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THEY TRIED TO BURY US BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE SEEDS: THE
LITERACY PRACTICES OF DEVELOPMENTAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

They Tried to Bury Us but They Didn't Know We Were Seeds:

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As many as 40% of first-year college students are required to take one or more non-credit remedial courses, including developmental, or basic, composition. Research has shown that these courses do not increase a student's chances of graduating and may actually impede them, and that a disproportionately large number of minority students are assigned to them. This study focuses on seven students who have been assigned to a developmental composition course, with the goal of learning about their literacy practices in order to understand the social structures, cultures, and relationships that surround them. Informed by the New Literacy Studies and Bourdieu's theory of practice, this dissertation represents a three-semester qualitative study in ethnographic style, and addresses the following questions:

1. What are the literacy practices of first-year college students who have been placed into a developmental writing course?
2. How do developmental college students' literacy practices reflect their relationships with educational institutions and the larger society?

3. What do developmental college students' literacy practices reveal about how they construct their identities amid conflicting pressures from school, family, and peers?

The data included interviews, field notes from observations, academic documents, and social media, with analysis following the tenets of grounded theory. Findings revealed the multimodal, varied, and creative uses of literacy by the participants, and brought to light the previously unrecognized injustices imposed on them through symbolic violence by the educational system. In addition, the findings have led to a deeper understanding of how marginalized students in their first year of college constructed their identities through texts, to make sense of their challenges and to resist forces that worked against them, as they attempted to adjust to the academic discourse required to complete college successfully. The study concludes that virtually every student who enters college requires guidance in some aspect of academic literacy, and that, rather than singling out certain students, higher education should work toward providing the necessary guidance to all students proactively.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Before I share the details of my research, I want to recognize and applaud the resilience, energy, and optimism of the participants in this study. I have high expectations that they will achieve success despite the gatekeepers who have placed, and continue to place, obstacles in their way. One of my participants, Luciana, introduced me to the quote: “They tried to bury us but they didn’t know we were seeds.” She identified it as a Mexican proverb. It has also been attributed to a 20th-century Greek poet, Dinos Christianopolos, who advocated for LGBTQ rights (www.jhfearless.com). In the present context, this quotation reflects the spirit of these particular seven students, and the thousands like them who have experienced ineffective pedagogies and negative labeling since early childhood from a school system that figuratively tried to “bury” them with bias and misunderstanding. Still, they entered college and continued to face their academic challenges with persistence, moved on to successful college experiences, and aspired to become the seeds of greatness in their future careers.

When I began teaching developmental reading and writing in a community college several years ago, I found that my somewhat unusual resume served me well in this position. After teaching elementary school for several years, I had become affiliated with Mary Kay, Inc., and soon was promoted to sales director. For many years in that position, I trained hundreds of women in skills such as sales techniques, money and time management, and self-motivation. The women I taught came from a variety of backgrounds; the levels of their education ranged from eighth grade to advanced degrees, and for many, English was not their first language. Nevertheless, I found that a desire to improve their circumstances was more important to their success than their level of

education. Because of this experience, I was able to view my developmental community college students, known variously as underprepared, remedial, or at risk, in a different light than did instructors who had never taught outside of academia. I saw my students as intelligent people who simply lacked an understanding of the academic discourse required for success in college (Grenfell, 2012). I soon came to realize that the remedial reading and writing courses that I was teaching were ineffective and demoralizing, causing many students to abandon their goals of attaining a college education. In addition, I saw that the college regarded my students simply as individuals who were unprepared for higher education, not “college material,” and the tests that placed them into the developmental courses as “the key academic gatekeeper to post-secondary study” (Bettinger & Long, 2009). I then made it my mission to seek a Ph. D. in literacy education to become an advocate for minority and first-generation college students.

Statement of the Problem

In this dissertation, the terms remedial, underprepared, and developmental are used interchangeably, as are basic composition and basic writing. All these terms signify courses that are assigned to students entering college who are deemed unprepared to do college level work. The term “remedial” has been used in higher education for the past 150 years, with “compensatory” added in the 1960s; but in the 1970s “developmental” came into favor because it provided a more positive connotation (Parker et al., 2010), although policy makers have continued to refer to “remediation,” probably because they lack an understanding of the goals of developmental education (Parker et al., 2010). Remedial courses may also be called college prep, basic skills, or – for English departments – basic writing, and the students who begin college in remedial courses have

been referred to variously as remedial, underprepared, developmental, or at risk. According to Shor (1997), basic writing, the remedial offspring of the first-year composition course, became common in colleges and universities at a time of unrest and social upheaval, the late 1960s, as “an extra layer of control” (p. 92) at a time of demand for equality and access to education and employment for minority groups and social classes that had previously been denied. Since then, developmental writing has been used to slow down the graduation rate, and, in effect, has created a tracking system in higher education that parallels the system that pervades K to 12 public education, as it “sorts each student cohort by race, class, and gender” (p. 93) continuing the inequities that permeate our schools and our society.

The participants of this study were each assigned to a basic composition course as they entered college, based on a standardized test administered to them on line at the end of their senior year in high school. This is one of several remedial courses which students may be assigned to, depending on the institution and the test results. Developmental courses in writing, reading and math that institutions assign as many as 40% of their first-year students to (Attewell et al., 2006), vary considerably from school to school, as do the scores on the placement tests used to distinguish “developmental” students from “college level.” The titles of the courses also vary by institution; they are alike, however, in that they cost as much as any other course but do not earn students credit toward graduation, and the time on the schedule that they require prevents students from taking other introductory and required courses in their first semester. This forces them to make up time by adding additional hours to their schedule in subsequent semesters, taking summer courses, or delaying graduation (Valentine, Konstantopoulos, & Goldrick-Rab, 2017;

Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2015). In addition, being a developmental student creates a label which is noted by professors as well as fellow students, and significantly, by the students themselves. This happens during the first semester of college, a time of transition which, for most students, already creates anxiety and uncertainty about new social experiences and their potential for success in higher education (Gibney et al., 2011).

Recently, the question of remediation in colleges and universities has been taken on by politicians and non-profit organizations including the Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation, with the goal of helping higher education institutions produce graduates who are better prepared technologically to keep our corporations competitive in the twenty-first century (Mangan, 2013). One group of researchers in developmental education (Saxon, Martirosyan, Wentworth, & Boylan, 2015) has addressed this recent push by non-educators to initiate major changes without what the authors consider to be sufficient evidence from research. They state that two primary forces drive developmental education reform: policymakers whose goal is to make developmental education more effective; and “opportunists and for-profit companies using social, economic, and political influence to promote reform through innovations, commercialized instructional models, and/or technology-based products” (p. 32). Interestingly, although educators, researchers, politicians, and organizations have produced hundreds of research studies and opinion pieces regarding the efficacy of, economic feasibility of, and need for developmental education, the percentage of college students in these programs today differs little from that of 100 years ago (Parker et al., 2010).

In contrast to most of the research that has been conducted in developmental education, which involves meta-studies or experimental studies of groups or classes of nameless students, this study offers a personal view of seven college students assigned to basic writing courses, through an analysis of their literacy practices, both traditional and digital, academic and non-academic. The purpose of the study is to learn from these practices the diversity of their cultures, their identity constructions, and their relationships with the power structures that have constrained their academic efforts in the past and currently. In presenting seven students' literacy practices, this study connects "the particular to a larger context of patterned practices, how specific things, people, and processes are related, how the specific is connected with its social and historical context" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 72). The ultimate purpose of the study is to contribute an alternative perspective on developmental education, to challenge the ingrained, deficit views held by the institution of higher education, and to extend the conversation beyond the narrow assessment of certain students as deficient. I posit that the higher education community needs to recognize that virtually every student who enters college requires guidance in some aspect of academic literacy. Rather than singling out certain students to attend ineffective and decontextualized courses, we need to develop methods to provide that guidance to all students proactively, and to consider alternative, innovative options for increasing the rate of success of all students in higher education.

Research Questions

- What are the literacy practices of first-year college students who have been placed into a developmental writing course?

- How do developmental college students' literacy practices reflect their relationships with educational institutions and the larger society?
- What do developmental college students' literacy practices reveal about how they construct their identities amid conflicting pressures from school, family, and peers?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that supports and informs this study is the New Literacy Studies (Street, 1995; Barton & Hamilton, 1998), Bourdieu's (1990/1980) theory of practice, and the concepts of funds of knowledge and multimodality. First, I will explain the foundations of the New Literacy Studies and define and explain the significance of literacy events, literacy practices, and Discourse within the New Literacy Studies paradigm. I will then explain how the new literacies in the ontological sense affect education. Next, I will outline the points from Bourdieu's theory that are significant for this study. I will then explain the concepts of funds of knowledge and multimodality, and, finally, I will show the significance of examining the participants' literacy practices through the three lenses of Bourdieu's theory of practice, funds of knowledge, and multimodality.

The New Literacy Studies theorize literacy as socially situated, rather than in the traditional cognitive view of literacy as a set of skills. In this paradigm, literacy is dynamic, constantly changing, and situated in a social context. When we view literacy as "a set of social practices" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8), we understand that competence is not absolute, but rather related to an individual's use of communicative practices in the various domains of life (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). This "ideological

model of literacy,” (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 103) recognizes the multiple forms that literacy takes in social situations, in school and out of school, in a pluralistic society (Street, 1995). Research within this paradigm requires sensitivity to the diversity of cultures, and an understanding that literacy is “inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in a given society” (Street, 1995, p. 161). This is not to negate the cognitive aspects of reading and writing, but rather to see them as embedded in cultures and power structures (Hull & Schultz, 2001). Therefore, literacy only makes sense when studied as part of the social, cultural, political, and economic context surrounding the event (Gee, 2000).

Literacy practices and literacy events. Literacy practices can be defined as the multiple ways in which people use written language in their lives. They involve not only specific uses of reading and writing, but also the values, attitudes, and relationships of the people who use the practices, as well as their conceptions of the reading and writing process (Street, 1995). They are different for various areas of life with their own distinct discourses; for example, an academic setting would have different literacy practices from a work setting (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Literacy practices connect people with one another, including identities, social issues, and ideologies. Furthermore, literacy practices are framed by social institutions and by the power relationships in a society, and some of these institutions are more prominent and controlling than others. They are culturally constructed and rooted in history (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy practices are constantly in a state of flux, as people go about their lives, learning and changing. They are usually done as a means to some end, and so can be studied to ascertain the broader social contexts of people’s lives (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; 2000; Street, 1995; Heath &

Street, 2008). According to Hull and Schultz (2002), Scribner and Cole were the first researchers to introduce the term “practice” to the study of literacy. They quote Scribner and Cole who define practice as “a recurrent, goal-directed sequence of activities using a particular technology and particular systems of knowledge” (Hull & Schultz, 2002, p. 20), helping scholars to view literacy not as a monolithic construct but as multifaceted and inextricably connected to human activity, both in school and in everyday life.

Literacy practices, however, because they involve values, feelings, and relationships, are not observable. Literacy events are observable instances of literacy which arise from literacy practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). A literacy event is a specific, tangible activity in which literacy has a role (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; 2000; 2005; Heath & Street, 2008). It involves some kind of text, usually includes conversation, may be one of a series of events, and is essential to the participants’ social interactions (Street, 1995). Literacy events have both individual and social purposes in people’s lives, sometimes multiple and conflicting purposes, and they are dynamic and constantly changing with the flow of human life, and multimodal (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Literacy events are observable, while literacy practices are generalizable from the events and indicate beliefs, values, and relationships that are inferred from the literacy events (Lewis & Fabos, 2005; Purcell-Gates, Perry, & Briseno, 2011). Literacy events are ubiquitous in human interaction and are a “basic unit of analysis” (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 17) when doing ethnographic research.

Discourse As a semiotic expression, language never exists in a vacuum. Rather, it is inextricably tied up with the situation at hand, as well as with the values, culture, class, and ideologies of the speaker (Gee, 2008). Every language, or variation of a language,

contains within it certain potential, and excludes others, based on the social practices of the group using the language (The New London Group, 1996). The term discourse refers to the way that language use reflects social practice, and in the plural the term reflects the diversity of domains that are negotiated in all aspects of life; some easily noted, like membership in a political party or religious group, others harder to pinpoint, but nonetheless a real part of everyday life (The New London Group, 1996). This concept has been called the “field of discourse” (Halliday, 1978, p. 33) or the “order of discourse” (Fairclough, 2003), defined as “a network of social practices in its language aspects” (p. 24). In all speech and other literacy practices, people use not only their understanding of syntax and sentence structure, but also their sociolinguistic practices (The New London Group, 1996). Similarly, Foucault (Gordon, 1977) uses the concept of discourse to help define his analysis of power in society, asserting that discourse is a reflection of the culture and ideology of a society, and as such, an instrument of hegemony within the institutions of the society.

According to Grenfell (2012a), Bourdieu discusses “academic discourse” (p. 63) in order to suggest ways of improving existing pedagogy. Bourdieu’s term “linguistic habitus” (p. 66) refers to the characteristics of a person’s speech which have been formed from his environment and share features with others of similar sociocultural background. Bourdieu sees “linguistic capital” (p. 67) as part of cultural capital and argues that the educational system perpetuates an imbalance based on arbitrary linguistic rules which favor those who have already been educated in the academic discourse, while purposefully leaving out those who are not privy to these rules. These “academic literacy practices” (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 105) requires students to switch from their primary

discourse to the discourse of the school when completing academic tasks, a process that involves not just understanding and using a new set of literacy practices, but also dealing with the identities and social positioning that this discourse dictates.

Gee carries the concept further, viewing language as part of a social context, what he calls a “big-D Discourse” (Gee, 2008, p. 2), which he expands into “ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities (or ‘types of people’) by specific groups” (Gee, 2008, p. 3), “... so as to enact specific socially recognized identities engaged in specific socially recognized activities” (p. 155). Each person is a member of many Discourses, as they negotiate their lives and the inconsistencies of “multiple identities” (p. 4), and deal with conflict among their various Discourses. He also distinguishes between a person’s primary Discourse and secondary Discourses and their particular uses of language. Each person has only one primary Discourse, which relates to their earliest and closest intimates. All other Discourses reflect a person’s membership in groups or workplaces, each with its own beliefs, values, and ways of acting and speaking, and these Discourses help to mold a person’s identity. Multiple Discourses mean multiple literacies experienced by each person, and to be a member of a secondary Discourse involves understanding the correct way to use language in that discourse. Discourses are “inherently ideological” (p. 161), meaning that they involve a set of values, resist criticism from members, and put forth certain viewpoints and objects at the expense of others. Membership in the dominant Discourse leads to social goods including money and power. As people go through life, they are apprenticed to secondary Discourses through socialization in schools, organizations, and other life experiences, and they

acquire a secondary Discourse by trial and error, and exposure to models. This acquisition is a kind of apprenticeship, and, according to Gee, must precede overt teaching. If students have not first acquired the academic Discourse, they will not learn from overt teaching. This leads to privileging the students who have already acquired the Discourse over the students who have not had that opportunity because of social class, poverty, or discrimination (Gee, 2008). An understanding of this concept of Discourse can help in the analysis of literacy practices, including digital practices, to uncover traces of identity sedimented in them (Rowse & Pahl, 2007).

The new digital literacies. The literacies that are designated “new” in the ontological sense (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) include the “post-typographic” literacies (p. 24) that have become an integral part of twenty-first century life and promise to alter the course of education as we know it. The use of these new media brings about several different effects in communication. First, creators have the ability to add multiple modes, such as music and sound (Kress, 2000). Second, users participate in the “interactivity” (Kress, 2003, p. 5) of electronic communication, the ability of the creator instantaneously to communicate with other users, and its “hypertextuality” (p. 5), which can lead the user to countless other texts and outlets. These advances have led to social networking and interactive features with numerous web-based applications that allow users to interact and post texts, pictures, and videos online to share (Barton & Lee, 2012).

One way to define what constitutes new literacies is that they contain both “new ‘technical stuff’ and new ‘ethos stuff’” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). This implies that, in addition to utilizing new technologies, the new literacies involve new values in education involving more participation and collaboration, and less expert domination than

conventional literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). Leander (2007), quoting Hodas, suggests that the values of the school system do not match the values of technology and that educational institutions have been slow about incorporating technology into literacy education. According to him, school structures and pedagogical practices have remained fairly constant for hundreds of years, and they are doing exactly what they were set up to do: maintain the social status quo. They are based on an older “monochronic” perspective which sees one action occupying one timeslot and one space. In contrast, the students’ perspectives are “essentially polychronic” (p. 27), in which several activities can be layered and simultaneous; for example, a student who surfs the net while still keeping up with the events in class. Accordingly, this study includes among literacy practices not just traditional reading and writing, but also the participants’ digital literacies.

Multimodality. Multimodality refers to the combination of various semiotic modes to create not just a more interesting text, but a whole new meaning (Hull & Nelson, 2005). All meaning-making, in fact, is multimodal (The New London Group, 1996; Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Humans have always used a variety of modes of communication, as the complexity of human thinking requires various forms of expression (Kress, 2000). Multimodal literacies can be defined as literacy events and practices which consist of not just the written word, but also other modes, including speech, writing, music, and art, in order to project a message, transmit information, entertain, teach, or accomplish any combination of these goals (Heath & Street, 2008).

With the availability of digital modalities, the design of printed materials, and therefore literacy, has changed significantly over the past century; modern textbooks, for example, contain more images and the text is situated on the page very differently from

books of the early 1900's (Bezemer & Kress, 2008). In the twenty-first century, however, technology has greatly increased the semiotic possibilities for creativity, and the materiality of literacy and therefore its possibilities and affordances are undergoing change (Hull & Nelson, 2005; Barton & Hamilton, 2005). "The *book* has now been superseded by the *screen* in the role of dominant medium of communication" (Kress, 2003, p. 12). In the future of literacy, speech is predicted to be the dominant mode of communication, but writing will increasingly be displaced by image in many domains (Kress, 2003). In the past, with the production of print-based media, written text has been most common and easiest to produce, while images have been more difficult. Now, however, in the digital production of media, images and sounds of all types can be produced easily and cheaply, and this has transformed communication. This profound change "from book or page to screen" (p. 5) will affect all aspects of human life, since "*the world told* is a different world to *the world shown*" (p. 1).

With the advent of interactive visual media, like YouTube, it has become particularly important for multimodality to become part of an analysis of literacy practices. Meyer et al. (2013) argue that "the visual mode integrates visual and verbal in such a way that neither can be fully understood without the other" (p. 4). According to Jewitt (2017), multimodal research examines how the production of texts, as well as their interpretation, is affected not only by the modes selected but also by the cultural and social processes surrounding it. Multimodal analysis, therefore, focuses on the semiotic potential of a social interaction in actual communication, and how the social setting, the context in which the text is created, and the context of the audience who receives it, influence the meaning of the text. It is also concerned with how the context influences

how the meaning-maker selects from the available resources and designs the message.

This social semiotic analysis also draws from Gee's (2008) concept of big D Discourses.

It is important to note that reading online is not done in the traditional, linear fashion, but rather spatially, following hyperlinks and hashtags, etc. (Pennington, 2017), involving the concept of intertextuality: meanings are derived not just from a particular text but also from other texts (including images and other modalities) that are related either by social or cultural context or by a connection via hashtags or hyperlinks. Another facet of intertextuality is recognition of the fact that we are often unsure about whether a post on social media is original or a repost, and it is often impossible to trace the original source of the text or the meaning, which may have been redistributed, re-composed, and re-audenced countless times.

The concept of multimodality intersects with the New Literacy Studies. Street, Pahl, and Rowsell (2017) explain that studying literacy practices as multimodal includes a consideration of the social practices and culture of the text creator, along with the physical or digital features of the text and the meanings imbedded in it. Analysis of literacy practices by including a variety of semiotic systems provides a fuller view of the participants' efforts to make sense of their lives. Multimodality has become increasingly important in the analysis of literacy practices with the ever-increasing use of digital modalities. Social media, in particular, reveal a myriad of modes being used in creative ways to impart meaning. In addition, social media and other means of digital communication provide participants with an unprecedented ability to learn from countless sources, to combine these sources using multiple modalities to create new texts, and to communicate these original texts to a broad audience.

Bourdieu's theory of practice. Pierre Bourdieu, a French philosopher turned sociologist, developed his theory of practice as a result of his own extensive ethnographic work in France and Algeria, in order to synthesize theoretical studies and practical ethnographic studies into one view of how human beings move and work within society (Grenfell, 2012a). He recognized that inequality is so inextricably woven into our society that individuals can only be understood in connection with and under the influence of their particular socioeconomic environment. Even institutions that claim to promote equality, for example, the educational system, in actuality perpetuate inequality. His concept of "habitus, "the system of durable and transposable dispositions through which we perceive, judge, and act in the world" (Wacquant, 2006, p. 6) accounts for this continued inequality among the various social classes. He further explains that habitus implies "'a sense of one's place' but also 'a sense of the place of others'" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19). A field is seen as "a structured space of positions ... a force field," that imposes its rules on anyone who enters; and also "an arena of struggle" for the capital valued in that field (Wacquant, 2006, p. 8). Bourdieu explains that if an individual's habitus fits the field, it is similar to an athlete that has a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990/1980, p. 66). He uses the concept of capital to describe, not economic capital in the Marxian sense, but symbolic capital, "social, economic, and cultural" (Grenfell, 2012a, p. 56), involving favors accorded to people of certain social standing. He uses the term cultural capital, that intangible but essential set of assets and credentials that can give an individual access to a higher social class and all the advantages that come along with it, to account for differences between social classes in academic achievement and ability to reach higher professional positions. These three concepts – habitus, field, and capital –

work together in environments and inform each other, so that if an individual acquires capital of any sort (e.g., social, economic, cultural) it will impact a field and both will impact the individual's habitus.

Bourdieu uses the terms “linguistic habitus” and “linguistic field” to indicate a person's linguistic background and use of language in common with others of his habitus. Linguistic habitus refers to the characteristics of a person's speech which have been formed from his environment and share features with others of similar sociocultural background. He sees linguistic capital as part of cultural capital and argues that the educational system perpetuates an imbalance based on arbitrary linguistic rules which favor those who have already been educated in the academic discourse, while purposefully leaving out those who are not privy to these rules. Similarly, he refers to academic capital as a part of cultural capital, the ability to use the correct language to be accepted in academia and in the higher classes of society (Grenfell, 2012; Heath & Street, 2008). These “academic literacy practices” (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 105) require students to switch from their dominant discourse to the discourse of the school when completing academic tasks, a process that involves not just understanding and using a new set of literacy practices, but also dealing with the identities and social positioning that this discourse dictates (Heath & Street, 2008).

Related to this is a further Bourdieusian concept concerning habitus. Bourdieu describes a situation that he calls a “destabilized habitus, torn by contradiction and internal division, generating suffering” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 160). Friedman (2016) calls this “*habitus clivé*” (p. 132), from Bourdieu's original French. This is a conflictive, or torn apart, habitus caused by disruptions in a person's identity due to experiences with

new, intersecting fields. It can be experienced by people who have migrated internationally or who have undergone great social mobility. As a matter of fact, according to Friedman (2016), Bourdieu described this in his own life experience. It is a “mismatch” between a person’s primary habitus and a habitus required in a new field and brings about a sense of being caught in the middle, in a painful position of “double isolation,” (p. 131-132) attempting to reconcile multiple allegiances and multiple identities. According to Wacquant (2006) this can be “a principle of both social continuity and discontinuity” (p. 7). Habitus exhibits continuity when it carries social structures within a person through time and space; and discontinuity because the habitus can be modified when the individual encounters a new field. Therefore, social mobility can be accompanied by emotional conflicts that may include insecurity, guilt, and estrangement, but it can also provide the individual with a greater capacity for reflection and self-analysis. While sometimes painful, a conflicted habitus does not necessarily result in long-term negative effects (Friedman, 2016).

Furthermore, in chapter five, I explain how symbolic power and symbolic violence, another Bourdieusian concept (Bourdieu, 1997), disrupted the educational lives of the study participants beginning with their earliest school experiences. Samuel (2013) explains that symbolic power is a form of cultural domination that uses not overt violence, but symbolic manipulation. It is “the ability to make use of the rules and distinctions of social space that are to your advantage” (p. 401). Symbolic violence is imposed on dominated people by the large institutions, including the educational system, who hold symbolic power over them. The structure for symbolic violence is set up in the habitus and is “preconscious” (p. 401), causing those who are dominated to accept the

judgments of the dominant power, even when these judgments are against their own interests. Bourdieu (1977a) describes it as “*censored, euphemized*, i.e., unrecognizable, socially recognized violence” (p. 191), and later, as “...that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 164). He describes the ways that symbolic violence can affect individuals:

The practical recognition through which the dominated, often unwittingly, contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting, in advance, the limits imposed on them, often takes the form of *bodily emotion* (shame, timidity, anxiety, guilt) ... It is betrayed in visible manifestations, such as blushing, inarticulacy, clumsiness, trembling, all ways of submitting, however reluctantly, to the dominant judgment... (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 169).

“In modern societies the school has become the most important agency for the reproduction of almost all social classes” (Nash, 1990). Bourdieu (1990) argued that social inequalities in our educational system can actually be more deleterious to society than economic inequality and that, although the stated and assumed goal of schools is to educate and build the new generation, their true function is to perpetuate society’s established structures. Bourdieu’s theories articulate how this social reproduction occurs in schools through domination by those who hold the symbolic power and shed light on the injustices perpetrated on the most vulnerable among our students, those who enter school with hope and open minds but little cultural capital and are constrained by the symbolic power of the institution from achieving their potential.

In Bourdieu’s view, practice creates theory and theory shapes practice; theory must always be left open to the possibilities of further knowledge; and power relations must always be considered (Hardy, 2012). Bourdieu’s theory of practice creates a framework with which to conduct ethnographic style research into the literacy practices

of students “within a specific field” in this “particular place and time” (Grenfell, 2012b, p. 180).

Funds of knowledge. The concept known as “funds of knowledge” originated in the field of anthropology (Hogg, 2011), and was introduced to educational research by a group of scholars at the University of Arizona (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) in the 1990s, to counter the traditional deficit theorizing of educators concerning poor and minority students. The funds of knowledge perspective aligns with that of the ideological view of literacy (Street, 1995), which sees literacy as a social process (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). The term is defined as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll et al, 1992, p. 133). It has been developed and researched within the context of Mexican-American families along the US-Mexico border (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Through the use of ethnographic methods, these researchers have recorded in detail the social relationships among Latino families which facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills of all types throughout the community to enable families and individuals to thrive. Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama (2012) argue that the funds of knowledge framework can be used to challenge the deficit views of Latina(o) students’ efforts to get into college and career, because sometimes it is the researchers’ own pre-existing belief systems that contribute to this deficit thinking.

Instead of looking exclusively at culture, research in the funds of knowledge framework focuses on “practice, that is, what it is that people do, and what they say about what they do” (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 40), in order to understand families and communities more deeply. This “theorizing of practices” (Gonzalez, Wyman, & O’Connor, 2011)

acknowledges and encourages the recognition of the complexities of people's lives, rather than attempting to reduce or oversimplify observations and conclusions (Gonzalez, Wyman, & O'Connor, 2011). Gonzalez (2005) suggests that we think of "culture as a set of inquiries" (p. 39) and relates those inquiries to the value of studying not simply theory but the "practice-based implications of those theories" (p. 39) that are often ignored by researchers, and really should be the true goal of the work of research. To accomplish this, the funds of knowledge scholars adopted "processual approaches" (p. 40) which focus on daily processes and activities as a bridge to mutual understanding between the educational system and the students' homes.

Esteban-Guitart & Moll (2014) emphasize that funds of knowledge do not exist only in an individual's mind, but rather "are distributed among persons, artifacts, activities, and settings," (p. 36) because people and their social worlds are inseparable. They then further develop this theory by arguing that "when people actively internalize family and community resources to make meaning and to describe themselves" (p. 33), funds of knowledge become funds of identity. Identities, how people see themselves, are made up of all the skills, knowledge, artifacts, and resources that they have accumulated through their experiences and interactions and have been both internalized and externalized by engaging in social activities with others. These activities, through either explicit instruction or informal observation and learning, form their identities, and their funds of identity are essentially "a set of resources, or box of tools and signs" (p. 37). They divide these funds of identity into five types: geographical, practical, cultural, social, and institutional. Jovés, Siqués, & Esteban-Guitart (2015) note that students may or may not be entirely aligned with their families for their funds of knowledge, depending

on their experiences outside of the family. As college students grow more independent and have educational and social experiences that differ from those of their families, they develop their own funds of identity, including family funds that they consider relevant along with the funds that they have accumulated personally, and these funds create their own identities.

Synthesizing these theories. These four theories – the New Literacy studies, Bourdieu’s theory of practice, multimodality, and the funds of knowledge – are used in this study to shed light on the cultural practices, relationships with power, and identity constructions of developmental college students. Although each theory is unique and essential to the study, they have similarities which unite them and add to the strength of my argument. The funds of knowledge theorists reject the simplistic view of culture as a concept that emphasizes differences and perpetuates racial biases (Gonzalez, Wyman, & O’Connor, 2011). Rather, Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) links the funds of knowledge and the concept of practices with Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, since they share a common understanding of culture as dynamic, multifaceted, and constantly changing. Through the interaction of habitus with acquired and inherited funds of knowledge, an individual creates unique, multi-layered, and constantly changing identities. Furthermore, in the process of composing multimodal texts as part of everyday living, a person sediments in the texts clues that can reveal these identities, and their interaction with, and resistance to, the various power forces active in their lives (Rowse & Pahl, 2007).

Finally, this study has been conducted following Bourdieusian principles. According to Grenfell (2012b), a study that claims to follow Bourdieu’s standards must exhibit specific characteristics: it must be empirical and specific; it must actively involve

the researcher's own perspective; it needs to be open to future revision; and, most significantly, the analysis must be relational, acknowledging the influences of the overarching social, economic, and political forces, the key organizations and individuals in this particular institution, and the similarities and differences among the individual participants in the study. In this dissertation, I have attempted to follow each of these guidelines.

Outline of the Dissertation

In Chapter Two, to present a historical perspective on the problem, I will discuss the problem of college developmental education in general, including a short history and recent research. then focus specifically on research into developmental, or basic, writing instruction. I will follow that with research into digital literacies, followed by multimodality, and finally, the funds of knowledge. Chapter Three outlines the methodology of the study, including positioning myself as a researcher, explanations of grounded theory as used in this study and the ethnographic perspective. I will then cover my recruitment process, the data collection, and data analysis, including visual and digital data. Chapters Four through Six present the findings of the dissertation, with each chapter addressing one of my research questions. In Chapter Four I outline the array of literacy practices used by the participants in their daily lives: academic and non-academic, traditional and digital. I then present a literacy profile of each of the seven participants, including selections from among their texts. In Chapter Five I discuss the many ways in which the educational system has inflicted symbolic violence on the participants throughout their years in school. I begin with the early language instruction of the six emergent bilinguals, followed by the questionable classification of two participants as

special needs students. I will then track these early identities as they affect their placement in the tracking systems of elementary, middle, and high school. Finally, I will describe how symbolic violence constructed their identities as developmental writing students in college, how it continues in the form of ineffective and time-consuming instruction and how the participants have continued to assume the deficit identities placed on them by the educational system. Chapter Six will cover my analysis of the participants' identity constructions as revealed by their literacy practices. Chapter Seven will present a discussion of the findings and their significance to the field of developmental education, and my conclusions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This review will cover several areas of research that are relevant to this study.

First, I will discuss developmental education in general and the findings of recent research on it. Next, I will focus on research on developmental writing instruction specifically. Because this study includes analysis of the participants' multimodal digital literacies, including social media, I have included sections on studies generally related to these areas. The last section will include recent studies in education that use the funds of knowledge framework.

Developmental Education

This review will reveal that the vast majority of research on developmental students begins with the assumption that there exists a line below which students require remediation, that remedial courses are the solution for these students, and that “guarding the gate” is the correct method of preserving standards in higher education. This study aims to refute these presuppositions. A group of literacy researchers (Hull, Rose, Fraser, & Castellano, 1991), presenting data from a study that included observations and interviews in a college remedial writing course, argue that remediation is a social construct, the result of deeply held beliefs about literacy and learning. They posit that assumptions about the need for remediation for certain students have been part of the system of higher education for so long that they are tacit, and instructors and administrators design and structure courses with unconscious deficit beliefs about the students. They note that the tradition of perceiving students from low-income and minority families as less intelligent has deep roots in the American system of education,

“turning differences into deficits, reducing the rich variability of human thought, language, and motive,” and creating a “success-failure binary” (p. 313).

Unequal graduation rates. College access in recent years has increased among all groups of students, but college completion varies based on ethnicity and income level. Students from high income families graduate from college at a rate four times that of low-income students (Bailey & Dynarski, 2011). According to the Kresge foundation, college graduation rates in the US are becoming more stratified by race and family income level. In 2013, seven out of ten people from high-income families earned a bachelor’s degree by age 25, but only one out of ten from low-income families did (Kresge Foundation, 2017). A study of the six-year graduation rates of students who entered four-year public institutions in 2011 indicate that Black students had the lowest graduation rate at 46%, while Latinos’ graduation rate was 55.7%, the rate for white students was 71.7%, and for Asian students was 75.8% (Shapiro et al, 2017).

Concerning minority students in developmental education, Black students are more likely to be required to take remedial college courses than similarly prepared white students (Attewell et al, 2006). Nonacademic factors, including lack of support from parents inexperienced with higher education, limited community resources, racism, and limited networking opportunities all contribute to a lack of readiness for college (Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). On the other hand, at least one remedial program (Palmer & Davis, 2012) has been shown to increase access to college and graduation for underrepresented minority students, especially African American young men. Students’ participation in the remedial courses at an historically Black university increased their social inclusion, established relationships with faculty members as well as with peers, and helped them to

feel comfortable with their ability to succeed in college. Remedial education “serves as a conduit through which minority students access four-year postsecondary education” (p. 423). Latino students, also, are underrepresented in college, less likely to earn bachelor’s degrees, and have the lowest rate of graduate school enrollment of any ethnic group (Schmidt, 2003). Although the Latino population, the nation’s largest minority group, is made up of a variety of different ethnicities and situations, they share common concerns regarding higher education. More than one-fourth of Latino students entering college are required to enroll in remedial English classes, their grades on average are lower, and they take longer to earn a degree than white students. In addition, when Latino students are undocumented, they are not eligible for federal financial aid, and this prevents many from entering or completing college (Solórzano et al., 2005).

Factors contributing to college readiness. Most of the gap in graduation rates relates to poor high school preparation caused by a disconnect between the high school curriculum and what is expected of students in college, rather than whether or not students take developmental courses in college (Attewell et al., 2006; Howell, 2011). In fact, the results of one study indicate that high school grade point average can be an accurate predictor of success in college (Jackson & Kurlaender, 2013). Insufficient understanding of some of the technology required for success in higher education may also be a factor in developmental students’ lack of readiness for college. Administrators from two- and four-year institutions have reported challenges when introducing some support technologies to students, including the students’ lack of experience with the types of software packages offered (Natow et al., 2017). Another factor in college readiness is that the credentials, experience, and educational level of a student’s high school teachers

have statistically significant effects on the rates of college remediation for their students, and this effect is greater for students from high schools with larger percentages of minority populations (Howell, 2011).

Effectiveness of developmental education. Researchers who have attempted to ascertain the effectiveness of developmental education have reported mixed results. One estimate is that up to 70% of students assigned to developmental reading would have scored a B or better taking instead a related college course (Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2015). Several studies (Calcagno & Long, 2008; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2015, Hassel & Giordano, 2015) used a regression discontinuity approach, comparing students who scored on a placement test just above and just below the cutoff for a developmental course. Findings from these studies indicate that being assigned to remedial courses increases the chances of a student's persistence into the second year but does not improve chances of a student's eventual completion of a degree. In fact, the most recent of these studies (Valentine, Konstantopoulos, & Goldrick-Rab, 2017) is a meta-analysis of regression discontinuity studies, "the most rigorous review of the effects of placement into developmental education to date" (p. 826). These researchers find that developmental education is associated with "substantively sizable" negative effects on the probability of passing the college level course for which the remediation was needed, along with fewer college credits earned after three years, and less likelihood to earn a degree:

Relative to their peers who are also on the margins of college readiness but who were placed into college level courses, students placed into developmental education earned fewer college credits after about 3 years, ... were about 8 percentage points less likely to eventually pass the college level course in which remediation was needed, and were about 1.5 percentage points less likely to earn a certificate or degree (p. 31).

Attempts to improve developmental education. Attempts to improve developmental pedagogies in recent years include summer bridge programs, co-requisite courses, also known as “contextualization” (Perin, 2011; Gabbert, Peschka, & Spradley, 2008), and learning communities. These programs focus not only on academics but also on giving the students a feeling of belonging and increased readiness for college (Zalaznick, 2016). They are successful not only because of the participants’ sometimes measurable cognitive growth but also because of their connection to academic and social support networks, although this result is difficult to assess (Cabrera, Miner, & Milem, 2013). Studies concerning summer bridge programs include one that found that at community colleges and less selective four-year colleges, attending a summer bridge program will increase a student’s chances of graduation within six years by 10% (Douglas & Attewell, 2014). Another study of a summer bridge program at a historically Black university showed that the participants scored higher GPAs and retention levels than non-participants (Bir & Myrick, 2015). Although evidence exists that learning communities can benefit underprepared college students, most colleges have not yet implemented them (Gabbert et al, 2008). One learning community study (Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett, 2016), however, showed no effect on the students’ subsequent persistence toward a degree.

To summarize, research so far has produced non-conclusive, mixed evidence concerning the effectiveness of efforts to improve the graduation rates of remedial students. One explanation for this ambivalence is that non-cognitive influences, including an individual instructor’s emotional connection with her students, a feeling of community

encouraged by collaborative learning approaches, and an advising system that imparts confidence to the students in their ability to complete college, can make the difference between persistence and dropping out for many students. These types of situations are difficult to assess in the large-scale analyses and experimental studies that have comprised most of the literature on developmental education.

College Developmental Writing.

This review of the research on college developmental writing will provide an overview of significant recent studies and their results, which provoke more questions than answers. Few studies acknowledge the fact that they are dealing with a diverse group of students, a factor that needs to be considered in any discussion of developmental college students. Other variables that have not been accounted for in this body of research include the educational level of the instructors or the quality of the professional development afforded them, if any. Another weakness of most studies is the lack of long-term follow-up, to ascertain whether any of these attempts actually improve students' long-term success in college or graduation rates, and the ones that do have unimpressive or negative results.

Affective issues. Affective and social issues regarding developmental writing students, including motivation and self-efficacy, have been addressed by several researchers. In a critical synthesis of empirical work on writing remediation, Relles & Tierney (2013) found that self-efficacy has been the most important predictor of writing improvement in areas of study other than direct remediation courses. Camfield (2016) identified participants' initial feelings of pessimism and later self-efficacy caused by their positive learning relationships with instructors. Another study (Launspach, 2008) focused

on a student's successful acquisition of the academic discourse through small group discussions with a teaching assistant, emphasizing the value of socially situated learning. Other researchers, examining pre- and post-test levels of academic self-efficacy in developmental first-year students who participated in a study skills course, found that the students started out with lower levels of academic self-efficacy and ended with levels that were equal to or better than those of the control students (Wernersbach et al., 2014). Another study (Jones, 2007) also found that first-year basic writing students' self-beliefs is an important predictor of success. Smith (2010) argues that one problem basic writers have is that when they read academic literature they lack the cultural knowledge necessary to fully understand it, and therefore, appear to lack thinking skill. These students often see this problem as a personal deficiency, and this causes them to give up on an assignment that they believe is too difficult for them. She suggests teaching metacognitive thinking as a solution. Callahan & Chumney (2009) found that access to the support services, such as tutoring, at a public university resulted in students' increased feelings of self-efficacy, contrasted to students at a nearby community college who had no access to similar support. They suggest that the extra resources provided by the university allowed the students to experience "a change in habitus" (p. 1659), meaning a change in their belief in their abilities as college students. A study to determine whether the use of blogs could improve the reading skills and motivation of developmental students (Hsu and Wang, 2011) found no difference in reading performance but a significantly higher retention rate and a stronger sense of community among the students using blogs over the control group.

Placement tests. The validity of placement tests used to place students into developmental writing classes is a concern that has been addressed by several studies. Hassel & Giordano (2015) argue that standardized tests do not effectively ascertain which students require remediation in writing, and that the use of multiple measures is more effective to determine who will or will not benefit from non-degree coursework. Similarly, assuming that one proof of the effectiveness of a developmental writing course is the accuracy of the testing that places the students in the courses, one Florida study (Southard & Clay, 2004) compared students placed into a developmental writing course with a control group of students in a college-level course. They found no significant correlation between the state placement test and the students' grades in any of the writing courses and concluded that the state placement test lacks content validity. From another perspective, using regression discontinuity methods, Martorell et al. (2011) found that students who were assigned by placement test to a remedial course were no less likely to enroll in college than students who score just above the cutoff for placement into remediation. Another concern about essay-style placement testing is the consistency of the raters who grade tests. Using Multi-Faceted Rasch Measurement, one study (Wu & Tan, 2016) found that, even with training, raters grade essays differently, and that these differences can significantly affect a student's placement if measures are not taken to manage this problem. Wu (2013) used qualitative and quantitative analysis to compare native and non-native writers' performance on a university reading-to-write placement test and found that the non-native writers exhibited a combination of limitations in reading and writing abilities. Finally, Sullivan and Nielson (2009), using student assessment essays and ACCUPLACER test scores, concluded that a writing sample is not

necessary for accurate placement into first-year writing courses, and that the concept of accurate placement itself is questionable, recommending the grouping of students broadly by ability. These diverse studies concerning the tests which place students into non-credit developmental writing courses provide a variety of perspectives but no clear indication that any of the testing measures used place students accurately and fairly.

Pedagogical approaches. A few studies addressed pedagogical approaches in the writing program. Burchard & Swerdzewski (2009) measured the effectiveness of a strategic learning course to improve metacognition and self-regulation offered to university undergrads and found that the program was effective. Another study of a basic writing course designed to emphasize self-regulation strategies (MacArthur, Phillippakos, & Ianetta, 2015) found positive effects in overall quality of writing, self-efficacy, and motivation. A report on a mixed-methods study that examines practices and comments of instructors in first-year composition courses (Ferris, 2014) surveyed college and university writing instructors to investigate their methods for providing feedback to their students' essays and found wide variation across the instructors and some disagreement between the instructors' self-reported philosophies and their actual practices, including peer reviews and conferences with students. Some other improvements to developmental writing programs have shown success. One study (Bird, 2013) described a course revised to teach students purposes of academic writing, e.g., to contribute to scholarly conversations, in order to develop academic writer identity. Comparative analyses of student papers showed significant development of students' identity as writers. Melzer (2015) describes an attempt to eliminate the deficit language of the basic writing program at a California university, calling a redesigned program Advanced Writing Framework.

Accelerated courses. Many community colleges have demanded that developmental students take a time-consuming series of courses before they are deemed ready to attend a college-level course, but recently, with the expectation of lowering the dropout rate, some have attempted to accelerate the pace of remediation. One method to accelerate the course of learning for developmental students is to embed supplemental instruction or scaffolding within a college-level course. This instructional approach (Perin, 2011; Gabbert, Peschka, & Spradley, 2008), connects literacy instruction with college-level content in one of two ways: “contextualized instruction,” which uses developmental literacy instructors; or “integrated instruction,” taught by discipline-area instructors. Both appear to have strong empirical support, compared to other approaches (Perin, 2011). Two experiments involving contextualization (Perin et al, 2013), in which skill instruction is linked to texts that have a specific application to the students’ course of study show notable positive results in facilitating motivation and transfer. A similar study (Ogden et al, 2003) reports on a political science course supported by supplemental instruction given by peer leaders, showing significantly improved short- and long-term outcomes over one year, for participating developmental students compared to non-participants. Implementation of programs involving contextualization requires the support of the college administration and a willingness on the part of subject-area instructors to modify their curriculum to include literacy instruction for underprepared students (Perin, 2011).

Obstacles to policy change. Significantly, Relles & Tierney (2013) used a critical review of the research to ascertain what would be needed to effect change in higher education policy concerning writing instruction for students placed into basic

writing courses. They found that two significant obstacles stand in the way of providing the kind of evidentiary support needed for discussions of policy changes: a lack of clarity among institutions and among instructors concerning what actually constitutes college writing, and a lack of assessment tools to measure writing aptitude. These shortcomings have prevented changes in remediation policy and have led institutions to “relegate underprepared students to dubious degree pathways” (p. 36).

Digital Literacies.

The current generation of students has been called “digital natives,” but there is actually great diversity among students in terms of knowledge and opportunities in the digital world. Innovation in technology, globalization, and the growth and variety of interactive media have changed society, and the field of education needs to respond by exploring the potential of the digital age (Beavis, 2013) to prepare students for their future. Concerning first-year college writing instruction, Dryer et al (2014) published a statement from the Council of Writing Program Administrators, with emphasis on “complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies” (p. 137). Further, it discusses a “world of fluid forms of communication” and “the inevitability of continuing changes in media, genres, and writing acts to come” (p. 138). In a report on interviews with two first-year writing students, Amicucci (2014) reveals the students’ suggestions for including non-academic digital literacies in class in order to provide a social context for writing and to allow the students to use and share their own digital skills. Suggestions include interaction with peers digitally, including on Facebook, and having the opportunity in class to code switch between non-academic language and the more formal style generally required in English classes.

Facebook is a ubiquitous presence among college students, and so several researchers have studied aspects of this most popular of social media among college students. Selwyn (2009) studied over 600 college students' use of Facebook and concluded that its use is "unremarkable" (p. 157) but not a cause for alarm by educators. Many researchers, however, recognize the value of digital literacy practices like social media as windows to an essential part of the lives of this generation of college students. An ethnographic study of two first-year college students (Stirling, 2016) revealed two contrasting stories of Facebook use: one of connection and one of disengagement. The researcher notes that social media experiences are not uniform, but rather depend on many factors, including socioeconomic status. A study of gender difference in Facebook (Shepherd, 2016) reported on a survey of first-year college students, finding that women use Facebook more and are more thoughtful about its use than men. Addressing the concept of voice in composition studies, Amicucci (2017) analyzed one first-year college student's activity on Facebook, finding that she has created a certain "not too personal self" (p. 48) on her site as a "secondary Discourse" (p. 38). Concerning studies of Facebook among developmental college students, one study (Ingalls, 2017) reports on the use of Facebook as a learning management system in a developmental writing course. Results suggested that Facebook is an excellent way to introduce students to the use of technology in their college classrooms, but that instructors are more reluctant than the students in the use of technology. Another venture into the social nature of online writing (DePew, 2011) analyzed the writing strategies of multilingual developmental writing students on Facebook, and reported that, similar to native English speakers, the multilingual students make usage and mechanical errors on their Facebook posts, as well

as deliberate decisions to use language in non-standard ways to make statements about their identity and their ethnic heritage, and for social affirmation.

Facebook studies involving participants other than college students can also add to our understanding of social media as literacy. A study (McLean, 2010) of a teenage immigrant's digital literacies, including Facebook, showed how, by designing her own set of communications online, the young woman was able to construct her various identities as a Caribbean, an American, and a learner, and see her language and cultural resources as appreciated and not deprecated. Davies (2012) analyzed screenshots from 25 teenagers' Facebook accounts, chosen by them. She used discourse analysis to consider how they indicated friendship, inclusivity, and how Facebook was affecting how they saw themselves and their relationships. In another Facebook study (Davies, 2013), she followed four young women hairdressers' use of their pages to construct gendered identities. Mendelson & Papacharissi (2011) studied Facebook photo galleries. They identified each photo as to participants, topic, setting, and all comments. They also used semiotic analysis to place content into a larger cultural context of meaning, looking for recurring patterns.

Studies in other social media continue to add to our understanding of digital literacy practices. Instagram has been analyzed by a few researchers (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhamtati, 2014; Mirsarraf, Shairi, & Ahmadpanah, 2017; Mosley, Abreu, Ruderman, & Crowell, 2017), revealing how this site, also, provides a platform for a broad social connection and identity construction. A study of Flickr (Davies, 2007) provides detail about the provenance of online images, which transform into shared experiences on social media and accrue histories of their own. Studies of fan

communities (Black, 2009; Korobkova & Black, 2014) use Gee's version of discourse analysis to trace identity constructions. Alvermann et al. (2012) report on five multiple-case studies of teenagers' use of web-based resources and digital literacy skills to construct their identities online. The analysis integrates new literacies with multimodality. Gillen (2009) utilized what she called "virtual literacy ethnography" (p. 57) to investigate the literacy practices of teenagers in a three-dimensional online world, finding that world to be highly literate and the participants using not just writing, but a multiplicity of semiotic modes for meaning making.

Multimodality

Multimodality has become an essential component of the analysis of texts, especially since the digital modalities have become so much a part of everyday life. Multimodality provides affordances that are not simply a new way to make meaning, but a different kind of meaning (Hull & Nelson, 2005). When analyzing a multimodal text, it is important "to understand both the individual and combinatory semiotic contributions made to the synesthetic whole by its material components" (p. 234). They illustrate their methods and results with a detailed study of a multimedia story created at a center designed to provide a creative outlet for children and adults in West Oakland CA. They note that one great benefit of showing multimodality to be a "democratizing force, opening up what counts as valued communication" (p. 253).

Several studies have highlighted the multimodal text creations of college students. A study (Monty, 2015) of college students living near the US – Mexican border investigates how they use mobile devices, multimodality, and social media to negotiate their transnational loyalties and to create their own academic spaces beyond the

boundaries of the institutions. Other researchers (Jiang & Luk, 2016) studied undergraduate English students in China as they composed multimodal texts, to learn why the use of multimodality is engaging and motivating. They found seven factors that contributed to this: challenge, curiosity, control, fantasy, competition, cooperation, and recognition. On the other hand, some researchers found challenges in students' attempts to communicate multimodally. In a study (Grouling & McKinney, 2016) to document college students' use of multimodality in assignments, researchers found that, despite official promotion of multimodal instruction by the university, few students brought multimodal texts into the writing center or knew the meaning of the term multimodality. They suspect that the students found multimodal composing difficult. Another factor for this reluctance to incorporate multimodalities into their writing may be the unwillingness of their professors to incorporate this relatively new concept into their instruction. Another study (Gunsberg, 2015) of a college English course requiring students to create a multimodal internet text using Adobe Flash Professional found that the students put more effort into the technical, interactive, and visual effects than they did the research and written content involved. They recommend a more integrated teaching approach.

Other studies researched the use of multimodal texts by children and adolescents. Researchers (Kim & Omerbasic, 2016) studied adolescents in various countries who engaged with Korean drama through multimodal literacy practices. They note the global reach of the students' engagement with these dramas, and the impact that these practices can have on individuals. Another researcher (Pyles, 2017) analyzed conversations between young people creating films and their media arts instructors, illustrating how the students negotiated their voice and the power dynamics of the interactions. Children

using cameras were the subjects of a study (Luttrell, 2010) that researched how children perceive and navigate linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and economic differences, relationships, and identities, with the use of picture-taking. Another study (Nagle & Stooke, 2016) describes the meaning-making process of four 13- and 14-year-old students designing history projects. Significantly, the researchers argue that multimodal literacies can bridge gaps between students' in-school and out-of-school experiences and identities.

Funds of Knowledge

The original perspective on research in funds of knowledge in education included teachers as co-researchers (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Barton & Tan, 2009), in an attempt to provide practical pedagogical approaches for the schools. Rios-Aguilar (2010) measured the relationship between students' funds of knowledge and their success academically and in other areas, finding a variety of theoretically relevant factors affecting their success, and concluding that it is critical that educators focus on Latina(o) students' knowledge and skills. Other research has included social activists (Guajardo, Guajardo, & Casaperalta, 2008), or has focused on students' out-of-school funds of knowledge, not only within the family but also in the wider community (Andrews & Yee, 2006), as well as with popular culture (Irizarry, 2009). Other researchers (Mangual Figueroa, Suh, & Byrnes, 2015) analyzed discourse from role-playing activities involving immigrant parents and graduate students, rehearsing phone calls to the school. Through this participation the graduate students shifted their beliefs somewhat, viewing the parents as competent and knowledgeable in educational settings, although they continued to reproduce traditional power structures by not consistently addressing parental concerns. A study of Latina(o) middle school students' use of funds of knowledge in a

science class (Moje et al., 2004) revealed the students' large quantity of knowledge related to their parents' work both outside and inside the home, experiences in the community, as well as their international travel, but acknowledged that this knowledge was seldom mentioned in the classroom. Mathematics understanding can also be supported through a funds of knowledge approach (Williams et al., 2016). This study followed three Latino families as the parents nurtured and encouraged their children's math learning.

Although the concept of funds of knowledge originated with work among Mexican-Americans, researchers have applied the theory to other marginalized groups, as well. One scholar related it to "culturally responsive pedagogy" (Irizarry, 2009, p. 489), drawing from research with urban teachers, and showed how the urban youth culture, including hip-hop, can be used as a bridge to help students relate to the school curriculum. In a study of pedagogical approaches in a sixth-grade unit on nutrition in a low-income school (Barton & Tan, 2009), researchers analyzed different types of funds of knowledge which the students brought to class and found that these contributions augmented the students' learning experiences and outcomes.

Several studies have focused on college students. A study of first-generation, low-income college students in engineering (Smith & Lucena, 2016) revealed that, although the students can feel uncertain when facing financial and other pressures, they were able to draw on their funds of knowledge for their education, and when these funds were validated, it established for them a sense of belonging in the field of engineering. Carter (2015) has used "digital literacy maps" (p. 27) to help herself and her basic writing students to understand the relationship between the funds of knowledge from their

discourse communities and their academics. Daddow (2016) conducted action research to examine how college students use their funds of knowledge as assets in disciplinary learning.

Conclusion

This literature review covered the significant recent research into developmental education and also studies specifically related to developmental writing, as well as research involving digital literacies, social media, multimodality, and funds of knowledge. The research into developmental writing, although prolific, provokes many questions and concerns. One review of developmental literacy research (Perin, 2013) found that many of the studies lack rigor and show methodological flaws, asserting that there is still much to be learned about teaching literacy to underprepared college students. Many of the studies described here indicate greater success with the pedagogical approach or conceptual framework espoused by the researchers than with the current approach. Addressing the affective issues faced by developmental students, particularly by the use of efforts involving social relations like learning communities, has have provided promising results, but most do not report on long-term positive effects on college success or increased graduation rates. In fact, several studies have found little or no correlation between completing developmental writing courses and subsequent greater success in higher education. It is important to note, however, that none of these studies has used an ethnographic approach to highlight individual developmental writing students' uses of literacy in all its modes, to bring to light their creativity, their relationships with institutions of power, and their potential in the academic community.

This dissertation, with its focus on individual students to connect them to the larger context of the deficit perspective of the institution of higher education, has as its goal to create change within that institution. Concerning literacy instruction, Heath (2001) argues, “a unilinear model of development in the acquisition of language structures and uses cannot adequately account for culturally diverse ways of acquiring knowledge or developing cognitive styles” (p. 339). Referring to “basic writers” in a similar sense, Shaughnessy (1976) places the responsibility to change not on the students, but on their instructors, and proposes a “development scale for teachers” which includes four stages, each one reflecting a level of growth in the perception of their students as intelligent young people, capable and willing to succeed in higher education. The four stages include: “guarding the tower ... converting the natives, ... sounding the depths, ... and ... diving in” (pp. 312-317). The final step, she asserts, suggests that “the teacher who has come this far must now make a decision to remediate himself, to become a student of new disciplines and of his students themselves in order to perceive both their difficulties and their incipient excellence” (p. 317). Accordingly, to counteract the deficit perspective and impersonal nature of most of the research into developmental education, with this study I will “dive into” the literacy practices of seven remarkable first-year college students who have been assigned to a developmental writing course. This study will reveal what I have learned as I became their student: the unrecognized intelligence, creativity, and energy they have demonstrated as they experienced their remedial writing courses at the beginning of their college experience. This study focuses on the everyday literacy practices of these seven marginalized students which often go unrecognized in the dominant discourses about literacy and composition in college, and to reveal the

social structures, cultures, and relationships that surround these practices, in order to better understand the participants' identity constructions and interactions with and resistance to power forces. This study will present each student in depth as a multifaceted individual, living literate traditions and rich cultures, and attempting to adjust their identity to the academic discourse required to complete college successfully.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this section I will describe my methodology for data collection and analysis. The first section of this chapter will address reflexivity, my own positionality as a researcher. Next, I will discuss the principles of a grounded theory methodology and issues of validity and the concept of research conducted with an ethnographic perspective. The next section will describe the process I used to recruit my seven participants, and details of my data collection. I will then provide details of my data analysis procedures.

Positioning Myself as a Researcher

In this section I will describe my own reflexivity, which is defined as “acknowledging, reflecting, and reporting how one’s identities, beliefs, knowledge, and relationships to people, material, and concepts influence one’s work” (Trainor, 2013, p. 130).

Theoretical views of reflexivity. “A scientific practice which fails to question itself does not, properly speaking, know what it does” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 236). Bourdieu makes a point of emphasizing that reflexivity on the part of the researcher “is the necessary prerequisite of any rigorous sociological practice” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 33), and yet is often done superficially. Even if the researcher notes her class background, race, etc., she cannot ignore the fact that, as an academic or intellectual, she has detached herself from the experiences of the study participants, and so is reporting from a different perspective. Bourdieu (1989) rejects the commonly held dichotomy between “objectivism and subjectivism,” asserting that these two perspectives stand in a “dialectical relationship.” In order to move beyond this “artificial opposition,” the researcher must

break with the mindset that recognizes “no reality other than those that are available to direct intuition in ordinary experience” (p. 14-15), and rather focus on social relationships, including power relationships, which can be masked by situations that are more easily observed and recorded. “The visible, that which is immediately given, hides the invisible which determines it” (p. 16). “Theoretic knowledge owes a number of its most essential properties to the fact that the conditions under which it is produced are not that of practice” (Bourdieu, 1989b, p. 34); therefore, we need to understand and acknowledge the limits of theoretical knowledge. The task of the researcher to avoid these “serious technical mistakes” (p. 35) is not only to tell the truth about her subject, but also to acknowledge that the world she is investigating “is the site of an ongoing struggle to tell the truth of this world” (p. 35). Charmaz (2014) similarly advises the grounded theory researcher to assume that social reality is “multiple, processual, and constructed” (p.13), and includes the positions and preconceptions that the researcher and participants bring to the study. She sees research as a construction that is built under specific conditions of which we may or may not be aware and emphasizes that a researcher is never neutral or value-free, and that her values actually shape the very facts that can be identified.

My reflexivity. In view of this advice, I will acknowledge points about my own identity and positionality as a researcher, with the understanding that my view of the subjects of my study will never be totally objective, nor totally subjective. Like most of the participants in my study, I am the grandchild of immigrants. I was raised in an urban, working class family; my mother had an eighth-grade education and my father graduated from high school. I was one of the first in my extended family to graduate from college

and acquire an advanced degree. My later experience as a mother of two and a stepmother of three, all of whom are now adults, has given me a great insight into the struggles of college-age men and women. In addition, for the past nine years, I have taught in higher education: developmental writing and reading in a community college, and the introduction to education course at Rutgers GSE. All these experiences have given me a great deal of understanding and empathy for students who make the decision to attend college as part of their life's goals and then encounter challenges. Furthermore, during my years of study for the Ph. D. I have acquired an in-depth knowledge of educational principles, particularly in the field of literacy, and this has made me aware of the shortcomings of developmental reading and writing instruction as currently practiced. I am aware, however, that my ethnicity and my current socioeconomic status as an older white, middle-class woman sets me apart from the participants in my study, and that I am, therefore, detached from them and can never fully appreciate their experiences and struggles. What I can do, however, as a Bourdieusian researcher, is to acknowledge that my perspective differs from that of the participants and attempt in this study to look for and uncover situations that have been normalized or taken for granted, particularly concerning the power forces that affect the lives of the participants.

From the participants' perspective, because of my age and experience, I believe that they initially perceived me as a college professor and may have been cautious about our conversations. I attempted to alleviate this discomfort by assuring them that I did not even know most of their professors and that our conversations were entirely confidential. I also showed a sincere interest in them, their experiences, and their feelings, and provided encouragement for them as they worked through their first year of college. I

tried to maintain a non-judgmental and caring attitude in my demeanor and in my communications with the participants. As a result, I have developed a warm relationship with each one that has continued past the data collection period, through texting and emails. I was thus later able to question them to clarify points in the analysis, as well as wish them, for example, success in their finals or an enjoyable semester break.

Grounded Theory

Data collection and analysis for this study were conducted following the principles of grounded theory. According to Charmaz (2014), this includes using inductive logic, subjecting the data to rigorous analysis, and constructing theories grounded in the data. Grounded theorists conduct data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process; use comparative methods; draw on the data to build new conceptual categories; develop inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis; and emphasize the construction of theory. The analysis process begins with initial coding, followed by focused coding and categorization. During these steps, Charmaz (2014) encourages the researcher to conduct “theoretical sampling, which means seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in your emerging theory” (p. 192). This process includes “abductive reasoning” (p. 200), imaginative reasoning to attempt to find answers to questions concerning unexpected data. These processes culminate finally in the production of theory, defined this way: “A theory states relationships between abstract concepts and may aim for either explanation or understanding” (p. 228). The theory constructed in this study consists of the findings and conclusions which I arrived at through my analysis.

“Constructivist grounded theory” (Charmaz, 2014) fits well with this study because many of Charmaz’s guidelines resemble those of Bourdieu, particularly her view of reflexivity toward our actions, our situations, and our participants. This style of analysis involves acknowledging multiple perspectives, noting that the analysis is influenced by our own perspectives, and understanding that the researcher can become emotionally moved by her participants and their lives. A researcher using constructivist grounded theory views data as constructed, not discovered; the analyses are interpretive, not objective; and she recognizes the multiple and sometimes conflicting realities that comprise the study. This particular approach to analysis is a good fit for this study because it allowed me to go deep into the analysis of the data without isolating it from its social and cultural surroundings.

Validation

Validation has taken on many different perspectives as the various approaches to qualitative research have evolved over the years (Creswell, 2013). I have subscribed to Charmaz’s approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), which is to evaluate a study using the criteria of credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness. This study is credible because it makes strong, logical links between my data and the analysis. My connections and conclusions are original and offer new insights into the field of developmental education. The analytic categories have resonance because they portray the fullness of the participants’ experiences. Finally, my study is useful because it offers interpretations that can be applied to create change in practice. In addition, to be assured of accuracy in my analysis, I conducted a member check (Creswell, 2013) by sharing a composite of the information that I learned from each participant with them and asking for confirmation of

my accuracy. I also was careful to triangulate my data from interviews with my field notes and my insights from social media, using a combination of the sources to reach my conclusions (Creswell, 2013).

Ethnographic Perspective

Furthermore, this study has been conducted using an “ethnographic perspective” (Street, 2012, p. 39), which involves accounting for context, culture, social practices, identities, and power relationships in the analysis. A study with an ethnographic perspective focuses on real-world settings, in real people’s lives, with a multi-method, holistic approach, and in an interpretative style that aims to represent the participants’ points of view (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). It is “characterized by disciplined and reflective ethnographic inquiry” (Street, 2012, p. 39), to understand from the subjects’ perspective the significance of the literacy events and practices of the people being studied. The data need to be analyzed first into types of literacy events, then in terms of their specific features, and finally interpreted in a way that relates the events to the overarching literacy practices; that is, the larger sociocultural patterns indicated by the observed events (Heath, 2001). Both the grounded theory approach and the ethnographic perspective aim to elicit theoretically valid insights from an in-depth analysis of literacy as practiced by a particular group of people in a particular time span, while also connecting these insights to the broader discussions of literacy, identity, and power forces which influence people’s lives (Barton & Hamilton, 1998).

This study can also be considered a critical ethnography, because in it I am attempting to reveal the presuppositions concerning the intelligence and academic potential of marginalized college students and expose the ways in which these

assumptions are “ideologically constructed and embedded in power relationships” (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 4). In addition, this study aims to shed light on and document the participants’ unique everyday literacies that go unrecognized by the dominant discourses of the institution of education, and ultimately, to bring about significant change in the way that higher education institutions perceive and educate students marginalized by race, ethnicity, language, or socioeconomic status.

The Recruitment Process

(All the names of participants and institutions in this dissertation are pseudonyms,) I used criterion sampling (Creswell, 2013) to recruit the seven participants in this study. I found two four-year institutions which allowed me to recruit and interview their students and observe them in class and in other campus activities. At State University, an administrator in the state’s educational opportunity program for students from low-income families asked me to design a recruiting email, which she forwarded to all the first-year students in the program. Through this I was able to recruit Daniel, Ayushi, and Luciana. One writing instructor at State University also allowed me to speak to one of his classes and distribute a questionnaire, but that did not result in any additional participants. At Sunnyside College, one writing instructor also allowed me to speak to her class and distribute the questionnaire and encouraged her students to volunteer for the study. Three students initially volunteered; one dropped out after several weeks, but Victoria and Darla did stay with the program. One community college student, Jerry, joined the study through his sister who was a former student of mine. In the second semester, I visited another basic writing class at Sunnyside and initially recruited three more students. Two of them dropped out quickly, but Joaquin stayed with the study. That

gave me a total of seven participants – three at State University, three at Sunnyside College, and one at a community college - whose interviews, activities, and various literacy artifacts have provided the data for this study. As a small incentive, I offered the volunteers a \$25 gift card to either Amazon or Barnes & Noble at the end of the interview phase.

The Data Collection Sites

State University is a large research university in the northeastern part of the US. My data collection took place on one of several urban campuses that are part of the university. This particular campus encompasses over 36,000 undergraduate students and boasts a very good national ranking in terms of ethnic and racial diversity, with over 50% of the student population composed of ethnic minorities. Daniel, Ayushi, and Luciana were all resident first-year students there at the beginning of data collection, and each had been assigned by placement test to a developmental writing course known as “basic composition.”

Sunnyside College is a small, private college in the northeastern part of the US. It prides itself on having one of the most ethnically diverse student bodies in the US, and having more than 50% of its students who identify as being the first generation in their families to attend college. Victoria, Darla, and Joaquin were all first-year students there at the beginning of data collection. Darla was a resident student and Victoria and Joaquin were commuters. All three had been assigned by placement test to the college’s developmental basic writing course.

Jerry attended a community college for the first semester of the study, and had been assigned by placement test to classes in developmental reading and writing, and a

student success course. For reasons that I will explain later, he dropped out in the middle of the second semester but continued with the study. I did not have IRB permission from that institution, and so I was not able to observe any of his classes, and I did all his interviews outside of the college.

The Data Collection Process

The data for this study consisted of 37 interviews, 24 observations, 18 months of participation in social media, 115 documents, and frequent supplementary emails and texts. I interviewed each of the three participants from State University a total of five times in the approximately 13-month period of data collection, in various locations convenient to them on campus, including the student centers and libraries. I conducted three interviews with Jerry and one with his father at their home, and a fourth one at a public library. With the Sunnyside students, I conducted four interviews with Darla, two with Victoria, and two with Joaquin on campus at a coffee shop or in the library. I conducted a third interview with Victoria at her home and a fourth in a library off campus, along with one interview with her parents at her home. After the second interview, Joaquin preferred not to be interviewed again, but I did keep in touch with him and all the other participants via text and email. I observed all the students except Jerry in class when I was able to obtain permission from their professors, as well as at their jobs and a few on-campus activities. I also collected their academic writing assignments and followed them on Facebook and Instagram for the entire data collection period. In addition, I collected interesting data from all of them via email and texting.

I recorded the interviews on my laptop using Microsoft One Note. I listened to each interview as soon as possible afterward, and either transcribed them myself or sent

them to a transcription service. I then printed out the transcripts and played the recordings again, stopping to correct inaccuracies and to make notes in the margins of preliminary ideas for coding. After each of the interviews, I made notes about interesting points that I wanted to follow up on in the next interview, and listed the questions I wanted to ask. I found that the participants were more candid and shared more details with me as they became comfortable with me in later interviews. In this way I was able to pursue certain topics in more depth with additional questions.

When I observed the participants' classes, I asked permission from the instructors via email ahead of time. My observations of classes were limited because many of the professors did not reply or turned me down. When I was able to observe classes, I attempted to quietly slip into the classroom and find a seat in which I could see my participant, the instructor, and the other students. I took fieldnotes on my laptop during all my observations, except for three off-campus jobs in retail establishments. For those, I recorded my fieldnotes immediately afterward in my car.

To achieve a complete understanding of the students' literacy practices, I also collected the participants' academic documents, including the papers they wrote for their writing classes, in some cases both their first and final drafts, and written assignments for other classes. Some of the participants emailed their documents to me directly while others shared with me the contents of their Google Docs. Ayushi's composition instructor prefers to write comments on paper by hand, and she gave me the hard copies of her final papers with comments. I also requested each one to share with me one, two, or three pictures of what I called "artifacts" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011), a person, place, or thing that symbolizes something important in their lives, along with a short explanation. Six of the

seven complied with this request and this gave me another insight into their aspirations, values, and identities.

Throughout data collection, I wrote in-process memos (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995), to record initial impressions and develop potential points for analysis. For example, in memos I made notes about questions to ask the participants in their next interview, notes that the students texted me about their literacy events, and comments about meetings with administrators.

The final part of my data collection involved observing the participants' social media for the approximately 13 months of data collection. I opened an Instagram account and a Facebook page separate from my personal page and open only to my study participants and asked each of them to "friend" me. They all did, but I found that Victoria, Daniel, and Joaquin participated very little in any social media. Ayushi and Darla were prolific in Facebook and Instagram; Jerry posted very frequently on Facebook but had no Instagram account; Luciana posted only on Instagram and later opened a second Instagram account devoted to her artwork. I visited the social media at least two or three times per week and informally followed their posts. In the data analysis section, I will give the details of how I analyzed the social media data.

Data Analysis

The coding and analysis for this study adhered to the guidelines of grounded theory as delineated by Charmaz (2014). I conducted my preliminary analysis during data collection. This included initial coding for the topics discussed in the interviews and making connections with observations in my field notes. This enabled me to prepare questions for subsequent interviews for more clarification on topics of interest. My initial

codes included, for example, “college classes,” “description of myself,” “family,” “K to 12 education,” “use of technology,” and “social media.” Sub-codes under “college classes” included “frustration,” “anxiety about grades,” “difficulties scheduling,” and “writing class.” “Description of myself” included the sub-codes “how others see me,” “political opinions,” and “things I am good at,” while “K to 12 education” included sub-codes “feeling ‘not as good,’” “learning English,” and “preparing for college.”

I then conducted focused coding. This included subsuming many of the initial codes into one and creating new codes to focus my analysis in directions that seemed salient. For example, I found that the participants had expressed a variety of feelings concerning their writing classes and so I included many of the excerpts from “frustration,” and “anxiety about grades” and made “writing class” a focused code. I soon realized that the codes “in-school literacy practices” and “out-of-school literacy practices” were not a useful classification, because I could not easily characterize some activities, such as studying or on-campus activities, as one or the other. Therefore, I changed the codes to “academic” and “non-academic.” I also combined “traditional” with “digital” literacy practices, because, except when required by a professor, virtually all their literacy practices are digital. Eventually, I decided on themes which I wanted to develop, including K to 12 education, use of technology, and writing class.

Aligning with grounded theory methodology, I constantly compared the data I was collecting and coding from various sources. The students revealed many details of their efforts to learn concepts and prepare for exams, to gain good grades from the sometimes unpredictable professors. I compared these conversations with the field notes from my observations of their classes, as well as the academic papers that they shared

with me. Some of the written class assignments which the participants shared provided valuable insights into situations which they mentioned briefly in their interviews; for example, Luciana and Ayushi both shared in writing more intimate accounts of their relationships with their mothers, and this helped me to understand more about their identity struggles.

Another step in grounded theory analysis is theoretical sampling, which involves “seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in your emerging theory” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 192). Early in the analytic process, as I began to notice themes that I wanted to study in more depth, I was able to go back in subsequent interviews and question the participants for more information about that topic or ask for clarification about the details or the participants’ feelings. I made note of these insights through analytic memos (Saldana, 2013) which I wrote constantly. For example, in my third interview with Ayushi she told me that she had been placed into a remedial English class in her first year of high school but sent an email to the principal to get herself into the honors English class for the following year. I wanted to know more about that process and how she felt about it, and to make sure that I had the details correct. I wrote a memo to remind me of the details that I wanted to confirm, and I asked her about it again in the fifth interview. I often repeated questions in later interviews and received more in-depth replies. Also, I noticed early that the participants generally blamed themselves for low grades in K to 12 and in college and hardly ever spoke disparagingly of teachers or professors. Since I was, at the same time, observing them in their classes, I had a view of what they were contending with in many cases. I therefore decided to follow up later in the semester with questions about their grades in those courses and how they felt about

the way the material was presented. This led to my decision to relate this data to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence. Another theme that I pursued was important among six of the seven participants whose first language was not English: their process of learning English and how this was handled (or not handled) by their elementary schools. Later, I decided to connect this language learning to symbolic power and symbolic violence, as well.

Analysis of Digital and Visual Data.

Many scholars claim that in western society the visual in countless varieties including photography, video, and digital media, is now the primary way in which people interact with the world (Rose, 2016). Kress (2003) asserts that "*the world told* is a different world to *the world shown*" (p. 1). Rose notes that these visual images are always constructed from a specific perspective; they are "never innocent. ... They interpret the world; they display it in very particular ways; they represent it" (p. 2). Words provide facts and explanations, while images provide interpretations, colored by ideologies, through connotations and suggestions (Pennington, 2017).

According to Rose (2016), three criteria must be considered for a critical visual methodology: take the images themselves seriously; consider the social conditions and cultural practices surrounding the images; and be aware of your own reflexivity as you study the images. In addition, she approaches the methodology in terms of four sites: the site of production (where the image is made); the site of the visual content of the image itself; the site of its circulation; and the site of its audiencing. Each of these sites has three different aspects, or modalities: technological (how an image has been made and how it travels), compositional (including content, color, and organization), and social (including

economic, cultural, and power relationships). This study, using both the New Literacy Studies and multimodality as a framework, must take account of both the social and cultural situations of the authors of the texts, as well as the material features of the texts and their contextual meanings (Street, Pahl, & Rowsell, 2017). A combination of these two methods of analysis opens up the concepts of literacy events and practices to “a wider range of semiotic systems” (p. 231). Further, “the conflation and intersection of Discourses become modalities in texts, which, alongside practices provide a formative picture of the meaning-maker” (Rowsell & Pahl, 2007, p. 392). Therefore, “an ethnographic lens gives multimodal analysis a social map” (Street, Pahl, & Rowsell, 2017, p. 233), providing an understanding of both what our participants are doing in their social and cultural contexts as well as the tools they use in the process, giving us a deep sense of context and identities.

The process of analysis of social media postings calls for looking for recurring patterns or themes, as well as what is absent from the postings, since “the text is seen as a window onto its maker” (Jewitt, 2017, p. 33). Hand (2017) suggests that qualitative analysis should look for symbolic, “latent content” in images (p. 218), to create a critical analysis of their meanings and how they construct identity and culture. This type of analysis is relatively new, and so to design a plan, I also took lessons from the following authors who have written about visual and digital analysis: Amicucci, 2017; Mosley et al., 2017; Black et al., 2014; Beavis, 2013; Stornaiuolo, Higgs, & Hull, 2013; Salomon, 2013; Davies, 2012; Burnett & Merchant, 2011; Pauwels, 2011; Boyd & Ellison, 2007. To begin my analysis of the participants’ social media, I catalogued all the Facebook and Instagram posts from September 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017, of Victoria,

Daniel, Joaquin, Ayushi, and Luciana. I only catalogued about one month of Darla's Facebook postings because there were too many to continue, but I did go through all her Instagram posts. Jerry has no Instagram site, but is very prolific on Facebook, and so I did about 3 ½ months of his postings there. I documented in a table the date of each posting, subject, purpose, and whether it is an original, a repost, or unsure. I then summarized my results in another table, which I will show in chapter six.

To analyze selected screen shots from social media, I designed a rubric. My original rubric had 16 points for the first round of my analysis:

1. Name of file (Participant's name, FB or Instagram, and identifying number)
2. Date of post
3. Type of post (e.g., video, photo, verbal message)
4. Topic of post
5. Author:
 - 1) Original
 - 2) Repost
 - 3) Unclear (It is often difficult to know whether an entry is original or has been reposted.)
6. Modes involved in production:
 - 1) Text/words
 - 2) Photo(s)
 - 3) Watercolor
 - 4) Ink
 - 5) Digital artwork
 - 6) Video
 - 7) Animation
 - 8) Sound/Audio
 - 9) Symbols
7. What is depicted in image
8. Introductory comment
9. Visual elements (context, details of picture, location, etc.)
10. Likes, emojis, any other semiotic elements
11. Additional comments and conversations
12. Purpose:
 - 1) Create an image of self
 - 2) Influence opinions
 - 3) Inform
 - 4) Share experiences
 - 5) Share art

- 6) Situate self culturally
- 7) Situate self socially
- 8) Tease or joke
- 13. Connotations (social or cultural clues)
- 14. Norms and ideologies implied or naturalized
- 15. Hyperlinks
- 16. Any other observations.

After using this for a selection of screenshots, I consolidated and simplified my rubric and continued my analysis with this:

Table 1: Analysis of Selected Social Media (Revised October 13, 2017)

| Name of file – Date – Purpose of post | |
|--|--|
| 1. Content of post (topic) | |
| 2. Author (original, repost, or unclear) | |
| 3. Introductory message (to contextualize post) | |
| 4. Modal elements | |
| 5. Audience response | |
| 6. Social and cultural norms and ideologies (implied or naturalized) | |
| 7. Hyperlinks | |
| 8. Any other observations | |

I analyzed a total of 33 screen shots using this rubric. Certain participants are more prolific on social media than others, and two, in particular – Luciana and Ayushi – provided a wealth of social and cultural clues in their posts. I coded these 33 analyses to identify themes which I discuss as part of their identity constructions in chapter six.

Analysis of artifacts. I asked the participants to share with me “artifacts” (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011) that express something important about themselves, objects or symbols

that they hold dear and can give me an insight into their values and identity constructions. This addition to my study, an “artifactual approach” (p. 130), draws on the funds of knowledge concept as it relates these artifacts to traditions and understandings that are important in the participants’ lives, as well as Bourdieu’s habitus, which involves mental structures and traditions that are passed down through generations. The analysis of artifacts also draws from Vygotsky’s notion of the mediation of cultural symbols and signs in the development of an individual’s identities (Bartlett, 2005). It emphasizes literacy as material, since a text is always expressed in material form; for example, on a screen, in a book, on a sign. Artifacts, therefore, carry material qualities that symbolize the culture, values, and practices of a community and so become a window to the individual’s culture and identities (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011). I used the above social media rubric to help me analyze the artifacts, also.

Framework for Analysis of Identity

The analysis of identity in this study includes a framework designed by Burgess & Ivanic (2010), Gee’s (2008) “big-D Discourse,” and the concepts of funds of knowledge and funds of identity (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2013). “A single act of writing involves the coordination of multiple processes that exist on different timescales” (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010). Burgess & Ivanic’s framework involves timescales and Discourse to analyze identity in academic writing. They argue that it is necessary to consider timescales to understand how specific events contribute to the student’s identity construction. In producing texts, writers “coordinate processes (of identification) that unfold over multiple timescales” (p. 234). If timescales are not considered, then the implication would be that identities as described in the writing are permanent rather than

consisting of multiple facets and in a constant state of flux. In producing texts, writers coordinate their processes of identification over several timescales, and it is important to note the interplay of the various timescales in which each element of the writer's identity exists. The concept of "big-D Discourse" (Gee, 2008) is also essential, they argue, to identify the "practices, interests, beliefs, allegiances, experiences of power relationships, and feelings" (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010, p. 247) which the writers bring to the documents. Other considerations are the "discoursal self... an interface between the identity the writer brings to the writing, and the writer's anticipation of how she will be read" (p. 240); and the "autobiographical self" (p. 238), which involves factors derived from a person's history brought to the current piece.

The funds of knowledge and identity, the "homes, peer groups, other systems and networks of relationships that shape the oral and written texts young people make meaning of and produce from classroom to classroom and from home to peer group, to school or to community" (Moje et al., 2004) relate as well to Gee's Discourse, along with concepts used by other theorists, including Foucault, Lave and Wenger, and Bourdieu, all of whom in some way argue that individuals' identities are always inextricably connected to their earliest experiences and the influences of their sociocultural roots (Gee, 2002). Therefore, these three related notions of timescale, Discourse, and funds of identity form the framework of my analysis of identity in the digital literacies of my study participants.

Chapter Four: Participants' Literacy Practices

This chapter will address the research question: What are the literacy practices of first-year college students who have been placed into a developmental writing course? It is important to note that a study of literacy involves not simply an analysis of texts but also an understanding of the practices surrounding the texts, the social interactions involved, and the individuals' relationships with forces of power in their lives (Barton, 2007). Accordingly, this chapter will present a profile of each young person, presenting examples of the ways that each one used literacy in their life, followed by a description of the participants' literacy practices, traditional and digital, academic and non-academic, and personalize those practices. This will provide a foundation for subsequent chapters which address relationships with power and how the participants constructed identities through these literacy practices.

Participants' Literacy Profiles

In this section I will provide a profile of each of the seven participants, including their uses of literacy in the various domains of their lives and a sample of the texts they have created in their first year in college. A text is "a physical piece of language, audible or visible" (Ivanic, 1994, p. 5), and so includes not just written material but also art, sound, and video. Except for a few pieces that I shortened for clarity, I have reproduced the texts as written. Since it is not my goal here to critique the participants' grammatical or spelling errors, I have reproduced each of them as written except for deleting identifying information. I do not include screenshots from Facebook because on that site each page shows multiple pictures and to block out all the faces would destroy the effectiveness of the page.

Ayushi. Ayushi, a student at State University, was born in Bangladesh and immigrated to the US with her parents when she was about three years old. They first lived in Florida, and when she was about four and a half, they returned to Bangladesh for about six months, after which they settled in a city in the northeastern part of the US. As a young child, she spoke Bangla at home. She does not remember taking ESL classes in school. A large percentage of the students in her elementary school were Bengali, and she had a teacher in first grade who spoke to them in Bangla when necessary. She remembers that she got Ds and Cs in first and second grades, then jumping to As in third grade. At first, she said that she did not know the reason for this change in her grades, but later commented that because she did not understand English when she began school, she thought that this made reading and writing difficult in the early grades. She said that her parents did not know enough English to help her with homework, and so she worked on her own and eventually developed competence in reading and writing English. She watched TV a lot at home, especially the Disney Channel, and she believes that this helped her to learn the language.

Ayushi's parents spoke Bangla at home, but her father spoke English well. He has a bachelor's degree and was an accountant in Bangladesh, but here he was a security guard at a clothing store. Her mother was a homemaker and knows some English, but Ayushi frequently helped her to understand items in the mail and sometimes accompanied her to the doctor. Ayushi had one younger brother. She also had three aunts, her mother's sisters, that she was close to; she admired one aunt, in particular, because she was such a strong and independent woman, caring for her husband and her son, despite being part of the Bengali society in which, according to Ayushi, a woman is

considered to have no rights. Her family had a computer at home, which she began to use around age 10, mostly to play games. She began using the computer at school around the same time, and she said that she always got good grades in her technology classes. At home, she generally used the computer to watch TV or listen to music. She tried to get her schoolwork done when she was on campus so that she could focus on her family and relax when she was home.

She attended a vocational high school because, she said, it was a better and safer school than the regular high schools in her city. She studied child development there, in addition to the regular subjects. Since the school drew students from all over her county, she said that the student body was diverse, and she met students from many different ethnicities.

Ayushi said that her parents were very supportive of whatever she chose to do, and they allowed her to be independent and make her own decisions. She said that she always wanted to go to college. When she was deciding which college to attend, she and her dad took a day off to visit State University. She loved it so much that she immediately decided to apply there. She loved the university because it is well known and well respected, even internationally, because the student body is diverse, and because there is always something to do on campus. She continued to praise State University through three semesters and posts frequent pictures of herself on Facebook and Instagram at various sites on campus.

Ayushi attended the university's summer bridge program for students from low-income families. She said that she learned more in this program's writing class than she did in her first-semester basic composition course. Through this program, she also had an

ongoing relationship with a counselor, who advised her throughout her undergraduate career. She had a work-study job in an office on campus in which she did some filing and other paperwork. She said that the people who worked there treated her with respect even though she was “just a student,” and that it was important to her that she treat others, regardless of their rank, with the same respect.

For the first semester, Ayushi took basic composition, creative writing, the math ed course, and three seminars. She had trouble with the math course and when she became frustrated when studying for a test, she Googled how to do the problems. She did not get full credit for her solutions, however, because the professor wanted them done in a particular way. She ended the first semester with a GPA of 3.4, but she felt that she could have done better. In the second semester, she felt that her courses were more difficult because they consisted of lectures with hundreds of students in large lecture halls. She felt that she learned better when a class included discussions. She read ahead in her textbooks when she was particularly interested in a topic; for example, for her communications course she read ahead about listening skills. She also enjoyed her criminology course, and this influenced her decision on a double major in communication and criminal justice. She hoped for a career that also involved education in some capacity.

Although most of her literacy practices were digital, Ayushi sent or gave traditional birthday cards with personal notes to her friends and family. She did not read a conventional newspaper very often, but she did often read the university newspaper on her phone. For current events, she goes to AJPlus.net, which is part of the Al Jazeera Media Network, which she explained, “I really like ... because it breaks down the

information in a very short and concise way that's easy to understand and very user-friendly." One set of books that made an impact on her were *The Kite Runner* and its two sequels: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And the Mountains Echoed*, all by Khaled Hosseini. She said that she could relate to these books because they take place in the part of the world that she is originally from. One lesson that she thought the books teach is self-forgiveness. Ayushi was happy to share details about her Bengali culture, including how her friend "does her henna" (beautiful designs painted onto her hands and arms), some information about Ramadan and Eid. She belonged to the Bengali Students Association. She only attended a few meetings, but she checked their Facebook page to find out about upcoming events. She also told about her visit to a cultural production on campus by a belly dance troupe.

For most of her schoolwork and personal communication, she used her laptop or her phone. She carried her laptop around with her everywhere she went on campus. The apps that she used on her phone include: Facebook Messenger, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, the State University app, the ABC app for watching movies or TV shows, the iHeartRadio for music, Safari, the weather app, and the calendar app. During the winter semester break, Ayushi spent some time online on social media and on the State University website checking her grades and finalizing her schedule for the spring semester. She also bought a few textbooks online.

Ayushi felt that the most important lesson that she had learned so far in college is time management. She said that one thing that helps her is to make a list of everything she has to do and when assignments are due, and cross them off as she accomplishes each one. Ayushi felt that she had changed considerably as a result of her time at State

University. She said, “One thing I learned is, even when it comes to school work or not, you have control over some things and then you just don't have control over other things. So the things you do have control over, use the energy you have and attack them, tackle those things. Before, I didn't do that, so I definitely do that more. And another thing I learned is that when I want something I have to get it. ... If I want change, I have to make it happen. ... I'm seeing things differently.” Concerning her relationships with friends, she said, “I always have patience with people; I just don't have patience with myself. I learned [in my sociology and communications classes] that the people that you surround yourself with, the experience that you have, it tremendously impacts who you are and how you think. ... And I also learned how to work with different people.”

Selections from her texts. Ayushi composed poetry for her creative writing course during her first semester at State University, and then followed that with a course in intermediate poetry in her third semester. According to Bourdieu, “persons experiencing transnational migration or undergoing great social mobility often possess segmented or conflicted dispositional sets,” a situation described as “habitus clivé,” (Friedman, 2015, p. 129), or “segmented or conflictive dispositional sets” (Wacquant, 2006). Ayushi reveals signs of this conflictive habitus in her literacy practices.

The following is one of a series of poems that Ayushi wrote for her creative writing course:

Mom

I always envied all the girls who had a best friend
who was also their mom.

My mother and I,
didn't always throw daggers at each other.

Instead, we kept it at “Did you do the dishes?”

“No, I didn’t.”
 “Well, why not? What’s your excuse?”

I always wore the thick black leggings underneath every short dress
 to make sure my pasty chicken legs were invisible.

Cancelled every plan or attempt at being America’s normal teenager
 because we could not afford to have the community see me grow up.

I bit my tongue
 every time she spoke of a world I could not live in

because of how much I love her
 Yet all she saw was some ungrateful monster.

Don’t get me wrong,
 She tried as the date I would leave approached closer,
 but all the tears were wiped before she could open my always closed door

The late night phone calls with boys whose names she will never learn quickly hushed
 when her soft voice echoed through the halls

My trembling lips never moved
 each time she asked me to open up

You know, I never really tried.

And I will *always somewhat* regret that because,

There WAS an “I love you” in those fights
 where she told me to not go to school so far away from home

And, maybe she didn’t know how to have girl talks during the late nights
 when we stood silently side by side either rolling the dough
 or making cute little complicated designs on the pastry

But I know that there ARE silent “I miss you” every time we speak on the phone
 and I give her a list of everything I ate for dinner

And I can feel both of our hearts fall apart
 every time I say my goodbyes without a hug or kiss

You know, I can’t even remember the last time
 we shared some sort of physical moment.

Probably, when I was *seven or eight*,

Sad, right?

But darling don't you worry,
I *promise* mommy won't do this to you either.

For Ayushi, State University stood for independence from the confining nature of her home habitus developed amid the cultural practices that sprung from past generations. In interviews, she often repeated how supportive her parents were, that they allowed her the freedom to choose to attend college, and that they took pride in her accomplishments. This poem certainly does not contradict her assertions, but it does present a more intimate perspective on her conflicts as she negotiates that always complicated mother-daughter relationship. Ayushi expressed the discomfort that she felt in this relationship as a symbol of the tension between her family habitus and her efforts to create her new, young adult identity as an American college student. Her Bengali family habitus is revealed in the comments about “the thick black leggings underneath every short dress,” and “we could not afford to have the community see me grow up.” Ayushi complained about her mother’s lack of physical affection toward her, but also expressed regret at her own choices not to open up to her. She recognized her mother’s inability to express her love in words, but rather in her concern that she is eating well at school. The closing lines, addressed to a future child, anticipate her efforts to move beyond her family habitus and create a new identity, again reflecting her conflicting habitus. In terms of timescale, “Mom” touches on several as she describes her relationship with her mother. Although she does mention her early childhood, around age seven or eight, as the last time she and her mother “shared some sort of physical moment,” most of her descriptions take the reader to her adolescence, when she as a young woman is attempting to separate herself from her mother and create her own identity. This time seems to be the culmination of Ayushi’s mother-daughter conflicts. She then moves to the time just before her leaving

home for college, and then the present. She implies that recently, as she has matured, she began to realize that her mother does love her but does not express her love the way Ayushi wishes that she would. She then moves to foresee a time when she promises that she will learn from her mother's shortcomings and be more affectionate with her future child. This poem is a poignant example of how Ayushi has used literacy to explore a deeply personal and significant concern in her life.

Social media. Ayushi showed the broadest use of both Facebook and Instagram compared to the other participants, with postings used to situate herself culturally and socially, create an image of herself as a student with growing independence, share experiences, and influence opinions. She posted original thoughts and opinions on Facebook which indicate an interest in sharing insights and information that will be helpful to her friends and relatives. She frequently posted photos of herself, smiling, posing alone or with a friend or relative. As noted above, her most frequent purpose for posting in social media is to situate herself culturally, and so it is significant that her attire in every picture is modest, in alignment with her Muslim identity. In fact, in one post a friend jokingly remarks, "Those ankles!" because that is the only bit of skin showing below her face. These postings also gave her an opportunity to explore her new identity as a college student and reveal her newly acquired freedom, living away from home. Consequently, we can see that her Facebook and Instagram accounts reveal her ongoing process of negotiation of her "conflicted habitus" (Wacquant, 2006), working out the clashes between the two cultures that compose her life now.



This selection is from Instagram and depicts Ayushi at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Sitting in front of a large Arabic mosaic. Her comment is, “Normally, I’m not a big fan of museums (unless it’s food-related) but I genuinely fell in love with the beautiful piece of art behind me so here’s a picture. 😊” The conversation that follows involves joking with her best friend, the one who took the picture. She received 139 “likes,” which signifies that she connected emotionally with many of her followers. I asked her why she had selected that particular piece of art and she replied:

It's beautiful. I'm just not an art person. I don't really like going to museums but that one I thought it stood out to me a lot, mainly because I remember this was the Arabic art section and since I'm Muslim, maybe I'm biased. I just gravitated towards that because it's like my home. That's why. I just love Arabic art. You know when you go to the mosque, you know how they have these designs. I just think they are so beautiful.

This illustrates one affordance of social media that is unprecedented; sharing on these sites is not just informative but also emotional, and Ayushi with her empathetic personality makes full use of that.

Daniel. Daniel was also student at State University. He was a serious student and spent hours each day on his schoolwork. Daniel's parents both came from Mexico. His father worked in a restaurant and his mother was a Yoga instructor. Unlike some other Mexican parents that Daniel knew, they spoke English very well. He said that they spoke mostly English, or a combination of English and Spanish, at home. He did speak Spanish, and, although he said that he did not have occasion to read Spanish very often, he could read it. He was the oldest of four children; he had a sister who is 16 and brothers who were 14 and 10. They were very close to their extended family, many of whom lived nearby. He had two older cousins who were students at the local community college. Daniel acted as a role model for his younger siblings. He said that he regretted that he did not focus on learning reading and writing skills when he was younger, and so he pushed his siblings to read more. He said, "I kind of forced them to a point ... to a point where they just eventually thought it was normal ... and now my youngest brother, he goes through Harry Potter books, big, thick books; he's smart, like really smart. So ... I forced them, but I don't have to force them anymore." He told his siblings, "Do really well and you will be rewarded later." He added, "So education is really important to me."

Daniel participated in the summer bridge program offered to students from low-income families before his first year and felt that it was very helpful in preparing him for college. He also thought highly of the other supports provided by State University for minority students, including the counselors, and the program for minority science majors. As part of this organization, he attended workshops that offer additional support in math and science classes and lectures on various helpful topics. In these workshops and all his classes Daniel preferred to sit up front and to ask questions, so that, even in a very large

lecture class, the professor got to know him. He was a serious student who spent most of his time studying.

Daniel told me that he was the only Hispanic in his class in school as a child. He also said that, until high school, he always felt that he was “a little bit behind.” He told me that he never really liked to write, he felt he was never good at writing, and he always felt like he was catching up. He said that he was not a good student in middle school, but, although college was not mentioned very much in the county vocational-technical high school he attended, he decided to work harder there and graduated seventh in his class. His major in high school was sports medicine, which resulted in his graduating with a certificate as a personal trainer, and he liked the field of health so much that he decided to aim for a career in the medical field.

He said that he decided on his own to attend college. His parents were happy and proud of him but did not attend college themselves and so could not guide him. Although there was little or no mention of college in school, a film he viewed of Dr. Ben Carson’s life inspired him, in addition to his experience of watching his parents struggle financially because of their lack of education. His goals in college included majoring in either cell biology and neuroscience, or genetics, and ultimately attending medical school.

Daniel felt confident about his ability to complete the program, graduate, and get into medical school. The university’s summer bridge program included a writing class, which, he said, helped him to improve his writing more than the basic writing class that he was required to take in the first semester and his second semester writing course that is required of all university undergrads. He generally studied in the library because he said that he got distracted in the residence hall, and he consulted YouTube for help whenever

he did not understand a concept. He said he sometimes read the assigned readings for sociology class two or three times to be sure that he understood them. In the second semester, he took chemistry and he said he was trying to put in four hours a day studying for that.

In terms of traditional literacy practices, Daniel said that he read *Feminism Is for Everybody*, by bell hooks, for his Latino studies class, and it greatly influenced his thinking. He has done some traditional reading outside of school, including a novel called “Blue Collar, Blue Scrubs,” about a man who went from being a construction worker to becoming a surgeon.

His digital literacy practices are varied. he began using the computer around age 12, mostly in school. At home, he used to play video games, but they no longer interest him. He is not interested in social media and posted very little on his sites. He used texting mostly to communicate with his friends and used facetime to visit with his family. He said that he had little leisure time for reading as a college student, but he did read articles from *The Atlantic* online and he kept up with political events by checking with sites like *Politico*. He frequently used YouTube to help him learn. For example, he found a channel called Schools for Thinking, in which some of the speakers gave a background on the sociological concepts that had been presented in his sociology class. He also found YouTube channels that feature exercise science to guide him when he began to work out. He liked to consult several sources before he formed his own conclusions about an issue. One source for him was a YouTube channel called The Young Turks. Over the winter semester break, his family got a German shepherd puppy, and Daniel educated himself on

dog care on YouTube and various German shepherd online forums. He also spent some time watching Naruto, a Japanese anime TV series.

Daniel belonged to a campus group of students interested in the brain, and as the webmaster, he worked on the design for their website, with the goal of adding to it original articles about the human brain. In addition, they recently won a grant from the university and they used the grant to hold an event called Brainfest. Aside from that activity, he chose to focus on his academics, because, he said, “I want to do well to prove to medical schools that I have what it takes to keep up with the other students.”

At the end of the first semester, Daniel told me what he felt were the most important concepts that he had learned so far in college: learning about social inequalities and the ability to view issues like feminism and Black Lives Matter from a different perspective. He believed that he had become more open-minded in his political views.

Selections from his texts. Two of my participants – Luciana and Daniel - enrolled in the same introduction to Latino studies class at State University. One of their assignments was to create a biomythography, defined in this way: “Biomythography is the weaving together of myth, history and biography in epic narrative form, a style of composition that represents all the ways in which we perceive the world” (Warburton, 2017). Daniel’s biomythography traces his trajectory through his K to 12 school experiences and into college, highlighting the forces that have influenced his growth. I have condensed his essay to increase clarity and save space.

December 18th, 2016

A Synthesis of Events That Influenced Me

In middle school i was never a great student. ... I was always getting myself in trouble and often hanging around with the wrong crowd. However, I was very fortunate to have two loving parents that always wanted the best for me I always knew that because my parents came into the country as

undocumented immigrants, but I never really knew the struggle they had to go through just to be where they are today. It wasn't until the summer before high school, when I started to grasp that concept of how much my parents sacrificed just to give me a better life. It amazes me how people are willing to leave everything that they have in their country, just for a future of uncertainty. My mother always told me to do well in school, however, that concept usually went in one year and out the other. Then that's when it hit me. After finally realizing all of the sacrifices my parents made, just to give me a better future, I knew that there was no way I was going to make nothing of my life. So when high school began, I was set on the goal of going to college. I went to an alternative high school, where students could not only graduate with a high school diploma, but a certificate by majoring in a trade. ...

After hearing that the Sports Medicine major was the hardest major to get into at my school, I thought I would give it a shot and do my best. ... and did well enough ... to get accepted into the program. I fell in love with what I was learning, which was something I felt that would never happen. I was learning things such as anatomy, disease, and how to treat athletes. I then knew that I wanted to pursue a career in medicine. During my high school career in the Sports Medicine major, I was automatically surrounded by people that had the same ambition as I did; we would motivate and push each other to limits we didn't know we could reach. By the end of my four years, I ended up getting the Senior Award for my Major. ... At graduation, I reflected on my past as a kid who always was getting himself in trouble, to a kid graduating 7th in a class of over 300, and going off to college. Along the way, I've had many encounters with people who changed my political views, my level of motivation, however at the end of the day, most of my motivation came from my family. ...

I have had some very humbling experiences at State University in which I would challenge professors and they would school me on a topic. ... It was a combination of my Sociology and Intro to Latino Studies class that I felt have helped me grow as a person the most. I became cognizant to the injustices around the world, which gave me the chance to challenge myself, and find myself in terms of my ideals and morals. Besides the professors, the environment of State University itself has changed my views on certain policies and topics. Unlike the predominantly-white town that I came from, I was now in a very diverse environment, and had the opportunity to surround myself with people with similar backgrounds as myself. This diverse setting enabled me to get involved with many activist groups such as Cosecha, and has given me the chance to help out the Mexican community by volunteering in a nearby city. One of the events that made me more humble was when I volunteered at an Immigration screening. At the screening, I would hear stories of workers being mistreated by employers and how they remained quiet about the situation. At the end of the day, most of the people that I talked to came to this country with the simple desire to work, and attain a better life. This experience had me fired up and made me realize how little attention undocumented immigrants get in the United States. I have been told by many people, even my ophthalmologist, that I have the presence of a lawyer. Although becoming a lawyer isn't something I want, fighting for the equal

protection of undocumented immigrants is something that I will always do. In a sense, State University has helped me find myself and what my interests are.

The timescales (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010) in Daniel's essay trace back before his birth, with his parents' trip from Mexico to the US as undocumented immigrants. Their struggle has made an imprint on his identity and has deeply influenced his own goals. In another timescale, he reveals himself as an inattentive and undisciplined middle school student. He then paints a picture of himself as a more mature, top student in high school, and describes the genesis of his dream to become a doctor. His next timescale relates his experiences in his first year at State University, how he sees himself learning from his professors, from his fellow students, and from the immigrants he has met while volunteering. By describing this trajectory, he creates a discursal image of himself (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010), as someone who is aware of his growth process, is empathetic, and is open to learning and modifying his life views.

Daniel's funds of identity include the history of his family's move from Mexico to the US and his parents' struggles to provide a good life for their family. His appreciation for his parents' sacrifices has profoundly affected his choices as he grew up and has caused him to feel a kinship and concern for the immigrants that he has met as a volunteer. His interest in health and his goal of becoming a doctor can be traced back to his family funds of identity, as well, as both his parents have always been interested in health and fitness. His father is a chef and works out at a gym on a regular basis; his mother teaches Yoga and health classes. The final timescale in Daniel's biomythography presents his future goals of a career in medicine, and his determination in the future to continue to fight injustice: "fighting for the equal protection of undocumented immigrants is something that I will always do."

His discorsal identity (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010) showed him as someone who possessed enough confidence to reveal what he saw as his former, younger identity as a middle school child who was disinterested in school and spending time with children of like mind. He seemed to relish the contrast of that identity with his later one as a focused and hardworking college student. He saw himself as a person who is still growing and maturing and open to new ideas and experiences.

Social media. Daniel had very few postings on Facebook and no Instagram account. He told me that he had no time for social media. His main purposes for his few postings were to influence opinions and to inform. They reflect his serious attitude and his political concerns.

Darla. At the beginning of this study, Darla, a European American, was a first-year student at Sunnyside College. She said that she had decided to attend Sunnyside because her friend had applied there and had suggested that they could room together. She had applied to a few other schools, as well, but she did not get into most of them, and she wanted to get away from home. She originally planned to major in nursing, like her roommate, but learned that the program involves a large amount of memorization which, she said, she cannot do. She told me that she was watching her roommate struggle with her courses and felt that she made the right decision to major in business management instead.

Darla shared some paperwork with me that indicates that she had an IEP in elementary and high school, receiving special accommodations for ADHD and anxiety, and took medication for ADHD as well as an antidepressant. She recalled that, in second or third grade, she was evaluated by the child study team, and, after that, she was placed

into a pull-out program for reading and writing. She did not remember too much about it, but she thought that it helped her. She told me that she intensely disliked her high school and tried several times to get into one of her county's vocational-technical high schools without success. She received home instruction during most of her junior year of high school because of severe anxiety. Sunnyside, also, gave her special accommodations, including extra time for tests and a note taker. She said that she did not really study. When she did her school assignments in the dorm, she got distracted easily, and so she would stop, listen to some music, play on her phone, or take a walk.

Darla was very close to her grandmother, who immigrated from Italy years ago. She apparently has always spent a large amount of her time with her, lived with her for several years growing up, and as a college student lived with her when she was not at school. Her grandmother could not read or write English. Darla did not speak or understand Italian, but when her grandmother received paperwork in the mail, Darla would read it and explain it to her in English. When her grandmother needed to write anything, however, Darla asked her cousin to help, because Darla was concerned that she might make mistakes.

Darla's father and a few half-siblings lived nearby, but she did not interact with them very much. Her mother lived locally and was married. Darla was the first in her family to attend college. Both her mother and her grandmother were happy and proud that Darla was in college. In fact, she indicated to me that pleasing her grandmother was her main reason for attending college. Extended family members, as well, encouraged her to go to college, to improve her life: "So they're like, don't be like your mom."

Outside of school, she did not usually do things that she was not comfortable with, including much reading and writing. Darla did some print reading outside of her schoolwork, mostly fashion magazines. She said she could remember only reading two books that she liked: *Remember Me* by Christopher Pike and *11/22/63* by Stephen King; she liked those books so much that she brought them with her to college.

Online, she read posts on Facebook and Instagram, but she said that she did not post comments; she only re-posted “puppy videos” and other things that catch her attention. Besides that, she watched Netflix and Hulu shows on her laptop, at school and at home, and had a schedule of certain shows that she watched, including *The Bachelor*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, and *How to Get Away with Murder*. During one semester break, she decided to color her hair purple and she researched how to do that on Instagram and Google; YouTube has also taught her a lot about hair and makeup. She liked to listen to all kinds of music, “except country music,” and she usually listened to it on her phone, through Spotify. She also had Amazon’s “Alexa” in her dorm room. She was especially interested in skin, hair, and beauty products and searched for information about them online. She hoped to be a hairdresser someday, and this was her true goal. She said that her mother used to be a hairdresser, but “then she had me and I kind of screwed her career up.” She did her own and her roommate’s makeup for Halloween, and she often does her friends’ makeup and hair when they go out. Darla studied photoshop in high school and taught fellow students to use it, although she said that she is easily frustrated when they do not learn it right away. She used her phone and her laptop to record an interview with her grandmother for a class presentation about her family heritage, then edited it into a PowerPoint.

At the end of the first semester, she was planning to pledge to a sorority on campus in the spring. She believed that the most important lesson she learned from her first semester in college was time management. Also, she was proud of the fact that her professor noted that her writing had improved significantly over the semester. One important project from the first semester that had an influence on her thinking was a research project for her writing class called “literacy practices,” that she said influenced her decision to major in business management.

Early in the second semester, however, Darla seemed especially depressed and unmotivated. She told me that she hated all her classes and was not doing well in them. When I observed her in her writing, introduction to business management, and pre-calc classes, she typically leaned on her elbow and showed little interest or animation. Mid-semester, Darla began to research cosmetology schools online, and decided to apply to one with an excellent reputation in a nearby city. As she completed her application online and made plans to leave Sunnyside, her attitude and demeanor visibly changed. She was excited to share the details of her application, the school’s website, and her expectations. Her family members were initially disappointed by her decision, but she was determined to fulfill her dream of becoming a hairdresser. She began the course at the cosmetology school in September of the third semester of this study and kept in touch with me via texting. At one point, she became discouraged because she received low grades on the school’s written tests, but she conferred with the director and asked for some assistance. She complained, “these problems have greatly affected how I feel towards school because I feel dumb in a way compared to everyone else because I need extra time to understand what we are learning.” I sent her some words of encouragement, and, when

I checked with her several weeks later, she told me, “Things are well! I’m still adjusting but I’m doing better!”

Selections from her texts. This piece was an assignment for her “geographies of experience” course, a requirement of Sunnyside College.

During my trip to the New York, I had the opportunity to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art and was able to explore the many types exhibits that were available at my advantage. The Met Museum had several art galleries for the many types of art they had available. A few of the exhibits that I was able to explore were the Egypt, African, Asian, and Islamic paintings and sculptures that are just a few of the many types of art the exhibits have. During my visit to the museum and exploring the Italian artwork, one piece of artwork that stood out the most to me was a painting called, Scene from a Novella by an Italian artist named, Liberale De Verona. The painting is of a women standing outside her window tower while two men and women stand outside the tower exchanging words with her. The painting is portrayed as a scene from a now-lost novel about two lovers and how there is a matching panel in which the two lovers are playing chess. I had chosen this painting as an artifact because it had reminded me of the princess Rapunzel sitting outside her tower with her long hair waiting for her lover to save her.

Cultural heritage is a form of living that was established by a nation and passed on from generations that combine the cultural practice, customs, expression and values. My family and most Italians believe in hard work, honor and family. Being Italian, I have learned that family is very important to us. My family and many other Italian families believe to spend as much time with family as possible, making them a top priority. Upon my visit to the museum I learned that Italians take great pride in their work and makings even if they did not come out perfect. I learned that a lot of their artwork had to do with major events that happened in history like the Italian Renaissance, or the Italian War. From visiting the museum I was able to gain more knowledge of Italian art history and able to see the many sculptures and paintings that were created where my family originally came from. I was also able to reconnect to my culture and learn several artifacts that relate to me.

Arguably the most important relationship in Darla’s life was the one with her grandmother who immigrated from Italy as a young woman, and so it is not surprising that she identified with a painting from an Italian artist. The GEO course emphasized the students’ own cultural heritage and this gave her an opportunity to express her connection to her habitus.

Social media. Darla was by far the most prolific of the participants in social media by about tenfold. She used Facebook mostly for pet videos and jokes, but also to share experiences, share information about hair and cosmetics, and situate herself socially. On Instagram, she revealed her creative nature by posting photos of hair creations and one collage of pictures of herself and her best friend. This persona was the one she chose to reveal. She persistently posted fun-loving and superficial videos and photos, even while she was experiencing inner conflict, trying to pull away from her family pressures to attend college and building her courage to follow her own goals.

Jerry. Jerry, a first-year student at a community college at the beginning of my study, had been adopted as a young child from China by two European-American men. Just as this study was beginning, one of his dads passed away after a long illness. For his first courses at the community college, he was required to take developmental reading, writing, and math classes, along with a course called “student success.” He said about those courses that he did not feel as if he was learning anything new; he was simply going back over the basics and reviewing. He was interested in both psychology and technology, and his goal was to study computer science and video game design; but he said that, if that does not work out, he would want to be a therapist. In his opinion, his student success course was a waste of time. The reading and the writing classes each incorporated both reading and writing, and he wondered why the two could not be consolidated into one class. His final grades in those courses were mostly As.

He began his second semester that spring, but he told me that he had to drop out because he did not have reliable transportation. He had depended on his dad to drive him to school during the first semester, but later his dad got a new job and was unable to

continue driving him. He planned to register at the same college for the following fall. He did not really want to stay there, but he said that he's "gotta do the two-year thing," because that was what his dad was encouraging him to do. He was looking forward to passing the test and having his own driver's license, but that did not happen until after he had dropped out in the second semester.

When I spoke to Jerry's dad, he told me that he and his partner had adopted Jerry around age two-and-a-half or three. His sister had been younger when adopted, and they felt that he did not adapt to English as quickly as she had. His dad believed that Jerry's brain moved faster than his mouth, and that was the reason for his early speech problems. His sister used to "translate" for him to their parents. He was placed into an early intervention program, and he continued through elementary school with a speech therapist, who his dad felt did an excellent job. The school system classified Jerry either ADD or ADHD and recommended medication, but his parents refused. They believed that Jerry, as a unique and intelligent child, needed to be appreciated and not medicated. His dad said that they had him tested privately, and that he was not diagnosed with ADD or ADHD. He went all the way through school with an IEP, however, and they did allow him to receive special assistance. Jerry recalled being considered a student "who needs extra help," but he refused to take advantage of the extra time offered for tests, and felt embarrassed when the school singled him out. His dad said that Jerry had always been a creative artist. At home with his dad and his sister, he would occasionally watch TV, and he became the cook of the family after his other dad passed away. He said that he was still learning about cooking, but a few months later, he spoke as though he had become more experienced in the kitchen and was enjoying it.

Jerry said that his goal was to create video games to make people happy and not angry, and that's why he was interested in psychology, as well. He liked the longer, more intricate games; he preferred to play on the internet, rather than on a console, and he played many online, multi-player games like Borderlines 2 and Legal Legends. Jerry said that he usually played alone to learn the game and then, when he is proficient, he would attempt the multi-player version. His favorite type of game was a MOBA: a multiplayer online battle arena. Later, he told me that he also enjoyed "idle games" like Cookie Clicker and had many different games on his phone.

Jerry said that, in elementary and middle school, he was the class clown and very social. He loved school, not for the academics, but for his friends. He had some bullying experiences in his childhood that were hurtful. In school, he felt that he could not learn as well as the other children, and that he was considered a student who needed "extra help," and this lowered his confidence. As a college student he was still focused on having friends and wanting people to like him.

In high school, he said that he was not a dropout, but that he was "a hard-core tardy person." He said that he was smart but in school he did not apply himself. Gradually, in his junior year, as he decided not to care so much what other people think, he learned to be himself and he began to make more friends. The highlight of high school was in his junior year English class when they read *The Lord of the Flies*. He read the book and enjoyed it and analyzed the plot and the characters so well that everyone in the class was asking him for help. He said that it felt good to get all that positive attention.

In the first semester of college, Jerry had a job at a retail store that sells clothing and household items. Besides working the register, he also kept track of the merchandise

that needed to be reordered. After working there about nine months, he quit during the semester break. After he earned his driver's license in the spring, he went back to the store and asked for his job back, and the manager was happy to rehire him. He was also offered an office job that involved using Excel, and he began to compose a resume as part of his application, but later decided against it because he did not know Excel and was afraid that he could not learn it.

Jerry sometimes used non-digital literacy practices. He liked to doodle and work on designs for characters in the video games he hoped someday to design. He felt that he still had a lot to learn about shading and how to draw bodies. He never studied art in school, but he shared with me pages filled with sketches of possible characters for a game, with detailed descriptions of "what they do... how powerful one person can be, and what they do that makes them powerful, and unique, and giving them all stats to help move and speak." He said that every day, in high school, he would create one character, and it took the entire day to finish one character. He told me that he used his drawing to help him get through school and personal difficulties. The drawings were three years old, and he said that he stopped creating more because he thought it was a waste of time.

He preferred using technology, however, and said that he conducted all of it on his desktop computer, the components of which he purchased and constructed himself, and on his phone. He has created artwork digitally, as well, including a composite sketch of his friends. Facebook was his choice of social media; he constantly posted photos and videos that he and his friends have created, depicting jokes, pranks, and outdoor activities. He also designed a separate Facebook page for his video gamer friends, in which he created a virtual card game. He told me that people tried and enjoyed the game,

giving him a lot of “likes.” He also enjoyed watching YouTube, and in high school he and his friends started a YouTube channel, where they posted the short, original videos which he also posted on Facebook. He did a lot of texting with his family and friends.

When I asked Jerry to tell me something additional that he was good at, he replied, “I am very kind and focused with people's situations. ... For example, in a group, if somebody's ...not given enough attention ... I would move the attention onto them, because ... I try to make everyone have an equal amount of attention, you know, giving respect to everybody equally.” He said that he was a charismatic person who had the ability to help people to feel comfortable, and that boosted their confidence.

When I spoke to Jerry late in the second semester, he showed me his brand-new Honda, which he had purchased with his dad’s help. He had a job at an Asian restaurant, where he was a sous chef, but he still planned to go back to the community college in the fall because his dad wanted him to. He and his friend were planning to register for the same classes, and they would major in computer science, because being part of the technological world motivated them. When I asked Jerry about the most important lessons he has learned in the past year, he said that “you need to consider yourself very important, be yourself, be glad to be yourself, and learn to appreciate yourself.” In the third semester of the study, I was told by his sister that Jerry had “forgotten” to register for classes at the community college and was about to apply to Amazon for a job.

Selections from his texts. During the first few minutes of meeting Jerry, at our first interview in his home, he was telling me that he has “never done any art,” but he did a lot of doodling in high school. He suddenly jumped up and said, “I’ll be right back. I want to show you.” He went into his bedroom for a few minutes and returned with a

sheaf of about fifteen sheets from a legal-size pad, filled with sketches of original video game characters, designs, and detailed instructions on how each character works, its powers, and how it fits into the scheme of the game he created. He told me,

I was just having some trouble ... trying to make it through high school. I did it with drawing. ... These are three years old and I stopped doing it because I thought of it as a waste. But that was me doing what I wanted - what I was bent on doing. And I wanted to do it so badly. ... Make my own game. Constructing characters, their own abilities ... [descriptions of] what they do. Of ... how powerful one person can be and what they do that makes them powerful, and unique, and giving them all stats to help move and speak.

He told me that it took between one class period and one school day to create a character.

Below are two of the pages.

Swordsman



Passive:
Every third auto-
attack deals 70%
gaining 15 defense,
the reduces
it by 25%
cd: 2 sec.



(AD/Melee)

cost: 3500



Dispatch:
(Long Range)
Launch to a chosen
target dealing 30
then to another
target dealing 25.
cd: 30 sec.
Linger in same target
if no nearby targets
-long Range-



Speed-Up:
gain 5% speed
for 3 sec, also
every auto-attack
deals bonus ()
damage.
cd: 24 sec



re-work:
(Melee Range)
heals 10 and
strals 5% of
the target's speed
for 3 sec.
cd: 20 sec



Triple Kill:
(Long Range)
Launches to a
chosen target
dealing 75 and
to another nearby
target dealing 60
and to another nearby
target dealing 45.
cd: 30 sec

Attack: 10/2
Power: 5/1
Defense: 5/1
Speed: 20%
Health: 250/5

Lvl 1



Passive:
auto bonus
rally from
back and
war and
fense.



(Tank/Melee)

cost: 3500



Stripes:
steals 20%
health to all
nearby
(Long Range)
targets over
2 sec.
cd: 32 sec



Pattern:
gain 70 defense
for 4 sec and
slow nearby
(Long Range)
targets by
10% for duration.
cd: 22 sec



Corvus:
gain 10 attack
and power, and
5% speed for
5 sec.
cd: 24 sec



Warp-Lunar:
heals 300 health
over 15 sec and
gains 5% speed.
cd: 100 sec

Attack: 10/1
Power: 10/3
Defense: 10/2
Speed: 20%
Health: 300/5

Lvl 2



Passive:
When using
ability
take half of
the damage.



(Pwr/Range)

cost: 3500



Volt-Slam:
(Long Range)
deals 100%
to affected
targets in an
AOE.
cd: 14 sec



Voltage-Wave:
(Long Range)
deals 25%
to affected
targets in a
cone.
cd: 18 sec



Volt-Strength:
(Melee Range)
deals 25% to
a chosen target,
also gains 10%
speed for 3 sec.
cd: 25 sec



Voltage-Shock:
(Long Range)
summons a voltage
to a chosen
target dealing
5% every second
and to nearby targets
to the affected target
for 15 sec.
cd: 60 sec

Attack: 5/1
Power: 10/3
Defense: 5/1
Speed: 20%
Health: 250/5

Lvl 3



Passive:
every 15
seconds
verbed
attack
n below
% health
war to 20%



(Assassin/Melee)

cost: 3500



Black-Hole:
(Long Range)
creates for
2 sec sucking
targets toward
the black-hole
in a cone.
cd: 8 sec



Vapper:
gain 10 attack
and deals bonus
() every auto-
attacks for 15 sec.
cd: 20 sec



Strik:
(Long Range)
Throws a projectile
amount of bone
to a chosen target
dealing 45% and
slows by 70% for
a second.
cd: 20 sec



Sharp-Strike:
(Global Range)
Throws a sharp
blade to a chosen
target dealing
85 damage ignoring
15 defense.
cd: 90 sec

Attack: 5/3
Power: 10/1
Defense: 10/1
Speed: 25%
Health: 300/5

Lvl 4



Passive:
every second
auto-attack
deals 10% of
re health
ing for
leaped
auto-
attacks



(AD/Range)

cost: 3750



Hunt-Sensor:
(Long Range)
deals 15% of
15 of there
health at a
chosen target.
cd: 18 sec



Quiver:
Every auto-attack
heals self by 10%
and resins 5%
health every 2 sec.
for 10 sec.
cd: 20 sec



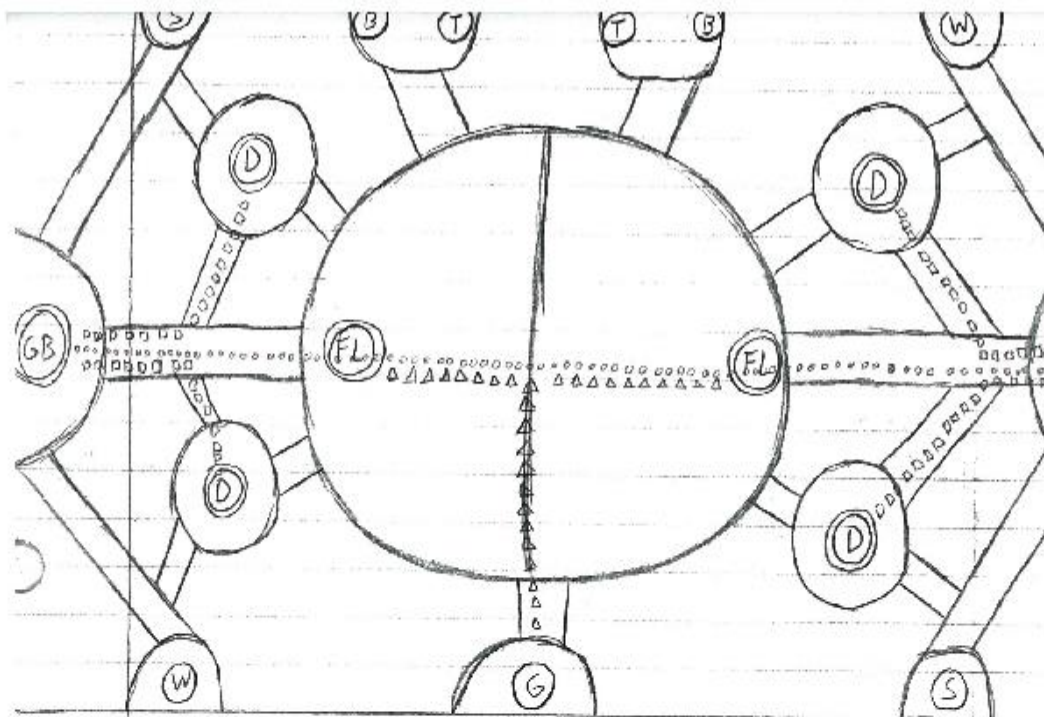
Clean-Shot:
(Long Range)
channels for
4 sec, dealing
45% + 25 health
at a chosen
direction.
cd: 20 sec



Archer-Shots:
Every auto-
attack deals
10% + 10 health
for 15 sec.
cd: 25 sec

Attack: 10/1
Power: 10/2
Defense: 5/1
Speed: 20%
Health: 200/5

Lvl 5



| Mobs | Spawn Time | Bases | starting Gold | Recall to |
|--|------------|---|---|----------------------|
| Soldier (S) | 2 min | Front-Line (FL) when destroyed Defender is active | Att-150 gold | (R) button 4 secs |
| Wizard (W) | 3 min | Defender (D) when both destroyed General-Base is active | Win $\frac{\text{points}}{+100-150}$ Lose $\frac{\text{points}}{+50-80}$ | |
| Berserker (B) | 7 min | General-Base (GB) when destroyed game is over | Bonus $+10-30$ | |
| Tanker (T) | 8 min | | | |
| Golem (G) | 12 min | Heals allied targets close to @ by 25 every second | | |
| <div> <div> All every 20 secs 5 per wave </div> <div> Minions Attack: 2 Defense: 0 Health: 50 Lvl 1-10 Atk: 10 Dfs: 20 Hth: 150 Last hitting \rightarrow 1-10 gold: 2 gold: 5 </div> <div> Tankers Attack: 2 Defense: 2 Health: 30 Lvl 1-10 Atk: 20 Dfs: 35 Hth: 300 1-10 gold: 5 gold: 15 </div> <div> Ultimates Attack: 5 Defense: 5 Health: 100 Lvl 1-10 Atk: 40 Dfs: 40 Hth: 500 1-10 gold: 10 gold: 25 </div> </div> | | | | |
| All 20% movement speed. only when teams have defeated @-Golem last for 100 secs | | | | |

These sketches reveal a young man who expressed his artistic identity secretly, as a way to resist the power that his teachers, the school system, and his parents exert over his daily activities. Rather than join in class activities that appeared to him to be irrelevant, he spent his time in class sketching and designing original video game characters, planning the details of the game, and visualizing his creations being used in the future by other people for enjoyment. It is also significant to note that he created these characters to be uplifting and to bring enjoyment to those who would participate in his game, unlike his own negative life experiences of bullying and racism. It is interesting to note that his childhood involvement with video games became part of his funds of identity (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). His autobiographical self was reflected in the timescales represented in this artwork. The first is his childhood in which he was given freedom at home to pursue his love of video gaming and of drawing. Unfortunately, however, it appears that his parents viewed his artistic talent as less valuable than, and disconnected from, his academic failures. The next timescale is three years before I received the artwork, which, he said, is when he created these and “stacks and stacks more” pages, most of which he destroyed because “my ideas, I don't like to keep them, sometimes, because I don't know if they're good or not. ... because you don't have somebody else with you to put their opinions on it.” In the timescale represented by this study, he apparently continued to believe that his own creations had no value, since he told me that he no longer sketched or doodled. The fact that these pages were the only ones he saved, of hundreds, indicates that he saw himself as a person of questionable abilities whose work was not good enough to be saved.

The identity he painted of himself in this work is that of an individual who used his creativity, unrecognized and unappreciated by anyone around him at home or at school, to push back against the powers that misunderstood him and underestimated his abilities. He showed his resistance in a quiet way, because he did not see himself as a student who would act out or become a discipline problem. It appears, however, that, by working on this art in class he, in reality, reinforced his teachers' low opinions of his academic ability, a "student who needs assistance," and someone who showed no interest or effort and therefore deserved the low grades he received. This coincides with what I learned about Jerry in our interviews. His view of his own abilities was so low that he hesitated to try almost anything new.

Social media. Jerry posted frequently on Facebook and mainly shared original videos, including many staged joke routines, and photos of himself and his friends and their activities. His purposes were to situate himself socially, to share experiences, and to make jokes. He was intent on creating a persona on social media of a fun-loving jokester, despite the contrasting identities as an academic failure and a child who had problems adjusting to the school social situations, which he revealed in our interviews and his academic writing. His Facebook page revealed his primary social concern, which was to be accepted by his group of peers.

Joaquin. I met Joaquin early in the second semester of this study when he was a first-year student at Sunnyside College. Joaquin took college algebra, a basic writing course, and a technology course in his first semester at Sunnyside, but because of a personal issue, he failed the math and the writing courses, and had to repeat them in the spring semester. He felt that he "had a better handle on both courses the second time."

His family moved here from Peru when he was around seven years old. He is the oldest of three boys in his family. When he first entered the local public school, he was placed in the second grade. Later, his family moved to another part of the same city, so that Joaquin could attend a school that his father believed was more attentive to the Latino children. Joaquin said that, when he arrived in the US, he knew only a few words of English. In school, he was placed into ESL classes, which, he said, helped. He said that he “got the hang of” English by fifth or sixth grade, and that he lost his accent completely. Joaquin’s father studied some English in college in Peru, but his mother did not speak English at all when they arrived. However, they lived in a neighborhood that is mostly Latino, and so they got along fine. Both his parents do speak English better now, he says. His parents encouraged him and his brothers to speak Spanish to them at home so that they would not forget it, but he said that he spoke English to his brothers and Spanish to his parents and their extended family. Recently, however, his dad had been taking English courses at a community college to further his education and to get a job in finance, similar to what he did in Peru, and he asked Joaquin to speak English with him so that he could practice. Joaquin often helped his parents to understand items in the mail, and sometimes accompanied them in situations where they might need help with English. He said that they were learning and did not need his help as much as they used to. Joaquin said that he did not like the required reading when he was in elementary school, but he did enjoy selections from the book fair, like *Captain Underpants* and *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. He said, “I never went out to the library and got an actual book or actually enjoyed what we read in school, to be honest. I did my work, I read it because I had to, not because I wanted to. That's typically how it went, K to 12.”

His parents always had a computer, and so he had always been around technology, playing games even at a very young age. When he was a child, Joaquin went to work with his mom at a community computer lab that she ran. When Joaquin was nine or ten, the school's computer lab administrator, who was called on to repair or solve problems with the school computers, encouraged Joaquin to accompany him and help. Later, the administrator started a computer club with Joaquin and some other interested students. He said, "I felt really proud when I was doing all the computer stuff. You know, 'I want you to plug these computers in. I want you to set these things up.' And I just did it."

Joaquin entered high school in one of the regular district schools, but his dad had him transferred to the county vocational-technical high school after his first year, because of the influence from gangs and drugs in the first school. When he entered the vo-tech, he wanted to major in computer technology, but there was no room for him, and so he was placed into the electrical construction program and graduated with a certificate in that.

Joaquin planned to major in video game design and development at Sunnyside. He was accepted by other institutions, as well, but he came to Sunnyside because he said they offered him a scholarship. He expected to finish his four years there and then go on to graduate study. He said that he was passionate about his work in technology, and he had known that he wanted to study game design for a long time. His goal was to become part of design and development in a large company and "put my signature on a game that they develop." In addition to his game design major, he also had an interest in cybersecurity, and hoped to take some courses in that, as well. Joaquin said that the most important lessons he had learned so far in college was time management and to ask a lot

of questions. He said he realized that, unlike high school, he was paying for these courses and it was up to him to question what he did not understand. He said, “you’ve got to ask the professor, and you’ve got to be direct.”

Joaquin used a few traditional literacies when necessary; he doodled and kept a sketchbook. He said that he did not generally read for personal pleasure, but he did read comics and graphic novels, particularly Japanese Anime or Manga, which he appreciated because of the three years of Japanese he studied in high school. Joaquin told me that he read for school assignments but seldom for personal pleasure, unless it was entertaining, usually involving computers. He said that he felt bad about the fact that he did not generally enjoy reading because he knew that it was important to learn whatever he could from his classes.

He used digital literacies, however, both academically and personally. Joaquin said that, although he did not read a newspaper, he was often on YouTube, watching anything he could about gaming or trending videos, and sometimes a news report would “sneak in among the big mountain of games.” He spent most of his free time either playing video games or viewing YouTube, where he also read Manga and he watched animé online in Japanese with subtitles, most of which he understood. He built his own computer at home and felt a strong emotional tie to his “creation.” Joaquin said that he can detect hacking and scams, and he tried to keep his family’s computer safe from them. He also used photoshop.

Joaquin had gaming friends, and they played daily and participated in a voice chat on an app called “Discord.” Rather than small, single-player games, he preferred multi-player, competitive games. He said that he liked to show off his skills, “compare myself

to the world and see how far I can go.” The original game that he played with his dad as a young child was called Counter-Strike; he still played the current version as a young man, then known as Counter-Strike: Real Global Offensive. Concerning digital literacy, he said, “it’s not like I don’t do any learning when I’m at home. I read a lot of articles in terms of technology. ... like PCGamer.com. ... They have articles on most of the new trends, games, new software, hardware, everything else. I’m into that. Whenever they come out with a new article, it’s a good read.” He said that the writers of the articles on that website are gamers, too, and so “everyone speaks the same language there.” He read articles on other gaming and tech websites, as well, so that he could keep current and competitive. At the end of the semester, he spent time reading online about artificial intelligence and virtual reality, in preparation for the final essay for his writing class, on the topic of technology and how it has changed our lives. In alignment with these interests, Joaquin had a part-time job at a large computer technology store. He was a customer sales representative and part of his job was to answer customers’ questions, along with running the cash register.

On social media, he had an Instagram account that he hardly used, and he never used his Facebook account anymore. He texted his friends, and his family or co-workers texted him when they needed him. He rarely sent emails, although he received a lot of emails from computer websites, etc. At home, Joaquin worked on the computer he built. At school, he could use his i.d. to get into the creative arts technology building and he often did class work there. Otherwise, he said that he used his phone, and had no need for a laptop.

Outside of school, Joaquin's mom was teaching him to cook so that he would be independent when he was living on his own. She shared family recipes with him. Most recipes have been passed on by word of mouth, but sometimes she would get a recipe on her I-pad from the internet or from a family member. Joaquin described himself as someone who liked to be friendly but was selective with his friends. At work, he was serious, he said, but he did socialize a little bit. For example, he and a few friends spent an evening at Mitsuwa, a Japanese market in a nearby city, which he first visited with his Japanese class in high school.

Selection from his texts. This essay was an assignment for his developmental writing course.

Not all who wander are lost

Humans observe things everyday, they may not notice all of it and take it into account but they're still there. Students in Sunnyside College are no different with many of their routes and passages become routine. Sunnyside College has a variety of locations, smells, people and events that are worth noticing. Students experience these observations everyday, they can choose to think of them positively or negatively. Common observations of Sunnyside College would be: there is a large population of African American students, technology classes are full of energy and the technology available is underwhelming compare to the technology building.

At Sunnyside College there is one trait that pops up and that would be the ethnicity percentage. There seems to be a larger population of African American students in Sunnyside College than other colleges in the tri-state area. Statistics show that 52.1% of students attending Sunnyside College are "Black or African American" while the next majority would be Hispanic with 24.2%. When walking across the campus these become obvious and students recognize this but don't mind too much of it.

Many students have a broad idea of what awaits them in a college level classroom, but in Sunnyside College those expectations get thrown out the window when entering a technology class. A student might be off put by the unorthodox classroom curriculum. Some of the creative classes start out their class with drum solos and big social circles, these classes may seem like they have no actual curriculum set out for the semester. These classes have a pool of students who are there for different majors and concentrations, but some of those classes are not specific to their major. Students can observe the frustration and confusion in their classmates because the class is not what any of them would have expected. At

some point in the semester, students begin dropping the class or just going along with it to get a passing grade and move on to the next class in hopes that it can only get better. There is definitely a lot of energy in these classrooms, but students waste too much time and money on classes as it is, and they are much better off going home and studying for that math midterm coming next week.

A student might expect the latest technology in a program that will use a lot of computers and software to fulfil their job, that can be found in the technology building chock full of Macintosh computers. Although there is plenty of computers to show off a new building, the rest of the campus is left back in the dust with very old and not very up-to-date computers/technology. For a computer majoring student, the rest of the school will seem very underwhelming in the technology department, not many classrooms have decent computers. The technology building has many features, with recording studios to pianos on every mac. Some classrooms in the technology building have as many as 3 projectors facing different walls. Classrooms are soundproof and have magnetic walls prepared to make a presentation easier. The students that study in those halls also have the ability to borrow material and equipment to use in their studies or recreational activities. With a technology building ID a student can borrow high quality cameras and recording equipment, this program gives students the freedom to roam and expand the field. The rest of the campus is very outdated in comparison, many of the classrooms also have a paint job that has much to be desired.

The campus is far from perfect but still has some very nice features that keep the students happy. Students can observe many things that happen every day and find the good and bad in them, while others just pass by and don't mind at all. Sunnyside College has a decent environment for students who want to learn, many features aren't important such as smells and looks, but every little thing helps the college. A new student who would come to Sunnyside College might notice the abundance of African American students on campus, they also might notice the highly unorthodox classes in the technology building and how the technology in that building is far superior to the rest of the campus.

This essay clearly followed the five-paragraph essay formula which the instructor apparently required, and he needed to come up with three significant points about the college. He touches on the racial composition of the campus, which no one else mentioned at any time during the study but does not elaborate on his feelings about it. The paper was also an opportunity for Joaquin to express his opinion about what he viewed as Sunnyside's unsatisfactory level of technology on campus, as well as his disappointment with the classes in his major. He closed with a paragraph that reflected

Joaquin's ongoing attitude of acceptance and making the best of situations, even complicity in the Bourdieusian sense. Regardless of the many complaints about Sunnyside's technology, he always strongly defended his decision to attend there, even to the point of refusing to reply to my texts rather than criticize the technology courses further.

Luciana. Luciana was a first-year student at State University at the start of this study. Her parents came from the Dominican Republic, and her father had returned there. She lived with her mother, who was a home health aide, and her 13-year-old sister. Shortly after Luciana was born, her mother sent her to the Dominican Republic to be cared for by her grandmother, and she stayed there about three or four years. When she started school here, she was placed into ESL classes and remained in them until third grade. She told me that she felt that some of her primary grade teachers thought that her "skills were not up to par with the rest of the students," and that is why she was kept in ESL classes for so long; she believed that she did not need ESL for that long. She said that in the early grades her reading level was lower than average, but in fourth grade, as a result of encouragement from her teacher, she started to read more, and her reading ability improved. She did not get to be an honor student, however, until around the eighth grade.

Around sixth grade, Luciana began to use the computer at school to write short essays. The school did not have computers in every classroom, so she only used one when it was available for an assignment. When she was about seventh or eighth grade, her mother got a computer at home, and on it she played games, watched TV, and sometimes used it for homework. Her mother bought her a phone at the end of her

freshman year of high school, and she began to text her friends. Since she had moved away from home, she used her phone to call her mother or to text her in Spanish.

She said that her mother was very happy that she had the opportunity to attend college. Although Luciana attended a college prep high school, she did not believe that it prepared her well for college, since she was placed into “basic composition with reading” at State University. The high school did offer AP courses, but she felt that they could not be compared to college level classes. While she did feel that she learned vocabulary and writing skills in high school, she believed that, in general, her high school AP courses taught basic information, while in college the student needs to apply these concepts, to think critically. Luciana believed that her reading and writing class in the first semester at State University helped her to learn “better ways to write and improve my sentence structure and grammar.”

In terms of traditional literacies, Luciana kept a journal in a notebook, which she wrote in occasionally, and she read the Bible and the prayer book in church. She also read novels when she had the time, including *Diary of an Oxygen Thief*, and *The Alchemist*, and she sent Christmas cards to her friends. She loved spoken word poetry, and she attended a meeting of a group on campus called Verbal Mayhem, in which the students recited their original poetry or sang. She said that she did write a poem during the semester break, but she did not like it, and so she threw it in the garbage. She told me, however, that she would like to write her own poetry and present it at Verbal Mayhem, but she did not feel that her skills were good enough.

In her spare time, Luciana liked to paint and sketch, mostly watercolors or colored pencil on paper. She said, “I feel like drawing relaxes me because I feel like when I’m

drawing I don't think about all my other responsibilities, I'm just thinking about drawing and what I have to do." She drew a lot of nature, self-portraits, and pictures of women. She took only one art class as a freshman in high school, but she did not enjoy it because she felt that the other students did not take the class seriously. She had considered taking an elective at the school of art and design at the university but found that the school required students to take a number of prerequisites which she could not fit into her schedule.

Her digital literacies were varied. She used texting for communicating most often, and texted her mother in Spanish, but, like the other participants, used email for her professors and official business. She kept up with news via a news app on her phone. Her favorite social media site was Instagram. Her creativity is most apparent, however, in her combination of traditional and digital artistry. She had a Surface laptop and used a software program called Autodesk Sketchbook to sketch digital art. She used an app called WIX to design her own website to display her art, but later decided to open a second Instagram site for her artwork instead. She also printed two of her pieces onto tee shirts, which she sold. She developed her love of poetry online, including a poet named Lang Leav, whom she first encountered on YouTube. She said that she admired her poems because they were relatable and "they really go into depth about a lot of things that people find a hard time admitting;" for example, fears, dreams, or goals. She also liked to watch spoken word poetry recitals on YouTube. Besides her two Instagram accounts, she also posted on Snapchat and Tumblr. Luciana used the internet if she did not understand a concept; she would watch a YouTube video explaining it, or she would Google a definition. As part of the trip she took to the Dominican Republic for

“alternative spring break,” Luciana designed a digital drawing of a symbolic tree for her concluding assignment. Luciana was also on the e-board of the Bachata dance club on campus; she sent out emails to the members and kept notes of the meetings.

Luciana’s favorite course for her first semester was Introduction to Latino Studies. In this class, they discussed social issues, the history of Latino people in America, and some of the racial and cultural inaccuracies that are taught in public education. At the end of the first semester, she participated in a group presentation that gave short summaries of each of the students’ family history and culture. The group prepared for their presentation via a group chat, which was used to accommodate the students’ varied schedules. Luciana also helped to put together a Prezi for their presentation and taught one of the other students in her group how to use the software. In addition to the presentation, Luciana wrote a paper which she titled: “How has being raised by a single, immigrant mother, shaped me to who I am today?”

Luciana also liked to cook and bake, although she did not enjoy her first job on campus in a café, where she did short-order cooking and food preparation. In the second semester, she was assigned a work/study job as a receptionist at a tutoring center, swiping students’ i.d. cards as they entered, which she found boring. In her third semester, she began to work at one of the gyms on campus and she found that job to be busier and more interesting.

Luciana wanted to enter the nursing program at State University, but she was told that, because she is part of the state program for students from low income families, she would have to apply to the program at a different campus in another city. Since she had started college at one campus and she felt comfortable there, she did not want to transfer,

and so decided to major in public health and, after graduation, to enter a 14-month nursing program for people who have a bachelor's degree. She said that she has heard "that the 14-month program is really intense, but honestly I feel I can do it. I'm going to do it because I'm going to stay here."

At the end of the first semester, Luciana said that she felt that the most important things she had learned in college so far was time management, including scheduling her free time and meeting deadlines without feeling overwhelmed. In the second semester, she applied and was accepted into the Global Village, a group of residence halls on campus, in the women, gender, and sexuality house. She took it upon herself to design a geotag filter for that campus and emailed it to the dean. As a student in this program, she took the required course, Issues in Women's Leadership, in the second semester, along with 13 other credits.

Selection from her texts. The following piece is an email which Luciana sent to me after a pro-immigrant rally at State University shortly after the 2016 presidential election. I had asked her to explain what attending the rally meant to her.

November 18, 2017

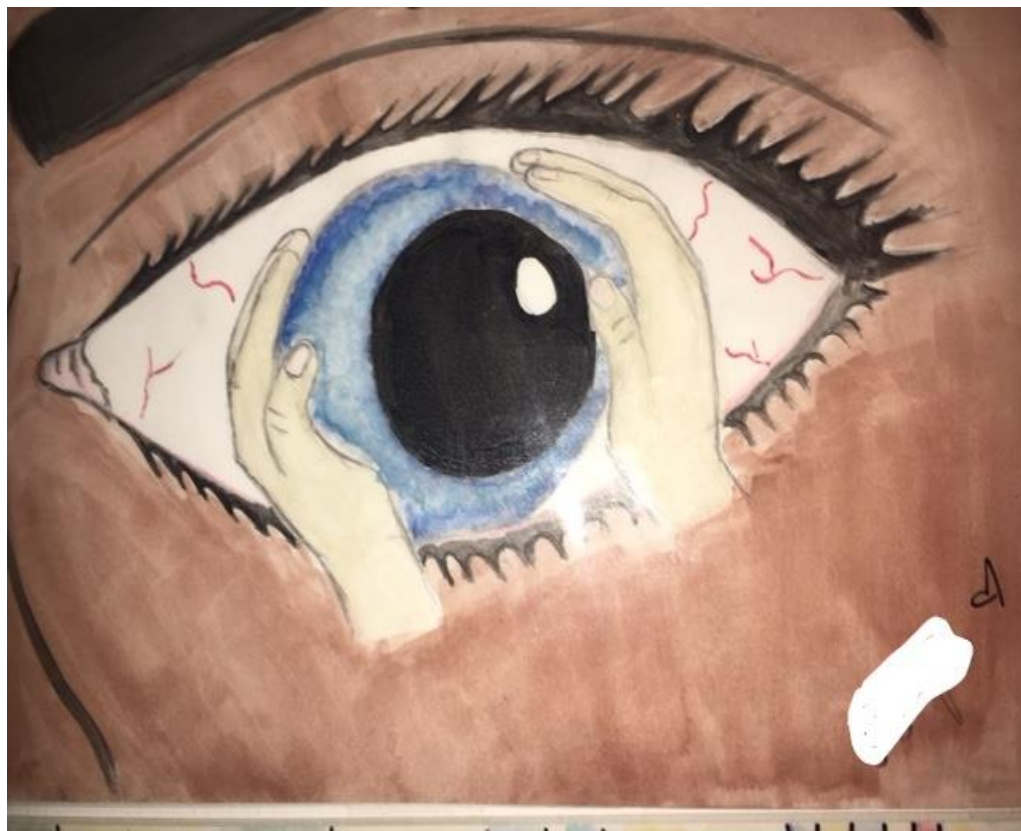
I'm not surprised that Donald Trump won because racism in America never ended, Donald Trump just made all these racist come out from hiding. In my opinion, having a black president for two terms along with all the progress Obama was making was too much for racist America to handle. Especially when gay marriage became legal under Obama's presidency. I'm not mad that Hillary didn't win I'm mad because a president should empower a nation. Citizens should not be scared for their lives. We should not be sitting here in fear and praying that nothing bad happens. I don't understand why we are told that "every vote counts" and encouraged to vote and "do our American duty" when the electoral votes are the ones that matter. Why tell me to go out and vote when someone else is making a decision for me anyways. I don't like politics because I think it's very messy, all about image, and full of lies and secrets.

As for the rally, I have never participated in a protest before so it was very new. It was also very peaceful and it felt nice to be around people that share the same views that I do. I loved the energy there and there were so many students

and staff marching with us, I was not expecting there to be so many people. Many believe that protesting is a waste of time but I believe that it raises awareness.

This was Luciana's opportunity to express her identity as a child of immigrants and assert her allegiance to that group of Americans who are "scared for their lives." It expresses her feelings about another force that she needs to resist, the overpowering hegemony of the new president that she perceives as threatening her life and the lives of many marginalized Americans. She also expresses solidarity with others who may not share her identity as part of the immigrant minority but still joined her in the rally.

Luciana originally created this artwork for a middle school math assignment and later elaborated on the idea:



We had a project on unit circle, we had to take the unit circle and be creative with it. ... and I made an eye out of it. It's like a circle and it has four quadrants and

then it has 30 degrees, 45, 90 ... It's math. ...And she said, "Be creative with it, decorate it and stuff." So, I took it and I made an eye out of it and I ... put the numbers and everything in there. Yeah, and then I liked the way it came out so I just took it and I redid it, and then I drew ... the hands grabbing the eye because I thought it was cool.

Social media. Luciana only opened a Facebook page because it was required in order for her to open a second Instagram site to display her artwork. She used her first Instagram site mainly to create an image of herself, using selfies and other photos of herself, and to situate herself culturally; and the newer one to display her artwork and to arrange it creatively. She focused on her Instagram posts, where she not only posted her artwork, but also combined it with poets and hip-hop artists whom she admired to create a whole new meaning. Similar to Ayushi, she used the affordances of social media to communicate not just ideas and information but also strong emotions. Her Instagram accounts are examples of using social media to convey messages in new ways that can touch many people emotionally (Hull & Nelson, 2005). She revealed her artistic identity, and also her desire to express her resistance to power forces in her life, including her controlling mother, but also the school system which placed obstacles in her path toward a college degree. She revealed these facets of her identity through the many photos of herself taken on campus, at concerts, and other social occasions.

The following selection comes from Luciana's Instagram account:



This post is filled with energy. The original art in this posting was done with acrylic paint. Luciana then added the line from a Tupac Shakur lyric: “Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else even cared.” She then arranged her artwork next to a photo of Tupac, photographed the whole thing, and posted it on Instagram to create a multidimensional message. Note the provenance of these images in the way they have been positioned. The rose as a symbol of beauty contrasting with the image of concrete, arranged with Tupac’s photo, show her own emotional connection to him and help her to express her own resistance to the power forces that have attempted to hold her back. This could be seen as reflecting her own childhood in a low-income urban setting and her rise to higher education despite the deficiencies of her early schooling. The opening message reads: “Happy 46th to the GOAT 🐐. Your words will continue to inspire, legends live forever.” (GOAT stands for greatest of all time.) She added two hash tags, which broaden her audience and connect her post to people of similar interests and passions. She received 19 “likes” and one comment. It is significant that she did not use her own voice,

but rather the voice of a recognized spokesperson for the contemporary counterculture. She may have felt that she has more power using his words than her own.

Victoria. When I first met Victoria, she was a first-year student at Sunnyside College. After her first semester, she transferred to John Adams State University. For her first semester, she was enrolled in Writing 95, which is Sunnyside's basic writing course. Although some students self-select into that course, Victoria was placed in it because of her score on their placement test. She told me that she was at Sunnyside because her guidance counselor helped her with her application and apparently encouraged her to go there. She said that she didn't really want to go to college because "I didn't think I was meant for it, like I didn't think I was on that level." Once she started her classes, however, she saw that she was achieving good grades, her confidence grew, and she was enjoying school.

About two months into the first semester, she told me that she was going to transfer to John Adams. She said that she felt that she should have gone to John Adams in the first place, and that Sunnyside, being a private college, was more expensive. Also, she said that she felt that the classes that had been assigned to her were too easy.

Victoria told me that she liked to read, that she is "really into books," and when she found a book that she liked she would find and read more books on the same subject. She told me that one of her high school teachers remarked that, even in the hallways, she always had her nose in a book.

Victoria's favorite subject was math. During her semester at Sunnyside, she was assigned by a placement test to Mathematics 141, described in the college catalogue as "College Algebra." She said that some students felt that the course was difficult, but she

had no problem with it. In the spring semester at John Adams, she enrolled in pre-calc, which she was finding very difficult. This may partially be due to the fact that she missed some time in class during a financial aid issue.

Victoria expected to major in computer science. In her semester at Sunnyside, she was required to take a “computer literacy” course, which she felt was not teaching her anything. She said that she has a strong background in technology thanks to instruction from her brother.

Victoria had a close relationship with her family. Her mother, a chef at an Italian restaurant, was originally from Italy and her father, a mechanic, was from the Dominican Republic. She had one brother who was close to her age, who was in college in another state, and three older brothers who did not lived with them. They had a large extended family nearby. Her parents kindly shared with me some information about the use of language in their family. The parents spoke Spanish to each other and English to Victoria. Victoria understood Spanish but did not speak it and could not read or write in Spanish. She had no understanding of Italian at all. When she was very young, before she started school, according to her parents, her dad’s brothers would visit and speak Spanish to her, and her mom’s sister would visit and speak Italian. Her mother told me that Victoria was placed in speech classes in kindergarten, lasting about a year. Her mother believes that what the school considered a speech “problem” was the result of confusion because three languages were spoken at home. Victoria sometimes helped her parents to understand mail, emails, or texts written in English. Using Google, she also converted measurements in recipes emailed from family in Italy, from grams to ounces.

Victoria used email, and she texted her friends, but she said that she did not text as much as some other people. She had a Facebook page, but she said that she did not visit it very much and kept it so that she could wish her mom happy birthday; she also occasionally received messages from her mother's family in Italy. She also had accounts with Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat which she seldom used. She told me several times that she did not have time for or interest in social media. This conforms with Victoria's introverted personality, as well as her close connection with her parents and extended family.

Looking back to elementary school, Victoria thought that she was not a good reader or writer as a child. She said that she was "very unfocused. Like I didn't pay attention to anything. I don't think I was that bad, but I was just not that kind of kid." Through middle school and high school, she "didn't really like English," and she tried to avoid writing research papers. Again, she said, "I was not that type of person." In a later interview, however, she told me that she was a good student and her teachers always loved her. Similarly, her writing professor at Sunnyside thought very highly of her and her abilities.

Victoria began using the computer at home when she was around ten years old, playing games. At school, she was able to use a computer once a week when the class visited the library. In high school she took mostly basic courses, no honors classes, but one AP class in psychology. Her teacher knew that she was interested in psychology, and so he encouraged her to take the AP course. She said that she worked very hard over the summer to complete the requirements for the course, and then, because she had never

taken an advanced course before, found the course itself difficult. But she ended the course with a B, which made her happy.

Despite her early doubts, she said that she could finally see herself able to be successful in college. When I asked her what changed, she attributed the shift in her attitude to her basic writing class because it was “the kind of class where you get more help.” She said that she did not want to ask for help in high school, but in her current class, “help is just handed out to you because everyone in the class needs it.”

During the first semester, Victoria got a job at a large retail store. She kept the store orderly, organized the merchandise, sometimes put new merchandise out on the floor, and took the discarded clothing items out of the dressing room and replaced them correctly on the racks. She had also been entrusted with the key to the case where they display the more expensive purses. She moved quickly and accomplished a lot when she worked.

Victoria seemed very happy and excited about her move to John Adams for the second semester. She planned to live on campus, and moved into the residence hall, unlike at Sunnyside where she was a commuter. Unfortunately, about three weeks into the semester, she was informed by the university that she had an outstanding bill that had to be paid within two days. These financial problems began while she was at Sunnyside and will be covered in detail in chapter six. She missed two weeks of the semester, but then was able to rejoin her classes and complete the semester.

Selections from her texts. This piece is a segment of the final paper for Victoria’s developmental writing class, an assignment for which the students were required to thoroughly investigate their potential major and compile a report. This paper reflects

Victoria's focus on detail and her care to complete her assignment with skill and attention. Of all the writing classes that I observed in two institutions, this professor showed the greatest connection to her students and an ability to encourage them to write quality papers.

Literacy Practices Report

Introduction

Sunnyside College is a four-year private liberal arts school. It is home to approx. 181 staff members and more than 2100 students. Sunnyside College was established in 1868, and offers majors in 6 different branches (Business, Technology, Education, Humanities, Nat. Science & Mathematics, Nursing, and Social & Behavioral Science). I attend Sunnyside College to pursue a career in Computer Science. ...

For my report, I'm attempting to find out what the literacy practices in the Computer Science major are. Meaning I want to find out what reading, writing, knowledge and the sorts of behaviors I will perform to succeed in my major. To succeed in this research, I'm conducting an ethnography. According to *Dictionary.com*, an ethnography is "a scientific description of individual cultures". The culture I'm studying is Computer Science at Sunnyside College.

Over all, this report is going to help me greatly to achieve success in the field of Computer Science. It will also help others figure out what one would be doing in the Comp. Science field. My hope for the outcome of this report is to help me understand more what lies ahead of me in my major. ...

Artifact Analysis

For this section, I have analyzed all my artifacts and written about what types of literacy practices I found in them.

- 1) **Website:** For my web artifact, I looked over the Sunnyside College Computer Science page, and read through my core classes. As far as knowledge is concerned, I learned from this artifact that students will learn mostly about programming, processing, installing designs, etc. As for reading, I did not find any information as to what types of reading I will be doing in the computer science field at Sunnyside College. As for writing, students will not be physically writing but will be programming, coding, debugging, and documenting. Lastly, in terms of performance, students are expected to be able to solve problems, and conduct lab work in front of computers. ...
- 2) **Interview with Dr. S.:** At 9:30AM on November 1, 2016 I interviewed Dr. S. As far as knowledge is concerned, students will learn how to solve problems, and write programs. As for reading, Kreutzer informed me that reading is very essential in the computer science field as you'll be solving many problems. To be able to solve these problems correctly you need to be able to understand what you're being asked to do, thus making reading incredibly important. Other than writing computer code and computer

programs, many students believe actual writing is obsolete since they'll be working with computers. ... Lastly, Professor S. says that the ideal student should have a desire to learn, as they should in any major. Students should be passionate about their work and do more than what is asked of them. ...

- 3) **Observation:** On November 8, 2016, I observed Dr. S.'s Programming I class. I wrote down many significant and insignificant things, hoping to figure out what kinds of literacy practices I'll be expected to perform. As far as knowledge is concerned, students will learn about loops, sentinel values, and will be expected to know material and be able to answer topic questions when asked. As for reading, students will have a textbook called *Java: From control structures through objects*, by Tony Gaddis, 6th Edition. In this textbook, it is filled with many programming questions that ask the students to create a certain program that meets certain conditions. For example, one problem asked students to create a program that resembles a slot machine game. Students are also expected to follow along with PowerPoints that the teacher provides. ... Lots of students showed up to class early, even before the teacher. At one point, he asked a student to act as the computer programmer, and the other as the computer itself. The point of this exercise was to help the students understand what a HW problem was asking of them. Another thing I observed was after trying to figure out a difficult problem in the Java book, the professor offered extra credit to those who can submit the program correctly. The last thing I observed was the setting of the room...it was very laid back and students were encouraged to answer questions and express their concerns to any HW. ...

Findings

This section will show the dominant patterns of literacy that I found in my artifacts. This section shows from my research what Computer Science students at Sunnyside College will be expected to do in terms of performance, reading, writing, and knowledge.

In terms of writing, the main things I will be doing in my major is programming, coding, and documenting. These three things I found to be very dominant when looking over all my artifacts. When looking at the reading section in my artifacts, I saw that the *Java: From Control Structures through Objects* book is essential in being successful in Dr. S.'s programming class, and in the Computer Science major overall. Students also need to be able to read and analyze the problems they're presented with in this textbook.

While looking for the dominant patterns of performance in my artifacts, I noticed that I learned so many different things that not all my performance analyses were different. To be able to "perform" an ideal student in Computer Science at Sunnyside College, students must have a desire to learn and expand their knowledge. They must read the material assigned to them, and do their HW as it's an essential part of learning. In both my observation and syllabus analysis, I saw that phones are strictly prohibited, as it would hinder performance.

Traditional Print Literacies

The participants' traditional print literacies were mostly academic in nature, and often hybrid, combining print with digital media. Their traditional, academic literacies included pencil and paper for their math courses; reading textbooks and other assigned books or articles for classes; and final exams completed in class with paper and pen. Some composition professors required the students to print out their papers to hand in, and then return them with handwritten comments. Outside their academic work, five of the seven students read books of interest to them when they had the time and spoke warmly about books that had become significant in their lives. Several frequently read magazines that feature their interests, such as gaming or fashion. Two of them kept journals which included notes about their thoughts and feelings and a "to do" list, and several sent or gave birthday or holiday cards to friends or family with personal notes. Three of the participants showed me artwork which they created using pen, pencil, or paint, including cartoons and sketches recording ideas for future video games yet to be created. Five of the seven participants have assisted parents or grandparents with understanding English correspondence or other print material that arrived in the home. Several helped younger siblings with schoolwork.

Digital Literacies

The students did nearly all communicating and information gathering, academic and personal, on their phones, including preserving notes taken in class by hand; as Joaquin remarked, "Everything that I can write down I can usually digitize." Five of them used their laptops in class and while studying, and two used their phones in school and the desktop computers at home that they built themselves. They all used email for official

business with their educational institution or with their professors but used texting constantly for all other communication. There was little reading of books or newspapers in the traditional sense. However, if we broaden our view of reading and learning to include YouTube, social media, and other internet sites, we see that these students were well informed on many different subjects. Most of them told me that they do not read outside of school, or do not have time, but when they talked about their interests they revealed that they did read a lot online about the topics that interested them. For example, Daniel read *The Atlantic* online, Joaquin and Jerry read online magazines like *PC Gamer* and other gaming magazines, as well as magazines and graphic novels concerning animé and manga; Ayushi got her news from an Al Jazeera website designed for young people; and Darla followed many online websites and social media sites that focus on fashion, hair design, and makeup.

Combining traditional and digital. These students moved seamlessly from traditional to digital literacies, and many of their literacy practices included a combination of the two. Examples of this were academic assignments composed on either a desktop or laptop computer and then printed out to submit to professors in class; and finding a .pdf of an assigned textbook online, but then printing out hard copies of the sections that are needed for class. Artwork was often a combination of digital and traditional; Luciana often used watercolors or acrylics to create original pieces and then posted them on social media to share with a wider audience, while Jerry copied photos of friends from Facebook and then created a pencil sketch of a composite of their faces. Also, many course exams are composed of multiple choice or true and false questions, answered with a pencil on an answer sheet and then graded by the professor via Scantron.

Academic digital literacies. Most of the time, students registered for classes, added or dropped courses, and checked on grades, online through the institution's website. Most of the participants' professors accepted their papers and other assignments submitted through their class websites. The textbooks for some math and science courses could be located online as E-books, and they provided exercises which some professors assigned for homework, to be calculated and submitted online, as well. In some courses, the students' class presentations included PowerPoint or Prezi, and group presentations using these software programs could be designed online through Google Docs or similar online websites that facilitate group efforts. Many professors assigned readings that they posted digitally on the class website; the students were then sometimes assigned to write a short paragraph about the reading and submit it online. Others provided links to videos for students to view online and submit a commentary on the class website.

Digital academic work outside the classroom was extensive and included study groups and a variety of extracurricular activities. All the participants found Google and YouTube indispensable for academic work, providing instruction to supplement concepts explained (or not explained) in class, and these two ubiquitous websites have become a first source for research on topics for papers or presentations. Two of the participants designed or maintained websites for interest groups on campus. They frequently helped fellow students by teaching them skills with software such as Prezi or Photoshop. They had numerous apps on their phones to assist them academically, including apps to help them study a foreign language; many, including calendars and to-do lists, to help them manage time; calculators; and news apps.

Non-academic digital literacies. The affordances provided by digital, multimodal literacies allowed the participants' non-academic texts to showcase their creativity and the innovative ways in which they communicated and learned using the internet and social media. The participants used their smartphones for texting, email, social media, reference, music, watching movies or television, and keeping up with the news. They searched Google and YouTube on their phones, and through them they were in touch with an endless source of entertainment and information, leading them to broad, new interests and groups of people who shared them, including spoken word poets, artists, social justice issues, and cultural events. They all listened to music and watched TV on their phones and on their computers through one or another music streaming service. Apps on their phones included many video games, calendar, alarm clock, calculator, compass, GPS, Google Maps, Facebook, and news apps. Most of them worked in retail and used the registers and computers there to do their jobs.

Social media. Social media were an essential part of the lives of five of the seven participants and analysis of them broadens our understanding of how they constructed their identities and built relationships. Therefore, this study includes the participants' Facebook and Instagram posts as an essential component of their literacy. Each participant's use of social media was unique and the types of postings that they chose to display revealed not only their interests and friendships, but also the persona that each created by their posts and projected to their audience. Literacy within social media opened new possibilities for communicating multimodally and opened a space for participants to explore their own identities and make choices about which persona to reveal (Davies, 2007; Amicucci, 2017) and these choices are a window to the author's

culture, values, and relationships with power forces. Details of the identity constructions which are revealed in their literacy practices, including social media, will be covered in chapter six.

Below is a table showing a summary of my initial study of the seven participants' use of social media, revealing each one's unique combination of purposes and choices.

Table 2: Summary of Social Media Analysis

| Name | Victoria | Luciana | Ayushi | Darla | Daniel | Joaquin | Jerry |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| No. of Postings Reviewed | 5 | 82 | 92 | 177 | 16 | 6 | 52 |
| Purposes: | | | | | | | |
| 1. Create Image of Self | 1 | 27 | 34 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 2. Influence Opinions | 0 | 0 | 16 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Inform | 0 | 6 | 18 | 35 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Share Experiences | 0 | 17 | 20 | 27 | 3 | 4 | 22 |
| 5. Share Art | 0 | 37 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. Situate Self Culturally | 0 | 30 | 28 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| 7. Situate Self Socially | 0 | 4 | 34 | 16 | 4 | 2 | 15 |
| 8. Tease, Joke, Fun | 4 | 1 | 19 | 115 | 0 | 2 | 39 |
| No. of Original Postings | 1 | 77 | 49 | 23 | 4 | 6 | 38 |
| No. of Reposts | 4 | 5 | 43 | 154 | 12 | 0 | 14 |

Summary

This chapter began with a detailed description of the literacy practices of the seven participants of this study, followed by a literacy profile of each one with samples of their texts, in order to shed light on the meaning and variety of literacy in their lives. It has provided a taste of the creativity of their literacy practices as well as how literacy

mediates their experiences and helps them make sense of them, as they explored new identities and old cultures and expressed their political and personal growth in individual ways. It is obvious that these young college students embraced digital and multimodal literacies in their everyday meaning making, in school and beyond. It is also clear that this multimodal communication has evolved into new, digital literacy practices (Davies, 2012) that have challenged the limits of space and time and allowed them to be a part of a global network, sharing not simply ideas but also feelings and emotions.

Conclusions

- The literacy practices of developmental college students are diverse, creative, and multimodal. Each participant's practices revealed a unique variety of interests and modes of expression.
- Their practices were generally digital; they used traditional literacies mostly for academic assignments when required. They participated in a broad spectrum of interests and modalities, but mostly outside their academic work, and there was little interaction between the students' varied and multimodal literate activities and their academic assignments.
- The participants did little reading of books or newspapers in the traditional sense, but including YouTube, social media, and other internet sites, they were prolific readers and writers, well informed on many subjects.
- Communication through social media was important to most participants, and each individual presented a unique self-portrait based on their choices of subject and mode in social media, projecting a unique persona of their own choosing.

- YouTube should be considered a new literacy practice; it affords complex and multidimensional ways to share affinity connections, interests, and knowledge, instantaneously across the world, via sound and visual modes, and this has never been previously possible.

This in-depth understanding of the participants' literacy practices has built a foundation upon which we can begin to analyze their engagements with institutions of power forces and how they have each responded to them.

Chapter Five: “I’ve Grown Accustomed to Disappointment:”

Symbolic Violence in the Education of Developmental Writing Students

This chapter will address the research question: How do the developmental college students’ literacy practices reflect their relationships educational institutions and the larger society? I argue that the educational system exerted symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1997) on the participants of this study. Through an analysis of their literacy practices, interviews, and field notes from observations, I will provide evidence that symbolic violence has disrupted the educational lives of these students beginning with their earliest school experiences through their K to 12 experiences, and into their first semesters of college.

Symbolic power is the situation in which “the dominated, often unwittingly, contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting, in advance, the limits imposed on them” (Bourdieu, 1995, 0p. 169). Individuals who wield symbolic power make use of the rules of society to their advantage. Symbolic violence is the experience of accepting the symbolic power as legitimate, and often appears as shame, timidity, anxiety, or guilt (Samuel, 2013). The participants’ responses to these instances of symbolic violence align with Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power and symbolic violence (1989). They accepted the legitimacy of the judgment of the education system and tended to blame themselves - their lack of ability or insufficient effort - for difficulties they faced, rather than deficiencies in the system. Further, they failed to view remedial placement or grades in college as a reflection of the deficit approach of their institution or professors, but rather saw them as the result of personal shortcomings. This deficit treatment, which extended from their earliest school experiences through their first year of college, caused

them to construct “remedial” identities that conformed with the views of their teachers and their college instructors. In a few cases, they chose to challenge the system and reach for better situations and experienced push-back from teachers and school administrators.

I will begin the chapter by detailing how early language instruction became instances of symbolic violence for each of the six bilingual participants, followed by a description of how symbolic violence was imposed on two of the participants through their questionable classification as special needs students. I will then illustrate how these early identities of English language learner and special needs student followed the participants through the tracking systems of elementary, middle, and high school, and into their college placements. I will also discuss how the participants revealed their unconscious acceptance and complicity with symbolic violence, and how it has affected their trajectory through the first three semesters of college.

English Language Instruction

According to García et al. (2008), approximately 85% of emergent US bilingual students can converse in English but have difficulties using English academically. This fact is generally hidden in the statistical data since so many students who appear to be competent in English can communicate orally but still are unable to keep up academically. Educational approaches to assist these English language learners has varied over the years. In the 1970s, the federal government provided funds to schools for English instruction but left the pedagogy to the individual schools or teachers; however, in the 1980s, the political climate began to shift, and the funding changed to support not bilingual, but “English-only” programs. The No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB), in effect between 2002 and 2015, regulated education, including English language

education, through most of the time that the participants of this study were in elementary, middle, and high school. NCLB's regulations concerning "limited English proficient students" (García et al., 2008, p. 6) has caused language education to become even more rigid and more deficit-focused, as opposed to research-based methods which advocate educating children in English by building on the student's first language. This legislation has shifted the emphasis from an effort to create more equal opportunities to a failed attempt to close the achievement deficit through testing and English immersion programs.

García et al. (2008) outline four types of English-only or English-immersion programs, including "submersion," with no special help at all with English; pull-out ESL classes for a short period per day; structured immersion in English with students grouped in the classroom for instruction; and some instruction in the student's home language with the goal of speedy assimilation. Bilingual education programs, proven superior by research, have given way as a result of this changing political climate. The emergent bilingual students in this study all experienced one or another of these ineffective English-immersion approaches cited by García et al. (2008).

One result of ineffective language instruction that goes unrecognized is students' slow development of their use of academic language, which is different from the use of language in everyday social situations. Children who often pick up English from popular media can reach a "surface fluency" (p. 27) in English, which is generally supported by other modes of communication like gestures or facial expressions, as well as shared interests which are common in conversation. Completing school tasks or taking tests, on the other hand, require more abstract language without the conversational support of everyday language. In addition, students from non-dominant cultures often do not have

the background knowledge which middle class children possess and is assumed in many testing situations. Quoting Cummins, García et al. (2008) calls this understanding “cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)” (p. 28) and notes that acquiring these abilities takes five to seven years. According to the first-hand reports of the participants in this study, the English instruction which they received in the public schools never addressed this type of English competence.

Participants’ Early Experiences with English Instruction

Joaquin. Joaquin had begun elementary school in Peru and was placed into second grade when he and his family arrived in the US. He related that his father was not happy with the first school that he attended because “There was a bit of a problem with teachers not being very educational towards the Spanish students.” His dad moved the family to another part of the city which has a larger Latino population so that he and his two younger brothers could attend the elementary school in that area, and he was assigned to pullout ESL classes there. He was quick to assert:

But I didn’t really struggle. What people tell me is that I got the hang of the language towards fifth or sixth grade, which people thought was really good. And I lost my accent fairly easily. My brother had a harder time converting, but I didn’t.

Several times, Joaquin mentioned his pride in losing his “accent,” and the fact that he lost it more easily than his brother. Joaquin often expressed his complicity in the symbolic violence imposed on him by affirming his desire to be perceived as an uncomplaining part of the dominant culture. This continual effort was revealed in his conversations, when he stated that he had not experienced any problems assimilating into the language and culture, noting that he lost his accent, and assuring me that he and his family

experienced no problems in the school system or in adapting to life in the US. The loss of his accent appeared to be a symbol for him of his assimilation into the US culture.

Ayushi. Ayushi was younger than Joaquin when she came to the US, and after a transitional period settled in a city in the northeastern part of the US when she was around age five or six. Her parents and her aunts taught her the alphabet, numbers, and how to write her name before she began school. For an unknown reason, she was placed into first grade, rather than kindergarten, in the public school. Ayushi remembers that most of the students in her class spoke either Bangla or Spanish at home and required English instruction, but the classes were conducted in English and she does not remember attending any ESL classes. Her first-grade teacher spoke Bangla, and she translated some lessons into Bangla for the students when necessary; she also remembers translators “helping out” in the first two grades. That was the only bilingual instruction that she recalled, an example of García et al.’s (2008) “structured immersion” (p. 19) program, one of the policies supported by NCLB which provided a premature exit from English instruction. She believed that she learned English by watching the TV: “I always watched TV. My whole childhood, I pretty much watched TV. That's all I did. I watched a lot of Disney.” She believed that Disney “had a huge role” in her acquiring proficiency in English. Her elementary school gave letter grades for children in the primary grades, and Ayushi’s report cards reflected her emerging understanding of English. She recalled, “I started out doing very bad. I would get Ds and Cs in first or second grade. And then, I don't know how, I went from a D to an A in third grade. I don't even know how. It just happened. ... I think I learned more English. It had to be that.” As a young child, however, she did not connect her language acquisition with the improvement in her

grades; she remarked, “Third grade, I don’t know why. I just did well. So I was very surprised. ... I just felt happy because I was doing something right.” Ayushi recalled that, in middle school, “I started to go downhill a little bit because the stuff got a little harder. ... Math and science was a lot harder.” This aligns with García et al.’s (2008) assertion that cognitive academic language proficiency takes five to seven years for a child to acquire. For Ayushi, a combination of social experiences and television watching helped her to develop a conversational knowledge of English, and this was sufficient for her to excel for about two years in elementary school, but because she had never been instructed in academic English, she faltered as the math and science concepts became more abstract in middle school. Once again, she felt that she did not measure up.

Victoria. Victoria’s preschool experiences included three languages: Spanish, Italian, and English. When she was very young, her father and his family members would speak to her in Spanish, her mother’s relatives spoke to her in Italian, while the parents also spoke English to her and her brother to prepare them for school. When she entered kindergarten, the school diagnosed her with a lisp disorder and placed her with a speech therapist. She explained, “I had to go to speech classes, though, because ---- I wasn’t good at speaking, I guess.” This lasted only a few sessions, however, after which the therapist reported to her mother that Victoria’s speech was fine and there was no reason to keep her in therapy. Aside from that apparent misrecognition of her language needs, Victoria cannot recall any classes to educate her in the English language.

Victoria described herself in elementary school this way: “I think I was very unfocused. Like I didn’t pay attention to anything. I don’t think I was that bad, but I was

just not that kind of kid.” She continued this theme frequently when she described herself as a student:

Victoria: Actually, throughout middle school and high school I didn't really like English. I think really every research paper I tried to avoid in some way. ... for a while. I was not that type of person.

Rosemary: What type of person? A more studious person? You don't see yourself as a studious person?

Victoria: Not that much.

These comments indicate that Victoria had accepted the deficit identity placed on her in her earliest experiences in school in which she was not effectively instructed in English. She described herself in elementary school as “unfocused” and “just not that kind of kid,” not recognizing that the school’s ineffective language instruction made it difficult for her to keep up, and instead blaming her disinterest on her own lack of ability. Interestingly, she also related that her teachers in high school thought highly of her and saw her as an excellent student, and that she was known as a “bookworm,” always was reading, even in the hallways. In contrast, complicit with the symbolic violence that had been imposed on her as a young child, she continued to maintain her deficit identity construction and accepted that any academic shortcoming resulted from her own lack of potential as a scholar. Even after she successfully transferred to John Adams University, she still held on to that deficit identity, that feeling that she was not good enough for college. I asked her, “Remember when you told me that you didn’t think college was for you?” She replied, “Ahh, yes, I remember that! Still having mixed feelings, to be honest.”

Luciana. Luciana spent her first four years with her grandmother in the Dominican Republic, and so had no experience with English when she started kindergarten. She does recall being pulled out for ESL classes. She told me,

Spanish is my first language, so I had to learn the English language and then the ways of writing, reading, in the English language. ... I remember in kindergarten and first grade I used to go to ESL classes, and I would have to be in a class with students where the majority only spoke Spanish. And I had to get extra help in the math and English courses.

She said that she stayed in ESL classes until third grade but she felt that the teachers underestimated her abilities and that she did not need the ESL classes for that long. Since research indicates that it generally takes longer than that to become fluent in a new language, we can surmise that either the quality of the instruction was lacking in the small ESL groups, or that she was misplaced in a group that did not meet her language needs.

Daniel. Unlike the other immigrant participants in this study, Daniel grew up in a predominantly working-class, white suburban area, and he told me that he was the only “Hispanic” in his class. His parents have always encouraged him and his brothers to speak English at home, but despite his early understanding of English, he most likely had not yet reached a level of competence to succeed academically. He does not recall attending any ESL classes. He does recall, however, that he was not an attentive student. He said, “With the reading, as a kid I always felt like I was playing catch-up with the school's standards. ... And, because I was, I wouldn't like the readings that I was assigned.” Interestingly, he realized later that he had missed out on a love for reading in the early grades and made it a point to encourage his three younger brothers to read. His own apathy toward reading and academics, however, carried into middle school: “I wasn't the best student at all. I would get detentions a lot, and all that. I was a pretty bad student.” This resistant attitude of Daniel's in elementary and middle school is evidence of his reaction to the symbolic violence which he experienced as he faced the

unreasonable expectation that he would absorb English well enough to keep up with the native English speakers that surrounded him. It is a tribute to his intelligence and determination that he was able to change his academic trajectory in high school to graduate as number seven in his class of approximately 200 students.

Jerry. Jerry's language situation was different from the others, but he, like Victoria, was diagnosed with a speech problem. He had been adopted between ages two-and-a-half and three from an orphanage in China, and so at that time he already had developed language in his native tongue. He has an older sister who was also adopted from China but at a younger age, and she had no problem learning English. Apparently, his parents were neither informed nor prepared for this difference and expected him to learn the language as easily as his sister did. His father told me that they found an early intervention program through the school system for which he could not recall the details, and when Jerry entered kindergarten, he was placed with a speech therapist and he remained under her instruction through elementary school.

Each of these students described the situations which they experienced while attempting to learn English and negotiate the sometimes-hostile arena of the school system. The system, entrusted with the responsibility of educating them, imposed its domination on them as symbolic violence in the form of ineffective English instruction followed by assessments and evaluations through the grades that convinced them and their parents of their own academic inadequacies. Aligning with Bourdieu (1997), the students tacitly accepted the limits imposed on them and then blamed themselves for their low achievement. This pattern continues through K to 12.

Special Needs Classifications

Mehan (2000) poses the question: “How does a student become a ‘special education’ or a ‘regular education’ student?” (p. 260). Examining the process of diagnosing and classifying a student in an effort to understand how this process fits into the educational institution’s goals, he concludes that the system actually “constructs” the identity of handicapped, or special needs. To carry that concept further, one can argue that the diagnoses of ADHD or “anxiety” are socially constructed by the professionals whose role it is to decide who fits the pattern of “normal” and who does not. Similarly, Bourdieu (1989) describes how an institution like the school system uses symbolic capital to maintain its power:

The legal consecration of symbolic capital confers upon a perspective an absolute, universal value. ... There is an official point of view, which is the point of view of officials and which is expressed in official discourse. ... This point of view is instituted as legitimate point of view, that is, a point of view that everyone has to recognize at least within the boundaries of a definite society (p. 22).

In other words, an official agent of the educational institution who carries the correct diploma or degree, “a piece of universally recognized and guaranteed symbolic capital, good on all markets” (p. 21-22), declares a student to be “ADHD,” and this becomes the official point of view, not to be disputed by individuals who do not hold any official position within the field.

Although their situations were different, Jerry and Darla both informed me that they had been classified ADHD and assigned an IEP in elementary school. ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorder of childhood, but there are concerns about whether the diagnoses are being made properly, including a lack of agreement about how reports from various perspectives, including teachers and parents, should be combined (Rowland, Lesesne, & Abramowitz, 2002). The diagnosis is “highly

susceptible to methodological choices and definitions” (p. 164) and is dependent on these reports, which can lead to questionable results, including mis-assigning this diagnosis to children who are bored, have been abused, or have other undiagnosed pathologies. Some studies suggest a possible overdiagnosis of ADHD (Bruchmuller, Margraf, & Schneider, 2012), and researchers found that therapists do not adhere strictly enough to the diagnostic manuals if the patient resembles their own subjective concept of an ADHD child. Children diagnosed with ADHD behaviors that were less severe on average scored lower in reading and math than their undiagnosed peers, and this difference was twice as large as a similar comparison between more severe ADHD children and their non-diagnosed peers (Owens & Jackson, 2015). This led to the conclusion that negative social implications, including social labeling, may outweigh the potential benefits of diagnosing less severe students with ADHD. Another study (Rogalin & Nencini, 2015) showed that, although teachers were aware of the stigmatization of children diagnosed with ADHD, they still used the label and thus reinforced the stigma. Teachers were less able to see the child with the ADHD diagnosis as a unique individual and more as a typical person with ADHD. “Consequently, if someone is expected not to perform well at certain tasks or in certain academic or occupational areas the person under consideration might be excluded from these tasks and areas in advance” (p. 46).

From the perspective of this study, it is impossible now to ascertain what conditions actually led to the decision by the school system to single out Jerry and Darla as special needs students. The important point here, however, is that the special needs classification apparently did little or nothing to improve these students’ education but did indeed place a stigma on them which was officially recognized by teachers and students

alike and which they carried with them throughout their years in the educational system. Further, they accepted and internalized this deficit identity, and this caused each of them to construct for themselves negative identities as persons who lack intelligence and the ability to function in society as a healthy person.

Jerry. My interviews with Jerry revealed an intelligent and creative young man. In his school experiences, however, his teachers apparently did not recognize these qualities. Since his early English language issues were never recognized or addressed, in kindergarten he began experiencing what he perceived as an embarrassing pullout from class by the speech therapist five days per week. Also, his difficulties with English soon caused him to fall behind his classmates in English language arts and other subjects and this called attention to him negatively in the classroom. In addition, there were few or no other Asian children in his class, and this, too, caused him to feel uncomfortable and led to some bullying situations. Apparently, this young child who felt singled out in a negative sense on a daily basis attempted to gain attention by inappropriate behavior:

Rosemary: When you were a kid did you like school?

Jerry: Loved school, but I loved it the wrong way, not how other people expected me to.

Rosemary: In what way?

Jerry: I ignored the education, the academics, and stuff. I focused only on friends. I only focused on what they were doing, if they liked me or not, and I just wanted to be involved. I loved being involved and everyone loved it because I was funny, I was very energetic, and I gave that positive vibe.

This, coupled with his academic shortcomings, led to an evaluation by the child study team. His father recalled that he and his partner were called in for meetings several times during elementary school, in which they were told that Jerry had either ADD or ADHD and were requested to place him on medication. The parents refused to medicate Jerry and testing from an outside source revealed to them that he did not have symptoms of

ADD or ADHD. They did allow the school to give him an IEP, believing that the extra help could not hurt, and this led to the label which he hated:

Jerry: I just remember them saying this one thing to me, that I was a person that needed assistance, that's all. I was an assistance student. ...

Rosemary: So you had a slow start on English.

Jerry: Yeah. I was everything slow.

Rosemary: And then you always felt like you were a little bit behind, is that it?

Jerry: Yeah, I was really behind. Everyone knew their stuff before me and sooner or later they got ahead of me, and I was all the way in the back. ... Elementary school I had no acknowledgement or awareness of what was going on. I was in these small classes. But now in middle school and high school I caught on and understood where I was placed and it was awful. I was skipping the stuff I needed to learn, the basics, right? But I skipped it and tried to get in the advanced so badly 'cause ... I was embarrassed. I'll be honest with that. I wouldn't be embarrassed now anymore. I wouldn't care. ... When I was a kid, I was really embarrassed. I really didn't like being in those small classes ...

Rosemary: Your friends were in other classes?

Jerry: Yeah, higher classes, and I had met these new people that needed help as well, like I did, and I didn't do very well with them because I knew I was smart and I felt so different in those small classes.

Aligning with Mehan (2000), the combination of Jerry's slow acquisition of English, the result of misdiagnosis of the problem and no English language instruction, along with his discomfort at being singled out negatively beginning as a young child, caused him to attempt to gain attention in a way that the teachers perceived as outside the normal pattern. This created his negative identity within his classroom and within the school. This pattern is particularly deleterious because once the school made the decision that Jerry was ADHD, the parents could do little to prevent them from attaching that stigma to Jerry. The school requested several times that they medicate him; the parents refused, but Jerry was still labeled as special needs. Since he was the only Asian child in

his class and among few in the school, he was easily recognized and was most likely the subject of conversation among the teachers. The special needs stigma was exacerbated by that, and there was no way for the parents to avoid it.

Darla. Similar to Jerry, Darla also received a special needs classification of ADHD early in elementary school. She reported that she was also given an EKG and then was diagnosed with anxiety and still receives medication for that. She recalls being pulled out of class in elementary school for small group instruction. She emphasized that when she reached high school she had difficulty adjusting and this created even greater anxiety in her. She told me that she hated her local high school and that she had wanted to attend one of the county high schools instead, because a friend had described it to her as a better educational situation. This is similar to most of the other study participants, who chose to attend one of the higher quality county high schools rather than their local urban school. She applied to transfer there in her freshman, sophomore, and junior years, tried to line up the needed reports and recommendations from her current school, but was never accepted. This may have been a reflection of her and her mother's lack of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1977), or it may have been related to her classification as special needs. Darla's story of anxiety and chronic absences indicates a school experience lacking in rich academic experiences or even the positive social interactions that create a beneficial high school experience. The result of this neglect by the school system to provide the best quality education for Darla was that her anxiety increased during those years, and it caused her to require total home instruction during her junior year of high school. This was around the time that her mother married a man whom Darla does not care for and, because of the conflicts at home, she moved in with her grandmother again.

She has always had an uncomfortable relationship with her mother but is very close to her grandmother. When she was in elementary school she stayed with her grandmother before and after school, presumably while her mother worked. She lived with her when she was in eighth grade, and apparently moved back and forth between her mother and her grandmother after that. In our first interview she provided some insight into her family situation and its effect on her emotionally:

My mom and dad were never married; they're not together. I don't know what my dad is doing, really. But my mom used to be a hairdresser and then she had me and I kind of screwed her career up. So she used to work for an insurance company for a long time, it got shut down, so she doesn't have a job right now. She got remarried to a guy named Tom. I don't like him, really, not at all. He also does not work. ... I live with my grandmother.

The details of her IEP were not available and it is impossible to surmise how much of Darla's special needs classification resulted from her difficulties dealing with her dysfunctional family situation, whether it benefited her academically, or why she experienced so much frustration and pain adjusting to the demands of high school. What is apparent, however, is that she believed the diagnoses of ADHD and anxiety, they became part of her identity, and that she carried that label with her throughout K to 12. Darla also carried her diagnoses and her request for accommodations with her to college, where she was provided with a note taker and allowed extra time for tests. She was convinced that she could not sit still long enough to learn very much in her classes and that she could not memorize. Making a presentation in class caused her so much anxiety that she had to take medication beforehand. Having been officially labeled as hyperactive from "a point of view that everyone has to recognize" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 22), Darla accepted this judgment unquestioningly and acted like the person she was told that she was. This anxiety and negative opinion of her own abilities was compounded by the fact

that she did not want to go to college at all and was only there to please her beloved grandmother, who dreamed of Darla graduating from college. This created a situation that became unbearable for her by the end of her freshman year at Sunnyside, when she gathered enough courage to break the news to her grandmother that she had decided to apply to cosmetology school.

In the third semester of this study, Darla attended a cosmetology school in a nearby city. Four weeks in, she sent me an email to update me on her progress. Similar to her high school and college experiences, she related that she found it hard to sit for hours in the “theory” classes and that she had earned Cs or Ds in tests. She complained, “I am basically the only one who has trouble with the tests we are given. I do know what I am doing but I have a hard time learning everything at once and especially when it's rushed. ... I feel dumb in a way compared to everyone else because I need extra time to understand what we are learning.” Darla’s official identity, placed on her as a young child, remains with her as a young adult.

When describing the effects of symbolic violence, Bourdieu (1997) states that “the dominated, often unwittingly, contribute to their own domination [and tacitly accept] ... the limits imposed on them. [This] often takes the form of *bodily emotion* (shame, timidity, anxiety, guilt)” (p. 169). Although the individuals in the school system may have imposed the stigma of “special needs” on Jerry and Darla with the belief that this classification would benefit them, the result was the infliction of additional pain and a range of emotional reactions that have exacerbated the symbolic violence inflicted on them.

The Imposition of Symbolic Violence through the Tracking System

In this section I will show how the participants' inadequate English language education and/or classification as special needs became a justification for placing them into remedial or low tracks throughout their K to 12 school experiences.

Holders of large amounts of symbolic capital ... are in a position to impose a scale of values most favorable to their products – notably because, in our societies, they hold a practical *de facto* monopoly over institutions which, like the school system, officially determine and guarantee rank (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21).

According to Rubin (2006), the tracking system, “the sorting and grouping of students for instruction based on an assessment of academic ability” (p. 4), is a practice that has been used in the US educational system for many decades, although it is frequently criticized by researchers. This system has been blamed for perpetuating inequality, since the lower tracks are disproportionately packed with students of color and those from low-income families, those who possess little symbolic capital, including immigrants. Aligning with Bourdieu (1989), these students accept their positions,

know their place in society and accept this unquestioningly, without recognizing the power that has been imposed on them ... Agents, even the most disadvantaged ones, tend to perceive the world as natural and to accept it much more readily than one might imagine (p.18).

This is how Joaquin, Ayushi, and Daniel accepted the unexplained class placements they experienced.

Joaquin. Joaquin described his placement in fifth grade as the result of having improved so much in English that he was placed into the highest track:

Numbers went from five dash one to five dash five, and one was supposed to be the best class, the higher class, and I was in five-one for fifth grade. Then for sixth grade, I went to six-three because maybe they put me into a very advanced class. Maybe it was too advanced for me at the time because I dropped to six-three, but it wasn't that bad. Everyone thought it was fine and my parents were proud of me for being that good.

Joaquin explained that the middle school and high school that he attended had similar systems of tracking, but:

I didn't feel like it bothered me too much. ... I definitely wasn't in the lowest class but I wasn't in the higher end classes. I did feel like I was still on the end of just finishing to master the language, to losing my accent completely. Middle school was probably one of the hardest academic times during my school career. ... My dad kind of pushed me through it because I dropped in grades. ... That's what helped me go up.

He, apparently, cited his knowledge and use of English as the reason he was placed into the top track in fifth grade and also for the cause of his lower placement in middle school, in both cases unquestioningly accepting the decisions of the educational system.

For his first year of high school, Joaquin attended a regular city school, but his father, convinced that the atmosphere there was heavy with drugs and violence, transferred him to the county technical high school. One of the first things that Joaquin told me about himself is his passion for and experience with computer technology. At the technical high school, he requested to be placed into the computer technology section, but he was never given a placement test and instead was informed that there was no room in that program. Since, in his first year, at the city high school, he had been placed by the guidance counselors into an electrical construction class, the technical high school placed him there, as well, and he graduated with a certificate in that field. It is significant to note that African American and low-income children are assigned disproportionately to low tracks and vocational programs (Rubin 2006). These placements were unquestioned by Joaquin and his dad.

Ayushi. Ayushi attended her county technical high school, as well, because the quality of the education there appeared to be higher. In her first year, she was placed into

a lower track for English, which she described as a remedial class. This is how she related her attempt to step up into a higher track:

...in that remedial class, I did really well. ... I got 97s, 98s. I wanted Honors but ...they wouldn't put me in Honors because I was too low. This is where I was. Then there was another class. Then there was Honors. I couldn't skip that class in the middle. They said, when I was a sophomore I was going to take that class. If I passed that class I could get into Honors. I was like, No. ... That's not fair to me. So I spoke to one of my friends ... He was like, I would write an email to the principal: I don't think this is fair because when you're not putting me in English honors I feel like you're restricting me from showing what I'm really capable of and that's not fair to me. I know I can take on the challenges and I love a challenge and I feel it's going to help me grow. ... Then the Principal said, Fine. You could get in.

As a first-year high school student, Ayushi had been placed into a lower track presumably based on a test that found her use of academic English lacking, reflecting the poor or non-existent English instruction which she had received in the same school system. She, however, with the encouragement of a friend, stepped up and challenged the system. The principal and the teachers accepted the challenge, but, similar to Joaquin's experience, still put her in her place by forcing her to sign a waiver, implying that they had no faith in her ability to pass the honors course:

But I had to sign a waiver form that said if I fail or anything I can't hold the school responsible. That was all on me. So I signed that waiver form and I got in, and I ended up getting a B+.

In addition, according to Ayushi,

I honestly could have gotten an A. The thing is, I did not like the teacher I got, and ... I just didn't speak. ... and I feel like that cost me a lot in that class because if I spoke I could have easily gotten an A. I just got a B+. Then same thing with my junior year. I didn't like that teacher either and I just never spoke and then my senior year, I spoke. ... So if I have a professor or a teacher who seems warm, I guess you can say, I'm more likely to raise my hand even if I'm like, "Maybe this is wrong, maybe this is right" versus if I don't like a teacher and I don't know how I'm feeling about it, I'm not going to raise my hand. I'm still like that even now.

This comment illustrates Ayushi's reaction of discomfort to the symbolic violence that had been inflicted on her when she attempted to challenge the system. She had earned a spot in the honors English class, but she could not escape her feelings of inadequacy which were revealed in her reticence in the classroom. Her inability to participate in class discussions also can be related to the fact that her sudden move upward from a lower track position created a conflict within her habitus, something Bourdieu called a "habitus clivé" (Friedman, 2016), which creates a feeling of discomfort, a sense of being out of place. This is an emotion experienced frequently by individuals who attempt to extend their habitus into new areas, particularly with immigrants.

Daniel. Daniel, too, challenged the position that his high school had placed him in, as a child of Mexican immigrants in a predominantly white area. He attended his county technical high school, where, he said, there was very little talk or encouragement for the students to attend college. Daniel had already made that decision, and he ranked number seven in his class, but when he conferred with the guidance counselor,

If anything, the guidance counselor encouraged me to not apply to State University. She ... said things like, maybe you should just go to a community college, because you're part of the [program for students in the top 10% of their class] and you're going for free. But I mean ... I took her advice kind of, but I didn't. I took my own initiative, I guess.

He eventually did apply to several institutions of higher education, but State University was his first choice because of their opportunities for research in science. In the next section, however, I will address the trajectory that led Daniel, a top student, to a developmental writing course and the ramifications of that placement.

Jerry. Jerry was apparently placed into a low track in high school because of his status as a special needs student. He described his classes as consisting of a large

percentage of minority students and his perception that the Black students behaved poorly in class: “But the Black kids are very rambunctious. They're like always ... saying some funny stuff, to piss off the teachers. And sooner or later that just triggers teachers. ... they paint the whole image of the class as that, very annoying. ... Like oh, I'm gonna get annoyed with the class because of that student. ... I'm gonna be annoying to everybody.” According to Oakes (1986) poor and minority high school students are disproportionately placed into lower tracks designed for those who are presumed not to be college-bound, and teachers of these groups of students are often likely to feel less able or willing to put their best effort into working with them, leading to frustration among the students, as well. In addition, research (Downey & Pribesh, 2004) has indicated that a bias exists among teachers against minority students, particularly Black boys, who are disciplined at higher rates than others. It is conceivable that this is the type of situation that Jerry described, which added to his negative attitude concerning school.

He enthusiastically related one experience in his junior year English class, however, that lifted his spirits and reveals the depth of his abilities when his interest is piqued. His class was assigned to read *The Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding:

The only book I read that I really liked was Lord of the Flies. That was my favorite. I had to study the characters very well, because I was interested in it. I loved the idea of it. ... This teacher ... she always said this, Jerry, you are a very open, expressive person ... we had to do this whole pretend, be this character, and I always picked my favorite character, it was the leader, the person that didn't know that much but he knew what was right and wrong. I was that person, and we had a play going on, and I was being very ex-, you know, me, in the play. Everyone loved it. I felt like I was back in my good old days, being the class clown, being the funny guy everyone liked, that type of thing. Everyone else relied on me in that class about who, what was this character, what happened in this moment, what page was it on, and what was your opinion on it? And they loved it all. ... That's what I felt like. I felt like I had the power back again. I felt - also, I felt like reading is very important, because people have trouble with it and I like helping people. ... That's what made me like it, in a way.

Jerry has indicated here an ability to analyze a plot and to make a story come to life when given the opportunity. Unfortunately, according to him, this was the one and only event in high school that inspired him to do so. He has painted a picture of a young man with sensitivity and ability whose label as “a student who needs assistance” precluded his ability to receive a quality high school education and became part of his identity. His comments here also reveal the persona of the “class clown” that he enthusiastically claimed and also carefully developed in his social media, which will be analyzed in chapter six. Apparent, also, is another facet of his identity which he mentioned frequently, his desire to be of help to others.

Symbolic Violence Imposed on Students in Higher Education

In this section I argue that the institutions of higher education imposed symbolic violence on the participants of this study early in their college careers and even before they began as first-year students. First, I will describe how symbolic violence influenced the administration of the composition placement tests and rendered them invalid; next I will explain how the institutions continued to inflict symbolic violence on the students by requiring them to take ineffective and poorly planned and executed developmental writing courses; finally, I will show how the institutions imposed symbolic violence on them in other ways that disrupted their trajectory towards a timely graduation.

Placement tests for first-year composition. The institutions of higher education inflicted symbolic violence on the participants of this study as they entered by the use of placement tests of questionable validity (Hassel & Giordano, 2015; Scott-Clayton, 2012; Belfield & Crosta, 2012). The tests, in which the students are provided a topic or a choice of a few topics and asked to write an essay, were administered online to the potential

college students while they were still in high school. None of the participants had been apprised of the purpose or the importance of the test. Daniel remembered receiving the link to the test for State University while he was at lunch and completing the assigned writing before his next class. Ayushi took the same test: “I understood most of it, but I felt like there was a time constraint and they just didn't give us much of a direction but I just wish I had more directions. So I just wrote to the best I can.”

Joaquin, Victoria, and Darla took a similar online test for Sunnyside. Joaquin described his testing experience this way:

They give you a bunch of prompts that you could use. ... They said write an essay and I don't think they gave you what they wanted on it. They just said write a blank essay. ... and they said, here's the space you need. Make it under I think a certain amount. ... Then you just write it down. Then I handed it in.

Victoria revealed that she was “really bad with taking tests when it comes to, like when they actually mean something,” and she felt that her anxiety caused her to do poorly.

Similarly, Darla described how she took the test: “My friend, I texted her, what is this about? What did you write about? She said, I wrote about this, and that, and I was like, I don't know what this is ... This is so stupid. I was so upset and frustrated, and I was like, whatever.”

These comments demonstrate some of the concerns that cause researchers and instructors to doubt the validity and the value of placement tests for composition classes (Sullivan and Nielson, 2009; Relles & Tierney, 2013; Hassel & Giordano. 2015, Wu & Tan, 2016). First of all, each of the students declared that they had no prior warning about the importance of the test, nor instructions about how to improve their chances of presenting their best work. These are first-generation college students; their parents possessed no cultural capital concerning college applications or placement, and so they

depended for direction on their teachers and guidance counselors, who apparently failed them. Second, Victoria and Darla mentioned that they become anxious when faced with a high stakes test; Ayushi felt that she did not have enough time; and Joaquin felt that he was not afforded enough information to develop a quality essay. These concerns could easily create anxiety, as well, which can obstruct their thinking and create panic. In fact, “Numerous studies revealed that test-anxious students or students targeted by a negative stereotype display performance deficits in evaluative settings” (Croiset et al., 2017, p. 107), and this anxiety is a reaction to symbolic violence.

Concerning that, Bourdieu (1997) explains that the dominated individuals accept in advance the limitations which the institution has imposed on them and symptoms of this reaction can be shame, timidity, anxiety, or guilt. All these factors combined to create a situation in which the power of the higher education system imposed its force against its newest and most vulnerable students. Institutions of higher education continue to use questionable assessments to place students, largely minority and first-generation, into non-credit bearing composition courses which many researchers believe are ineffective or even deleterious to the students’ chances of graduating from college. One explanation for this seemingly irrational policy is that the placement tests and the developmental courses are still used today as gatekeepers, just as the first college composition courses at Harvard in the late nineteenth century were used to eliminate some students, so that the institutions of higher education can maintain the prestige of their diplomas and degrees and prevent marginalized groups from encroaching on their territory.

Interestingly, Joaquin described his feelings about being placed into the developmental writing course: “I did get placed in the lowest classes. Like Writing 95. I

didn't feel too bad about it. I felt like if it's a slow start then I'll learn everything. ... Start from zero and I'll go farther up, and I'll fix it." Once again, he showed his complicity in the symbolic violence imposed on him and his acceptance of the deficit placement of the college without question, believing that he could make the best of it.

The composition classroom. The composition courses which the participants were forced to attend were characterized by a lack of consistency in pedagogy and grading. The writing course that Jerry attended in the community college focused on grammar and punctuation, while the courses at the four-year institutions professed to focus on analysis and academic composition. State University differentiates their developmental composition courses into "basic composition," which meets twice per week, and "basic composition with reading," which meets three times per week and presumably reflects a lower score on the placement test. At Sunnyside, the students in basic writing meet four times per week, severely limiting their options for taking other courses that semester. All the institutions use a decontextualized approach to writing instruction, in which the students are expected to learn writing skills by composing essays on topics assigned by the instructor which generally have no relevance to the students' interests or their courses of study. For example, for Victoria's second semester writing course at John Adams University, the professor required her to write every essay through the entire course on the same topic, the story of her misadventure with the financial aid office which I recount later in this chapter.

I like my writings from last semester better than this semester. ...Because I just feel like I wrote about more last semester. Like for this semester, I wrote about the financial aid thing three times. And that was it. ... It was a process essay, research study, case study, and my professor wanted me to do it about the financial aid thing. I just kind of wish I would've had something else to write about.

This approach to writing instruction is organized around learning to write in different genres, and reflects an underlying belief that students can learn to compose different types of academic papers by practice, regardless of the topic or the students' interest, an example of the autonomous view of literacy (Street, 1995).

The curricula for the courses vary by the school and/or the instructor. At State University, the instructors for both the developmental composition course in which the participants had been placed for the first semester, and the required expository writing course that they took in the second semester, followed a similar syllabus required by the university. Both courses, with different textbooks, involve reading two essays from the textbook, comparing and contrasting them, and creating an original paper which includes an analysis and quotes from each of the essays. At Sunnyside, the professors had more freedom to structure the instruction and the assignments, and those classes reflected more variety in topics and approaches. Unlike the classes at State University which were held in generic classrooms, the writing classes at Sunnyside spent two out of their four days per week in computer labs, and so every student was able to work on their own paper while the professor instructed.

Experiences in State University composition classes. All but one of the classes I observed at State University were remarkable for the apparent deficit attitudes of the instructors and a lack of engagement among the students, and this compounded the anxiety and uncertainty felt by these students at the outset of their college careers. This negative regard for the students is an example of the unrecognized and unexamined deficit views concerning a significant portion of the students by the dominant discourse of the university. I attempted to observe each of the writing classes for both semesters,

but some instructors there refused to give me permission to enter their classes or ignored my emails. By observing where I could and listening to what the students told me about their classes, I have constructed a picture of their experiences.

Daniel reported that he liked his basic composition professor: “What I like about him, I think he's a real good professor, he wants us to develop those critical thinking skills rather than - and obviously he wants the essay to be clean and all that, but he really stresses the critical thinking, which is something I need. We all need that.”

My observations of this class revealed an instructor who was relatable and motivated at least some of his students, who showed some interest and involvement. At the same time, Daniel felt that he was not learning what he needed: “I'm in a class with athletes, so they don't really take their work too seriously. ... And I want to improve my writing, and I still need to talk to the professor about that ... And obviously I want to help them but I want to learn myself and develop those skills and move on to expos.”

In the second semester, my observation of his class with a different instructor revealed a general lack of engagement among the students in the discussion; Daniel reported again that he did not believe that he was learning anything.

Also at State University, Ayushi took both the basic composition and the first-year expository writing course with the same professor. Early in the first semester, she reported that the class “makes me fall asleep.” Later, she felt especially frustrated when she could not manage to give the professor what he wanted in her essays: “I'm not really good at analyzing, like I have trouble analyzing. ... I did try to follow through with his things, but I don't know, I just had trouble.” On the day I observed her basic composition class, there were eight students in the class, which generally enrolls about 15. The

postures of the students and their use of phones and laptops unrelated to the class discussion indicated that they were not engaged with the topic. The students had been assigned to read an essay and the instructor attempted to conduct a discussion about it, with no participation on the part of the students, except for Ayushi. She told me later that she always tried to speak in that class because no one else did and she felt sorry for the professor. At one point, he was talking about something related to the discussion and he mentioned his love for classical music, particularly Rachmaninoff. He asked in a sarcastic tone, “I don’t suppose anyone here has heard of Rachmaninoff?” No one replied. That comment reflected the condescending tone of the class and was and not pedagogically helpful. Ayushi registered with him for the second semester:

It was much easier the fact that I had him because he knows me. That definitely helps a lot in this class, especially since expos is a much harder class according to a lot of people. ... I heard a lot of bad things about expos, like a lot of bad, bad, bad things. So I was looking at all of the professors that were teaching, and out of all of them, he was the only one that I knew. And all the other ones ... I heard a lot of bad stuff about them.

And so she went back to the “devil” she already knew. “I feel like I made it a little bit easier on myself for doing that.” Later, after nearly two full semesters of college writing instruction, she remarked, “I realized that, I’m not really good at analyzing.” Later, her assessment changed somewhat: “I also felt that basic comp did help me with analysis a lot. ... For me, writing analysis papers isn’t that hard for me anymore because I’m so used to, like ... I know how to do them.” This comment, made in the context of a discussion about her creative writing class which she found more stimulating, reflects the complexity of her academic identity construction which can reveal a variety of positions and can vacillate frequently.

This two-semester experience in composition at the start of her college career has produced several results for Ayushi. First, it taught her little or nothing about college academic writing. Second, it reinforced the deficit identity concerning English which the educational system imposed on her through her K to 12 years, that not only does she require remediation, but even after two semesters of instruction she still “cannot analyze.” Third, the low grade of C that she received in the second semester will hold down her cumulative GPA.

Similarly, when Luciana’s “basic composition with reading” professor gave me permission to observe her class I again witnessed a remarkable lack of engagement among the students in the class, some of whom appeared to be napping, while others chatted or surfed the web on their laptops or phones. A large part of this class consisted of the professor asking the class questions about what they had supposedly read, not receiving a reply, and then giving them the answer she was looking for. After the class, I thanked the professor for allowing me to observe. She replied, self-consciously, that these students are so deficient in their reading and writing skills that “you really have to spoon feed them,” another reference to the presuppositions common among developmental writing professors that their students lack ability and most likely are not “college material.” When I asked Luciana in a later interview what she thought about the writing class, she replied that she felt she learned a lot. This response, and Ayushi’s comment that basic composition had helped her to learn to analyze, are indications of their submission to the symbolic power of the university, assuming that this was the best instruction that they could expect.

The Sunnyside experience. In contrast, Victoria and Darla's first semester basic writing course at Sunnyside was filled with energy. The students at Sunnyside found their professors to be approachable and willing to provide personal attention in class, and they gave their courses good grades. The students obviously related to their professor and she kept them engaged. She taught from *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Graff and Birkenstein, whose premise is that a good academic writer needs to be able to create an argument based on others' ideas as well as his own and teaches that by means of templates that provide students with starting points to learn to express their own thoughts. The students in this class, in their computer lab, remained engaged in writing and discussion throughout the double period both days that I observed. Both Victoria and Darla expressed positive feelings about the course and the professor, and I believe that these positive results were the product of the combination of the instructor and the course of study that she used.

Grading and feedback. Coffin et al. (2003) note that feedback from writing instructors is often unclear, does not correspond to best practices, and is perceived by the students as unhelpful. Based on a compendium of research, Ferris (2014) provides a list of "best practices" for writing instructors which includes suggestions such as:

- Feedback should be provided on multiple drafts of student papers, not only final graded drafts.
- One to one writing conferences may be more effective than written teacher commentary.
- Teachers should give clear and text-specific feedback that includes both encouragement and constructive criticism and that avoids appropriation (taking over) the student's text. (p. 8)

Both researchers emphasize the importance of instructors clarifying with the students early their expectations and their preferences and being sure that the feedback is specific and understood by the student.

The grading and comments in the participants' composition classes at State University did not conform to these suggested practices. Instead, they apparently depended on the whims of the instructors. For example, Luciana's basic composition instructor returned papers digitally and posted comments, many of which appear to be vague and generic, something that the instructor could copy and paste, and not one that can guide the student in future writing; for example:

C+

This project indicates some ability in making connections between two disparate readings. You attempt to incorporate quotes, but some quotes don't show a clear connection between texts and assignment. Part of this is due to your claim which does not express clear relationships between texts and theories. Try to form an argument that clearly connects to the assignment and the text. Avoid making claims that overgeneralize the texts. Reread the text in order to produce an original and independent response to the assignment question rooted in connective thinking about the text. Identify and examine the significance of some aspect of the subject under discussion. Your project needs to be rooted in connective thinking about the text. To make an effective analysis, provide a valuable point of view or way of interpreting the phenomenon addressed in the prompt, that otherwise may appear unexplainable. Try to identify and examine the significance of some aspect of the subject under discussion. Focus on addressing the underlying assumptions within the text.

This comment and others similar apparently were ineffective at guiding Luciana to improve her writing. She complained:

Basic Comp was a waste of time because I would stay up all night until like 3:00 am and I would still get a C plus no matter what I did. My professor was so inconsistent with the way she commented on our papers, like she would comment one thing on the rough draft and then I would fix it and then on my final draft she would comment totally different and it was hard to just get a B in that class.

She told me about another vague and unhelpful comment she received from that instructor: "I have to fix my understanding. My paper was a little hard to understand ... I understood the wrong content from that story." As far as I know, none of them provided a rubric to guide the students' grading. State University provided guidelines (Masiello, 2016), but they were not always followed. Luciana reported about her expos instructor,

[He doesn't] grade your rough drafts. He's not really speaking up about things that he's really looking for, so I'm not going to know exactly what I'm doing right or wrong until I get my grade back. ...He says that he's only commenting on the first and the fourth paper, and he commented on it but he says that he's only going to make one comment per page.

Ayushi, also, found it difficult to comply with her professor's suggestions, which he wrote by hand on her papers. As the second semester was drawing to a close, she remarked:

Ayushi: For paper one I got a C+, for two I got a B, and then for paper three I got a C.

Rosemary: Do you know why? Did he make comments to let you know why?

Ayushi: Yes, he basically said for paper three, "Your analysis is not always developed, it's just like random analysis all over. You can do a lot better than this." That's all he said. He was like, "I'm not saying anything but that I know you write a lot better than this."

These examples of feedback from instructors did not follow the suggested best practices and reinforced the students' already negative opinions about their own abilities.

Decontextualized instruction. The writing curricula at Sunnyside and the community college allowed the instructors more freedom than those at State University, and some of them used this freedom to create more energetic, motivational classes. Nevertheless, all the writing programs in which the participants were enrolled were designed within the perspective of the autonomous model of literacy (Street, 1995), with

emphasis on basic skills and decontextualized reading and writing. These decontextualized developmental courses are generally ineffective. Despite research (Perin, 2011; Gabbert, Peschka, & Spradley, 2008) that supports the argument against this type of instruction for developmental students and in favor of courses that are integrated with introductory subject area courses, these programs continue in most institutions from community colleges to large universities. The autonomous model of literacy espoused by the institutions of higher education in these composition courses presents its values, independent of social context, as neutral and universal and, as it imposes the values of the dominant discourse onto other cultures, assumes that literacy will autonomously have effects on learning (Heath & Street, 2008). The ideological view of literacy, on the other hand, more sensitive to the diversity of cultures, views literacy as necessarily situated, and only making sense when studied as part of the social, cultural, political, and economic context surrounding the event (Gee, 2000). Most college students, but particularly students from diverse and marginalized cultures, will experience difficulties engaging with topics which the academics may consider neutral, but are outside the experience or interest of the students. For example, Ayushi commented, “When I write about my own experiences, it’s more powerful than something that is not real.” Similarly, Daniel remarked that he didn’t feel like he learned anything in expos, the required first year composition course. In his third semester, however, he said that he had a good professor teaching “researching in disciplines,” which focuses on analysis in the fields of science and medicine. These topics are important to him because they prepare him for his goal, a future in medicine, and so he was able to gain expertise in writing in this class. Darla expressed a similar view: “I don’t know about you but I read something

and [it's] so boring to me. ... The only thing we had to read was how to graduate ...

And I mean, that was the most boring thing I ever had to do in my life. But I had to it.”

Jerry, who took developmental writing at the community college, described the paper that he considered his best in that course:

When I talked about my family. Mostly because the teacher said, talk about something that means something to you. ... That was easy for everybody. And what mattered to me was ... mostly my family. And the one that really stood out was what I put lots of effort in, was my dad, the one that passed way, because what I loved about it, what I really learned about in writing, if you had something happen to you, it's easier to write. ... If it really happened to you, build on to that and put a lot of detail in it because people will love things that are truthful.

Two other deleterious effects of developmental writing course must be

mentioned. First, the courses provide no credit for the students toward graduation, but they cost the same as a regular college course. This added expense is usually covered by their Pell grant or Stafford loan, both of which have limits after which the students, overwhelmingly minority and/or low income, need to find additional funds to finance their education. In fact, after her transfer to John Adams, Victoria remarked:

The writing class I was taking at Sunnyside, although I did really like it, I just feel like it wasn't necessary, you know? ... the class was like \$6,000. ... because it was a double [class]. ... I could have taken another class.

Second, the requirement to include one or more developmental courses in the first semester of college lessens the number of other courses which the student can take starting out and in subsequent semesters. Besides the time involved with the extra writing course, many courses in various disciplines require prerequisites which the developmental students need to postpone because they cannot fit them into their schedule. This forces them to either take courses at their own expense during the summer to ‘catch up,’ or postpone graduation. This example of symbolic violence has gone unrecognized by both the administrators of the institutions and the students who are

inconvenienced and penalized because of these policies. For example, this is how Darla explained her attempts to register for a course as a business major:

Because I took Writing 95, I'm basically behind in my major, so in order to take any business class, you have to have Writing 105 already. I didn't have it, so when I went to meet with the head or I guess my advisor in the business department, he was like, why did you take 95? I was like, 'cause I had to ...the way that he talked he made it sound like he was talking me down. He was like, why did you take that? Why would you want to take this class? I was like, it wasn't something I wanted to do, it was something that was recommended. And he was like, well, now you are behind in your major. ... He made me feel stupid.

In Darla's experience, the college administration required her to take the basic writing course and then blamed her for taking it, making her "feel stupid."

Similarly, Daniel decided to take two biology courses at a community college over the summer after his first year at the university, while also working fulltime, to avoid falling behind with his major:

I can't take any sciences because of my Basic Composition placer. ... [Next semester] I'm taking general chem and then expos, and then pre-calc again, because pre-calc is a two-semester sequence. ... I'll take general chem in the spring ...I'm gonna take the biology series in the summer. I want to take Chem Two and the lab in the fall.

Further experiences of symbolic violence. Sunnyside College provides another example of symbolic violence imposed on students with little cultural capital and no recognition of how the institution is exploiting them. This college's website boasts that it is ranked as one of the most diverse liberal arts colleges in the nation, that it is committed to enabling students who have been historically excluded from higher education to reach their goals, and that more than half of their student body identify as first-generation college students. The experiences of the participants who attended this college, however, reveal an institution that permits courses of low quality which sometimes do not match their descriptions in the course catalogue, at the price point of a private college. This

common perception of low income and minority students as lacking the ability to succeed with a more challenging curriculum is common in all levels of the educational institution and is generally unrecognized and unchallenged. In the experiences described by the participants of this study, these deficit practices are especially damaging. Victoria was the first to express to me that the courses at Sunnyside were too easy and that she did not feel challenged at Sunnyside: “Going to Sunnyside didn’t give me the same feeling I get when I’m usually in a learning environment. I didn’t feel as comfortable, or like I belonged, and I definitely felt too smart for the classes I was put in.” Darla, too, commented in her first semester that she was doing well and that was because her courses were “easy.”

In November of her first semester, Victoria decided to transfer from Sunnyside to John Adams University. She excitedly told me that, because the tuition and other costs were so much lower at John Adams because it is a state university, she would be able to live there, rather than commute. In January, she moved into the residence hall and started classes. Three weeks later, she was called to the financial aid office and told that in the first semester, Sunnyside had submitted her FAFSA incorrectly as an independent student and used up most of her grant and loans for the year. They informed her that she needed to pay the university \$1200 immediately, and then enroll in a payment plan, or she would be forced to pack up and leave the university. Since that amount of money was not immediately available to her or to her parents, she immediately moved out of the residence hall and dropped out of her classes. Two weeks later, her writing professor called her to ask about the details of her situation and later accompanied her to the financial aid office. This time, with her professor standing next to her, they offered her a payment plan to get her through the semester that she and her parents were able to

manage by pooling their resources. Victoria later wrote an essay about this experience for the same professor, and her comment was: “My entire freshman year has been messed up, simply because I chose to go to a school that would mess up the one job they had.”

This story is a poor reflection on Sunnyside, whose financial aid office either made a horrendous error, or – worse – engaged in deceit. The incident is also another example of the power of educational institutions to manipulate and cause damage to their students’ lives while giving the appearance of simply following the rules. Sunnyside offers “dumbed-down” curricula that are not as challenging as those at a community college, while charging private college tuition. Students there keep up with costs through student loans that will need to be paid back after graduation. John Adams’s financial aid office also imposed its power on Victoria by forcing her to drop out of school and lose the money that she had put down already, because of Sunnyside’s error. Victoria’s conscientious writing professor who called her and accompanied her to John Adams’s financial aid office obviously had more cultural capital in that field than Victoria did, and he used it on her behalf. The institution still pushed back, however, because she had to make up two weeks of study and assignments, and her grades for the semester reflected this trauma.

Joaquin’s experience was also remarkable, and possibly damaging to his future. His major at Sunnyside is creative arts and technology, with an area of concentration in video game design and development. In his first semester, he took the first in a required series of courses for his major, which he described in this way:

It was like a really random workshop where different concentrations were put together in a classroom and there was no set syllabus that would tell you what was going to happen. Everything was kind of just written as the day went on. It felt

really disorganized. The program is fairly new, that's my reason. I gave it that. ... I finished it, passed it. I felt like I wasted my time, honestly.

When I met Joaquin in January, he was in the midst of his second required course, which he also perceived as a waste of time. It was called “movement for animators,” described on the college website as a course that covers movement in dramatic activities including acrobatics and mime, and then goes on to cover the creation of animation and film, emphasizing the use of advanced technologies including motion capture and green screen. This class was held in a large room that looked like a dance studio, with mats on the floor and ballet bars along one wall. Contrary to the course description, the students in Joaquin’s class never used a computer in class that semester. The day I observed it, the students were learning improvisational acting as the professor led them through a series of games, in which Joaquin was moderately engaged. During the class, the professor announced that their final presentation would be group skits skit based on the TV program, *Whose Line Is It Anyway*, a show that features comedy improvisation. I received permission from Joaquin and from his professor to return to observe the group presentations. Over the subsequent weeks of the semester, Joaquin reported that he and his group were writing and rehearsing their skit, although it had been described as improv, and that they had not touched on any computer technology. The evening before the final class, Joaquin texted me that he had had only one line in the skit and that it had been eliminated, and so I should not bother to attend. A few weeks later, I texted Joaquin to ask him his grade in that course. He replied that he had received a C, but added, “If I were more interested in it I would have gotten an A, but I honestly didn’t try hard enough.”

The following semester, Joaquin took the next course in the series, a 3-D design class, which turned out to be a course in hands-on woodworking or paper design and, when I checked in with him in late September, also had not yet included any work with computers. When I asked him how he felt about that, he replied, “I’ve grown accustomed to disappointment. ... It’s a class I need to take so I can’t complain.” In mid-November, when I checked in again, he told me, “Technology is going just fine, just climbing the classes to get to the core of things.” I asked him two more times if his tech class had taught him any technology yet, and he did not reply. He has not replied to my texts since. I believe that Joaquin felt that my prodding was threatening his decision to attend Sunnyside College, or perhaps encouraging him to question the quality of the technology program that was costing him so much money. Throughout this study, Joaquin gave evidence of his complicity in the symbolic violence which the educational system had inflicted on him, as Bourdieu (1991) described: “that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it” (p. 164). He always conveyed an attitude of acceptance, never criticizing the school, regardless of the injustice.

Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the ways in which the educational system has inflicted symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1997) on the participants of this study.

- Six of the seven students, who were first- or 1.5-generation immigrants and were emergent bilinguals when they entered school, experienced symbolic violence in the form of ineffective early language instruction by the use of English immersion programs mediated by NCLB, despite research that

indicates that bilingual education programs are more effective (García et al, 2008).

- Because of this early ineffective “English immersion” language instruction, participants experienced difficulties keeping up academically; this caused them to adopt a deficit identity.
- Two of the participants were classified as special needs students through questionable procedures and, as a result, suffered from a stigma attached to special needs students in the public school, including deficit views by teachers and embarrassment among peers.
- Ineffective language instruction did not encourage them to maintain or to value their first language. Rather than growing as bilinguals, some grew to devalue their home languages.
- The English language learners were never educated in academic English proficiency and this resulted in problems with math and science.
- As a result of this poor English language instruction and the stigmatizing of special needs students, the participants were placed into lower levels of their schools’ tracking systems in elementary, middle, and high school. Consequently, they missed opportunities for advanced and specialized courses and failed to receive the highest quality guidance and preparation for their college applications and placement exams.
- This, along with a lack of background knowledge and out-of-school experiences also affected the students’ standardized test scores.

- The higher education institutions continued the imposition of symbolic violence on the participants through testing, placement, and instructional practices that, according to research, are ineffective and disrupt their trajectory toward a timely graduation.

The institutions which were entrusted with the education of the participants provided faulty and ineffective English education courses for the emerging bilinguals and classified two participants as “special needs.” This treatment imposed labels on these young students which the teachers, administrators, and parents believed and which became part of their identities. Later, these labels led to tracking in middle school and high school based on deficit perceptions, and the imposition of ineffective developmental courses which cost them both time and money at the start of their college experience.

Chapter Six: Identities Sedimented in Literacy Practices

This chapter will address the research question: What do developmental college students' literacy practices reveal about how they construct their identities amid conflicting pressures from school, family, and peers? In this chapter I assert that the participants constructed and displayed complex and conflicting identities in their multimodal texts in their ongoing struggle to understand their own personal uniqueness and share that with their readers. The participants' texts revealed traces of their early beliefs about themselves, rooted in a sense of deficit, as well as indications of conflicts they experienced later as they interpreted new experiences and negotiated the expansion of their habitus beyond their family cultures into new, adult identities. Each of the participants used academic texts, written for courses that allowed enough freedom for identity to be embedded in their texts, to reveal very personal feelings and insecurities that they did not share in interviews or on social media

Amicucci (2017) argues that users of social media use rhetorical awareness when they create a certain online persona who enacts the exact role that the author wishes to project to their own unique set of followers. Social media can be seen as a secondary Discourse (Gee, 2008; Black, 2009) because people in online communities take on the values and mindsets associated with the digital media sites they frequent. These values include a spirit of communality, appreciation of "likes" and other reactions, as well as the use of hashtags and emojis, which the participants used frequently in postings to communicate emotional connections back and forth instantaneously. This ability to connect emotionally stands out as one unique aspect of social media, and a major reason for its popularity. Burnett & Merchant (2011) assert that social media reflect complex

interactions because they remix and recontextualize available resources, merging dominant global discourses with local contexts.

In addition to their texts, the participants also shared “artifacts” (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011) which express something important about themselves, objects or symbols that they hold dear and that provide another insight into their values and identity constructions. This part of the study, an “artifactual approach” (p. 130), draws on the funds of knowledge concept as it relates these artifacts to traditions and understandings that are important in the participants’ lives. It also relates to habitus (Bourdieu, 1989), which involves mental structures and traditions that are passed down through generations. It emphasizes literacy as material, since a text is always expressed in material form; for example, on a screen, in a book, on a sign. Artifacts, therefore, carry material qualities that symbolize the culture, values, and practices of a community and so become a window to the individual’s culture and identities (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011).

The importance of studying identity through literacy is explained by Moje & Luke (2009), who list three reasons why the discovery and analysis of identity is essential to literacy studies. First, when considering literacy from a sociocultural view, we can understand texts as tools for an individual to construct, perform, and explore their own identities and as a means to greater understanding of individuals’ or communities’ social practices. Second, we as educators must particularly work to recognize the identity constructions of students who have been traditionally overlooked or misunderstood, because identity has been used to stereotype or marginalize non-dominant groups. Educational institutions, in particular, rely heavily on labels, including “remedial” or “underprepared.” As we have learned in this study, if these negative labels continue

uncontested, they are easily adopted and believed not only by teachers and parents, but by the students themselves. Third, the current use of electronic and digital media requires study to understand the agency and power that young people demonstrate in their use of these media to celebrate their creativity and innovations.

“People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 3). Individuals are “composites of many, often contradictory, self-understandings and identities” (p. 8); identities are unfinished and always in the process of becoming, they develop in social practice, and are instantiated in texts. Rowsell and Pahl (2007) argue that, through the interaction of habitus with acquired and inherited funds of knowledge, an individual creates unique, multi-layered, and constantly changing identities, and these identities trace back to the authors’ social practices. In the process of composing multimodal texts as part of everyday living, a person sediments in the texts clues that can reveal these identities, and their interaction with, and resistance to, the various power forces active in their lives.

Ivanic (1994), quoting Halliday, asserts that language conveys two types of meaning simultaneously: the ideational meaning, which is the subject matter, and the interpersonal meaning, which is information about the people who are communicating, both in writing and in speaking. She notes that in a text a writer constructs multiple identities, making a mostly unconscious choice from among the Discourses (Gee, 2008) available to them for each text, based on the context in which they are writing and their anticipation of how their potential readers will receive the text. The writer’s discursal identity is revealed in these choices. Besides revealing identity, writing also contributes

to and assists the author's own identity development and enables these identities to evolve and coordinate across different times and different interactions.

The participants' texts, academic and non-academic, were all created and revised digitally, submitted online, emailed, or posted to social media. Some of them contain photos or sketches which play an essential role in the meaning making. Since it is not my goal here to critique the participants' grammatical or spelling errors, I reproduce examples from their texts as written except for deleting identifying information.

Ayushi

Ayushi's texts reflect her ongoing struggles with her conflicted habitus (Wacquant, 2006), as she negotiates her own new identity constructions drawn from both her family's Muslim culture and her new experiences on campus. This conflict has exacerbated the usual pull away from parents that is typical of young adulthood. Ayushi's habitus has expanded beyond her home Discourse (Gee, 2008) and her funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) now include understandings and experiences in her own world, broadened through her education and participation in the contemporary social life of a young woman (Andrews & Yee, 2006). For her creative writing course, she submitted an essay entitled *I Am a Muslim*, in which she describes crimes of racism that Muslims had recently experienced and the emotional reactions of herself and her family to them.

Imagine being attacked on your way home from school. Not physically attacked-well kind of but not entirely-Actually, *I don't even know* what type of attack you could call this. However, one thing is for sure and that it was and still is ***very fucked up***.

.... Imagine walking home from school and some random car stops right in front of you. You freeze thinking you're about to get shot. You start praying to all of the gods known to man begging for forgiveness. I mean, after all, you live in one of the dangerous cities to live in. But wait, you *don't* get shot.

Instead, all your ears hear is, “Go back to your country you piece of shit! We don’t need **terrorists** like you here!”

Then, you get spat on.

Wait, wait, what? What the hell just happened?

How in the world does this even make sense?

I mean, it’s America. Isn’t it supposed to be the land of the *free*?

Unfortunately, that incident depicts some of the true colors of America. My friend, a hijabi (a Muslim female who wears a scarf-like cloth over her head as a sign of modesty), had to endure this act of stupidity and ignorance simply because of her faith.

Ayushi shares her primary Discourse (Gee, 2008), the Bengali Muslim culture of her family, by the title (“I Am a Muslim”) and by describing the attire and cultural practices of her friends and family. She reveals her secondary Discourse as a young American student with her informal, emotional style and by her use of the informal slang and profanity that is common to her generation. She may also have selected this topic to affirm to herself her loyalty to her ethnic identity in a new environment. A poem which he wrote for the same course, entitled *Train Rides*, uses the ride from home to State University to symbolize the contrast between her family identity and her emerging young adult identity at the university.

Throw on the hoodie that your mom washed for you this weekend
and let the sweet fresh smell hit your fat nose,
You won’t smell this again for a whole two weeks. ...
Pardon the bright sun as he lays on your cold face,
And let the good memories consume your head.

This feels pretty good.

“We are now at State University, the next stop is...”

Although “Train Ride” describes one short trip, its final line refers to her expectations for the future and the role that the university plays in fulfilling those expectations.

Social media. Ayushi used both Facebook and Instagram, and the main purposes for her posts were to create an image of herself, to situate herself culturally, and to situate herself socially. Her online persona reflects complex threads of her identity, including her

most recent one, that of an independent but serious college student. She regularly posted photos of herself, posing in numerous locations on campus and around the metropolitan area, many with comments such as, “I’m smiling now because once finals start I’m doomed,” or “Are you in love with your school like me?” With these postings she extended this thread of her persona as an American college student, pulling away from her childhood habitus and creating a new identity. In social media when she referred disparagingly to her anticipation of finals, as well as in a poem in which she mentioned “deteriorating grades,” however, she hearkened back to that academic identity that still does not quite measure up.

Ayushi’s social media postings of her pride in her school and her position as an American college student share space with original comments and reposts concerning her family’s Muslim culture. This reflects her struggles to reconcile her conflicting cultural identities. One Facebook post was a birthday greeting to her aunt, her mother’s sister. It aligns with the Facebook tradition of wishing “friends” a happy birthday, but also affirms a close family tie and her Bengali identity. It consists of a still photo of herself and her aunt posing outdoors, apparently in a backyard. Ayushi makes a joke in her comment but later goes back and notes that she was “just kidding,” indicating that she is not sure if her aunt understands teasing in the style of American young people. She includes the phrase, “Insha’ Allah,” – “God willing” - which marks the conversation as part of her primary Discourse, acknowledging not just her family tie but also the language and culture that she shares with her aunt. Ayushi jokes with her aunt (they are close in age) about the three-year-old photo, and her aunt gives a loving reply with many emojis, including hearts and smiley faces, and one face blowing a kiss. She also received two love reactions

and 11 likes, indicating an emotional connection with a few of her friends. Another aspect of her identity conflict is reflected in another Facebook post of a short video of a Bengali comedian who lives in the UK, depicting in a humorous way an unsuccessful attempt by a young person to explain his symptoms of depression to his traditional parents. Her comment reveals another frequently observed aspect of her online persona, that of someone who wants to provide guidance and empathy for people who share her cultural conflicts. She comments that their parents cannot help the fact that they do not understand the clinical concept of depression, but rather offer suggestions like, “Go out with your friends and you will feel better.” Ayushi’s initial comment here was, “For everyone who tells me or told someone else to “get over it” or to “deal with it,” I hope you tell your own children the same thing one day.” After replying to several comments from friends that indicated that they identified with the video, also, she added, “But remember, don’t blame your parents. They don’t know the world you know,” implying that her generation, unlike their immigrant parents, is expanding their habitus to include new experiences and the contemporary culture in which they are becoming adults. Her initial comment also reveals a fleeting view of the emotional struggles she is experiencing in her first year in college.

Artifacts. The photos that Ayushi shared as her artifacts include one of herself as a baby with her aunt. She comments:

She's married but I've never seen her rely on her husband or anyone for anything in life. In the south Asian culture, women are usually inferior to men yet she doesn't follow that standard. She works 11 hours a day, comes home to her son and make sure he's ready for school the following day, and does whatever she has to do to survive and make herself happy. This is the woman I aspire to be; independent, fearless, and powerful with or without a man by my side.

A second photo depicts Ayushi as a child with her parents, who, she asserts:

... are my entire world and my motivators. Their endless support, love, and care for every good and bad thing I do drives me to do my best just so I could be the good person they've raised me to be. I hope one day, I can be this supportive to my own children and allow them to make their own mistakes in life just like how my parents allow me to do.

These artifacts also represent Ayushi and her efforts to reconcile her Bengali Muslim roots with her expanding American identity. She admired her aunt not only for her work ethic, but also for her image as a strong, independent woman who is experiencing a similar conflict in her habitus and is successful in Ayushi's eyes. On the other hand, she expressed her love for her traditional parents and her cultural roots. Her third artifact is a photo of a train, reminiscent of the poem quoted earlier. She commented: "I absolutely love trains. I feel like I have the whole world in my hands whenever I'm on the train. It's very relaxing and I feel like I can conquer anything." This is a symbol of that growing sense of freedom and independence that were so important to her, and of the growth of her habitus to include not only her family's traditions but also her vision of herself as a young American college student, with the train symbolizing that move.

Sedimented in Ayushi's texts are traces of her family habitus as well as traces of the new identities which she is creating for herself, with the help of family and friends on social media. Along with that, we see signs of the academic identity which she has carried through her school years and which was reinforced by her placement into developmental writing. She uses her Facebook and Instagram friends to support her emotionally through this growth process and she, in turn, provides them with similar support.

Luciana

Similar to Ayushi, the traces of identity sedimented in Luciana's texts also reflect conflict. As she experienced her newly found freedom at the university she was still forced to deal with her ongoing resistance to the forces that have attempted to hold her back in her life: the educational system, the political system, and her mother. For her Latino studies course she wrote an autobiographical essay about her relationship with her mother, one that she appreciated and resisted at the same time:

... My mother has played the role of both mother and father, raising two girls all by herself and she never even finished high school. I will always admire her for that. I never really had time to actually bond with my mom when I was younger but I do know that she does love me but she doesn't say it, ever. She just has a hard time showing it. As I grew older I tried to be the perfect daughter because for some reason I felt bad for derailing my mom's life by the age of 18. I have always done well in school and have always helped my mom out at home. However, a part of me has always felt like there was something I was missing, something I just could not seem to get right. It seemed as if everything I did made her angry when all I was trying to do was make her proud. I was so confused and did not know what to do. . . .

My mother has always been very overprotective of me. As I grew older I partially understood why. Since I was the first born and my mom had me at such a young age, she wants to make sure I do not make the same mistakes that she did. By the time I was in 7th grade ... I was begging my mom to let me go out and be with my friends. She would never let me have friends over or let me go out with friends and never told me why. This caused even more conflicts between my mother and I.

This piece reveals Luciana's struggle to construct her own identity as a young adult as well as an attempt to comprehend her conflicting emotions concerning her relationship with her mother. She felt a strong need to assert herself and find her own identity as a college student, but she also experienced guilt for admitting her desire to pull away from her mother.

Social Media. Luciana's main purposes for posting on social media was to share her art, to create an image of herself, and to situate herself culturally. She created a persona of an artist who loves and admires spoken word poets whom she discovered on

YouTube, and who is inspired by their words of individuality and resistance. Shortly after her arrival for her first year at the university, as her first Instagram post, she posted a photo of herself from a few years previous. Her opening message was: i should be writing this paper but here's a tb. :) (tb stand for “throwback” (www.urbandictionary.com)). This comment reflects resistance to the university’s power, in that she was posting on Instagram when she should have been completing an assignment, but also an attempt to “try out” her online identity. She received 152 likes and comments from 8 different people with urban slang and emojis, which added dimension to the meanings of the post and showed the strong emotional connection she made with her readers.

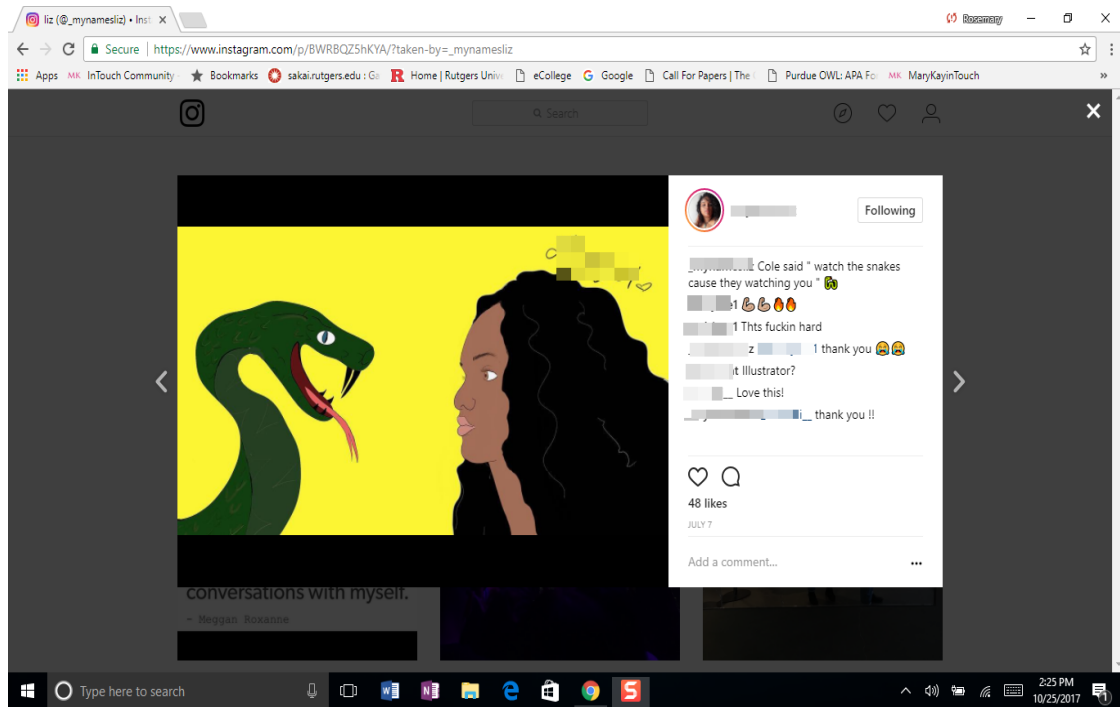
This Instagram post is a photo of palm trees near the beach in the Dominican Republic, her family home and where she lived for four years as a young child. The photo was taken when she visited on “alternative spring break” in 2017.



The opening comment, "underneath the palm trees, you can leave your worries " 🌴, is a line from a song by Alina Baraz, a Russian-American pop musician, and connotes a

feeling of nostalgia. This post reflects her projected persona as a blend of cultures: Dominican-American, as well as a part of the contemporary urban culture, and is an example of how uploading images to social media transforms the original texts into shared experiences which then develop multi-layered meanings (Davies, 2007). She has connected a line from a popular lyric with a picture that represented her Dominican identity and extended her reach past her local environment. She received 86 likes and one comment from a follower who recognized the lyric and added several emojis to show her emotional connection with the singer and with Luciana. The hash tag, #Homesick, connects her to a wider audience at an Instagram page of photos, including hers, that had been labeled with the same hash tag. “Homesick” also reveals her deep emotional connection to the Dominican Republic, where she spent her first four years and to her family that still lives there.

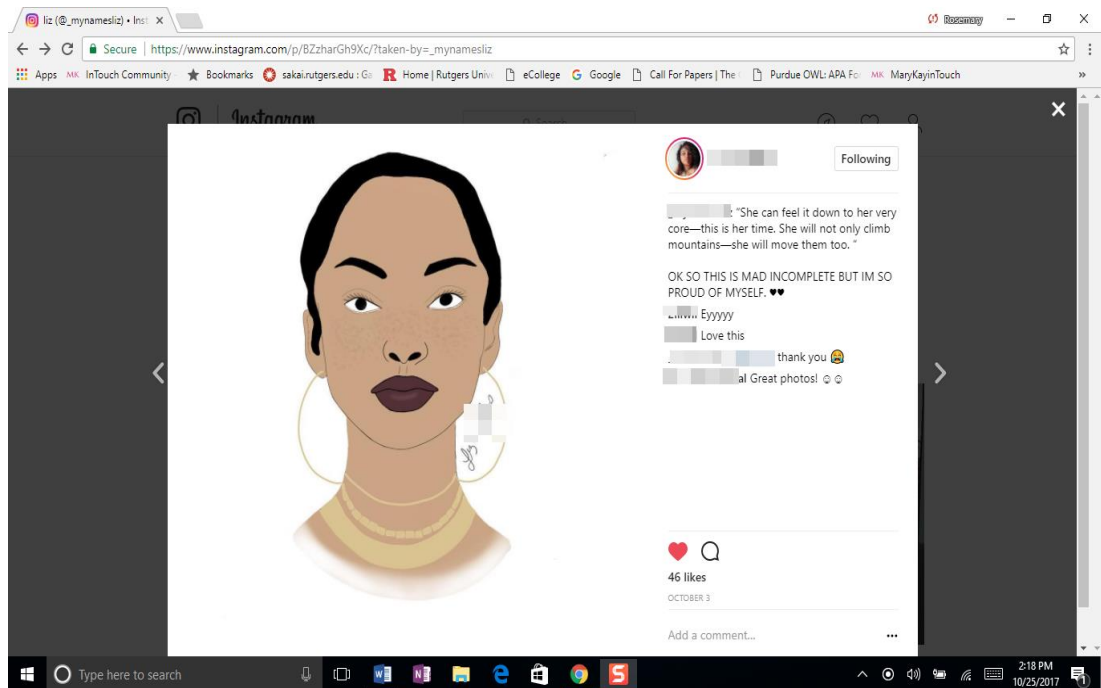
Luciana’s posts are especially unique because of the way she often combined her original artwork with the words of poets and hip hop artists whom she admires. Here she used the words of a more powerful spokesperson, combining her art with a line from lyrics by J. Cole, a hip hop artist, to forcefully express her spirit of resistance:



The opening message is: “Cole said ‘watch the snakes cause they watching you,’” with a snake emoji. She received 48 “likes” for this. She did not receive a lot of comments, but the ones she received are intense. She replied, “thank you,” with two emojis of tearful faces. She used that emoji frequently and it conveyed her emotional connection to her Instagram followers and to her own artwork. The appreciation of her audience helps to add depth to and extend the identity of strength and resistance which she is projecting.

The snake is a symbol, and we may wonder who or what it could have symbolized for her. Perhaps it is the school system that has often placed obstacles in her path, including her placement in a remedial writing course as she embarked on her college adventure. She could also have seen the snake as the new presidential administration which poses a real threat to immigrants, including people whom she cares about. Or she could have been expressing her emotional connection to the hip hop artist J. Cole, who,

she told me, relates stories of racism and conflict that he has experienced between the musical numbers at his concerts.



This is Luciana’s digital art done on a Surface tablet with a software program called Autodesk Sketchbook. Her opening message is a quote from poet Lang Leav, a Cambodian-Chinese writer who lives in New Zealand and has become popular through Youtube. This is an example of how social media seamlessly connect the local with the global. It reads, “She can feel it down to her very core—this is her time. She will not only climb mountains—she will move them too.” She adds, “OK, THIS IS MAD INCOMPLETE BUT I’M SO PROUD OF MYSELF.” For this one she received 45 likes and heart emojis, and two comments: “Eyyyyy” and “Love this.” Luciana’s response is the emoji she uses to express her deep emotional thanks to her followers, a face with tears, and a “thank you.”

In Instagram, Luciana revealed two strong identities, situating herself in the contemporary youth culture and as part of the spirit of resistance and independence

characteristic of this culture, but, at the same time, projecting her family's Dominican habitus, as well. She communicated using a combination of modes, including original art created traditionally or digitally, photography, and poetry, using social media to unite her voice with the voices of others of similar mind. In this way she projected her chosen persona, an artist who enjoyed sharing her creativity in an emotional way, and who used this digital medium to express her conflicting feelings so that she and her followers could interact and share emotions and understandings through their common Discourse. She enjoyed the emotional reactions that her art incited and also the reassurance that she felt from her followers. She posted her original artwork, but she apparently felt that she could not use her own voice. This absence of her own voice is significant. Perhaps she believed that it would not be heard or perhaps she doubted her ability to verbalize her feelings as well as the poets do. Alternatively, this silence may reflect that deficit academic identity which she has carried for so long. Instead of composing her own words, she depends on those other voices to pair with her artwork, to express her own feelings of frustration and anger.

Luciana's Artifact.



This is her comment: “my paint brushes and my books are important to me because the art allows me to express myself and books allow me to stop thinking for a bit when i’m too stressed out.” This photo clearly reflects her identity as an artist and an intellectual who feels happy and “at home” in her university residence hall, her broadening interests that have resulted from the unlimited reach of the internet, and her admiration for people who defy the dominant discourses and create their own styles of communication and self-expression. Sedimented in Luciana’s texts are traces of her

family habitus and traces of the identities that she was constructing: an artist and an independent young woman who is working to resist the forces that attempt to prevent her from reaching her goals

Jerry

Jerry's texts reflect his own conflicts and his struggles for social acceptance. His academic texts and his social media posts project such different personae that it is almost impossible to realize that the same young man wrote both. As the data collection phase of this study was just beginning, Jerry's older dad passed away after a long illness. He did not say much about his relationship with his dad in our interviews, and I hesitated to probe too deeply. One basic writing assignment which he shared with me, however, revealed his love and respect, as well as his pain at the loss of his dad. It expresses poignantly Jerry's grief and love for him:

Tom Smith is my father, for 17 years he had me. Watching me, raising me, feeding me, teaching me about the good and evil in an implied way. ... I could never really pay him back with what I have learned through living or even told him how I felt really about what I have learned. I was young and reckless... It's pretty hard to finally realize this now knowing that it's already too late to show my appreciation. ... I was a sleepy and lazy unconfident child in middle school and high school, but everyday my father would get out from his bed, six in the morning, to get my ass up ready for school I am sorry that I wasn't a better son to my father; I wish to go back and actually show my undying respect towards my fathers, especially Tom. My parents never gave up on me, even though I failed a lot in school grades and never applied myself in anything academically. I have let them down so much. ...

This essay, written just days after his dad's death, expresses poignantly Jerry's grief and love for him. The piece is autobiographical, describing his relationship with his dad and his deep feelings of loss and guilt. The multiple conflicts which Jerry experienced included his guilt at not appreciating his dad while he was alive, as well as his feeling that he disappointed him by his lack of achievement in school. This negative

identity traces back to his early language difficulties that were never addressed by the educational system, but, in compliance with the symbolic violence inflicted on him, he accepted the role created by the school and internalized by him and his parents. At the end of the piece, Jerry goes on to reveal himself as a person who wants to use his regrets to create a new identity, someone who is empathetic, “caring and forgiving,” the qualities he saw in his dad:

I can never forget a man like him. Always giving and never receiving, he knew what most people didn't, how to be a real human being. I will be just like my dad; caring and forgiving. I will not promise anything told to me or me saying what I will keep to myself, but dammit I'll never stop trying when the moment counts!

He has also attempted to present a similar persona in our interviews, in which he mentions trying to be empathetic to people, to include everyone present in conversations or activities, and wanting to create video games that make people feel happy.

Social Media. Jerry used Facebook to portray his persona of the “class clown,” which represented to him his only pleasant memories of school. He and his friends created dozens of videos and photos depicting staged joke routines, with Jerry in comic poses; for example, nearly falling off a boulder or playing with food at the restaurant where he was employed as a sous chef. His purposes were to situate himself socially, to share experiences, and to make jokes. He was intent on creating a persona on social media of a fun-loving jokester, despite the contrasting identities as an academic failure and a child who had problems adjusting to the school social situations and a young man who was attempting to find direction in his life and exhibited deep caring about others, which he revealed in our interviews and his academic writing. On the other hand, he designed a Facebook page for his adaptation of a popular video game, a virtual card

game; this effort provides a glimpse of his creative identity that he did not often display on social media or among his friends.

Jerry's artifact.



This symbol of the yin and yang were accompanied by this explanation from Jerry:

Everything contains **Yin** and **Yang**. They are two opposite yet complementary energies. What does this really mean? Although they are totally different—opposite—in their individual qualities and nature, they are interdependent. **Yin** and **Yang** cannot exist without the other; they are never separate. ... The real question is that how do we all stay together as one. A family? A species? A world? The universe? but I am not going all out with that question, very complicated...though it is what I like. Thank you for reading and your time.

This artifact reveals volumes about him. He identifies with this Chinese Daoist symbol which has become universally recognized as an illustration of duality, similar to Jerry's own identity: Chinese by birth and raised in a white, middle class environment; an intelligent young man with complex thoughts but someone who projects the image of a clown to his friends. The origin of the Yin and Yang in Chinese philosophy is significant. Jerry's earliest consciousness, now forgotten by him, was in the orphanage in China, and

his first language was a Chinese dialect. His adoption and move to the US, surely a shocking transition for a three-year-old, was never addressed educationally, and has resounded in his life. In interviews Jerry shared with me many stories of his pain during childhood in school and in other social situations, when bullying because of his race, and presumably his family situation with two adoptive fathers, made him feel isolated. He realized that he possessed intelligence although the school system gave him no opportunity to show it, and so he expressed his creativity in his artwork and his gaming and formulated a desire to become a video game designer. When he pondered his high school experiences in the small special needs classes, he commented, “I knew I was smart and I felt so different.” The school system, however, did not recognize his intelligence and he adopted that official school identity of disability, as well. He attempted to reconcile these conflicts and assert himself socially in high school by creating the “class clown” persona, and even after high school that persona persisted in his Facebook posts. On the other hand, our conversations also revealed views of himself as a creative artist and a deeply sensitive and moral individual who cares about the feelings of others. Unfortunately, after he dropped out of college, this seeming failure, although caused by factors beyond his control, revived that old deficit school identity. When he was offered a job that involved using Excel, a software program he had never used, that identity of the incapable student prevailed and he declined the job, turning instead to a more familiar one as a sous chef in a Chinese restaurant. That choice relates to his family funds of identity, recalling his relationship with his deceased father who taught him to cook, as well as his Chinese origin, which he continued to grapple with. He still struggled with this “conflicted habitus,” and so the yin and yang symbol particularly appealed to him.

Darla

When Darla was a young child, she sat under the kitchen table as her mother worked to style and cut women's hair, and so her interest in hairdressing and cosmetics is rooted in her family funds of identity. This led Darla to the goal of becoming a hairdresser like her mother. These early memories rooted in her identity continued through childhood and into her young adulthood. Despite later conflicts in her relationship with her mother, learning the skills of hair styling became Darla's dream. Everyone at Sunnyside College – the professors as well as her classmates, and everyone on Facebook and Instagram – knew that Darla did not want to be in college and dreamed of a career in cosmetology. In an essay for her basic writing course, she explained:

Despite my yearning to do hair, I am now in college. And often I wonder, "Why the hell am I here?" College for me was an unavoidable situation. for as long as I can remember ... my grandmother and mother both embedded the idea of college into my mind. ... As I grew older, I started to realize that college was not the place for me and what I wanted to do with my life did not need a college degree. The thought of me not going to college threw my whole family off. They were disappointed and put me down about my decision saying I would not get far in life and would struggle tremendously. I do not want to go to college at all, yet here I am due to making my grandmother happy and the conflict I have between my mother and her husband.

Similar to Ayushi, Luciana, and Jerry, Darla revealed deeply personal feelings in her school assignment. Her early feelings related to her mother created this desire to style hair like her. Her primary Discourse, however, also includes close ties to her extended Italian family, particularly her grandmother, who place enormous pressure on her to comply with their goals for her to graduate from college. To try to deal with these conflicting feelings, she shared them with everyone she knew at Sunnyside as well as among her friends. Darla shared with me another early memory, of her mother informing Darla that she was a successful stylist in a salon until Darla was born. This has instilled

guilt in Darla because, as she told me, “I kind of screwed her career up.” The discorsal identity (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010) that she reveals in this essay tells a conflicted story about an individual who has her own goals but is strongly influenced by her family members and reacts to their pressure by subordinating her goals to theirs. She is using this essay to express these conflicts and look for affirmation from her reader, her writing professor, as she gathers the strength to assert herself and follow her dream.

Social Media. Darla used social media to tease, joke, or entertain, to create an image of herself, and to share experiences. Many of her entertaining postings consisted of photos and short videos of animals, especially dogs. She also shared experiences with her friends and informational postings about hair and makeup. Significantly, unlike the other participants who used social media frequently, she never mentioned Sunnyside or her studies in any of her posts on Facebook or Instagram. While she was attempting internally to gather the courage to follow her own dream against the pressure of her grandmother’s loving wishes for her, she used social media as an escape from reality. As soon as she had made the decision to leave college and apply to cosmetology school, her social media were filled with posts displaying hair design, at first reposts of others’ work. When she began her studies in hair styling, she continually posted photos of her own work.

Darla’s Artifacts. Darla’s first photo depicts Darla with her dog, a pet that symbolizes her love of animals: “My dog is important to me because I’ve had her since I was about seven years old and I just cannot imagine my life without her. She is the most lovable dog ever.” This pet is also important as a source of love and continuity in her life when her mother’s remarriage created havoc for Darla. Her Facebook posts, most of

which consist of puppy and other small animal videos, project and reinforce that identity. Darla's second artifact is a picture herself and her grandmother, arguably the most constant support in her life. She comments: "My grandmother is also a VERY important person in my life because she has always been there for me and stood up for me in situations where I was too scared to. She has taken me in several times and has taught me many things that will help me later on in life." This photo also reflects her connection to her Italian American family habitus and important source of her funds of knowledge.

Her third artifact reflects her lifelong love for cosmetics and hair design, a photo of her with her face and décolleté decorated with makeup and sparkles for a special occasion. She comments, "Lastly, makeup is another important thing to me because it's something I'm somewhat good at. It makes me happy and it lets me be able to experiment and express myself." Significantly, she describes makeup as something she is "somewhat good at." This recalls her experiences throughout her K to 12 years, which mostly consisted of painful reminders of her emotional condition and her need for academic assistance, which has become part of her identity.

Daniel

Similar to other participants, Daniel sedimented traces of identity in his academic writing beyond what he discussed in his interviews. In an assignment for his Latino studies class, he first revealed his early identity as an inattentive and undisciplined middle school student: "In middle school ... I was always getting myself in trouble and often hanging around with the wrong crowd." He went on describe his trajectory as he matured, came to realize the significance of his parents' support for him, and formulated his future goals:

I was very fortunate to have two loving parents that always wanted the best for me. ... I always knew that because my parents came into the country as undocumented immigrants, but I never really knew the struggle they had to go through just to be where they are today. ... It wasn't until the summer before high school, when i started to grasp that concept of how much my parents sacrificed just to give me a better life. It amazes me how people are willing leave everything that they have in their country, just for a future of uncertainty. ... After finally realizing all of the sacrifices my parents made, just to give me a better future, I knew that there was no way I was going to make nothing of my life. So when high school began, I was set on the goal of going to college.

Daniel relished the image of his growth from a child with little interest in school to his identity as a young man who has arrived in college and works hard to reach his next goal, medical school. In the same essay, Daniel described his political and social awakening during his first semester at the university:

I have had some very humbling experiences at State University in which I would challenge professors and they would school me on a topic. ... It was a combination of my Sociology and Intro to Latino Studies class that I felt have helped me grow as a person the most. I become cognizant to the injustices around the world, which gave me the chance to challenge myself, and find myself in terms of my ideals and morals. Besides the professors, the environment of State University itself has changed my views on certain policies and topics. Unlike the predominantly-white town that I came from, I was now in a very diverse environment, and had the opportunity to surround myself with people with similar backgrounds as myself. This diverse setting enabled me to get involved with many activist groups ... and has given me the chance to help out the Mexican community by volunteering. ... One of the events that made me more humble was when I volunteered at an immigration screening. ...I would hear stories of workers being mistreated by employees and how they remained quiet about the situation. At the end of the day, most of the people that I talked to came to this country with the simple desire to work and attain a better life. This experience had me fired up and made me realize how little attention undocumented immigrants get in the United States.

By describing this trajectory, he created a discoursal (Burgess & Ivanic, 2010) identity of himself as someone who is aware of his growth process, is empathetic, and is open to learning and modifying his life views. Still, he has accepted the deficit identity which the school system imposed on him as a young child and blamed himself for his

inattention and detentions in his early school experiences. Daniel frequently mentioned the many hours he spent focusing on his schoolwork. He admitted that he had little time for activities and spent hours studying. This could be the reason why he paid little or no attention to social media or other amusements like gaming. We must wonder whether Daniel's all-consuming efforts to do well academically is indicative of the deficit academic identity which dictates that he must work constantly to keep up.

Social Media. Daniel asserted that he had little time for social media because of his emphasis on schoolwork. The few postings – four in Facebook and one in Instagram - that he took time for during this study, however, continue the image he created in his other texts, that of a serious and newly politically minded young man. Three of his four Facebook posts convey political views, including a video of Senator Elizabeth Warren arguing against Betsy DeVos's educational policies; a repost of Governor Andrew Cuomo's statement about immigrants; and a video of a protest march by immigrants. The other is a photo of himself with a group of students who had organized "Brain Awareness Week." His one Instagram post is a photo from a pro-immigrant protest which he attended at the university.

Daniel's artifacts.



This caduceus is a symbol of the medical profession, and reflects his newer identity as a serious student with a significant goal:

I chose this in particular, because it symbolizes health. Over the past years I have become very fascinated with the human body, whether it be learning about it in a textbook or exercising at the gym in an effort to improve the body. My interest in health is what has guided me into planning on going to medical school after my undergrad.

His second artifact is a picture of the scales of justice:



This is his comment:

Being the oldest child, I have always felt this need to protect my siblings, however this trait has evolved to something bigger. With the recent outcome of the election, I have felt the need to protect and stand up for those who are most underrepresented. To me, the Justice Scale reminds me of what needs to be done in order to give people a better quality of life. I like fighting for what is right, the equal treatment of all people.

With these artifacts, Daniel constructed the persona of an individual who is working intently to build his career in medicine and is the protector of his family, as well as someone who has evolved in his political views, which expanded dramatically in his first year at the university. In addition, he linked his identity as a child of undocumented immigrants to this personal and intellectual growth to emphasize his desire to work for social justice.

Victoria

One of the first assertions that Victoria shared with me about herself was that she really had not wanted to go to college, that “I didn't think I was meant for it, like I

didn't think I was on that level," although she also revealed that her high school teachers loved her and called her a "bookworm." Her professors at Sunnyside also saw her as an excellent student. This reflects the conflicts which she experienced as she attempted to reconcile her old, persistent identity as a young child who began school with a language deficit from the system's perspective, with her new identity as a college student. In an essay for her basic writing class at Sunnyside she revealed this conflict.

Victoria has a close relationship with her father, and in this essay, she described him as "my biggest supporter of anything I do/did. He is a humble, respectable, smart man, and I don't know where I would be without him." She related that every New Year's Day her dad would sit her down and remind her of her potential, his pride in her, and how important a college education would be for her success. Despite that support, she commented about her self-doubts:

"Will I be good enough?" or "Am I even right for college?" I always had a love/hate relationship with school. School was always so terrifying ... On the other hand, I treasured the time away from home, and I just adored sitting in the library surrounded by books, or in math class solving equations When it came to selecting colleges to apply to, I remember sitting with my guidance counselor and saying "Yeah, sure I'll apply to that one, and this one, sure that one too." Unfortunately, I didn't care where I went, and I still don't, because I don't believe in myself. Now that I'm in college, I'm terrified I won't be able to find my major in time, what if I never find what I'm good at?

She revealed another thread of this complex identity construction, her quiet, introverted demeanor, when she expressed her worries about the pressures of making friends in high school and projected that anxiety into college: "I was never a social person so I always had the worry of who I'd talk to, or if I'd have to sit by myself in lunch." Despite encouragement from her dad and from her teachers, Victoria had not yet been able to

shake that early deficit identity imposed on her by the symbolic violence of the educational system.

In her third semester, I texted Victoria who, since this essay was written, successfully transferred from Sunnyside to John Adams University, where she reported that she was majoring in computer science, enjoying her classes, and doing well. I congratulated her on her progress, and asked, “Remember when you told me that you didn’t think college was for you?” She replied, “Ahh, yes, I remember that! Still having mixed feelings, to be honest.” Apparently, she continued to see success for herself as a future, possibly unreachable goal. These “mixed feelings” reflect her still conflicted identity: a child who had trouble with language early on and has since felt inferior to the others versus a successful computer scientist.

Victoria’s Artifact. The artifact which she shared with me was a novel entitled *Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock*, by Matthew Quick, an introspective novel about a high school boy who is planning his own murder/suicide.

It's not something that describes me but it is my favorite book, I've read this book many many times and I always read it after I forget what it's all about so I can get the same effect as if I were reading it for the first time. I'm not sure why but this book really got to me and I hope this is an okay artifact!

This book reflects Victoria’s identity construction as a quiet young woman who prioritizes her time with her books and studies. Also, she may identify with the main character as a sensitive individual who feels that he does not fit in socially.

Joaquin

When I met Joaquin, the first thing he told me about himself was how passionate he was about his major at Sunnyside, video game design and development. In an essay

for his basic writing class, he detailed how his family funds of computer knowledge became part of his funds of identity.

My mother used to work as an elementary school teacher back in Peru and tested her skills on me-the first born son. She let me play on our simple computer in the living room if I finished the homework she gave me, I would always finish just to get some time on the web. After a couple of years of showing her my interest in computers she agreed to let me pursue game development and design as long as I went to college for it.... When I was a kid, I had my house and a computer lab that my mom ran with a colleague of hers. The computer lab was a place that had internet and computers available to the public for a charge. Everytime my mom needed to go run the lab she would take me and my little brother to the lab. I remember running in and turning on the light switch at the far end of the lab. My brother would turn on all the computers with the switch at the floor, most of my time I would spend playing “counter-strike” or “Age of empires” on those computers. ... Unfortunately we had to close the lab because it was not generating as much as we would have hoped for, but those early days sparked something in me to follow computers and games. ... I hope that I can be the best game designer I can be to repay my mother all that she's done for me.

He went on to describe how, in high school, his dad helped to finance the purchase of the parts for a desktop computer which he built himself. All these experiences and the loving encouragement of his parents built a deep connection between his love and knowledge of technology and his supportive family, merging his love for technology into his habitus, “and the experiences I've had over those years made me who I am today.”

Social media. Joaquin has almost no activity on social media, except for a few photos sharing experiences from high school. He prefers to keep in touch nearly every day with his network of gamers using Discord, a voice and text chat system for gamers. This was the manner which he selected to use to build social connections. Joaquin was reluctant to be interviewed more than twice and he did not share any artifacts with me.

Conclusions

Each of the participants of this study sedimented multidimensional and unique identities into their literacy practices, both traditional and digital. Some used social media

to create personae that attempted to shed negative images and project stronger, more positive identities to the world: Jerry, who created his social media persona to maintain his old, childhood image of the “class clown,” while suffering painful feelings of inferiority and lack of self-confidence; Luciana, who projected an online identity of resistance and determination by combining her art with other people’s words to strengthen her confidence; Ayushi, who shared on social media her cultural conflicts as well as her efforts to keep up with the demands of college, and gave and received empathy from friends; and Darla, whose Facebook and Instagram pages glowed with her love for animals and with her creative passion for hair design while she simultaneously struggled with her efforts to resist family pressures and pursue her own goals. While each of the participants revealed unique identity constructions, similarities are evident. Each of them shared stories about the funds of identity which they inherited from their families, and to which they all attached great emotional value. Another commonality is that three of the four young women in the study shared the painful sides of their relationships with their mothers, and two of them expressed guilt because they were told that they, as Darla explained it, “messed up her life.” Significantly, they all used digital tools and the affordances provided by the internet to expand their worlds educationally and socially, to add depth to their communications, and to explore their complicated identity constructions.

In summary:

- The breadth and variety of texts created by the participants revealed the complexities of their identity constructions as they negotiated major life transitions and expanding and often conflicted habitus.

- The participants of this study created texts to express the many facets of their identities, but also to explore their feelings and to deepen their own understanding of the conflicts that they were experiencing related to family, culture, and the forging of new, young adult identities.
- Through their frequently difficult and often negative academic experiences, when provided with the opportunity, they revealed in some assigned texts aspects of their experiences and reflections that they did not show in texts created in other situations. This indicates the value the participants placed on their relationships with those professors who did work to build connections with their students.
- While dealing with ongoing conflicts in their lives, they continued to express their resilience and determination by creating positive personae in social media.
- They made use of the affordances of YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, as well as other digital platforms, to explore a wide variety of interests, to express their thoughts, opinions, feelings and identities, to give and receive empathy, and to project distinct online personae.
- Each of them shared stories about the funds of identity which they inherited from their families, and to which they all attached great emotional value.

Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore from an ethnographic perspective the literacy practices of seven first-year college students who were assigned to a developmental writing course, to bring to light their relationships with institutional structures of power and their identity constructions amid these and other conflicting pressures. Using the lens of the sociocultural view of literacy, Bourdieu's theory of practice, the concept of multimodality, and the funds of knowledge, and through the collection and the analysis of 37 interviews, 24 observations, 18 months of participation in social media, 115 documents, and frequent supplementary emails and texts, in this study I have worked to uncover the roots of the deficit policies and biases that have inflicted symbolic violence on these students and brought about the negative identities which they adopted and carried with them through school. This is a story of learning, identity, and resistance to and complicity with power forces in the educational system, instantiated in the literacy practices of these seven basic writing students. The findings shed light on a pattern of discrimination which followed these participants from their earliest school experiences and created their identities as students who do not measure up to the standards constructed by the institutions. As they entered college, each of the participants in this study was judged to be deficient academically and was required to endure a basic composition course that awarded no credit but cost them time and money. They accepted that assessment without question, giving evidence of the symbolic power which the educational system exerted on them and with which they were complicit (Bourdieu, 1997). This is one identity with which they all struggle, and which has shaped their lives.

Building upon the ideological view of literacy as social practice, I employed an ethnographic perspective to learn how these seven first-year college students used literacy, the thoughts and activities behind their literacy practices, the variety of their literacy practices, how their literacy practices reflected their experiences with institutional structures of power, and what these practices revealed about their identity constructions. It paints a detailed picture of the role of literacy in the lives of each of the participants, along with a description of some of their struggles throughout their school years with the educational system, and the ways in which those struggles have influenced their identity and their persistence toward their goals. To connect the literacy practices of these seven participants with the broader social relations of which they are part (Barton, 2007), I have examined the effects of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1997) on them at every stage of their educational lives, and the traces of identity which they have sedimented (Rowse & Pahl, 2007) in their literacy practices.

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, followed by a synthesis of the findings concerning symbolic violence and identity. It will then conclude with the contributions of this study to developmental education and to the field of literacy. Finally, I will make recommendations for future research.

Research Question #1: What are the literacy practices of first-year college students who have been placed into a developmental writing course?

In chapter four I explored the literacy practices of the seven participants, shedding light on the ways in which they used literacy to construct their identities, expand their habitus, and persist toward their goals despite the obstacles they confronted. Through this understanding of their uses of literacy and the meaning that literacy holds for them, I was

able to broaden my perception of how they made sense of their lives, communicated and built alliances, and constructed the identities that they projected to the world through literacy. The analysis of their texts, academic and non-academic, revealed creativity and innovation in their use of the internet and social media. Significantly, they all used digital tools and the affordances of the internet to expand their worlds educationally and socially, and to add depth to their communications. Most of this multimodal learning and creating was accomplished outside of the classroom, and the educational institutions had little or no concept of the range of these students' abilities.

The students in this study participated in a wide assortment of literacy practices for a variety of purposes. They used a few traditional literacies including reading textbooks and occasional leisure books or magazines, giving or sending greeting cards with personal notes, and creating original artwork using traditional media like pencils or watercolors. Most often, however, they performed literacy using digital media. Phones were generally their chosen mode of communication and information. Texting is essential in all their lives, and their phones are the devices that none could function without, in or outside of school. Five also used their laptops in class, and two of them built their own desktop computers at home.

Academically, the participants did what they were assigned. Outside of their academics, they enjoyed multiple and varied interests, mostly online. We can conceptualize two distinct sets of literacy practices: one is the academic practices that are prescribed by the educational institutions and officially accepted as literacy; the other set is the everyday literacy practices which may be called "vernacular literacies" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Among the participants of this study, the vernacular literacies exhibit

independence, creativity, resilience, variety, broad interests, resistance, hybridity of cultures, and personal growth. The academic texts for most classes, including most writing classes, usually appeared static, predictable, and representative of the institution's power over them. Each of the participants, however, for courses that allowed some freedom of expression, for example, Latino studies or creative writing, did submit academic texts that revealed very personal feelings and insecurities there beyond what they shared in interviews or on social media.

The participants did little reading of books or newspapers in the traditional sense, but if we broaden our view of reading and learning to include YouTube, social media, and other internet sites, we see that these students were prolific readers and writers and well informed on many different subjects. Digital media provided affordances to the participants that went beyond anything available using traditional literacies. They served to connect them globally to unlimited sources of entertainment and information, leading them to broad, new interests and affinity groups including spoken word poetry, art, social justice issues, and cultural events. Each participant used digital literacies in a unique way and for unique purposes, constructing the identities that they chose to reveal in social media. This opportunity to express themselves outside of the constraints of school allowed them to try out various perspectives and personae.

YouTube in particular was shown to be their go-to source for global information of every sort, as well as the vehicle for some of them to project original creations via sound and visual modalities to people of like interests. It allowed the participants to reach out and to educate themselves, unfettered by the limits of their class syllabi, and they all took full advantage of these opportunities. They consulted YouTube for academic

assistance when they needed clarification for concepts in, for example, calculus, chemistry, or sociology. In addition, they depended on You Tube for the expansion of their leisure interests. “Although we must always study local literacies, we can ask what is localizing and what is globalizing in what is going on” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 347). YouTube, with its interactive and multimodal nature, is an example of literacy that can be created locally but reaches out globally. Davies (2012) asserts that Facebook has become a new literacy practice because it has been used to extend friendship in new ways. I maintain that YouTube, also, has earned the status of a new literacy practice because it affords participants complex and multidimensional ways to share affinity connections, interests, and knowledge, instantaneously across the world, via sound and visual modes, and this has never been previously possible. Everyone learns from YouTube and anyone can create original media multimodally there, as well. It breaks barriers of time and space and allows its users access to education, entertainment, and general information from worldwide sources.

The participants, particularly four of them, also valued other social media, specifically Facebook and Instagram, as a vehicle to express their creativity and emotional connections. Each one exhibited a unique profile of purposes and modes used in Facebook and/or Instagram, and so social media posts became another window through which to view their identity constructions. The table in chapter four showing purposes for using social media indicates how each person created a unique combination of postings and in so doing, reflected their interests, and revealed aspects of their identity along with their online personae. Ayushi’s ongoing commentary on Facebook and Instagram concerning the expansion of her cultural identities, and Luciana’s blending of

her art with poetry and hip-hop lyrics, exemplify the local/global blend of discourses. All four of the students who frequently used social media for self-expression used them to explore their relationships with power structures; this included comments about struggles with grades and final exams, political commentary, and cultural conflicts. Most obvious is their use of social media to express and explore identity, a concept analyzed further in chapter six. Also, although the immigrant students in this study either have never traveled back to their family's original country, or seldom did, the instantaneous nature of social media allowed for a closer relationship with their home culture and international family members than immigrant families of previous generations.

Two of the participants especially valued online gaming and considered this activity an essential part of their social lives. This aspect of social media not only provided an avenue to develop skills of strategic thinking and technology, but also to build connections with people of similar abilities and interests (Gee, 2007). Both participants enjoyed games online, alone or with a team of local friends, in competition with players around the world. Both young men claimed the gamer identity in our first interviews and both expressed a goal of becoming video game designers after college. All these young college students embraced digital and multimodal literacies in their everyday meaning making, in school and beyond.

Research Question #2: How do the developmental college students' literacy practices reflect their relationships with educational institutions and the larger society?

In chapter five I argue that the educational system inflicted symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1997) on the participants beginning in their earliest school experiences.

Because of early ineffective “English immersion” language instruction in elementary school, as prescribed by NCLB, the participants experienced difficulties keeping up academically through the grades. This caused them to adopt a deficit identity, believing that they were not capable of excellent academic work. They often remarked that they had been disinterested in school in the early grades, or did not do well, and put the blame on themselves for lack of focus or inability to read and write well. Also, the early “English immersion” language instruction and the day-to-day English language arts programs did not encourage them to maintain or to value their first language. Rather than growing as bilinguals, some of them grew to devalue their home languages, while at the same time they were ineffectively instructed in English. Consequently, they developed deficit academic identities which were adopted by them and by their teachers and school administrators. Another factor that contributed to the participants’ early language difficulties is the fact that they were never educated in academic English proficiency (García et al., 2008), a fact that explains their difficulties with math and science in middle school and beyond when abstract concepts became more prevalent in the curriculum. This was described by several of the participants. This, along with a lack of background knowledge and out-of-school experiences also affected the students’ standardized test scores. This lack of understanding of academic language in both reading and writing can be seen in their difficulties across all their coursework in their first and second years of college, despite hours of studying and a sincere desire to excel academically.

Two of the participants experienced symbolic violence in the form of designation as special needs students and the assigning of an IEP. In fact, one of them dealt with both unaddressed language issues and classification as special needs. In both cases, rather than

confront the students' underlying issues that had resulted in certain behaviors deemed to be outside the normal parameters, the school system classified them special needs, a stigma which stayed with them and was internalized by them. Rather than improving their educational experience, this resulted in a belief held by teachers, administrators, their parents, and themselves that they were disabled and academically incompetent.

The participants' middle school and high school experiences involved symbolic violence in the form of tracking. This system, which has been part of the educational system for so long that it is accepted unquestioningly, placed most of the participants in non-college prep classes. When they attempted to improve their education by stepping up to more advanced courses, instead of receiving encouragement and assistance, they received push-back from the school. One participant attended a college-prep high school in her city, but still was placed in developmental writing; this leads us to wonder about the quality of the preparation at that school.

Additionally, as the participants prepared to enter college, their institutions imposed on them a placement test of questionable validity and used the score to place them in developmental writing courses in their first semester. The participants accepted their placements and the institutions' decisions that they were unable to function at college level. The decontextualized courses which the participants were required to attend professed to instruct in writing skills which the students were expected to learn by composing essays on topics assigned by the instructor which generally had no relevance to the students' interests or their courses of study. They varied widely by institution and by instructor, but all shared a lack of consistency in pedagogy and grading. Most of the instructors apparently regarded these students as deficient in the skills necessary to

succeed in college, and some displayed a condescending attitude and tone of voice in class. Although most of the participants found these courses frustrating and difficult, they generally did not question their professors' competence or the value of the course, but rather blamed themselves and their lack of analytical skills for their low grades. Consequently, the results of these developmental writing courses included reinforcement of the deficit identities which they have borne since early childhood, little or no real preparation for academic writing in their chosen fields of interest, and generally low grades that deflated their GPAs.

One bright light in the dismal world of basic writing that I observed was one of the professors at Sunnyside College, who maintained a warm and respectful relationship with her students. Although the course was listed as basic writing and was positioned like the others as a decontextualized course to which the students were assigned via an online test, she had developed a syllabus that taught some practical strategies for reading and writing, and her assignments were more comprehensive than others that I had witnessed at Sunnyside. On each of my observations of her classes, the students remained engaged through the entire session of nearly three hours, and attendance in the class was always excellent. On the other hand, despite her effective pedagogical style, the course was expensive, provided no credit, and slowed down the students' trajectory toward graduation, like all the others.

The early deficit labels that the school system imposed on the participants at a very young age became part of their identities and affected the quality of their education through their K to 12 years and into college.

Research Question #3: What do developmental college students' literacy practices reveal about how they construct their identities amid conflicting pressures from school, family, and peers?

In chapter six I argue that the participants sedimented a unique combination of multidimensional identities in their texts, both traditional and digital. These identities revealed traces of their early deficit self-beliefs and their later struggles to interpret new experiences and negotiate the expansion of their habitus beyond their family cultures into new, adult identities. All the participants experienced conflicts as they negotiated their growth as young adults through their first year in college. The five first- or 1.5-generation immigrants, in particular, showed evidence of their conflicted habitus (Wacquant, 2006) both constructing and displaying complex and conflicting identities in their multimodal texts as they struggled to reconcile their family habitus with their new, expanding young adult habitus. All the participants' texts showed traces of their early beliefs about themselves, rooted in a sense of deficit, as well as indications of conflicts they experienced later as they interpreted these new experiences. The affordances provided by the participants' non-academic texts, mostly digital and multimodal, showcased their creativity and the innovative ways in which they communicated and learned using the internet and social media. Additionally, when academic courses allowed enough freedom of expression, the participants sedimented identity clues in their writing assignments, revealing very personal feelings and insecurities that they did not share in interviews or in social media.

Another component of this identity study included the artifacts (Rowsell & Pahl, 2007) which they selected and submitted to me which expressed something important

about themselves. They were objects or symbols that they held dear, reflected their family funds of knowledge and also their newer expanding habitus and identities as they negotiated their ventures into young adulthood. Combining these theoretical perspectives, the analysis revealed the participants' "funds of identity" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014), which they continually re-created and pondered in their texts. The ones who used social media worked there to create personae that attempted to shed negative images and project stronger, more positive identities to the world.

While each of the participants revealed unique identity constructions, similarities are evident. Each of them shared stories about the funds of identity which they inherited from their families, and to which they all attached great emotional value. Most of them struggled with conflicts concerning family; some worked to gather the strength to pursue their own goals despite pressure from family to move in different directions or to reconcile in their minds cultural differences. Significantly, they all used digital tools and the affordances provided by the internet to expand their worlds educationally and socially, and to add depth to their communications. Most of this multimodal learning and creating, unfortunately, was accomplished outside of the classroom, and their instructors had little or no concept of the range of these students' abilities.

Symbolic Violence and Identity

Teachers and school administrators are encumbered by certain commonly-held misconceptions concerning marginalized students, and many of these misconceptions have been taught and continue to be taught in schools of education as fact. One is that the home and community experiences of young people growing up in minority cultures, particularly those living in poverty, are perceived as deficits and not as cultural resources

(Lee, 2003). Another, as argued by Mehan (2000), involves the construction of a deficit identity for a student characterized by the institution as special needs; others in the system, including the teachers and administrators, unquestioningly accept that diagnosis and create that deficit identity for them. The unconscious and unquestioning acceptance of these beliefs by the participants' K to 12 teachers led the school system to consistently position them as slow, incapable, or resistant learners, and these identities were internalized by the students themselves.

In another perspective related to identity, Wenger (1998) argues that education primarily concerns a change in identity – “exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state” (p. 263), and that schools should function primarily to address issues of identity. Success requires students to continually take on new identities as they progress through school, the identities of individuals who are competent readers, writers, and thinkers, built by successful school experiences. If a student has not taken on those types of identities, real learning will be impeded. In their early school experiences, the participants were not exposed to opportunities to create these positive learning identities. Because of their ineffective language instruction and/or the stigmatization of being categorized as special needs, the experiences of the study participants through elementary and high school ranged from unpleasant to painful and created early school identities characterized by disinterest and low confidence in their own abilities. This situation led to a further perception of them by teachers and administrators as incapable learners. The students accepted unquestioningly these negative identities, and these barriers prevented them from full participation in subsequent learning in school. This created a cycle of

negative academic identity constructions and feelings of disinterest or hostility toward school.

Despite these early negative experiences and emotions, five of the participants entered college with determination and lofty goals. Significantly, these were the five first- or 1.5-generation immigrants in the study. Each of them, in interviews, frequently described in detail the encouragement that they received from their parents throughout their years of school, and particularly their inspiration to attend college. Some of these parents had little education; others brought with them degrees from institutions in their native countries which were not recognized in the US. All were working in difficult, low-paying jobs to create better lives for their children, and they all conveyed to their children their values that included the importance of education and hard work and a desire to improve their lives. These values became the funds of identity that motivated these students to confront their academic challenges despite the constant obstacles that were placed in their paths by their institutions of higher education. The resources provided by their family habitus proved to be stronger than the negative identities inflicted on them by the symbolic violence of the educational system.

Although one participant, Jerry, was technically also an immigrant when he was adopted from China, his experience was different both in his family and at school. Apparently, his parents received little or no support or information when they adopted him at an age in which he already had developed language other than English. The school system, as well, failed him in this regard, placing him with a speech therapist instead of providing English language instruction. This neglect apparently resulted in behavior that was interpreted by the school as ADHD, rather than an understandable emotional reaction

to a school experience that appeared hostile and unhelpful. His parents, as well, did not know how to deal with Jerry's problems and, although they refused to medicate him, did finally accept the school's insistence that he be given an IEP, becoming complicit with the symbolic violence inflicted on this young child. Over the years of K to 12 schooling, this deficit identity became a stigma which Jerry, his parents, his teachers, and the school administration believed, and which led to his dropping out of the community college after one semester and his fear of trying any new, intellectually challenging jobs or courses of study.

Darla experienced emotional upheaval in her family as well, when, as a young child her father left and her mother blamed Darla for her own misery. It is impossible to tell now what behaviors or tests led to her classification as ADHD with anxiety and subsequent medication, but the emotional reactions to her family situation most likely were a significant part. Like Jerry, this symbolic violence created a stigma and apparently did her no good educationally. She, her mother and her extended family, as well as her teachers and the school administration believed the diagnosis and helped her to take on the identity of an individual who cannot keep up academically. The strength of her love for hair design, however, that was part of her funds of identity, eventually showed itself to be stronger than her deficit beliefs.

Conclusions

Literacy practices. The literacy practices of developmental college students are diverse, creative, multimodal, and generally digital. Each participant's practices revealed a unique variety of interests and modes of expression. Students participated in a broad spectrum of interests and modalities, but mostly outside their academic work, and there

was little interaction between the students' varied and multimodal literate activities and their academic assignments. The participants did little reading of books or newspapers in the traditional sense, but including YouTube, social media, and other internet sites, they were prolific readers and writers, well informed on many subjects. Communication through social media is important to most of the participants for social and emotional connections and to share information and political views. Analysis of each individual's postings on Facebook and Instagram revealed a unique self-portrait based on their choices of subject and mode, each projecting the persona of their own choosing. In addition, I have considered YouTube, ubiquitous among college students as in the broader society, a new literacy practice because it affords complex and multidimensional ways to share affinity connections, interests, and knowledge, instantaneously across the world, via sound and visual modes. This type of interactive, global sharing has never been previously possible, and should be taken seriously by educators.

English language learners. Six of the seven students, who were first- or 1.5-generation immigrants and whose first language was not English, were provided by the school system with ineffective English instruction despite research that indicates that bilingual education programs are more effective (García et al, 2008). Because of this, they experienced difficulties keeping up academically and they, their parents, and their teachers adopted for them a deficit identity regarding academic ability. This ineffective language instruction and their resulting negative identities as English language learners discouraged them from maintaining their first language. Consequently, rather than growing as bilinguals, some grew to devalue their home languages. Additionally, these

English language learners were never educated in academic English proficiency and this resulted in problems with math and science.

Special needs designation. Two of the participants were classified as special needs students and assigned IEPs. Although it is impossible now to ascertain why or how these classifications occurred, it is clear that this negative identity with which they were labeled as young children remained with them into their college experiences. Because of this, they carried with them through the grades a stigma which is often attached to special needs students in the public school. They, their teachers, and their parents unquestioningly accepted their deficit identity and acted accordingly, lowering their academic expectations and assuming a limited level of ability. This low belief in their own academic competence displayed itself in their avoidance of academic or mental challenges and their deficit self-beliefs.

Later grades and entry to higher education. As a result of this poor English language instruction and the stigmatizing of special needs students, the participants were placed into lower levels of their schools' tracking systems in elementary, middle, and high school. Consequently, they missed opportunities for advanced and specialized courses and failed to receive the highest quality guidance and preparation for their college applications and placement exams. The higher education institutions continued the imposition of symbolic violence on the participants through testing, placement, and instructional practices that, according to research, are ineffective and disrupt their trajectory toward a timely graduation.

Identity issues. The breadth and variety of texts created by the participants revealed the complexities of their identity constructions as they negotiated major life

transitions and expanding and often conflicted habitus. The participants of this study created texts to express the many facets of their identities, but also to explore their feelings and to deepen their own understanding of the conflicts that they were experiencing related to family, culture, and the forging of new, young adult identities. Importantly, each of them shared stories about the funds of identity which they inherited from their families, and to which they all attached great emotional value.

Discussion

The participants of this study entered the discourse community of higher education as legitimate peripheral participants (Lave and Wenger, 1991), expectantly open to transformative experiences that would expand their habitus and bring about the creation of new, young adult, scholarly identities. Instead, like a large percentage of new college students, they were immediately classified as requiring remediation, reinforcing the old negative identities that they had received and adopted as children, believing that they lacked the intellectual ability to succeed in college. Their academic texts indicate the lack of engagement which they experienced in the majority of their coursework. Through their frequently difficult and often negative academic experiences, however, when provided with the opportunity, they revealed in some assigned texts aspects of their autobiographical selves and personal reflections that they did not show in texts created in other situations. This indicates the value the participants placed on their relationships with those professors who did work to build connections with their students. Furthermore, these meaningful courses, although not the norm, often served to change opinions and affect the students' identity constructions.

The participants were placed into developmental writing through the use of an online placement test. Rather than reflecting the students' intelligence or their true writing abilities, the results of these tests were inaccurate for several reasons. First, the students' lack of instruction in academic English early on put them at a disadvantage in a decontextualized, timed testing situation. Second, the students were not informed in advance of the importance of this test, nor were they given preparation by anyone at either their high schools or the higher education institutions. Most of their parents, moreover, lacked the cultural capital to be aware of the test or to be able to prepare them for it. Third, research indicates that grading of test essays is subjective and inconsistent, and that this can significantly affect a student's placement (Wu & Tan, 2016).

Additionally, the developmental courses, with little or no research evidence of success in providing academic remediation, cost them money and slowed their trajectory toward graduation, or led them to drop out of college. Their instructors, with a few exceptions, appeared to perceive them through the official lens of the dominant discourse, as lacking academically and culturally. When they were given assignments by instructors who taught with respect for them and for their cultures, however, their writing revealed very personal identity clues. This indicates that, despite their tolerance of the affronts to their dignity and intelligence that many professors inflict on them, they appreciated and responded to those who related to them on a more positive level.

This study, by shedding light on the participants' literacy practices, mostly digital and both academic and vernacular, shows how the students used texts to display and build sophisticated understandings and do identity work that were not captured by the practices encouraged within the educational institutions they encountered. The

participants' literacy practices, particularly outside of the narrow confines of their academic work, displayed skillfully designed, complex, and varied texts created multimodally and digitally on many different subjects, indicating sophisticated understandings of social, political, and cultural concepts and a wide variety of interests. Sedimented in their texts, moreover, we see complex identity constructions that reveal their social and political concerns, creativity, and connection to both their family habitus and their efforts to expand their habitus to include new, young adult and scholarly identities.

Implications for developmental writing programs

Writing remediation at the college level, AKA developmental or basic writing, began as a gate-keeping effort in the 1960s (Shor, 1997), to maintain the status quo, to resist the influx of new people who enter higher education with different cultures and backgrounds, and to discourage and eliminate people who were deemed “not college material.” Unfortunately, little has changed since then. Institutions of higher education maintain the systems that assess, categorize, and assign each first-year student into one or another writing course, with many being relegated to the developmental course that, according to numerous studies, provides little or no assurance that it helps students' chances of graduation (Valentine, Konstantopoulos, & Goldrick-Rab, 2017). Moreover, a disproportionately large percentage of the students assigned to developmental writing courses are minorities (Palmer & Davis, 2012; Schmidt, 2003). This stubbornly consistent situation is the result of widespread, unexamined assumptions about the nature of literacy and the cognitive abilities of members of non-dominant, marginalized communities. These racist views assume that the dominant academic discourse is the

owner of all knowledge in the university, and that students who do not pass the standardized tests have little or nothing to offer intellectually. Many sociological studies in the mid-twentieth century echoed these assumptions when they assigned deficit identities to minorities, particularly African-Americans, blaming their culture for “impoverishment of language, maladaptive mother-child interactions, inadequate environmental stimuli for development of cognition, and so on” (Hull, et al., 1991, p. 313). Since then, although many literacy scholars have presented research that disputes these claims (e.g., Heath, 1983), the old, discredited theories remain unquestioned by the administrations that control the writing programs in institutions of higher education. Educators who are involved in decision making regarding developmental writing programs, in both community colleges and four-year institutions, need to examine their own prejudices and presuppositions concerning their minority and first-generation college students. The data from this study have shed light on the unrecognized abilities of these students.

A significant part of this study related to the institutional power forces and their effects on the participants’ education and on their identity. Moje & Lewis (2007) argue that “greater attention must be given to the role of power in [students’] opportunities to learn...” (p. 16). They conceptualize learning as participation in discourse communities, or Gee’s (2008) big-D Discourses – groups of people that share ways of knowing, thinking, acting, and communicating. These Discourses are not simply groups that are physically connected; they can also be virtual Discourses, exemplified by the social media connections made by the participants. College students now circumvent the power structures’ control of their education when they construct meaning in a variety of genres

outside the writing classroom. I argue that real learning is taking place continually outside the formal classrooms, on YouTube channels, on Facebook and Instagram, and on countless websites that feed the growing interests of college students. The meaning-making abilities of students need to be tapped in the college writing classroom. When the educational institution fails to recognize that other discourses even exist or relegate these discourses to the margins, they cause the dominant, academic discourse to appear irrelevant and part of the extraneous but necessary requirements to make it through college in the quest for the credential, rather than a deeply educational, identity-transforming experience.

For higher education to be effective, it must become open to these non-traditional sources of knowledge and recognize the “post-typographic” literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, p. 24) that have become an integral part of twenty-first century life and have already begun to alter the course of education as we know it. These revolutionary changes can be viewed from two different perspectives, or mindsets, the “outsider, or newcomer, and the insider mindsets” (p. 32). The outsider mindset sees the world as very similar to that experienced before the digital age, but only with computers added. The insider mindset, on the other hand, sees that the world is radically changing as a result of these new technologies. While educational institutions have acknowledged the use of digital media in education, in most cases digital applications are being used with the outsider mindset, in an attempt to perpetuate old types of thinking, rather than to engage with the new and create innovative ways to use technology in education. The participants’ experience in their writing courses exemplifies this mindset when the system allows the use of computers, but sticks to outdated, decontextualized syllabi and

textbooks for instruction, does not include the possibilities of multimodal texts, or requires students to print out their essays to hand in on paper. Because of the deeply embedded traditions and unexamined presuppositions of most college writing programs, the outsider mindset has a hold that will be difficult to loosen. To begin to bring about equity and fairness, however, to improve the educational level of the institutions, and to better prepare students for careers, those who hold power need to recognize that education now requires an insider mindset that is open to constant rethinking and improvement.

One more related implication of this study for developmental education involves the outdated and biased perspective on literacy that most developmental writing (and reading) courses reflect. The autonomous view of literacy (Street, 1995) focuses on skills and presupposes the belief, not based in research, that students can learn literacy skills through decontextualized instruction and writing assignments that have little or no relevance to the students' interests or academic goals. This is the perspective that relies on a score on a standardized test to relegate certain students to remediation. In contrast, my conclusions align with the sociocultural view of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 1998) which sees difficulties with reading and writing as part of everyone's experiences and problems with literacy not located within certain groups of marginalized individuals. I argue, therefore, that the higher education community needs to recognize that virtually every student who enters college requires guidance in some aspect of academic literacy. Rather than singling out certain students to attend ineffective and decontextualized courses, educators need to develop methods to provide that guidance to all students

proactively, and to consider alternative, innovative options for increasing the rate of success of all students in higher education.

In terms of effectiveness, previous research that has been conducted concerning basic writing students has focused either on one or another skill or strategy or on broad studies of graduation rates based on large-scale data sets. Since none of these studies has been able to state unequivocally whether developmental writing benefits students or not, decision makers have resisted change, waiting for more comprehensive data (Relles & Tierney (2013). I suggest, instead, that decision makers take an opposite perspective, that since the courses have never been proven effective, it would be expedient to try a new approach. Moreover, if these administrators will educate themselves in the sociocultural understandings of literacy as social practice they will see that, besides never having been proven effective, the basic skills model currently used in most writing classes purports to present a neutral approach, but, in ignoring the multiple literacies of the students, is inherently insensitive to the multicultural values which most institutions profess to espouse.

Furthermore, the sociocultural view includes the now broadly-accepted concept of disciplinary literacy which posits that reading and writing must be taught and learned in the context of the discipline in which it is used; reading, writing, and thinking in scientific studies is different from that in history, or in mathematics. It follows that a generic writing course is ineffective from the educator's perspective and irrelevant from the student's. I suggest, therefore, that the community of composition instructors begin to re-think their courses to provide academic guidance to students alongside their coursework, customized for each discipline. Furthermore, I encourage instructors and

administrators who design and facilitate developmental and first-year writing courses to allow space for students to utilize their technical abilities and broad interests within the college classroom, rather than singling out certain students for remediation and exposing all first-year students to irrelevant and ineffective composition courses.

Suggestion for Future Research

Specifically, I suggest that, rather than relegating certain students to non-credit remedial writing courses, all first-year students in an institution should be assigned to a writing course that runs parallel to, and in cooperation with, an introductory level content course which aligns with the students' interests and goals. The course would award the students the same credit that they now earn for their first-year composition course, and would be just as rigorous, but would be related to the syllabus of the content course and would focus on the literacy demands of that particular discipline. It makes sense that an innovation like this would need to start with a small pilot study that would be carefully monitored. Mixed-methods research should be conducted to record the students' progress through that semester and to follow their trajectory through to graduation. This study would be superior to those that have been most often conducted with developmental students which follow the students for, at most, one year, and would need to measure the course's success in terms of student satisfaction as well as grades on the courses, GPAs in subsequent semesters, and on-time graduation rates.

In conclusion, this dissertation has revealed the multidimensional, varied, and creative uses of literacy by the participants, and has brought to light the previously unrecognized injustices imposed on them by the educational system that was entrusted with their education. In addition, it has created a deeper understanding of how

marginalized students in their first year of college construct their identities through their texts, to make sense of their challenges, resist the forces that work against them, and continue to pursue their goals with resilience and determination. In light of these findings, it is imperative that institutions of higher education take steps to ensure that all their students receive a more equitable and effective education.

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Appendix A

Literacy Questionnaire to Recruit Participants

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions about how you use reading, writing, and technology. Everything you write will be kept confidential. Your responses will help with a research study being conducted by a doctoral student in literacy education at Rutgers University.

What college or university do you attend?

What courses are you taking this semester?

How confident do you feel about your reading and writing abilities in school?

How confident do you feel about your reading and writing abilities outside of school?

Do you speak any language other than English at home? If yes, what language?

Do you ever translate for members of your family, or help them with understanding things in English? Please explain.

Are you on social media, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other?

Please tell about which ones and how often you use them.

Do you have a job? If so, do you use the computer on your job?

Are you involved with a religious or community organization? If so, how do you use reading, writing, or the internet with them?

Thank you for your help!

Optional: Would you be willing to assist in this research project by sharing in more detail about the ways that you use reading and writing? If yes, please give me your contact information below. As a thank you for this additional help, you will receive a \$25 Amazon or Barnes & Noble gift card.

Your name

Phone Number

Email address

Best way to reach you and best time

Appendix B

Email Used for Recruiting Participants

Attention: New College Students

I am a Rutgers Ph.D. student working on my dissertation. I am looking for students who have entered a community college in the fall of 2016, or January of 2017. When they enroll they are given a placement test. I need to meet students who took the test and have been placed in “developmental” reading or English. These are remedial courses for students who need to brush up on their reading or writing skills. They can be students from any college within driving distance of central NJ.

I am looking for a variety of students, including African American, Latino, white, immigrants, military veterans, etc., as many different people as I can find. I am of the opinion that colleges underestimate these students. I taught developmental students for five years and I see them as intelligent people who just have to learn how to “do college.”

For the participants in my study, I will interview them and I will ask if I can observe them in situations where they are using reading, writing, and technology. This will include doing homework, at home, at work, and in other areas of their lives. I will not be asking any embarrassing questions or learning deep, dark secrets. I just want to get to know them and understand how they use literacy. In return I will give participants a \$25 gift card and treat them to lunch, and I may be able to help them out with some of their school work. I will keep all the information confidential.

After I do all the interviews and observations, I will write it all up. I hope to open the minds of some college administrators who see these types of students as “not college

material.” If you volunteer to join this study, you will be helping future college students to have a successful experience in college. Thanks in advance!

For more information or to help with my study, please email me at rosemary.carolan@gse.rutgers.edu, or phone or text me at 609-970-4899.

Rosemary Carolan

Appendix C

First Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about yourself and your family.
 - a. Where did your family come from, originally?
 - b. Do you speak any language other than English at home?
 - c. If yes, what language? Do you ever translate for members of your family, or help them with understanding things in English?
2. What kinds of activities do you do with members of your family?
3. How do you use reading and writing as part of your family?
4. Do you use the internet with your family? Please explain.
5. What is your goal, or reason for attending college? Why did you select this college?
6. How do you feel about your ability to complete the program?
7. How does your family feel about you attending college?
8. How do you feel about your reading (or English) class?
9. What other courses are you taking this semester?
10. How do you feel about those courses, and why?
11. When you were in elementary school, were you a good reader and writer?
12. How did you feel about reading and writing in high school?
13. At what age did you start to use the computer in school? Did you get a lot of time with it? How did you use it? Did you enjoy it?
14. Tell me about your job. Would I be able to go and observe you at work?
15. How do you use reading and writing on your job? What parts of this do you find easy? What parts are difficult?

16. How do you use the computer on your job?
17. Where do you do your school work? May I observe you there?
18. What are you reading in your reading (or English) class? Tell me about it.
19. What kinds of assignments do you get in that class?
20. Please tell me about one particular assignment in that class that you had recently.
21. Describe the reading and writing that you had to do to complete the assignment. Was it difficult or easy for you? Why? Do you feel that you did it well? Why, or why not?
22. Tell me about one particular assignment in _____ class. Describe the reading and writing that you had to do to complete the assignment. Was it difficult or easy for you? Why? Do you feel that you did it well? Why, or why not?
23. Did you use the internet for this assignment? If so, give details about that.
24. (Similar questions for each class that the subject is taking)
25. How do you feel about your reading and writing abilities in school?
26. Where and when do you do your school assignments, reading for class, and studying?
27. May I come and observe you when you are doing your school assignments?
28. What kinds of things do you like to do in your spare time?
29. Outside of school, do you like to read? What kinds of reading do you do?
30. Tell me about how you use the internet. Are you on Facebook? If yes, what kinds of things do you post there? Are you on any other social media?
31. Would you friend me on these sites?
32. What else do you do on the internet?
33. Do you play video games? What games do you play and who do you play with?

34. Are you involved with church or any community group? How do you use reading or writing there? Do you use technology there?
35. How do you use texting?
36. Can you tell me about any other uses you make of reading and writing?
37. Can you tell me about any other uses you make of the internet or technology?
38. Will you post some pictures on Facebook or Instagram of objects in your life that are important to you and explain why they are important? (Give an example.)