ignited a firestorm of discourse among writing scholars and within the general public. The article's first line set the tone for the rest of the report: "If your children are attending college, the chances are that when they graduate they will be unable to write ordinary, expository English with any real degree of structure and lucidity" (Sheils, 1975, p. 58). Sheils went on to criticize the writing performance of students in high school and elementary school as well, citing as evidence the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores. Numerous responses and alternative perspectives on the issue of poor student writing followed this article's publication in 1975, both refuting and supporting the assertion that American students are failing at writing (e.g., Cameron, & Selfe, 1977; Elgin, 1976; Newkirk, Parker & Meskin, 1976; Schlesinger, 1975).

In recent years, the allegation that "Johnny" can't write has resurfaced in the popular press, with "Why Johnny Can't Write Even Though He Went to Princeton" (Bartlett, 2003) and "Why Johnny Can't Write and Why Employers Are Mad" (Holland, 2013). In response to this national concern over American students' writing prowess – ignited by Sheils and continued in the popular press – The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) initiated a National Conversation on Writing in 2008 (National Writing Project [NWP], 2016). Among the questions asked in this national conversation are who considers themselves a writer, who doesn't, and why (NWP, 2016).

If NAEP scores are considered the standard of writing proficiency, the assertion that American students do not write well cannot easily be contested. The two most recent NAEP reports on the writing performance of a nationally representative sample of more than 28,000 12th grade students indicate that only 25% of participating 12th graders scored proficient or higher in 2007 (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2008), and only 24% scored at the proficient level or higher in 2011 (NCES, 2012). Many of the high school seniors taking the NAEP in the spring become the freshmen in colleges and universities four months later. Here they enter an environment in where their learning is often assessed through writing assignments (Hyland, 2011). These assignments range from brief reports to extensive research papers (Rai & Lillis, 2013). The transition from secondary to postsecondary settings, therefore, necessitates that students adapt to different requirements for their many writing assignments (Fanetti, Bushrow, & Deweese, 2010).

No longer writing for a single teacher on a specific prompt provided to them, students in higher education are now writing for multiple professors, in varying disciplines (with variable conventions), and for different audiences – including their peers (Fernsten & Reda, 2011). Instead of recognizing that they have entered into a new arena of writing, with a wide variety of requirements and conventions (Hyland, 2011), many students believe that the problem lies with them (Fernsten & Reda, 2011; Williams, 2006a). They may sense that their skills are deficient, but don't know why. The writing practices that worked for them in the past are no longer valued or effective (Fanetti et al., 2010), and they begin to realize the need to "conform to not just a set of skills, but a set of cultural expectations" in the form of writing expectations as well (Williams, 2006a, p. 4). Without knowledge of these cultural expectations for writing, students may believe they write well, but not be able to adjust their writing to the new context (Duncheon & Tierney,

2014). In time, these students "become convinced that they are simply 'bad writers'…[s]tuck in these negative identities and fearful of failure in academic writing tasks" (Fernsten & Reda, 2011, p. 171).

In a recent interview, renowned writing researcher Steve Graham described having such an experience early in his undergraduate studies. He recalled earning a D in his English composition class, noting "that event really influenced how I viewed myself as a writer" (Liu, 2017, p. 178). He was convinced he could not write. He added that the experience of writing failure as an undergraduate resurfaced during the writing demands of his doctoral program, motivating him to begin researching how to become a better writer. Thus, he began his long and well-respected career as a writing researcher (Liu, 2017). Graham's story points to the potential long-lasting effects of a negative writing experience on a student's writer identity.

The personal identification that students associate with the problems they're experiencing makes sense, given the magnitude of changes that typically accompany the transition from high school to college. This unique period is often characterized by the transition away from home and into vocational or educational environments requiring greater responsibility and autonomy (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). Not yet fully adult, students in this stage are still in a period of identity and social development; they strive to understand and incorporate their new surroundings and peers into their shifting identity constructions (McLean, 2005). The challenge of navigating the new writing environment in higher education can affect even those students who experienced success with writing in high school as they seek to understand the changing expectations for authorship and disciplinary expectations (Weiner, 1985).

The idea that undergraduate students need to recognize that they've entered a new learning context in higher education is not a new one. David Bartholomae made this same claim

in 1985, with his seminal essay, *Inventing the University*. In his first sentence, Bartholomae asserts that "[e]very time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion…or a branch of it, like history or anthropology or economics or English" (1985/2009, p. 605). He continues, noting the need for university students to learn and practice the "peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing" that define the implicit expectations for writing in higher education (1985/2009, p. 605). While Bartholomae argues that the students need to invent the university – by considering what the expectations are for each assignment, each professor, or each discipline – each time they write, the study described here suggests students may need to invent themselves as successful college writers as well.

Identity and Writing

Just as the idea that students need to understand the new context of higher education is not new, linking identity to the practice of writing is not unique to this study either. Many writing scholars describe writing as a mode of identity expression. Hyland (2002a) describes academic writing as not simply an expression of content, but also a "representation of self" (p. 1091). Karsten (2014) adds to the link between writing and identity when she defines the process of writing as a series of "movements the authoring self performs" (2014, p. 480). Among these movements are the alternating perspectives of being a writer, while also considering the future reader(s) and the appropriate context of the writing (Karsten, 2014). These shifts in perspective, and the inclusion of "the authoring self" as one of them, suggest the role of identity in the writing process. Similarly, Williams (2003) portrays writing as a reflection of "the person on the page" (p. 178). Matsuda (2015) asserts that identity in writing can be expressed in two ways: both as an "empirical reality that can be described and measured" and as a "phenomenological reality that

exists in peoples' perceptions" (p. 141). The former expression is described through demographic characteristics of the writer and the latter reflects the social constructions of the writer (Matsuda, 2015). Finally, Williams raises questions about the specific identities students are expected to convey when writing in higher education, and how those expected identities may (or may not) conflict with students' identities related to other aspects of their lives (2006a). The question, he asserts, is not *whether* identity influences what college students write, but rather *how* it does so (Williams, 2006a).

Instead of focusing on students' perceptions of themselves as writers, writing research in higher education often seeks to understand students' perceptions of writing itself. For example, many of the older attitude-based studies assess students' apprehension about writing (e.g., Daly & Miller, 1975; Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981). More recent studies measure students' perceptions of the writing process (Lavelle & Guarino, 2003), different writing genres (Hasegawa, 2013), and discipline-specific writing (Buzzi, Grimes, & Rolls 2012). Troia, Shankland, and Wolbers (2012) provide a comprehensive review of research related to motivation to write. Included in this review is a brief discussion of the motivational aspect of having "a positive self-concept in the domain of writing," which is represented in an example as a student thinking "I'm a good writer" (Troia et al., 2012, p. 8).

Students' beliefs related to writing are also often assessed in terms of self-efficacy for writing. Self-efficacy beliefs for writing relate to students' perceptions of their ability to perform the required tasks associated with writing (Schunk & Meece, 2006). The relationship between writing self-efficacy and student motivation and performance in writing is well established (see Pajares, 2003 for review). While writing self-efficacy relates to students' confidence in their ability to perform the tasks of writing, it falls short of conveying their perceptions of themselves

as writers. The difference is subtle, but nonetheless worth noting. Self-efficacy reflects students' beliefs about their abilities to perform specific *tasks* related to writing (Pajares, 2003; Schunk & Meece, 2006); writer identity represents students' beliefs about *themselves as writers*. It is this identity-related approach of the current study that differs from much of the existing research of writing self-efficacy beliefs. This study assumes, as Williams (2003) claims, that "[w]riting is a deliberate construction and expression of identity on a page" (p. 180). If academic writing in higher education is indeed an expression of students' identity, the academic community must understand the types of identities that students hold – identities both related to, and constructed from, their writing experiences (Matsuda, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Despite a volume of literature on writing and students' perceptions of writing, only a small body of writing on students' writer identities exists. Much of this work is in the form of concept papers that discuss the construct on a theoretical level rather than in the context of a research study (Hyland, 2002a, 2002b, 2011; Karsten, 2014; Williams, 2003, 2006b, 2006c, 2008). Despite the theoretical, rather than empirical, perspective on writer identity, this body of work adds to the rich discourse on student writer identity. Empirical studies of this construct, however, are few in number (Walsh, 2017). A recent systematic review of empirical studies of writer identity identified a number of studies focusing on writer identity in non-native English speakers (e.g., Abasi, Akbari, & Graves, 2006; Burgess, 2012; Fernsten, 2002, 2005; Hyland, 2002b; Ouellette, 2015; Tang & John, 1999) and only one existing systematic review of writer identity (Walsh, 2017). This single systematic review focused only on developing writers in kindergarten through sixth grade (Collier, 2009).

Although not traditionally considered developing writers, students entering the new writing environment in higher education do need to develop the skills needed to become a successful academic writer. First-year university students have left a context where writing instruction typically focuses on the skills associated with writing, skills often assumed to be impersonal and at times even formulaic (Williams, 2006b). Teaching writing through the lens of identity, however, could help student writers understand how they can develop, express, and organize their unique thoughts and analytical stances on topics (Williams, 2006b). This understanding of students' perceptions of themselves as writers is an important first step in developing effective instruction with this population of students and is the goal of this study.

Purpose of the Proposed Study

Among the existing studies of writer identity, two distinct yet related constructs were identified: writer identity and authorial identity (Walsh, 2017). Studies that used the writer identity construct primarily employed a qualitative research design and explored the factors that influenced undergraduate students' writer identity. Those that used the authorial identity construct were primarily quantitative studies, and used newly created measures of authorial identity measures – many of which had poor or psychometric properties (see Ballentine, Guo, & Larres, 2015). Recently, a new measure of authorial identity was created, with stronger psychometric properties than previous versions. This measure, the Student Attitudes and Beliefs about Authorship (SABAS; Cheung, Stupple, & Elander, 2015) suggests a three-factor model of the authorial identity construct. The current study expands upon the extant research on these two constructs by investigating them through a mixed methods design. Mixed methods draws on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the construct(s) of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Building on the question posed by the National Conversation on Writing, this study seeks to understand who considers themselves writers among the student sample of first-year undergraduate students, and what experiences and situations may inform these identifications. In addition, this study explores the two prominent constructs identified in the literature, writer and authorial identity, to determine the extent to which these constructs may or may not differ. A final purpose of this study is to provide a foundational understanding of these constructs on which additional research on the writer identity construct can be based, in a variety of populations and educational settings.

Research Questions

In this study of who considers themselves writers, who does not, and why, the first part of this question will be assessed through quantitative questions relating to both writer identity and authorial identity. The *why* associated with those identifications will be investigated through open-ended qualitative questions. Then, the larger question of who considers themselves writers and why in the context of this study will be analyzed through the mixing of the findings generated from the quantitative and qualitative strands. As such, the specific research questions guiding this study are:

1. Quantitative: To what extent do first-year undergraduate students identify as being a writer?

2. Quantitative: Is the existing three-factor model of authorial identity supported with the sample of undergraduate students in this setting?

3. Quantitative: Do differences exist between students' writer identity (positive, negative, conditional) and their authorial identity?

4. Quantitative: Do writer identity and authorial identity differ across participants' demographic characteristics?

5. Qualitative: What situations do students list as contributing to their identification with being/not being a writer?

6. Mixed: How do the situations that contribute to students' writer identities differ between WI groups and AI scores?

7. Mixed: What common features exist between writer identity and authorial identity in this sample of first-year undergraduate students?

Operationalization of Constructs

Identity. Drawing on the writer identity theories described above, identity is regarded as multifaceted and changeable, rather than a stable and lasting sense of a "true" self. For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that students' identity is an accumulation of previous experiences that can change (positively or negatively) based on the new context of higher education. In addition, identity can be understood by asking the I-self (knower) about the perceptions of the me-self (doer) as it relates to writing.

Writer identity (WI). The term writer identity is used in this study to refer to students' identification with being (or not being) a writer in the general sense. Being a writer is assumed to mean actively engaging and participating in the writing process as a means of expressing one's own thoughts and ideas in a meaningful way. It is not limited to academic writing, but instead can include types of writing that students engage in voluntarily, for pleasure or professional purposes.

Authorial identity (AI), Authorial identity is assumed to be a more specific form of writer identity – that of being an author of one's own written work. Authorial identity implies

having a sense of authority over what one writes. Authorial identity more closely matches the writing expectations for students in higher education (understanding audience and disciplinary conventions, writing with authority, developing an academic writing "voice" appropriate to assignments and disciplinary conventions).

Researcher's Stance

Although typically reserved for qualitative research studies, I feel it is important to make my stance on this study's constructs and design transparent. The beginnings of this study were inspired by my own experiences hearing students express their perceptions of being a bad writer in my role as a writing center consultant at the university in which this study took place. This process began as an authentic inquiry into why so many students I worked with – from undergraduate to graduate to fellow doctoral students –began their consultations by expressing this negative writer identity. In addition, I also taught the course described in the study's setting for this study (although not during the semesters in which the study was conducted). While teaching this class with primarily first-semester and first-year college students, I often asked about their perceptions of themselves as writers and about their high school writing experiences, and incorporated their responses into my instructional design. As my academic inquiries into the writer identity construct progressed, I began to incorporate instruction on the construct into our classroom discussions about writing. My familiarity with both the university setting and course in which this study was conducted, along with my authentic interest in understanding the writer identity construct, motivated my decision to investigate writer identity through the perceptions of the students themselves.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In designing and proposing a study, researchers must have a firm understanding of the existing body of research related to the topic of interest. This comprehensive understanding of the literature is imperative in order to establish the relevance of a study (Boote & Beile, 2005). What constitutes a comprehensive review, however, is not always easily defined – particularly in educational settings (Boote & Beile, 2005; Maxwell, 2006). Further distinctions are made between literature reviews *for* research (for a study proposal) and those *of* research (for publication), with the latter being more comprehensive because it is a report of research that has been conducted (Maxwell, 2006). This review incorporates literature both for research (to inform the study) and literature of research (a systematic review conducted by the researcher).

The goal of this review, then, is to provide a thorough and comprehensive discussion of the relevant literature related to undergraduate students' writer identity in the transition from high school to college. The literature included here informs all aspects of the study design. Graham notes (as cited in Liu, 2017) that writing research from disciplines outside of educational psychology adds new ideas and philosophical perspectives to both the field of educational psychology and to writing research in general. Therefore, this review includes relevant work from writing scholars across a range of disciplines that inform the study. It incorporates a discussion of the well-established constructs in writing research, and scholarship related to the differences in writing instruction and expectations in secondary and postsecondary settings that might contribute to the perceived skills gap in student writing. It concludes with a synthesis of

results from a systematic review of existing studies of writer and authorial identity in the target population of undergraduate students for whom English is their native language.

Conceptual Framework for Study

  Social constructionism. Constructivism and social constructionism both assert that our knowledge of the world and ourselves is constructed, not acquired as a universally accepted reality (Paul, Braffam, & Fowler, 2005; Young & Collin, 2004). Some assert that social constructionism and constructivism can be used interchangeably, while others argue that they are distinct philosophical perspectives (Young & Collin, 2004). It is worth noting why social constructionism is identified as the theoretical framework that informs this study. Generally, constructivism acknowledges that context and social practices influence meaning making, but this perspective prioritizes the individual's mind as the location where meaning making occurs (Paul et al., 2005). Social constructionism is concerned with identifying the "*processes* [emphasis added] by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world" and for themselves as agents in the world (Gergen, 1985, p. 266). Social constructionism also asserts that our understanding is based on both current and historical social interactions (Gergen, 1985). Social constructionism, therefore, equally prioritizes the individual's interpretation of meaning and the identification of the social processes that inform that interpretation (Young & Collin, 2004). Investigating undergraduate students' writer identities in the transition from high school to college using a mixed methods design allows for exploration of both the participants' expressions of their constructed writer identity as well as their descriptions of the social factors (both current and historical) that inform these constructions.

  Definition of identity and identity development. There is little agreement on a single definition of identity in the extensive literature on this construct. The term can be used to

represent the culture with which one affiliates, the group or social affiliates one considers him/herself to belong to, or – on an individual level – the different aspects and/or roles that comprise the larger self (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Despite these differences in definitions and contexts, there is agreement among many that identity is a multifaceted construct that comprises both an internal personal component and an external social component (Burke & Stets, 2009; Gee, 2001; Kroger, 2007; Roeser, Peck, & Nasir, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity includes a reflexive capacity in which one aspect of oneself can reflect upon another aspect of oneself (Stets & Burke, 2000), which James referred to as an I-self (the knower) that is capable of reflecting on a me-self (what is known about oneself). The I-self is the volitional part of ourselves that allow us to monitor and choose which aspect of the me-self to attune to and focus attention on (Roeser & Peck, 2009). These self-reflections, however, do not just occur internally, but also externally, as influenced by different social situations (Bayley, 1976; Roeser et al., 2009). These two aspects of identity interact personally and publically, whereby we begin to see ourselves as a "certain kind of person" in different environments, identities that can be both known by one self and seen by those in the social context (Gee, 2001, p.100).

While theories of identity development have evolved over time, Erik Erikson is generally considered to be the first to bring the discussion of identity into the social sciences (Burke & Stets, 2009) and to theorize that identity develops and changes over the course of our lifespan from childhood through adulthood (Kroger, 2007; Waterman, 1982). An extensive discussion of the evolution of theories of identity development is beyond the scope of this study; but a commonality across theories is the importance of late adolescence and young adulthood as a crucial period for identity exploration and development (Blakemore, 2008; Kroger, 2007;

Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010. During this time, changes in identity occur as our attributions of the meaning of various experiences evolve over time (Burke & Stets, 2009). Much of the research on identity development during adolescence has focused on the influences of parents and peer groups on adolescent identity development (Kroger, 2007). Only recently has the study of identity development specifically in the context of educational settings begun to be prioritized (Gee, 2000; Kaplan & Flum, 2009).

In 2009, a special issue of *The Educational Psychologist* was devoted to the topic of identity development in education, with the explicit goal of inspiring future efforts to link students' identity development and student motivation (Kaplan & Flum, 2009). In this special issue, Eccles (2009), asserts that students' motivation comes from their perceptions of their own competencies in a wide array of tasks, and these perceptions are then used to inform their expectations for future success on those tasks. In this process of self-assessment that informs motivation, Eccles asserts "people assess their own skills by comparing their performances with those of other people and with their own performances across domains" (2009, p. 82). More recently, Schachter and Rich (2011) have proposed a pedagogy in which teachers make the focus on aspects of students' identities transparent and intentional in their teaching practices. This practice, termed Identity Education, would promote "the deliberate active involvement of educators with the psychosocial processes and practices that are involved in students' identity development" (Schachter & Rich, 2001, p. 223).

Within the context of the proposed study, these recent movements to consider students' identity development within the context of educational settings and as a component of students' motivation to learn inform the purpose and framework of this study. Specifically, students' self-assessments and identification as writers in the new context of higher education and across

different contexts of writing describe the overarching focus of this study. Using James's terminology, this study seeks to understand the I-self perceptions of whether one of the me-self roles includes being a writer. This reflexive nature of individuals to identify different components of themselves is foundational to identity theories specifically related to writing.

Emerging adulthood theory of development. This study's focus exclusively on first-year students as they enter the higher education setting, necessitates an understanding of the developmental characteristics of traditional college students in order to contextualized the findings. The emerging adulthood theory of development was first introduced in an article published by Jeffrey Arnett in a 2000 edition of *American Psychologist*. This article proposed the addition of a new developmental phase between the well-established stages of adolescence and young adulthood, one necessitated by the changing demographics that began in the late 1990s in industrial nations (Arnett, 2000). The increase in the number of students entering college after high school, and the accompanying increase in age of marriage and childbirth that resulted, created a group of 18 – 25 year olds who were not adolescents but not yet adults. In the short time between the proposal of the theory and the first full book published on it, the popularity of emerging adulthood as a distinct phase of development with today's societal norms has soared (Arnett, 2007). Four years after its proposal as a new developmental stage, emerging adulthood had garnered enough interest to support a national conference in 2004 (now offered annually), the establishment of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (SSEA) and creation of a peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to studies of emerging adulthood in 2013 (Arnett, 2014). In 2015, *The Oxford Handbook of Emerging Adulthood* was published.

Considered to be a phase of development that is "culturally constructed" by delaying the traditional benchmarks of adulthood (marriage, employment, and childbirth), emerging adults

tend to possess a more conditional identification of being an adult – sometimes they do and sometimes they don't (Arnett, 2000, p. 470). Five features describe this stage of emerging adulthood: identity exploration, instability, a focus on self, a sense of being in-between, and a time of possibilities (Arnett, 2007). In a 2014 study of a nationally representative sample of over 1,029 18 – 29 year old participants, the five proposed features of emerging adulthood were consistently supported across differences in geographical location, gender, and socioeconomic status (Arnett). For those who attend college, school becomes more important than it was in high school, as students begin to realize that their college years will have an impact on their future prospects for employment (Arnett, 2004). However, when asked retrospectively to rate their level of satisfaction with their college experiences, their satisfaction with college was conditional upon the extent to which they experienced personal growth (Arnett 2004). A time characterized by great instability in residency, relationships, and identity exploration (Arnett, 2000), emerging adults embrace their "self-focused freedom from role obligations and restraints" (Arnett, 2007, p. 70).

      Ivanič's theory of writer identity. Much of the literature on writer identity references Ivanič's theory of identity construction in academic writing. This work was first introduced in Ivanič's 1998 book, *Writing and Identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*. Situated within the framework of social constructionism, Ivanič (1998) based her theory of writer identity on her work with older adults reentering the university setting and their experiences with academic writing specifically. She identified three different aspects of the larger construct of writer identity: autobiographical self, discoursal self, and self as author (Ivanič, 1998). She described the autobiographical self as "the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing, shaped as it is by their prior social and discoursal history" (p. 24). In

contrast, the discoursal self is the aspect of identity that authors present in a specific piece of writing, "constructed through the discourse characteristics of a text" (p. 25). This discoursal identity, according to Ivanič's theory, is temporary and dependent on the type of text being written. Finally, the self as author is the extent to which the writer embraces and expresses an identity of author.

The self as author aspect of Ivanič's theory of writer identity maps well onto the authorial identity construct identified in several of the existing empirical studies of students' perceptions of themselves as writers. Authorial identity is described as "the sense a writer has of themselves [sic] as an author and the textual identity they construct in their writing (Pittam et al., 2009, p. 154). Originally introduced in a study of plagiarism among non-native English speakers (NNES) graduate students, lack of a strong authorial identity was identified as the issue in students who plagiarized in their writing assignments (Abasi et al., 2006). Noting that these students' misunderstanding of what their role as academic writers required, Abasi et al. assert that "plagiarism could be…considered as an issue of authorial identity" in which students unsuccessfully "represent themselves as writers who should make a novel contribution" through their writing in graduate school (2006, p. 114). In both descriptions of authorial identity, the construct is defined in terms of students' sense of themselves as a writer, possibly implying that authorial identity may be a specific aspect of a more general sense of being a writer.

The proposed study primarily investigates two of the three aspects Ivanič's theory of writer identity, the autobiographical self (the identity writers hold when they write, informed by past experiences with writing) and authorial self (perceiving oneself as a unique author of the content of the writing). Because the authorial identity construct relates both to Ivanič's authorial self and is defined as a component of the student as an academic writer, the term *writer identity*

is hypothesized to be a more general construct that includes the authorial identity construct. According to Ivanič's (1998) theory, the writer identity held by this study's participants – as they enter the new setting of higher education – should be shaped by their prior experiences with writing in high school.

Writing Research – Established Constructs from Educational Psychology

Conducting research in educational settings is a challenging task in and of itself, due to the multiple influences that interact in classrooms and schools at all levels (Berliner, 2002; Boote & Beile, 2005). Research in the complex settings in education is also subject to what Berliner (2002) refers to as a "decade by findings interaction," in which educational practices that were empirically supported and accepted become outdated as the social contexts of school settings change with the larger society. He describes this interaction as a phenomenon whereby "[s]olid scientific findings in one decade end up of little use in another decade because of changes in the social environment that invalidate the research or render it irrelevant" (2002, p. 20). Writing research in education is further complicated by the intricacies of writing itself as an academic skill (Breland, Bridgeman & Fowles, 1999; Bruning & Horn, 2000; Bruning, Dempsey, Kauffman, McKim, & Zumbrunn, 2013; Graham, 2006). Graham asserts that one way to confront these intricacies is to draw from the work of writing researchers working in a wide range of disciplines to complement the research conducted by educational psychologists (as cited in Liu, 2017).

Unlike other academic skills that may have more absolutes regarding right and wrong answers or skill demonstration, writing assessment in higher education is more subjective (Kidwell, 2005; Sullivan, 2003). Students are not only expected to write correctly but are also expected to demonstrate their learning in multiple genres of writing (Breland et al., 1999;

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Kidwell, 2005), while applying a wide variety of cognitive skills as well (Breland et al., 1999; Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Hayes & Flower, 1986; Kellogg, 2008). Writing ability is not an absolute but a continuum, and can be considered "a theoretical construct" that is only evidenced by "individual writing performances" (Sainsbury, 2009, p. 548). A final factor that complicates writing research, particularly in the higher education setting, is the absence of a clear definition of college-level writing (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Sullivan, 2003). Nonetheless, writing continues to be one of the primary modes for assessing student learning in higher education (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Graham & Perin, 2007; Liu, 2017). Despite the complexities and changing contexts in education, writing motivation research has established several self-belief constructs that have withstood Berliner's (2002) assertion that these changes render some educational research findings outdated. These self-theories – locus of control, self-efficacy, and self-regulation – continue to be supported in writing motivation research over time.

Locus of control. Jones (2008) asserts that locus of control (LOC) ranks among the most popular constructs investigated by psychologists, ranking first among the well-established self-beliefs of self-efficacy, self-regulation and LOC. In the academic setting, LOC refers to students' perceptions of where the control for their academic outcomes lies: internally or externally (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006). While studies of LOC and writing have been conducted across all levels of education, they are very few in number (Jones, 2008). In their review of writing motivation research, Troia et al. (2012) identified LOC as one among several variables (writing anxiety and grade goals) that correlated with writing self-efficacy beliefs in studies with students in college composition classes. However, neither LOC nor the other variables contributed any significant variance to the outcomes measured, beyond the variance attributed to students' writing self-efficacy (Troia et al., 2012).

The complexities of writing seem to counter any assumption that LOC can be understood as a single construct that influences writing outcome expectations, thus it is most often studied in combination with other writing motivation constructs such as self-efficacy and self-regulation (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006). This was the goal in Jones's 2008 study examining the self-beliefs of first-year students enrolled in a basic college English class. Locus of control more strongly predicted achievement in the students with the weakest writing skills when compared with the other self-beliefs included in the study (Jones, 2008). Measures of self-beliefs included two measures of self-efficacy for writing (Jones, 2008). Jones notes that self-beliefs such as LOC and self-efficacy play an important role in learning to write, adding that when students use the first-person pronoun "I" in their writing, "students' sense of themselves seems closely linked to their writing performance" (2008, p. 210). The link between students' selves and their writing, then, may also play an important role as first-year students are learning to write in the university setting.

Writing self-efficacy. Initially introduced by Bandura in 1977, self-efficacy in the general sense impacts people's willingness to initiate tasks, expend sufficient effort on them, and persevere when obstacles arise. Prior to the conceptualization of self-efficacy, motivation was perceived to be primarily based on outcome expectations – a person's belief that certain actions will produce specific outcomes (Zimmerman, 2000). Bandura suggested that self-efficacy is our belief that we will be able to perform the actions needed to achieve the desired outcome (1977) and that these beliefs are influenced by the context in which we are required to perform those tasks (Zimmerman, 2000). In the context of school settings, students' "[k]nowledge, skill, and prior attainments are often poor predictors of subsequent attainments" because of the strong influence of students' beliefs in their own ability to achieve desired outcomes in school (Pajares,

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1996, p. 543). In order to understand how to improve students' self-efficacy beliefs, then, it is important to know the genesis of those beliefs – the previous experiences that informed their development (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Bandura identified four primary sources of self-efficacy beliefs: mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasions, and emotional and physiological arousal (1977). Of these four sources, mastery experiences have consistently been found to be the most powerful source of self-efficacy (Usher & Pajares, 2008), particularly when mastering a challenging task or after overcoming obstacles to do so (Bandura, 1977).

In addition to the context in which required tasks are performed, self-efficacy beliefs also differ by academic domain (Zimmerman, 2000). Writing self-efficacy refers to students' beliefs that they can perform the skills needed to write well (Bruning et al., 2013). In an early study of predictors of writing quality among 137 first-year students in a basic writing class, McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer (1985) found that students' perception of their own self-efficacy for writing was the only predictor of writing quality to reach statistical significance (perceptions of locus of control, anxiety, and cognitive processing were the other factors tested). The strong influence of self-efficacy for writing continues to receive support across gender, ethnic, and developmental differences and its overall influence on students' confidence in their writing abilities (Pajares, 2003). In discussing the implication of his overall findings related to the important role of writing self-efficacy, Pajares notes that teachers need to nurture and cultivate positive self-beliefs of their pupils, "for it is clear that these self-beliefs can have beneficial or destructive influence" on students' perceptions of their own abilities (2003, p. 153). Self-efficacy for writing requires students to reflect on their ability to fulfill the tasks of writing, implying that there is an aspect of the students doing the writing that can be assesses. This implication hints at an identification of oneself as a writer performing the tasks needed to write.

Writing self-regulation. While self-efficacy relates to students' confidence in their ability to write, self-regulation for writing is related to the development of students' competence in performing the tasks associated with it (Graham & Harris, 2000). Self-regulation for writing includes such self-initiated skills as planning, organizing, monitoring, and revising during writing (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). It is generally assumed that more skilled writers employ the strategies for writing self-regulation (Graham & Harris, 2000), but some assignments – particularly those that rely on students' personal insights and experiences – may not require the same level of writing self-regulation required to demonstrate expertise (Graham & Harris, 1997). Further, self-regulatory strategies that may have been successful in writing assignments in the past may not work in new settings (Graham & Harris, 1997), and students' goal orientation (mastery or performance) may influence their willingness to engage in writing self-regulation strategies (Kaplan, Lichtinger & Gorodetsky, 2009). Longitudinal studies of the development and changing dimensions of writing self-regulatory practices is relatively sparse (Graham & Harris, 2000), but two recent studies aimed at increasing college students' knowledge of and use of writing self-regulation strategies doing so improved both writing quality (Feltham & Sharen, 2013) and improvements in students' adaptive use of strategies for different writing purposes (Negretti, 2012). A larger-scale quasi-experimental study of incorporating strategies for writing self-regulation into the writing curriculum of 19 developmental college writing classes (276 students) found that doing so increased the quality of students' writing specifically in the genre of persuasive essay writing (MacArthur, Philippakos, & Ianetta, 2015).

Described here as separate constructs, writing self-efficacy and writing self-regulation are intricately related in the overall writing process (Ekholm, Zumbrunn, & Conklin, 2014; Jones, 2008). Some researchers combine the two terms into a single construct, such as self-regulatory

efficacy for writing (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994), or subsume one term within a larger model of the other (see Bruning et al., 2013 for support of a three-factor model of writing self-efficacy that includes writing self-regulation as one of the factors). In summary, self-regulation and self-efficacy require that students possess an "agentic perspective regarding self-development, adaptation, and change" (Zimmerman, 2003, p. 450). This "agentic perspective" could be interpreted as one's writer identity.

Summary of writing research. Researching writing is a complex endeavor, one that is compounded by the multiple influences when doing so in the educational setting. Nonetheless, several well-researched constructs have been found to withstand the tests of time and context. These constructs – locus of control, writing self-efficacy, and writing self-regulation – are often referred to as writing self-beliefs. Implied in these important self-beliefs is ability to reflect on oneself as a writer in order to assess one's ability to perform and/or regulate the skills associated with writing. This reflective ability maps well onto the dual I-self/me-self aspects of identity that identity theory posits (Bayley, 1976; Roeser et al., 2009). The I-self is often described as the knower and the me-self as that which is known (Roeser et al., 2009). From this perspective, in this study's context of assessing students' self-beliefs related to writing, it is the I-self doing the reflection that allows students to assess themselves as college writers (me-self).

These established self-beliefs are essential in writing research; however, they will not be explicitly measured in the current study. This decision was intentional. Before valid comparisons can be made between writing self-beliefs and writer identity, a more complete understanding of the writer identity construct is needed. Therefore, this study focuses solely on the goal of investigating students' writer identity and the factors that inform these identities. Once the

construct is better understood, a comparison with the well-established self-beliefs of LOC, self-efficacy, and self-regulation would a be valuable next step in future studies.

Unpacking the Writing Gap from High School to College

Consistent with the popular claims that "Johnny" can't write, colleges and universities are finding that a large number of their first-year students are ill equipped to write at the level and volume required in higher education (Carter & Harper, 2013). Enders (2001) reports findings from an end-of-course writing survey administered to classes of college freshmen. Data for this analysis were collected across two different university settings over an eight-year span. When asked what high school experiences prepared these freshmen for writing in college, 25% of the 315 total respondents answered "nothing" (Enders, 2001). As discussed previously, if students find they're unprepared for their writing in this new setting, they may begin to question themselves instead of the new writing environment. It is important, therefore, to understand the writing contexts in both high school and higher education to identify the skills and perceptions that contribute to the perceived gap in writing skills.

For some students, the challenges they encounter in writing assignments in college are indeed due to poor preparation in high school (Beil & Knight, 2007; Enders, 2001; Duncheon & Tierney, 2014). For others, however, the gap may come from their perception of writing itself, based on their experiences with writing in high school (Beil & Knight, 2007; Fanetti, Bushrow, & Deweese, 2010). Students may assume that all writing equates to the type expected in high stakes writing assessments (e.g., single attempt, on-demand writing) (McCrimmon, 2005) or the popular five-paragraph essay (Sainsbury, 2009). In either case, students' perceptions of themselves as successful college writers could be negatively impacted if they are unaware of the changing context they are entering (Fernsten & Reda, 2011). It is important to understand

whether the skills deemed necessary for successful college writing match students' experiences with writing assignments and instruction in high school before we can attempt to bridge the gap that might exist. Patterson and Duer (2006) found that high school writing teachers and writing professors in higher education settings often listed the same types of skills required for successful writing. When it came to teaching those skills, however, the ways in which these writing was actually taught differed between the two contexts. High school teachers described teaching the mechanics of writing at the sentence level, while writing professors described content, process, and purpose level instruction at the college level (Patterson & Duer, 2006).

Recent investigations into unpacking the gap impeding students' successful transition to becoming college writers reveals a fundamental difference in the perception of writing at the pedagogical level. Writing in college is most often considered to be a process (i.e., writing as a verb) with the expectation that students will plan, conduct research, draft, and revise their assignments prior to submitting them (Enders, 2001; Fanetti et al., 2010; Kidwell, 2010). Feedback from peers and instructors is meant to be constructive and inform revision (Enders, 2001). In this process writing approach, students consult expert sources, but the final paper is an expression of their own thoughts or analyses, supported by findings from their research (Sullivan, 2003). In this process approach, writers in higher education are expected become the authority – and thus, the author – of their assignments.

In contrast, writing in high school is often conveyed as a product (i.e., writing as a noun), with teachers' expectations that a final paper will demonstrate a consistent production of specified writing from all students (Beil & Knight, 2007; Fanetti et al., 2010). Contributing to this orientation is teachers' reports of the need to teach to the end-of-course standardized assessments (Fanetti et al., 2010; Jackson & Kurlaender, 2016; McCrimmon, 2005; Sainsbury,

2009), even when they want to implement a process approach of planning, drafting, and revision (Fanetti et al., 2010; McCrimmon, 2005). Accordingly, students describe their writing as done to please the teacher and earn a good grade rather than to express themselves or their ideas (Enders, 2001). Students in the product-oriented writing environment begin to perceive that writing is formulaic, and their roles, as writers, is to summarize and report information from expert writers deemed to be authorities (Enders, 2001; Fanetti et al., 2010; Kidwell, 2010). Feedback on product-based writing is often corrective, where teachers provide the right word or phrasing directly on the paper; revision, if allowed, only requires that students rewrite the paper to include the teachers' corrections (Enders, 2001; Fanetti et al., 2010). From this writing-as-a-product perspective, the writing always comes from someone else other than the student (Enders, 2001).

In a meta-analysis of writing interventions aimed at improving writing skills, Graham and Perin (2007) sought to identify effective writing practices for fourth through 12th graders. Their analysis of 123 documents containing 154 different effect sizes yielded 11 different types of writing interventions. Ten of the interventions had positive effect sizes (noted in parentheses): strategy instruction (0.82), summarization (0.82), peer assistance (0.75), setting product goals (0.70), word processing (0.55), sentence combining (0.50), inquiry (0.32), prewriting activities (0.32), process writing approach (0.32), study of models (0.25). Only grammar instruction had an effect size less than zero (–0.32). While the population for this meta-analysis was students in the pre-college years, the list of effective writing practices identified match those considered necessary to write successfully at the college level. Unfortunately, too many practices in high school writing may not follow this list of skills, thus creating or widening the skills gap (Beil & Knight, 2007; Enders, 2001; Fanetti et al., 2010).

Efforts to Bridge the Gap

Describing his experience teaching "hundreds of first-year students," Kidwell asserts that the transitional nature of the first-year experiences comes from the need for students to "[adopt] new styles of learning that are less a matter of skills and more a matter of the student's relation with him- or herself as a learner" (2010, p. 254). This assertion could also apply to a need for students to adapt their thinking about writing – not as a matter of skills but in relation to themselves as writers. Students, however, are not the only ones who may need to adjust their thinking about the differences in writing expectations in high school and college. High school teachers and professors of writing in higher education could benefit from understandings these different expectations as well (Patterson & Duer, 2006). Such knowledge could inform programs that facilitate students' transition from the writing context and standards in high school to those in higher education. A discussion of several such programs follows. Few among these programs focused on impacting writing instruction at the high school level, but several such examples exist. More common, however, are programs initiated at the higher education level, which seek to remediate or teach the writing skills needed after students enroll (Relles & Tierney, 2013).

Pre-college writing programs. Two recent initiatives of the National Writing Project (NWP) specifically seek to improve students' writing skills before they enter the new writing environment in college. The first, called "Being a Writer," targets students in grades K-6 and seeks to help students embrace being a writer from their earliest writing experiences (NWP, 2015). This program's goal to "support the development of the writer rather than the writing" represents the idea of cultivating a writer identity in developing writers (NWP, 2015, n.p.). The program includes professional development activities for teachers designed to help them identify as writers themselves. As such, the teachers increase their own identity as a writer and can then better model a writer identity for their students (NWP, 2015).

The second NWP program, the College-Ready Writers Program (CRWP), picks up where Being a Writer ends. It is designed to teach middle and high school students the argumentative writing skills that most assignments in higher education require (Gallagher, Woodworth, & Arshan, 2015). During the 2013 – 2015 academic years, the CRWP was implemented in 22 different rural school districts in 10 states, with participating districts ranging in size from 75 to 6,593 students, two-thirds of whom were eligible for free or reduced meals (Gallagher et al., 2015). A recent independent evaluation of this program's effectiveness found that program participants demonstrated statistically significant improvements in four key skills of argumentative writing (correctly using source material in context, developing a claim, selecting relevant evidence, and connecting evidence to the claim) when compared to the control group (Gallagher et al., 2015)

California's Early Assessment Program (EAP) also seeks to develop college-level writing (and math) skills in high school students. Originally developed by the California State University system (CSU), the EAP is now a collaborative effort between CSU, and the department and board of education in California (Venza & Voloch, 2012). In brief, the program assesses students' writing skills at the end of their junior year of high school, and those who pass are exempt from taking writing remediation classes as freshmen at any of the CSU campuses (Knudson et al, 2008). Students who don't pass the EAP at the end of their junior year have the opportunity to enroll in an expository writing course in 12th grade that was designed by a CSU-sponsored task force (Venezia & Voloch, 2012). The expository writing program includes extensive professional development for high school teachers as well, considered one of the strengths of the program (Venezia & Voloch, 2012). An evaluation of the effectiveness of the

EAP found it reduced the probability of an average student participant needing remediation in college by 6.1 percentage points for English (Howell, Kurlaender, & Grodsky, 2010).

All three pre-college programs described here were developed to better prepare high school students for college-level writing. A secondary goal of these programs, however, is to keep students from having to take remediation or developmental level writing classes (also referred to as basic writing) once they enroll in colleges and universities (Gallagher et al., 2015; Knudson et al., 2008; Venezia & Voloch, 2012). Enrollment in remediation and basic writing classes at the college and university level is an alternate approach to bridge the gap in writing skills between high school and college.

College-level remediation writing courses. Many postsecondary institutions are now providing remedial writing instruction courses to build first-year students' writing skills to the level required for academic writing in their settings (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Knudson, et al., 2008). These classes were originally developed to open access to higher education to greater numbers of students, and to support underprepared students in developing the skills needed to graduate from college (Relles & Tierney, 2013). A national report on remediation class enrollment in degree granting postsecondary institutions found that 67% of public institutions (n = 580) and 46% of private institutions (n = 1,300) offered remedial classes in writing (Parsad, Lewis, & Green, 2003). Among this sample of colleges and universities, only 10% of the institutions offered degree-related credit for the remedial writing classes; 90% did not. In institutions where remedial classes were extra credits beyond those required for graduation, the added burden of extra costs and time is incurred by the students taking them (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014) and on the institutions providing them (Venezia & Voloch, 2012). This extra burden on students and institutions is meaningful, given the conflicting evidence supporting the

effectiveness of remediation classes on subsequent student outcomes (Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Chen & Simone, 2016; Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Relles & Tierney, 2013). Remediation classes put the onus of improving students' writing skills both on the institution and on the student, when a lack of exposure to, or experience with, academic writing in high schools may bear part of the responsibility (Callahan & Chumney, 2009). Regardless, placement in remedial writing classes may not only stigmatize underprepared students (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014), but may also further delay their entry into the context and expectations of writing in higher education and in becoming an academic writer.

Basic writers and writing courses. A similar, but not identical effort to facilitate students' transition to academic writing in higher education is tiered writing instruction. This model enrolls students with writing skills deemed subpar into a basic writing class prior to their enrollment in a required first-year writing class (Jones, 2008). The difference between basic writing classes and remediation is that the basic writing classes are often credit bearing, where most remediation classes are often not (Duncheon & Tierney, 2014).

In his study of self-beliefs as predictors of writing performance among first-year students in a basic writing class, Jones (2008) found that these self-beliefs (LOC and self-efficacy) were the strongest predictors of achievement in the sample of basic writing students. Locus of control was a particularly important predictor of achievement among the students with the lowest writing abilities, which Jones (2008) posits to be because students in basic writing courses more closely match high school students than their freshman classmates with stronger writing skills. Also noteworthy is the finding that while students' self-efficacy for writing tasks increased, their LOC became more external than internal (Jones, 2008). This finding may be congruent with the assertion that writing instruction in basic writing classes may focus more on learning to write at

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the sentence level (or basic task level) (Robinson, 2009). So, while students in basic writing classes may be coming more self-efficacious when receiving positive feedback from their writing instructors (Jones, 2008), they're attributing their success to factors outside of themselves.

If the primary focus of instruction in basic writing courses is the completion of writing tasks assigned by the instructor, these students are not learning the skills to meet the expectations of academic writing at the college level (Robinson, 2009), Further, such instruction also facilitates maintenance of a more extrinsic motivation for writing (typical of high school writing) instead of the intrinsic motivation that college writing requires (Robinson, 2009). An exception to the questionable success of basic writing classes is an example in which students in a basic writing class received specific instruction in cultivating the three types of writer identity in Ivanič's theory of writer identity. Students not only demonstrated an increase in their identity as a writer but also were more successful in their freshman writing class than students who entered freshman composition directly (i.e., without taking basic writing) (Bird, 2013). Incorporating instruction on the writer identity construct improved the quality of Bird's students, even though these students entered the college setting with weak writing skills.

Summary: Transition in Writing Expectations from High School to College

While writing instructors at both the high school and university levels may agree on the most important writing skills that students should learn (Patterson & Duer, 2006), differences in perceptions, demands, and expectations of writing between these two contexts may continue to add to the perceived skills gap between the two settings. Entering freshmen can't always draw upon their past experiences with writing to inform their writing practices in the new writing environment of higher education (Jones, 2008). They may, in fact, not even be aware that

they've entered an environment of new and different expectations for writing (Fernsten & Reda, 2011).

Despite a variety of programs developed to bridge the gap in writing skills between high school and college, the success of these efforts is not clearly demonstrated. In their 2013 review of efforts to bridge the gap in writing skills from high school to college, Relles and Tierney identified 55 empirical studies of writing remediation programs at both the high school and the college level. Theirs was the first study to review and synthesize the current research specifically on writing remediation programs' academic outcomes, with the hope that the findings would inform policy related to these programs (Relles & Tierney, 2013). The authors report that findings related to the relationship between remediation programs and achievement was lacking "both empirical consistency and substantive relevance to policy" due to inconsistences in definitions college writing, and in how achievement was measured across studies (Relles & Tierney, 2013, p. 26). Adding to the concern over remediation and developmental writing programs at the postsecondary level include the inconsistencies among the placement tests used to assess students' writing readiness (Breland, et. al., 1999; Duncheon & Tierney, 2014; Relles & Tierney, 2013).

In assigning students to the categories of remedial, developmental, basic, or first-year writer, we at the institutional level are imposing a specific writer identity on these students. Problems with the efficacy of these programs, coupled with issues of accuracy in the placement tests, call into question the practice of creating tiered writing instruction in the higher education setting. The student writers in these programs are bearing the responsibility for what may be larger more systemic problems related to writing instruction in high school, writing expectations in college, and a lack of understanding of the skills, perceptions, and expectations that students

bring with them into the college setting. Recent research efforts into identifying who considers themselves writers and authors has begun to uncover some of the situations and experiences that students perceive as contributing to their identification as a writer (or not). A review of these studies, with populations similar to the population of interest for this study, follows.

Writer Identity in Higher Education – A Systematic Review of Literature

Despite a volume of literature on writing and students' perceptions of writing, only a relatively small body of writing on students' writer identities exists. As noted earlier, much of this work is in the form of concept papers (e.g., Hyland, 2002a, 2002b, 2011; Williams, 2003, 2006b, 2006c, 2008), which provide meaningful contributions to the rich theoretical discourse on student writer identity. Empirical studies of this construct, however, are much fewer in number (Walsh, 2017), but help to establish a theoretical foundation for the study of writer identity among undergraduate students. To date, only one other review on writer identity was identified. Collier (2010) reviewed writer identity research with students in the beginning stages of writing development in monolingual K-6 classrooms. No reviews of writer or authorial identity beyond sixth grade were found (Walsh, 2017).

Study identification. The search for empirical studies on writer identity was conducted in four large databases: Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), JSTOR, ProQuest, and PsychINFO (American Psychological Association). "Authorial identity" was identified early in the search process as an alternative label for writer identity. Results were limited to peer reviewed journals only; no date limits were applied. Search terms were also not limited to a specific field within articles in an effort to maximize the number of initial results. A total of 164 results were found within the four databases, once duplicates were eliminated.

Study selection. The full set of search results was first evaluated by reading titles and abstracts. During this initial evaluation, codes for inclusion and exclusion were generated and refined. Exclusion criteria included results that were not empirical studies (e.g., essays, conceptual papers) and any studies conducted with a population outside of the target population of undergraduate college students. Exclusion criteria also included empirical studies of other types of identity (e.g., gender identity, researcher identity, teacher identity). Within the undergraduate group, further exclusion codes were developed to exclude studies that focused exclusively on non-native English speakers (NNES) and those for which the target population was primarily mature students returning to college as undergraduates. A relatively large portion of the research on writer identity specifically focuses on the construct as experienced in NNES students. However, the choice to exclude these unique populations was made to avoid the potential cultural, linguistic, and/or age-related identities that may confound writer identities in these undergraduate student populations. The complete coding process yielded 13 studies of writer identity among native-English speaking (NES) undergraduate students for the full analysis. Given the small number of studies identified, the additional decision was made to include studies with a small number of graduate, mature, or NNES students in the studies' samples. In each case, the majority of the sample (i.e., more than half) matched the population of interest for this study.

To ensure that all existing studies were captured in the search process, a legacy search using references of the 13 included studies was conducted. Additionally, each of the journals in which the 13 identified studies were published was searched using the same search terms noted above. Finally, four of the five journals noted in Collier's 2010 review were also searched for additional studies for this review. No new studies beyond the original 13 were identified in these

additional searches. For this reason, it is assumed that saturation was reached for the population of interest for the current review.

Search results. A summary of the 13 studies identified in this review is presented in Table 1. The majority of studies identified in the search used either the writer identity or authorial identity construct. A summary of the findings from this review will be discussed in the section that follows. However, before discussion these findings, it is worth noting that all but one of the quantitative studies used the same measure to assess authorial identity, the Student Authorship Questionnaire (SAQ; Pittam, Elander, Lusher, Fox, & Payne, 2009). The psychometric properties of the SAQ were challenged in one of the later studies (Ballentine, Guo, & McCourt Larres, 2015), and an alternative, psychometrically sound scale of authorial identity was introduced in the most recent on the authorial identity construct (Cheung, Stupple, & Elander, 2015). This scale, the Student Attitudes and Beliefs about Authorship Scale (SABAS) is the quantitative scale that will be used in the proposed study.

The SABAS was specifically designed to address the questions about the SAQ's psychometric properties raised by Ballentine et al. (2015). Items on the SAQ were generated first by a focus group of 19 psychology students who discussed their perceptions of authorship and the risk of unintentional plagiarism and then a search of literature based on the themes from the focus groups (Pittam et al., 2009). While the psychometric properties were assessed in the creation of the SAQ, they were low, ranging from .46 to .69 (Pittam et al., 2009). Cheung et al. (2015) followed the more rigorous steps of scale construction in creating the SABAS. Their process included focus groups with students and faculty with expertise in assessing student writing to create a large item pool, testing and evaluating the items' content validity and assessing the items' convergent and divergent validity against writing self-efficacy and critical

Table 1

Summary of Studies of NES Undergraduate Students

Author and Date	Design Type	Study Location	Sample Size	Construct Used
Ballantine & McCourt Larres, 2012	Quantitative	Ireland	217	Authorial identity
Ballentine, Guo, & McCourt Larres, 2015	Quantitative	Ireland	588	Authorial identity
Bird, 2013	Mixed method	United States	47	Writer identity
Cheung, Stupple, & Elander, 2015	Quantitative	England	439 (EFA) 307 (CFA)	Authorial identity
Creme & Hunt, 2002	Qualitative	England	7	Self as writer
Elander, Pittam, Lusher, Fox, & Payne, 2010	Mixed method	England	279	Authorial identity
Ketter & Hunter, 2003	Qualitative	United States	39	Writer identity
Kinder & Elander, 2012	Mixed method	England	62	Authorial identity
Leggette, Jarvis, & Walther, 2013	Qualitative	United States	57	Writer identity
Lunsford, Fishman, & Liew, 2013	Qualitative	United States	1	Writer identity
Olinger, 2011	Qualitative	United States	3	Writer identity
Pittam, Elander, Lusher, Fox, & Payne, 2009	Mixed method	England	19 (qual) 318 (quan)	Authorial identity
Rodgers, 2011	Qualitative	United States	10	Self as author

thinking, respectively. Following the item creation and validation, a confirmatory study was conducted with a new sample of university students. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) identified a three-factor model of authorial identity, which was confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether authorial identity was a single or three-factor model (Cheung et al., 2015).

The SAQ was included and used to compare the previous six-factor (Pittam et al., 2009) and three-factor models of authorial identity (Ballentine et al., 2015) generated by the SAQ, with the three-factor model suggested by the SABAS. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were greater than .70 for each of the three factors of the Cheung et al. (2015) model: authorial confidence (.81), valuing writing (.79), and identification with author (.79). The authors of the SABAS suggest that the systematic approach to item development, the multidisciplinary sample used in both the EFA and CFA studies, and the rigorous validity and reliability testing further support the SABAS as "a more robust model of authorial identity than the SAQ (Cheung et al., 2015, p. 14). They note, as can be expected for an initial scale validation study, that more evidence supporting the SABAS as a measure of authorial identity is needed.

Findings from the research on writer and authorial identity. Once the 13 studies were identified, the findings were examined and coded for common themes across studies. Seven unique themes emerged that shed light on the factors that contribute to students' writer or authorial identity in higher education. A discussion of these themes follows. As noted earlier, five of the six studies of the authorial identity construct relied solely on the SAQ, despite its questionable ability to produce reliable and valid scores. Therefore, findings related to authorial identity should be interpreted with caution.

Fear and/or lack of understanding of plagiarism. Studies using the SAQ to measure authorial identity tended to focus on the relationship between authorial identity and plagiarism. Findings indicated a positive relationship between high authorial identity and students' understanding of plagiarism (Ballentine et al., 2015; Elander et al., 2010; Kinder & Elander, 2012), and a negative relationship between having dyslexia and understanding plagiarism (Kinder & Elander, 2012). Further, a negative relationship between students' sense of themselves as writers with agency and their fear of or preoccupation with committing plagiarism emerged in several studies (Creme & Hunt, 2002; Lunsford et al., 2013). Linking students' understanding of plagiarism to their identities as writers provides a unique insight into the potential need to teach the critical skills of paraphrasing and citation that are so critical to academic writing.

Personal expression and choice in writing assignments. Providing students with opportunities for personal expression and choice in their academic writing assignments was also found to contribute to a positive writer identity. Experiencing the freedom of expression in a professional writing environment contributed to greater agency in academic writing (Ketter & Hunt, 1999) and helped students feel more control in their academic writing (Creme & Hunt, 2002). Providing a variety of types of writing assignments, including expressive and creative writing, allowed participants "to be creators and not just writers" (Leggette et al., 2013, p. 75). In contrast, a perception of not having opportunities to write in the "imaginative" way that professional authors do impeded students' perceptions of themselves as writers (Rodgers, 2011, p. 414), and left some students feeling more like editors of the work of others instead of authors themselves (Pittam et al., 2009).

Understanding disciplinary conventions. Exposure to, and understanding of, the rules, conventions, and expectations for writing in different disciplines helped students identify as a

writer (Leggette, 2013), and to feel more confident as writers with agency within their disciplinary community (Ketter & Hunter, 1999; Lunsford et al., 2014; Olinger, 2011). Thus, understanding the writing conventions of their chosen discipline may help students see their writing as contributing to the larger professional community of their discipline (Leydens, 2008). This understanding fosters their ability to identify as a writer both in their chosen discipline as well as for it (Lunsford et al., 2014; Olinger, 2011).

Intentional course design. Courses, workshops, or interventions intentionally designed to increase students' writer or authorial identity were also successful. Among the course designs that improved writer identity were direct instruction on Ivanič's three types of writer identity (Bird, 2013) and adding creative writing assignments to complement the assignments in an academic writing class (Creme & Hunt, 2002). These creative assignments allowed students to "play with their idea of themselves as writers" through explorations of different aspects of themselves that may contribute to their writing assignments (Crème & Hunt, 2002, p. 148). Adding more creative assignments to the disciplinary writing assignments helped students feel more comfortable writing about their disciplinary content from a variety of different perspectives. After participating in an intervention designed to reduce plagiarism through the direct instruction on the constructs of writer and authorial identity, students reported feeling "more positive about adopting more authorial roles in [their] academic writing" (Elander et al., 2010, p. 166). Even such relatively small changes as inclusion of collaborative writing assignments and helping students envision their writing audience(s) may help students feel more authorial (Lunsford et al., 2013; Olinger, 2011), even in those who do not plan to become professional writers (Leggette et al., 2013).

Students' perceptions of authors and writers. A final factor identified as contributing to students' writer identity is their perceptions of what the words *writer* and *author* convey. Students who held a concrete belief that an author could only be someone of high status, who wrote effortlessly, and wrote to large public audiences could not identify with being an author themselves (Pittam et al., 2009; Rodgers, 2011). Having writing published was also a common attribution given to being an author or writer (Ketter & Hunter, 1999; Kinder & Elander, 2012; Lunsford et al., 2013; Rodgers, 2011). Helping students to expand their perceptions of what an author is – to include anyone who writes to express their personal ideas, opinions, and knowledge – may help them develop a stronger writer identity. Providing opportunities to publish their student writing is also an avenue for increasing students' identifications as authors or writers (Lunsford et al., 2013).

Summary of writer and authorial identity research. Findings from this review of existing research on writer and authorial identity inform this study in several ways. The SABAS (Cheung et al., 2015) has potential to provide valuable insights into students' authorial identity development, particularly given the diversity of disciplines and student ages included in their initial samples. While the authors reported demographic data on their sample, this data was not part of their analysis (Cheung et al., 2015). The influence of disciplinary differences and high school experiences are two factors of interest not addressed in existing WI or AI research. Interestingly, two of the factors that influenced writer identity that surfaced in Collier's (2010) review (the addition of creative/expressive writing and understanding various writing standards) were identified as influential among undergraduate participants in these studies as well. The similarity of these findings – particularly given the vast differences in age, development, and skill level between the two target populations – suggests that more research in writer identity is

warranted to better discern whether it is a static construct across ages, skills, and developmental levels or whether the situations that inform writer identity development depend on age-related differences in the writer and writing contexts. Of the 13 studies identified in the systematic review of writer identity, only four were conducted by psychology researchers (Cheung et al., 2015; Elander et al., 2010; Kinder & Elander, 2012; Pittam et al., 2009), all of whom included the SAQ as at least one measure of authorial identity, and all of whom collaborated in some combination on these four studies. None of the identified studies of writer or authorial identity included educational psychologists.

Contribution of the Proposed Study

The proposed study contributes to the small but emerging body of research on undergraduate students' writer identity. The overall goal of the study, to explore and examine components of the writer identity and authorial identity constructs, will help researchers better understand whether these are, in fact, different constructs and if so, in what ways they differ. This study answers the call to incorporate different disciplines into the larger body of writing research (Liu, 2017). By considering the two prominent versions of the construct of self as writer, the study incorporates both the writer identity construct typically used in composition studies with the authorial identity preferred by psychologists. Comparing the scores of the pre-established authorial identity items on the SABAS with students' responses to the open-ended questions about writer identity, then, can inform both disciplines. A clearer operational definition for the constructs may yield more generalizable research findings in future studies.

The timing of the data collection, occurring at the beginning of participants' university writing experiences, captures the students' writer identities at their entry point to higher education. With the exception of Bird (2013), the studies on writer identity discussed in the

review of literature have all been conducted with students who have at least some exposure to, and experience with, writing in higher education at the time of the study. Understanding participants' perceptions of themselves as writers, as well as the situations that inform these perceptions, sheds light on the writing experiences first-year students bring to the university setting. These insights can then inform writing instruction that makes the expectations of writing in higher education more transparent and that addresses the skills needed to meet those expectations effectively.

Use of the SABAS with a different population of students is another contribution of the study. Validation of the scores generated by the modified SABAS may help to further the development of a quantitative measure of writer/authorial identity. Given the promising psychometric properties reported in the scale creation study (Cheung et al., 2015), additional tests of these properties, with a different population of students, is beneficial to this end. Validation of a psychometrically sound quantitative measure of writer identity could also allow more mixed methods studies on the writer identity construct, adding to the diversity of research design in this area of research – particularly for educational psychologists.

In addition to diversity of research design, the proposed study contributes to the writer identity literature in other ways. Considering writer identity from the educational psychology lens of identity as a developmental construct adds disciplinary diversity to the larger body of research in this area. Further, the target population of undergraduate students for whom English is their first language may contribute to our understanding of writer identity as a more universal construct for all students, not only in the context of NNES learners where the majority of studies of writer identity are focused. Studying writer identity as a more universal construct – one that is independent of the influences of second language acquisition and culture – can help inform

writing instruction in higher education for a broader student population, including NNES students.

Working Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature related writing practices in high school, writing expectations in higher education, and existing research related to students' writer identity development in both settings, the following working hypotheses were developed for each of the research questions for this study.

1. Quantitative: To what extent do first-year undergraduate students identify as being a writer?

    Hypothesis 1. Based on the literature supporting differences in expectations and perceptions of writing between high school and higher education contexts, it is hypothesized that the majority of participants will not identify as a writer at their entry into the higher education setting. This hypothesis is also supported by the findings from the two informal pilot studies conducted with undergraduate students in this setting.

2. Quantitative: Is the existing three-factor model of authorial identity supported with the sample of undergraduate students in this setting?

    Hypothesis 2. Because of the rigor used in both establishing and validating the SABAS, as well as the relatively large sample sizes in both the exploratory ($n = 439$) and confirmatory ($n = 306$) studies (Cheung et al., 2015), a multi-factor model is hypothesized with this study's population as well.

3. Quantitative: Do differences exist between students' writer identity (positive, negative, conditional) and their authorial identity?

    Hypothesis 3. Because the authorial identity construct is defined in terms of writer identity, as well as students' limited exposure to the writing expectations at the university level at

the time of the study, it is hypothesized that no significant differences will be found between the students' writer and authorial identity in the study sample.

4. Quantitative: Do writer identity and authorial identity differ across demographic categories and different high school English class experiences by participants?

Hypothesis 4. Existing studies of writer and authorial identity have not included demographic characteristics of participants in their analyses. However, differences across different levels of high school English are expected to be found, based on higher expectations for writing that are assumed in the more standard Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) English classes.

5. Qualitative: What situations do students list as contributing to their identification with being/not being a writer?

Hypothesis 5. Qualitative research is often conducted to generate hypotheses or theories related to the constructs of interest. As such, the themes that emerged from coding the qualitative data were used to help increase understanding of the situations and experiences that students attribute as informing whether or not they identify as a writer, or when they do. The codes that emerged from students' responses were then be examined across constructs during the mixed analyses.

6. Mixed: How do the situations that contribute to students' writer identities differ between WI groups and AI scores?

Hypothesis 6. Based on the findings of existing research on writer identity, it was hypothesized that few, if any, differences will be found in the situations that contribute to positive, negative, or conditional writer identity. What is less known is how the situations that inform writer identity may or may not differ across authority identity scores. If a multi-factor

model of AI is confirmed, it is hypothesized that differences may be found among the situations that contribute to the different subscale scores. This assumption is based on the differences between each of the subscales of the original SABAS (authorial confidence, valuing writing, and identification with author).

7. What common features exist between writer identity and authorial identity in this sample of first-year undergraduate students?

Hypothesis 7. The overall hypothesis of this study is that the constructs of writer identity and authorial identity will be very similar in the sample of students for this study, as they will have little to no exposure to the potentially different demands that college writing requires at the time of the study.

Chapter Three: Methods

While gaining popularity as a research method (Seifert, Goodman, King, & Baxter Magolda, 2010), mixed methods research is not simply conducting both qualitative and quantitative research in the same study. Mixed methods research studies must justify that the best way to understand the phenomenon of interest is to examine it through both a qualitative and quantitative approach, and to then generate new information that can only evolve through the "mixing" aspect of this design orientation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixing can occur at any or all stages of the design, depending on the type of mixed methods design that best answers the research question for the study. When and how to mix the qualitative and quantitative strands, data, and/or findings must be an intentional decision, based on the evidence that neither a qualitative nor quantitative design alone can fully answer the overarching mixed methods research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In the case of this study, a mixed method research design was justified by the overarching goal of this study to expand our understanding of the writer and authorial identity constructs through a study that directly compares and contrasts the constructs in the mixed strand, using both qualitative and quantitative data. To date, no other study has been identified that has sought to accomplish these same goals. Therefore, a mixed methods design provides the means to more fully examine the two constructs of interest, as the participants' perceptions and survey responses will be interpreted together to generate new knowledge in this area of research.

Justification for Mixed Methods Research Design

This study uses a convergent parallel mixed methods design, which allows for the concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data (Figure 1). Concurrent data collection serves the purpose of gathering information about the perceptions of participants in a single setting at a single moment in time, using both quantitative and qualitative measures. Doing so helps to capture a more detailed perspective of participants' perceptions early in their college experience, prior to the first college writing assignments. This timing better exemplifies aspects of the writer identities students may bring with them to the college setting. Sequential data collection for the two strands ran the risk of changes in participants' perceptions from one data point to the next, if they had writing assessments during the time between strands.

Although relatively small, existing research on writer identity with the target population has been investigated almost equally between qualitative and quantitative designs (see Table 1). Of the three existing studies using a mixed methods design, one was primarily qualitative with a small quantitative strand that quantified qualitative data (Bird, 2013), and the remaining two used their qualitative strand to inform the larger quantitative goal of survey construction (Elander et al., 2010; Pittam et al., 2009). Of these mixed methods studies, Bird (2013) prioritized the qualitative strand over the quantitative and Elander et al. (2010) and Pittam et al. (2009) prioritized quantitative over qualitative. Equally prioritizing the quantitative and qualitative strands in this study provides a unique perspective of the constructs. This parallel-database variant of the convergent design allows the researcher to analyze the two types of data to "examine facets of a phenomenon" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 80). Because the study of writer identity and authorial identity – and the extent that they relate to each other – is a relatively new endeavor, thoroughly examining the different facets of each construct is a valuable first step in understanding their relationship with one another.

The current study addresses the gaps in the existing literature by examining students'

perceptions of their writer and authorial identities through a combination of quantitative

measures. While a quantitative measure can begin to uncover more generalizable findings related

to students' sense of being an author of their own work, the qualitative responses can help to

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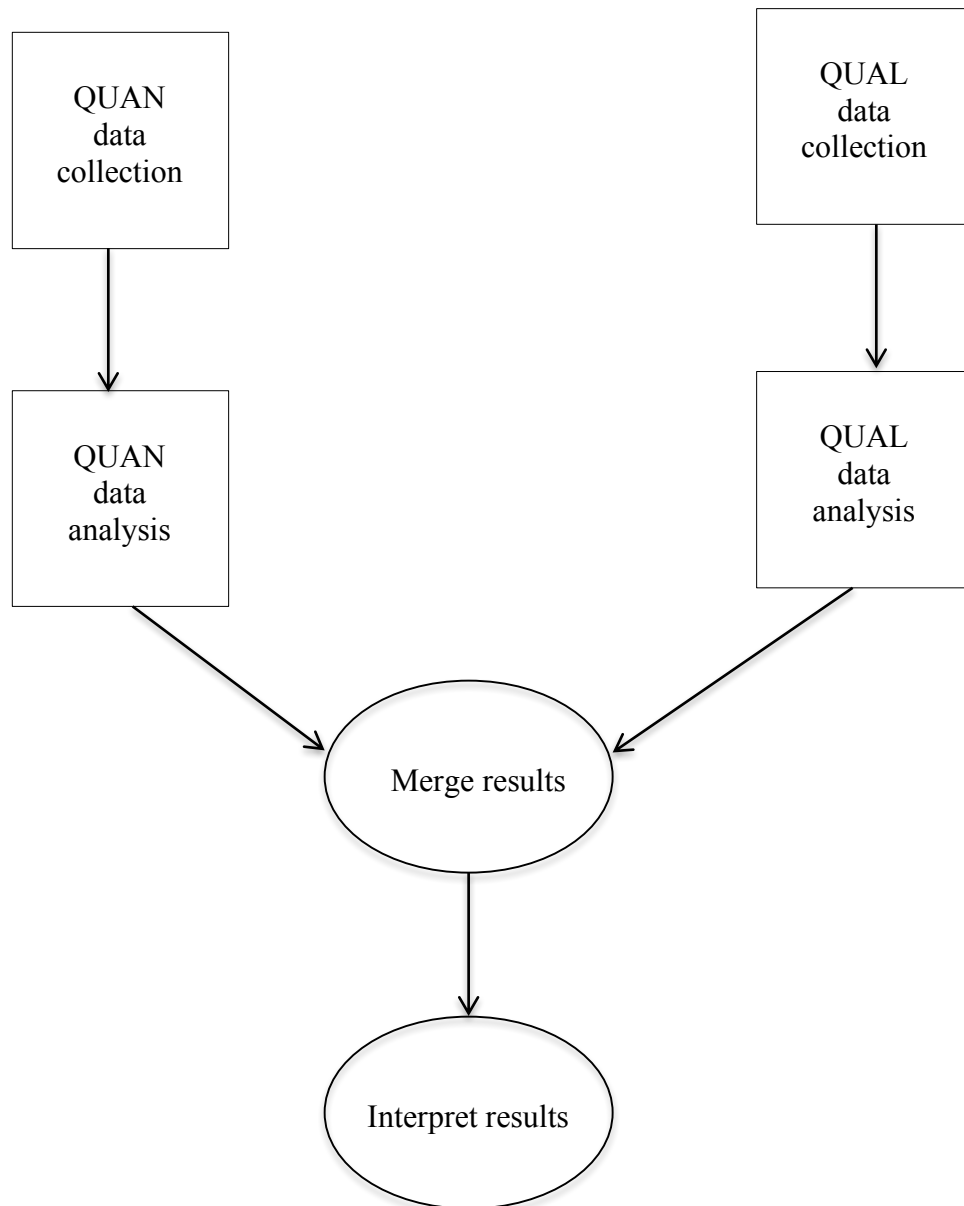
Figure 1. Convergent parallel mixed methods design

contextualize those scores through students' perceptions of the factors that may influence the scores. Additionally, by investigating both authorial and writer identity, this study advances the operational understanding of what differences – if any – exist between the two constructs. As Table 1 shows, the majority of existing studies in this area examine either writer identity or authorial identity. Including both constructs in the same study makes a unique contribution to the literature.

In addition to diversity of research design, the current study contributes to the writer identity literature in other ways. Of the existing research on writer identity among undergraduate students only three studies have been conducted by psychologists (Cheung et al., 2015; Elander et al., 2010; Pittam et al., 2009). Considering writer identity from the educational psychology lens of identity as a developmental construct adds to the disciplinary diversity to the larger body of research in this area. Further, the target population of undergraduate students for whom English is their first language was intentionally chosen to contribute to understanding writer identity as a more universal construct for all students, not only in the context of Non-native English speakers (NNES). As noted in the review of literature, much of the research in this area focuses on writer identity in the NNES population. While understanding writer identity in the NNES population is important work, studying the construct as a more universal construct – one that is independent of the influences of second language acquisition and culture – helps inform writing instruction in higher education for a broader student population, one that also includes NNES students.

Participants and Setting

This study was conducted in a large, urban, public university in the southeastern United States. The study's sample was drawn from the population of first-year students enrolled in a

writing-intensive inquiry course required of most new students at this university. Approximately 2,700 students enroll in this required course (hereafter referred to as "the course"), which represents 64% of the total population of first-year students entering the university in the fall of 2017 (n = 4,200 for total first-year enrollment). It is important to note that the institution that is the setting for this study does not require – or even offer – writing remediation courses except as part of the pre-admission support for non-native English speakers. In addition, the course selected for the study is not exclusively a writing course. It is instead a course aimed at increasing entering students' critical thinking, analytic, and reasoning skills in a wide range of areas, but these skills are typically assessed through writing papers. Because data collection was conducted concurrently, the participants and course setting for the study were the same for both the qualitative and quantitative strands. Permission to conduct the study with students from this course was received from the Department Chair and approval for the study by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was received prior to recruitment and data collection.

The selection of first-year students as the target population was intentional, as students in this population are in a period of both developmental and academic transition. Most first year students attending this university are traditional students, i.e., entering college immediately after high school. As such, they are in the developmental period of emerging adulthood, a time where social development is influenced by the increased autonomy and array of new – and possibly more diverse – peer relations that the higher education setting provides (Arnett, 2000; Gutman & Eccles, 2007). As noted earlier, the transition to college is a critical period of meaning making for this population. Students are working to understand the new expectations of higher education, and to incorporate these into their own identities (Arnett, 2007; McLean, 2005).

Academically, first-year college students are learning to navigate new expectations for their writing abilities, with increases in both the volume and discipline-specific conventions required in university-level writing assignments (Carter & Harper, 2013). The course selected for this study's setting was designed to help students transition into these new expectations through the course content and assignments. Students enrolled in the course typically remain with the same professor and classmates through two sequential semesters. In addition, all sections of the target course are taught from a common curriculum of shared learning outcomes and writing assessment topics. This continuity of instruction, assessments, and classmates is specifically designed to facilitate students' transition to the higher education setting by fostering a sense of community and trust among enrolled students and their professors (personal communication, M. Abelson, personal communication, August 2014). The shared curriculum across different sections provides an additional benefit of drawing the study's sample from this target course. Findings from this study can be assumed to be relevant to the course in general and not simply the specific sections from which the sample was drawn. It is worth noting that students can be exempted from the first level of the required course if they successfully earn high enough Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and/or dual enrollment credits. Students who completed AP, IB, or dual enrollment English classes but did not earn the threshold scores/grade required for exemption are still required to take both classes in the sequence. The sample for this study included students enrolled in both the first (111) and second (112) levels of this required course.

All 42 faculty members teaching the 135 sections of the 111 and 112 courses were invited to participate in the current study, as both levels of the course enrolled first-semester freshmen. Actual participating class sections were based on professors' permission to allow the

researcher access to their students for the study. In total, 16 of the 42 faculty members agreed to allow recruitment for participants in their classes. Because students are randomly assigned into the different sections of this class, this convenience sampling approach still allowed for variability of the sample in terms of the demographic characteristics of participants. Table 2 displays a comparison of the demographic characteristics of the population of first-year students enrolled in 2017 and those of the study's sample, indicating the sample is representative of the overall population of entering first year students.

Table 2

Comparison of Gender and Race Demographic Categories for All First-Time Freshmen and the Study Sample Entering Fall 2017

Demographic Category	All First-Time Freshmen	Study Sample
Gender		
Male	38%	39%
Female	62%	61%
Other	<1%	<1%
Race/ethnicity		
White	42%	43%
Black/African American	19%	22%
Asian	15%	12%
Hispanic/Latino	10%	10%
Two or more races	8%	8%
Other or unknown	5%	5%

Instruments

Student Attitudes and Beliefs about Authorship Scale (SABAS). A modified version of the SABAS (Cheung et al., 2015) was used as the primary quantitative measure in this study. An earlier measure of authorial identity, the Student Authorship Questionnaire [SAQ] (Pittam et al., 2009), has been used in several previous studies of authorial identity; however, the reported

psychometrics for the SABAS were much stronger than those reported for the SAQ. In fact, the SABAS was created as a replacement for the SAQ, and was developed in conjunction with one of the original creators of the SAQ (Cheung et al., 2015). A detailed discussion of these two measures is included in Chapter Two. The SABAS is a 17-item scale developed specifically to measure students' authorial identity, a construct very similar to the writer identity construct. Items are measured using a six point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Scoring for the SABAS is computed as scale scores for each of the three subscales: authorial confidence (eight items), valuing writing (five items), and identification with author (four items). The scale's authors report a Cronbach's alpha of .89 for the SABAS as a measure of the single construct of authorial identity, and subscale alphas of .85, .84, and .79 respectively, for each of the three subscales noted previously (Cheung et al., 2015). Confirmatory factor analysis of the data collected in the original scale-validation study determined that a three-factor model of authorial identity was a stronger fit than a one-factor model (Cheung et al., 2015). Both the three-factor and one-factor models were tested for the analysis of the data collected in the current study.

Writer identity questions. The SABAS was modified to include quantitative and qualitative questions related to students' identification as a writer. The writer identity questions were based on informal surveys used for instructional planning during the three years I taught the first two classes (111 and 112) of the required course described in this study. While data from these informal surveys are not included in the current study, the discussions with my students following completion of the informal surveys strongly influenced the motivation for and design of this current study. These writer identity questions were added to the beginning of the measure to collect students' responses to the qualitative open-ended questions before students answered

the questions related to authorial identity. This placement was made to decrease the influence that answering the SABAS items may have on students' qualitative responses to the open-responses prompts. The writer identity questions were developed based on the interview questions asked by the larger National Conversation on Writing: who considers themselves a writer and why (NWP, 2016). Students were asked if they considered themselves to be writers, followed by a branched *why*, *why not,* or *when* open-ended prompt.

Response options for the first part of the writer identity questions ("Do you consider yourself a writer?") included *sometimes* as an option in addition to *yes* and *no*. The addition of *sometimes* as a third response option grew out of in-class discussions with my former students during the years that I taught. In several cases on the informal instructional surveys, students responded yes or no to identifying as a writer, but their response to the why/why not question indicated that there were some circumstances in which they did identify as a writer and some when they did not. Allowing that students' identification as a writer may be contingent upon specific situations and/or writing experiences (negative, positive or both negative and positive) helped to add greater depth to understanding of the writer identity construct.

Following the initial writer identity question, participants were asked to support their response choice in an open response format. These open response questions generated the qualitative data for this study. Each response type for the initial writer identity question branched to different qualitative prompts. Students who answered *no* were prompted by the question "Why don't you consider yourself a writer?" and students who answered *yes* were asked "Why do you consider yourself a writer?". Students who responded *sometimes* were prompted with two questions: "When DO you consider yourself a writer?" followed by "When DON'T you consider yourself a writer?". These qualitative questions were intentionally general, so as not to prompt

any presupposed influences on writer identity that might have occurred with more specific prompts.

Demographic data. Several questions asking for demographic data were added to the end of the modified SABAS. These questions included students' age, gender, highest level of high school English completed, current course level (111 or 112) and whether their high school writing experiences were positive, negative, or both. Two additional questions asked whether students were in their first semester of college and if they were taking the class for the first time. These last two questions served to double check participants' eligibility based on the intended sample characteristics for this study (described previously). The specific demographic categories included were selected based on previous research on writing, writing identity, and authorial identity in higher education and discussed in the review of literature in Chapter Two. Several of the existing studies on these constructs suggest that academic discipline may contribute to students' writer identity in different ways (Biel & Knight, 2007), but none incorporated academic discipline as part of the study's analyses. The decision not to collect information about participants' intended academic major was informed by the timing of the data collection for this study, which took place within the first three weeks of the academic year. First-year students in the population would not yet have had exposure writing conventions of their intended academic major at that time. The inclusion of participants' highest level of high school English class was based on conversations with my students during my three years teaching the course, and students' impromptu comments about their high school English classes. The influence of high school writing instruction on students' ability to successfully write in college is further supported by the recent development and early success of the NWP College-Ready Writers Program (SRI Education, 2015). The relationship between college students' high school writing courses and

writing expectations in higher education was also a focus area of the ACT's national surveys of high school English teachers and instructors of first-year English classes at the college level. Findings from these surveys, as reported in Patterson and Duer (2006), found differences in the writing skills taught in high school for students assumed to be college bound and those assumed not to be attending college after graduation.

Additional data sources. Research memos and field notes were written throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study. Maxwell notes that "memos not only capture your analytic thinking about your data, but also *facilitate* [emphasis in original] such thinking, stimulating analytic insights" (2013, p.105). As such, they become a method of both data collection and data analysis. The memos and field notes were updated after each data collection session to record any observations and/or interactions with professors and students. This information helped to inform validity considerations related to consistency of implementation across course sections and different professors. Research memos were also written, reviewed, and updated on a regular basis throughout the data analysis phase of the study. These memos were particularly useful in recording initial insights gained from the early stages of the qualitative coding process and for documenting researcher decisions throughout the different analyses.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

Participant recruitment was conducted solely by the researcher, using a recruitment script to ensure consistent recruitment across course sections. This script included information regarding the purpose of the study, eligibility requirements, reiteration of the voluntary nature of participation, and assurance that no personal information would be collected on the survey. Eligibility criteria included being 18 years old (or older), enrolled in the class for the first time,

and being in the first semester of college. These criteria were developed to ensure that only students new to the higher education setting would be included in the sample. Transfer students and students repeating the course were ineligible due to their previous experience in academic writing in higher education settings.

In ten of the sixteen participating class sections, professors allowed time for the students to complete the survey immediately after the recruitment script was completed. Four other professors allowed for in-person recruitment but survey completion outside of class time (with the survey link emailed by the professor) and two professors requested the recruitment script and survey link be shared via email and completed outside of class time. The sample selection process included screening for age to ensure that only students over the age of 18 would be eligible to participate in the study. This screening took place through questions asking for age and date of birth on the initial page of the online survey. After checking all submitted surveys for completeness and eligibility requirements, 387 first-year students comprised the study sample. The minimum sample size calculated for a 95% confidence level with a population of 2,700 students was calculated to be 336; the study's sample surpasses that minimum by 51 participants.

Data were collected using an electronic version of the modified SABAS using the Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) software program. The survey was formatted so it could be completed on both computers and smartphones. For in-class survey completion, students were given a half sheet of paper with instructions for accessing the survey. These survey instructions were given to all students in each class, and students were instructed to push the instructions to the front of their desks (or center of tables, if applicable) when they were finished with the survey (or if they chose not to participate). Once all students had finished the survey, the instruction sheets were collected to ensure only students in the target courses had access to the

study's survey. For classes in which the students completed the survey outside of class time, the survey link and reiteration of the recruitment script were emailed to the participating professors who in turn emailed the information to their students. This survey distribution process allowed for the separation of any identifying student information from the survey responses, as the researcher did not have direct access to students' names or email addresses at any point in this process.

The survey began with an initial consent page to ensure that participants met the minimum age requirement to provide informed consent. Students who entered ages less than 18 were automatically redirected to a page instructing them that they did not meet eligibility requirements and could exit the survey. Completed surveys were assigned a unique record identification number generated by REDCap; thus, completed surveys did not include any identifying information that could connect responses to specific students. Only complete surveys were used for the final analyses.

Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures

Although the quantitative and qualitative strands of this study were given equal priority, the qualitative data were analyzed before the quantitative to decrease any potential influence that quantitative findings may have had on the qualitative coding procedures. Qualitative data were analyzed using the ATLAS.ti software program. This software provides the means for the three steps of qualitative data analysis recommended by Maxwell (2013): coding, thematic analysis, and connecting strategies. The process began with importing the participants' open-response answers into ATLAS.ti. This software also allows in vivo coding, a process in which word(s) and/or phrase(s) from qualitative responses become preliminary codes (Friese, 2014). As noted previously, research memos were written during the entire coding process. ATLAS.ti software

provides a method for creating memos directly within the project or importing memos written

elsewhere into the project. This function keeps all of the qualitative data sources in a single

digital project workspace (Friese, 2014). It is worth noting that no data other than participants

record identification number was imported into the ATLAS.ti file. Again, this decision was made

to initially keep the qualitative and quantitative data separate during the two distinct stages of

analyses.

The first stage of coding qualitative data was done in vivo, where codes were generated

from exact words and/or phrases present in the participants' responses. Beginning the coding

process in this way allowed the participants' exact words to serve as the ideas for the first, more

descriptive, codes (Friese 2014). Very few of the existing studies on writer and authorial identity

directly asked participants about these constructs; therefore in vivo coding allowed their thoughts

and ideas to inform the coding process. Qualitative data were coded based on the prompt that

generated the response (e.g., all responses to the prompt "When do you consider yourself a

writer" were coded before moving onto the next set of responses to a different prompt). This

decision was made to ensure that any differences between the situations that informed negative,

conditional, and positive writer identity could be represented – no matter how subtle. When

coding these responses, an index was added to each code to represent whether it was generated

from positive, negative, or conditional response prompts (the conditional response prompts were

further indexed to designate situations that fostered a positive or negative identification). Each

initial code, then, began with one of four different indices (Y_, N_, SY_, or SN_) followed by

the code name. Beginning the coding process with the positive writer identity responses was also

intentional, a decision to begin the in vivo coding with what was working for students with

positive writer identities. The negative writer identity responses were coded next, followed by

the two groups of conditional responses. The emerging themes and/or higher order ideas were noted in the data analysis research memo after each coding session. As patterns of codes began to emerge, many of the initial codes were merged and renamed to represent the common ideas expressed across responses. During this merging and renaming, however, the four code group indices remained with the codes to distinguish which situations were generated by each of the writer identity response types. The final code list included 51 codes (total, across all four code groups) that represented 606 total units of analysis from the qualitative responses. Following this second stage of coding, a codebook of all codes, sorted by the four code groups, was generated for future reference. The full codebook is included in Appendix B.

After all data were coded by the researcher, a random sample of students' quantitative responses was selected and given to an external coder to validate the researcher's coding decisions. The person selected for this process was a university professor not affiliated with the target course, and relatively unfamiliar with the constructs under study. The external reviewer was given a sample equating to approximately 10% of the sample (38 cases) and the codebook. Exemplar quotes were included in the codebook, but none of the exemplars provided was included in the sample of responses given the coder. Initial independent coding resulted in 71% agreement between the researcher and independent coder. After discussing each case where discrepancies occurred, both parties came to agreement on 74 of the 75 pieces of coded data, resulting in a final independent coding agreement of 98%.

The final stage of the qualitative analysis was conducted using the network view function in ATLAS.ti. This function, similar to creating concept maps, allows researchers to represent the qualitative data visually, establishing and labeling the connections between individual codes and/or data groups. The code groups and codes within networks can be rearranged, and

connections revised and expanded, all while remaining directly connected to the original data from student responses. This direct connection back to the original data points allows for concurrent accuracy checks with the original data when making any assumptions about connections within the network. Before creating the networks, however, all of the codes were reviewed as a whole, and common themes across response groups were generated and recorded in a network map research memo. These themes are discussed in detail in the Findings Chapter, but included the following: being required to write, perception of own writing skills, enjoyment of writing, voluntarily writing, expressive nature of writing, genre-dependent writing, and motivation to write.

Each of these themes was analyzed on a separate network map, where the codes associated with each theme were imported into the individual maps. Initial connections were made based on the code names, without regard to the response group index. For example, codes under that first theme (being required to write) included codes from the *yes*, *no*, and *conditionally yes* code groups (Y12_required as a student, N9_only when required, and SY6_when required). Once the initial connections were established and labeled, the individual quotes from participant responses were imported and explored for further insights into the relationships in each theme. This process of reviewing the original response quotes allowed for further refinement of codes that became apparent based on insights generated in the network mapping process.

In total, the qualitative analyses described here allowed for multiple reviews of participants' original responses to the situations that informed their writer identity, which in turn generated the final findings reported in Chapter Four. Throughout the coding, grouping, and network mapping processes, research memos served as an additional qualitative data analysis

tool. Insights from the data analysis memos helped to facilitate the inferences made in the network view analysis. Insights drawn from these research memos also informed the mixing of the data during the mixed analysis phase the study.

Quantitative Data Analysis Procedures

All quantitative data were collected using the electronic version of the modified SABAS described earlier. Analyses of the quantitative data were conducted using SPSS software. This software allowed for analysis of the two target constructs (writer and authorial identity) as well as the relationships between each of these constructs and the demographic data collected. Prior to beginning any analyses, responses from the 386 completed surveys were inspected for any missing data. The only missing data were demographic responses from three respondents. Therefore all 386 participants were retained as the sample for analyses.

Writer identity analysis. The first research question, to what extent first-year college students identify as being a writer, was answered by calculating a frequency distribution for the responses (yes, no, sometimes). Participants were then grouped into three WI groups, based on their response to this initial question: positive (yes), conditional (sometimes), and negative (no). These writer identity groups were then used in subsequent analyses. Students' qualitative responses to the writer identity question (why, why not) were analyzed separately, as described in the previous qualitative data analysis section.

Authorial identity analyses. The preliminary data analysis for authorial identity began with the generation of descriptive statistics to report the measures of central tendency and variance of the SABAS subscale scores as well as determine skewedness and presence of outliers. A visual review of the histograms showed writer identity scores to be slightly negatively

(left) skewed, and a positive skew for the valuing writing and identification with author subscale scale scores. The full results of the measures of central tendency are displayed in Table 3.

Because the SABAS is a newly created and relatively untested instrument, it was also important to establish the validity of the scores generated by the scale with the population in this study. The sample of first-year students in the United States also differed from the sample of students in the SABAS scale validation study (first through fourth year undergraduate students in the United Kingdom). Therefore, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test Cheung et al.'s (2015) three-factor model of authorial identity with this study's sample. CFA was the appropriate analysis in this case, since the purpose of the analysis was to test the factors against a previously established structure, and to assess the relationship among factors within that structure (Field, 2013). Specifically, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was the type of CFA conducted to force the three-factor model supported by the initial scale creation study by Cheung et al. (2015). All assumptions were tested prior to running the PCA. The data generated from the authorial identity items on the modified SABAS were ordinal, but since they were

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for All SABAS Items

	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Authorial confidence items						
I have my own style of academic writing	1	6	4.19	1.21	-.32	-.32
I am able to document my ideas clearly in my writing	1	6	4.08	1.20	-.43	-.38
What I write communicates my confidence about the area to the reader	1	6	4.43	1.10	-55	.14
I generate ideas while I am writing	2	6	4.82	.98	-.56	-.08
I have my own voice in my writing	1	6	4.67	1.14	-.73	.14
I feel in control when writing assignments	1	5	3.97	1.33	-.38	-.43

I am able to formulate my ideas in my writing	1	6	4.43	1.17	-.72	.26
Academic writing allows me to communicate my ideas	1	6	4.30	1.28	-.65	.02
Valuing writing items						
Being able to write clearly is an important part of being a graduate	1	6	5.22	.94	-1.57	3.17
It is important to me that my essays are well written	1	6	5.33	.83	-1.72	4.73
Academic writing is an important skill	1	6	5.16	.98	-1.39	2.20
My ability to write academically is important to me	1	6	5.02	1.03	-1.15	1.49
It is important to me to keep developing as an academic writer	1	6	5.08	1.00	-1.12	1.38
Identification with author items						
I feel that I am the author of my assignments	1	6	4.55	1.16	-.75	.47
I think of myself as an author	1	6	2.74	1.34	.49	-.54
I feel that I own my written work	1	6	4.86	1.10	.12	.25
I consider myself to be the author of my academic work	1	6	4.38	1.31	-.68	.15

generated from a Likert-style scale, they were treated as continuous for the purpose of this analysis. Thus, the first assumption for running a PCA was met. The second assumption, that a linear relationship existed between the variables, was first tested with a simple scatterplot, but linearity couldn't be established from the initial review of this output. Examination of the correlation matrix (Table 4) generated from running an initial PCA, however, indicated that this second assumption was met. All variables exceeded the standard $r \geq .30$ criteria for inclusion in the PCA (Field, 2013). No extreme outliers were identified by visually checking the data and also confirmed by creating probability-probability plots (P-P plots) for each of the three factor component scores. In each case, the distribution of the data remained scattered closely on either side of the "ideal diagonal line" that represents normally distributed data (Field, 2013, p. 181).

The final assumption tested to assess the appropriateness of the PCA was adequacy of sampling. This assumption was also met, as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .93, which is well above the .5 minimum value and fall in the highest ranks of "Marvelous" for this test (Field, 2013, p. 685). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p <$ .0005). The KMO and Bartlett's test suggest that the PCA factors can be considered both "distinct and reliable" (Field, 2013, p. 684).

Since all assumptions were met, the initial PCA was run with all 17 items on the original SABAS. For this initial PCA, a specific number of factors was not forced; extraction was based on eigenvalues greater than one. The initial scree plot displays three distinct points of flexion, and three distinct factors had eigenvalues greater than one (7.60, 2.10, and 1.03 respectively). These three factors accounted for 63.11% of the total variance. However, the rotated component matrix showed that two items loaded across all three factors. These items were "What I write communicates my confidence about the area to the reader" and "Academic writing allows me to communicate my ideas." Two items loaded similarly on two factors. These items were "I have my own style of academic writing" and "I have my own voice in my writing." Each of these four items was sequentially removed and a new PCA run after each removal. This item removal process was continued until all items loaded strongly on a single factor, which occurred after all four items were removed. The final PCA was then run, this time with three factors forced to confirm the authorial identity model proposed by the authors of the SABAS. The results of this final PCA with three factors forced are reported in Chapter Four.

Table 4

Correlations Matrix for Original SABAS Items

	AC1	AC2	AC3	AC4	AC5	AC6	AC7	AC8	IWA1	IWA2	IWA3	IWA4	VW1	VW2	VW3	VW4	VW5
AC1	1.00																
AC2	.45	1.00															
AC3	.43	.51	1.00	.													
AC4	.47	.52	.43	1.00													
AC5	.59	.52	.54	.48	1.00												
AC6	.52	.65	.54	.53	.58	1.00											
AC7	.48	.69	.50	.56	.54	.68	1.00										
AC8	.44	.51	.56	.46	.56	.55	.54	1.00									
IWA1	.46	.40	.51	.38	.53	.49	.49	.47	1.00								
IWA2	.36	.43	.29	.36	.39	.44	.42	.32	.32	1.00							
IWA3	.48	.40	.50	.43	.53	.47	.45	.47	.69	.28	1.00						
IWA4	.44	.44	.40	.42	.46	.52	.49	.44	.66	.34	.53	1.00					
VW1	.23	.26	.35	.27	.23	.33	.28	.34	.30	.18	.29	.31	1.00				
VW2	.19	.37	.34	.32	.30	.29	.36	.42	.30	.21	.30	.27	.50	1.00			
VW3	.24	.20	.40	.28	.28	.28	.27	.51	.34	.10*	.32	.27	.61	.47	1.00		
VW4	.24	.33	.40	.32	.27	.36	.30	.50	.34	.17	.40	.31	.53	.54	.58	1.00	
VW5	.26	.21	.43	.30	.29	.35	.30	.41	.34	.13*	.30	.29	.64	.51	.66	.59	1.00

Note. For items indicated with an asterisk (*) $p \leq .05$; for all other items $p \leq .001$

The three factors identified in the PCA became the three subscales used in subsequent analyses (Authorial Confidence, Identification with Author, and Valuing Writing). Cronbach's alphas were calculated to establish the reliability of each of the three subscales, and inter-item correlations were generated to measure overall construct validity of the modified SABAS. These analyses not only tested the validity and reliability of the scores and instrument, but in doing so also answered the second research question for this study. Because subscale scores were used in the remaining analyses, establishing the validity and reliability of the scores generated by this modified SABAS was an essential first step in the data analysis procedures for the remainder of the study.

Differences between writer identity and authorial identity. The third research question asks whether differences exist between students' perception of their writer identity and their authorial identity. This question began the exploration of whether and in what ways WI and AI may (or may not) be different constructs. This question was investigated by calculating a Chi Square statistic comparing the three groups of writer identity (negative, conditional, and positive) with the three subscales of the SABAS. This study assumed a rank order between the three levels of writer identity, with negative being the lowest and positive the highest, intervals between the three groups couldn't be assumed to be equal. Therefore, the data were considered categorical and Chi Square was the appropriate analysis (Field, 2013).

Before running the Chi Square analyses, three groups (low, average, and high) were created for each of the three subscales of authorial identity (authorial confidence, identification with author, and valuing writing. These calculations were made by first calculating the mean and standard deviation for each subscale, then assigning scores that fell one or more standard

deviations below the mean score to the low group, and scores falling one or more standard deviations above the mean to the high group. The remaining scores were assigned to the average groups. Following this process resulted in low, average, and high groups for each of the three authorial identity subscales that could then be compared with the negative, conditional, and positive writer identity groups. It was these sets of groups that were compared using Chi Square analysis. For these analyses, the writer identity groups were compared in separate analyses with each of the authorial identity subgroups. Therefore, three separate Chi Square analyses were run to test for differences between the writer and authorial identity constructs. The results of these comparisons are reported in Chapter Four.

Influence of demographic data on WI and AI. Existing studies of WI and AI described previously report the demographic characteristics of their samples, but none of the current research on these constructs included differences in demographic characteristics as part of their data analysis. The fourth research question asks whether differences exist between writer and authorial identity across the different demographic characteristics collected for this study. Specifically, this analysis investigated whether participants' age, gender, previous high school writing experiences, highest high school English completion, and current course level (111 or 112) made a difference in their writer and authorial identity.

Both the demographic data and the data representing participants' different group assignments for the writer and authorial identity constructs were considered categorical data (nominal or ordinal). Therefore, separate Chi Square tests were run to determine whether (and where) differences between demographic groups and writer/authorial identity groups emerged. The initial Chi Square tests generated Chi Square statistics to identify whether significant differences existed for each demographic category when compared with each of the four sets of

construct groups (writer identity, authorial confidence, identification with author, and valuing writing groups). In cases where significant differences were found, the analyses were rerun with a Bonferroni adjustment to identify in which aspects of the comparisons these significant differences were located.

Mixed Data Analysis Procedures

The mixing of both the quantitative and qualitative data was the final phase of data analysis for this study. During these analyses, both the original data collected on the modified SABAS and results of the previous quantitative and qualitative analyses were examined together answer the two research questions in the mixed strand. Taken together, these two questions asked what differences and similarities between the writer and authorial identity constructs could be discerned from the examining the quantitative and qualitative data together. To facilitate this analysis, the qualitative codes were first quantified. For this process, numerical variable labels were created for each qualitative code name, and theses numerical codes were added to the study's SPSS database. Each label created for the codes retained a reference to its code group index (e.g., the first code in the yes code group was labeled as Y1). Each code label was then defined in the SPSS database to match the actual code title (e.g., the Y1 variable label was defined in SPSS as "Compared to other subjects," the actual code name). Defining the codes labels in this way allowed for the full qualitative code names to appear in the output for the various mixed analyses. In the final preparatory step, frequency distributions for each of the qualitative codes were calculated and used in the first mixed analysis.

The first mixed analysis investigated whether differences existed in the situations given for the writer identity responses when grouped by the authorial identity groups. This analysis answers the sixth research question, which asks in what ways the situations contributing to

participants' writer identity may differ when compared with their authorial identity group placement. The goal of this research question is to further investigate the inferential differences that may exist between the writer identity and authorial identity constructs, beyond the separate quantitative and qualitative analyses. To maximize variation for this comparison, only the negative and positive writer identity groups and the low and high authorial identity groups were used in this analysis. The code frequencies for each group were converted to percentage frequencies, because the writer identity and authorial identity groups were not the same size. These percentages were then ranked from highest to lowest for each group. The decision to use the rank of each code rather than percentages was to facilitate ease of comparison and discussion. Because this analysis was a side-by-side observation, rather than a quantitative analysis, distinct differences between rankings are easier to identify and discuss than comparing a large number of percentages that may differ only slightly. In the final step, a visual comparison was conducted across the groups, comparing code rankings between the negative writer identity group and the two low authorial identity groups (authorial confidence and identification with author) and between the positive writer identity group and two high authorial identity groups. Differences that emerged from these comparisons of rankings across all groups were noted and are discussed in Chapter Four.

The second mixed analysis was conducted to answer the final research question, which asks what common features exist between writer identity and authorial identity in this sample of first-year undergraduate students. For this analysis, the qualitative responses to the writer identity questions were examined for the presence of authorial identity using a rubric created from the authorial confidence and identification with author items on the modified SABAS. The qualitative responses from the negative and positive writer identity groups were then assessed by

assigning a score on a scale from zero (no evidence of authorial identity) to four (extensive evidence of authorial identity) for each item. The full rubric is included in Appendix C. Once the individual responses were assessed, a total sumscore for the authorial confidence factor and the identification with author factor was calculated for each participant. Mean scores and standard deviations were then calculated for each factor. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated separately for the negative and positive writer identity groups, because the positive identity scores were higher overall than those for the negative group, and exemplar cases would have been skewed towards the positive responses. The mean scores and standard deviations for each factor for the negative writer identity group were: authorial confidence $M = 2.71$, $SD = 3.28$; identification with author $M = 1.99$, $SD = 2.07$. For the positive writer identity group, the mean and standard deviations for each factor were authorial confidence $M = 8.50$, $SD = 4.79$; identification with author $M = 5.04$, $SD = 2.45$. Exemplar cases were then selected from this subsample of positive and negative writer identity groups. Cases were deemed exemplars if the total sumscore was more than one standard deviations above the mean for each group. This process yielded 18 exemplar cases.

Each of the 18 selected cases was then analyzed across all categories for meta-inferences related to similarities between students' writer and authorial identities, as well as in relation to the relevant demographic data associated with each case. Each case was reviewed for its potential to contribute to the understanding of the combined conditions that may contribute to students' writer and authorial identity, and 15 cases were selected as the final case group. The three cases that were excluded from the final case group for one of two reasons. One case did not have responses to the demographic questions, which were an important component of this analysis. The other two cases were excluded after reviewing the qualitative responses for each.

Each response was very brief, and referenced only a more global aspect of authorial confidence. The brevity and generality of these two responses limited the meta-inferences that could be made thus they were excluded.

Validity Considerations

A range of practices and procedures were put in place to maximize the validity and reliability of the data and findings for this study. Data collection was conducted solely by the researcher, and a recruitment scrip was use to maximize the consistency in how the study was introduced to students in each of the 26 classes. After each data collection session, notes were added to a research memo specifically to record the data collection process. No exceptionalities were noted in any of the data collection sessions. In addition, conducting the data collection sessions in the first four weeks of classes also decreased the potential influences that differences in classroom instruction may have had on students' qualitative responses to the open-response questions on the modified SABAS. The ordering of the questions also helped to maximize variance in the qualitative data, by decreasing the potential influence that the SABAS items might have on the reasons participants provide in their answers to the open-response writer identity question. By answering the writer identity questions first, participants had to generate their own unique reasons to explain why they consider themselves to be writers or not. Placing the open-response questions after the authorial identity items could have prompted participants' thinking along the specific themes associated with those items. Collecting the data early in the participants' college experience also captured their perceptions of themselves as writers and authors right as they were transitioning into the college setting. This timing was meant to maximize the variance in responses to both writer and authorial identity questions, and provide the most authentic picture of students' perceptions as they enter the college setting.

Understanding the experiences and perceptions that students bring into this new setting can help to inform the type and extent of instruction students may (or may not) need to become successful writers in college.

The creators of the original SABAS reported strong validity and reliability statistics for their measure of authorial identity. It was, however, a new and otherwise untested scale. Therefore, the analyses of the SABAS responses included psychometric testing of the modified scale with this study's population. During the PCA, the three-factor model of authorial identity was tested first without forcing the three hypothesized factors; the model was confirmed with and without forcing three factors. Research memos were also written during the decision-making process for deciding which items to remove and why, so that all decisions could be made transparent. The final PCA, with the four items removed, had stronger psychometrics than the original scale with this population of first-year students.

The validity of the qualitative responses was also enhanced by the use of the written open-response question to identify the situations and experiences that informed students' perceptions of themselves as writers. The prompts to solicit these responses were intentionally vague, so as to not lead students towards any specific situations that may impact their perceptions. Further, because the students are not talking directly to the researcher, the threat of reactivity, "the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied" was reduced (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). Written responses also committed the participants to their thoughts at the time of data collection, without the opportunity to qualify and/or amend their reasons after completing other parts of the overall survey. Given the goal of better understanding the writer and authorial identity constructs at the time of participants' transition into the higher education setting, written response questions at a single point in time seemed like the most accurate method

of capturing the data of interest. The use of written responses, however, does not allow for additional follow up with participants – a practice that would allow for member checking to further confirm interpretation of the qualitative writer identity question and a limitation of this study.

Multiple steps were taken to increase the validity and reliability of the qualitative coding. Research memos were kept throughout the qualitative data analysis to record emerging themes and code groups as they evolved. Once all of the data were coded, an outside coder was solicited to assess inter-rater reliability. Initial independent coding resulted in 71% agreement between the researcher and independent coder; final independent coding agreement was 98%, as described previously. The accuracy of the coding for the qualitative data was also reviewed during the network mapping analysis process. During this process, individual quotes were reviewed again as relationships between codes and code groups were analyzed. These responses were once again analyzed during the mixed analyses, when the authorial identity rubric was applied to the qualitative data. In analyzing the 15 exemplar cases, consistency between qualitative responses and students' self-reported authorial identity and high school writing experiences helped to add to the overall validity of the findings for this study.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

This study was approved by the university's IRB. Because the study involved only minimal risk and was conducted in an established educational setting, it was improved as an exempt study. Although approved as an exempt study, participants' consent was still included as part of this study.

Chapter Four: Findings

The overarching purpose of this study was to understand the extent to which first year university students perceive of themselves to be writers and authors, and the situations that might inform these perceptions. Existing literature on students' perceptions of themselves as writers investigates this question through two different constructs: writer identity and authorial identity. Therefore, embedded in the larger study purpose is a more theoretical goal of examining whether writer identity and authorial identity may (or may not) describe the same construct and whether different situations may (or may not) inform writer and/or authorial identity. Seven research questions were investigated using a parallel convergent mixed methods research design, where qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently, but analyzed separately. Qualitative data were analyzed before the quantitative analyses began in order to decrease the potential influence that quantitative analyses might have on the qualitative coding and analyses.

Following the separate analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data, both types of data were combined to identify the unique findings that mixing the qualitative and quantitative data could afford. Although the quantitative and qualitative strands were given equal priority in this study, the discussion of findings that follows is presented in the order of the seven research questions that informed this study. This sequencing was chosen because findings from the earlier research questions provide context in which to discuss subsequent findings.

Quantitative Findings

The first four research questions generated quantitative data. These quantitative data were examined for completeness and potential outliers prior to analysis (no outliers were found). Each of the four quantitative research questions required separate analyses due to the level of the data generated by the different questions asked (nominal, ordinal, or quasi-continuous).

Research question one. The first research question asks to what extent first-year undergraduate students identify as being a writer. Participants were asked if they considered themselves to be a writer, and were presented with answer choices of *no*, *sometimes*, and *yes*. Responses to this question were calculated as frequencies of response for each answer choice. The conditional answer, *sometimes*, was selected by 40.4% of the participants ($n = 156$), which represents the most frequently selected response. A response of *no* was the second most frequent response, with 38.3% of the participants ($n = 148$) choosing it. Only 21.4% of participants ($n = 82$) indicated that they did identify as a writer. Based on these three response options, three groups of the writer identity construct were identified: low writer identity (response of *no*), conditional writer identity (response of *sometimes*), and high writer identity (*response of yes*). These writer identity groups were then used for comparison in the analyses for four of the remaining six research questions.

Research question two. RQ2 examines whether the existing three-factor model of authorial identity proposed by Cheung et al. (2015) is supported in the sample of first-year undergraduate students in this study. To date, the original scale creation study is the only known study that has used the SABAS, therefore confirming the three-factor model through factor analysis is necessary before additional analyses can be conducted here. Specifically, a principal components analysis (PCA) was run on the 17 authorial identity items that comprise the SABAS (Cheung et al., 2015). This specific type of factor analysis was chosen to force the SABAS items

into the three factors hypothesized by scale's creators. Prior to running the analysis, all assumptions were tested to ensure the data were appropriate for a PCA, and no assumptions were violated. The results of the assumption testing and details of the process for item removal have been reported in the Methods chapter.

The first analysis was run using all 17 authorial identity items, initially without forcing factors. This choice was made to examine the model when factors were not forced. Initial results indicated that three factors had eigenvalues greater than one, and when combined explained 63.11% of the variance. The initial scree plot also indicated three factors, as evidenced by the three distinct inflection points. In most cases, the items included in each of these three factors corresponded to the same items in the three subscales of the SABAS (authorial confidence, valuing writing, and identification with author). However, two of the items in the authorial confidence subscale loaded on all three factors ("I have my own style of academic writing" and "What I write communicates my confidence about the area to the reader") and were therefore removed for continued analysis. When the factor analysis was rerun with the remaining 15 items, two additional authorial confidence items ("I have my own voice in my writing" and "Academic writing allows me to communicate my ideas") loaded nearly equally on two different factors. These two additional AC items were removed, and the final PCA was run with the remaining 13 authorial identity items.

When running the final PCA, with the four items removed, three factors were forced to further test the hypothesized three factor model of authorial identity. The three factor model was again confirmed by visual inspection of the final scree plot, which showed three distinct points of inflection (see Figure 2). The results of the final PCA indicate that the first three factors account for 67.0% of the total variance (25.4%, 24.0%, and 17.6% respectively). The 13 items included

in the final PCA loaded onto the same subscales as the original SABAS, with one exception. One

item from the identify with author (IWA) subscale ("I think of myself as an author") loaded with

the AC items. All rotated component loadings and communalities are presented in Table 5.
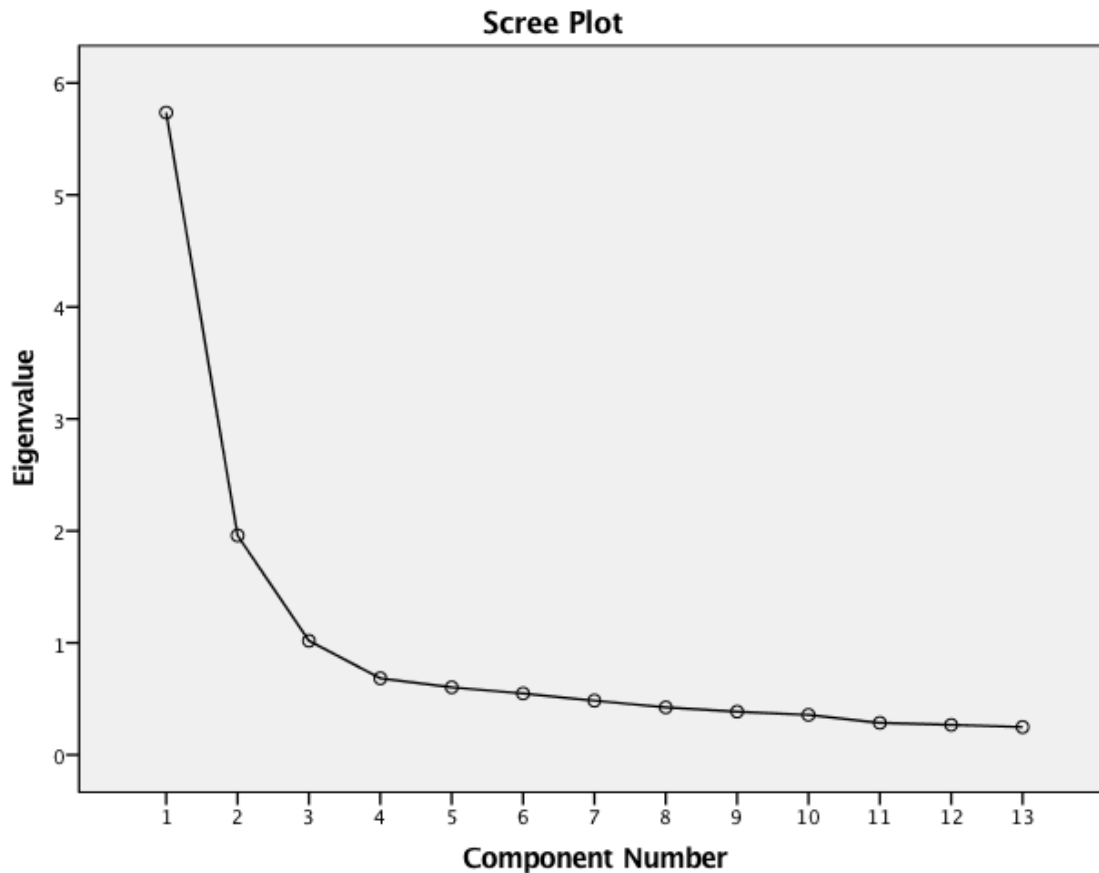
Figure 2. Final scree plot for 13-item, three-factor model of authorial identity

The final analysis of the authorial identity items included calculating reliability

coefficients for each of the authorial identity subscales. Each subscale (as determined by the

PCA) demonstrated high internal reliability as measured by Cronbach's alpha: authorial

confidence $\alpha = .84$, valuing writing $\alpha = .87$, and identify with author $\alpha = .83$. The reliability for

the full scale ($\alpha = .89$) indicates high internal reliability for the overall measure of authorial

identity.

Table 5

Component Loadings and Communalities for Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation for Three Factor Model of Authorial Identity Using Modified SABAS

Item	Component Coefficients			Communalities
	1	2	3	
It is important to me to keep developing as an academic writer	**.83**	.10	.17	.73
Academic writing is an important skill	**.82**	.04	.20	.71
Being able to write clearly is an important part of being a graduate	**.74**	.14	.13	.67
My ability to write academically is important to me	**.75**	.18	.18	.64
It is important to me that my essays are well written	**.69**	.31	.03	.57
I am able to document my ideas clearly in my writing	.16	**.83**	.17	.74
I am able to formulate my ideas in my writing	.18	**.79**	.29	.73
I feel in control when writing assignments	.22	**.73**	.34	.69
I think of myself as an author	.03	**.67**	.11	.46
I generate ideas while I am writing	.23	**.66**	.24	.54
I feel that I am the author of my assignments	.20	.26	**.85**	.83
I feel that I own my written work	.22	.26	**.79**	.73
I consider myself to be the author of my academic work	.16	.36	**.73**	.68

Note. Factor loadings > .40 are in bolded text. Factor 1 = valuing writing (VW), factor 2 = identity.

Table 6 provides a comparison between the original SABAS scale creation PCA as published in Cheung et al. (2015) and the PCA findings in this study. For all items included in both the original and modified SABAS, the corresponding correlation coefficient was the same or higher in the modified 13-item scale for all but two items.

Table 6

Comparison of Factor Loadings and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients between Original SABAS and Final Modified SABAS

Item	Original SABAS	Modified SABAS
I have my own style of academic writing	.47	N/A
I am able to document my ideas clearly in my writing	.70	.83
What I write communicates my confidence about the area to the reader	.53	N/A
I generate ideas while I am writing	.46	.66
I have my own voice in my writing	.67	N/A
I feel in control when writing assignments	.73	.73
I am able to formulate my ideas in my writing	.76	.78
Academic writing allows me to communicate my ideas	.57	N/A
Being able to write clearly is an important part of being a graduate	.60	.74
It is important to me that my essays are well written	.55	.69
Academic writing is an important skill	.69	.82
My ability to write academically is important to me	.84	.75
It is important to me to keep developing as an academic writer	.78	.83
I feel that I am the author of my assignments	.72	.85
I think of myself as an author	.46	.67
I feel that I own my written work	.48	.79
I consider myself to be the author of my academic work	.89	.73

Although findings from the PCA support the three factor model of writer identity, only two factors (authorial confidence and identification with author) were used to represent the authorial identity construct in the remaining quantitative analyses. The goal of this study was to explore students' perceptions of themselves as writers and authors, and the decision to exclude the valuing writing factor in this analysis best matched this goal. Exclusion of the valuing writing factor for this specific analysis was based on the content of the items comprising this factor, all of which asked about students' perceptions of the importance of academic writing. This decision was further supported by evidence that the items in the valuing writing factor had

the lowest correlations coefficients with items in the other two factors (see Table 3 in Methods Chapter).

Research question three. The third quantitative question seeks to investigate whether the writer identity and authorial identity constructs are similar or distinct constructs. As such, RQ3 asks: Do differences exist between writer identity and authorial identity? Because the original authorial identity data were categorical (Likert-type items), a chi square test of homogeneity was the appropriate test to answer RQ3. Only the participants in the negative and positive writer identity groups were included in this analysis as a means by which to maximize the variability of the writer identity variable. Including only the low and high writer identity groups resulted in a sample size of 230 participants for this analysis.

The chi square was run between participants' writer identity group (low or high) and their group assignment for each of the two authorial identity factors (low, average, or high). The null hypothesis, then, states that the probability distributions will be equal between the writer identity and authorial identity groups. Assumptions were tested and none was violated. Results of the chi square analysis found that the probability distributions were not equal between writer identity groups and either of the two authorial identity factors. For the authorial confidence factor, X^2 (2) = 69.47, $p < .001$ and for the identification with author factor X^2 (2) = 21.54, $p < .001$. These significant chi square results allow the rejection of the null hypothesis for each of the two authorial identity factors used, suggesting that the writer identity construct and authorial identity construct (as represented by the authorial confidence and identification with author subscales) may be separate constructs.

Since significant differences in the probability distribution between writer and authorial identities were found, additional multiple z-tests of two proportions were conducted to determine

where these differences occur (Laerd Statistics, 2017). This post-hoc test conducts multiple z-tests to test for differences in pairwise comparisons of the distribution between each writer identity group and each of the groups for the two authorial identity factors. Therefore, the negative and positive writer identity groups were compared with the low, average, and high authorial confidence (AC) groups to determine where the significant differences occur. The same comparisons were made between each writer identity group and the three groups of the identification with author (IWA) factor. In total, six pairwise comparisons were made in this post hoc test. Multiple comparisons such as these can increase the likelihood of finding significant results in error; therefore, a Bonferroni adjustment was made to adjust the *p*-value to determine significance (Laerd Statistics). Table 7 displays the results of these multiple z-tests with the Bonferroni adjustment. Statistically significant differences (highlighted in bold for greater emphasis) were found in the proportion of low and high writer identity in the high and low groups for each authorial identity factor, but not for the average groups. The Bonferroni-adjusted significance level for these post hoc findings is calculated by dividing .05 by the number of comparisons (.05 divided by 3), resulting in an adjusted *p*-value of .017 (Laerd Statistics, 2017).

Table 7

Crosstabulation for Authorial Confidence Groups by Negative and Positive Writer Identity Groups

| AC Group | | Writer Identity Group | | Total |
		Negative	Positive	
Low	Count	**50**$_a$	**3**$_b$	53
	% within writer identity	33.8%	3.7%	23.0%
Average	Count	92$_a$	42$_a$	134
	% within writer identity	62.2%	51.2%	58.3%
High	Count	**6**$_a$	**37**$_b$	43
	% within writer identity	4.1%	45.1%	18.7%
Total	Count	148	82	230
	% within writer identity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

IWA Group

Low	Count	**30ₐ**	**5_b**	35
	% within writer identity	20.3%	6.1%	15.2%
Average	Count	100ₐ	48ₐ	148
	% within writer identity	67.6%	58.5%	64.3%
High	Count	**18ₐ**	**29_b**	47
	% within writer identity	12.2%	35.4%	20.4%
Total	Count	148	82	230
	% within writer identity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note. Different subscript letters denote a subset of Writer Identity categories whose

column proportions differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Research question four. The final quantitative research question asks whether authorial

identity and writer identity differ across demographic categories. Because the writer identity,

authorial identity, and demographic variables are all categorical, separate chi square analyses

were run for writer identity and authorial identity to test for differences across the various

demographic categories. Demographic data that were collected included participants' age,

gender, highest level of high school English completed, high school writing experiences

(negative, conditional, positive), and current course level in which the students were enrolled

(111 or 112). Several decisions were made as to which demographic categories would be

included in this analysis based on the frequency distribution for each. Age was not used, since

89.6% of participants were 18 years old ($n = 346$) and 7.8% were 19 years old ($n = 30$). Also,

because 99.5% of participants ($n = 381$) identified as either male or female, only these two

gender categories were included in this analysis. The highest high school English variable was

grouped to combine small subsamples and meet the assumption for minimum cell counts in the

chi square analyses. The advanced and honors English groups were combined into one

advanced/honors group, and the IB group was combined with AP to create a single AP/IB group.

The dual enrollment group was excluded from this analysis due to the small size of this group

(n = 3; 0.8%).

Separate chi square analyses were run comparing the three constructs of interest (writer

identity [WI], authorial confidence [AC], and identification with author [IWA]) with each of the

four remaining demographic categories (gender, highest high school English class, high school

writing experiences, and current course enrollment). No significant differences were found for

gender in any of the writer or authorial identity groups. Differences for the highest level of high

school English were only significant for the writer identity groups: X^2 (4, N = 380) = 19.16, p =

.001, but not the authorial identity groups. Significant differences were found for class section

for the writer identity groups, X^2 (2, N = 383) = 7.20, p < .05, as well as for the AC groups, X^2 (2,

N = 380) = 6.90, p <.05. Class section was not significant for the IWA groups. The only

demographic category in which findings were significant across all writer/authorial identity

groups was high school writing experiences (negative, conditional, positive). For clarity, the

findings for the chi square analyses for the high school writing experience demographic category

are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Chi Square Tests of Independence: Writer and Authorial Identity Groups x High School
Writing Experiences (Negative, Conditional, Positive)

	χ^2	df	N	p-Value
WI groups x high school writing experiences	17.133	2	386	.000
AC groups x high school writing experiences	67.068	4	386	.000
IWA groups x high school writing experiences	44.611	4	386	.000

Because significant differences were found between several demographic categories and

the constructs of interest, Bonferroni post hoc tests were conducted to identify where the

Table 9

Writer Identity, Authorial Confidence and Identification with Author Groups Where Significant Differences Occurred for Demographic Categories

Group		High School Writing Experiences			High School English Completed			Current Course	
		Mostly Negative	Negative and Positive	Mostly Positive	English 12	Advanced/ Honors	IB/ AP	111	112
Negative WI	Count	**24$_a$**	**85$_a$**	**39$_b$**	**53$_a$**	**40$_b$**	**54$_b$**	**118$_a$**	**29$_b$**
	% within WI	16.2	57.4	26.4	36.1	27.2	36.7	80.3	19.7
Positive WI	Count	**3$_a$**	**37$_a$**	**41$_b$**	**9$_a$**	**24$_b$**	**47$_b$**	**52$_a$**	**29$_b$**
	% within WI	3.7	45.7	50.6	11.3	30.0	58.8	64.2	35.8
Low AC	Count	**19$_a$**	**32$_b$**	**2$_c$**	-	-	-	56$_a$	12$_a$
	% within AC	35.8	60.4	3.8				82.4	17.6
Avg AC	Count	**8$_a$**	**76$_b$**	**49$_b$**	-	-	-	182	63
	% within AC	6.0	57.1	36.8				74.3	25.7
High AC	Count	**0$_a$**	**14$_a$**	**29$_b$**	-	-	-	**44$_a$**	**26$_b$**
	% within AC	0.0	32.6	67.4				62.9	37.1
Low IWA	Count	**13$_a$**	**19$_b$**	**3$_c$**	-	-	-	43$_a$	11$_a$
	% within IWA	37.1	54.3	8.6				79.6	20.4
Avg IWA	Count	**11$_a$**	**88$_b$**	**48$_{a, b}$**	-	-	-	190$_a$	63$_a$
	% within IWA	7.5	59.9	32.7				75.1	24.9
High IWA	Count	**3$_a$**	**15$_a$**	**29$_b$**	-	-	-	**49$_a$**	**27$_b$**
	% within IWA	6.4	31.9	61.7				12.8	7.0

Note. Significant differences at the .05 level are bolded for emphasis; cells where no significant differences were found in original

chi square analyses are designated by -

significant differences occurred. Table 9 displays where significant differences between groups occurred for variables where chi square results were significant.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data were collected to answer the fifth research question, which asks what situations students list as contributing to their identification as being or not being a writer. Four different qualitative prompts were possible, based on participants' responses to the quantitative question: Do you consider yourself to be a writer?

- If yes, the prompt asked: Why do you consider yourself a writer?

- If no, the prompt asked: Why don't you consider yourself a writer?

- If sometimes, two prompts asked:

  - When DO you consider yourself a writer?

  - When do you NOT consider yourself a writer?

These four open ended questions generated a total of 606 units of analysis from students' responses, each of which was coded for the qualitative analyses (a single response could have multiple codes). Only 3% of the data units were coded as unrelated and/or too ambiguous to interpret, leaving 588 units of analysis coded as relevant to the situations that inform students' perceptions of themselves as writers. Codes were labeled with an index (e.g., Y_ , N_ , SY_ , and SN_) to identify which type of prompt elicited the response. These indices became the four primary code groups under which students' responses were coded: yes, no, sometimes yes, and sometimes no. Following the initial coding, multiple codes that shared a larger, common idea were then grouped into content-based themes. The findings that follow describe a synthesis of the primary themes that emerged from the responses to the qualitative prompts described above, with each primary theme representing more than 10% of participants. The six themes discussed

here also include codes from two or more of the four code groups. Together, these six themes represent 83% of the total units of analysis and responses from 97% of study participants. A complete list all themes, code groups and codes is included in Appendix B.

Theme one - being required to write. The theme comprising the largest number of response topics (24% of the coded data units) was the requirement to write for academic purposes. This theme included codes from all four code groups, suggesting it is a more universal theme that influences students' perceptions of themselves as writers (or not as writers). While being required to write was listed as a condition that fostered a negative, conditional, or positive writer identity, it was particularly salient for students in the conditional writer identity group.

For some students, simply being required to write was their reason for identifying as a writer ("whenever it is required for me to write") and for others it was given as a reason for not identifying as a writer ("I don't consider myself a writer when I am required to write"). The general theme of being required to write was also attributed to different levels of academic writing: writing for school ("When I'm at school and have to write"), for classes ("The only time [I] write is when I need to for a class"), or for assignments ("When I am doing an assignment that involves me to write"). Despite a number of similarities among responses across all three writer identity groups, there were subtle differences when each response type was regarded separately.

Among the students who indicated that they do consider themselves to be writers (positive writer identity group), their responses to the qualitative prompt tended to be more global descriptions that they attributed to the role of being a student. Examples of these more global responses include:

- "I am a student who is often required to write assignments, essays, and stories."

- "I always write for school"

- I have...taken IB courses in high school that depend heavily on writing skills."

- "Because I write essays for school"

For students who conditionally identified as writers (conditional writer identity group - positive), their descriptions of the influence of being required to write were similarly general in terms of when they did identify as writers:

- "When I'm required to put thoughts onto paper"

- "When writing a paper for an assignment or project"

- "When I have writing assignments consistently in a class."

- "When I need to be a writer, like when I need to write an essay for a class"

For both groups of students, being required to write in school or for classes seemed to be accepted as part of being a student in general and a task they were able to complete.

For students in the negative or conditionally negative writer identity groups, the requirement to write was given as their reasons for not feeling like a writer. Among the students who specifically indicated that they did not consider themselves to be writers, simply being required to write was often given as their reason.

- "Because I only write when required to"

- "usually I only write when I have a school assignment, so I wouldn't consider myself a writer all the time"

- "Because I only write for school and that is all."

Other descriptions of the requirement to write for academic purposes were equally general, but assigned writing was perceived as being "forced" to write:

- "I don't see myself as someone who when forced to write, writes well."

- "When I am in school and I'm forced to write a paper."

- "When I am forced to write research papers or a piece that I don't have interest in"

- "Mainly when I am forced to write a paper or essay"

For some in the negative/conditionally negative writer identity group, their responses in this theme tended to provide more specific insights into what aspects of being required to write had a negative influence. Writing specifically for grades, writing to prompts, having topics assigned by teachers, and writing to deadlines were all given as reasons that the students did not perceive themselves to be writers.

- "I only write when I have to for a grade"

- "When there's a prompt and I cant [sic] choose what I'm writing about"

- "When deadlines and specific topics are brought in"

- "When I don't enjoy the topic and I am just writing for the grade."

When asked when they did not consider themselves to be writers, students in the conditionally negative group responded because they only wrote when required they therefore didn't perceive themselves to be writers.

- "I only write in class or for class-related assignments, never outside of this"

- "Any time I don't have to write for class, because I never desire to write."

- "When I'm not doing school work I hardly ever write meaningful text"

- "I only write when required to so for classes, I have no innate desire to write for the sake of writing"

- "When I write it is always for an assignment and not from my own desire to write."

Theme two - perception of own writing skills. Many of the participants included descriptions of their own writing skills as the reason for whether or not (or when) they considered themselves to be writers. This theme represents 13% of the data units and spans all three writer identity groups. Many of the responses in the positive and negative writer identity groups simply describe whether or not the students perceive themselves to be "good at writing" or "bad at writing". Among these simple responses, students identifying as being "bad at writing" outnumber the students identifying as being "good at writing" six to one. Students who perceive themselves to be good at writing also describe themselves as "halfway decent at writing" and "above average at it". Students who perceive themselves to be "bad at writing" use that specific term, but also indicate they are "not good","not strong", "not the best", "sub-par" or "terrible" writers. For some in this group, they qualify their "bad at writing" description with references to the longevity of this perception:

- "I used to write a lot but I was never that good."

- "I have never really been good at it"

- "Because writing has never been my strongest thing. I've always struggled with it since I was young."

Worth noting is that one response indicating the "bad at writing" perception had hope for improvement, writing "I'm not a very good writer, but I'm hoping to become better".

Another group of responses in this theme reflected students' perception of their writing skills before, while, or after completing writing assignments. Responses in this group linked their perception of their skills to their thoughts and feelings related to writing assignments rather than to writing in general. While preparing to write an assignment, one student noted not feeling like a writer "When I'm thinking about how much I'm about to struggle with my upcoming writing

assignment". Others described being aware of their writing skills - both positively and negatively - while writing:

- "When im [sic] writing a piece that I like; when its [sic] well written and makes me feel like I accomplished something to tell people/help them"

- "When I can fully grasp the subject i'm [sic] writing about."

- "When I am not successfully writing and feeling as if everything I wrote is wrong"

- "When I am doing an assignment that involves me to write and I feel that I'm a terrible writer."

- "Whenever I attempt to write and realize how bad I am at connecting plot points and use too much filler"

Finally, several responses demonstrate students' negative writer identity is based on reflecting on assignments after writing: "When I write a bad paper" or "After I write a terrible essay".

A third group links their writer identity to whether they possess or lack specific writing skills. Some responses indicate simply having the skills needed to be a writer noting "I know how to write." Others feel their writing skills are lacking, "my writing skills aren't the strongest" and "my writing skills are not that great." Lacking specific writing skills was a reason for a negative writer identity for a number of students. Among the skills noted as lacking were grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, structure, organization, and engaging audience. Several students listed two or more skills that they perceived to be lacking. Students who embraced a positive writer identity listed being "able to format a paper into clear and concise parts", "making arguments", and having "a good grasp of flow when it comes to how words are put together".

A final group indicated that being a writer required a certain level of skill development and demonstration beyond that of being a student writer. These student responses indicated that a specific standard existed in order to qualify as a writer - skills that they didn't possess (e.g., "My writing skills aren't as good as they should be to be a writer" and "i [sic] do not think i [sic]have the level of writing of a writer"). Some of these responses stipulate that being a writer is a title held only by professional writers: "I don't do it professionally or to a standard of a professional writer" and "I am not formally trained" as a writer. Students in this group all fell in the negative writer identity group.

Theme three - enjoyment of writing. Whether or not students enjoyed the process of writing emerged as the third most-frequently given response to the writer identity question asked (12% of the data units). Only students in the negative and positive writer identity groups are represented in this theme. Half of the responses in this theme (n =26) simply stated "I don't enjoy writing" or "I don't like writing", or conversely "I like writing" or "I enjoy writing" without any further elaboration. As was the case with theme two, the dislike/don't enjoy responses ($n = 49$) outnumbered the like/enjoy responses ($n = 21$). Some responses combined theme two (perception of own writing skill) with this theme, noting "I do not enjoy writing and I am also not very good at it" or "I enjoy it and consider myself to be good". Other responses indicated that that enjoying or not enjoying writing had been an enduring perception, indicating that they "never" or "always" enjoyed or liked writing. Among this group that implied an enduring perception, some also expressed a level of passion or dread towards writing beyond simply enjoyment or dislike: "Writing is something I have always enjoyed, no matter the form, genre etc." or "I don't find it fun. Nothing about it is enjoyable". These more emphatic and ardent responses also appeared in several other statements in this theme:

- "I am the most passionate about writing in comparison to any other activity."

- "I write everyday [sic], all the time."

- "I'd say that stories are a pretty big part of who I am as a person and an artist."

- "I absolutely detest writing any sort of paper."

- "I don't mind writing, but I also don't enjoy it nor do I have a passion for it"

- "I have never really been good at it and dread it."

This final response example from this theme seems to represent a perceptions that very closely matches the construct of writer identity as defined in this study:

> Writing is pretty much the only thing I'm entirely passionate about. It's something I've always done, and always found comfort in doing. Writing is a large part of my identity. I enjoy being called a writer by others, but I am very wary to ever call label myself a writer in front of others."

The final sentence of this response begins to hint at the personal nature and perceived vulnerability associated with writing that may underlie the construct of writer identity.

Theme four - voluntarily writing. Theme four complements theme one, which described the influence that being required to write had on students' perceptions of themselves as writers. Rather than whether or not students were required to write, however, this theme suggests that being a writer is based on whether or not participants write outside of the school setting, of their own volition. Ten percent of the data units contributed to this theme. Just as theme one responses spanned all three writing groups and all four qualitative prompt responses, theme four does the same. In addition, like theme one, writing voluntarily or not was the gauge for some students identifying as a writer and other students not identifying as a writer.

- "When I voluntarily write"

- "I will occasionally come up with ideas and decide to write stories on my own. I do voluntarily write for my own enjoyment and expression."

- "It's has been a long time since I have freely just decided to write about something."

Several variations of the larger idea of volitional writing emerged in the responses for theme four. For some students, whether or not they wrote in their free time was cited as why or when they did or did not identify as a writer:

- "It isn't something I do during my free time."

- "Because I do not write in my free time"

- "I really enjoy writing in my spare time"

- "When I'm writing creatively at my own time"

Other students indicated that whether or not they wrote for fun or pleasure was indicative of being a writer, and stated just that:

- "It is not something I do for fun."

- "I don't really like writing for enjoyment"

- "Because I enjoy writing for pleasure"

- "I write for fun"

Another group of responses in this theme, cited only among those in the positive writer identity group, involved writing for personal expression and/or solely for oneself:

- "When I'm writing alone just for the sole purpose of relief."

- "When I'm writing in my journal about my daily life"

- "When I'm writing for myself about what I want to write about"

- "I write in my free time about my day, I keep a diary. I also write letters to my loved ones to keep."

As was the case with theme three, there were several responses included in theme four that mentioned both writing voluntarily but also indicated that writing for school also contributed to identifying as a writer. In other words, these participants implied that being a writer encompasses writing in general, regardless of whether writing for school or for personal pleasure or expression:

- "When im [sic] writing a paper for school or for fun"
- "Whenever I have to write an assignment for school or any personal writing pieces."
- "I often write not only for school but in my free time"
- "When I am writing by myself in my room in my notebook, or writing in class"

These more universal writing experiences were only shared by students in the positive or conditionally positive writing responses, but no students included writing in and outside of school as a reason for not identifying as a writer.

Theme five - expressive nature of writing. Just as the idea of writing for personal expression outside of school was given as a reason for identifying as a writer, the expressive nature required of academic writing became a theme separate from personal expression noted above. Responses in theme five described participants' perceptions of their ability to successfully express their thoughts, ideas, and/or emotions on academic writing assignments. While this theme represents a smaller portion of the data (9% of the data units), the ability to successfully and clearly express one's thoughts and ideas is a crucial component of writing, particularly academic writing as assessment.

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Within this theme, groups of responses focused on different aspects of the expressive nature of writing. These groups progress through many of the crucial skills required of writing: ideation, expressing thoughts, and organizing thoughts and ideas. Responses that focused on ideation suggested that identification as a writer depended on the ability to generate and express ideas easily and clearly.

- "I enjoy [writing] to express my ideas with written language."
- "I enjoy thinking critically and abstractly about ideas that I come up with, ponder and then expanding as far as possible to fulfill my confidence of understanding the topic."
- "When I write, ideas don't flow naturally and smoothly at first."
- "When I have a blank mind."

The ideation responses seem to focus on the initial stages of writing, when generating preliminary ideas to begin writing. In contrast, responses that focused specifically on expressing thoughts rather than ideas seemed to suggest the next step in writing once ideas are generated. In this group, students acknowledge already having thoughts in mind that then need to be translated into writing. Identification as a writer or not depends on how easily that translational process occurs.

- "I consider myself a writer because I enjoy putting my thoughts on a piece of paper."
- "When I want to write my thoughts."
- "I am very slow at writing and putting my thoughts together."
- "Writing is difficult for me to do. I have trouble getting the thoughts I have into my writing."

The third group includes responses that seem to relate to the final stages of writing, after generating ideas and putting thoughts into writing. Responses in this group discuss how well students are able to organize their ideas and thoughts in their writing - whether while writing or after.

- "I don't really know how to put my thoughts into writing and I don't understand how to really say one thing without jumping to the next."
- "Because sometimes I can get my thoughts mixed up and then get stuck…"
- "I'm not good at putting my thoughts into words in a way that many people will understand."
- "Because I'm terrible at explaining things and I have a hard time putting a composition together."
- "When I have to complete a [sic] essay that involves personal insight and i [sic] can express myself."

In addition to writing as an expression of thoughts and ideas, some responses in this theme speak to identifying as a writer as being directly tied to students' ability to express their emotions. This link between emotional expression and being a writer, however, was only true for students who were in the positive or conditional writer identity groups.

- "I am good at writing and expressing my feelings and emotions through words."
- "I have never really had a problem transferring my emotions into words."
- "I usually consider myself a writer when I'm deep in an emotion."
- "because i [sic] write what i [sic] feel."

Some responses in this theme imply that writing to express emotions suggests an activity different from what they perceive writing to be:

- "When I want to share my thoughts and emotions about what happened throughout the day. So I guess its [sic] more journaling instead of writing."
- "I consider myself to be a writer because I often write not only for school but in my free time to express feelings and emotions that I can't always express otherwise."

For these students, it seems that writing for academic purposes and writing to express emotions may be different activities instead of different phases and/or types of writing.

A final group of responses expressed identifying as a writer when the task provides a means for coping "I turn to writing as a coping method", to relieve stress "I write about what comes to my mind, its [sic] a stress reliever", or to clear one's mind "I find writing to be enjoyable, because I often find it as a cleaner medium than my mind". For one student, writing provides an outlet to express thoughts in a way that talking can't: "I don't talk much, and consider myself to be very observant, so writing is a better way to express thoughts."

Theme six - genre-dependent writing. The final primary theme indicates that some students base their identity of being a writer on when they are writing specific genres of writing. Responses in this theme only include the positive and conditional writer identity groups, and represent 8% of the coded data units. Among the genres listed that foster a positive or conditionally positive writer identity were essays, research papers, journalism articles, and narratives for academic purposes.

- "I enjoy writing down stories, and/or personally [sic] essays."
- "When I am analyzing different texts."
- "When it comes to writing things that don't require much creativity, like research papers."

Responses in the positive writer identity groups also cited creative writing and traditionally non-academic genres as contributing to their positive identification as a writer:

- "When I am assigned homework that involves being creative"

- "I consider myself to be a writer because I enjoy writing poetry rather frequently."

- "I often write screenplays and other multimedia scripts."

- "When I write ideas for my comic strip."

Interestingly, students in the conditional writer identity group cited many of the same genres when describing when they did not identify as writers (conditionally negative):

- "When I am writing an essay."

- "I don't feel like a writer when I am doing research papers that feel clinical."

- "Writing about a book/article or nonfiction writing"

- "When I have to write things like poems or stories."

Also among the conditionally negative responses were times when students were writing short assignments and/or taking notes:

- "I do not consider myself a writer when making notes, lists, or anything small of that sort of nature."

- "When I am writing short responses to prompts."

Shorter writing assignments were not mentioned among the situations that fostered a positive writer identity. However, one response in the positive writer identity group specifically noted length of homework assignments that were "more than 3 pages" as a condition of when the student identified as a writer.

Mixed Findings

After the separate quantitative and qualitative data analyses, a final stage of analysis was conducted to merge both types of data to generate findings to the final two research questions. The mixed analyses were conducted to investigate the extent to which writer identity and authorial identity may (or may not) be unique constructs. To parse out differences between the constructs, the qualitative responses were compared between writer and authorial identity groups. As was the case in the quantitative analysis of differences between groups, only the positive and negative groups for each construct were used for this analysis to maximize the variability between the two groups.

Research question six. This question asks in what ways the situations that contribute to participants' writer identities may differ between the WI and AI groups. The goal of this research question is to further investigate the inferential differences that may exist between the writer identity and authorial identity constructs, beyond the quantitative analyses described previously. To answer this sixth research question, the qualitative codes were analyzed within each of the writer identity and authorial identity groups, calculating frequencies for each code, and ranking the codes for each WI and AI group based on these frequencies. All three writer identity groups (low, conditional, and high) were included in this analysis to provide the maximum number of qualitative data for this analysis. Further, all of the qualitative codes were included in this analysis, rather than the themes described earlier. This decision was made to remain as true as possible to the participants' exact word choices when describing the situations that informed their writer identity. The rankings were then analyzed through side-by-side comparison to draw inferences across groups. Rank was used instead of percentages for ease of discussion here. Tables 10 - 12 display the side-by-side comparisons between the code frequencies and ranks for the negative, positive, and conditional writer identity (WI), authorial confidence (AC), and

identification with author (IWA) groups. Observed differences in situations (i.e., qualitative

codes), where the rank of codes differed by more than two positions between groups, are

indicated in bold.

Table 10

Side by Side Comparison – WI No Codes for Negative Writer Identity and Low Authorial Identity Groups

WI No Codes	Negative WI Group		Low AC Group		Low IWA Group	
	Percent	Code Rank	Percent	Code Rank	Percent	Code Rank
Don't like/enjoy writing	23.6	1	33.3	1	28.2	1
Not good at writing	17.8	2	23.8	2	23.1	2
Only write when required/assigned	13.1	3	7.9	4	15.4	3
Don't write for fun/in spare time	12.6	**4**	1.6	**8**	2.6	**8**
Not skilled enough to be a "writer"	10.5	5	3.2	7	5.1	5
Can't express thoughts in writing	7.3	**6**	14.3	**3**	12.8	4
Amount of effort required	5.2	7	6.3	5	5.1	5
Don't write often	4.7	**8**	4.8	6	5.1	**5**
Not compared to other activities	3.1	9	1.6	8	N/A	10

Note. Numbers in bold indicate differences of greater than two rank positions between the

groups; repeated numbers indicate a tie in ranking based on identical percentages

Differences in rankings across two or more groups occurred more frequently in the

positive/high identity groups than they did in the negative/low identity groups. In general,

rankings of the top five situations among students in the positive writer or high authorial identity

groups differed only slightly (one or two positions) across the three comparison groups. The

rankings of the situations after fifth place, however, showed greater variation. The most notable

difference was observed in the rankings for the condition of perceiving oneself to be good at

writing. Being good at writing ranked second for students in the high authorial confidence group,

fifth for those in the positive writer identity group, and eighth for those in the high identification

with author group. This finding may suggest that students' perceptions of how well they can

write (a perception similar to writing self-efficacy) may inform students' authorial confidence

more than their writer identity, and relatively less so for identifying with being an author. The

remaining observed differences occurred between two groups rather than across all three. It is

worth noting that there were more observed differences in the positive writer identity and high

authorial identity groups than in the negative and conditional groups. Also notable among these

groups was the relatively low ranking for the situation of having published writing and of

planning a future career as a writer. These low rankings represent very small numbers of students

listing these situations as reasons for identifying as a writer.

Table 11

Side by Side Comparison – Yes Codes for Positive Writer Identity and High Authorial Identity
Groups

WI Yes Codes	Positive WI Group		High AC Group		High IWA Group	
	Percent	Code Rank	Percent	Code Rank	Percent	Code Rank
Genre specific	16.7	1	13.3	3	12.8	3
Enjoy writing	13.2	2	18.3	1	14.9	2
Can express feelings/ emotions/thoughts	12.3	3	11.7	5	12.8	1
Write for fun/in spare time	12.3	3	13.3	3	17.0	3
Enjoy specific genre	8.8	5	8.3	6	8.5	5
Good at writing	8.8	**5**	15.0	**2**	4.3	**8**
Writing required as a student	6.1	**7**	3.3	**8**	2.1	**11**
Writing is a basic skill	4.4	**8**	3.3	**8**	8.5	**5**
Passionate about/love writing	4.4	**8**	1.7	**11**	4.3	**8**
Have published	3.5	10	1.7	**11**	4.3	**8**
Future writing career	2.6	**11**	3.3	**8**	N/A	**12**
Compared to other subjects	2.6	**11**	5.0	7	6.4	7

Note. Numbers in bold indicate differences of greater than two rank positions between the groups; repeated numbers indicate a tie in ranking based on identical percentages

Side-by-side comparisons of the qualitative codes for the conditional writer and authorial identity groups also revealed several observed differences between groups. As described in Chapter Three, qualitative responses to the conditional writer identity response (*sometimes*) were coded in two groups: when students did identify as a writer (*sometimes yes*) and when they did not (*sometimes no*). These codes, therefore, were examined separately to identify any observed differences. Only two differences in rankings were found in the conditionally positive writer identity and authorial identity groups. Being interested in the topic ranked fifth for both the conditionally positive writer identity and high authorial confidence groups, but was eighth for the conditional identify with author group. Similarly, when expressing thoughts and/or emotions was ranked fifth for the conditional identify with author group and eighth for the conditional authorial confidence group. No other notable differences in rank were observed in the conditionally positive identity groups; and no distinct differences in ranks were observed in the conditionally negative groups.

Table 12

Side by Side Comparison – Sometimes Yes Codes for Conditional Writer Identity and Authorial Identity Groups

	Conditional WI Group		Average AC Group		Average IWA Group	
WI Sometimes Yes Codes	Percent	Code Rank	Percent	Code Rank	Percent	Code Rank
When forced/required/assigned	33.2	1	35.6	1	29.9	1
Genre specific writing	12.8	2	12.6	2	14.9	2
When writing for fun/myself	9.6	3	11.9	3	8.2	4
When inspired/motivated	9.1	4	8.9	4	9.7	3
When interested in topic	7.0	**5**	6.7	**5**	5.2	**8**
When expressing thoughts/emotions	6.4	6	4.4	**8**	7.5	**5**
When I write well	5.9	7	5.2	7	6.0	6

When writing own stories/personal connection to topic	5.3	8	5.9	6	6.0	6
When I write	2.7	9	3.7	9	3.7	9
When passionate about topic	2.1	10	0.7	12	2.2	10
When assigned length	1.6	12	1.5	11	2.2	10
When choose topic	1.6	12	2.2	10	1.5	13
When learn from writing	0.5	13	0.7	12	0.7	14

Note. Numbers in bold indicate differences of greater than two rank positions between the groups; repeated numbers indicate a tie in ranking based on identical percentages

The similarity in rankings among the conditional writing and authorial identity groups do not necessarily inform the goal of identifying differences in situations that may inform writer and authorial identity, but they do contribute to several inferences when included in a comparison of rankings across all groups. Looking at the top five codes in each of the larger groups discussed above (negative/low, positive/high, conditionally negative/low, and conditionally negative/low), several notable differences arise. First, required academic writing ranked in the top three codes for all except the positive/high identity groups. For the positive/high group, the idea that writing is a basic requirement for any student was ranked relatively low (eighth). The code for writing (or not writing) for fun or in one's spare time also differed across the four types of groups, in contrasting rankings. For the positive/high and conditionally positive/high groups, writing for fun or in spare time ranked in the top five codes across all subgroups, and the code for only writing when required was ranked in the top four for the negative/low identity group (not writing in spare time is inferred with this code). In contrast, writing for fun/in spare time was ranked 11th for the conditionally negative/low identity groups. Feeling inspired or motivated to write only emerged as a code among those students in the two conditional identity groups, ranking in third or fourth place across all writer/authorial identity subgroups. Finally, genre-specific writing ranked among the top four positions for all groups except the negative/low identity groups.

Genre-specific writing was not mentioned as a condition for this group. While strictly observational, these side-by-side comparisons begin to point to potential situations that may influence writer and authorial identity formation.

Research question seven. This final research question seeks to identify any common features between the authorial and writer identity constructs. This question was explored through the creation of a rubric to assess evidence of authorial identity expressed in the negative and positive qualitative writer identity responses given by participants. This rubric was created using the items from the authorial confidence and identification with author subscales of the modified SABAS, and assigning a score from a scale from zero (no evidence of authorial identity) to four (extensive evidence of authorial identity). The rubric can be found in Appendix C. This mixed analysis sought to examine the extent to which each qualitative response exemplified the condition expressed in each item for authorial confidence and identification with author on the modified SABAS.

Once the qualitative data were assessed using the rubric, exemplar cases of both positive and negative writer and authorial identity were identified for a more in-depth analysis of the characteristics of each case. The goal of this exemplar case analysis was to identify common factors that may influence negative and positive writer identity, and whether students' self-reported writer and authorial identity scores were consistent with the rubric-based exemplar status of each case (as assessed by the researcher). In total, 15 cases were identified as exemplars for this analysis. The process used to select exemplar cases is reported in detail in Chapter Three. These cases were examined to identify similarities in participants' qualitative responses, high school English and writing experiences, course enrollment, and demographic features. Table 13 provides the characteristics of the 15 exemplar cases and the overall sample. The most notable

differences between the case study sample and the full sample are a higher proportion of

participants who completed Advanced Placement (AP) English in high school, and differences in

high school writing experiences between the full sample and the case study sample.

Table 13

Demographic Category Frequency Distribution Comparison: Full Sample and Case Study Sample

Demographic Category	Options	Full Sample %	Case Study %
Gender	Female	61	60
	Male	39	40
High School English	English 12	26	10
	Advanced English	7	0
	Honors English	19	20
	IB English	10	10
	AP English	37	60
High School Writing Experiences	Mostly negative	10	30
	Sometimes negative/ Sometimes positive	50	20
	Mostly positive	40	50
Class Section	111	74	60
	112	26	40

Note. To provide a valid comparison, the full sample distribution percentage represents only the

sample of participants in the negative and positive writer identity groups ($n = 228$)

Table 14 displays the writer identity group, authorial identity groups, qualitative responses, and

demographic categories for each of the ten exemplar cases. Cases one through ten are grouped by

writer identity group (negative or positive). The final five cases represent both positive and

negative writer identity groups, but include interesting situations that may contradict their self-

assessed writer identity groups and further inform our understanding of the two constructs under

study.

Table 14

Exemplar Cases by Writer Identity, Authorial Identity, and Demographic Characteristics

Case	Gender	WI Group	Qualitative Response	AC Group	IWA Group	Highest High School English	High School Writing Experiences	Class Section
1	Female	Negative	It takes so much energy and concentration for me to write. I find it very challenging and difficult, and I really have never liked it...	Low	Low	AP English	Sometimes positive/ sometimes negative	111
2	Female	Negative	I never know how to tie my ideas together	Low	Low	AP English	Mostly negative	111
3	Female	Negative	I'm not good at putting my thoughts into words in a way that many people will understand. I also don't particularly like writing.	Low	Avg	IB English	Mostly negative	112
4	Female	Negative	I don't really know how to put my thoughts into writing and I don't understand how to really say one thing without jumping to the next	Low	Avg	English 12	Sometimes positive/ sometimes negative	111
5	Female	Negative	It takes me a long time to write a paper that I feel may actually get me a good grade. It is not something I do for fun.	Avg	Avg	English 12	Sometimes positive/ sometimes negative	111
6	Female	Positive	Writing is pretty much the only thing I'm entirely passionate about. It's something I've always done, and always found comfort in doing. Writing is a large part of my identity. I enjoy being called a writer by others, but I am very wary to ever call label myself a writer in front of others.	Avg	Avg	AP English	Mostly positive	112

7	Male	Positive	I enjoy it and consider myself to be good. I intend on making a career out of writing, in fact.	High	Avg	AP English	Sometimes positive/ sometimes negative	111
8	Male	Positive	I enjoy thinking critically and abstractly about ideas that I come up with, ponder and then expanding as far as possible to fulfill my confidence of understanding of the topic.	High	High	AP English	Mostly positive	112
9	Male	Positive	I don't think one has to be published to consider themselves a writer. I simply enjoy writing and consider it to be the most satisfying part of my studies and academics.	High	High	Honors English 12	Mostly positive	111
10	Male	Positive	I often write screenplays and other multimedia scripts and I consider myself a strong writer academically	Avg	Avg	IB English	Sometimes positive/ sometimes negative	111
11	Male	Negative	When I write, ideas don't flow naturally and smoothly at first. I have to really think about what to write usually.	Avg	High	Honors English 12	Mostly positive	111
12	Female	Positive	I enjoy writing poetry, stories, and articles, and I have published work	Avg	High	English 12	Mostly negative	111
13	Female	Positive	when im [sic] writing a piece that I like; when its well written and makes me feel like I accomplished something to tell people/help them	Avg	Avg	AP English	Mostly positive	111
14	Male	Negative	I struggle to collect my thoughts and express them as words. Even to this prompt, trying to collect my thoughts and writing an appropriate response took a	Avg	Avg	Honors English 12	Sometimes positive/ sometimes negative	111

little bit of time and effort.

| 15 | Female | Negative | I don't write a lot and I'm not particularly a writer that can grab an audiences [sic] attention. I also don't necessarily write for fun and enjoy it as a hobby. I see writing more as work than fun. | Avg | High | AP English | Mostly positive | 112 |

The first set of exemplar cases (one through five) represent negative writer identity and low authorial identity. In each case, the low authorial identity was assessed both by the students' responses on the modified SABAS and the rubric-based assessment. Further, the qualitative responses in each case express a belief in some perceived deficit in the students' writing abilities, as evidenced by the effort required and struggles in case one, and the composing challenges in cases two and three. Two responses also add a dislike for writing and one adds that she doesn't write for fun, in addition to the perceived skill deficit. Interestingly, all three of the students represented in these exemplar negative identity cases completed either AP or IB English classes in high school, courses that are designed to earn college credit if the end-of-course test results in a high enough score. The two AP English students were enrolled in the 111 course, which implies that their AP scores were not high enough (or not reported) to qualify them for exemption from this class (as described in the Setting description in the Methods chapter, students with high enough AP/IB scores can be enrolled directly into the 112 course). Four of the five cases also were in the low authorial confidence group for authorial identity. None of the students in this exemplar negative writer identity group reported positive writing experiences in high school.

The next five cases (cases six through ten) exemplify a positive writer and high authorial identity. Three of the four cases in this group were successful enough in their high school AP English class to be enrolled directly in the 112 class (the fourth wouldn't qualify for the exemption having completed Honors English), and three of the four described their high school writing experiences as mostly positive. Qualitative responses in all four cases indicate enjoyment of/passion for writing and possessing a high level of confidence in their writing skills. It is worth noting that the self-reported authorial identity scores for case three places this student in the

average authorial identity groups for both subscale groups. However, her qualitative response may reveal why her self-report scores were lower than the rubric-assessed scores that qualified her as an exemplar case. Her response indicates a passion for and commitment to writing, and specifically states that writing is part of her identity. However, she then adds that she "enjoy[s] being called a writer by others," but is "very wary to ever call...[herself] a writer in front of others." This lack of confidence in identifying herself as a writer in front of others may help to explain her self-report scores on the SABAS as falling into the average groups.

The last five exemplar cases (eleven through fifteen) were included because of one or more apparent contradiction between students' self-report responses that may be explained through their qualitative responses. In case eight, the student reports not identifying as a writer, but fell into the average authorial confidence and high identification with author groups of authorial identity. He also reports that his high school writing experiences were mostly positive. These contradictions may be partially explained by the high expectations implied in his qualitative response to why he doesn't identify as a writer. He notes that his ideas "don't flow naturally and smoothly at first" and that he has to "really think about what to write usually." Difficulty getting started with writing and thinking hard about what to write would likely be considered a natural part of the initial stages of writing by experienced writers with a more advanced understanding of the academic writing process. The student in case nine reports a positive writer identity, average authorial confidence, and high identification scores. However, she also reports that most of her high school writing experiences were negative. When viewed in the context of her qualitative response to why she identifies as a writer, she cites writing poetry and stories, and having published some of her writing. This response helps to support her positive identifications as writer and author, and may explain the contradiction implied by

negative writing experiences in high school. The types of writing that she reports enjoying and publishing are not necessarily the type of writing that is emphasized in academic writing – particularly research and argumentative writing typically required in higher education. The final case (ten) shows a negative writer identity but average and high authorial confidence and identification scores, respectively. This student also reports mostly positive high school writing experiences, and was successful enough in AP English to be enrolled directly into the 112 class. The difference between her writer and authorial identity perceptions may be based on the expectations of writers she expresses in her qualitative response. She seems to imply that writing frequently, for fun and on one's own time, are qualities of a writer that she doesn't possess. She also states that she lacks the ability to "grab an audiences [sic] attention". This judgment of herself suggests that being able to do so is important to being a writer – a perception that relates more to narrative or creative writing than to the type of academic writing for learning purposes more typical of writing assignments in higher education. She concludes her comment by noting she sees writing "more as work than fun", suggesting that enjoying writing is a quality that true writers possess.

In summary, these exemplar cases of writer and authorial identity are consistent with many of the findings in the separate quantitative and qualitative findings described previously. Just as no significant differences were found in the quantitative analyses of writer/authorial identity and gender, there were no gender-based differences observed in these exemplar cases. Also similar among these exemplar cases were the quantitative findings that identified significant differences for writer/authorial identity and the demographic categories of high school English class, high school writing experiences, and class section. Each of these demographic categories was represented in differences observed in this mixed analysis of these fifteen cases. All six

qualitative themes were also represented in the qualitative responses displayed in these exemplar

cases. In some instances, the qualitative responses helped to contextualize what seemed like

contradictions between students' positive and negative writer and/or authorial identity

perceptions.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This mixed method study was inspired by my experiences working as a writing center consultant and as an instructor for the target course at the university in which the study was conducted. As such, the study was initially begun as an authentic inquiry into the phenomenon regularly witnessed in these roles: why so many of the students (those seeking the services of the writing center and enrolled in the target course) frequently referred to themselves as "bad writers." There has been public discourse criticizing the writing skills of college students both at their entry into college (Cameron, & Selfe, 1977; Elgin, 1976; Newkirk, Parker & Meskin, 1976; Schlesinger, 1975; Sheils, 1975) and their exit from college (Bartlett, 2003; Holland, 2013). Based on my experiences working with undergraduate and graduate university students, students seem to be internalizing this public criticism in the form of negative perceptions of themselves as writers.

The initial literature search for research on writer identity revealed two separate constructs – writer identity and authorial identity – that were being investigated through two separate literature bases. Studies of writer identity were most frequently conducted among scholars and instructors in the composition and rhetoric disciplines who were seeking to understand the phenomenon underlying students' perceived struggles with writing in the higher education setting (Bird, 2013; Creme & Hunt, 2002; Ketter & Hunter, 2003; Leggette, Jarvis, & Walther, 2013; Lunsford, Fishman, & Liew, 2013; Rodgers, 2011). Authorial identity studies grew from researchers' inquiries into students' understanding of their roles as writers in higher education, in an effort to decrease incidences of plagiarism in college students' academic writing

(Cheung et al., 2015; Elander et al., 2010; Kinder & Elander, 2012; Pittam et al., 2009). The small number of authorial identity studies conducted to date have all come from the disciplines of psychology or educational psychology. These initial investigations into the two constructs, then, informed the three primary aims of the study: to identify first year students' perceptions of themselves as writers and the situations that inform those perceptions, to test the validity of the Student Attitudes and Beliefs about Authorship Scale and three-factor model of authorial identity proposed by Cheung et al. (2015), and to explore the differences and similarities between the writer and authorial identity constructs exemplified by the sample of first-year students in this study. The discussion that follows is based on the insights gained from the analyses reported in Chapter Four, organized by each of the three strands: quantitative, qualitative and mixed. Following the summary of each strand, implications of the study, study limitations, and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

Discussion of Quantitative Findings

  Writer and authoiral identity groups. Only 21% of respondents in this sample identified as being a writer at their point of entry into the higher education setting. The majority of respondents indicated that they either didn't identify as a writer (38.3%) or only sometimes did, in certain situations (40.4%). The popularity of the conditional answer choice (i.e., students who sometimes consider themselves to be writers) among this sample fits well with the literature describing the emerging adult stage of development occupied by most of these students. For the authorial identity construct, the average group was also the largest group for each of the three subscales of the authorial identity scale. The exploration of multiple facets of identity and comfort with "feeling in-between" is one of the characteristics of the emerging adult phase of development (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2007). However, if 40% of the students sometimes identified

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as a writer, they also sometimes did not. Participants in this study seem to exemplify the sense of being "in-between" the definitive roles of both writer and author, reluctant to fully embrace or deny either role.

That the majority of participants in this study did not fully embrace the identity of a writer or author is not simply one of semantics, particularly for students in the negative writer and low authorial identity groups. Writing expectations in college are different from those in high school (Carter & Harper, 2013), particularly once students begin to engage in writing for their chosen academic major (Leggette, 2013). Further, writing is a common mode of assessment in higher education, which often requires that students express their unique understanding of a topic or phenomenon through writing. Students' previous writing experience in high school (positive or negative) are likely to inform their expectation for similar experiences in college (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Even students who enter college with a strong sense of being a writer may experience challenges when faced with unfamiliar expectations for their role as an academic writer (Fernsten & Reda, 2011). However, the positive influence that being required to write has for the students in this group may encourage them to persevere despite the new arena for writing, as self-sufficiency is a goal that is just beginning to be developed by emerging adults (Arnett, 2000). The external requirement of writing assignments may still hold power for these students in college – particularly in the first year.

Students in the positive writer identity group cited writing in their spare time and writing to express emotions as their top reasons for identifying as a writer. Neither of these types of writing is typically representative of the argumentative writing assignments they are most likely to encounter in college (Gallagher et al., 2015). However, these findings parallel those of several of the previous studies of writer identity. Providing opportunities for more freedom of expression

(Crème & Hunt, 2002; Ketter & Hunt, 1999), and the inclusion of expressive and creative writing assignments (Leggette et al., 2013) were both previously identified as having a positive influence on students' identification as writers in college settings. While high school writing teachers express a strong pressure to teach writing that will help students score well on standardized tests (cite), creative and/or writing for personal expression could be incorporated into assignments designed to develop topics, brainstorm ideas, and other process-related activities.

Testing the SABAS and the three-factor model of authorial identity. The three-factor model of authorial identity proposed by Cheung et al. (2015) was supported in the sample of first-year undergraduate students participating in this study. However, several modifications in the content and structure of the SABAS were needed for this sample of students. Four items were removed from the original SABAS because they loaded on two or more factors almost equally. These four items may not have resonated with the students in this study because of the nature of the content of each item. Two of the removed items ("I have my own style of academic writing" and "Academic writing allows me to communicate my ideas") refer specifically to academic writing. The term "academic writing" is frequently used in writing research literature, but may not be a term familiar to students just entering the higher education setting. All of the other items on the scale simply reference "writing." One of the other two removed items refers to students' voice when writing ("I have my own voice in my writing"), which again may not be a feature of writing that many high school students are taught – but becomes an expectation in writing in higher education (Bird, 2013; Ivanič, 1998). The final removed item asks about students' confidence in writing for their reader ("What I write communicates my confidence about the area to the reader"). Given that only 18 – 20% of the participants in this study were in one of the high

authorial identity groups or the positive writer identity group, it makes sense that an item asking about their confidence in their ability to communicate through their writing specifically for their reader (their teacher) would not score highly with this sample when they were completing the survey. Writing in high school – along with other high school subjects – is often viewed as an activity to earn a good grade and get into college (Arnett, 2014). Introducing the idea that writing for the academic purposes of learning and expressing original ideas would be a beneficial addition to high school writing instruction to help bridge the gap in writing purposes from high school to college.

A comparison in the results of this study's PCA and the CFA conducted for the scale creation study (Cheung et al., 2015), provide interesting contrasts and similarities among the samples used in each study. Both studies had similar sample sizes, *n*=389 (this study) and *n*=306 (CFA in Cheung et al.). In addition, both samples represented a diversity of academic disciplines. However, participants in this sample had not yet had exposure to their major area of study at the time of the study, therefore academic discipline was not a condition considered in the analyses. These two areas are where the similarities between the two study samples end. The differences between the two study samples may have played a role in the different factor loadings for the PCA performed in this study. Participants in the SABAS confirmation study by Cheung et al. (2015) ranged from first year undergraduate to masters level, with the two largest groups being second and third year students (39.9% and 41.2% respectively). Participants in this study were restricted to first semester freshmen by design. In addition, potential differences in national educational systems in the countries in which each study took place could also have contributed to the differences in SABAS item loadings for this study. The original SABAS study took place in the United Kingdom (UK), and 89.2% of the participants were citizens of the UK. Different

emphases in writing instruction between the two national education systems could have influenced participants' perceptions; this difference would have to be explored through further studies. Despite these differences in study populations, the finding that the results of the PCA in this study supported the three-factor model of authorial identity and had similar factor loading on 70% of the items (12 of the 17 in the original SABAS), shows some promise for the SABAS as a valid and reliable measure of authorial identity.

Differences between writer and authorial identity. One of the goals of this study was to begin the process of better understanding the two constructs of interest in this study. The first step towards this goal was to assess the differences and similarities between the two constructs. For this analysis, comparisons between the three writer identity groups and three authorial identity subscale groups were examined, first for differences between the constructs, then for differences between the demographic categories for each construct.

As described in Chapter Four, significant differences were found between the writer identity groups and the authorial confidence (AC) and identification with author (IWA) factor groups for authorial identity. Further analyses identified where these differences were among the different groups. The details of the significant differences between the different groups are displayed in Table 7 in Chapter Four. This comparison between the writer and authorial identity constructs seems to indicate that writer identity and authorial identity (particularly as measured by the items on the AC subscale) do appear to represent different constructs for all of the participants in the study. As it was operationalized in this study, authorial identity is hypothesized to be a more advanced aspect of a more general writer identity, in which students' unique ideas, thoughts, or voice are evident in their writing assignments. Students in this sample may be beginning to demonstrate the idea of being in between role identifications (Arnett, 2000)

and not yet fully embracing a writer or authorial identity. Building on their newly experienced independence and positivity as emerging adults just entering college (Arnett, 2004), instruction that focuses on the writing skills represented by the authorial confidence items may help to foster greater authorial identity with this sample. , as was the case with the increase in students' writing quality and authorial presence evident in Bird's 2013 study of writer identity.

The writer and authorial identity constructs were also assessed in terms of differences in the sample's demographic categories. No significant differences were found for gender across any of the writer or authorial identity groups. The most salient findings were that for the writer identity groups, differences in high school writing experiences were significant only for the proportion of students who had positive high school writing experiences. High school writing experiences were also particularly salient for students in the low AC groups, as differences across all three types of writing experiences reached significance. These significant differences can be explained by the frequencies associated with each of the types of high school writing experience types. Most of the participants indicated having some positive and some negative writing experiences (50%) or mostly positive writing experiences (40%). Only 10% reported mostly negative experiences with writing in high school. Therefore, building on the mostly positive writing experiences from high school in the transition period into college may help to foster a more positive writer identity and higher level of authorial confidence in the new setting. The differences across highest English class taken in high school were sporadic (significant only for writer identity, and only for those who took English 12), suggesting that high school English level was not particularly significant in fostering either writer or authorial identity for this sample of first-year students. The most interesting demographic category was the current course level. Significant differences between proportions of students in the 111 and 112 courses were found

for both writer identity groups, and for the high AC and IWA groups. What makes these findings interesting is that in each case, the significantly highest proportion of students was enrolled in the 111 class. In other words, the highest proportion of students in the positive writer identity group and both of the high authorial identity groups, were enrolled in the first class of the three-class sequence of the course. Coupled with the sporadic significant differences found in high school English class, this finding may suggest that instruction aimed at fostering greater authorial identity may be warranted for students who are directly enrolled into the 112 level course in their first semester of college.

Discussion of Qualitative Findings

The analyses of the qualitative data yielded six themes that informed whether or not (or when, in the case of conditional writer identity), students identified as writers. These themes are described in Chapter Four and ranked according to the frequency with which the code emerged from the qualitative responses to the writer identity open-response question. For reference, these themes were (in order of frequency) being required to write, perception of own writing skills, enjoyment of writing, voluntarily writing (for fun or in spare time), expressive nature of writing, and genre-specific writing. These six major themes provide insights into areas where intentionally-designed assignments and/or instruction could be developed, particularly the three themes that were present in all four responses to the initial writer identity prompt.

Whether or not writing was required of students was the most frequent response identified when coding the qualitative data, and was given for all four prompt responses. Being required to write for class or for school both fostered and inhibited writer identity. For students who did identify as a writer, being required to write was given as a reason. For students who did not identify as a writer, only writing when required was the reason give. Similarly, students who

conditionally identified as writers indicated they did when they were required to write and didn't when they were not required to write. The prevalence of this theme, generated from an intentionally general *why or why not* question, suggests that being required to write seems be the most influential situaton that informs students' identification with being a writer for the population for this study. Therefore, helping students to understand the value and purpose of academic writing may well help to foster a more positive writer identity, particularly as students are transitioning to the new environment of writing in higher education. Writing in the higher education setting is typically used more as a means of assessing and developing students' original thinking and learning (Sullivan, 2003)., instead of an activity learned to pass an end-of-course assessment (Fanetti et al., 2010; Jackson & Kurlaender, 2016; McCrimmon, 2005; Sainsbury, 2009), or demonstrate competence in writing accoring to a prescribed formula (Beil & Knight, 2007; Fanetti et al., 2010) as is often the case for high school writing assignments. Given that the majority of participants in this study are considered to be in the emerging adult stage of development, their willingess to perform at the higher level required by the authorial level of writing expected in higher education could be supressed if they do not find writing to be a valuable task (Arnett, 2007).

The second common theme that emerged across all four response types was whether or not students wrote in their spare time or for fun. As was the case with the first theme, those who write on their own or for fun more often identified as a writer, while those who didn't identify as a writer indicated not writing in their spare time or for fun was their reason. Students who sometimes identified as a writer based their identification on when they were or were not writing for themselves. Again, because this theme seems to suggest writing for fun or in one's spare time are qualities a writer should have, emphasis on the different types and/or genres of written

communication students may already be engaging in in their time outside of classes may help them recognize writing as a means of expressing their original thoughts and ideas. Doing so could help to foster a stronger authorial identity in assignments when students recognize their authetic "presence" in the writing they do outside of academic assignments. Providing students with meaningful inquiry and pre-writing assignments, as well as using a process approach to writing, were among the most effective writing interventions identified in Graham and Perin's 2007 metanalysis of effective writing inteventions in the primary and secondary school settings. These practices could serve well in helping to bridge the gap in writing skills in the transition from high school to college.

Students' perceptions of their own writing skills (strong or weak) also emerged as a theme across all four types of qualitative responses. Among the students in the negative writer identity group, some version of believing they were not good at writing was the second most frequent response given to the open response question. Students in this group may find the increase in writing assignments and the changing expectations for writing to be considerable challenges in the higher education setting – particularly given the number of students in this group who do not feel they have the skills needed to be a writer. Skill mastery is one of the most powerful sources of self-efficacy for students (Usher & Pajares, 2006). In addition, whether or not students have experienced mastery of a task in the past has long-lasting effects on their belief in future success (Usher & Pajares, 2006). The students who hold the perception that they haven't mastered the writing skills needed in high school may project that perception onto their current environment and resist even attempting to write well in college. However, students who did perceive to have mastered writing assignments in high school may also find their confidence shaken in the new expectations for writing at the college level, in which students are expected to

independently plan, conduct research, draft, and revise their assignments prior to submitting them for grades (Enders, 2001; Fanetti et al., 2010; Kidwell, 2010).

Two themes – performing genre-specific writing and the expressive nature of writing – were expressed in responses from students who positively or conditionally identified as writers. Neither of these two themes was identified among students who did not identify as a writer. Therefore, helping students who hold a more negative writer identity explore different genres of writing – including more creative and/or personally-expressive genres –may help to foster a more positive writing identity. Providing a variety of writing assignments and genres, including more creative writing, can help to foster greater agency (Ketter & Hunt, 1999) and control (Creme & Hunt, 2002) when students then turn to academic writing assignments. Allowing students more freedom of expression and creativity in pre-writing can also help students develop stronger sense that they are generating more original content when writing rather than simply restating others' ideas (Leggette et al., 2013). Writing with agency, perceiving control when writing, and generating original content are all consistent with the authorial writing construct as defined in this study.

The frequency and common occurrence of four of the six qualitative themes, across three or more qualitative response types, seem to indicate that students in the beginning of their transition from high school to college may bring a perception of writing and being a writer with them into the college setting. Considered together, these four most prevalent themes suggest that participants in this study consider a writer to be someone who is required to write but also voluntarily writes in their spare time, is skillful at writing, and understands how to write in specific genres that allow them to express themselves. If this composite perception of what a writer is and does is accurate, it is not surprising that only 21.4% of participants identified as a

writer in this study. Direct instruction on both the writer identity (Bird, 2013) and authorial identity (Pittam et al., 2009) has shown to increase students' understandings of these constructs and embrace them more readily.

Discussion of Mixed Findings

Side by side comparison. The first mixed analysis examined the rankings of the qualitative codes across the different writer and authorial identity groups. Although these codes emerged from participants' responses to a question about writer identity, this analysis sorted the codes by the authorial identity groups as well to determine whether rankings differed between writer and authorial identity (defined as a difference of more than two positions in the ranking). To reiterate, the qualitative data were generated from an intentionally general why, why not, or when open response prompt, and the authorial identity groups were based on quantitative data generated by the modified SABAS. If, as the quantitative analyses suggest, the writer and authorial identity constructs are different, the rankings in the codes that inform writer identity should differ when examined by the authorial identity groups. As has become the norm with this sample of students, the results of this comparison indicate that differences in rankings did occur – in certain instances.

Nine codes emerged from the qualitative data generated from participants in the negative writer identity group. There were only small differences in rankings for the first three codes for this comparison (codes: don't enjoy writing, not good at writing, and only write when required). After the third position, however, differences began to emerge. Not writing in one's spare time, not writing often, and participants' perceived inability to express their thoughts or feelings when writing were the codes that differed in ranking across the writer identity and authorial identity groups. The observed differences between code rankings for those in the negative/low groups

support the hypothesis that authorial identity requires a higher level of personal presence in one's writing (Abasi et al., 2006) and supporting the operational definition of authorial identity as a more specific identification beyond that of being a writer.

For participants in the positive/high writer and authorial identity groups, rankings of the top five codes varied only by one or two positions. These codes related to enjoying genre-specific assignments, enjoying writing in general, the ability to express one's thoughts through writing, and choosing to write in one's spare time. All of these top-ranked codes across the positive/high groups imply enjoying and choosing to write, both in and out of school assignments. After the fifth position, however, the remaining seven codes for this group varied between the writing and authorial identity groups. The perception of being good at writing ranked in the middle (tied for fifth) for positive writer identity, but was second for the authorial confidence group and eighth for the identification with author group. These differences in rank for this code seem to indicate that being good at writing is very important for feeling confident in being an author, relatively important for a writer, but not necessarily required in order to identify with being an author. While being good at writing was important for authorial confidence, being published was less important. The code for having been published was ranked higher for the identification with author group than for the writer or authorial confidence groups. Preferring writing over other subjects was a code that ranked higher for the two authorial identity groups (seventh) than for the writer identity group (tied for last). These findings again support the emerging hypothesis that authorial identity is a more highly-refined construct than a more general writer identity.

This side-by-side comparison suggests several subtle differences in perceptions of writers and authors among this sample of undergraduate students. Authors seem to be perceived to write

mostly when required, but they write often. Authors prefer writing over other subjects, and are confident that they are good at writing. That confidence, however, doesn't reach the point of identifying as an author. Identifying as an author is facilitated by being published. This composite of participants' perceptions of being a writer and an author (inferred by their qualitative responses to the writer identity prompt) is similar to findings from previous studies of students' perceptions of authors and writers. Authors were perceived as someone who could write effortlessly for large public audiences (Pittam et al., 2009; Rodgers, 2011), and their writing was good enough to be published (Ketter & Hunter, 1999; Kinder & Elander, 2012; Lunsford et al., 2013; Rodgers, 2011). Being published, however, was not required for students to develop a stronger sense of authorship (Leggette et al., 2013); a finding similar to students in this study that confidence in their writing abilities was important for authorial confidence but not necessarily required to identify with being an author.

Exemplar case studies. The second step in the mixed analysis was to create exemplar cases for analyses across all of the types of data to further distinguish similarities and differences between the writer and authorial identities of this study's participants. Exemplar cases were identified by reassessing the qualitative data using an authorial identity rubric created from the items of the authorial confidence and identification with author subscales of the modified SABAS used for this study. This process, described in detail in Chapter Three, resulted in a final group of 15 exemplar cases – five exemplar negative writer identity cases, five exemplar positive identity cases, and five exemplar cases representing both writer identity types but offer unique insights into writer identity perceptions that may be contradicted by the content expressed in their qualitative responses.

Negative writer identity exemplars. In addition to a negative writer identity, four of the five cases in this group also have low authorial identity. All report some type of personal deficit in their ability to perform one or more tasks associated with writing for academic purposes. Statements such as "I find it [writing] challenging and difficult...", "I never know how to..." or "I'm not good at..." are present in each of the five cases in this group. None of these cases reports having had positive writing experiences in high school. These expressions of perceived skill deficits coupled with less than positive writing experiences, suggest that students with low writer and authorial confidence may be at risk of projecting their high school experience onto their expectations for writing in college (Arnett??). However, the content of the qualitative responses for this group reveals insights about their expectations for writing – expectations that are similar to the type of writing expected in college. These responses, given to support their negative writer identity, describe a high level of effort, concentration, and time investment that is needed to produce good writing, writing "that others will understand" [consideration of audience] or "that I feel will actually earn me a good grade" [authorial presence]. All but one of these students are enrolled in the 111 level course, which will provide them with the full three-class series of the target course. Normalizing the time, effort, and process required to produce good writing may help students in this group become less self-critical of their writing abilities.

Positive writer identity exemplars. For this group expressing positive writer identity, three of the five also had high authorial confidence; two cases scored high on both of the authorial confidence subscales. Four of the five cases completed either AP or IB English, and no one in this group reported negative writing experiences in high school. To the contrary, three of the five reported their high school writing experiences to be mostly positive. Their qualitative responses in support of their self-identified positive writing identity include a number of positive

identity-based comments: "I enjoy being called a writer by others", "I consider myself to be good", "I consider myself to be a strong writer academically". Students in this group express being "passionate about" writing, finding writing to be "the most satisfying part" of academics, and a way to express "confidence in my understanding of the topic". For students with such high levels of writer identity and authorial confidence, it is essential to ensure that their previous success and high confidence in writing isn't eroded by unfamiliar expectations for writing that may arise in the college setting.

   Mixed exemplar cases. This final group represents both exemplar negative and positive writer identities, but one or more conditions that seem to contradict their self-reported writer identity. These mixed exemplar cases may shed the most light on where writing instruction designed to foster writer and authorial identity could have the greatest impact. This mixed exemplar group matches well with evolving and changing roles, experiences, and identities that Arnett (2014) and others attribute to emerging adults. Within each case, some experiences were positive, and others were negative, and in some cases contradictions seemed evident. For example, the first case in this group represents a negative writer identity, but average to high authorial identity and mostly positive high school writing experiences. His qualitative response supporting his negative writer identity seems to shed light on his negative identification as a writer, noting "ideas don't flow naturally and smoothly at first" and that he has to "really think about what to write." These perceptions suggest only strong writers seem to do so naturally and without needing to think about what to write. This student doesn't identify as a writer, but exemplifies the qualities of an author as identified by students in previous studies (Pittam et al., 2009; Rodgers, 2011) and by his authorial identity scores. A second case in this group reports a positive writer identity, average to high authorial identity, but mostly negative high school

writing assignments. Her qualitative response suggests that her positive writer and authorial identities are fostered by success at creative and expressive writing and having been published. These qualities are also similar to findings in previous studies that suggest creative and expressive writing assignments (Leggette et al., 2013) and providing students with opportunities for publication (Creme and Hunt, 2002) help to foster positive writer and authorial identity. In this case, her success in her personal writing experiences may have been more influential than her high school writing assignments.

For each of these mixed cases, few clear patterns could be discerned across demographic categories and high school experiences, an indication of the complexity of situations that students may attribute to writing and themselves as writers and authors. These cases also represent the complexities of the two constructs themselves. Findings from this case study suggest that writer identity and authorial confidence may share some similarities (e.g., the valence of the writer identity matched the valence of the authorial confidence scores in most cases), and that high school writing assignments seemed to have some influence on these perceptions. As a group, however, the qualitative responses for these cases seem to suggest that the students understand the time, effort, and challenge that are often required to generate good writing that they are proud of and that can be understood by their audiences. This understanding of the qualities of good writing provides a good starting point for writing instruction in the higher education setting for the students in this sample.

Discussion Summary

The overarching aim of this study was to answer the question posed by the National Conversation on Writing in 2008: who considers themselves a writer, who doesn't, and why (NWP, 2016). Embedded in this larger aim was the goal of unpacking the situations that inform

students' perceptions of themselves as writers, and to explore the extent to which an alternative construct, authorial identity, relates to the original writer identity construct proposed by Ivanič in 1998. To that end, this study employed a mixed method design to examine first-year students' quantitative and qualitative responses to these questions, right at the point of entry into higher education. This population of students is best characterized, as Arnett (2000) proposes, as students who are in between two distinct periods of life - including adolescence and adulthood or high school and college. As emerging adults, these students not only perceive themselves to be "in between", but also embrace the idea of it; they are therefore "less likely to be constrained by role requirements" (p. 471). This sense of conditionally embracing role requirements came through clearly in participants' responses to many of the questions asked by this study. The majority of participants (40.1%) responded that they only sometimes considered themselves to be writers. Their scores on the authorial identity scale indicated the same conditional identification; over 60% of the participants scored in the average (mean) range for each of the three authorial identity subscales. Even when asked to describe their high school writing experiences as negative, positive, or both negative and positive, 50% chose the in-between response.

Findings from the comparisons between the writer and authorial identity constructs also varied, depending on the specific aspect of participants' experiences examined. Surprisingly, participants' highest level of high school English class was only significant for the writer identity construct, and only for those students who completed English 12. Differences between the higher levels of high school English classes (advanced, honors, AP and IB) were not significant for the writer or authorial identity constructs. These findings raise the question of whether writing instruction in high school actually varies across the classes presumed to be progressively more

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advanced at each higher level. Participants' experiences of writing in high school were, for the most part, mostly positive or sometimes positive; only 10% of participants reported having mostly negative experiences with writing in high school. Again, this finding – when paired with the finding that 38% of participants didn't identify as a writer – suggests that having positive experiences with writing does not necessarily encourage identification as a writer.

What does foster or impede students' writer identity? Based on the qualitative responses from participants, being requirement to write as a student was listed most frequently in response to why participants did, did not – or sometimes did or did not – identify as a writer. For students who did identify as a writer, being required to write was given as a reason. Writing only when they were required to was the reason given for not identifying as a writer. Volitional writing, in one's own free time and out of school, also seemed to foster a positive writer identity; and not writing outside of school assignments supported students' negative writer identity. Worth noting is that participants' most frequent response to the question of why and when they do or do not identify as writers related more to the act of writing than to their perceptions of their own writing skills. This finding suggests somewhat of a disconnect between students' perceptions of the act of writing and their perceptions of themselves as writers and authors. This disconnection between themselves and the process of writing may, in fact, help to shed light on the more public perception and assessments that students are not successful writers in college and beyond.

If this assessment of students' perception of writing and being a writer is accurate, then writing instruction at both the high school and college levels should strive to consistently and explicitly teach students how and when to insert their own thoughts, ideas, and perceptions into their writing assignments. While some teachers at the high school level express wanting to teach these aspects of authorial writing, they acknowledge feeling the pressure to teach writing in a

way that will help them pass the required standardized test prompts. Teaching to pass a writing test prompt requires high school teachers to instruct students on the mechanics of writing at the sentence level, a level of writing that requires little – if any – authorial presence in writing (Patterson & Duer, 2006). Finding a way to infuse pre-writing assignments with opportunities to write at the content, process and purpose levels could provide a compromise for high school teachers seeking to better prepare students for writing at the college level (Patterson & Duer, 2006).

Implications

     Implications for theory. This study contributes to the literature for both the writer identity and authorial identity construct. The mixed method design introduces more diversity of research design to a literature base that is primarily split between qualitative or quantitative studies. In addition, it is the first study to investigate the two constructs together. Prior to this study, research has focused on either the writer identity or the authorial identity construct, not both. The study also is the first identified that investigates the constructs right at the point of entry into college, before students are exposed to writing assignments in the higher education setting. Further, this study explores the influence that students' high school writing experiences might have on the two constructs of interest.

     In addition, that many of the themes generated by the qualtitative responses to an intentionally-general prompt were similar to themes identified in previous studies begins to suggest some commonalities in the constructs across different populations. The difference this study offers is that the reasons for the presence or absence of students' writer identity came directly from participants' responses rather than through content analyses of student-produced writing assignments. Providing support for the three-factor model of authorial identity and

validating the SABAS as a measure of authorial identity also add to the literature for the authorial identity construct. Finally, introducing emerging adulthood as a developmental lens through which to interpret and understand the perceptions of undergraduate student writers adds to the theory by presenting this group as a unique category of developing writers – writers who are developing the skills for writing at the college level and beyond. Viewed through this lens, the ubiquitous "Johnny" may be afforded more understanding as he transitions into the new writing environments of college and professional life.

Implications for practice. The findings from this study suggest several areas where writing instruction in both secondary and higher education settings can help to foster a positive writer identity, and ideally, a positive authorial identity. Previous studies suggest that including direct instruction on the writer and/or authorial identity construct help students develop as academic writers. The richness of responses to the very general writer identity prompt in this study suggest that students authentically contemplated and expressed the reasons they did or did not consider themselves to be writers. These discussions in classroom settings in high school and college could have similar impacts on instructional content, practices, and assignments when students' perceptions of themselves as writers and authors become part of the classroom discourse. Further, enhancing positive high school writing experiences with skills needed in college can help begin students' transition to the writing expectations at the college level. Doing so can help students whose high school writing experiences were both positive and negative recognize that they've entered a new writing environment, and to capitalize on the propensity for optimism and embracing new experiences typical of emerging adults (Arnett, 2014).

The lack of differences between the two constructs of interest across high school English classes and course placement for this sample in this setting may suggest that the policy of

exempting students from the 111 class may need to be reexamined. At a minimum, incorporating instruction to foster a more positive authorial identity for students enrolled directly into the 112 course is supported by the finding that the highest proportion of students in the high writer and authorial identity groups were enrolled in the 111 course. Therefore, fewer students in these groups identified as having a positive writer or authorial identity. Providing professional development on the characteristics of the relatively new theory of emerging adulthood would also be valuable for faculty who teach writing in the higher education setting. Doing so would help faculty better understand the fluctuating identity explorations typical of today's traditional college students, and allow faculty to develop assignments and instruction that capitalizes on these explorations to foster stronger writer and authorial identity roles in their students.

Limitations and Future Studies

Although the findings of this study offer unique and relevant insights into students' writer and authorial identities as they enter the college setting, it is not without its limitations. These findings represent a snapshot of students' perceptions at one moment in time, right at the beginning of their college experiences. These experiences and perceptions can change and evolve quickly, particularly with this group of primarily emerging adults. The lack of follow up data collection later in their first year is a limitation of this study. In addition, using only written, open-response questions as the qualtitative data source is a second limitation of this study. Doing so did not allow for member checking or clarification of students' responses, practices that would have futher strengthened the validity of the findings. The follow-up questions that elicited the qualitative data differed between the response options, which could be seen as a limitation since why questions and when questions may evoke qualitatively different responses. That was not the case in this study, but could be for similar studies. Excluding transfer students from this

study sample is a final limitation of this study. Limiting participants only to first year students did not allow the unique perceptions and insights that transfer students in the target course could have added to this study's findings.

Given these limitations, several suggestions for future studies of writer and authorial identity are warranted. Replicating this study of first-year students, but as a longitudinal study that includes follow up interviews and an additional administration of the SABAS (at midyear and/or end-of-course) would help to inform our understanding of how these constructs evolve over time and exposure to college writing. Studying students' perceptions both at the high school level and after entering college would provide beneficial insights into students' experiences across this transition. The survey used in this study specifically placed the qualitative writer identity prompt ahead of the authorial identity items to decrease the potential influence that the SABAS items may have on students' responses. Future studies on these two constructs may benefit from investigating whether the placement of the qualitative prompt before or after the SABAS items enriches or detracts from the insights gained in this study. A study that incorporates writing motivation constructs such as writing self-efficacy and self-regulation for writing, would expand our understanding of the relationship between writer/authorial identity and writing motivation. Finally, including students' perception of writing itself – in addition to themselves as writers – would be an additional contribution to the factors that may contribute to identifying as a writer and author.

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Modified SABAS Items

1. Do you consider yourself a writer?

    a. If yes: Why do you consider yourself a writer?

    b. If no: Why don't you consider yourself a writer?

    c. If sometimes:

        i. When do you consider yourself a writer?

        ii. When don't you consider yourself a writer?

2. Authorial Confidence Items (α=.85)

    a. I have my own style of academic writing

    b. I am able to document my ideas clearly in my writing

    c. What I write communicates my confidence about the area to the reader

    d. I generate ideas while I am writing

    e. I have my own voice in my writing

    f. I feel in control when writing assignments

    g. I am able to formulate my ideas in my writing

    h. Academic writing allows me to communicate my ideas

3. Valuing Writing Items (α=.84)

    a. Being able to write clearly is an important part of being a graduate

    b. It is important to me that my essays are well written

    c. Academic writing is an important skill

    d. My ability to write academically is important to me

    e. It is important to me to keep developing as an academic writer

4. Identification with Author Items (α=.79)

    a. I feel that I am the author of my assignments

    b. I think of myself as an author

    c. I feel that I own my written work.

    d. I consider myself to be the author of my academic work

5. Demographic Items

    a. What is your date of birth?

    b. With which gender category do you most strongly identify?

        i. Male

        ii. Female

        iii. Other (please specify)

    c. Is this your first semester in college?

        i. Yes

        ii. No

    d. Is this your first time taking this class?

        i. Yes

        ii. No

    e. Which category best describes the highest level of high school English you completed?

        i. English 12

        ii. Advanced English 12

        iii. Honors English 12

        iv. AP English (please specify which AP English class)

v.   IB English

vi.   Dual Enrollment English

Appendix B
Codebook for Qualitative Data

WI No Codes:	**Exemplar Quotes**
N1_Can't express thoughts in writing	Because sometimes I can get my thoughts mixed up and then get stuck or can't think of anything to write at all
N2_Compared to Other Activities	I'd prefer [sic] to do other things than write for the most part
N3_Don't Like/Enjoy Writing	Because I do not like writing very much
N4_Don't Write for Fun/Enjoyment/In Spare Time	It is not something I do for fun.
N5_Don't Write Often	It is not something that I do on a regular basis.
N6_Effort Required	It takes so much energy and concentration for me to write. I find it very challenging and difficult.
N7_Not good at writing	I'm not a good writer
N8_Not Skilled Enough to Be a "Writer"	I...feel like writers express themselves through their writings, as for me I only use it to receive a grade.
N9_Only Write When Required	I don't do it outside of class; I only write when it is required, for homework or for classes.
N10_Response Unrelated/Unclear	because I am going to open my own business soon; Because i [sic] do not like to read

WI Yes Codes	**Exemplar Codes**
Y1_Compared to Other Subjects	[I] consider it to be the most satisfying part of my studies and academics.
Y2_Enjoy Specific Genre	because I enjoy writing poetry rather frequently; I simply enjoy writing down stories, and/or personally essays.
Y3_Enjoy Writing	Writing is something I have always enjoyed, no matter the form, genre etc.
Y4_Express feelings/emotions/thoughts	I write about what comes to my mind, I stress reliever
Y5_Future Writing Career	I intend on making a career out of writing, in fact.
Y6_Good at writing	I think I have a good grasp of flow when it comes to how words are put together; I know how to write
Y7_I write (various genres)	I write novels and research papers; Because I've been writing short stories and one act plays since freshman year of high school
Y8_I write for myself/in spare time	I write for fun; it is something I personally enjoy in my free time.
Y9_Love/Passionate About Writing	Writing is pretty much the only thing I'm entirely passionate about; I love writing and making up stories.
Y10_Positive feedback from others	[I] have gotten positive responses to my writing
Y11_Publishing	I have published work; I've written articles for a newspaper.
Y12_Required as Student	Because I write essays for school; I am a student who is often

	required to write assignments, essays, and stories.
Y13_Unrelated/Unclear	I am an avid reader; real life experiences
Y14_Writing is Basic Skill	Anybody can be a writer; because everyone is a writer, just in different ways or magnitudes

WI Sometimes Codes:	**Exemplar Quotes**
SN1_Ambiguous	When life get harder; Often
SN2_Express Myself in Other Ways	Most of the time, I'm more inclined to express myself through art and music rather than writing
SN3_Genre Specific	When it comes to creative writing; I do not consider myself a writer when making notes, lists, or anything small of that sort of nature.
SN4_Lack Skills	When I'm thinking about how much I'm about to struggle with my upcoming writing assignment; I believe I am not a good enough writer myself
SN5_Most of the Time	most of the time
SN6_No Ideas	Whenever I don't have a good idea or concept in my head.
SN7_When Compare with Others	When I compare myself to others
SN8_When Forced/Required/Assigned	When I am doing an assignment that involves me to write and I feel that I'm a terrible writer; When i [sic] am forced to write for a grade
SN9_When Not Interested in Topic	When i [sic] am doing an assignment that isn't a topic i [sic] want to write about
SN10_When Not Motivated	When I don't feel like writing
SN11_When Not Required for Class	Whenever I am not required to write essays for a class
SN12_When Not Writing	When I haven't written in a while; When I don't write
SN13_When Not Writing Well	When I don't do well in those essays or writing assignments; When I don't do well in those essays or writing assignments.
SN14_Don't Write for Fun/For Myself	I do not write on my own; I do not write for fun or hobby usually

WI Sometimes Codes:	**Exemplar Quotes**
SY1_Unrelated/Unclear	Whenever I get ready; When I write for art
SY2_Genre Specific Writing	when i [sic] have to write essays; When I write ideas for my comic strip
SY3_When Assigned Length	When I am given an assignment to complete that involves writing extensively
SY4_When choose topic	When I am writing on a topic of my choosing
SY5_When expressing Thoughts/Emotions	When I choose to personally express myself through writing; when I talk about deep or personal thoughts.
SY6_When Forced/Required/Assigned	When I need to be a writer, like when I need to write an essay for a class

SY7_When I Write	When I'm working on writing something
SY8_When I Write Well	When I have recently written a good paper
SY9_When Inspired/Motivated/Knowledgeable to Write	When I am inspired or motivated to write; When I feel like I know enough about a topic to write about it in detail
SY10_When Interested in Topic	When I find a story or topic interesting enough for me to write about.
SY11_When Learn from Writing	When I feel like I have something to share that can allow me to look at life differently
SY12_When passionate about topic	when i [sic] feel passionate about something im [sic] writing about
SY13_When writing for Fun/Myself	When I'm writing in my journal at home; when i [sic] voluntarily write
SY14_When writing Own Stories/Personal Connection	I consider myself a writer when I am freely expressing my ideas in my own stories; When writing about myself

Appendix C
Authorial Identity Rubric for Case Selection

Authorial Quality	No evidence	Minimal evidence	Emerging Evidence	Moderate Evidence	Extensive Evidence
Authorial Confidence	0	1	2	3	4
I am able to document my ideas clearly in my writing					
I generate ideas while I am writing					
I feel in control when writing assignments					
I am able to formulate my ideas in my writing					
I think of myself as an author					
Identification with Author	0	1	2	3	4
I feel that I am the author of my assignments					
I feel that I own my written work					
I consider myself to be the author of my academic work					