The Rhetorical Challenge of Whiteness within Blackboard for African American

Bidialectal Students at Elizabeth City State University

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This research will attempt to discover if there is a rhetorical challenge due to whiteness within

Elizabeth City State University's (ECSU) Blackboard (Bb) online education system when it is utilized by

African American (AA) students whose dominant dialect is African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

This study will gather data through the implementation of a survey and follow-up interviews. The

analysis of the two sets of data will attempt to identify if this segment of the AA student body is hesitant

to take online courses via Bb, if they have a stronger inclination for the need for call-response, tonal

semantics, and non-verbal cues in their communication experiences when compared to the other

participants, and if their need for these communication elements has an impact on their approach to

online classes at ECSU.

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Theoretical Framework and Analytical Lenses

Fall 2012 witnessed the launch of MOOC (massive open online courses) a collaborative initiative

between Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology offering free online courses. 370,000

students were enrolled when the first official fall course began. In the same year, Coursera, founded in

January 2012 had 1.7 million enrolled according to *The New York Times* (Pappano, 2012). Clearly,

learning online is a growing phenomenon. Although online education is taking many different forms,

one thing appears to be obvious; this educational venue is here to stay. So, as educators within the

college and university system, we should no longer acquiesce to our administration's online initiatives

like they are a fad designed to increase enrollment, instead we need to recognize that online classes

have the potential to positively change the face of education, if they are designed and implemented in a

manner that increases the students' agency. Concerned with potential challenges faced within the

online educational experience at the institute where I teach, I decided to address the potential for

whiteness, a system that maintains white supremacy (Picower, 2009), within Blackboard (Bb) and the

further potential for rhetorical challenge for a certain segment of our student population.

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), with the student body of 2,470 (Elizabeth City State

University, 2012) is a Historic Black College (HBCU) located in Elizabeth City, a town of 18,705, close to

the Atlantic coast, in North Carolina. This town is fifty-four percent female, the median age is thirty-one,

and the demographics include thirty-eight percent white and fifty-four percent African American (AA).

Also, the estimated median household income in 2009 for Elizabeth City is $33,466, and 10.7 percent of

the citizens are unemployed (Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 2012). ECSU, located in this town, has a

student body of over ninety percent African American; also, eighty-seven percent of the students are in-

state students. The average SAT score is eight hundred and sixty-five, and sixty-one percent of the

student body is females (Elizabeth City State University, 2012). At the commencement of my research, I

had been part of the full time faculty at ECSU for three years. As a white Canadian transplanted into the

American South, I discovered the beauty of the African American Vernacular that was spoken at times

on the campus, and I thoroughly enjoyed my exposure to a new culture and way of communication.

Also, I had the opportunity to teach both face-to-face and online classes, and I quickly recognized a

variance in many of the students' attitudes between participating in a face-to-face class and taking an

online class at ECSU.   The online system at ECSU is Blackboard, and in the 2011-2012 academic school

year, one hundred and ninety-eight students were enrolled in an online class at this institution

(Appendix D). At the time this research was conducted, seventy percent of American colleges and

universities used Blackboard as their system of choice for online classes (Bradford, Porciello, Balkon, &

Backus, 2007).

In my second semester as an English Instructor at ECSU, I was asked to consider teaching an

online class in the summer school session. During the discussion with the chair of the department, I

inquired about the class size, and she explained that the class sizes for online courses are much smaller

than for face-to-face courses. Then, at the end of the semester, a number of my students wondered

whether I would be teaching the next course they needed to take, and I explained that I was teaching

that course, but it would be online during the summer. I was surprised at how many of those students

screwed up their face or shook their heads as they explained that they do not like to take online classes.

Through these and other conversations with ECSU students and faculty, it became apparent to me that

many of the students seem hesitant to take online classes at ECSU. After making some initial

observations, I was curious to discover if African American (AA) students whose dominant dialect is

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) are disadvantaged or marginalized in an online class at

ECSU, and if that marginalization creates hesitation to take an online class within this segment of the

student population. So, I conducted a first draft of my survey just to see if there were any statistics that

would warrant official research into why some of the ECSU students did not take online classes.   The

survey was given to 303 students: 252 AA, 31 White, 20 other.   I analyzed the AA and white categories, but I did not address the 20 in the "Other" category because they did not indicate any answer regarding race/ethnicity on the survey. Also, in the responses, 75 out of the 303 students (25%) indicated that their dominant dialect was AAVE. The following chart (Chart 1) summarizes the data regarding the surveyed students' ethnicity, dominant dialect, and hesitancy to take an online course.

_____ _____

Dialect, Ethnicity, and Hesitancy Regarding Blackboard Courses at ECSU

AAVE is dominant – 75 students   SE is dominant – 228 students

Ethnicity	AA 75/75 (100 %)	White 31/228 (13%)	AA 177/228 (77%)
Hesitant	AA 39/75 (52%)	White 13/31 (42%)	AA 71/177 (40%)

_____

Chart 1: Dialect, Ethnicity, and Hesitancy Regarding Blackboard Courses at ECSU

The above chart indicates that out of the 75 AA students whose dominant language is AAVE, 39 (52%) are hesitant to take an online class. This finding is 10% higher than Whites and 12% higher than AA students whose dominant language is Standard English (SE). This initial survey indicated the need for further investigation regarding whether whiteness in the design and implementation of Blackboard (Bb) at ECSU is an element that creates a rhetorical challenge for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE.

At the outset of my research, I assumed a postmodern approach that allows for the destabilizing of traditional concepts of identity (Aylesworth, 2005) that are associated with an online student. This approach allows for the assessment of the "changing realities in [a] virtual classroom" (Gruber, 1999, p. 207). The reality, according to Gruber (1999), includes the acknowledgement of any changes within the demographics of online classes and the implications that come from those changes. This postmodern

approach provides a platform for a "productive dialogue about race and education" (Arroyo, 2010, p. 40) and what the implications are for an online class at ECSU. This freedom to incorporate "the practice of deconstructing existing versions of social reality and . . . giving voice to other versions" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 39) allows me freedom to investigate the interaction between instructor and student that takes place in a Bb course. Assuming this postmodern approach to online classes at ECSU, I determined through secondary research, that the role of whiteness, the role of hegemony, which is a dynamic that allows the dominant social group to maintain its position of power (DeBose, 2007), the significance of the AA learning/communication styles, and the development of online class' pedagogy needed to be my foci within my research, thus becoming my analytical lenses through which I considered my data. These four elements are important aspects to examine as I investigate the rhetorical dynamic between African American (AA) online students whose dominant dialect is African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and their instructors who communicate in written Standard English (SE).

Through the use of secondary literature, I was able to gather data regarding whiteness, hegemony, AA communication style, and online education. The data gathered confirmed my selection of these four analytical lenses for my research.

Whiteness is an ideology that maintains the supremacy of whites over African Americans (Picower, 2009), and whiteness has been identified as an element in online courses like Blackboard (Bb) (Anderson, 2006; Gruber, 1999; Kendrick, 2005). Regarding whiteness, consider Picower's (2009) article "The Unexamined Whiteness of Teaching: How White Teachers Maintain and Enact Dominant Racial Ideologies" that takes the concept of whiteness in education and expounds upon that hegemonic role of whiteness. Picower (2009) identifies the ideological basis for whiteness, which involves the "way of being in the world that is used to maintain White supremacy" (p. 198). She addresses educational demographics including the statistics that in 2004 ninety percent of teachers in America were white. She also presents material that relates to the impact whiteness has on the emotions and the

performance of minority students. Picower's research offers insight into why whiteness is a consideration in the analysis of educational dynamics.

According to Picower (2009), whiteness is an element within academia, but I needed to consider other literature to see if whiteness is a consideration in online classes. Gruber's (1999) article "Communication Gone Wired: Working Toward a 'Practiced' Cyberfeminism" addresses new technologies, and she points out that during the designing period of Bb, "the computer industry was dominated by white males" (p. 199). Gruber also encourages her reader to consider that within cyberspace there is the representation of dominant belief systems. Gruber helps her reader see that "any tool comes attached with values and has to be approached as a product of society" (p. 199), and she goes on to acknowledge that within "cyberspace [there exists] social and political injustices" (p. 201), which are a part of dominant belief systems. Gruber's perspective supports the concept that online education is representative of the same elements that are part of a face-to-face class; thus, the social injustices based in whiteness that are part of a face-to-face class setting could potentially be part of the online class setting. Kendrick's (2005) "Invisibility, Race, and the Interface" also addresses "white content" (p. 399) in online settings. This author shows that the cyber world is not racially invisible, but race and elements associated with race, like whiteness, are woven into the online experience. Like Gruber (1999), Anderson's (2006) "Writing Power into Online Discussion" considers the social construction of online communication, with the specific consideration of race, and how communication is shaped by off line experiences. Anderson (2006) sees language style as an identifier in online communication and he ties his perspective regarding online communication into the development of the teacher's voice and biases within the construction of online classes. Blackwell (2010) addresses whiteness by examining pedagogical interventions concerning racism and white privilege in the classroom setting. Like

Kendrick (2005), she also explains the dynamic of online invisibility as it relates to the perception that students are potentially "race free" because no one can see their faces online. Like Gruber (1999) and Anderson (2006), Blackwell (2010) also explains how space is socially constructed, and she elaborates on the need for safe space in an educational setting, especially for minority students. McIntyre (2002) in "Exploring Whiteness and Multicultural Education with Prospective Teachers" sees whiteness as informing teaching. Through the use of a classroom activity in one of her student teacher classes, she establishes that whiteness is present in the way these teachers–in-training approach pedagogy. Kynard's (2007) article compliments McIntyre's research with her gathered data addressing the online written dialogue of her AA students. She illustrates that her students were able to communicate their identity through the use of the vernacular and signifying in an online setting. This author goes on to encourage her readers to assess their pedagogical approach to online classes where AA students are a part of the experience so that the vernacular traditions are considered when online communication occurs. Thus, these seven authors provide a perspective that whiteness as an element within the design and implementation of Bb is an important lens to be used in this research project, especially since a vast majority of the students at ECSU are AA and could be affected by whiteness in the online classroom.

The second lens I am implementing is hegemony, which is an aspect in society that enables the dominant social group to maintain their position of power (DeBose, 2007). As communicated in the above section on whiteness, there is a potential hegemonic aspect in whiteness when we consider the online classroom experience (Picower, 2009 ; Gruber, 1999 ; & Blackwell, 2010). The hegemonic role of whiteness is understood better when considering DeBose's (2007) definition of hegemony. DeBose (2007) defines hegemony as a function of society where elements are enacted so that the dominant social group maintains its position of

power, and he cites the use of Standard English in education as an example of hegemony. The dominant social group (whites) have established Standard English, which is the middle class, white dominant language, as the language of American education (Bennett, 1998; Ornstein and Levine, 1982; Kynard, 2007), which naturally gives whites power in the classroom because it is the language educated whites use to communicate. This hegemony carries over into the online class where, at an HBCU college like ECSU, the students whose first language is SE might be privileged over the AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE, and this potentially happens because the design and approach to online learning has been created for the average white student, whose primary language is SE (Kendrick, 2005).

The third element of AA communication style is another lens used within my research. There are different cultures with distinct characteristics, and this distinction also applies to their learning and communication styles (Durodoye & Hildreth, 1995) within the Bb setting. According to Arroyo (2010), research relating to teaching AA students online must include a "transformative, postmodern pedagogical techniques filtered through the lens of culturally specific learning styles" (p. 36), and these learning styles based in communication are specific to each culture, including the AA culture (Smitherman, 2007, p. 84).

ECSU, which is a HBCU school, is the focus of my research regarding the online classroom experience of the AA student whose dominant dialect is AAVE. In order to discover if there is a rhetorical challenge for this specific group of students at ECSU, when they are taking an online class, I turned to secondary literature to discover more about the learning and communication style of AA students. Durodoye and Hildreth (1995) in their article "Learning Styles and the African American Student" explain that there are different learning styles for different ethnicities. Then they go on to detail the four elements that make up the AA learning style: social, harmonious, expressive, and nonverbal. Social involves people oriented social learning, harmonious is where synthesis in the learning

process is sought, expressive is about the preference of simultaneous stimulation, and nonverbal involves intonation and body language where the "movement and rhythm components are vital" (p. 243). Thus, the expressive element lends itself to call-response with the AA preference for simultaneous stimulation, and the nonverbal lends itself to tonal semantics with the intonations and the non-verbal cues related to body language. Also, in this article, these authors identify a challenge that is created for these AA students when their communication style is not a part of the instructor's pedagogy. Hecht, Jackson II, and Ribeau (2003) address the distinctiveness that occurs in different languages and dialects by explaining that each language or dialect has their individual combination of verbal and nonverbal markers. In their book *African American Communication: Exploring Identity and Culture,* Hecht, Jackson II and Ribeau (2003) explain that "African American styles . . . convey [meaning] without words" (p. 175). There are a number of identifiers that they discuss, but one characteristic of the non-verbal aspect of AA style of communication involves body motion, and they explain that there is a greater variety of movement used in AA style of communication as compared to European American students' communication style.

The foundational work of Smitherman (1977, 2007) serves as a good reference for my research as I consider the lens of AA communication style. Smitherman (2007) asserts that "there [are] stylistic patterns [of Black communication that] are the sole property of Black folks" (p. 84), and regarding Black "style," she is referring to "patterns of Black communication combine[d] with Black verbal rituals" (p. 84). There are three elements within AA communication style that I will be considering: call response (CR), tonal semantics (TS), and nonverbal cues (NVC). Smitherman (2007) defines call response as "the speaker's solo voice alternat[ing] or . . . intermingle[ing] with the audience's response" (87). Smitherman (2007) concludes that the "printed page obviously cannot reflect the Call-Response pattern" (p. 88), and this conclusion also applies to the screen page of Blackboard. Tonal semantics is detailed by Smitherman (1977) in her foundational book *Talkin and Testifyin* and can be summarized as "verbal

power [that is] achieved through the use of words and phrases carefully chosen for sound effects" (p. 99). Further on in her book, she adds that tonal semantic is a reference "to the use of voice rhythm and vocal inflection to convey meaning in black communication" (p. 134). Smitherman (1977) explains that it is not just what is said in AA communication, but it is also how it is said that results in the communication of information to the listener. Nonverbal cues are a reference to body language and movement. Smitherman (2007) highlights Black performance explaining that AA communication style is filled with "nonverbal gesticulations" (105), which is the third element of AA communication that I label as nonverbal cues (NVC).   Cumming and Latta's (1986) article explains the role of call response in the AA church setting, where the pastor's voice intermingles with the audience's response, and they conclude that "call and response are at the center of . . . performance" (p.66).   Woodyard (2003) also acknowledges the dynamic of call response as an element in AAVE, stating that it is "most effective when [African Americans] have been given space to participate in the creation of the message" (p. 141). Collectively, we see that these writers provide significant support in the recognition of the importance of call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues in relation to the communication style of African Americans.

Thus, out of the many elements identified with AA communication style, there are three aspects – call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues - that I will investigate as I assess a potential hegemonic dynamic in online classes at ECSU because these three elements play a more dominant role in AAVE when compared to SE (Bennett, 1998). Bennett (1998), in his article "Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective" explains that the nonverbal cues in Standard English are "perceived more as a commentary on the verbal message than as a part of the message itself" (p. 11). Since it has been established that there are differences between the communication styles of those speaking AAVE and those speaking SE (Hecht, Jackson II, & Ribeau, 2003; Bennett, 1998), I wanted to

know the implications on the AA students' rhetorical agency when call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues are missing in an online class.

The fourth lens used in this research conducted at ECSU is the lens of online education. The dynamics of an online class and the pedagogical implications for online teaching are two aspects to be considered. Also, the more focused topic of online education for AA students must be examined. Thus, secondary literature relating to online education was studied.

Rovai and Barnum's (2003) article "Online Course Effectiveness" is a general article regarding online education. They take a look at instructor immediacy, which for all students is "positively related to learning" (p. 59), and they also suggest that instructors unconsciously use non-verbal cues like eye contact or body motion when they are teaching face-to-face and that these non-verbal cues are part of communication. Sapp and Simon's (2005) article acknowledges general principles regarding online education. One area these authors consider relates to learning styles and how some learning styles are not compatible to online learning. They reference the missing non-verbal cues in an online setting that can be found in the face-to-face classroom. Also, they recognize the importance of the online teacher developing a pedagogy that will consider every student's learning/communication styles and the fact that "body language cues associated with face-to-face learning" (p. 477) are missing in online education. Conaway, Easton, & Schmidt (2005) in "Strategies for Enhancing Student Interaction and Immediacy in Online Courses" look at the need for increased interaction between the online instructor and his or her students, and, like Rovai and Barnum (2003), they believe that all students need immediate feedback from their teacher; however, their research is related to a general online class, rather than addressing specific cultural demographics within an online class like I have done with my research at ECSU. Hewett and Ehmann's (2004) article "Preparing Educators for Online Writing Instruction" identifies the aspect of missing body movements and phatic utterances in online education and the impact those missing elements have in the educational process for all students. These authors explain that the "loss of facial

and body-language cues [are] inherent to the online environment" (p. 75). Also, they elaborate on

phatic utterances, which are expressions that create atmosphere in a classroom, and they suggest that

phatic utterance are missing in the traditional approach to online education when the instructor only

uses written instructions and feedback. Like Rovai and Barnum (2003) who value instructor presence

and Hewett and Ehmann (2004) who identify the role of body movement within instruction, Palloff and

Pratt (2007) also indicate the need for vital instructor presence and the concern regarding the missing

element of body language in online education. Collectively, these articles provided needed insight

regarding teacher presence, non-verbal cues, tonal semantics, learning styles, and immediate feedback

as it relates to the general online student populace, and all of these aspects need to be considered when

developing online pedagogy.

        Crawford (2004) establishes the validity of culturally specific discourse styles, recognizing that

students have their own discourse style; however, most instructors also have an academic language that

is used within the academic domain and that language is Standard English (SE). Ornstein and Levine

(1982) recognize the traditional use of SE within academia when they explain that "Historically . . .

schools have attempted to teach [in] Standard English" (p. 80), and historically it is the white population

that have determined that Standard English is to be the "standard" language in education (Kynard,

2007, p. 337). Kynard (2007) explains in her article that white Americans have established the norm for

academic communication and that the majority of online educators also embrace the traditional "white"

way of communicating through the expected use of SE. West, Waddoups, and Graham's (2007) article,

"Understanding the Experiences of Instructors as They Adopt a Course Management System," support

Kynard's assertion that SE is the default language for online communication. Also, these authors attest

to the fact that "Most instructors . . . do not understand how to teach online" (p. 17), and these authors

go on to write that instructors do not see their colleagues implementing modes of communication other

than written SE when they are teaching online; thus, these instructors default to the trend of instructing

through the sole use of written SE in an online class. Although not all college online instructors use

Standard English as their discourse style, in my research I will be addressing the generally accepted use

of SE as the discourse style used by online college professors, whether they are white or of another

ethnicity. In this dissertation, the definition of whiteness within online teaching is not rooted in the

color of the instructor, but in the use of written SE as the only mode of communication the instructor

uses with their online students; thus, the online instructor establishes whiteness in his or her online

class through their use of written SE, which is a part of their online pedagogy for teaching the Bb

course. These articles I have referenced reiterated the reality that whiteness is part of the traditional

method of instructing within Bb; however, online education as it relates to AA students is a more

specific consideration for my research.

Anderson's (2006) article "Writing Power into Online Discussion" addresses agency, structural

online elements, and the need for immediate feedback; however, his information provided in the article

also supports Blackwell's (2010) data on the white bias inside of online education and the need for a

safe space for minority students.   Arroyo (2010) identifies the importance of a postmodern approach to

research regarding online education, which allows us to have a "productive dialogue about race and

education" (Arroyo, 2010, p. 40). In his article "It's Not a Colorless Classroom: Teaching Religion Online

to Black College Students Using Transformative, Postmodern Pedagogy" Arroyo references research

done by Boykin (1983) who identified nine black cultural learning styles (BCLS). These nine BCLS are:

spirituality, harmony, movement, verve, affect, communalism, expressive individualism, orality, and

social time perspective.   Although Arroyo (2010) does not develop the details regarding these nine

BCLS, it was interesting for me to note that movement and orality were two of the nine identifiers,

where movement relates to NVC and orality relates to TS, and NVC and TS are two of the three elements

I will be considering in my research. Arroyo (2010) goes on to say that "empirical studies of white and

black students support the notion of learning style differences by race, showing how failure to properly

attend to them impacts student grades" (p. 37); thus, for my research at ECSU regarding AA students'

learning/communication styles and the implications in an online class setting, Arroyo's article regarding

learning styles, race, and online classes demonstrates the need for further research since "nuanced

approaches for teaching target populations such as black students are especially scarce" (Arroyo, 2010,

p. 1). Another helpful book regarding the specific dynamic of teaching AA students online was

Richardson's (2006) *Hiphop Literacies*. Richardson's (2006) view of agency relates to multimodality and

how it "create[s] new ways of making meaning" (p. 98), and agency within the AA online college

learning community is to be considered as I research different modality possibilities for Bb that will

allow visual/verbal elements to be incorporated into the online classroom experience.

Every ethnic group has its own distinguishing characteristics regarding its communication style;

the challenge, however, for African Americans who speak AAVE is that many of their defining

characteristics, like call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues, are elements that are missing in

online communication. Nonverbal cues (NVC) are an aspect of AA communication that is visual and,

therefore, missing in an online class. Hewett and Ehmann (2004) acknowledge that there is a loss of

facial and body movement cues in an online environment, but these nonverbal cues are aspects of AAVE

that enables agency. Also, Durodoye and Hildreth (1995) admit that conflict can occur when AA

students must perform an academic exercise that is not facilitative to his or her learning/communication

style. On the other hand, power and agency occur when a student has the ability to "give effect to their

wishes" (Anderson, 2006, par. 3) by completing an exercise without frustration because the process was

facilitated through their own learning/communication style.   Arroyo (2010) believes that these

bidialectal (DeBose 2007) AA students experience "disjointedness" within the educational system, and

one reason for this disjointedness is language differences. Alim (2007) explains that there is a

marginalization of students whose language and literacy practices are other than SE, and this inevitably

impacts their success in the classroom. These authors have heightened my awareness that frustration,

disjointedness, and marginalization within academia are possible emotions for some AA students, and

their writings have provided foundational research upon which I can build my research at ECSU relating

to a potential rhetorical challenge for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE and who are hesitant

to take online classes.   Having considered secondary literature, it is important to consider the

implications of this research as it relates to whiteness within my research.

The domination of whiteness within the educational system and the hegemony associated with

this racial domination are two of the issues to be addressed in my dissertation as I consider the

rhetorical process of a racially mixed online classroom. In 2004, ninety percent of the K-12 teaching

force was white, which demonstrated a strong white influence in the educational experience and in the

development of the academic process. This trend obviously continued, since at that time over eighty

percent of the current students in the U.S. teacher education program were white females and those

teachers were being instructed by teachers whose composition was eighty-eight percent white

(Picower, 2009). This dominant white presence brings with it a dynamic called whiteness, which

involves privileges, ideologies, and stereotypes that reinforce institutional hierarchies (Picower, 2009).

Picower (2009) explains that whiteness is an ideology that maintains white supremacy; it is like an

invisible knapsack filled with educational advantages (McIntosh, 1990) that include unearned assets, one

of which is that the instructor's language is the same as the average white college student's primary

language, and that advantage is handed to white students, but is kept from students of color whose

primary language is not Standard English. As stated earlier, whiteness is a system of white dominance

that marginalizes people of color, while securing privileges for white people (McIntyre, 2002). Kendrick

explains whiteness as the "canvas upon which everything else is painted" (Kendrick, 2005, p. 396); an

apt metaphor where whiteness is the foundational ideology within the educational field, and the

instructional language, choice of literature, and educational methods are the paint that covers that

canvas. Whiteness is seen within the educational system, but what role does it play in online education?

One growing area of higher education is online education, and if the design of a computer system like Bb has the average "white" user in mind (Kendrick, 2005, p. 398), then whiteness is a dynamic that must be considered in the evaluation of the rhetorical process in an online class.   This system of privilege and power, which is the basis of whiteness, is rooted in racial identity, and if "whiteness organizes mainstream notions of . . . success" (Blackwell, 2010, p.476), then success for the AA online student will be affected by whiteness. Therefore, the effect of whiteness in a Bb site used in online education programs at ECSU must be considered from the perspective that the design was originally engineered by four white males, Stephen Gilfus (*Gilfus Education Group,* 2012), Dan Cane (Prendismo *collection*, 2012), Matthew Pittinsky ("The education guy", 2007), and Michael Chasen (Zipkin, 2009). In 1997 Gilfus and Cane developed a software product that would power online education at Cornell University (*Gilfus Education Group*, 2012). The student body at Cornell University was over two-thirds white when Gilfus and Cane were researching and developing their online course software (*Cornell University*, 2012). However, the focus of the software broadened from Cornell University to the general American university population when Gilfus and Cane joined Pittinsky and Chasen, two white males, and together these four white males worked to design and implement Bb ("The Education Guy", 2007; Zipkin, 2009). At the time Bb was being designed, the American university population was 74.7 percent white (Hansen, 1998). Thus, Bb was designed by white males for a predominantly white audience.

Online Bb classes that take the traditional approach of disseminating information through the use of written Standard English (SE), appear to be set to a "default 'White' position" (Lockard 2000, referenced in Anderson, 2006), and this position is 'White' because of the use of the accepted language of American academia, Standard English, presented in the commonly used written form (Crawford, 2004 & Bernard et al., 2004). Crawford (2004) acknowledges that in America, SE is the academic language of choice used within academic domains. Also, within the traditional implementation of Bb, written

Standard English (SE) is the mode of communication used by most instructors (West, Waddoups, & Graham, 2007) as well as "the students [who] must use written forms of expression to interact" (Bernard, et al., 2004); thus, those students whose dominant language is not Standard English, or those students whose agency is challenged when only the written form of communication is used, could potentially be marginalized in an online setting where written SE is the method used by most of the instructors when communicating with their students (Crawford, 2004 & Bernard et al., 2004).

Acknowledging Lockard's (2000) consideration of whiteness within online education, it was important for me to investigate whether there is a whiteness factor in the implementation of the Bb design at ECSU. The design of new technology, such as Blackboard, is determined by its creators; and the computer industry in the 1980s, when Blackboard emerged, was dominated by white males. Gruber (1999) concludes that the ingrained values of the white male designers determine the whiteness of the online class setting. Gruber challenges online education with the charge that the "dominant belief system [within online education] reinforce[s] the marginalization of nondominant groups by privileged groups" (p. 199), and I wanted to know who is privileged and who is marginalized at ECSU based on whiteness within Bb.

There appears to be a whiteness element within Bb when we consider the use of written SE, but there is also the whiteness of the teacher to consider, especially as they communicate with minority students through the online venue. Cumming and Latta (1986) maintain that "the educational experience of minority students is a direct consequence of how teachers define themselves in relation to minority communities" (p. 48). An instructor's approach in an online class is supported by institutionalized practices of control (Anderson, 2006). In a face-to-face classroom these institutionalized practices of control are reinforced through many aspects like the instructor's position at the front of the classroom and the fact that the teacher stands while the students sit, the voice the teacher assumes, along with the control of the classroom and material that establishes the teacher's

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position. In an online classroom, there are also institutionalized practices of control that establish the

instructor's ethos. The use of Standard English is one way that control is established, because SE is the

language of power within education. Anderson (2006) identifies the role of the instructor's "voice,"

which is identity communicated through word choice, and in online education, that frequently used

format to communicate the word choice is the written format.   This academic voice will determine the

kind of agency the student will have. Also, the chosen instructor's "voice," according to Anderson

(2006), is a reflection of the teacher's definition of himself or herself as an academic instructor who

establishes his or her position of authority through well written instructions and/or feedback while

employing academic vocabulary. Sujo de montes, Oran, and Willis(2002) explain that online instructors

must be "willing to analyze their own biases and assumptions, first when they build online courses and

then when they interact with online students" (referenced in Anderson, 2006, p.269); otherwise, their

choice to use strictly written SE to communicate with their online students could potentially marginalize

some of these students.

The whiteness of the teacher is not based on the race of the online instructor, but on their

method of communication that establishes whiteness in the online venue. Written SE is the academic

language of choice, and "Blackboard, with all of its restrictions and limited pre-packaged qualities"

(Kynard, 2007, p.331) is designed in such a way that written communication in Standard English is the

default approach of many online college instructors (West, Waddoups, & Graham, 2007). We have

recognized that communication that occurs in an online setting is grounded in the communicators'

identity (Hecht, Jackson II, & Ribeau, 2003); however, it is not just the identity of the instructor who uses

SE, but the identity of the student as well.   Since one aspect of our identity is racially based, there must

be a consideration of the rhetorical dynamic that occurs because of the communication style connected

with the racial identity of the student, and this consideration must occur when assessing the

communication between the Standard English speaking teacher conducting an online class and, for this

research paper, the AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE.

As a student begins an online class, the visual elements of his or her ethnic identity are hidden from the rest of the participants. However, Anderson (2006) asserts that there are visible indicators regarding racial differences in our distance education classroom. Anderson (2006) helps explain this phenomenon by citing Koiko, Nadamura, and Rodman (2000) who state that racial online identity is influenced by "real world" identity, which shapes us and informs our cognitive process in an online setting. Anderson (2006) goes on to say that it is the language style and use that often reveals the racial identity of the online writer. The online identity of the student is recognized as the Bb course progresses; also, during the duration of the class, the online instructor's ethos is recognized, and there is a possibility that the intersection of the student's identity and the instructor's ethos can result in a hegemonic relationship.

Since I am concerned with the AA students' success in ECSU online classes, the questions that guided my research are as follows:

- Is there a rhetorical challenge for AA students in online classes at ECSU when a difference exists in communication styles between the online instructors who communicate in SE and the students whose dominant dialect is AAVE?

- Is whiteness an element that is part of the design of online classes at ECSU?

- If there is whiteness dynamic incorporated into the online classes at ECSU, then does the hegemonic role of whiteness in an online class at ECSU hinder the rhetorical process for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE?

- What are the pedagogical implications when considering the hegemonic role of whiteness within the Bb experience, and could the hegemonic role of whiteness potentially create a rhetorical challenge for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE?

These questions provided guidance for my research that will be detailed within the pages of this dissertation. I wanted to discover the answers to my questions and to consider the implications the answers could have regarding online pedagogy within higher education.

Before I detail the methodology, data, and analysis of my research, there are a number of limitations within my research process that need to be identified. First, I am a white, Canadian who is researching a topic outside of my cultural background. This terministic screen has implications on my research because of the potential "White" bias that might infiltrate the process. Although I tried to guard against this natural bias, the reality that I am a white Canadian conducting research in a predominantly AA community creates potential limitations. Also, I am an instructor who is interviewing students, and the potential barrier created by my position of power could also result in limited feedback or comments from the students. Secondly, my research is conducted at a HBCU school, which could potentially limit my findings to HBCU schools. Furthermore, my research is conducted at one specific HBCU school – Elizabeth City State University. Thus, my findings, conclusions, and recommendations apply to the student body, online faculty, and administration of ECSU. Finally, the survey is conducted with 156 students, which is eighteen percent of the student population. The result is that some of the groups I will be analyzing, specifically the groups of white students, involves a small sample section.   As a result, some of my findings involve one or two students, which is also a limitation of this research project. Also, the data addressed in this research project applies to one of many American dialects, and further research needs to be conducted regarding the implications for online students who do not claim SE as their first language and whose dominant dialect is not AAVE.

Having considered the literature which addresses whiteness, hegemony, AA communication style, and online learning, I felt better prepared to move ahead with my own research. My research, detailed in the upcoming chapters, is designed to help discover an answer to whether there is a whiteness element in online classes at ECSU, and if whiteness is a dynamic to be considered, then is

there a potential rhetorical challenge for AA ECSU college students whose dominant dialect is AAVE, specifically when the online instructor is not actively addressing the potential hegemonic role of whiteness in his or her online class? Chapter two of this dissertation addresses the methodology I used for the development and implementation of the survey given and interviews I conducted at ECSU. Chapter three looks at the data gathered from the survey and chapter four details the data gathered from the interviews. Chapter five is the analysis of the data from the survey and interviews, along with the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Two

Methodology: The Survey and Interview

In 2009, I joined the faculty at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU). This Historic Black College (HBCU) is part of a blue-collar community located in the north-eastern part of North Carolina. The city, with a population around 20,000, is a military town that hosts the students of ECSU. A segment of the student population comes from Elizabeth City, but a majority of the students have chosen to move to Elizabeth City to attend ECSU.   As we consider this HBCU school, it is important to recognize that ECSU's student body is predominantly African American (AA). The racial breakdown for this school of 2,470 is 1,934 (78%) who are AA, 485 (20%) who are white, and 51 (2%) who fall into the other category (*Elizabeth City State University,* 2012). The data I was looking to collect and analyze was based on a curiosity as to why many of my AA students at ECSU expressed a strong aversion to taking online classes at ECSU. I wanted to know why these AA students were hesitant to take an online class and if there was a possible hegemonic element that was inspiring the AA students' hesitancy. The possibility of hegemony was important to consider as I investigated the rhetorical dynamic between AA online students whose dominant dialect is African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and their instructors who communicate in written Standard English (SE). I was interested to learn if AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE are disadvantaged or marginalized in an online class at ECSU. This query was based on a potential whiteness element that could be part of the design of an online class (Gruber, 1999) at ECSU, and if whiteness is an element to be considered, then I wanted to know if that whiteness played a hegemonic role (Picower, 2009 & Debose, 2007)) that could potentially hinder the rhetorical process of an ECSU student whose dominant dialect is AAVE.

In this predominantly AA setting, it was vital that I as a white English instructor consider my own terministic screens (Royster, 1996) that could play a role in the research process as I, a white woman, collect and analyze data regarding the AA students at ECSU. During the research process, I was

conscious of the hegemonic role my race and position as an English instructor could create as I surveyed

and interviewed the students at ECSU (Blackwell, 2010). To counteract that potential hegemonic

dynamic, I designed the survey [see Appendix A] and conducted interviews [see Appendix B] with

countermeasures in place, and these measures will be detailed later in this chapter.

In the gathering of my data, I decided to use the combination of survey and interviews. Like

Sapp and Simon (2005) who effectively implemented the combination of a survey and interviews to

collect data for their research regarding a student's online experience, I too designed and distributed a

survey and then conducted interviews. After I received IRB approval for the survey and interview

process, the survey was given to 156 ECSU students in GE102 and GE103 classes. I used the English

department to distribute the surveys, but the intent of the survey is to evaluate any Bb classroom

experience at ECSU, not just an English online class. I conducted the survey within the English

department; however, I gave the survey to GE102/103 students who are not English majors but

represent the entire student body. Both GE102 and GE103 are composition classes that are required

courses at ECSU, so the students in GE102 and GE103 classes can potentially include a range of students

from freshman to seniors as well as potentially represent a wide range of students who are taking

different majors offered at ECSU.   The professors who distributed the survey did so at the end of the

instructional period, allowing the students about ten minutes to complete the survey. The survey was

given in order to determine if the whiteness element that is part of the Bb causes hegemony and what

potential effect the hegemony might have on AA students who speak AAVE, when they are considering

taking or are taking an online class at ECSU. Then I conducted 30 interviews with a selection of students

who had completed the survey and indicated their willingness to participate in an interview in order to

delve further into their answers given on the survey. My research, involving the use of a survey and

interview process, was specifically constructed in order to determine if there is a hegemonic role based

on the whiteness in the implementation of the design of Bb for the AA students at ECSU whose

dominant dialect is AAVE rather than SE. Before we consider the design of the survey, I want to

establish the relevance for the qualifier of AAVE as we consider the rhetorical process of the AA students

at ECSU.

Smitherman (2007) in her article "The Power of the Rap: The Black Idiom and the New Black

Poetry" identifies how learning styles are specific to each culture and that the AA culture has a particular

learning/communication style that is recognized within AAVE (p. 84). According to Smitherman (1977,

2007), there are many identifying factors that collectively describe AAVE. However, for my research, I

selected three aspects that are specific to AAVE communication style but are not found as identifiers of

SE communication style: call response(CR), tonal semantics(TS), and nonverbal cues(NVC). Call

response is the intermingling of the speaker's voice with the listener's response (Smitherman, 2007, p.

87). Tonal semantics involves "the use of voice rhythm and vocal inflection to convey meaning"

(Smitherman, 1977, p. 134). Nonverbal cues are part of Black performance and include "nonverbal

gesticulations" as part of the communication process (Smitherman, 2007, p. 105). These three elements

are not identifiers within SE communication style (Bennett, 1998); therefore, they served as effective

qualifiers within my research as I investigated the rhetorical process as it relates to communication style

within the dynamic of whiteness on Bb.

Another important term to consider before we discuss the composition of the survey and

interview questions is "terministic screen" and the implications that term has on the design of the

survey and interview questions along with the way I distributed the survey and conducted the interview.

Kenneth Burke (1966) utilized the term "terministic screens" in his book *Language as Symbolic Action:*

Essays on Life, Literature, and Method. A "terministic screen" is constructed out of the researcher's bias

that unconsciously directs our attention as a researcher, shapes or limits our interpretations, and can

even prescribe normative behavior (p. 45). Recognizing potential biases associated with my race that

could unconsciously influence the way I designed the survey, and the hegemony connected with my

position as an English instructor that might skew the interview process, were both important to consider as I designed the survey and interview questions. I acknowledged my natural bias or inclinations as a Standard English speaking white and tried to vary the order of elements in the survey so that equal representation occurred. An example of the variance provided can be seen on the first page of the survey when comparing the first response item offered in question four to the first response item offered in question six. In question four, seen below, the first option for the student to circle is a potential AAVE option because "method of interacting" could involve call response, tonal semantics, or nonverbal cues. In question six, seen below, the first option for the student to underline is not connected to AAVE, but it is a personal option that could apply to any race.

4. If you answered "No" to question #3, then circle the appropriate reason(s) for your lack of success in your online class.

> **Method of interacting is challenging**   **Technology difficulties**
>
> **Difficulty with the material**   **Difficulty understanding the instructor**
>
> **Time management skills**   **Lack of community**   **Other _____**

6. If you answered "yes" to question #5, then underline your reason(s) for being hesitant to take an online college course through Blackboard (Bb).

Personal lack of initiative (need a set classroom time to motivate you to go to class)

> **Technology issues** (hesitant about Bb method of relating course material and communication)
>
> **Lack of community** (enjoy or need to have other classmates present)
>
> **Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor**
>
> **Courses needed were offered on campus**

It was important for me to try to avoid a potential hegemonic dynamic, so the survey began with a paragraph, which is seen below, communicating the reason for the survey and that participation in the

survey is voluntary. The voluntary aspect was incorporated in order to remove any potential pressure

the student might feel to participate in the survey. The survey opened with the following paragraph.

ECSU English Online Survey

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The results from the survey will be used to gather data for future research regarding communication in online classes at Elizabeth City State University. Your participation is strictly voluntary and will have no impact on your classroom experience.

The survey was designed to identify a number of elements that are connected with my research

question. The first six questions of the survey were directed at identifying the participant's

language/dialect, whether they had taken an online class before, whether they were hesitant to take an

online class, and why the participant might be hesitant.

My first consideration was the student's language/dialect. The preliminary information section,

a space where the student writes their name and identifies their race, together with question one

provide the information that allowed me to divide the 156 students into three sections: AA who speak

SE; Whites who speak SE; AA who speak AAVE. Question five, regarding hesitancy to take an online

class, helped me further divide these three sections into a collective six groups: SE-Nonhesitant-AA; SE-

Hesitant-AA; SE-Nonhesitant-W; SE-Hesitant-W; VE-Nonhesitant-AA ; VE-Hesitant-AA. For convenience,

when I reference these groups in my writing, I will reduce the Not Hesitant to a "N" and the Hesitant to

an "H". Also, for convenience there will be times when I reference all six groups – using the word

"groups," and there will be times when I reference the three sections: SE-AA; SE-W; VE-AA, where I

removed the "N" and "H" markers – using the word "section."

In the collection of my data, I was looking to see if there are different reasons for hesitancy to

take a Bb course between the races and language/dialects spoken.   Smitherman (1977, 2007) identified

three characteristics specific to AAVE speakers that are not identifiers of SE speakers' style of

communication: call response, the intermingling of the speaker's voice with the listener's response;

tonal semantics, vocal rhythm and inflection that communicate meaning; and non-verbal cues,

communication through body movements. I designed the options in questions four and six, as seen

below, to help identify if the reason for lack of success or hesitancy, in relation to an online class, had

something to do with the communication style of the students. In question four, which addresses the

student's lack of success in an online class, three of the six options are connected with the AAVE style of

communication.

4. If you answered "No" to question #3, then circle the appropriate reason(s) for your lack of success in

   your online class.

   Method of interacting is challenging   **Technology difficulties**

   Difficulty with the material   **Difficulty understanding the instructor**

   Time management skills   **Lack of community**   **Other** _____

"Method of interacting is challenging," "Difficulty understanding the instructor," and "Lack of

community" are the three elements that demonstrate a potential need for CR, TS, or NVC. For the first

element, method of interacting is challenging, the word "interacting" could be an indicator for the need

for CR. For the next option, difficulty understanding the instructor could demonstrate a need for TS or

NVC. Finally, the third option, lack of community, could attest to their need for CR, or it could

demonstrate the need for TS or NVC within the context of a classroom setting where both the instructor

and the students are able to verbally interact. The interviews will provide more insight into the AAVE

connection with these three elements. However, in the meantime, I have labeled the three elements,

method of interacting is challenging, difficulty understanding the instructor, and lack of community as

elements possibly connected with AAVE. On the other hand, the other three elements, technology

difficulties, difficulty with the material, and time management skills are all aspects that have the

potential to be common to all students and are not connected with a particular

language/communication style.

Question six addresses hesitancy to take online classes, which is used in the identification of the six groups I used for my analysis of the data. Out of the five options, three of the answers are potentially AAVE related: Technology issues, lack of community, and need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor. The parenthetical information that follows "Technology issues" references communication, which allows the student to consider missing elements like CR, TS, and NVC because communication in traditional Bb is written. "Lack of community" and "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" both allow for the participant in the survey to consider those missing elements that are connected with AAVE communication style.

6. If you answered "yes" to question #5, then underline your reason(s) for being hesitant to take an online college course through Blackboard (Bb).

Personal lack of initiative (need a set classroom time to motivate your to go to class)

Technology issues (hesitant about Bb method of relating course material and communication)

Lack of community (enjoy or need to have other classmates present)

Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor

Courses needed were offered on campus

Keeping in mind the goal of determining whether there is a rhetorical challenge for bi-dialectal AA students because of whiteness within Bb, I designated the first six questions to help discover whiteness in the design of Bb, which would indicate educational advantages (McIntosh, 1990) for the white, SE speaking students and potential disadvantages for the bi-dialectal AA student.

As I moved on to pages two and three of the survey, I addressed questions seven and eight, which are in place to help confirm that the identification of the language/dialect in question one is a correct identification. Also, questions seven and eight were designed to help to confirm that students whose dominant dialect is AAVE are more prone to use call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues, within a conversation as established by Smitherman (1977, 2007). In question 7, I asked the

students to share an example of a conversation so that the students might be better equipped to

consider what is involved in their communication style, which could potentially help them to more

accurately identify the appropriate rating for the elements in question 8. Question 8a addresses call

response, question 8b addresses tonal semantics, and question 8c addresses nonverbal cues, all

elements of AAVE, and I was curious to see if AAVE speaking students identified a higher number for

these three elements than SE speaking students.

7. Outside of class, when you are verbally interacting with your friends, is your communication just about the words spoken, or are there other aspects that are a part of the communication experience? (circle your best answer)

   Just words spoken   **Other aspects**

Please share a simple example of a conversation between you and your friends when the communication of information involved more than words as a part of the dynamic?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not very important and 10 is very important, rate the following elements in relation to the scenario you just shared.

a. There is a lot of interaction rather than just one person speaking at a time:

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

b. The tone of voice enhances the verbal interaction that took place:

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

c. Body movement was a part of the communication that took place:

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Considering whiteness as a potential rhetorical challenge within Bb for AA students whose

dominant dialect is AAVE, I designed questions nine through eleven to investigate further the element of

"immediate feedback," which is a characteristic of call response (CR); because, if immediate feedback is

an element needed for AAVE communication, then we need to consider the potential hegemony that

might occur when immediate feedback is missing within the Bb experience. Since immediacy, an aspect

of CR, is an important element of the AAVE communication style, then receiving immediate feedback,

whether it is in a conversation or a classroom setting, should also be an important element for AA

students whose dominant dialect is AAVE (Smitherman, 1977, p.220-221; Woodyard, 2003, p.141;

Garner & Calloway-Thomas, 2003, p. 47).

Question nine was designed to specifically address the element of immediate feedback whether

in a face-to-face setting or an online setting.

9.On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all and 10 is very important, how important is immediate
feedback to you when you are looking for a response from any of your instructors at ECSU?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What constitutes "immediate"? (circle your best answer)
The same day
The next class
The same week
The next week

The first half of question nine provides the student with the opportunity to indicate how strongly they

desire immediate feedback. The second half of question nine allows for confirmation regarding the

number they circled in the first half of question nine. "The same day" would support a higher number,

"The next class" or "The same week" would support a number ranging from four to six, and "The next

week" would show support for a lower range of numbers.

Questions ten and eleven address an aspect of immediate feedback that is found in synchronous

communication like instant messaging, skype, or texting versus asynchronous communication like

emails. In an effort to confirm the results from question ten, I included question eleven.

10.In an online setting like Blackboard (Bb), would you prefer asynchronous, synchronous, or a
combination of the two when communicating with the instructor? Note: asynchronous is
communication with a time delay like emails and the discussion board; synchronous is communication
with no time delay like instant messaging or skype. (Circle your best answer)

asynchronous (emails)   **synchronous** (chat)   **combination**

11. If you were taking an online course through Bb, would you like to have a time where you could chat
online with your instructor - like a texting experience?   **Yes   No**

A yes response to question eleven could potentially support a synchronous or combination response in question ten, because texting is a synchronous method of communicating and the combination response includes a synchronous element. On the other hand, a no response to question eleven could potentially support an asynchronous response for question ten. A no response could potentially appear to not support a combination response because incorporated into the combination is the aspect of synchronous, and a no answer to question eleven could potentially indicate a lack of interest in synchronous communication with an instructor. Question 11 is somewhat limited because some students might not like to text, and therefore their "no" answer is not connected to their desire for synchronous or asynchronous communication with an instructor, but the interviews will help to clarify the potential connection.

Question twelve serves as a transition question from "feedback", which is identified in questions nine through eleven, to "instruction given," which is the focus of question thirteen. Question twelve is specifically addressing feedback in both a face-to-face setting and an online setting. I wanted the participants of the survey to consider what was more valuable to them: hearing the information verbally or receiving the information from the instructor in written form; thus, a scale from 1 to 10 was provided where the student could indicate the importance they placed on verbal and written feedback.

12.When you receive feedback from your instructor, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all and 10 is very important, how important is . . .

Verbal feedback : **1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**

Written feedback : **1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**

If they circled seven or higher for either verbal or written, then that was considered a strong indicator that the particular mode of communication, either verbal or written, was important to the student who was completing the survey. A strong verbal score could be an indicator that the student valued CR, with the element of immediate feedback; also, a high verbal score could be an indicator that the student values TS and NVC as part of the information exchange. NVC is an element that will require further

investigation in the interview because I did not have the foresight to include the aspect of visual within question 12. I assumed that the students would understand that verbal feedback would be given in a face-to-face setting where there is the potential for NVC to be part of the communication process, but since I did not include that aspect specifically in question 12, I am limited in my conclusions regarding the potential for NVC to be seen as a desire or need within the students' responses. The potential priority for AAVE elements in feedback was further investigated in the interview process that followed the survey. As we continue to consider a potential rhetorical challenge for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE when CR, TS and NVC are missing in a communication experience like feedback from an instructor, then it will be important to see if the data from questions nine through twelve demonstrate a need or desire for same day, synchronous, verbal based communication with the instructor.

Another role for question twelve, within my research, is to provide data that serves as a comparison and/or confirmation regarding the responses given in question thirteen. Question twelve investigates desired style of feedback and question thirteen a, b, and c investigates desired style of instruction. Question thirteen is designed to help students register their preference for verbal instructions, written instructions, or both equally, and it is also designed to indicate a preference for venues. Each scenario within question thirteen provides one of the three options: verbal, written, or both. Also within question thirteen, there are four venue options that are offered for the student's selection: webcast, YouTube, PowerPoint, and Skype. Within the design of question 13, I also incorporated the element of visual in order to better determine the students' need or desire for a venue that would allow students to experience the non-verbal cues in an online forum.

13. When considering different types of visual communication in an online scenario, use the scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all and 10 is a great amount, and circle the number that best represents the appeal of the following visual tools.

    a. Imagine that you are taking an online class and when it is time for you to write your first essay you had the instructions on a webcast so that you could see the instructor giving the instructions, **but you had nothing in writing**.

<div align="center">**1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**</div>

b. Same scenario as above, **but you also had the same instructions written** on your Blackboard site.

<div align="center">**1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**</div>

c. You have instructions for an assignment that are **only written** on your Blackboard site.

<div align="center">**1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**</div>

d. How about a scenario where you are given instructions for writing your first essay for a composition class but the instructions are a general Youtube video on writing a paper (not your instructor speaking). However, you do have your instructors' **written assignment** on Blackboard.

<div align="center">**1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**</div>

e. The instructions are on a PowerPoint presentation with your instructor's voice explaining the instructions?

<div align="center">**1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**</div>

f. On a scale of 1 -10, how would you rate a skype talk where you were on the computer with a group of other students and you could see the instructor explaining the instructions while a selection of students were listening and interacting and you were one of those students. Also, you could see the **written instructions** in front of you as a document on the Bb site

<div align="center">**1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**</div>

When I analyze the data from the surveys in the following chapter, a score of seven or higher will be a strong indicator for a student's support of the scenarios in question thirteen. Comparison of responses between question twelve and question thirteen will be important as I seek to determine if the oral element, which is an essential element in CR and TS, is a necessary element for the AA students at ECSU as they identify the mode of feedback and instruction they desire. I also wanted to know if the VE-AA students indicated a need or desire for the visual as well as the verbal, because the visual aspect is also involved with the AAVE element of NVC.   The design of question thirteen includes the combination of both the visual and the verbal, with the intention that the students' responses would provide insight regarding their preference for the presence of the visual and verbal within the instructional experience. Questions 13 a and b include a webcast, which involves the verbal and the visual since the instructor is both seen and heard. Question 13 d suggests a YouTube video of another instructor, which also involves the verbal and visual elements. Question 13e is a PowerPoint with the voice of the teacher, but this venue allows for only the verbal element. Then Question 13f returns to the inclusion of both the verbal

and visual with Skype. Consistent with my previous approach to analysis, the numbers seven through ten will be a strong indication that the student desires or needs the verbal and/or visual in the instructional experience.

Leaving the survey, we move to the interview process and the development of the interview questions. Once I had collected all the completed surveys, I selected thirty students who had indicated their willingness to participate in the interview process, and this selection was based on the organization I had established for the analysis of the data: six groups based on language, hesitancy, and race. I planned on interviewing a total of thirty students, with five students from each of the six groups, thus establishing equal representation.

My awareness of a possible hegemonic aspect unconsciously slipping into the interview process forced me to consider the setting where the interviews were to take place. I chose to conduct the interviews in my office that has two comfortable chairs, a coffee table, and an area rug. This setting was more conducive to a relaxed atmosphere, unlike a classroom setting where the student is reminded of my position of power as an ECSU English instructor.

When the students who were to be interviewed entered my office, I welcomed them warmly and thanked them for their willingness to participate in the upcoming interview. I explained to them that the purpose of the interview is to help me gain further insight into the answers they provided in the survey they completed. With their completed survey in hand, I would then ask their permission to record the interview so that I would be able to reference the conversation later. If they agreed to the recording of the interview, then I would hit the record button on my recording device. Next, I would explain that in the write-up of the interview, they would be referred to as a number rather than by name. I provided them with a number so that they did not need to worry about being identified by name within any of the data I might record from the interview. At this point, I began the interview process using the document found in Appendix B.

Before the beginning of each interview, I referenced the survey and transferred the data regarding their name and newly assigned number, their ethnicity, the dialect or language they indicated, and whether they were hesitant or not hesitant to take an online class. For ease, I then circled the appropriate group that they would be a part of for analysis.

Name _____ Ethnicity _____

Dialect _____ Hesitancy _____

Category: (AA/SE/N)   (AA/SE/H)   (AA/VE/N)   (AA/VE/H)   (W/SE/N)   (W/SE/H)

At the beginning of the interview, I established the reliability of what they had recorded regarding their dominant dialect/language and hesitancy by asking if the option they circled in question one was accurate, then I moved to questions four and six that address lack of success and hesitancy.

Regarding question 4, I only addressed this part of the interview to students who indicated a lack of success. I reviewed the reasons they identified for lack of success, then I asked for a further explanation if they had identified "method of interacting is challenging," "difficulty understanding the instructor," or "lack of community". I was looking for any aspects of whiteness along with key descriptive words and phrases that might include negative reactions to the communication experience they had during their online class.

I repeated the same process with question six, but the elements that I asked them to elaborate on were "Technology issues," "Lack of community" and "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor". As explained in the review of the design of the survey, these particular answers in questions four and six have potential AAVE related responses, and I was looking to see if any of the students I was to interview would provide indicators that their answer was AAVE related. Also, in relation to questions four and six on the survey, I designed three extra questions that were to help provide insight into any potential hegemonic aspects that were part of their lack of success or hesitancy. Here are the extra three questions to be asked at this point in the interview process:

1. What specifically about the method of interacting in an online class makes you hesitant?

2. What did you find unappealing regarding the Bb experience, and what was your experience interacting with the instructor like because you were on a system like Bb?

3. When you were interacting with the instructor in your online class how would you describe the instructor's approach to the dissemination of the material?

Next, questions seven and eight provided an opportunity for me to see if the elements of CR, TS, and NVC are a part of the communication dynamic they experience. I asked them to elaborate on the scenario they described in question seven. Question eight provided a further opportunity to look for the inclusion of the three AAVE elements in their communication style. I also had a chance to discuss the correlation or discrepancy between their answers in question seven and eight.

In the survey, question nine is very straight forward, but I did want more detail concerning their indication of "synchronous" in question ten. I asked them to explain why having synchronous communication with an instructor is important to them, and I followed up that question with a similar question relating to question eleven. I wanted to discover in question eleven if the student who indicated the desire to have texting communication with the instructor believed it would be more helpful, and why. Both questions ten and eleven address the potential desire for CR, and this is the element I looked to identify when I addressed those two questions in the interview process.

Regarding question twelve, I asked them to explain why they indicated the number they did regarding their desire for verbal feedback and written feedback. In listening to their response, I looked to see if there were any indications regarding the desire for CR and TS, and I also wanted to see if they provided any indicators regarding NVC even though "visual" was not a specific part of the question.

Question thirteen provides six different scenarios regarding instructional venues, and each of the scenarios addresses either the verbal, written, or combination of the two. An indication of seven or higher in each of these six scenarios is what I determined to be a strong indicator of their preference for that particular venue or method. During the interview, I reviewed each of their answers to each of the

scenarios and then asked them why they chose to circle the number they circled. My hope was twofold for this particular question. I wanted to see if their preference in question thirteen matched the answer they gave regarding feedback in question twelve. In other words, I wanted to know if the student preferred the same approach to feedback as they did to instruction, or if their preference differed and why. Also, I wanted to know which particular venues were preferred and why, in order to provide data based recommendations concerning elements within Bb instruction that could possibly reduce the potential for hegemony for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE.

The interview process ended with an open ended question that provided them an opportunity to share with me any other thoughts they might have concerning what we had discussed. Then I expressed my appreciation for their sacrifice of time in order to help me in my research. At that point, I turned off the recording device and let them know that the interview was over.

Once all the interviews were complete, I took the time to transcribe the interviews so that I had a written copy of all that was said. It was from the written copy that I was able to analyze the data gained through the interview process. Although the fully transcribed interviews will not be a part of the detailing of the data, pertinent words and phrases that were a part of the interview process will be identified in chapters four and five.

Chapter Three

Data from the Survey

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) is a Historic Black College (HBCU) of 2,470 students. In order to graduate from ECSU, all students in all majors must take the GE102 Composition and Grammar and GE103 Composition and Vocabulary classes. I was able to use the GE102 and GE103 classes as a venue for distributing my survey to as many students as possible who ranged from freshman to seniors. I had 156 surveys returned. Out of the 156 students who completed the survey, 94 (60%) were SE-AA, 25 (16%) were SE-W, and 37 (24%) were VE-AA, as illustrated in Figure One.

Next, I needed to further sub-divide the students surveyed, so I added another component of "not hesitant" (N) and "hesitant" (H) because the element of hesitancy is part of my research question. I discovered that out of the 156 students surveyed there were 51/156 (32%) SE-N-AA ,

Percentage of Survey Respodents

Figure One: Survey respondents in three language and racially based categories.

43/156 (28%) SE-H-AA, 15/156 (10%) SE-N-W, 10/156 (6%) SE-H-W, 22/156 (14%) VE-N-AA and 15/156 (10%) VE-H-AA.   Wanting to see the data in percentages, I took the total number for each group and divided it by the total number surveyed. The results in percentages are detailed in Figure Two.

Considering ECSU as an HBCU school, it was helpful to identify that out of the 156 completed surveys 84% (131/156) were AA. This percentage of eighty-four is close to the 78% AA for the overall student body as identified in chapter three. Next, there are 16% (25/156) who are white, which is close to the 20% for the overall student body at ECSU (see

Percent of Students Surveyed in the Six Designated Groups

Figure Two: The division of the six groups based on language, hesitancy, and race.
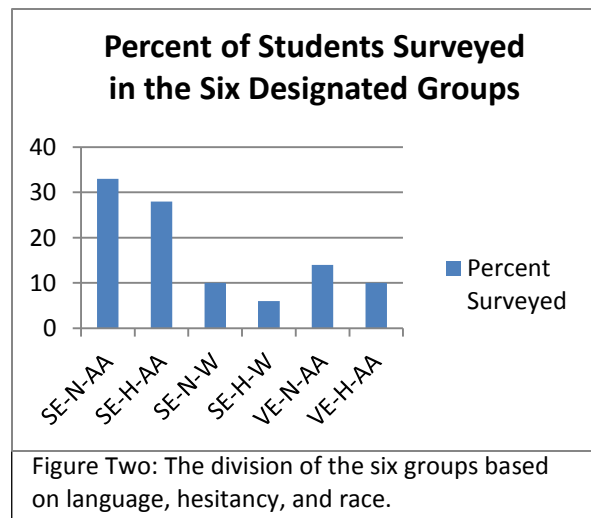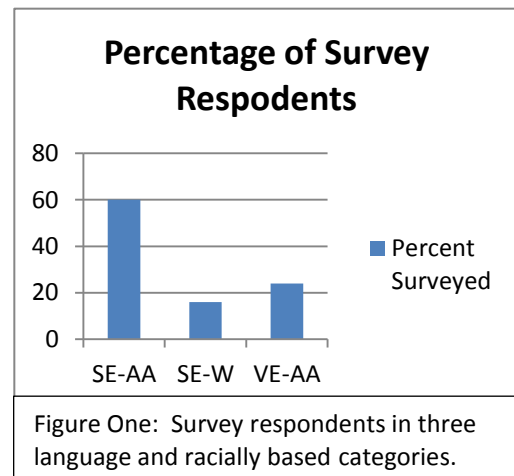
chapter three). Also, out of the 156 students surveyed, 76% (119/156) of the students identified their

dominant language as SE, and 24% (37/156) identified their dominant dialect as AAVE. Finally, out of

the collective 156 students surveyed, 56%(88/156) identified they were not hesitant (N) to take an

online class at ECSU, and 44% (68/156) identified that they were hesitant (H) to take an online class at

ECSU. Thus, out of the entire group surveyed, the majority of students are AA (84%), the majority of the

students speak SE as their first language (76%), and a smaller majority of 56% are not hesitant to take an

online class. Although the range is only 12% (44% to 56%) between the NH and H categories, the

difference was still worthy of my investigation. Also, the fact that 44% of the students surveyed did

identify some hesitancy warranted my further investigation into why some students at ECSU are

hesitant to take online classes. Now that I have addressed some of the overarching statistics that relate

to my research question: race, language, and hesitancy, I am ready to move on to consider the students

who have already taken an online class at ECSU, their success or lack of success in the online class taken,

and the reasons why some students indicated a lack of success in their online class.

Figure Three illustrates the data concerning the percentage of students who have taken or not

taken online classes at ECSU. The first column indicates those students who have taken an online class at

ECSU and the second column indicates the percentage

of students from the survey who have not taken an

online class. The results for those who have taken

online classes indicate that the highest group is the VE-

N-AA at 41% (9/22) and the next highest group is SE-N-

AA at 33% (17/51). The vernacular speaking AA

students were the largest section to have taken online

classes. However, it is important to note that within

Figure Three: Percent of students who have taken or not taken an online course at ECSU.

the two AA sections, SE speaking and VE speaking, that both groups with the highest indication of
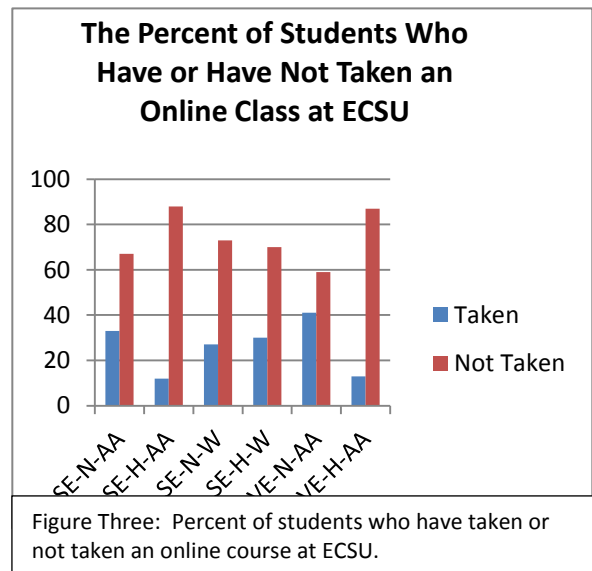
"taken" are also students who indicted "not hesitant" in their survey. Although there could be many reasons for hesitancy or no hesitancy, one aspect I will consider during my research is whether whiteness within Bb is a reason for hesitancy.

Within the six groups I have formed for my research, the SE-H-AA and VE-H-AA groups have the highest indicators of "not taken." SE-H-AA group have 38/43 students, which is 88%, and the VE-H-AA group have 13/15 students, which is 87%. This high indication of "not taken" in the two H-AA categories is cause for further investigation regarding why these students have not taken or are hesitant to take online classes at ECSU. Having noted that the AA students who are not hesitant have the highest rate of taking an online class, and those AA students who are hesitant have the highest rate for not taking an online class, I turned my attention to the white, SE speaking students who were surveyed. Regarding the two white groups, their data suggests that these two groups are closer to the non-hesitant AA groups in the areas of taken and not-taken. Also, the scores for the two white groups, in the area of not hesitant and hesitant, are very close, as seen in Figure Three. Regarding "taken," SE-N-W registers 27% (4/15) and the SE-H-W registers 30% (3/10); as a result, the "not taken" scores are also close: SE-N-W is 73% (11/15) and SE-H-W is 70% (7/10). When I considered the data for taken/not taken, it was apparent that the two H-AA groups had the highest scores for not taken. Overall, it is important to see that in all six groups there are many more students who have not taken an online class at ECSU than have taken an online class.

The next aspect within the survey to consider is detailed in Figure Four. I calculated the response from the student's data concerning success or lack of success for those who have taken an online class. Keeping in mind the data from Figure Three, I considered the six groups in relation to success. The success column is the first column in Figure Four, and the lack of success is

identified in the second column.   The two groups,

SE-N-W and VE-N-AA, both indicate 100% regarding

success in their online class. Again, this dynamic of

non-hesitancy is providing strong indicators. The

only group that this is not true for is the SE-N-AA

group. In the SE-N-AA group 33% indicated they

have taken an online class (Figure Three), and of

that 33%, 76% (13/17) indicated success. This

indication of success is not as extreme as the 100%

Percent of Students Who Reported Success in an Online Class
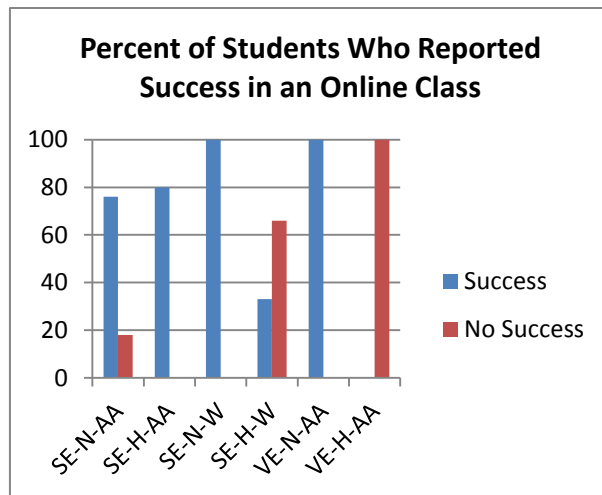
Figure Four: Percentage of students who reported success or no success regarding their online class.

indicated from the other two non-hesitant groups. What really caught my attention is the VE-H-AA

group who recorded 2/15 (13%) who have taken online classes (Figure Three) and that neither of those

two students experienced success; therefore, 100% of the VE-H-AA group experienced "No Success" as

seen in Figure Four. This is an indicator that further data from my survey needs to be analyzed

regarding the VE-H-AA students and their hesitancy and lack of success in taking online classes at ECSU.

The data regarding taken/not taken and success/no success led me to the question why the

students did not experience success when they took an online class at ECSU. Of the seventeen SE-N-AA

students who have taken an online class, 3/17 (18%) indicated that they did not experience success.

With those three students, there were three who circled time management and one student who circled

technology. It is important to note that those two elements are connected with non-AAVE aspects. In

the data collected with SE-H-AA; SE-N-W; VE-N-AA groups, all three groups had students who have taken

online classes and there were no indications regarding a lack of success. This leaves the SE-H-W group

and the VE-H-AA group. Let's first consider the SE-H-W group. In this group there are 3/10 students

who have taken online and two out of those three students (66%) identified a lack of success; both

students who identified a lack of success also indicated the reason as time management, which is a non-

AAVE element. Finally, we have the VE-H-AA group in which 2/15 students identified that they have

taken an online class and those two students (100%) did not experience success in their online class.

Those two VE-H-AA students provided four reasons why they did not experience success: 1 time

managements, 1 material used, 1 method of interacting, and 1 community. It is important to note that

two of these elements (method of interacting and community) are potentially AAVE based and two of

these elements (time and material) are non-AAVE elements. Having considered this data, it is

noteworthy that of the three groups that provided reasons for lack of success in the online course they

have taken, it is only the VE-H-AA group that provides AAVE related answers.

The final aspect that needs to be addressed from the first page of the survey (questions one

through six) is the identification of hesitancy and the

reason for that hesitancy. First, let's address the

percent of students who took the survey and indicated

that they are hesitant to take online classes at ECSU.

Figure Five demonstrates that 46% (43/94) of the

SE-H-AA group, 40% (10/25) of the SE-H-W group, and

41% (15/37) of the VE-H-AA group all indicated that

Percent of Studets Who Indicated their Hesitancy to Take Online Classes at ECSU
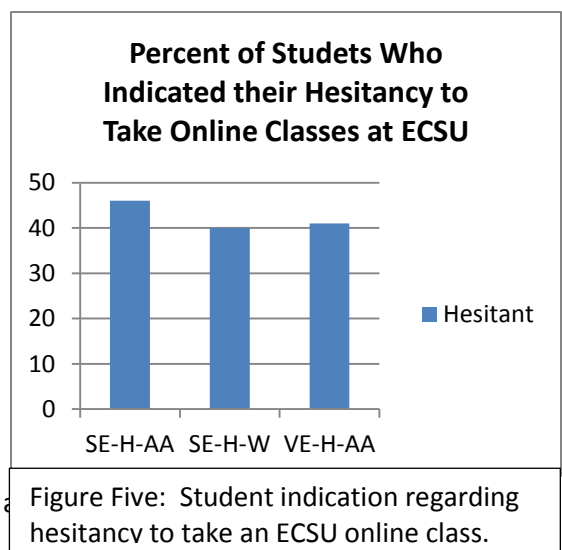
Figure Five: Student indication regarding hesitancy to take an ECSU online class.

they are hesitant to take an online class. I was surprised a

percent of each group who were hesitant. Since the percent of each group is very similar, I knew further

analysis was need so that the reasons for their hesitancy could be identified and any similarities or

differences might be recognized in their responses.

Question six is the place on the survey where the students identified their reasons for their

hesitancy. Out of the five options, three of the answers are potentially AAVE related: technology issues,

lack of community, and need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor. These three answers

suggest the possible need for call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues based on the indicators

mentioned earlier. Figure Six provides the percentages regarding the students' reasons for their hesitancy.

Since the lack of course availability on campus was not chosen by any of the students taking the survey, we will only address the four options identified by the students: instructor, technology, community, and initiative.   The first consideration is the instructor column which identifies the student's desire to have face-to-face contact with the instructor. This factor is the strongest reason all three groups are hesitant to take online classes: 65% (28/43) for SE-H-AA, 70% (7/10) for SE-H-W, 73% (11/15) for VE-H-AA. Other observations that need to be considered are that community (9% or 4/43) in the SE-H-AA group is not a strong indicator, that initiative (60% or 6/10) in the SE-H-W group is a moderately strong indicator, and that technology(10% or 1/10) and community(20% or 2/10) are not very strong indicators. The other three indicators in the VE-H-AA group are closer to the same range with technology at 20% (3/15), community at 27% (4/15), and

initiative at 33% (5/15). These four options of instructor, technology, community, and initiative have three options that are potentially AAVE related: instructor, technology, and community. The other option, initiative, is not AAVE related.

Figure Six: Reasons for students' hesitancy to take an online class, given in percentages.

In my research, as I looked for any possible AAVE related reasons for hesitancy, I examined more closely the VE-H-AA group to see if their indicators for hesitancy were higher in connection to the three options that had possible AAVE aspects. When I examined the three groups' responses in the specific areas of technology, instructor, and community, I observed that the SE-H-AA

group had the highest indicator regarding technology with 33% (14/43), the VE-H-AA group had the second highest indicator with 20% (3/15), and lastly, the SE-H-W group had the lowest indicator with 10% (1/10). Next, I noticed that the VE-H-AA group had the highest indicator for instructor contact at 73% (11/15) as compared to the SE-H-W group at 70% (7/10) or the SE-H-AA group at 65% (28/43). Also, when I considered the other AAVE element, community, I noticed that the VE-H-AA group also had the highest indicator with 27% (4/15) as compared to the SE-H-W group at 20% (2/10) or the SE-H-AA group at 9% (4/43). In order to better understand the collective responses of the VE-H-AA group regarding technology, instructor, and community, I acknowledged that with all three options there were possible AAVE related indicators for hesitancy, the VE-H-AA group registered 3% higher than the SE-H-AA group and 8% higher than the SE-H-W group in the area of instructor need, and the VE-H-AA group, in the area of community, registered 7% higher than the SE-H-W group and 18% higher than the SE-H-AA group. Also, regarding technology where there might be hesitancy about Blackboard's method of relating course material and communication, the VE-H-AA group had a 20% (3/15) indicator, the SE-H-W group had a 10% (1/10) indicator, and the SE-H-AA group had a 33% (14/43) indicator. Thus, when considering the possible AAVE related responses for hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU, the VE-H-AA registered a slightly higher desire or need for instructor presence and community experience than the SE-H-AA ad SE-H-W groups, and a slightly higher indicator for hesitancy regarding technology when compared to the SE-H-W group. Although all three groups indicate a greater need for those elements that contain some of the identifiers for AAVE (call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues), it is interesting to note that the VE-H-AA group has indicated a strong need for those AAVE related elements. This indicator warrants further investigation in the interview process.

Before moving on to analyzing the data from the rest of the survey, I needed to summarize the information already gained regarding the VE-H-AA students as it relates to taking online classes at ECSU. Regarding students who have not taken online classes at ECSU, the VE-H-AA group (87%) is basically tied with the SE-H-AA group (88%), and the VE-H-AA group is the only group that indicated 0% success for those students who have taken online classes (Figure Four). Also, the VE-H-AA group is the only group that indicated potential AAVE related reasons for their lack of success when they took an online class at ECSU. Although the SE-H-AA group (46%) is the highest group indicating hesitancy to take an online class, the other two groups SE-H-W (40%) and the VE-H-AA (41%) have a very close percentage to the SE-H-AA group (Figure Five), so hesitancy is an issue for the VE-H-AA group too. However, the AAVE related reasons for hesitancy is the strongest in the VE-H-AA group. So, as I leave the analysis of page one of the survey (questions one through six), I do so with the indicators that the VE-H-AA group has taken the least amount of online classes, and experienced the least amount of success for reasons that could potentially be related to AAVE. Also, this VE-H-AA group has an indicator regarding hesitancy and out of the three groups has the strongest potential AAVE related reasons for hesitancy. The implications regarding this data will be further detailed in Chapter Six, but at present it is important to remember that the first page of the survey (questions one through six) is looking for indicators of hegemony and whiteness within the Bb setting, which involves privileging the SE speaking whites and AA students over those students who do not have SE as their dominant dialect. Also, since the basic traditional approach of ECSU's Bb setting does not include call-response, tonal semantics, and non-verbal cues in the online instruction, then it is important to note that the answers within the survey that relate to these AAVE communication aspects are also elements that VE-H-AA students cite as reasons for lack of success or hesitancy regarding online Bb courses at ECSU.

As I move on to pages two and three of the survey, I begin by addressing questions seven and eight, which are in place to help confirm that the identification of the language/dialect in question one is a correct identification. Also, questions seven and eight help to confirm that students whose dominant dialect is AAVE are more prone to use call-response, which is identified through question 8a; tonal semantics, which is identified though question 8b; and non-verbal cues, which is identified through question 8c. Here are questions seven and eight.

7. outside of class, when you are verbally interacting with your friends, is your communication just about the words spoken, or are there other aspects that are a part of the communication experience? (circle your best answer)

   Just words spoken   **Other aspects**

Please share a simple example of a conversation between you and your friends when the communication of information involved more than words as a part of the dynamics?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not very important and 10 is very important, relate the following elements in relation to the scenario you just shared.

a. There was a lot of interaction rather than just one person speaking at a time.
      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
b. The tone of voice enhanced the verbal interaction that took place.
      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
c. Body movement was a part of the communication that took place.
      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

First, let's address question seven where the student was to write a scenario regarding a verbal exchange with a friend outside of class. The students taking the survey were asked to identify if they used "just words spoken" to communicate or if they used "other aspects." Unfortunately, the data coming from question seven proved to be too unreliable to be used as part of my research. Most students did identify "just words spoken" or "other aspects" as their answer, but only a few of them wrote down an example of a conversation. When I got to the interview section of my research, I observed that 11 out of the 30 students (37%) during the interview process requested to change their

answer to question seven and/or eight. Most of the 37% indicated confusion with questions seven and

eight when I addressed their answers to questions seven and eight. I would indicate the answer circled

in question seven, and then I would ask them to show how their answer in question eight supported

their answer in question seven. Often the answer in question seven was not supported by their answers

in question eight, and many of them expressed that they were confused by the phrases "just words

spoken" and "other aspects".   Regarding question eight, I realized during the interview process that it

was helpful to the students when I explained that interruptions, tone of voice, and body movements

were not just a style of talking but were aspects of the conversation that were needed for effective

communication to occur. Keeping in mind Smitherman's (1977, 2007) perspective regarding the

necessity of the distinguishing elements of call-response, tonal semantics, and non-verbal cues for clear

communication within AAVE conversation, I should have included the aspect of necessity when I wrote

question eight, and I did not. Since questions seven and eight were not designed to effectively discover

what I was looking to have identified, I believe the data is skewed from these two questions. To provide

specifics regarding the ineffective design of questions seven and eight, I will provide below details from

three different interviews. Students 16 (SE-N-W) and 22 (SE-N-W) were both students I had taught for

two consecutive semesters. Both students 16 and 22 are quiet, shy, white, SE speaking students who

have demonstrated over the course of a year that they are able to communicate effectively with a few

words and have no need for call-response, tonal semantics, or non-verbal cues to understand a message

or to deliver a message. When I interviewed them, I noticed that both of them had strong indicators (8,

9, or 10) for their answers to question eight; however, I knew that both students did not require those

aspects of call-response, tonal semantics, or non-verbal cues to communicate. During the interviews

with students 16 and 22, I was able to inquire about whether there was any "need" for them to use the

elements of interruption, tone of voice, or body movements when they are trying to communicate a

message in a conversation. Both students confirmed that the elements described in question eight were

not needed; the elements, on the other hand, were elements that were part of a communication style

that might be implemented when a conversation is taking place. Also, when I interviewed student 19,

who is SE-N-AA, she explained that her answer to question eight was about how her friends

communicate and not how she does. In other words, when she was thinking about the scenario in

question seven, she was including her friends' style in her answer; it was not just about her own

communication style. It is because of the information gained through the interview process that I

believe the data for questions seven and eight are not fully reliable, and will not be used in the analysis

of the data.

Considering whiteness as a potential rhetorical challenge within Bb for AA students whose

dominant dialect is AAVE, I designed questions nine through eleven to investigate further the element of

"immediate feedback," which is a characteristic of call response. Since immediate feedback or

"immediacy" is a key element needed for effective communication within AAVE, then we must consider

the potential hegemony that might occur when immediate feedback is missing within the Bb experience.

(Smitherman, 1977, p.220-221; Woodyard, 2003, p.141; Garner & Calloway-Thomas, 2003, p. 47).

Question nine was designed to specifically address the element of immediate feedback, whether

in a face-to-face setting or an online setting. Not only did the students indicate a number (1-10)

regarding the importance they placed on immediate feedback, but they also circled word choices that

could potentially indicate an AAVE related aspect of immediacy. "The same day" indicated a stronger

need for immediacy and "The next class," "The same week," and "The next week" all indicated a lesser

need for immediate feedback. As I analyzed the data from question nine, it was fascinating to notice

that almost all the students gave a strong indicator (7 or higher) for their desire for immediate feedback,

so their answer to what constitutes immediate feedback became the qualifying data on whether the

student desired more immediacy regarding feedback, or whether they were willing to wait. In the

analysis of the data, "Same Day" represents "The same day" in question nine, and "Next Day" represents

the students who circled "The next class," "The same week," or "The next week." Figure Seven

summarizes the data found from question nine regarding the students' desire for "Same Day" feedback,

or their willingness to wait for "Next Day" feedback.

If you consider the overall pattern of responses for the first column for each group, you will see

that the first column for all six groups form a concave pattern with the higher scores on either end, and

the groups on either end are the AA groups. Then there are the lower indications in the middle, which

are the white groups. On the other hand, the willingness to wait for feedback is demonstrated with the

second column, which forms a convex

pattern with the lower number of responses in the

AA groups on either end of the graph, and with the

higher responses found with the middle, which is the

white groups. When considering the specific data in

columns one and two regarding the SE-AA groups

and the VE-AA groups, the VE-AA groups

demonstrate a slightly stronger desire for immediate

feedback as their scores are VE-N-AA 64% (14/22)

Figure Seven: Percent of students who desire "Same Day" or who are willing to wait for "Next Day" feedback.

and VE-H-AA 67% (10/15) as compared to SE-N-AA 59% (27/46) and SE-H-AA 63% (27/43). The two

white groups demonstrate a lesser desire for immediate feedback with SE-N-W at 50% (7/14) and SE-H-

W at 50% (5/10). It is important to note that the denominator changes from question to question

depending on how many students within each group chose to answer that particular section of the

survey. Some surveys were only partially completed, but the data that was submitted was still used in

the analysis.

Questions ten and eleven address an aspect of immediate feedback that is found in synchronous

communication like instant messaging, Skype, or texting. Question ten allowed the students to indicate
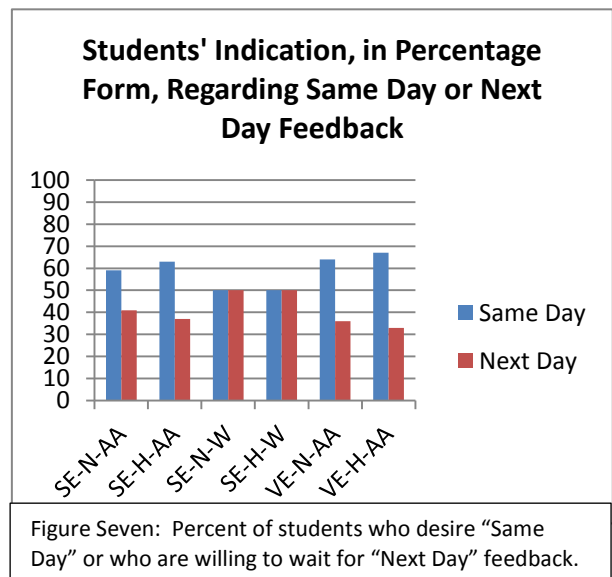
their preference for asynchronous communication with an instructor, like emails; synchronous

communication with an instructor, like chat; or a combination of the two. Question eleven further

pursued the issue of immediacy with a yes/no question concerning the students' interest in being able

to text their instructor while taking the online course. The summary of the data collected from question

ten is found in Figure Eight.

Students' Indications, in Percentages, Regarding the Students' Desire for Asynchronous Communication , Synchronous Communication, or Combination of the Two.

Figure Eight: Data from question ten concerning the students' desire for asynchronous, synchronous or a combination in regards to immediate feedback, in percentage form.
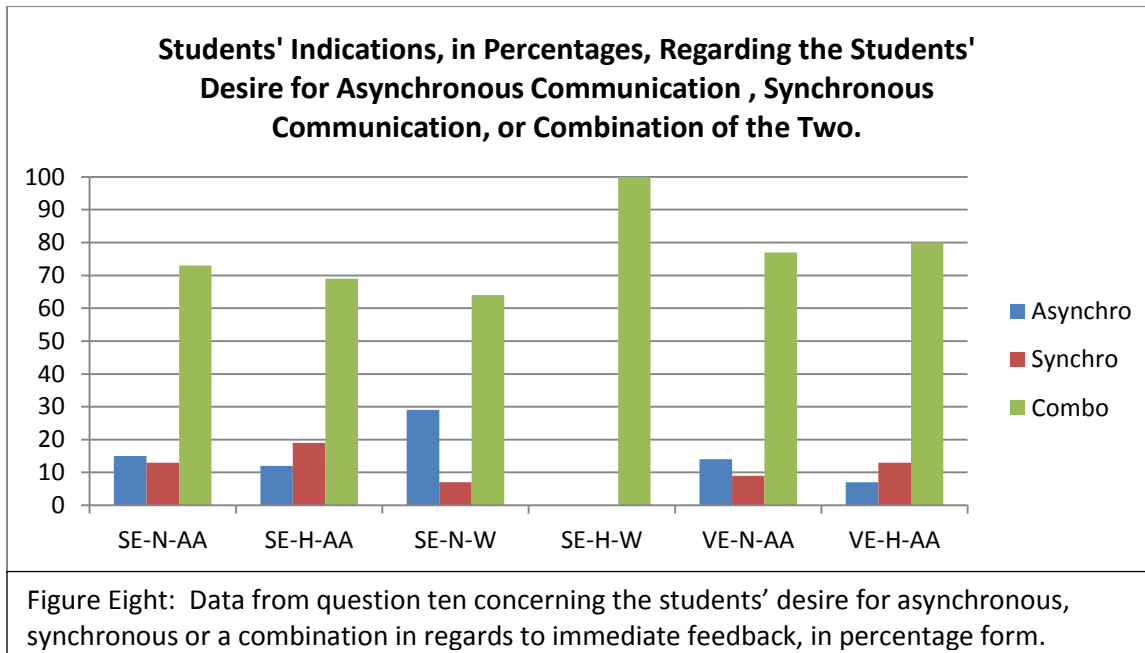
The first observation relates to the very strong response from all groups regarding their preference for a

combination of asynchronous and synchronous communication. Next, I considered the students'

indications regarding asynchronous and synchronous independent from each other. Asynchronous

communication, like emails, which does not have an aspect of immediate feedback, registers highest

with the SE-N-W group at 29% (4/14), and asynchronous communication registers the lowest with the

SE-H-W group at 0% (0/10). Another observation regarding asynchronous communication is that the

non-hesitant groups have a greater desire for asynchronous communication and the two AA hesitant

groups have indicated a stronger desire for synchronous communication, like chatting or Skyping. The

data for the two AA hesitant groups regarding asynchronous versus synchronous communication shows

that with the SE-H-AA group 12% (5/42) desired asynchronous and 19% (8/42) identified a preference

for synchronous communication with the instructor. The data for the VE-H-AA group shows that 7% (1/15) of the students prefer asynchronous and that 13% (2/15) prefer synchronous. The only group that really deviates from the pattern is the SE-H-W group that indicated a 100% desire for a combination of the two methods of communication rather than one or the other. In an effort to confirm the results from question ten, I included question eleven regarding the opportunity to text with the instructor during the online class session.   A "yes" response to question eleven would support a synchronous or combination response in question ten, because texting is a synchronous method of communicating and the combination response includes a synchronous element. On the other hand, a "no" response to question eleven would support an asynchronous response for question ten. A "no" response does not appear to support a combination response because incorporated into the combination is the aspect of synchronous, and a "no" answer to question eleven might indicate a lack of interest in synchronous communication with an instructor. For future research, further investigation regarding other reasons why a student

Figure Nine: The percent of responses from question eleven that support the data from question ten.

might indicate that they would not desire texting as a form of communication with an instructor is warranted. However, in the present research, the responses from all six groups showed a strong support of the answers given in question ten when looking at the data from question eleven. The summary of the data demonstrating the percent of support between questions ten and eleven is found in Figure Nine.
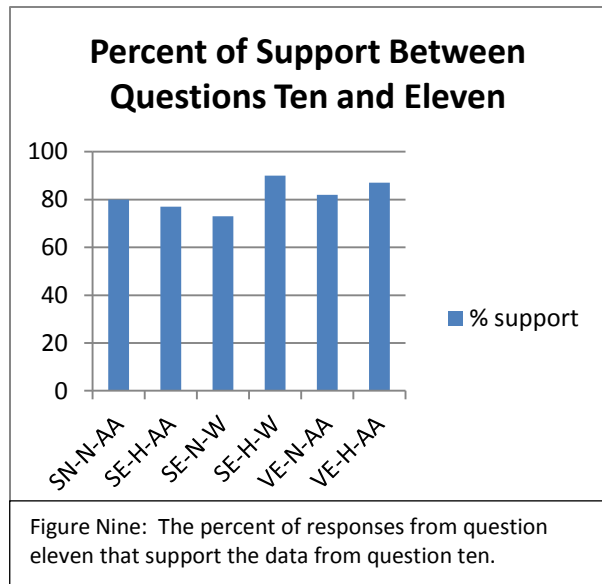
Question twelve serves as a transition question from "feedback," which is identified in questions nine through eleven, to "instruction given," which is the focus of question thirteen. Question twelve is addressing feedback in both a face-to-face setting and an online setting. I wanted the participants of the survey to consider what was more valuable to them: hearing the information verbally or receiving the information from the instructor in written form, and they demonstrated the value by circling a number from one to ten. If they circled seven or higher for either verbal or written, then that was considered a strong indicator that that particular mode of communication was important to the student who was completing the survey. A strong verbal score could be an indicator that the student valued CR, with the element of immediate feedback; also, a high verbal score could be an indicator that the student values TS and NVC as part of the information exchange. Although there is the chance that the students might be thinking about verbal feedback as an untraditional mode like a recorded voice message, most students would

Figure Ten: Percentage representing students' preference for a certain type of feedback.
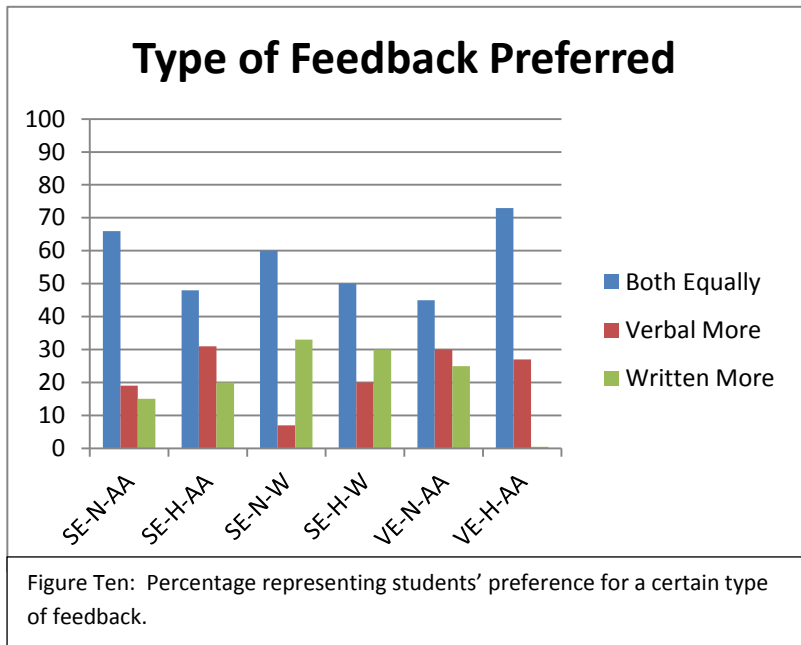
default to the traditional mode of verbal feedback which involves the face-to-face experience, allowing for the three AAVE elements to be experienced. That potential priority for AAVE elements in verbal feedback was further investigated in the interview process that followed the survey, and the write up of that information will begin in Chapter Five.   In Figure Ten, however, you will find the graphed data that came from question twelve. The first column represents a response from the students where both numbers circled are the same number, and in all but three cases the numbers circled are seven or higher indicating a strong response to both written and verbal. I have called that response "Both Equally." Two

of the SE-N-AA students circled both numbers equally, but the numbers circled were lower than 7, and

one student in the SE-H-W group equally circled numbers lower than 7 also. Within my research, those

three students' responses lower the original "Both Equally" from 66% to 63% for the SE-N-AA group and

from 50% to 40% for the SE-H-W group. However, this change in percentage does not affect the overall

results that "Both Equally" is the strongest response for all six groups. Column two identifies the

percent of students who gave a higher score to verbal feedback, and column three indicates the percent

of students who circled a higher number for written feedback.

As I considered the data gathered from question twelve, I noticed that all six groups have the

highest response in the "Both Equally" column; thus, every group demonstrated that they prefer a

combination of both written and verbal.   This preference for a combination of the two elements is a

pedagogical consideration that will be addressed in a later chapter. When the second and third columns

are considered, important data is revealed concerning communication between an instructor and a

student. Column two reflects the data for preferring "Verbal More" and column three reflects the data

regarding the students who prefer "Written More." When considering columns two and three, the four

AA groups all indicated a stronger desire for verbal feedback over written feedback; on the other hand,

the two white groups have a higher response for written feedback over verbal feedback. When I looked

specifically at the response regarding the verbal element for the four AA groups, I saw that the SE-N-AA

group has the lowest of the four scores at 19% (9/48). However, the other three groups' percentages are

much closer together with SE-H-AA being 31% (13/42), VE-N-AA being 30% (6/20), and VE-H-AA being

27% (4/15). Considering these close percentages, it is noteworthy that the VE-H-AA group had 0/15

(0%) students choose to not give a strong response for the "Written More" option, which is a strong

indicator that the students in this VE-H-AA group do not have a strong desire for feedback that is written

only.

Before I move on to report the data from question thirteen, it will be helpful to summarize some of the data from questions nine through twelve regarding feedback. One of the first observations is that in Figures Eight and Ten the combination element is the strongest response in all six groups. All groups prefer the combination of asynchronous and synchronous communication along with the combination of written and verbal feedback as seen in the "Both Equally" element in Figure Ten. Next, it is important to note that indicators for the need for immediate feedback were the highest for the two VE-AA groups, and when considering synchronous and asynchronous communication independently, the preference of synchronous over asynchronous was higher with the two AA groups who were hesitant: SE-H-AA and VE-H-AA. On the other hand, all three non-hesitant groups, SE-N-AA, SE-N-A, VE-N-AA, showed a stronger desire for asynchronous communications rather than synchronous. Also, in Figure Ten, it can be seen that the four AA groups have a higher percent who desire verbal feedback over the two white groups who have a higher percent who desire written feedback. Finally, it is interesting to compare the data between the SE-H-AA and VE-H-AA groups in the areas of same day feedback, synchronous feedback, and verbal feedback. The SE-H-AA group had the following percentages indicated: same day 61% (27/44), synchronous 19% (8/42), and verbal 31% (13/42). The VE-H-AA group had these percentages: same day 67% (10/15), synchronous 13% (2/15), and verbal 27% (4/15). As you can see, the VE group had a 6% higher indication in the same day column, but it had a 6% lower indication in the synchronous column. The VE group's "Verbal More" percentage is almost the same as the SE group's "Verbal More" percentage. When you consider this data, it appears as if the need for immediate, verbal feedback seems to be about the same for both groups; however, what provides a slightly stronger indicator regarding the need for AAVE related elements within feedback for the VE-H-AA group is the fact that 0% (0/15) of the students indicated the desire for written only feedback; whereas, 20% (9/45) of the SE-H-AA group liked written only feedback better. This final piece of data is important to acknowledge as I further investigate the potential rhetorical challenge for the VE-H-AA

group regarding a venue that could allow for call response, tonal semantics, and nonverbal cues to be experienced when the student is receiving feedback from an instructor.

When I considered SE-H-AA and VE-H-AA groups in relation to the other four groups, there is a consistent range of higher percentages, which is summarized with the following data: for "same day" the two H-AA groups are anywhere from 3% to 22% higher; for "Synchronous" the two H-AA groups are anywhere from 0% to 19% higher; for "Verbal More" the two H-AA groups are anywhere from 1% to 24% higher.
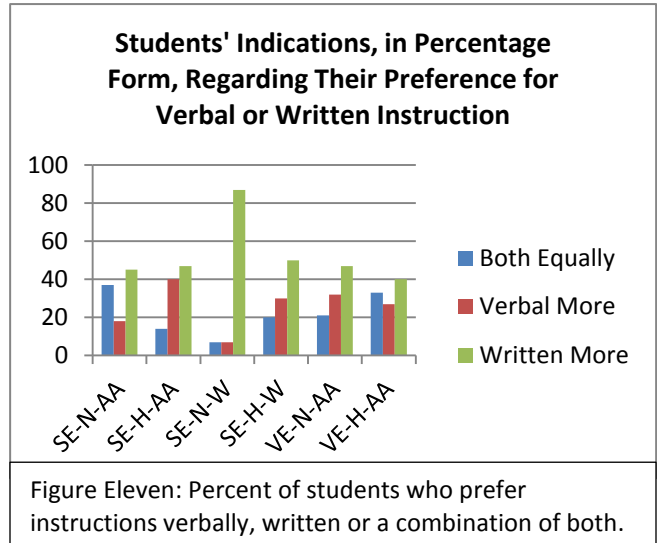
Figure Eleven: Percent of students who prefer instructions verbally, written or a combination of both.

As we continue to consider a potential rhetorical challenge for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE when call response, tonal semantics and nonverbal cues are missing in a communication experience like feedback from an instructor, then it is important to see that the data from questions nine through twelve demonstrate a fairly equal desire for the SE-H-AA and VE-H-AA groups in the areas of same day, synchronous, verbal based communication with the instructor. In addition, the VE-H-AA group's desire for feedback that potentially could allow for AAVE elements within the communication is even stronger when we take into consideration that 0% (0/15) of the students were comfortable with written only when receiving feedback from the instructor, but 20% (9/45) of the SE-H-AA students were comfortable with a written only approach to feedback. Thus, out of all six groups, the VE-H-AA group has the overall strongest indicator for the need for immediate, verbal feedback, which is an aspect of call-response.

Another role for question twelve, within my research, is to provide data that serves to confirm the responses given in question thirteen. Question twelve investigates desired style of feedback and question 13 a, b, and c investigates desired style of instruction. Question thirteen is designed to help

students register their preference for verbal instruction, written instruction, or both equally, and it is

also designed to indicate a preference for venues. Each scenario within question thirteen provides one

of the three options: verbal, written, or both. Also within question thirteen, there are four venue

options that are offered for the student's selection: webcast, YouTube, PowerPoint, and Skype. First, I

considered the student's selections in question twelve and then their choices in questions 13 a, b, and c.

13a presents the online classroom scenario with a webcast but nothing in writing. 13b presents the

same scenario, but the instructions are provided in writing. 13c has only written instructions provided.

A score of seven or higher is a strong indicator for the scenarios in question thirteen: 13a – 7 or higher is

a strong verbal; 13b – 7 or higher is a strong "equally both"; 13c – 7 or higher is a strong written. First, I

assessed the data from question 13a, b, and c, then I looked to see if the response in those three

questions within thirteen, regarding verbal, written, or equally both, is the same as what was registered

in question twelve. Figure Eleven summarizes the data from question 13 a, b, and c.

Considering the data from Figure Eleven, the first striking element is the strongest response in

the category of "Written More," which is the third column, and this highest percentage is seen in all six

groups. However, out of those six responses regarding written only instruction, the VE-H-AA group has

the lowest percentage with 6/15 or 40%. Conversely, the SE-N-W group has the highest percent of

students who like "Written More" with 13/15 or 87%. Regarding the "Verbal More" option, the SE-H-AA

group has the highest percentage at 40% (17/43), the VE-N-AA group is second at 32% (6/19), the SE-H-

W group has 30% (3/10), and the VE-H-AA group is fourth with 27% (4/15). The percentages for the four

groups just mentioned require further investigation during the interview process to determine if the

desire for verbal instruction is similar, or if there are other indicators within the students' comments

that allow for more insight into what they desire and why. Another aspect that needs to be noted is

that the two SE-N groups have the lowest percentage in the category of verbal only instruction with SE-

N-AA at 18% (9/49) and SE-N-W at 7% (1/15).

After I identified the percentage for the students who preferred verbal, written, or both equally regarding instruction, then I looked at the "stronger" responses in question twelve, regarding feedback, in order to determine if there was a correlation between the style the students from each group desired for feedback and what each groups' desire was for instruction. This comparison

Correlation Between Students' Responses for Feedback and Instruction

Figure Twelve: Percent of correlation between feedback (12) and instruction (13a, b, and c).
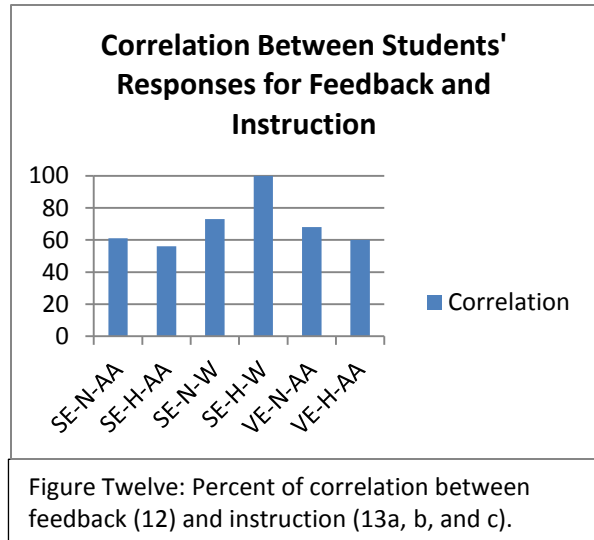
was considered with pedagogical implications in mind, and those implications will be addressed in a later chapter. In the meantime, I assessed the responses in this fashion. If the student indicated the same number for both verbal and written in question twelve, then their response is an "equally both". If the same student gave 13b the highest score or gave 13 a, b, and c the same score, then the student's response in question thirteen is also "equally both" and is therefore the same response for both feedback (question twelve) and instruction (question thirteen). I used the same approach for verbal, with a high indicator for verbal in question twelve and a correlating high indicator in questions 13a. Regarding written, the same process occurred, only it was a high indicator for written in questions twelve and a correlating high number in 13c. Figure Twelve records the correlation between the answers given in questions twelve and 13a, b, and c regarding mode of feedback and of instructions.

As Figure Twelve illustrates, there is a moderately strong correlation (56% to 73%) for five of the six groups, with a strong correlation of 100% for the SE-H-W group regarding students who desire a certain method for feedback and the same method for instruction. This comparison is important as I seek to determine if the oral element, which is an essential element in call-response and tonal semantics, is a desired element for the AA students at ECSU within feedback and the mode of instruction. Regarding the VE-H-AA group, there is a 60% correlation between the students' responses in

question twelve and their responses in question thirteen. This correlation is moderately strong because

it falls in the 50% to 70% range rather than the strong 70% to 100% range, which I established

as strong for the analysis of the data for the survey.

Moving on to further analysis of question thirteen, I also wanted to know if the VE-AA students

indicated a need or desire for the visual as well as the verbal, because the visual aspect is also involved

with the AAVE element of non-verbal cues.   The design of question thirteen includes the combination of

both the visual and the verbal, with the intention that the students' responses would provide insight

regarding their preference for the presence of the visual and verbal within the instruction experience.

Questions 13 a and b include a webcast which involves the visual and the verbal since the instructor is

both seen and heard. Question 13 d suggests a YouTube video of another instructor, which also involves

the verbal and visual elements. Question 13e is a PowerPoint with the voice of the teacher, and this

venue allows for only the verbal element. Then Question 13f returns to the inclusion of both the verbal

and visual with Skype. Consistent with my previous approach to analysis, the numbers seven through

ten are a strong indication that the student desires or needs the verbal and/or visual in the instructional

experience. The summary of the data from questions 13 b, d, e, and f is found in Figure Thirteen.
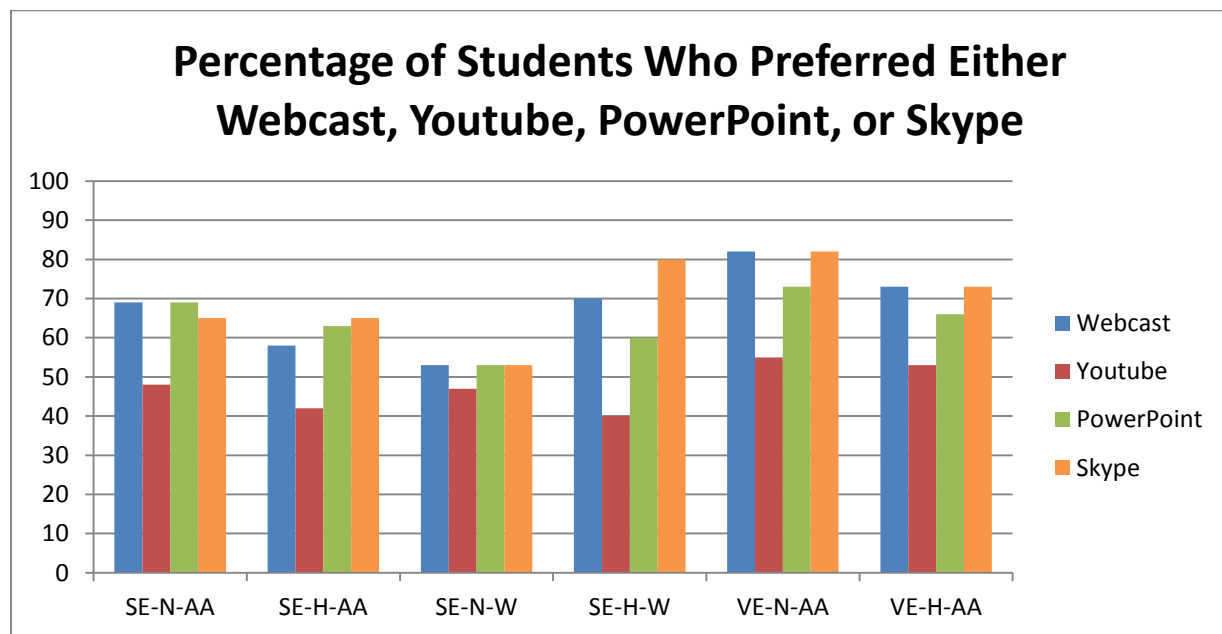
Figure Thirteen: The percent of respondents who liked a particular online venue for instruction.

Overall, there was a moderately strong response (from 50% to 70%) from all six groups

regarding the preference of a combination of visual/verbal with the written instructions. However, the

overall strongest response came from the two VE-AA groups. 82% (18/22) of the VE-N-AA group like

webcast, and the second highest percentage for webcast is the VE-H-AA group at 73% (11/15). 55%

(12/22) of the VE-N-AA group liked YouTube, and the close second is the VE-H-AA group at 53% (8/15).

73% (16/22) of the VE-N-AA group had a strong inclination for PowerPoint; however, the second largest

response for the desire to incorporate PowerPoint comes from the SE-N-AA group with 69% (35/51),

and the close third is with the VE-H-AA group with a 66% (10/15). Finally, the VE-N-AA group again has

the highest percentage at 82% (18/22) for Skype, but the second highest is with the SE-H-W group with

80% (8/10), and third highest percentage is the VE-H-AA group at 73% (11/15). These results

communicate a moderately strong (50% to 70%) desire from all six groups, but it is important to note

that out of the four venues, the two VE-AA groups register a strong desire (70% to 100%) for the use of

webcast, PowerPoint, and Skype in online instruction. Also, when comparing the data in each venue

amongst the six groups it is important to recognize that in each of the four venues, the VE-N-AA group

registers the highest percentage of students who desire this venue to be used in an online educational

experience. The summary of that pattern is as follows:

Webcast: VE-N-AA highest at 82% and VE-H-AA second highest at 73%

YouTube: VE-N-AA highest at 55% and VE-H-AA second highest at 53%

PowerPoint: VE-N-AA highest at 73% and VE-H-AA third highest at 66%

Skype: VE-N-AA highest at 82% and VE-H-AA third highest at 73%

This summary helps to register the fact that in all four venues the VE-N-AA group registers the highest

desire for a multi-modal approach to online classes. In the first two of the four venues, the VE-H-AA

group registers the second highest percentage, and in the last two venues, they register the third

highest. Thus, overall the collective VE-AA groups show the strongest inclination for wanting a multi-

modal approach to their online experience. However, during the interview process, I do want to

investigate the moderately strong interest from all six groups in order to determine why they want the

incorporation of the different venues and if their desire is connected to their ability to experience any

AAVE related elements in the communication process.

As we move towards the end of the report on the data from the survey, I will summarize the

findings regarding the correlation of and details from questions twelve and thirteen as they relate to the

AA students at ECSU who speak AAVE as their dominant dialect. Regarding feedback in question twelve,

Figure Ten demonstrates that written feedback is not a desired mode of communication for the VE-H-AA

group. However, in question thirteen, there is a strong indicator from all six groups that written

instruction is preferred, and out of those six responses regarding written instruction, the VE-H-AA group

has the lowest percentage of students who prefer written instruction (Figure Eleven). Keeping in mind

that for the VE-H-AA group there is no indication for the desire for written feedback only (question

twelve), and in question thirteen the VE-H-AA group has the lowest percentage of students who are

inclined to want written instructions only, it is helpful to see that the data show that question thirteen

demonstrates a 60% support from the students regarding their desire for the oral aspect of

communication in both feedback and instruction (see Figure Twelve). For the VE-H-AA group, questions

13 b, d, e, and f demonstrate a strong indication for the desire for verbal/visual modes of

communication to be a part of their online instructional experience, and the overall strongest response

came from the two VE-AA groups in regards to a multi-modal approach to instruction. So, the VE-H-AA

group's responses in questions twelve and thirteen confirm that feedback and instruction that are

"written only" is not their strongest desire, but they want feedback that contains an oral element and

instructions that include the visual and verbal elements.

As I leave the analysis of the data from the survey given and move to consider the data from the interviews in chapter five, an overall summary of findings as they relate to the VE-H-AA group will be helpful. Relating to those who have taken an online class, the percent of VE-H-AA students is similar to the percent of SE-H-AA students; however, the VE-H-AA group has the smallest percentage of success indicated by those who have taken an online class (Figure Four). When considering this lack of success indicated by the VE-H-AA group, it is important to note that they were the only group who gave reasons based on possible AAVE connected elements. Although the SE-H-AA group has the higher indicator of hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU (Figure Five), it is important to see that there is only a 5% difference between the SE-H-AA group (46%) and the VE-H-AA group (41%) as seen in Figure Five, and that the VE-H-AA group's reasons for hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU has the highest percentage of possible AAVE related reasons (Figure Six). Regarding feedback, the VE-H-AA group's overall data provide the strongest indicator for the need for immediate, verbal feedback. When the instructional mode is considered, it is critical to recognize that the strongest desire for a multi-modal approach to instruction came from the two VE-AA groups (Figure Thirteen), but the VE-H-AA group had the lowest percent of students who preferred written instruction (Figure Eleven), thus making their position the strongest concerning the desire for the inclusion of verbal/visual elements in the instructional process.

So, I leave the analysis of the data from the survey with some indicators that the VE-H-AA group has taken the least amount of online classes, and experienced the least amount of success for reasons that could possibly relate to AAVE. Also, this VE-H-AA group has a strong indicator for hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU and has the strongest indicator, out of the six groups, for possible AAVE related reasons for hesitancy. This VE-H-AA group has the strongest indicators for the need for immediate, verbal feedback. Finally, the VE-H-AA group's responses confirm that feedback and instruction that are

"written only" are not their strongest desire, but they want feedback that contains an oral element and

instructions that includes the visual and verbal elements.

Chapter Four

Summary of the Interviews

In this chapter, I will delve further into the potential hegemonic role (Picower, 2009 & Debose, 2007) of whiteness within ECSU's online educational experience that might potentially hinder the rhetorical process for AA students whose dominant dialect is AAVE, and this will be done through the analysis of the interviews I conducted with thirty ECSU students who completed the survey and offered to be a part of the interview process.

As explained in chapter three, I have organized the participants in my survey and interviews into six groups. This organization occurred on the basis of language, hesitancy, and race. The first organizational step identifies the students' language as Standard English (SE) or their dominant dialect as African American Vernacular English (VE). The next category involves the students' indications of hesitancy (H) or non-hesitancy (NH) in relation to taking an online class at ECSU. Finally, the students, at the beginning of the survey, had the opportunity to identify their race, out of which two categories were formed: African American (AA) and White (W). Thus, the six categories I have used to organize my research findings from the survey and interviews are as follows: SE-N-AA; SE-H—AA; SE-N-W; SE-H-W; VE-N-AA; VE-H-AA.

To provide equal representation from each group, I identified five students from each of the six categories who indicated their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview regarding the questions they completed on the survey. Each of the thirty students was contacted, and an interview time was established. When the interviews occurred, I warmly welcomed them into my office, and sat alongside them in the comfortable seating area that resembles a living room setting. On the coffee table I placed their completed survey and a recording device. I took the time to thank them for their willingness to be a part of the interview process. Next, I explained that the purpose of the interview was to review their completed survey and to address any questions I might have as well as to give them an opportunity to

explain their answers further, if they were inclined to do so. At this juncture, I asked if they had any

questions or concerns, then I explained that I had given them a number so their name would not need

to be used in the interview process. Finally, I asked them if it would be okay to record the interview so

that I would be able to reference what they said more accurately when I analyzed the data. Once I

received their consent to turn on the recording device, I pushed the record button, identified the

student by his or her assigned number, and began the interview.

The first part of the interview involved the confirmation of the data that identified the student's

dominant dialect, their hesitancy or non-hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU, and their race that

they identified. I confirmed the data by asking them if their answers they indicated on the survey,

regarding dialect, hesitancy, and race, were correct. This confirmation was important so that I was able

to, with confidence, know I had correctly placed the student in one of the six categories I had designed

for the analysis of the data. Using the survey as a guide, I followed the order of questions as they

appeared on the survey.

Questions two, three, and four address whether the students had already taken an online class

at ECSU, and whether they considered themselves successful. During the interview, I asked students to

expand on potential AAVE related reasons for lack of success that might lead to hesitancy to take further

online classes. Question four provided six reasons for the student's lack of success in taking an online

class.

4. If you answered "No" to question #3, then circle the appropriate reason(s) for your lack of success in

your online class.

Method of interacting is challenging   **Technology difficulties**

Difficulty with the material   **Difficulty understanding the instructor**

Time management skills   **Lack of community**   **Other _____**

As explained in chapter three, there are three reasons in question four that provided potential AAVE related issues regarding communication. "Method of interacting is challenging," "Difficulty understanding the instructor," and "Lack of community" are all elements that potentially involve call-response (CR), tonal semantics (TS), and non-verbal cues (NVC). Smitherman (1977, 2007) identifies CR, TS, and NVC as three distinguishing elements of AAVE communication style, and during the interview process I asked the student to expand upon his or her need for one or more of these elements. Since I was looking for AAVE related reasons for hesitancy to take an online class, I decided to address questions four and six at the same time during the interview process because both questions were designed to help identify potentially AAVE related aspects.

6. If you answered "yes" to question #5, then underline your reason(s) for being hesitant to take an online college course through Blackboard (Bb).

Personal lack of initiative (need a set classroom time to motivate your to go to class)

Technology issues (hesitant about Bb method of relating course material and communication)

Lack of community (enjoy or need to have other classmates present)

Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor

Courses needed were offered on campus

"Lack of community" and "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" are both answers that could potentially involve CR, TS, and NVC, because a community setting that is face-to-face provides an environment that allows for immediate response (CR) as well as allowing for TS to be heard and NVC to be seen. Also, there is the potential for AAVE related reasons attached to the "Technology issues" in question six, unlike question four, because of the parenthetical explanation that directs the student to consider the design of Bb and the way the course material and communication occur. Thus, the following questions after confirming the identification information of the students involved, asked the

students to elaborate on the reasons they gave regarding their lack of success in an online class or their hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU.

Although the data regarding all surveyed students is detailed in chapter four, in this chapter the specific data regarding the students who were interviewed will be highlighted. Therefore, out of the thirty students interviewed, the number of students who have taken or have not taken an online class within each of the six categories at ECSU is detailed in Figure Fourteen. Once I confirmed which students had taken or not taken an online class, I needed to identify which of the students, who have taken an online class, experienced success.   Of those students who have taken an online class, two SE-N-AA students indicated success; however, the two hesitant groups (SE-H-W and VE-H-AA) indicated that they did not experience success. The SE-H-W group had two indications of time management, which is not based in AAVE related elements. On the other hand, the VE-H-AA group had one indication of time management, one indication of method of interacting, one indication of lack of community, and one indication of difficulty with the
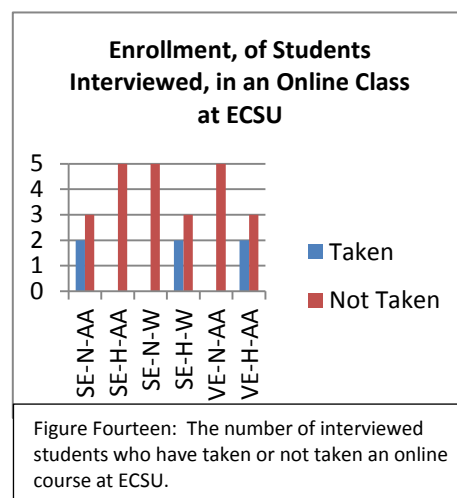
Figure Fourteen: The number of interviewed students who have taken or not taken an online course at ECSU.

material. During this section of the interview process, I kept in mind the representation of AAVE related reasons in Figure Five (chapter three), how only the VE-H-AA group identified possible AAVE related reason for their lack of success, and whether that connection is ultimately tied to whiteness within the Blackboard design.

During the interview process, I asked the students to confirm their reasons for lack of success and/or hesitancy to take an online class. Then I asked them to expand upon their answers by addressing how the aspects they identified in the survey affected their success and/or hesitancy. I also, asked them to identify any specific methods of interacting that negatively affected them or that they found

unappealing. The following are comments shared by interviewees regarding their success and/or hesitancy along with methods of interacting.

Among the SE-H-AA group, there were no students who indicated a lack of success. Regarding hesitancy, student #8 identified "personal lack of initiative" (initiative) and "Technology issues" (technology) as his reasons for being hesitant to take an online class, but in the interview he explained that he tends to procrastinate, and he went on to say, "Having the instructor in front of me motivates me; otherwise, I will get distracted." When asked what would distract him, he confessed that anything could distract him like his music or t.v. because he would be trying to avoid sitting down at his computer and doing his school work. Student #17 identified initiative and "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" (instructor) as his reasons for hesitancy. During the interview he explained, "If I don't have a scheduled time to go to class, then I will forget about it," but he went on to say that a scheduled class he will attend. He also explained that with a face-to-face instructor in a classroom he is better able to grasp the concepts because he "can ask questions." Student #18 identified instructor on the survey relating to hesitancy, and she explained in the interview that she believes she learns more in a classroom setting because if she is online she would get "distracted with other online options." She suggested that one of those distractions for her would be facebook, and, as a result, she believes she would never get her work done. Student #19 identified instructor as her reason for hesitancy. In her interview she acknowledged, "I am a visual learner . . . . I like to be able to ask the instructor questions" Later on she explained, "When I can see what is written on the board that helps." Student #28 identified technology on her survey, but in her interview she explained that what she really likes is the one-on-one with an instructor where she can get more details and hear what the instructor is saying. She concluded, "The technology aspect keeps me from connecting with the instructor"

Among the SE-H-W students interviewed, student #9 indicated "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" for his reason for hesitancy. During his interview he stated that "It doesn't feel right to take it to the computer." He explained that interacting is awkward for him on a computer and that he preferred a venue that was familiar to him, and that venue is the classroom. He concluded by saying, "I am just more comfortable in the classroom because it is what I know." Student #13 identified "Time management skills" (time management) as her reason for lack of success, and initiative, community, and instructor as her reasons for hesitancy. This student owned her initiative and time management skills in the interview with the statement, "I don't do what is needed to get the job done." However, she did emphasize that she liked to be able to interact with the instructor to help keep her on track with the assignments. She communicated her preference for community and her challenge with initiative with this statement, "My biggest issue as to why I don't want to take online is my own initiative, and I like having others in the class." Student #21 identified initiative and instructor as her hesitancy issues. She explained in her interview, though, that her main issue is personal initiative, and that she just liked having the instructor face-to-face as a personal preference. She also explained, "I am a visual learner, so I like to ask questions and see who is explaining it to me." Student #26 identified time management as his reason for his lack of success and initiative as his reasons for hesitancy to take another online class. This student confessed, "Honestly, it is more about personal initiative" when it comes to his success in an online venue. He went on to explain that he is quite capable of doing the work online, he just doesn't make it a priority to get online to do the work, so he thinks a face-to-face classroom is better for him. Student #29 had three reasons for being hesitant to take an online class: initiative, community, and instructor. In the interview, he did acknowledge that he has signed up for an online class for the next semester, but he is a little bit hesitant because he likes the interaction that happens in a classroom better than online. He summarized with this statement, "I need interaction and community to motivate me."

In the VE-H-AA group, student #7 indicated initiative, community, and instructor as her reasons for being hesitant to take an online class. In the interview she touched on her initiative and desire for community, but she emphasized the fact that she needed face-to-face with the instructor so that she can "hear and see the teacher." Student #15 identified method of interacting, time management, and community as reasons for her lack of success, and community and instructor as her reasons for hesitancy. Regarding lack of success, the student, during the interview, focused on the instructor's method of interacting by explaining that the online professor did not do a good job in communicating with her through emails because "the professor sent no emails" and that frustrated her. This student explained that she had problems understanding the professor's instructions, and without the help she needed from the instructor to understand the assignments effectively, her time management became an issue. When this student did not hear from the instructor, then this student would "forget about the class." She explained her answer regarding community was based on the social aspect; this student wanted to get to know her classmates "through an icebreaker at the beginning of the semester," and since there were no icebreakers, those potential social relationships did not develop, thus she was not motivated to get online. Regarding hesitancy, she went on to say, "I need interaction with the instructor to confirm that I am on the right track," and she suggested that every online instructor should have to "meet once or twice a week" in a face-to-face setting to make sure that their online students are keeping on track. Student #24 just identified the need for instructor interactions as her reason for hesitancy. In the interview she emphasized that she likes to talk to her professor and she gets that in face-to-face classes. She went on to say, "It is stressful to think about [online classes]," where she is unable to ask questions. Student #27 has two reasons for being hesitant to take an online class: initiative and instructor. During the interview this student acknowledged that she should be more responsible if she were to take an online class, but she identified that she needs to be able to interact with her instructor so that she can "ask [her] instructor questions." Student #30 circled "Difficulty with

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the material" and "Time" for his two reasons for lack of success in an online class. However, he circled

"Instructor" for his reason for hesitancy. During the interview he explained that in his marketing class

he got lost in the material. He believes that if he had been face-to-face, then he would have been able

to ask questions and get the help he needed. This student declared, "I don't like it when the assignment

is written out and you don't have no details," which he went on to explain as his reason for not having

any success in his online class. Later in the interview he added, "I need to make sure I am talking about

the right stuff," and face-to-face interaction with the instructor would allow him the chance to get the

needed details so that when he is completing the assignments he is "talking about the right stuff."

As explained in Chapter Four, data from questions seven and eight proved to be unreliable; thus,

I will move to discuss interview responses related to questions nine through twelve. Questions nine

through twelve addressed issues concerning feedback as it relates to instructor/student communication.

During the interview process I was looking to see if the immediacy aspect of call-response (CR) was an

aspect needed more by one group over another group.

Question nine approached the issue of immediacy from the perspective of the student's need or

desire for same day feedback.

9.On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all and 10 is very important, how important is immediate
feedback to you when you are looking for a response from any of your instructors at ECSU?
                          1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
What constitutes "immediate"? (circle your best answer)

> **The same day**
> > **The next class**
> > > **The same week**
> > > > **The next week**

When reviewing the data from the surveys of the thirty students, it was interesting to note that twenty-

nine of the thirty students circled a seven or higher on the first part of question nine. The student who

did not give a strong indicator (seven or higher) to the first part of question nine was a SE-N-W student.

Thus, the second half of question nine was a better indicator of whether the student desired or needed

"immediate feedback" or if they were willing to wait for feedback. Before we turn to the interviews, it is important to note that within the survey, the four AA groups showed a stronger indication regarding immediate feedback, which means "Same Day" feedback, than the two white groups, and these results can be seen in Figure Nine in Chapter Four.

During the interview, the students were asked why they selected their preference for feedback. In the SE-N-AA group student #2 said, "I like to know how well I did on an assignment before I go any further" regarding her reason for indicating "same day." Student #3 selected "Next Week on the survey," but she explained during the interview, "I need to know a.s.a.p., but I understand if it is not right away." When asked to explain her understanding spirit, she acknowledged that instructors have a lot of work to do. Student #10 offered her reason for wanting same day with these words, "I would want my professor or teacher to let me know if I'm on the right track. I'll rather do a couple questions and then see how I'm doing than do a whole assignment and have it wrong." Within the SE-H-AA group, student #18, selected two answers on the survey and explained that "either same day or next day is okay." Student #17, who selected "Same Day" offered this explanation, "So that I can immediately know exactly what the teacher wants." Student #19 identified same day feedback and when asked why, she said, "I like to be visually shown what I need to correct on the same day, so that I can space out my timing of completing what needs to be done to an assignment." Student #28 explained, "Same day or next day as earlier as possible because I can't see and talk to them when I contact them through the computer." When asked to explain further, she shared that if it is the same day, then the feedback will be face to face with the instructor in the classroom rather than having to wait until later and emailing the professor regarding her concern.

The next section of SE-W students provided insight into their reasons for wanting same day feedback. In the SE-N-W group, student #6 identified "same day" and when asked to explain why that was important to her, she offered that it was because "it was as soon as possible," which she liked

because she wants to get her work done. Student #20 said, "Next day is okay," and when asked to explain this response, he said, "Personally, it doesn't matter to me. Receiving your grade either day still won't change or help it." Student #22 reasoned that "same day [feedback] lowers the time related to the downtime when it could be used for additional work." Finally, student #23, who indicated "Same day," shared that if the feedback was important, then the feedback should occur quickly so "the student . . . can go back and fix what they missed." Within the SE-H-W group, the students had these responses regarding same day feedback: Student #9, who indicated "The Next Class," said, "Immediate feedback is not necessary for me, I guess it all depends on the class. If it is a class I'm doing well in, I don't worry about feedback. What is really important is understanding the assignment before I turn it in;" student #13, who also indicated "The Next Class," explained, "I'm okay to wait for the next class because I want to work on the things first and see if I understand the work before I get the feedback from the teacher;" student #21, who circled "Same Day," offered, "It is important for me to get feedback on the same day that I get an assignment . . . because I need to know that I am on the right track [and] it allows me to get any questions I have answered;" student #26 who was willing to wait for "The Next Class" stated, "I just need to get the feedback in time for the next assignment or test;" on the other hand, student #29 who was willing to wait for "The Next Week," explained, "Feedback is not a priority for me, I can wait for next week. . . [I just need the] crucial information to pass the class."

Finally, the VE-AA section of the thirty students interviewed provided responses regarding their desire for same day feedback. In the VE-N-AA group, regarding same day feedback, student #4 said, "I want to know what was good and what was not . . . it is important to know what your instructor thinks as far as your work, so you can improve." Student #11 said, "I will know what I need to fix right then while it's fresh in my mind." Student #14 gave her reason for wanting same day feedback, ". . . because I would like to fully understand the topic or assignment before I move on to something else." However, student #25 explained that immediate feedback means "soon, and I believe by the [next]class period

that is soon enough for me." Within the VE-H-AA group, the students responded with the following

comments: Student #7 acknowledged that she "likes immediate feedback." Student #15 said, "Same

day feedback is very important to me," and when I asked her why, she said because she doesn't like to

wait. Also, student #24 explained that she is eager to do her best, so immediate feedback allows her to

know what she has to do next to "fix the problem." Student #27 needed immediate "same day"

feedback, which for her meant "before the day is over," and she explained that it was "because I'm

contacting my teacher [and] it means I have a question or concern . . . that is important to me" so

getting an immediate answer to that question or concern is what she wanted. Finally, student #30 was

fine to wait to the next class, but in the interview he did admit that "same day" feedback might be

helpful because there might be "important info on assignments, tests or any questions," that he might

need to finish his work.

Having gained a little bit of insight regarding the need or desire for immediate feedback from

question nine, I moved on to questions ten and eleven to see if I could gain further insight into their

need or desire for immediacy through varying modes of communication.

10. In an online setting like Blackboard (Bb), would you prefer asynchronous, synchronous, or a
combination of the two when communicating with the instructor? Note: asynchronous is
communication with a time delay like emails and the discussion board; synchronous is communication
with no time delay like instant messaging or Skype. (circle your best answer)

                        asynchronous (emails)   **synchronous** (chat)   **combination**

11. If you were taking an online course through Bb, would you like to have a time where you could chat
online with your instructor - like a texting experience? **Yes   No**

Questions ten and eleven provided an opportunity for me to discuss with the students what type of

communication the student might prefer when wanting interaction with an online instructor regarding

an assignment or issue the student might have. I was looking to see if there were any indications of a

possible call-response (CR) dynamic that might be required by the students for the rhetorical process

connected with their online classwork to be effective. I was also looking for strong words or statements

that would indicate more of a need rather than a desire for immediacy related to the interaction and feedback that occurs between the instructor and the student. For the sake of clarification, I will refer to this section of the survey as the "feedback section" because the instructor is giving input regarding material or assignments rather than giving the initial set of instructions for the assignment. The "instruction section," which involves the initial set of instructions given for the assignment, will be addressed in question thirteen of the survey. Establishing those parameters, I considered questions ten and eleven in the survey.

Again, the first section I analyzed was the SE-AA section. In the SE-N-AA group, four out of five students selected "same day" (SD) for their response in question nine. Student #1, who selected SD explained that she never knows if her online teacher gets her emails, but texting and chatting with her online instructor would be "almost like sitting in a classroom."   Student #2, another SD student, said that "email isn't fast enough." Student #3, who indicated her willingness to wait for "next week" for feedback also indicated on the survey that she liked the idea of a combination of emails and chat; however, during the interview she did explain that "Chat would allow me to have the answers as soon as possible rather than waiting for email," so the idea of chatting with a professor was good. On the other hand, the SD student #10's reason for wanting to text with a teacher was because she is not a "big talker," so texting would be an easier way to communicate with a teacher.   Student #12 (SD) suggested that "instructions [were better] through emails but with chat [it] gives you the chance to ask questions on the fly. [It gives] clarification, kind of like in class."

The SE-H-AA group also had four out of five students indicate their desire for "Same Day" feedback. However, during the interviews it became apparent that this group also liked the idea of a combination of emails and texting.   Student #8, who had indicated "same day" on the survey, didn't like the "delay in time" that comes with emails, so chatting and texting sounded like a good option to him. With student #17 (SD) who did indicate that he liked emails, also said that "chatting is hearing the

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teacher" and he liked the idea that he could hear the teacher's voice over Skype. Student #18, a SD

student, did indicate her willingness to have a combination experience if it involved Skype, but she was

very strong in not wanting to text her teacher, because if she had the option she would much "prefer

face to face time with [her] instructor" because she likes to see her teacher. Student #19 (SD) likes the

"back and forth" that comes with chatting. Student #28 was the student who was willing to wait for the

"next class" for feedback, but when it came to the interview, she explained that she likes the idea of

chatting because it will give her "quicker feedback."

The SE-N-W group had two out of the five students wanting same day feedback from the

instructor. Here is what I discovered when it came to the students' desire for asynchronous and

synchronous communication with the instructor. Student #6, a "same day" student, thought emails take

too long and she likes the immediacy of texting so she "can ask questions." Students # 16, a "next class"

student, liked the speed of chatting with a professor to get "answers faster." Student # 20 was another

"next class" student, and he was apathetic in his response because "emails were good enough" for him.

Student #22, who was also willing to wait until "next class" did like the combination of the two venues,

just as long as he had the written feedback through emails. For student #23 (SD), she wanted to have

the option of emailing available "all the time," but she likes how "quick" chatting is.

The SE-H-W group had two of the five students identify the fact that they wanted same day

feedback from their instructors. Student #9, a student who was willing to wait until the "next class" for

feedback, expressed that immediate feedback was not necessary and he was fine with emails. Student

#13, another "next class" student, liked the combination of email and chat, but she emphasized that she

liked the "immediacy of chatting with a professor." Student #21, a student who indicated "same day"

(SD) as a preference for feedback, reflected that emails are helpful, but chatting "seems like a

conversation." Student #26 indicated "same day" feedback, but he was not looking to have a

"conversation with a professor" just as long as he got the "needed information" to do what he needed

to do. Finally, student #29 was actually willing to wait until "next week" for feedback, and he expressed

that a combination of emails and chat would work best, but during the interview he reflected that it is

"easier to communicate with chat [because] it is instant."

The first group is VE-N-AA where three out of the five students indicated their desire for same

day feedback. Student #4, a SD student, confessed that she "doesn't like to check her emails," so that is

why she would like to text with her instructor. Student #5, who was willing to wait for the "next class"

for feedback, originally indicated that she wanted only asynchronous communication with an instructor,

but during the interview said that if she had an assignment, she would want direct feedback, so now she

feels that chat "would be helpful." Also, she went on to say that "chat as well as texting would be good"

in order to get immediate feedback. Student #11, another "next day" student, offered that he liked the

combination idea, but he expressed that although he was "okay with emails," he really loved the idea of

texting because it would be "like having a teacher [available] 24 hours." Student #14 (SD) explained that

she uses emails, but she determined that she "wants help as soon as she needs help" so even with

emails she would like the teacher to email her back right away. Student #25 (SD) didn't care for emails,

but really "want[ed] texting," and when asked for further insight into why she would want a chat like

relationship with a professor, she said she would like to chat "verbally [so] then [she] can understand if

[the professor's] answering [her] question correctly or not."

The other VE-AA group to consider is the VE-H-AA group where four out of the five students

indicated their desire for same day feedback. Regarding asynchronous and synchronous communication

with a professor, student #7 (SD) identified a desire for a combination of the two venues, but during the

interview she said, "I want my teacher to be available immediately," and she explained that she gets

that with synchronous communication. Student #15, another SD student, referenced her former online

teachers' inability to communicate effectively and efficiently through email because "they take too long

to answer emails," and she thought that texting might help that situation. Student #24 (SD) said she was

"frustrated" because instructors did not "respond in a timely manner" to her emails, and she said that

"chatting would be better than emails" because she wouldn't get frustrated waiting. Student # 27 (SD)

said, "texting would feel more comfortable" than having to remember to check her email. The final

student #30 indicated "next class" for when he was willing to wait for feedback, and this student

thought that texting or chatting would be "weird," and when I asked him why, he said, "It wouldn't be

like a teacher/student relationship should be." As I leave the analysis of questions ten and eleven,

which directly address the issue of immediacy and feedback, I move on to question twelve, which

addresses types of feedback rather than the immediacy factor involved in feedback.

Question twelve asks the students to identify the importance of verbal feedback and written

feedback. The purpose of this question is to provide an opportunity for the students to address two

different venues: verbal, which can allow for call-response (CR) and tonal semantics (TS), and written,

which does not allow for CR and TS to be experienced.

12.When you receive feedback from your instructor, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all and 10 is
very important, how important is . . .
Verbal feedback :   **1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**

Written feedback :   **1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**

The data from question twelve, as detailed in Chapter Four, provided three responses. "Equally"

represents the same "strong" indicator for both verbal and written feedback. Then there is the stronger

"verbal" indicator or the stronger "written" indicator. A "stronger" indicator begins with a number that

is 7 or higher. As I moved into the interview process that addressed question twelve, I reminded the

students of the numbers they indicated on the survey, then I simply asked why they answered the way

they did. As they gave their answers, if what they said during the interview varied from what they

indicated on the survey, then I would ask them to re-evaluate the answer they gave on the survey.

Once again, I began with the SE-AA section. In the SE-N-AA group, four students identified both

methods "equally" and one student identified his or her stronger desire for "verbal" feedback. Student

#1 was the student who identified her desire for "verbal" feedback, and during the interview she stated, "I want to be able to converse with my teacher because it gives me a better understanding of what I need to do." Student #2 had both equally, and she explained that she likes the verbal because it gives the instructor a chance to re-explain the feedback and for her to "ask questions if something does not make sense"; however, she does see the value of written because she can use it as a reference, although it is "not personal enough" for her. Students #3 also indicated "equally" on the survey, but during the interview she explained that with verbal, "I can ask questions and have a clear[er] understanding while I look at what we are talking about." With the written element, she explained, "I am okay with this, but sometimes I do not fully understand the message, and I need it to be explained." Student #10 indicated equally, but during the interview she did say she liked written better because she could "go back to it to reference it," but with verbal she said "there might be a possibility I might forget." Student #10 went on to explain that she does like one aspect of verbal because, as she said, "I like to listen to my instructors so that I can learn to speak better grammar." Student #12, who identified both equally, claimed that "both [types of feedback] are needed if you want to do well," because you need both written and verbal feedback so that all aspects of the assignment can be addressed effectively.

The SE-H-AA group had three students on the survey who indicated an equal desire for verbal and written, one student who indicated a stronger desire for the verbal, and one student who indicated a stronger desire for the written. Student #8 indicated a stronger desire for written, but during the interview he confessed his skepticism regarding any type of feedback because he has "not had a great experience with any kind of feedback." Student #28 indicated verbal over written because she needs clarification on issues that confuse her and verbal provides an opportunity for the instructor to clarify, because, as she said, "contact should be close to the same as face to face conversations." Students #17, #18, and #19 all indicated "equally" for both verbal and written feedback on the surveys and during the initial part of the interview, all three referenced the importance of both for helping them get good

grades. However, during the interview student #17 identified liking written better because he "can go back to whatever [the instructor] has written," and he said he did not like verbal as much because he "can easily forget what the teacher has said." Also, student #19 indicated that she did prefer verbal a bit more because "with written feedback, I feel as though I'd be lost and would want to ask so many questions, than if I'm receiving my feedback verbally."

The next section is the SE-W section with the SE-N-W group, which consists of three "equally," one "verbal" and one "written." Student #6 liked both equally. Student #16 also liked both equally, but she pointed out that written is good for reference "so I can remember it and save it for the future," and verbal is easier to understand. Student #20 took a bit of a different approach by stating that although he valued both verbal and written feedback equally, he values written feedback as an effective mode for the "average [or usual] type of feedback" in a class setting and verbal feedback as "good in an emergency." Student #22 liked verbal slightly more than written feedback on the survey, but during the interview he changed his stance and said that "written feedback is preferred to verbal because verbal feedback can be overlooked or forgotten;" although, he did say that "verbal feedback is better on non-written assignments and short assignments too." Student #23 liked written much more than verbal on the survey, and during the interview she explained it was because "it means you can see the feedback in front of you," and she went on to say that written feedback was helpful because "[she] does not get things right away," but she did acknowledge that verbal is helpful when "you have questions about the subject."

The other SE-W group is the SE-H-W group where one student wants the two methods of feedback "equally," one student wants "verbal," but three students want "written." During the interview the students' comments from this group supported the strong "written" indicators from the survey with four of the five students communicating their preference for written feedback. Student #9 valued written more as a "blueprint of what you want to do." He explained that he loves written

because "it gives you a lot more information and a lot to work with;" although, he did acknowledge that

verbal feedback was faster. Student #26 said that written feedback is good for reference; thus, he liked

written better, but he acknowledged that verbal is easier to receive because "I have a good memory."

There was also student #29 who explained that "written is definitely more important to me," and he

went on to explain it was because it allows you to "review and have an accurate record of what the

instructor thought."   Student # 13 liked the referencing aspect of written feedback, but she prefers

verbal because on written feedback "[the instructor] can't point out what is wrong and show how I need

to change things." Student #21 indicated that both are equally important, but during the interview she

explained, "I prefer written feedback because . . . I like to be able to look at what changes my professor

suggested that I make."

The final section to consider regarding feedback is the VE-AA section. The VE-N-AA group within

this section had one student indicate verbal and written "equally," one student indicate "written" as his

stronger preference, and three students who indicated "verbal" as their preference for feedback.

Student #4 identified "written" as her stronger preference, and in her interview she explained that

written is more important to her because written can be referenced and verbal can be forgotten. On

the other hand, student #5 liked verbal better, and she explained in her interview that verbal is more

important for her because she wants to "talk with [her] teacher to see what [she] has to fix;" at one

point this student said, "I would rather chat with [my instructor] about my work" than just receiving

written feedback. Students #11 and #25 circled a higher number for verbal feedback, and during the

interview student #11 said he liked the chance to "ask questions," and student #25 said verbal was more

important because "I can receive the understanding from the teacher's own voice." Student #14 circled

both "equally," but she explained in her interview that if she had to choose one over the other, she

would choose verbal because "if I have more questions to ask, the teacher would be right there to help

me understand." She explained that she does not like written quite as much because she "can easily get

lost and not understand it at all . . . [without the instructors] telling me and showing me what I am doing wrong."

The final group is the VE-H-AA group, a group where four students indicated equal desire for both approaches and one student indicated her strong need for verbal. The comments within the interview included student #7 who said that "Verbal feedback is much more important than written feedback because I have the opportunity to actually hear what the teacher has said out of his or her own mouth concerning a specific assignment." This student also said that verbal feedback is helpful because "I am able to talk to the teacher one on one and all of my questions will be answered." Student #15 did indicate both options equally, and in the interview she said, "Written is okay;" however, regarding verbally, she elaborated by explaining, "Verbally you can tell me words [or details] that are hard to write," and she also likes the fact that verbal feedback "provides more detail." Student #15 also added, "I remember more when it is verbally stated to me," and when asked to clarify she said, "I remember my teacher's voice, and I can recall stuff better." Student #24 who also indicated both equally explained, "I would rather have my teacher talk to me and show me instead of having the feedback written down because I get it better when I am shown stuff." Student #27 was another "equally" on the survey, but in the interview she said, "I am more of a verbal listener; I may not fully understand something just by reading something." Student #30, who identified both "equally" did explain that he values verbal feedback because, as he said, with verbal feedback, "the student [gets] the fully understanding of the feedback;" however, he likes some written feedback, but he did clarify by saying, "If it is very descriptive, then I give it a 10."

This transition from feedback given to instructions given occurs as I move from question twelve to question thirteen. Question thirteen in the survey was written in six parts, with each part offering an approach to instructions that used written, verbal, or a combination of both; and within the combination scenarios, different types of venues were suggested so that I could gain some more insight

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into what types of instructional venues might be more effective in an online class setting. During this section of the chapter, I will first address the students' desire for written instruction versus their desire for verbal instruction, and then I will consider the correlation between the students' responses regarding feedback and their responses regarding instruction. Lastly, I will detail what was shared during the interviews regarding the four different venues that were listed within question thirteen, where I shared with them their answers on the survey, then I asked them why they indicated what they did.

When assessing the results from the survey regarding preferred method of instruction, Figure Twelve, in Chapter Four, illustrates the results from the data that show that all six groups prefer written instruction over verbal instruction. Within the SE-N-AA group of students who were interviewed, four out of five students preferred written instructions and one student preferred both equally. Most of the students explained their strong desire for written instructions was based on their ability to reference the instructions while completing the assignment (#1, #2, #3, #10). Student #1 acknowledges that she is a visual learner, but when it comes to receiving instructions, she said, "I need to have something written down so that I can make sure I am doing it right." Student #2 explained that she likes to be able to look at the paper as a guide. Student #3 identified that she liked both equally in the survey, and during the interview she confessed that she does like face to face, but she went on to say, "I would like to have [the instructions] written out so that I can refer back to it." Student #10 stated that written instructions "can guide me along the way so that I don't have to remember all the instructions in my head." Finally, student #12 shared that "written makes a big difference because I can understand it better."

The SE-H-AA responses during the interviews included three students who preferred written instruction and two students who preferred verbal instructions. The three students who preferred written instruction are students #17, #19, and #28. Student #17 said, "I can always go back to where my teacher has written the instructions, that way I won't be confused or lost." Student #19 explained that

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"written instructions may be easier for me to follow." Student # 28 indicated a stronger preference for written on her survey, but during the interview she edged toward liking verbal more because if she asked the instructor in person what to do, she would get more "details and description." Students #8 and #18 both indicated their desire for verbal instructions over written instructions. In the interview, student #8 said that verbal instructions "help me learn better," and student #18 shared that her preference was based on the fact that she wants more visuals because she "is more of a hands on learner."

The next section to be reported concerning the students' responses for question 13a, b, and c is the SE-W section, where both groups gave very strong responses identifying their desire for written instruction over verbal instruction. The SE-N-W group had four out of five students indicate their desire for written instructions, on the survey, and all five students indicated a strong preference during the interview because student #22 changed his position. Student #6 explained that she likes verbal instructions but "written is more important because you can miss something when you are listening." Student #16 acknowledged that "written is easier to go back to and reference when working on an assignment." Student #20's survey indicated a preference for written instruction, and he maintained that preference during the interview, although it was also important for him to have his desire for visual aids noted. He said, "I am okay with written, but I prefer visuals when receiving instructions because they help me understand the instructions better." Student #22 explained his preference for written instruction with these words, "Written instructions are more likely to be more detailed than verbal instructions," and he expressed his appreciation for the detail he can reference in written instructions. Student #23 confessed that verbal instructions "bore me when I just want to know what I need to do," and that is why she likes written instructions better.

The SE-H-W group had four out of the five students identify their preference for written instructions, and in the interviews they supported their indications with the following phrases. Student

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#9 said that he "would take written over verbal" because he will forget it if it is not written down. Student #21 liked written instruction better, and she explained why by saying, "I can look back at [the written instructions] to make sure that I have completed the entire assignment, but if it was verbal, I would feel like I would forget some details." Student #26 kept emphasizing that written is all he needed to be able to complete the assignment, and he even went on to say that the inclusion of visual and verbal elements in online instruction were "a distraction." Student #29 also supported written instructions; on the other hand, student #13 indicated her preference for verbal instructions in the survey, but in the interview she explained that both verbal and written instructions allowed her to "cover all bases." She went on to say that she likes the immediacy of verbal instructions and the ability to reference the written instructions. She did say, "I am a visual learner" and she added, "I like to have it explained to me as well as read if off of a paper," so that she has the freedom to ask questions.

Finally, the VE-AA section had responses that indicate that out of the ten students interviewed in these two groups, four students preferred "equally," three students preferred verbally, and three students preferred written, according to their answers on the survey regarding instructions. With the VE-N-AA group there were two out of five who equally identified verbal and written, two out of the five who identified verbal as their stronger desire regarding instructional methods, and one student who identified written as his preferred mode of instruction. During the interviews for the VE-N-AA group, student # 4 indicated her equal preference on the survey, and during the interview, she explained that when nothing is written down, a verbal explanation is okay; however, she likes the written part because she is "able to look back at [the instructions]." Interestingly, when I got to 13c she said that "written is not just enough," but verbal needs to be part of the explanation for her to fully understand the instructions. Student #11 also identified verbal and written instructions equally. In the interview, this student began this section with the comment that the combination of the two approaches was his favorite. However, he explained further into the interview that "It is more important to have

[instructions] verbally because having verbal instructions makes it clearer to me." He also said he finds the written instructions helpful too. The next two students identified verbal instructions as more helpful to them. Student #5 elaborated on her response from the survey by stating, "I prefer verbal because I can remember a majority of what instructors say; however, I may not know how important the information may be if it is only written down and I don't get to hear the instructor emphasize the importance." Student #25 explained in her interview that verbal instructions were better for her "because some professors can teach better than they can write, and written words can be misleading." Also, she says that with verbal instruction they "are broken down into more detail." The final student interviewed in the VE-N-AA group was student #14, who indicated on her survey that she preferred written over verbal instructions. During her interview she explained that "written instructions are better because if I forget something, I can go back to my instructions and look over them." So, when I confirmed her desire for written over verbal instructions, she did clarifying that the combination of verbal instructions with written instructions works well "because hearing and seeing helps me remember."

Moving on to the final group, VE-H-AA students, their survey answers indicate that two of the students equally like verbal and written instructions, one student likes verbal, and two students like written. Student #15, who was "equally" on the survey, explained that she liked verbal because "if I have any questions, I can ask my instructor," but she also explained that written is helpful because "I can follow up and read the instructions as many times as I want." Student #24 also responded "equally" on the survey, and during her interview she elaborated by stating that written instructions are "helpful because I can keep looking over to ensure what I'm doing is right . . . but verbal instructions is better because I can see the teacher and she will hold my attention." Student #7 indicated her desire for verbal instructions on her survey, and in the interview she said, "Verbal instruction is better because I can hear and see my teacher explain the assignment or lesson and that would give me a better

understanding of the material." She went on to emphasize that "I need more instructions than just what

is written . . . I need to make sure I am doing the right stuff." Students #27 and #30 both indicated a

stronger desire for written instruction when they took their survey, but student #27 started out this

section of the interview by making it clear that she needed more instructions than just what she can see

written by the instructor, and she added that she likes it when she has the opportunity to have her

instructor "elaborate on things I don't understand." Earlier in the interview, student #27 mentioned that

she was a "verbal listener" and during this part of the interview she explained further, "I am a very good

verbal learner" so she likes it when her teacher elaborates more by giving verbal instructions. Student

#30 explained his preference for written instructions by saying, "written instructions provide a format,

and I need a format that is written," but he did confess that "If I have any questions, I can ask in the

classroom."

The last section of the survey/interview process addresses four online venues where a

verbal/visual element is experienced along with written instructions. The four venues are webcast,

YouTube, PowerPoint, and Skype. Question 13 addresses all four venues by asking the students to

indicate their interest in having a particular venue incorporated into the online learning experience.

13. When considering different types of visual communication in an online scenario, use the scale of 1 to
10, where 1 is not at all and 10 is a great amount, and circle the number that best represents the
appeal of the following visual tools.

a. Imagine that you are taking an online class and when it is time for you to write your first
essay you had the instructions on a webcast so that you could see the instructor giving the
instructions, **but you had nothing in writing**.
       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
b. Same scenario as above, **but you also had the same instructions written** on your
Blackboard site.
       2   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
c. You have instructions for an assignment that are **only written** on your Blackboard site.
       2   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
d. How about a scenario where you are given instructions for writing your first essay for a
composition class but the instructions are a general YouTube video on writing a paper (not
your instructor speaking). However, you do have your instructors' **written assignment** on

Blackboard.

              2   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**   **8**   **9**   **10**

e. The instructions are on a PowerPoint presentation with your instructor's voice explaining the instructions?

              2   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**   **8**   **9**   **10**

f. On a scale of 1 -10, how would you rate a Skype talk where you were on the computer with a group of other students and you could see the instructor explaining the instructions while a selection of students were listening and interacting and you were one of those students. Also, you could see the **written instructions** in front of you as a document on the Bb site

              1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**   **6**   **7**   **8**   **9**   **10**

Question 13b addresses webcast, 13d YouTube, 13e PowerPoint, and 13f Skype. I wanted to know which groups preferred the addition of a visual/verbal element within an online learning class and how strong that preference is, but I was also interested to learn which students preferred each venue offered. In chapter four there is a strong (over 70%) reaction from the SE-H-W group concerning Skype, from the VE-N-AA group for webcast, PowerPoint, and Skype, and from the VE-H-AA group for webcast and Skype. The rest of the groups demonstrated a moderate interest in the inclusion of a visual/verbal element with the indications ranging from 40% to 70% (Figure Fourteen). During the interview I wanted to know why the students indicated a stronger desire for a particular visual/verbal element to be incorporated into the online classroom experience, so I asked them why they circled the number they circled and what was it about the venue they liked or disliked.

Regarding the webcast venue, only two students (students #2 and #10) showed interest in incorporating it into an online class. During the interview student #2 said, "It would make an interesting way to learn from teachers," but student #10, during her interview, expressed a hesitation about taking an online class using webcast. This student explained, "I like to go to my teacher from time to time and develop a student-teacher relationship. With webcast, if I have a question on something, I would have to email, and I wouldn't like that." Students #1, #3, and #12 all did not like webcast as an option because "It is not the same as having a teacher physically in the classroom where they can look over my work," according to student #1, and "I would like a teacher physically in the class," according to student #3.

Next, I looked at YouTube as a venue, and with this group only student #10 indicated her interest in using YouTube in an online class, but during the interview she changed her mind and said, "I would get really confused and with confusion would come frustration." The other four students did not like the idea of YouTube because according to student #3, "you can't ask YouTube questions," and student #2 explained, "I had a YouTube assignment before and it didn't appeal to me." Students #1 and #12 both cited that it would be confusing to have another instructor giving instructions.

Regarding the use of Ppt, four of the five students liked the idea because it included both a visual and voice. Student #1 was the student who indicated on her survey that she did not particularly like Ppt by circling a 5, but in her interview she explained that Ppt would be easier to use if it had the instructor's voice with the slides. The other four students gave reasons for liking Ppt with an accompanying voice by saying "it would feel like I was in a classroom" (student #12) and "I just love PowerPoints, and it would be better if I hear his explanation . . . and I can follow along with the instructor"(student #10). Student # 2 explained that she would like the voice with the Ppt "just in case I don't understand a specific slide," and student # 3 said, "It would be just like being in class and the voice would elaborate."

Skype was the fourth option and five out of five students said they liked that option. There were many reasons given for their strong score for Skype, including, "Chat gives time for Q and A" (student #1); "You can chat while you see the instructor, and you can take notes" (student #2); "It allows for one-on-one communication" (student #3); "I could ask them questions if I needed to, and it could be one-on-one" (#10); and "It is as close to face-to-face as you are going to get" (student #12).

Webcast and YouTube were not popular with this group as only one student indicated a desire to have either of these incorporated into an online class. Student #18 liked the idea of a webcast because she said, "I can have an actual conversation with my instructor and ask questions." Student #28 liked having a YouTube as part of the online experience "because it's still as close as you can get to

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physically being there;" however, she went on to say, "I don't like that it is not my teacher or professor." The reasons given for lack of interest by student #8 is that he "doesn't like [webcast] no matter what because I don't like technology as part of my learning experience," and student #19 said, "I would only like [webcast] if my instructor pre-recorded his lecture, and I could re-wind it to follow it step by step." Regarding negative reactions to YouTube, student #17 explained why he wouldn't want to have YouTube when he said, "I would get distracted by the videos scrolling on the side. I would want to start watching different videos." Student #19 offered, "I would not pay attention and it would be confusing," and student #8 said, "YouTube is difficult to learn from when it is someone I haven't heard before."

Moving on to PowerPoint (Ppt), three of the five students liked the idea of Ppt because, as student #8 said, "[I would] understand it better if I heard the instructor's voice," and student #18 liked the idea because the teacher's "voice may clarify" what the PowerPoint is teaching." Student #19 shared during the interview that an "Energizing voice [of the instructor] could energize the students" and also that "the voice will elaborate on the lesson on the PowerPoint," and that is why she likes the idea of a Ppt with an instructor's voice. The two SE-H-AA students who did not like the idea of PowerPoint accompanied by the voice of the instructor were students #17 and #28. Student #17 said that he didn't like the option because "it's not the same as learning in class [and] I can't ask the PowerPoint questions, if I had any." Student #28 explained that a PowerPoint with an instructor's voice has "too much going on," since the words might not match what was typed, and she would not like that type of learning venue.

Lastly, five out of five students liked Skype on the survey, but during the interview student #17 changed his thoughts and expressed his dislike because he would "prefer talking in person and it would be an uncomfortable feeling for some." When I asked why that situation could be uncomfortable, he explained that Skyping is a personal way to communicate and you don't do that with a teacher. The rest of the students thought they would like to Skype with their online teacher because "it would be the

same as being face-to-face" (student #28), and because students could "ask as many questions as needed, and be able to get visuals of what [they] needed to complete the assignment" (student #19).

The next group, SE-N-W, had no one who liked the webcast idea, two who liked YouTube, three who liked Ppt, and five who liked skype, when I considered their survey answers.

First, there is the venue of a webcast, and the reasons these students gave for not liking this type of venue is because "I would rather see the teacher in person," (student #23) and "I would feel like I was on the spot when the teacher called on me" (student #16). Regarding YouTube, there were two students who strongly liked the idea of an instructor using YouTube. Student #16 said, "Yes, if you can get the same instructions that your professor gives," but student #22, who circled 7 as a strong indicator for his preference for YouTube, actually changed his mind during the interview and said that he no longer likes the idea of an instructor using a YouTube video because there could be "different opinions and styles" between the two instructors. The other three students had clear indicators that they did not like the idea of YouTube instruction and their comments in the interviews supported their survey responses with phrases like "you can miss something [your real professor taught] when you are just listening to a video [of another instructor]" (student #6), "the [instructor's] teachings could be different and that could confuse you" (student #20), and "it would bore me not being able to interact" (student #23).

Regarding Ppt, the three students who liked the venue did so because "it gives [a student] written and verbal in one, and there is a lot of information in a PowerPoint" (student #6), "having the instructor's voice breaking things down helps a lot more than hands on by yourself" (#20), and "it helps when the information is in front of [the student] and being explained" (student #23). The two students who did not like Ppt said that there is a potential to "miss things" that need to be learned when it is a Ppt and a voice happening at the same time (student #16), and student #22 said that he finds Ppt to be "lacking written information."

The strongest indicator in relation to the four suggested venues was Skype, and that was by all

five students. There was such a positive reaction to Skyping with an online instructor because "it would

provide improved feedback over the current [online teaching] methods" (student #22), "it would give

[the student] a chance to have one-on-one with the instructor" (student #6), "it is like being in a

classroom" (student #20), and student #16 shared that "even though I have never done S   kype, I

could talk and do face to face" and she liked that option. Student #23 actually changed her answer to a

strong no as she discussed the dynamic, and she changed her answer because "it would be weird and

awkward" when that type of venue is usually used for personal conversations not school work.

The fourth group is the SE-H-W group; there were three who liked webcast, three who liked

YouTube, five who liked PowerPoint, and five who liked Skype.

In the first venue, webcast, student #13 explained why she liked the venue with these words, "I

will be able to visually see my teacher and they could show examples on boards." Student #26 has

taken a webcast class and said, "It worked fairly well for me because I could ask a question when

needed." Student #29 was less enthusiastic in the interview, but said that "if it still feels like a

classroom," he would be okay with the venue. The two students who did not like the idea of using

webcast for an online class were students #9 and #21. Student #9 explained that he avoids online

classes and he does not think webcast would change his opinion because he still likes to be able to have

the teacher in person so he can ask questions. Student #21 has also taken a webcast class and said, "In

my experience, I did not find it helpful at all. I would always want to just do my work and be done with

it, rather than having to sit there and listen to the professor on the screen. I feel like if I had to do that, I

might as well take a regular class."

Regarding YouTube, three of the five students indicated their desire to have a YouTube element

in an online class because "it might give a better perspective on how to do the assignment," (#9)

compared to the instructions given by his online teacher. Student #26 circled a 9 on his survey regarding

YouTube, and during the interview he explained that he enjoys YouTube videos, so it would be great if there was an "educational value to the video." Student #29 said, "It doesn't sound bad" as his reason for liking the venue, then he went on to explain that "YouTube videos are typically very easy to use, and . . . students remember more from a lecture [when] visuals [are used]." The two students who did not like the YouTube venue explained in their interview that "it could be confusing" (student #21) having two teachers, and "I don't like the idea because I like a consistency with teaching in the classroom" (student #13).

Ppt had the same three out of five students indicating their interest in incorporating it into an online class experience; however, when I went to the interview, all five students indicated their support of the use of Ppt with accompanying instructor's voice. Their reasons for liking Ppt include, "It is the equivalent of the instructor writing on the white board and explaining it in class"(student #9), "The voice gives more depth to the PowerPoint" (student #26), and "It would be like the best of both worlds with the written PowerPoint and voice of the instructor . . . it would [provide] good notes"(student #29). There were two students who indicated that they did not like the idea of Ppt in the classroom; however, during the interview, student #13 explained that although it would be frustrating to not be able to see the instructor, having the voice of the instructor would be helpful "because they can explain more in detail" what is on the Ppt. Student #21 also changed her position during the interview. She began by explaining that Ppt presentations often have "not enough writing and too many pictures," but she went on to say that it would still be good to "have the written instructions and to hear the professor teaching it" (#13).

Finally, Skype had a strong five out of five response in the survey, but the interview revealed that their desire for Skyping with a teacher had some qualifiers. Student #9 said, "Yes, but only if it is convenient for me at the time the instructor wants to meet." When asked why he liked the idea, he referenced being able to ask questions. Student #13 only liked the idea if it was one-on-one, because

she likes "individual attention;" however, she did express some concern about internet challenges and the frustration if it cut out while Skyping with the teacher. Student #21 said, "I feel like Skyping with a teacher could get really weird really quickly, but if we kept it professional, it would give me a chance to connect to ask questions, and that would be good." Student #26 said, "It would be helpful to have a time when I could clear up any confusion I might have with the course or to ask any questions." Finally, student #29 referenced a fear regarding a "personality conflict with the professor," but he said Skyping could work well for him just as long as he got along with the professor.

For the VE-N-AA group, there is a strong positive response for the four online venues. Five out of five students like webcasts. Student #4 said webcast worked well for her because she can "ask questions right then and there." Student #5 explained "I can interact with the instructor, and . . . I remember a majority of what the instructor says." Student #11 said, "It is similar to being in a class, and . . . it is important [for me] to have the [instructions] verbally." Student #14 said, regarding webcasts, "I think I'd like a webcast if it was pre-recorded . . . and it would only work if the teacher could be found in her office." Student #25 stated that "webcast would let the teacher be right there breaking down the information and let me interact with him or her."

When considering YouTube instructions, three out of five liked YouTube. Students #11, #14, and #25 liked the idea of using YouTube instructional videos because "it is not as boring as reading something yourself" (student #11), "it may help me understand [the material] better" (student #14), and "it is always helpful to have another perspective that you may not have thought of already" (student #25). From the other point of view, student #4 did not like the YouTube venue option and the reason she gave was, "I would want my professor to explain it to me in person, and I wouldn't stay focused" with the YouTube. Student #5 did not like the YouTube option either and explained her dislike by saying, "The way the YouTube teacher teaches may not be the way I learn ," and she went on to say that some recordings can be technically frustrating.

Regarding PowerPoint, four out of five gave a strong indicator for the use of a Ppt/voice combination in online instruction for the following reasons: "It provides notes and you can save them and go back to them" (student #4);"It would be straight forward, and I like to hear the voice. It would seem like the instructor is actually there"(student #5); "It would help me understand [the material] better when there is the voice of the instructor there"(student #14); and "I would like to hear the voice of the professor because it's like being in a class during a lecture"(student #25). On the other hand, student #11 explained that he didn't like the idea of Ppt because there is "no face to be seen," and it wouldn't keep his attention.

Lastly, five out of five liked the idea of Skype. Student #4 liked the idea because "it would be a visual face-to-face with my instructor, and I would use that time. Plus, it's also different and may be fun to use." Student #5 explained, "I need any help, then the teacher can help me." When I asked student #5 to elaborate on what kind of help, she said that "in everything I need help in." Student #11 simply stated that the Skype time would "help answer my questions." Student #14 began with "I'd like it, but it'd also be weird. I'd like it because I can ask questions and get help on things I need help on." She explained that the "weird" element has to do with being alone, online with an instructor, and you "just don't do that." Lastly, student #25 announced, "This would be great because it would be like the teacher's office hours," where you could ask questions and get some feedback.

The last group to consider regarding the four online venue options is the VE-H-AA group. This group demonstrated a strong desire for all four venues with a three out of five liking webcast, three out of five liking YouTube, four out of five liking Ppt, and four out of five liking Skype.

Three out of the five students liked webcast. Student #7 began her comments with, "When I can hear and see my teacher explain the assignment or lesson . . . that [gives] me a better understanding of the material." She went on to say that webcast is a good option because "it is like a real classroom." When asked to expand upon that statement, student #7 explained that a real classroom is when there is

a teacher you can see and hear and to whom you can ask questions. During the interview, student #15 explained that a "[webcast] would be good because it would be interactive." Student #30 offered this explanation, "Yes, I would like a webcast because it's the same as the teacher being physically there; nothing can replace the physical body and touch of a teacher being there." I also asked student #30 to define "physically there" and he said it meant being able to see and hear the teacher. There were two students, #24 and #27, who did not like the idea of a webcast according to their indications on the survey. During the interview student #24 said, "I cannot get the same bond with the teacher or one-on-one time," when the class is done as a webcast. I wondered what was involved in a "bond," and she explained that included being able to stop by the teacher's office to have the teacher show her what needed to be done or changed. She did add that what she did like about a webcast is that there are "verbal instructions [which] is better because I can see the teacher and she will hold my attention." Student #27 said, "I think it would make a glitch between me and the teacher and they wouldn't be about to walk around and give help." Again, I wondered what was involved in making a glitch, and was told by student #27 that it was a barrier created by the technology; in other words, there would be a distance between the student and teacher that would make it hard for the student to connect with the teacher and learn from the teacher. Also, toward the end of the discussion of this question, she did add that she liked the "interactive part of a webcast" because she likes to be able to ask questions and get clarification.

When I considered the students' responses to YouTube, and that three out of the five students liked YouTube videos used in online instruction, I note that Student #7 likes the idea of YouTube being used in an online class, but during the interview she explained her concern with this venue because "[the student] wouldn't get to talk or ask questions." Student #15 explained that she liked the idea because it provided another view point, but she was worried that she might not "know what [her] professor wants" when she is listening to another instructor on YouTube. Student #24 said she

indicated that she liked the idea on the survey because "the YouTube might elaborate better."

However, this student expressed her concern with the venue because she said she "would probably

have questions and . . . I would find a reason to ask a question" and she would be frustrated because she

couldn't ask that question. This student also shared that her concern would be that there might be

different expectations or elements that are not shared between the online teacher and the YouTube

teacher and this would create some anxiety in her. Student #27 explained that "different teaching

methods are gonna be used, or the online teacher might be a foreigner who I can't understand,", so she

didn't like the idea of using YouTube videos. Finally, student #30 offered his explanation as, "It is too

easy to get distracted with other videos," so it was better for him if he did not go to YouTube to do

school work.

Moving on to the venue of PowerPoint with the instructor's voice, four out of five students

liked this concept, with one of the explanations offered as, "It is just like having notes and would help

with studying"(#7); she also added that it would work well if "it was interesting." I asked her to share

what would make it interesting, and she said "when the PowerPoint has animation because it keeps my

attention."   Student #15 explained that she likes the idea of the visuals combined with a professor's

voice and she added, "It would be like I was in a classroom . . . and the [voice] would help me better

understand what is on the slides."   Student #24 exclaimed during the interview, "Oh, yes, [the voice]

would help me relate to the ideas better." The last student in the positive response group, student #30,

said, "PowerPoint is usually effective" and he went on to explain that the addition of the teacher's voice

would help the Ppt to be understood. Regarding the negative response to the PowerPoint and teacher's

voice combination, student #27 said she didn't like Ppt because she likes things written in paragraph

form.

Finally, four out of five students liked Skype, and the reasons given regarding their desire to

incorporate Skype into an online class is because it is like face to face where "I can ask questions" (#7)

and "it would be convenient to not have to leave my dorm room" (#15). Student #24 said that she likes

the visual and verbal combined, and student #30 highlighted being able to ask questions, have a chance

to let the instructor elaborate on the subject, and to get some one-on-one time with the professor.

Student #27 did not like Skype, because she is just not a "big Skype person" because communication

using the venue can be awkward.

As I come to the end of my summary of the data from the interviews, it is apparent that further

observations need to be made concerning responses given and perspectives that were shared by the

students. It is important to see if there are any patterns in place from the data that have been shared in

this chapter. Chapter Five will address any further observations that need to be made, patterns that are

evident, and conclusions that are reached from both the survey and interviews.

Chapter Five

Analysis, Conclusions, and Recommendations

As an English Instructor at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), I noticed hesitancy amongst some of my students to take an online class at ECSU, and I wondered why. This curiosity led to my research project linked to the hesitancy of some students to take an online class at ECSU, to a potential rhetorical challenge, and to whiteness and hegemony. At this HBCU school, located in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, where a vast majority of the students are African American (AA), I discovered that 84% of the 156 students surveyed are AA. Also, out of the 84% who are AA, I learned that 38% of those students are hesitant to take an online class at ECSU; and, of that 38%, there are those who have taken an online class and it didn't go well and those who have not taken an online class. So, in order to determine what the causes are regarding the hesitancy of some of these surveyed students to take an online class, also to see if those hesitancies are based in whiteness within the design of Blackboard (Bb), and to see if there is a hegemonic dynamic that could possibly create a rhetorical challenge for some of these students, I will analyze the data from my survey and interviews then make some conclusion and recommendations. I will approach the analysis of the data by dividing the data into four sections: lack of success and hesitancy, feedback, instructions given, and venues.

There is a segment of the student population at ECSU who have taken online classes using Bb, and of these students, there are those who have not experienced success. I wanted to know why these specific surveyed students experienced a lack of success, and if there were any potential connections to whiteness and hegemony because of the design of Bb. The data from my survey identified that the VE-H-AA group was basically tied with the SE-H-AA group for the lowest percentage of students who have taken an online class, and that the two VE-H-AA students who have taken an online class indicated that they did not experience success. Also, out of all the students who indicated a lack of success, it is only the two VE-H-AA students who provided reasons in their interview that could potentially be tied to

whiteness within Bb. Student #15 wanted more and better communication from her online instructor, and she felt a face-to-face meeting with her instructor would have helped her "lack of success." This student provided indicators that the way in which communication happens in an online setting using Bb made it difficult for her to succeed because the instructor was a "poor communicator," and written instructions on the Bb site were the only method of communication used by the instructor. Having established earlier that call-response (CR), tonal semantics (TS), and non-verbal cues (NVC) are all important elements within AAVE communication (Smitherman 1977, 2007), and that traditional communication within Bb does not include CR, TS, or NVC because traditional communication is written, it is important to note that student #15 was frustrated with the method of and lack of communication from the instructor, and that is one of the reasons this student gives for not experiencing success in her online class.   Also, student #30, during his interview, focused on his frustration with the online instructor because he didn't understand the instructions written by the instructor, and he also wanted face-to-face time with the instructor so that the instructions could be explained. Student #30 demonstrated that the design of Bb limited his opportunity to experience success because he was not able to get the kind of interaction with the professor that would have allowed him to receive the details he needed because "[he doesn't] like it when the assignment is written out and you don't have no details." Therefore, unlike the rest of the participants' reasons, only students #15 and #30, who are part of the VE-H-AA group, credit their lack of success to the instructor.

The traditional design of Bb provides ease of access to the written form of instructions and feedback, and traditional communication from an online instructor is done in written Standard English (Crawford 2004 & Bernard et al., 2004). If that design and approach is not providing certain students with elements that they require for effective communication, like call-response (CR), which involves immediacy that is not part of written conversation, tonal semantics (TS), which can only be experienced when a voice is heard, and non-verbal cues (NVC), which are only seen when the speaker can be seen,

then this can create a rhetorical challenge for any students who are not experiencing agency because those elements are missing. AA students who are bidialectal need CR, TS, and NVC to be a part of the communication process (Smitherman 1977, 2007); hence, comments from the students #15 and #30, mentioned earlier regarding their reasons for lack of success, may illustrate this need that these AA bidialectal students have for the incorporation of CR, TS, and NVC when communicating with the online instructor. The challenge within traditional Blackboard (Bb) is that CR, TS, and NVC are not typically part of the instructional or feedback process (West, Waddoups, & Graham 2007), and Durodoye and Hildreth (1995) remind their readers that a lack of agency can occur when a student must perform an academic exercise that is not facilitative to his or her learning/communication style. Both students #15 and #30 indicated a lack of agency based on communication issues with the online instructor. Thus, the whiteness of the design of Bb, based on written SE as the mode of communication, plays a hegemonic role with these two AA students whose agency is challenged because they are not receiving instructions or feedback through a method that facilitates their agency.

For some students, their lack of success in an online class could create hesitancy to take another online class at ECSU, but I wanted to know if there were other AAVE related reasons for a student's hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU, and if there were any reasons, I wanted to know if they indicated potential hegemony based in whiteness. Whiteness within the traditional design of Bb is a foundational concept in my investigation into a possible hegemonic dynamic for AAVE students at ECSU. Whiteness, as Picower (2009) explains, is an ideology that maintains supremacy of whites over AA, and the use of SE provides an example of hegemony (DeBose 2007). Also, another potential way in which whites could maintain supremacy over AA whose dominant dialect is AAVE is to withhold key communication elements, like CR, TS, and NVC, from the online communication experience. If CR, TS, and NVC are needed for effective communication to occur for AAVE speaking AA, then a venue that is designed without a mode of communication that allows CR. TS, and NVC to be experienced could have a

hegemonic aspect within the design. The next part of the survey and interview process addresses those who experience hesitancy to take an online class and their reasons for this hesitancy. As I consider the data regarding lack of success and hesitancy, I looked to see if there is further demonstration of hegemony within Bb based in whiteness.

In the original design of my survey, the "Technical Difficulties" option in question four does not have any connection to implementation of the Bb design, but the "Technical Issues" option in question six did have some connections to the Bb design and implementation because of the parenthetical explanation that I provided after "Technical Issues" which states (hesitant about Bb method of relating course material and communication). The parenthetical explanation allows for the possible consideration of wanting more than written SE. I believe the varied focus between the two technical options was not helpful, and in future research, the technical element needs to remain technical in nature and a separate design element needs to be addressed. However, when addressing the results from this research project, it is important to remember that the "Technology" reason in question four is unrelated to whiteness and the "Technology" reason in question six was meant to address whiteness.

Out of the 156 students surveyed divided into three sections based on language spoken (SE/VE) and race (AA/W), between 40% and 46% of the students indicated their hesitancy to take an online class. The hesitancy (H) factor, which became the third defining factor in the way I organized my three sections into six groups for analysis, allowed the participants to be divided into three groups: SE-H-AA; SE-H-W; VE-H-AA. In all three hesitant groups, "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" is their strongest reason for hesitancy to take an online class (See Figure Six in Chapter Four). The "instructor" answer was provided as an option in the survey because the face-to-face interaction potentially allows for the AAVE elements of CR, TS, and NVC to be a part of the communication, and I wanted to discover if hesitancy occurred when those elements are missing.

In the survey, 65% of the SE-H-AA students indicated "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" as their reason for hesitancy; however, in the interviews, the SE-H-AA group's comments that were connected with the professor included aspects regarding schedules, motivation to attend class, asking questions, and hearing the professor's voice. The asking of questions (students #17 and #19) is a potentially weak indicator of the need for call-response because the students only indicated the asking of questions rather than indicating the desire for interaction that involves the back and forth that comes with question and answering. The exchange that happens with question and answering can potentially simulate the call-response dynamic defined by Smitherman (2007). Smitherman (2007) explains that CR is "the speaker's solo voice alternat[ing] or . . . intermingle[ing] with the audience's response" (p. 87). Also, both students offered other educationally related reasons for hesitancy with student #17 addressing his own initiative and student #19 acknowledging she is a visual learner. However, the desire to hear the professor's voice, offered by student #28, along with her acknowledgement that technology is a barrier that keeps her from connecting with her instructor are two possible indicators that the students' agency is being inhibited because of the design of the online class. These students in the SE-H-AA group identified SE as their spoken language; thus, they do not claim AAVE as their dominant dialect. So, why do these students express hesitancy because of missing elements within Bb that do not allow the students to ask questions or hear the instructor's voice? Student #17 and #19 both offer reasons related to their own study habits (#17) and learning style (#19); however, student #28 does provide some strong indicators that she is looking for a venue that provides TS and she sees technology as a barrier that keeps her from connecting to the professor. Logic would say that her desire is not connected with AAVE because she is a SE speaking student; however, I was given a hint at a possible connection during the interview process with another student, student #19.

On the survey, questions seven and eight were originally designed to help determine if the student was looking for CR, TS, or NVC, but because of the faulty design of the survey, I am unable to

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use the responses to confirm possible AAVE related connections with students who are part of the SE-H-AA group. Although the data from questions seven and eight cannot be used to validate AAVE connections, there was a comment made by student #19, that indicates that further research is needed regarding the possibility that AAVE elements can be connected with SE speaking students because of the exposure these students have to AAVE on an ongoing basis. Further insight into possible hegemony within Bb based on AAVE could be acquired through future research that will help determine if AA students who claim SE as their first language are still influenced by AAVE related elements within communication because of their exposure to friends and family members who use AAVE as their dominant dialect.

At this point in my research, I have determined that the SE-H-AA group has one student who identifies agency issues based on the traditional design of Bb because this student wants to hear the instructor, and two students who want to ask questions face-to-face; also, there are other reasons offered by this group related to their hesitancy, including personal initiative and learning style that are not potentially connected with AAVE.

The SE-H-W group experiences hesitancy, but according to the definition of whiteness as an ideology that maintains the supremacy of whites over African Americans (Picower, 2009), it is impossible for whites to experience hegemony because of "whiteness."   By definition, whiteness within the design of Bb (Anderson, 2006; Gruber, 1999; Kendrick, 2005) should not be an issue for the white students. This group, however, did have 70% who indicate on the survey "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" as their reason for hesitancy to take an online class. Yet, when I consider the comments during the interview that were connected with the instructor, I see they were focused on motivation, initiative, and personal comfort rather than the need for a certain type of communication to happen so that understanding of the material can occur. Thus, the survey answers indicate that a majority of the SE-H-W students want face-to-face interaction with an instructor; however, the students

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who are interviewed confessed to self-based rather than instructor-based reasons for hesitancy to take an online class.

The third group is the VE-H-AA group, and 73% of these students indicated on the survey "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor" when referencing their reason for hesitancy. During the interviews, all five students indicated that their number one reason for not wanting to take an online class is because of their need or desire for face-to-face interaction with an instructor. With this group, the students want to "hear and see the teacher" (#7), to have required face-to-face time with an online instructor (#15), to interact and ask questions face-to-face (#24, #27), and get needed detail face-to-face (#30). Within the VE-H-AA group, three of the students indicated a potential need for CR, TS, or NVC when they addressed the need to "hear and see the teacher" (#7) and desire to interact and ask questions face-to-face (#24, #27), and all five students referenced agency issues that are connected with the traditional Bb design where face-to-face interaction with an instructor does not occur. Thus, this group provides strong indicators for the inclusion of AAVE related elements within the Bb experience in order to reduce or remove their hesitancy to take an online class.

Based on DeBose's (2007) belief that the use of SE in academia is an example of hegemony, then the use of written SE in an online class would have an added hegemonic element because written communication does not allow for CR, TS, and NVC to be experienced by AA students who are bidialectal. The students in the VE-H-AA group who were interviewed provided indicators of hegemony based on whiteness within Bb when the student says it "is stressful" to think about not being able to reach a professor to ask him questions (#24), or when a student misses important details with online instructions that he believes he is able to get face-to-face (#30). Also, at this point in the development of online classes at ECSU, there is no required face-to-face time between instructor and student within an online class, and the absence of face-to-face interaction is also a part of the traditional design of Bb. Student #15 believes that face-to-face time should be required, which demonstrates her struggle with

the traditional design of Bb and the possible hegemony that could occur because this student is not provided with the opportunity to experience CR, TS, and NVC that can occur with face-to-face interaction. Thus, within the VE-H-AA group, all five students have potential AAVE related reasons for hesitancy that serve as indicators of a lack of agency connected with the traditional design of Bb.

If, according to Anderson (2006), power and agency occur when a student has the ability to "give effect to their wishes," then the inability to complete an exercise because the process was not facilitated through the student's own learning/communication style will not only be frustrating for the student, but will also result in a lack of agency. The first part of my survey/interview deals with lack of online success and hesitancy to take an online class at ECSU. I asked, does the design of Bb create a hegemonic dynamic that hinders the agency of the students? For the SE-W section of students, there does not appear to be any agency issues based in the design of Bb or connected with potential AAVE related elements regarding lack of success or hesitancy. The SE-N-AA group does not provide any indicators of hegemony based in whiteness. For the SE-H-AA group of students, there are no AAVE related reasons regarding their lack of success, and there appears to be two weak and one strong indicator that the design of Bb might challenge the agency of the students. With the VE-N-AA group there are no indicators that the students' agency is being challenged by the design of Bb. However, the VE-H-AA group of interviewed students provided two strong indicators that AAVE related elements are wanted when communicating with an instructor, which the traditional design of Bb does not readily provide, resulting in their lack of success. Also, the VE-H-AA group had all five of the interviewed students indicate their lack of agency based on the lack of instructor presence.

When considering the results from my data collection, it appears that the white participants do not struggle with agency issues based on the lack of AAVE communication within the traditional design and implementation of Bb. Considering the AA participants, the non-hesitant students do not appear to experience any agency issues based in whiteness either, but there is a segment of AA students

interviewed who are hesitant, and with these two groups, there are apparent agency issues based in whiteness. With the SE-H-AA group, there is just one strong indicator that the design of Bb might challenge the student's agency; however, with the VE-H-AA group, all five students interviewed provided indicators that their agency was limited because the traditional implementation of Bb does not incorporate CR, TS, or NVC since written SE is the mode of communication traditionally used.

So, at this juncture in the analysis of my data, there appears to be a hegemonic element regarding whiteness within Bb for the VE-H-AA segment of the student population at ECSU who were interviewed. Although further research needs to occur in order to determine if the data from my interviews proves representative of the overall student population at ECSU, there is still the need for online instructors to consider how to use Bb or other online learning platforms more effectively in response to the students' cultural and communicative backgrounds. According to my data, the first action that we, those in academia who are interested in improving student agency in online education, need to consider, if ECSU wants to improve the success and limit the hesitancy of AA students when taking an online class, is to provide more instructor presence where CR, TS, and NVC can be experienced by the AA students.   The next part of my research analysis addresses instructor feedback.

Questions nine through eleven on the survey address the aspect of feedback between the instructor and the student. These questions consider the aspect of immediacy, which is part of call response (CR), by addressing how quickly the student wants feedback. Smitherman (2007) defines call response as "the speaker's solo voice alternat[ing] or . . . intermingle[ing] with the audience's response" (p. 87), then she concludes that the "printed page obviously cannot reflect the Call-Response pattern" (p. 88). Logically, this conclusion also applies to the screen page of Blackboard.

Although nothing within Bb can replace the verbal interaction that occurs with CR, I hoped to determine the students' need or desire for a CR relationship with an instructor by gathering data on the students' desire for immediate feedback. The idea was that the more "immediate" the student wanted

feedback, the closer they were to demonstrating a potential desire for the immediacy that is part of call response. The survey was designed to reveal the potential urgency the student had regarding communication with the instructor according to the answers they selected, and the interviews were designed to help establish if their urgency involved a need for the back and forth aspect of call response when the student is communicating with his or her professor. Question nine addresses immediacy, and questions ten and eleven suggest different venues that provide options that allow for immediacy or "immediate feedback."

In the survey, the four AA groups indicated a stronger desire for immediate feedback in question nine (Figure Seven in Chapter four). In question ten, a pattern emerges showing that the three non-hesitant groups prefer asynchronous communication and the two AA hesitant groups prefer synchronous; although, the overwhelming response from all six groups was a combination of both methods (Figure Eight in Chapter Four).   Also, the responses to question eleven support the individual findings indicated in question ten (Figure Nine in Chapter Four). The interviews provided more insight into the students' reasons for wanting "same day" feedback, as well as the students' thoughts concerning the modes of communication suggested on the survey.   In the SE-AA section it is the hesitant group that demonstrates slightly stronger AAVE related reasons for their desire for immediacy through a synchronous form of communication. The SE-W section has low indicators regarding a desire for immediacy, but during the interviews, the indicators increase with four out of the five students in both groups expressing an interest in receiving immediate feedback. On the other hand, there are only two weak CR indicators with the SE-N-W group and one stronger CR indicator with the SE-H-W group. Finally, during the interviews with the VE-AA students, all five students in both groups indicated a desire for immediacy, and one student in the VE-N-AA group provided an AAVE related reasons for wanting that immediacy. Thus, when considering the data gathered, it is apparent that all six groups are looking for some aspect of immediacy when interacting with their instructor. Also, the two VE-AA groups and

the SE-H-AA group all show only a slightly stronger interest in having immediate feedback when

compared to the two White groups and the SE-N-AA group. Since the findings in this section of research

are so similar there are no conclusive variances to be identified.

The results from questions nine through eleven demonstrate that all six groups are looking for

an element of immediacy when receiving feedback from an instructor. The reasons for wanting the

immediacy are varied, and the AAVE related element of CR is present in some of the groups, but it does

not play a predominant role in any of the groups. When designing the survey, I wondered if the need

for immediacy that is found in the verbal "back and forth" with CR could translate into the need for

immediate feedback; however, it appears that since the AAVE dynamic of CR is a unique exchange that

includes a "back and forth" involving interruptions and intermingling of the speaker's and respondent's

voices (Smitherman, 2007), then trying to parallel CR with "immediate feedback," which does not

include interruptions and intermingling of the speaker's and respondent's voices, results in inconclusive

findings.   Further research is needed in order to determine if immediate feedback can parallel CR in

some venues. Questions nine through eleven did show that immediacy within Bb is important to all six

groups interviewed, but there were no conclusive results connected to whiteness, hegemony, or AAVE

within Bb coming out of the research from this section of the survey and interview process.

Next, I will address question twelve which was designed to see which mode of feedback the

students preferred: verbal or written. Figure Ten in Chapter Four illustrates the data gathered from

question twelve. The graph demonstrates that in all six groups the combination of preferring verbal and

written feedback equally was the strongest preference. However, there were some students who only

indicated a strong preference for either verbal or written feedback rather than a combination of both

equally. When considering the results related to either verbal or written feedback, it is apparent that

the two white groups prefer written feedback more often than they prefer verbal feedback; on the

other hand, the AA groups all prefer verbal over written feedback. Two other important observations

from the survey are that the SE-N-W group has the strongest indicators regarding written feedback, and

the VE-H-AA group has the strongest verbal indicators. Also, it is important to note that with the VE-H-

AA group no one indicated a strong preference for written feedback only.

So, coming out of the survey and moving to consider the data from the interviews, I recognized

that the combination option for feedback has the strongest indication by all six groups. However, when

I considered the strong response from some students for only one or the other form of feedback, I

recognized that the traditional written SE form of feedback given in a Bb course is more strongly

preferred by the white groups and not preferred by the AA groups; thus, the traditional design of Bb in

relation to feedback serves the white student population better than it does the AA student population

at ECSU. Also, more specifically, it is important to note that no one in the VE-H-AA group indicated the

written mode of feedback as a strong preference unless it was accompanying a strong preference of

verbal feedback. In other words, from the survey results it appears that the VE-H-AA group only

appreciates written feedback when it is accompanied with verbal feedback and none of the VE-H-AA

students prefer written feedback when it is given independently from verbal feedback. Therefore, there

are some strong indicators from the survey that the traditional design of Bb, which easily allows

feedback to be done in written SE, effectively serves the white students surveyed, but it disadvantages

the AA students surveyed who only indicated a strong preference for verbal feedback and did not

include a strong preference for written feedback, and this is especially true for the VE-H-AA group.

During the interview for question twelve, I was looking for evidence of CR or TS within the

students' answers in order to determine if the students' reasons for wanting verbal instructions might

be based in AAVE.

This group had four "equally" and one "verbal" indicator. This group, overall, supports their

survey responses of seeing the value of verbal and written combined, yet there are two students who

express concern when written without verbal feedback occurs, which is a clear challenge to the

students' agency. This is important to keep in mind as I consider the students' agency within a traditional Bb course where written feedback is the mode of communication between instructor and student.

With one strong indicator for "verbal," one for "written," and three for "equally" there appears to be a fairly even balance regarding preference between the two modes of feedback. In this group there is one student who demonstrated a potential need for CR and one student who might need TS; with both of these students, they demonstrated that their agency would be challenged if they did not have the instructor provide some form of verbal feedback, but the other three students did not demonstrate any challenge to their agency, just a preference for a combination or a certain mode of feedback. Hence, within this group there is the potential that two of the student's agency would be challenged if the only feedback they received is in written SE.

This group also had one "verbal," one "written," and three "equally" as indicators on the survey for question twelve; however, during the interview all five students indicated a preference of written over verbal feedback, which is the method used in traditional Bb; thus, their agency is not hindered because of the traditional approach within Bb of using written SE as the mode to communicate feedback.

In the survey, this group displayed a strong support of "written" feedback with three students; on the other hand, one student indicated "verbally" and one student indicated "equally." However, during the interviews, four of the five students demonstrate a stronger preference for written feedback. So, there is a clear appreciation of feedback being given in the written form, which is the traditional way feedback is given in a Bb course, hence written SE feedback does not challenge the agency of this group.

In the survey, the VE-N-AA group had three indicators of "verbal," one of "written," and one of "equally." With this group during the interviews, four out of the five students provide strong support for verbal feedback based on clear indicators for the potential need for CR and TS. Since there are strong

indicators in this group for the need for verbal feedback, it is logical to conclude that this group could

feel disadvantaged in a venue where the feedback was only "Written," as it is with the traditional way in

which Bb is implemented.

With the VE-H-AA group, on the survey they indicated four "equally" and one "verbal"; however,

during the interview there is a clear preference for "verbal" feedback. During the interviews, it is also

important to note that within the VE-H-AA group all five students have some kind of potential indicator

regarding the need or desire for CR, TS, or NVC as a part of verbal feedback. These AAVE related

responses from the VE-H-AA group are worth considering as I address the traditional design and

implementation of Bb that uses written SE and does not provide CR,TS, and NVC within the mode of

communication used when feedback is occurring.

As we consider hegemony based in whiteness within the design and implementation of Bb, it is

apparent that the SE-W groups experience relatively few agency challenges because, overall, their

preference is for written feedback. On the other hand, there are potential challenges regarding the

students' agency within the traditional Bb experience, in the area of feedback, for the four AA groups.

The two SE-AA groups, overall, like the combination of both verbal and written feedback, so just written

feedback is not as helpful for these two groups. Also, in each of the SE-AA groups there were two

students who indicated potential AAVE related reasons for wanting "verbal" feedback; hence, there is

the potential that these students' agency could be frustrated when verbal feedback is not a part of the

feedback received. Finally, the VE-H-AA group expressed a strong desire for "verbal" feedback with nine

out of the ten students wanting verbal feedback based on potentially AAVE related element; thus, for

this group hegemony is potentially experienced when the online instructor's pedagogy does not allow

for verbal feedback.

The next part of the survey was designed to address the method of instructions given: verbal,

written, or both equally. As with the feedback section, I was looking to see if there was a need or desire

for verbal instructions based on AAVE related indicators.   The first half of question thirteen is where I gathered data concerning written and verbal instructions.

The results of the survey unanimously demonstrate that all six groups prefer written instructions over verbal instructions and also over an equal preference of "both equally." In the survey, the strongest support for the preference of written instructions is the SE-N-W group at 87% and the lowest support for written instructions is the VE-H-AA group at 40%. Also, it is important to note that four of the six groups register the category of "Both Equally" as the least favored option. Interestingly, the VE-H-AA group has all three options within a fairly close percentage: "both equally" at 33%, "verbally more" at 27%, and "written more" at 47%. Thus, I considered the interviews to see what the students have to say about their selections in questions 13 a, b, and c.

In the SE-N-AA group there is a strong support for written instructions with four out of five students indicating written and one student indicating both equally on the survey they completed. During the interview all five students appreciated the value of written instructions for referencing or clarification. There are no AAVE related indicators in this group and the traditional way of giving instructions on Bb through written instructions does not appear to challenge the agency in this group, according to their comments within the interview.

In the SE-H-AA group, during the survey, three students indicated written and two students indicated verbally; however, during the interviews, the students shifted their emphasis to verbal. Within the comments made by this group, there is one indicator of an AAVE related reason for the student's preference for verbal instructions; thus, within this group there is a potential agency issue with the use of written instructions within a traditional Bb setting.

In the survey, all five students in the SE-N-W Group indicated their preference for written instructions. During the interview the students provided a number of comments that indicated their

negative reactions toward verbal instructions only. Hence, the SE-N-W group clearly sees the value of written instructions, which is the traditional method of giving instructions on Bb.

The survey reveals that four out of the five SE-H-W students want written instructions and one student wants verbal instructions. The comments within the interview reveal that this group is overall very interested in having instructions written. Although there is one potential AAVE related indicator offered, it is not at strong indicator because there was no need for the "back and forth" that comes with CR; on the other hand, there are very strong comments demonstrating a negative attitude toward the use of verbal instructions. Hence, the traditional method of using written SE when providing instructions on Bb would promote this group's agency.

Within this VE-N-AA group, on the survey, two students indicated both equally, two students indicated a preference for verbal instructions, and one student indicated a preference for written instructions. However, during the interviews I noticed more of a preference for verbal instructions. After the interviews, it was apparent that four of the five VE-H-AA students prefer verbal instructions over written instruction, and two of the students indicate their potential interest in TS and one student indicated a potential desire for NVC. In the traditional design of Bb, instructions are not provided verbally, so this group of students, who are potentially looking for TS and NVC could experience frustration because those elements are missing. Thus, there is potential that their agency could be hindered when the traditional design of Bb is implemented through written SE.

This final group, on the survey, had two indications of both equally, one indication for verbal instructions, and two indicators for written instructions; however, a stronger support for verbal instructions came out during the interview. Five out of the five students, during the interview, provided varied AAVE indicators when considering verbal instructions given within Bb. So, when the mode of verbal instructions is missing from the online experience through Bb, then this group could be potentially frustrated and their agency hindered.

When I first considered the data from the survey regarding the method of instructions given in an online class, I was struck with the fact that all six groups indicated that they preferred written instructions over verbal instructions. Also, it was interesting to note that in the interviews the most popular reason given amongst the six groups for wanting instructions in written form is because the written form allows the students the opportunity to reference the document while following the instructions. However, the VE-H-AA group indicated, during the interviews, a strong interest in having verbal instructions and four of the five students referenced potential AAVE related reasons with the fifth student acknowledging that verbal elaboration helps improve understanding. The challenge, specifically, for these AA students is that traditionally, Bb instructions are given in written SE. Durodoye and Hildreth (1995) acknowledge a potential inner conflict that can occur within AA students when they must perform an academic exercise that is not facilitated through their learning/communication style. On the other hand, power and agency occur when a student has the ability to "give effect to their wishes" (Anderson, 2006) by completing an exercise without frustration because the process was facilitated through their own learning/communication style, and for the VE-AA groups that means that CR, TS, and NVC need to be part of the learning experience. Thus, the traditional design of Bb provides privileges for the whites because the instructions are given in the format they prefer; on the other hand, the VE-AA students are marginalized because the communication style they prefer is not made available.

Within the survey there were four venues addressed: webcast, YouTube, PowerPoint, and Skype. With each venue option offered to the students, there was a verbal, visual or a combination of both elements offered in conjunction with a written element. I was interested to see which venue was the most desirable and why.

The survey results demonstrate that all six groups would like to see some type of visual or verbal element included in the Bb learning experience. As you consider the data from Figure Thirteen in

Chapter Four, it is apparent that the SE-N-W group is the least interested in the incorporation of a venue

that involves the visual or verbal elements. Also, it is apparent from this graphed data on the survey

results that the use of YouTube is the least popular venue with all six groups. Questions 13d through 13f

were designed to help determine if the six groups of students I interviewed were interested in including

a verbal/visual element into their online learning experience, and if they were, what type was their

favorite. The interviews provided further insight into the reasons behind the students' selection, during

which time I was looking for any AAVE related indicators connected to their preference for a

visual/verbal element within a Bb course.

The first group is the SE-N-AA group, and I analyzed their comments regarding all four venues

and found there are six indicators of potential AAVE related reasons for wanting or not wanting a

particular venue within an online learning setting. The SE-N-AA group appears to be looking for a venue

that simulates the classroom experience. Skype was their favorite venue because it does simulate a

classroom experience. For this group, webcast was not the same as face-to-face, and YouTube has a

different instructor incorporated into the learning process, making it less desirable. For them,

PowerPoint is not close to the classroom experience, but this group liked it because they see the added

voice benefiting the learning process. The AAVE indicators do not play a predominant role in their

selection of preferences; this is especially obvious when you compare their responses to the VE-H-AA

group.

The next group is the SE-H-AA group, where I will consider their comments and the six potential

connections to AAVE aspects of communication. Like the SE-N-AA group, this SE-H-AA group likes a

venue that provides classroom elements that allow for questions to be asked, and for them that is

skype. This group does not like webcast because of the distance from the instructor created through the

technology, and they do not like YouTube because of the "confusion" element that can occur between

the two instructors. There is also hesitation with Ppt because of a confusion element and because it is

not like a classroom, although some students like the elaboration and dynamic that comes with the

added voice to Ppt.   In communicating their preference, the SE-H-AA group does not use very many

AAVE related reasons for their preferences given, when compared to the VE-H-AA group.

The third group is the SE-N-W group, and although this group does not have linguistic

connections to AAVE, I still looked to see if there were any indications of a desire for a call-response (CR)

type interaction with their instruction, or if they showed signs of wanting a voice that will provide TS, or

interaction with the instructor that would allow for NVC, and I discovered two possible indicators. The

SE-N-W group wants to connect with the instructor. They see Skype as allowing that connection with

the instructor to happen. Their responses given regarding two other venues reference the concept of

connection with the instructor: with webcast, they would miss that in-person connection, and with

YouTube the concern is in connecting with another professor rather than their ECSU professor. On the

other hand, with PowerPoint, for them it is more about gaining and understanding information than it is

about instructor connection, and they appreciate those benefits. Like the two SE-AA groups, the AAVE

related elements play a very insignificant role in their reasons for the preferences they selected; this is

especially true when comparing their comments to the indicators found in the VE-H-AA group.

The SE-H-W group, is like the SE-N-W group regarding a disconnect when trying to relate the

actual definition of AAVE to whites. Keeping that reality in mind, there are eight possible connections to

AAVE type elements in the discussion of the four online venues during the SE-H-AA group's interviews.

The SE-H-W group likes the idea of including verbal and/or visual venues into a Bb course experience,

but their support comes with qualifiers. This group somewhat supports the idea of a webcast because it

is similar to a classroom experience, but others think it is too different from a classroom experience.

Regarding YouTube, some like the benefits of another perspective given and some find another

instructor's perspective confusing. These students liked the addition of an added voice to the Ppt, but a

few confessed that this combination is not enough because they want more than a voice or just Ppt

slides. With skype, there were qualifiers with all the supportive comments including elements of

convenience, if it is only one-on-one, and keeping it professional. The qualified support of all four

venues was shared during the interview with relatively few potential AAVE related indicators compared

to the VE-H-AA group.

For the VE-N-AA group, there are ten potential AAVE indicators related to the four online

venues. The VE-N-AA group is considering the helpful nature of these four venues as they give their

responses. They really like webcast for the help they can receive when connecting with the instructor.

They also really like skype because they can interact with the professor to get the help they need. Ppt

was also liked by most because of the help it would provide through notes and offering more

understanding.   Those who liked the YouTube option liked it because it would bring a helpful added

dimension, but those who were hesitant about YouTube being used in a Bb course were hesitant

because a video had missing dimensions, which is not helpful. This group used the second highest

number of potential AAVE related indicators, with the VE-H-AA group having the highest number of

potential AAVE related indicators.

The last group is the VE-H-AA group and there are seventeen potential AAVE indicators seen as I

analyze the four online venues. So, the VE-H-AA group likes the idea of incorporating verbal/visual type

venues into the Bb classroom experience because they connect with the instructor and get the help they

need. Webcast allows them to hear, see, and ask the teacher questions. Skype also provides the visual

and allows them to ask questions, which they like. Ppt for them is about getting and keeping their

attention, which helps them "get" the material. However, regarding YouTube, although the idea is liked,

there was a lot of concern about not being able to connect with the ECSU instructor. With this group

there was a larger number of potentially AAVE related indicators given when communicating their desire

for instructor connection and getting the help they need to succeed.

In the data from the interviews I noticed the smallest number of AAVE related reasons with the two SE-W groups, the next smallest number with the SE-AA groups, and the largest numbers with the VE-AA groups. The range of AAVE indicators connected to the students' reasons for wanting the inclusion of the venues vary from two possible AAVE related reasons in the SE-N-W group to seventeen possible AAVE related reasons in the VE-H-AA group. Thus, all six groups want these visual and verbal elements included in the online learning experience, but the VE-H-AA group has many more potential reasons related to elements connected with CR, TS, and NVC. It is also interesting to note that during the interview, Skype was a favorite venue with all six groups for reasons including being able to see the instructor to being able to ask the instructor questions.

What is important to consider is the general reasons for each group's preference for the inclusion of some type of visual/verbal element into a Bb class. The SE-AA section has both groups looking for a classroom experience, with the SE-H-AA group making sure they had the opportunity to ask questions. With the SE-W section there are two distinct approaches to their interest in wanting the inclusion of visual/verbal venues. The SE-N-W group likes the idea of connecting with an instructor. The SE-H-W group likes the idea of the inclusion of a visual/verbal venue, but there are qualifiers that come with each venue establishing a concern that the venue has to be effective. The VE-AA section emphasizes their need for help. The VE-N-AA group appreciates the helpful aspect of all four venues. The VE-H-AA group wants to make sure they get the help they need and they see it intrinsically tied to having instructor contact. So, the SE-AA section is focused on the classroom experience; the SE-W section is interested in instructor connection, but has qualifiers, and the VE-AA section wants help and likes the venue, if that help is provided, especially through instructor contact.

Considering the three foci and the number of potentially related AAVE indicators, it is important to note that the VE-H-AA group wants help and they are looking for that help through instructor connection. Also, this group communicates their need and/or desire for this help and instructor

connection with many more potential AAVE related elements than the rest of the groups. The SE-AA

groups are looking for the classroom experience, but the emphasis is not on the help they need within

that experience. The SE-W group is looking to connect with the instructor, but they are willing to put

qualifiers around the way that connection happens. The VE-AA groups want help, and they see

instructor connection as the way to get that help.

The VE-H-AA group provides many more indicators regarding the need for help, and when that

need is not answered with the inclusion of verbal/visual elements within Bb, then marginalization

occurs, which inevitably impacts their success in the face-to-face classroom as well as the online

classroom (Alim, 2007). This marginalization is further extended when I considered that bidialectal AA

students need verbal/visual elements as part of the communication process in order to not feel

"disjointed" within the educational system (Arroyo, 2010), but rather experience success through

understanding what is being communicated. If the elements of CR, TS, and NVC are not provided by the

instructor because of the traditional implementation of Bb, then the bidialectal AA students' agency is

hindered.

As I consider the data from my research, it is important for me to address the observations

connected to all six groups. Also, through the analysis process, I have observed shared similarities

between the SE-H-AA group and the two VE-AA groups, which I will summarize below. Finally, I will

address the implications of my findings regarding the VE-H-AA group in relation to whiteness,

hegemony, and the implementation of the traditional Bb design.

There are conclusions that can be reached concerning more effective design for Bb no matter

who the user is. Some of the data gained from this research have implications for all six groups.

Unanimously, all six groups liked the idea of combining synchronous and asynchronous communication

between an online instructor and his or her students. Even though some students were willing to wait

for feedback; overall, all six groups indicated their desire for immediate feedback in one form or

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another. On the survey, all six groups identified their desire for a combination of both verbal and written feedback from an instructor. Also, on the survey, all six groups identified their preference for written instructions. Although, during the interview I recognized that the VE-AA groups more clearly identify their desire for verbal instructions, I did discover that regarding the overall interest in written instructions, the most popular reason across all six groups for wanting written instructions has to do with wanting a document to reference when processing the instructions given. Also, concerning venues, all six groups liked the idea of incorporating a verbal/visual element into a traditional Bb course. On the survey, I noticed that all six groups identified their least popular choice as YouTube, and during the interviews, I discovered that in all six groups the students struggled with the disconnect that could possibly occur because the YouTube instructor and their online ECSU instructor are two different people. During the interviews, I also recognized that Skype appeared to be the most popular venue option and the most common reasons for the popularity of Skype is because the student can see the instructor and be able to ask questions.

Thus, from the data collected, it would seem beneficial for all Bb courses to incorporate a form of communication that allows for immediate feedback, like the synchronous methods of chatting, texting, or Skyping. Also, feedback needs to include both written and verbal elements when the feedback is part of an online class. It is also clear that all types of students value having the written document when receiving instructions, so the traditional approach involving written instructions is a method that needs to continue. However, these students do want a verbal/visual element to be part of their online class, and if they had their preference, they all see the value of instructor connection through Skype.

Earlier in this paper, I alluded to a comment made by student #19 that provided insight concerning the AAVE influence on SE speaking AA students. Student #19 explained that she looks for CR, TS, and NVC because most of her friends communicate in the vernacular and those elements of CR,

TS, and NVC are part of that communication experience. I believe more research is needed concerning the impact of AAVE on SE-AA students and the implications that it has on online education. In my data, I identified that at times the SE-H-AA group's answers are more closely connected to the VE-AA section than to the SE-N-AA group or the SE-W section. There are instances when the SE-H-AA group has more AAVE related indicators than the SE-N-AA group or the SE-W section, and one place this is specifically seen is in their comments concerning their desire for verbal feedback. Another example of how the SE-H-AA group is closer in their responses to the VE-AA section is in the part of the survey/interview process where instructions are addressed. On the survey, all six groups indicated their preference for written instructions, but during the interview, the SE-H-AA shared similar responses to the VE-AA section when we, the reading audience, see the three groups, SE-H-AA; VE-N-AA; VE-H-AA, shift their preference to verbal instructions. It is because of these few indicators that I believe there is a potential connection regarding agency and online education within the SE-H-AA group that needs to be further investigated.

If whiteness is a system of white dominance that marginalizes people of color, while securing privileges for white people (McIntyre, 2002), then the traditional implementation of Bb based on the use of written SE (West, Waddoups, & Graham, 2007) demonstrates the impact of whiteness within the educational system that marginalizes AA while privileging whites. Throughout my research we see indicators that the design and implementation of Bb privileges the SE speaking students, specifically the SE-N-AA and the SE-W students. Even more specifically, the VE-H-AA students who were interviewed are disadvantaged because of the traditional implementation of Bb through the use of written SE (Krish 2008). Consider this, all five of the interviewed VE-H-AA students were hesitant because of the lack of instructor presence in the traditional Bb classroom. Regarding feedback, the VE-H-AA group wanted verbal feedback and they provided the strongest AAVE cues concerning this desire; unfortunately, the most common traditional form of feedback in an online class is not verbal but written SE (Krish, 2008).

When considering instructions given in a Bb course, this group wants verbal instructions, which are not traditionally in place on Bb. Also, this group communicated this desire through the use of the strongest AAVE indicators of all six groups. Finally, the VE-H-AA group is looking for help through a verbal/visual connection with the online instructor; however, this is not part of the traditional way Bb is implemented (West, Waddoups, & Graham 2007). On the other hand, the white students are not hesitant because of the lack of instructor presence, but because of their own approach to an online class. They are happy with written feedback and instructions. They do like the idea of including verbal/visual venues in a Bb class, but they are not looking for that inclusion based on help needed, but on preference and interest. These differences in the approach to a Bb course must be considered through the lens of whiteness. The ideological basis for whiteness, which feeds America's educational hierarchy that is predominantly white, ultimately impacts performance in the classroom (Picower, 2009). Since whiteness is a dynamic that is part of the educational experience, Kynard (2007) encourages us to consider analyzing a multi-cultural online classroom that includes both AA students and white students. At ECSU, the multi-cultural aspect to be examined must include the students who are bidialectal, where their dominant dialect is AAVE. Through my research, I have examined the multi-cultural online classroom and discovered that the VE-H-AA students' agency is hindered because of the whiteness within the implementation of the traditional design of Bb. The white students are privileged, thus enforcing the institutional hierarchies (Picower 2009) since the design of Bb caters to the whites and disadvantages the AA students who are bidialectal. Gruber (1999) concludes that the ingrained values of the white male designers of Bb determine the whiteness of the online class setting. Gruber challenges online education with the charge that the "dominant belief system [represented in the online design] reinforce[s] the marginalization of nondominant groups by privileged groups" (p. 199). If we, as online instructors, adopt DeBose (2007) definition of hegemony as a function of society where elements are enacted so that the dominant social group maintains its position of power, then the design and approach to online learning through Bb at

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ECSU has a hegemonic aspect to it that privileges the average white student, whose primary language is SE (Kendrick, 2005), and it hinders the agency of the AA student who is bidialectal, which is the hegemonic dynamic within Bb that must be addressed and changed.

In the course of my research there are three aspects that require further research:

1. Within my research, I did not ask about the specifics of the design of Bb. For future research, it would be helpful to survey a segment of a multi-cultural college or university to determine which elements within the design of Bb have been used effectively in their educational experience resulting in an increase in their agency.

2. In my research, I was looking for CR as a reason for a student wanting a texting relationship with an online professor, but I did not pursue during the interview process why a texting relationship might or might not be a helpful mode of communication. Further research is needed in order to determine the benefits and/or challenges of offering texting as a mode of communication with an instructor.

3. During my research, I assumed that AAVE as a dominant dialect was the only reason why a student might want or need elements like CR, TS, and NVC. Further research is needed into other dynamics involving exposure to AAVE, in order to see if the need for AAVE elements in communication might be a need for other students than just those who claim AAVE as their dominant dialect

Research regarding online education has already established that immediacy and non-verbal cues (Barnum 2003; Hewett & Ehmann 2004; Wong 2005) are elements that need to be included for every online student. However, it is my recommendation that in HBCU schools where there is the greater potential of having AAVE speaking AA students as a segment of the student body, that the inclusion of verbal/visual elements must be incorporated into the Bb teachers' pedagogy. There should be a verbal and written combination for feedback, and written instructions need to be foundational

within Bb, but for the VE-H-AA students there must be in inclusion of the verbal as well, so that they are

able to experience agency. Also, it is my recommendation that the venue, which provides both verbal

and visual elements, should also allow for CR involving the "back and forth" where the speaker's voice is

able to be interrupted with the listener's response. From my data, Skype was the venue selected as a

favorite because the students can experience CR, TS, and NVC. Recently, ECHO360, an online tool that

allows the online instructor to be seen and heard while providing instructions, was introduced to the

ECSU campus as a possible venue to be incorporated into Bb classes. The results from the trial run

proved encouraging. Dr. Rebecca Seaman, who piloted ECHO360, explained the increased agency her

online students experienced because they could see (NVC) and hear(TS) her give the instructions for the

online class assignments through the video she created of herself using ECHO360. Unfortunately, this

venue does not allow for CR to be experienced. Further exploration is still needed to discover an

effective way the students can experience CR. However, an initiative like this one is an example of the

action needed in order to help increase our students' agency.

It is important for the success of our AA students who are bidialectal to address the whiteness

within Bb, reduce the hegemony that can occur with the use of written SE as the only form of

communication, and respond with a pedagogy that allows these students to experience CR, TS, and NVC.

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Appendix A

Survey Regarding Online Classes at ECSU

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The results from the survey will be used to gather data for future research regarding communication in online classes at Elizabeth City State University. Your participation is strictly voluntary and will have no impact on your classroom experience

Name _____ Ethnicity _____

1. Underline the phrase that is closest to the way you speak with family and/or friends outside of the classroom setting.

> **Can't nobody find him 'cause he be workin' all the time.**
>
> **Nobody can find him because he is working all the time.**
>
> **Nobody can find him. He is trabajoando.**

2. Have you ever taken an ECSU online class? **Yes   No**

3. If yes, would you consider yourself successful in that online college class? **Yes   No**

4. If you answered "No" to question #3, then circle the appropriate reason(s) for your lack of success in

    your online class.

> **Method of interacting is challenging   Technology difficulties**
>
> **Difficulty with the material   Difficulty understanding the instructor**
>
> **Time management skills   Lack of community   Other _____**

5. Are you hesitant to take an ECSU online class through Blackboard (Bb)? **Yes   No**

6. If you answered "yes" to question #5, then underline your reason(s) for being hesitant to take an

    online college course through Blackboard (Bb).

    Personal lack of initiative (need a set classroom time to motivate your to go to class)

    Technology issues (hesitant about Bb method of relating course material and communication)

    Lack of community (enjoy or need to have other classmates present)

    Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor

    Courses needed were offered on campus

7. outside of class, when you are verbally interacting with your friends, is your communication just about the words spoken, or are there other aspects that are a part of the communication experience? (circle your best answer)

Just words spoken   **Other aspects**

Please share a simple example of a conversation between you and your friends when the communication of information involved more than words as a part of the dynamics?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not very important and 10 is very important, rate the following elements in relation to the scenario you just shared.

a. There was a lot of interaction rather than just one person speaking at a time.
       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
b. The tone of voice enhanced the verbal interaction that took place.
       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
c. Body movement was a part of the communication that took place.
       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

 9.On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all and 10 is very important, how important is immediate feedback to you when you are looking for a response from any of your instructors at ECSU?
              1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
What constitutes "immediate"? (circle your best answer)

The same day
          The next class
                The same week
                    The next week
10.In an online setting like Blackboard (Bb), would you prefer asynchronous, synchronous, or a combination of the two when communicating with the instructor? Note: asynchronous is communication with a time delay like emails and the discussion board; synchronous is communication with no time delay like instant messaging or skype. (circle your best answer)

        asynchronous (emails)   **synchronous** (chat)   **combination**

11. If you were taking an online course through Bb, would you like to have a time where you could chat online with your instructor - like a texting experience?   **Yes   No**

12.When you receive feedback from your instructor, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all and 10 is very important, how important is . . .
Verbal feedback :   **1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**

Written feedback :   **1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10**

13. When considering different types of visual communication in an online scenario, use the scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all and 10 is a great amount, and circle the number that best represents the appeal of the following visual tools.

    g. Imagine that you are taking an online class and when it is time for you to write your first essay you had the instructions on a webcast so that you could see the instructor giving the instructions, **but you had nothing in writing**.

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

    h. Same scenario as above, **but you also had the same instructions written** on your Blackboard site.

        3   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

    i. You have instructions for an assignment that are **only written** on your Blackboard site.

        3   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

    j. How about a scenario where you are given instructions for writing your first essay for a composition class but the instructions are a general Youtube video on writing a paper (not your instructor speaking). However, you do have your instructors' **written assignment** on Blackboard.

        3   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

    k. The instructions are on a PowerPoint presentation with your instructor's voice explaining the instructions?

        3   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

    l. On a scale of 1 -10, how would you rate a skype talk where you were on the computer with a group of other students and you could see the instructor explaining the instructions while a selection of students were listening and interacting and you were one of those students. Also, you could see the **written instructions** in front of you as a document on the Bb site

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

14. Would you be willing to be contacted for a fifteen minute interview with Mrs. Chambers, an English instructor at ECSU, during which time you will be asked to provide more insight regarding your answers on this survey? **Yes   No**

If yes, please print clearly your ECSU email address _____

Note: Out of 300 participants, only 30 willing students will be selected for an interview

Appendix B

Interview Questions

The following interview questions provide the basis for further investigation into a student's responses in their survey. The survey and interview will be considered together in the analysis.

Name _____ Ethnicity _____

Dialect _____ Hesitancy _____

Category: (AA/SE/N) (AA/SE/H) (AA/VE/N) (AA/VE/H) (W/SE/N) (W/SE/H)

Regarding **question #4**, if you indicated "Method of interacting is challenging" and/or "Difficulty understanding the instructor", then please explain how these elements affected your level of success in an online class.

Identified whiteness _____

Descriptive words used:

Regarding **question #6**, if you indicated "Technology issues" and/or "Need to have face-to-face interaction with your instructor", then please explain how these elements affected your willingness to take another Bb online class at ECSU.

Identified whiteness _____

Descriptive words used:

Extra questions for #4 & #6: These questions will provide insight into the potential hegemonic role of whiteness in an online college classroom at ECSU.

4. What specifically about the method of interacting in an online class makes you hesitant?

5. What did you find unappealing regarding the Bb experience, and what was your experience interacting with the instructor like because you were on a system like Bb?

6. When you were interacting with the instructor in your online class how would describe the instructor's approach to the dissemination of the material?

Regarding **question #7**, please explain to me in more detail the conversation you described.
Call-response: _____

Tonal semantics: _____

Non-verbal cues: _____

Regarding **question #8**, will you please detail how your answers in question 8 are reflected in the
conversation you referenced in question #7.

Call-response: Support _____ Detract _____

Tonal semantics: Support _____ Detract _____

Non-verbal cues (body language): Support _____ Detract _____

Regarding **question #10**, if you selected synchronous, then please explain why this is important to you.
Call-response _____

Regarding **question #11**, how would texting with your instructor help your understanding regarding the
subject matter and why would you find that more helpful?   Call-response _____
How?

Why?

Regarding **question #12**, why did you indicate the number you did regarding verbal feedback and then
regarding written feedback?
Verbal:

Written:

Needs: call-response _____ tonal semantics _____ non-verbal cues _____

Regarding **question #13**, please elaborate on each of the scenarios, while providing me with a better understanding of why you chose the number you circled.

a) Webcast only

b) Webcast + written instructions on Bb

c) Written instructions only

d) Youtube video + instructor's written instructions on Bb

e) Pp instructions with instructor's voice

f) Skype

Extra Question for question #13:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is no change needed and 10 is multiple changes needed, what number would you give to the design and format of the actual Bb course shell at ECSU?

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

2. What changes would you recommend?

Appendix C

Evaluation Form Used in the Analysis of the Survey Data

Tally the number of participants who meet the criteria listed below:
For (AA/SE/N)

Call-response

8a/ 7 or higher

9/ 7 or higher

   Same day or the next class

10/ synchronous

 11/ Yes

12/ 7 or higher

13f/ 7 or higher

Tonal semantics

7/ circled "no"

8b/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

Non-verbal cues

7/ circled "no"

8c/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

For (AA/SE/H)

Call-response

8a/ 7 or higher

9/ 7 or higher

   Same day or the next class

10/ synchronous

 11/ Yes

12/ 7 or higher

13f/ 7 or higher

Tonal semantics

7/ circled "no"

8b/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

Non-verbal cues

7/ circled "no"

8c/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

For (AA/VE/N)

Call-response

8a/ 7 or higher

9/ 7 or higher

   Same day or the next class

10/ synchronous

 11/ Yes

12/ 7 or higher

13f/ 7 or higher

Tonal semantics

7/ circled "no"

8b/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

Non-verbal cues

7/ circled "no"

8c/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

For (AA/VE/H)

Call-response

8a/ 7 or higher

9/ 7 or higher

   Same day or the next class

10/ synchronous

 11/ Yes

12/ 7 or higher

13f/ 7 or higher

Tonal semantics

7/ circled "no"

8b/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

Non-verbal cues

7/ circled "no"

8c/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

For (W/SE/N)

Call-response

8a/ 7 or higher

9/ 7 or higher

   Same day or the next class

10/ synchronous

 11/ Yes

12/ 7 or higher

13f/ 7 or higher

Tonal semantics

7/ circled "no"

8b/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

Non-verbal cues

7/ circled "no"

8c/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

For (W/SE/H)

Call-response

8a/ 7 or higher

9/ 7 or higher

   Same day or the next class

10/ synchronous

 11/ Yes

12/ 7 or higher

13f/ 7 or higher

Tonal semantics

7/ circled "no"

8b/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

Non-verbal cues

7/ circled "no"

8c/ 7 or higher

12/ 7 or higher in verbal feedback

13a/ 7 or higher

13b/ 7 or higher

13c/ 3 or lower

13f/ 7 or higher

[Appendix D]

Distance Learning Student Enrollment

AY	Summer	Fall	Spring	Totals	AY Totals	% Summer Growth	% AY Growth
1998-1999		5	5	10	10		
1999-2000		10	15	25	25		150%
2000-2001	22	15	12	49	27		8%
2001-2002	15	11	14	40	25	-32%	-7%
2002-2003	19	16	19	54	35	27%	40%
2003-2004	26	21	19	66	40	37%	14%
2004-2005	27	18	25	70	43	4%	8%
2005-2006	23	21	31	75	52	-15%	21%
2006-2007	27	40	55	122	95	17%	83%
2007-2008	41	61	59	161	120	52%	26%
2008-2009	63	62	59	184	121	54%	1%
2009-2010	88	81	82	251	163	40%	35%
2010-2011	115	80	82	277	162	31%	-1%
2011-2012	144	84	114	342	198	25%	22%

Source: Information accessed from the Distance and Continuing Education department at ECSU.

Appendix E

IRB Approval from Elizabeth City State University

Moore, Michelle W

From:	Moore, Michelle W
Sent:	Friday, March 09, 2012 3:44 PM
To:	Chambers, Mary-Lynn
Cc:	Kaur-Walker, Kulwinder
Subject:	IRB APPROVAL #312-0006-Whiteness and the Rhetorical Challenge in an online Classroom

Good afternoon Dr. Chambers,

This email is to certify that the IRB has approved the above referenced protocol via an expedited review process. Research proposals with expedited or full review are subject to IRB audits, continuing review, or requests for project closure. Any change to the protocol including number or participants or site, require the primary investigator to resubmit a revised application to the IRB for approval. Also please notify the IRB if there are any unanticipated problems. You are advised to apply for a <u>continuing review</u> thirty days_ before the anniversary date (March 8, 2013).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dr. Kaur-Walker, IRB Chair, at 252-335-3410 or <u>kpkaur@mail.ecsu.edu</u>
mm

Michelle W. Moore
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