This talk with focus on the ability of students, who are African American English (AAE) speakers, to navigate the institutional and writing expectations for college students. This is investigated in part by using the method of focus groups as a space for collectives and for students to make sense out of their experiences. I introduce the notion, through the intersection of the Ethnography of Communication and Critical Race Theory, that Black AAE speaking students exhibit racial communicative competence. Racial Communicative Competence allows for students to develop agency as communicators (verbal and written) and challenge practices that erase their cultural linguistic and rhetorical practices. Understanding students’ experiences in writing classrooms can aid teachers and administrators to start thinking about the pedagogical opportunities in the diversity of linguistic and writing practices.