Introduction

For the past two years, my office has been located next to where many of the first-year composition (FYC) courses meet. Students often congregate in the halls before class, where I hear them discuss the course and the assignments they are working on. The first few times I heard students complain, I didn't really think much of it. No one likes all the required courses they have to take as an undergraduate. After a while though, I began to sense that many students did not understand why they are required to take another writing course and that they did not find it beneficial. That troubled me.

My thesis seeks to examine FYC as a site of conflict, in which students and instructors bring conflicting values and perspectives to the classroom. In the first chapter, I explore one author's theory of a new phenomenon that influences the values that students bring to the classroom. This new phenomenon is Marc Prensky's digital natives concept. Prensky coined the term "digital natives" in his article, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," in order to describe a generational phenomenon, where students' thinking has radically changed due to being the first generation to grow up totally immersed in digital technologies (1).

Also, central to Prensky's theory is that digital natives are more digitally advanced or literate than older generations, who did not grow up with digital technologies, which Prensky calls "digital immigrants" (2-3). According to Prensky's digital native theories, teachers, those who Prensky sees as belonging to the digital immigrant category, need to be able to communicate and teach digital native students in ways that they will respond to. In other words, Prensky believes that teachers are stuck in their digital immigrant mindset, that there is a disconnect between their pedagogies and

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the way students think (3-4). Prensky's solution is for teachers to utilize digital

technologies in the classroom (5-6).

More specifically, Prensky's preference is to create video games that incorporates

the curriculum of the course in question. Prensky believes his educational video games

can be used in any field of study, and with any grade level. Prensky states, "Our goal was

to completely eliminate any language that even smacked of education" (5). This is why

he feels that video games are effective, because (1) video games are a medium that

students are familiar with, and (2) video games are a medium that students will respond

to (5).

However, Prensky's critics (see Sue Bennett and Karl Maton, Chris Jones et al.,

Anoush Margaryan et al., and Neil Selwyn) have been quick to point out that intrinsic to

his argument are assumptions about the way in which students use digital technologies,

not taking into consideration other influential factors, such as socioeconomic status,

gender, academic interest, or geographic location. Recently Chris Jones et al. and Anoush

Margaryan et al. have produced studies that take into consideration these other variables

while trying to more accurately measure how students use digital technologies, in order to

see if it would be beneficial to bring digital technologies into their classrooms. In the

discussions of both studies, Chris Jones et al. and Anoush Margaryan et al. caution

against radical curricula changes, because those labelled digital natives are "not

homogenous nor is it [the digital native generation] articulating a single clear set of

demands" (Jones et al. 731).

Although I agree with Jones et al. and Margaryan et al., I also believe there are

other larger economic variables, such as the new capitalism, that affects students' living

and learning environments which shape their values and beliefs. In order to see what variables influence students the most in the composition classroom, I conducted a survey with the purpose of determining (1) how students value FYC, especially considering their major related courses and career goals, and (2) how students value writing in digital spaces, specifically in social digital technologies, such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. My survey also examines how FYC students use and value social digital technologies in order to determine how social digital technologies can be utilized in FYC courses. Prensky's critics, such as Anoush Margaryan et al., already have performed studies that examine how students use and value digital technologies in order to determine how digital technologies would benefit classroom instruction. However, since I am specifically interested in the FYC classroom, I wanted the survey results, which will be discussed in chapter 3, to reflect the interests and values of FYC and writing studies.

Through the survey, I found students to be very career motivated, which greatly influences how they value their courses. For example, 94 out of the 118 students' majors or academic interests coincided with their future career goals. The more students find the course applicable to their career goals, the more they value the course, which is demonstrated through students finding FYC valuable in regards to their other courses, but not necessarily their overall career goals, which is why more than half of the student respondents indicated that they would not take FYC if it was not required.

To my surprise, the way in which students value social digital technologies was not very high, and is used to either keep in contact with family/friends or for entertainment purposes. For example, Twitter is a social digital technology that most students only use for entertainment purposes. Here are what some students had to say

about their Twitter usage: "Quick message that don't take a lot of trouble to read. Some tweets are pretty good but most are mindless babble," "It is simpler than facebook and requires less thought," "I use Twitter because I like reading the funny tweets people post as well as the funny profiles that people make. I mainly just read tweets from different sites, not the people I follow," "Just for a laugh. You see some ridiculous things," and "Mostly, it just gives me something to do when I have nothing else to do." Note the language that students use, like "mindless," "requires less thought," and "something to do." In other words, for these students, Twitter is entertainment that doesn't necessarily require critical or active thinking.

Another social digital technology that students were asked about is Google+, which is a social networking site owned and operated by Google. Only 4 students indicated having a Google+ account, three indicated that they did not like Google+, and many others confused Google+ with Google's search engine. Students' confused response to Google+ in combination with their less than sophisticated use of Twitter, portrays students as something much different than Prensky's highly digital literate, digital natives.

Even more interesting is the way in which students view the writing done in these digital spaces. In order to participate in these social digital spaces, students must do some sort of writing, to some extent. However, students do not understand the writing that they do in these digital spaces to be writing. This becomes clear through the survey when students are asked, "How much writing do you do online," and only 10% reported to do a substantial amount, and 29% reported to do a moderate amount of writing, which sharply contrasts how often students reported to use social digital technologies—Facebook: used

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by 69% of students at least once a week, and Twitter: used by 57% of students at least once a month.

Because of the way in which students view social digital writing, it would take up too much class time to demonstrate to students how social digital writing is not something completely different than what they are doing in school (at least in the sense that it is writing and has a rhetorical purpose and function) in order to implement social digital technologies in the FYC classroom. More importantly, based on the survey data, centering a FYC course on digital technologies would not equate to students valuing the course more. Overall, the survey did not give any indications that social digital technologies should be utilized in the classroom, as Prensky's pedagogy recommends.

However, as stated earlier the survey indicated that students were driven by their career goals, which prompted me to examine the new capitalism in more detail in chapter 3. The new capitalism is a concept discussed by James Paul Gee, Glynda Hull, and Colin Lankshear in *The New Work Order: Behind the Language of the New Capitalism.* The new capitalism is the economic system that grew out of the technological and scientific advances beginning in the 1970s, which brought about wider global competition (Gee and Hayes 107). Commodities became more easily massed produced in developing countries, so industrial jobs left developed countries, like the United States, for lower-cost facilities (Gee and Hayes 107).

National unions lost their power and industrial jobs were lost in developed countries, which inevitably changed the employment structure of developed countries (Gee and Hayes 107). For example, one-fifth of the population are now symbol analysts, which "create or manage new knowledge, designs, products, and services and are paid

well for it" (Gee and Hayes 107). One-fifth of the population are technical workers, who have mastered technical or specialized knowledge, but are not paid as well as symbol analysts. Gee and Hayes state that technical workers are made up of a "mixed bag," and examples they provide are family doctors, electricians, and college professors (108). Three-fifths of the population are service workers and the small amount of industrial jobs that are left. Gee and Hayes state, "They are asked to represent the company as they deal with the customers, though they are paid infinitely less than the company's CEO and managers" (108). Jobs that they make up are "workers in restaurants, health care, call centers, janitorial services, banks and so forth" (108). In short, the new capitalism can be very rewarding to those who have knowledge desirable to the new capitalism (i.e., the symbol analysts), it also leads to a large number of service workers being exploited "in order to make a company, region, or country 'hyper-competitive' in our global economy" (1300).

My survey results and further analyses of the new capitalism demonstrated that Prensky's pedaogy would not be adequate to address the conflict within the FYC classroom, which prompted me to look for a pedagogy that extends itself to students' values, while not compromising the values of writing studies. In other words, I did not want to design a course that strictly caters to the values of students. Ideally, I would like to be able to find a way to bridge the gap between students' values and the values of the field of writing studies. In order to do this, in chapter 4, I decided to construct a course design that implements Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle's Writing about Writing pedagogy. Downs and Wardle states the goal of their pedagogy,

> This pedagogy explicitly recognizes the impossibility of teaching a
> universal academic discourse and rejects that as a goal for FYC. It seeks

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instead to improve students' understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy in a course that is topically oriented to reading and writing as scholarly inquiry and encouraging more realistic understandings of writing. (553)

In other words, instead of proposing to teach students basic writing skills that will transfer to their other courses and professional work, they focus on teaching students that writing is "conventional and context-specific rather than governed by universal rules-thus they learn that within each new disciplinary course they will need to pay close attention to what counts as appropriate for that discourse community" (559).

Another goal of Downs and Wardle's course is for students to gain an understanding of writing studies as a subject of scholarly inquiry. They state, "Students leave the course with increased awareness of writing studies as a discipline, as well as a new outlook on writing as a researchable activity rather than a mysterious talent" (560). In order to achieve this goal, Downs and Wardle's course is situated around the students' research projects, where the students conduct primary research "on issues of interest to both themselves and the field of writing studies" (562).

In essence, Downs and Wardle's pedagogy has changed their FYC classroom into an intro to writing studies course, which appeals to me, due to their emphasis on students reading and engaging with texts that come out of the field of writing studies. In my implementation of Downs and Wardle's pedagogy, students will engage and negotiate texts that represent the field's values and theories in a closed research classroom. Scholars in the field of writing studies, such as Deborah Brandt, Harvey Graff, and James Paul Gee have done extensive research in regards to the relationship between literacy, learning, and economics. Their work could be used in order to (1) demonstrate to students the commonality between their values and the values of the field of writing studies, (2)

provide them with a new perspective or insight regarding literacy, learning, and economics, and (3) provide students with a way into writing studies, so that they may gain a greater understanding of writing, literacy, rhetoric, and language.

Although my course is concerned with students' values, their values are not the primary concern of the course. However, I believe that by demonstrating to students that their values are connected or share a commonality with the values, concepts, and theories of writing studies that it will encourage and help students find a way into writing studies.

Chapter 1

Marc Prensky's digital natives theory is a possible example of what students bring with them to the FYC classroom (i.e., values, beliefs, and backgrounds). Although Marc Prensky has not been the only author to discuss a concept similar to the digital natives theory, such as Diana Oblinger's Millennials and Don Tapscott's the Net Generation, Prensky is one of the more prolific and influential authors in this field, which is why I chose Prensky's theory to examine specifically. In this chapter, I will examine Prensky's digital natives theory and explore how his concept relates to the values that students bring to the classroom. I will also discuss how Prensky's work was received. For instance, while there is still an audience and demand for his work (Prensky's last two major publications were in 2012: *From Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom* and *Brain Gain: Technology and the Quest for Digital Wisdom*; he also is speaks internationally at conferences and professional developments events, such as Future in Review Conference, Laguna, CA, and LEARNTech Asia Conference 2014, Singapore), many scholars and researchers have critiqued his theories, because they are largely based on observations and assumptions, with no empirical evidence to support his claims (*Marc Prensky*). I will review Prensky's critics, such as Anoush Margaryan et al., and then respond to their critiques.

Digital Natives/Digital Immigrants

Prensky coined the term "digital native" in his 2001 article, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," where he describes the phenomenon in which students, who were born in a world immersed into digital technologies, "are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" (1). Prensky believes that through students'

use of digital technologies their "thinking patterns have changed," and that the educational system, specifically teachers are not prepared to adjust their pedagogies to students' new ways of thinking (1).

According to Prensky, teachers' thinking has not changed, because most teachers were born in a pre-digital world. In effect, Prensky setups a dichotomy between the older generation of teachers, which Prensky labels "digital immigrants," and supposedly more tech-savvy students, the digital natives. Prensky asserts that digital immigrants were socialized differently during the pre-digital era, and that they have an accent that has carried over, which is evident when they use and discuss digital technologies (3). Examples Prensky gives of the digital immigrants' accent include printing out emails to read, printing out a document for editing, and physically bringing people into an office to see an interesting website (3). In order for digital immigrant instructors to reach their digital native students and appreciate their new ways of thinking and learning, Prensky asserts that digital immigrant instructors must "learn to communicate in the language and style of their students" (4).

Interestingly, Prensky provides more details on the characteristics of digital immigrants than digital natives. Throughout the article, he provides one paragraph to describe what exactly digital natives' new "thinking patterns" and "language and style" entails,

> Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics before their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to "serious" work. (Does any of this sound familiar?) (4)

Prensky does not provide any empirical evidence to support these claims. The characteristics which he ascribes to digital natives are based on observations (hence, the question at the end of the quote, "Does any of this sound familiar?"), and the dichotomy of digital native vs. digital immigrants. In other words, he begins on the assumption that readers agree with his premise: "It is now clear that, as a result of this ubiquitous environment and the sheer volume of their interaction with it [digital technologies], today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (1). Because Prensky assumes that his audience will accept his premise without question (because he believes they observe same things he does), he does not feel the need to spend too much time explaining the characteristics of digital natives. It is also worth noting that I checked Prensky's website, which lists all his publications to date, to see if there was any other article or book in which he elaborates further on the characteristics of digital natives. He does not provide a better description in any other publication.

Instead, Prensky spends more time demonstrating how different digital immigrants are in comparison to digital natives, and how they do not appreciate and/or understand digital natives' new thinking patterns or "new skills" that digital natives have acquired (Prensky specifically uses the term "new skills" to describe things that digital natives do that digital immigrants do not do; however, he does not elaborate on what those skills may be outside of the paragraph cited above—which comes directly before Prensky use of "new skills") (4). Prensky states,

> But Digital Immigrants typically have very little appreciation for these
> new skills that the Natives have acquired and perfected through years of
> interaction and practice. These skills are almost totally foreign to the
> Immigrants, who themselves learned—and so choose to teach-slowly,

> step-by-step, one thing at a time, individually, and above all seriously,
> "My students just don't _____ like they used to." Digital Immigrant
> educators grouse. I can't get them to ____ or _____. They have no
> appreciation for____ or____. (Fill in the blanks-there are a wide variety of
> choices.) (4)

Here, Prensky is describing how digital immigrant instructors complain about students

not being as responsive or unable to meet the instructor's expectations. Prensky asserts

that this lack of appreciation is due to digital immigrants' belief that students learn in the

same way as they always have (4). The result of digital immigrants' lack of appreciation

and understanding is that digital natives often respond by not paying attention (4).

Prensky's solution to the disconnect between digital natives and digital

immigrants is to offer digital immigrant instructors a new teaching approach. His

approach offers digital immigrant instructors ways teachers can teach their curriculum

through the language of the digital natives, which naturally means utilizing digital

technologies in the classroom (4-5). Prensky prefers using video games in the classroom,

which are designed to teach students the course's curriculum (however, he doesn't limit

the inclusion of digital technologies into the classroom to video games; he prefers video

games, because it is a format that digital natives are familiar and will respond to) (5).

Presnky believes that using digital technologies in this manner, to reach digital natives, is

something that can be accomplished at all grade levels, and in all subject matters (5). He

states,

> A frequent objection I hear from Digital Immigration educators is "this
> approach is great for facts, but it wouldn't work for 'my subject.'"
> Nonsense. This is just rationalization and lack of imagination . . . It's just
> dumb (and lazy) of educators—not to mention ineffective—to presume
> that (despite their traditions) the Digital Immigrants way is the only way to
> teach, and that the Digital Natives' "language" is not capable as their own
> of encompassing any and every idea. (6)

Prensky's pedagogy is purposefully ambiguous (i.e., his pedagogy does not maintain any underlining structure besides the goal of teaching the original curriculum through a digital format, which the digital natives will understand and be receptive towards), because he wants it to be applicable to all educational situations, in all grade levels. Prensky vehemently believes that this is possible even though he indicates that most attempts at incorporating educational video games into the classroom has failed (5).

A New Metaphor: Digital Wisdom

Ten years after the publication of "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," Prensky contributed a chapter, "Digital Wisodm and Homo Sapiens Digital," to *Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young People, Technology, and the New Literacies* edited by Michael Thomas, where his purpose is to update his digital natives/digital immigrants concept. Instead of examining a dichotomy which is divided by generation and age, Prensky moves onto a new metaphor, digital wisdom, that examines how digital technologies has the potential to make an individual wiser through cognitive enhancement.

Prensky's motivation for rethinking and updating the digital natives/digital immigrants concept was in response to the criticism that Prensky received (I will discuss this criticism in more detail later in the chapter—however, it is worth noting that a major qualm Prensky takes with his critics is that they did not understand his digital natives/digital immigrants concept to be a metaphor, and took it too literally). Prensky also admits that his original concept has a "limited shelf life" due to its reliance on age and generational difference. In other words, Prensky is aware that as time progresses the generations that were born in the pre-digital era will become less and less and his theory will not be relevant. His goal now is to extend his metaphor so that it may be more

relevant as digital technologies become more pervasive. Prensky moves from his original concept of the digital natives/digital immigrants to a revised metaphor that no longer strictly dichotomizes those who grew up in a world immersed with digital technologies and those who did not. Instead, his new metaphor, which he calls digital wisdom, seeks to illustrate a concept of digital technology use that Prensky claims can "make us not just smarter but truly wiser" (Prensky does not define or distinguish the way in which he is using the term smarter in comparison to wiser) (18). Prensky describes his concept of Digital Wisdom as "referring both to wisdom arising *from* the use of digital technology to access cognitive power beyond our innate capacity and to wisdom *in* the prudent use of technology to enhance our capabilities" (18).

For Prensky, Digital Wisdom occurs through what he calls digital extensions and enhancements. Prensky asserts that digital technologies "already extend and enhance our cognitive capabilities" (19). Examples of this cognitive extension phenomenon are digital technologies that enhance memory, data-gathering, and decision-making tools (19). Prensky sees that "digital cognitive enhancement" as provided by "laptop computers, online databases, three-dimensional virtual simulations, online collaboration tools, personal digital assistants, and a range of others" (19). Because Prensky believes that digital technologies greatly increase cognitive abilities, the loss of digital technology equates to the loss of individual cognitive ability. Take this passage from Prensky's chapter as an example,

> We are already becoming dependent on these enhancements. As
> philosophers Andy Clark and David Chalmers argue, "extended cognition
> is a core cognitive process, not an add-on extra," as "the brain develops in
> a way that complements the external structures and learns to play its role
> within a unified, densely coupled system." As I recently heard a teenager
> say, expressing this idea more colloquially, "If I lose my phone, I lose half

my brain." Many would express the same sentiment in regard to a PDA or a laptop computer; we are already embracing a basic level of digital enhancement, and we will accept ever more sophisticated as technology continues to develop. (19)

As seen from the passage above, Prensky argues that digital technologies increase an individual's cognitive ability and when the technology is removed the individual's cognitive power and capability is lessened. In effect, an individual's cognitive power and capability is directly linked to their use of digital technologies. Prensky calls the newly developing digitally enhanced individual "homo sapiens digital" (19).

It is the homo sapiens digital that do or at least come closest to achieving Prensky's concept of Digital Wisdom. For instance, Prensky believes that "as digital enhancements develop, so too will the concept and practice of digital wisdom" (19). In order to explore how exactly digital technologies enhance an individual's cognitive abilities, Prensky set ups a new dichotomy: the enhanced and unenhanced (21). Prensky believes that by analyzing the limitations of the unenhanced individual, he can pinpoint how digital technologies improve and enhance the homo sapiens digital. In this passage Prensky describes the unenhanced individual and how they differ from the enhanced,

> As unenhanced humans, we are limited in our perceptions and constrained by the processing power and functioning of the human brain. As a result, we tend to go astray in our thinking in ways that limit our wisdom; for example:
> - We make decisions on only a portion of the available data.
> - We make assumptions, often inaccurate, about the thoughts or intentions of others.
> - We depend on educated guessing and verification (the traditional scientific method) to find new answers.
> - We cannot deal well with complexity beyond a certain point.
> - We cannot see, hear, touch, feel, or smell beyond the range of our senses.
> - We find it difficult to hold multiple perspectives simultaneously.
> - We have difficulty separating emotional responses from rational conclusions.
> - We forget. (21).

Prensky asserts that "available and emerging digital technologies" will allow their users to overcome these human limitations and "attain true digital wisdom" (21). He goes on to suggest that he is opposed to the idea that the unenhanced brain is superior to the enhanced one, because, as advanced as digital technologies are now and how greatly he believes digital technologies enhance cognition, Prensky suggests that "thinking and wisdom have become, in our age, a symbiosis of the human brain and its digital enhancements" (27).

Comparison of Prensky's Texts

As Prensky shifts his attention to a new dichotomy, the digitally enhanced versus the unenhanced, he leaves behind his previous metaphor of the digital native/digital immigrant. In doing so, he also dismisses the criticism that the previous metaphor received since he sees his new metaphor as beyond the limitations of the original. As stated previously, Prensky acknowledges that his original metaphor, digital natives/digital immigrants, has "a limited shelf life," which he views to be its major limitation, and why a new metaphor was necessary. Although Prensky introduces his new metaphor, Digital Wisdom, as a new concept, how different is it from his original metaphor? The Digital Wisdom metaphor may have new terminology and (perhaps) a shifted focus; however, Prensky carries many of the same themes and characteristics of the digital natives/digital immigrants metaphor into the Digital Wisdom metaphor. For instance, a major argument of Prensky's is that digital natives "brains have physically changed" ("Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" 1). Part II of "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" titled "Do They Really *Think* Differently" was Prensky's follow up article, which expanded upon this argument and analyzes scientific texts in order to demonstrate how the brain is changed

by technology. As discussed earlier, Prensky is also concerned with technology and the affects it has on the human mind in his Digital Wisdom metaphor; in fact, a majority of his argument is based around technology use and digital cognitive enhancement. While these two ideas surrounding technology and the mind are not identical, they share the same essential core: technology use changes the human mind.

Cognition is not the only thing that these two metaphors share. As Prensky shifts to a new metaphor he also creates a new dichotomy as well. Although the new dichotomy, on the surface, analyzes a different phenomenon, the digitally enhanced individual versus the non-enhanced individual, it actually closely resembles the digital natives/digital immigrant dichotomy, in the sense that they are both comparing those who use technology in a knowledgeable way to those who do not. The main difference between the two dichotomies is that where age and generation defines group membership for the digital natives/digital immigrants, it does not for the digitally enhanced/non-enhanced. Even though membership is defined differently, both dichotomies are structured in a way so that they subordinate those groups, digital immigrants and non-enhanced individuals, which have not attained a level of digital literacy that would allow them to utilize current digital technologies in the most beneficial way. Ultimately, if what has only changed in his new metaphor is removing age in relation to digital literacy, then a majority of Prensky's argument has not been changed, or even necessarily updated, but repackaged.

Critics on Prensky's Pedagogies

An aspect of his original argument that Prensky does not touch on at all in "Digital Wisdom and Homo Sapiens Digital" is classroom practices and pedagogy. Even

with his first publication on digital natives, he aggressively asserts that teachers and schools are not well equipped to teach "today's students" ("Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" 1). Prensky goes on to discuss what he thinks could be a possible solution: video games (5). In short, Prensky asserts that any school subject can be and should be incorporated and taught through video games or some other digital technology that digital natives will respond to (6). Prensky was calling for major classroom and pedagogical changes in the educational system. This aspect of the digital natives theory didn't sit well with many critics (see Sue Bennett and Karl Maton, Chris Jones et al., Anoush Margaryan et al., and Neil Selwyn).

It wasn't that critics were opposed to change. Many critics expressed concerned that he gained supporters even though, as they argue, there is no empirical evidence to support his claims (see Sue Bennett and Karl Maton, Chris Jones et al., Anoush Margaryan et al., and Neil Selwyn). From *Computers and Education's* 2010 article, "Are digital natives a myth or reality? University students' use of digital technologies," Margaryan et al. discuss how more scholars and educators are beginning to question Prensky's assumptions that make up his digital native theory (429). They state, "Recently, counter-positions emerged, emphasizing the need for robust evidence to substantiate the debate and to provide an accurate portrayal of technology adoption among students" (429). Margaryan et al. are also interested in collecting data regarding students' technology use in order to contribute to the growing empirical data needed to provide a more accurate portrayal of how students use digital technology and how they view the value of digital technologies in educational spaces (430). They state,

> Empirical data is essential in substantiating the conceptual debate and
> underpinning the design of educational systems and policy-making in

universities. To this end, our study explored the nature and extent students' use of technologies in formal and informal learning and socializing. An investigation of students' use of technologies for learning and their views on the educational value of technologies was supplemental by an analysis of faculty's use of technologies in teaching and their perceptions of the educational benefits of tools. (430)

Their results do not support the concepts of Prensky's digital natives pedagogy. They state,

These findings challenge the proposition that young people have sophisticated technology skills, providing empirically-based insights into the validity of this assertion. The outcomes of our study suggest that, although calls for radical transformations in education may be legitimate, it would be misleading to ground the arguments for such change in students' shifting patterns of learning and technology use. (439)

In other words, the students within their study did not demonstrate characteristics of digital natives overall, and did not seem as responsive to the integration of digital technologies in the classroom.

Margaryan et al. demonstrate that education reform and/or policies cannot be made based on unverified claims. Not to mention, if Prensky was only intending his discussion of digital natives/digital immigrants to be a metaphor, how did he expect drastic pedagogical change to be taken based on a metaphor? I don't think there is a good answer to this question, which is why Prensky probably did not include classroom practices or pedagogical implications in his more recent publication on Digital Wisdom.

Conclusion

Prensky's concept regarding the relationship between technology and cognition is intriguing. First, in the digital natives/digital immigrants metaphor he asserts that digital natives think distinctly different than digital immigrants, and from there he moves on to the digital wisdom metaphor where Prensky examines how digital technologies enhance

and extend human cognitive abilities. Although I am not so interested in neuroscience or the physical changes of the brain, as Prensky is, I do think that it is important that scholars and educators consider how technology has affected their students (i.e., regarding their attitudes, values, and perspectives of digital technologies), so that instructors are better informed about the implications of these changes are for the classroom.

However, I agree with Margaryan et al., that Prensky makes broad generalizations without any empirical evidence to support his claims and then suggests that pedagogical and policy changes be made based on these generalizations. Since I am interested in how technology has affected first-year composition students' relationship and perspective towards language, literacy, thinking, and learning, Prensky's theories are more thought provoking than informative. I do not agree with many of his assertions; However, Prensky pushed me to consider how digital technologies affect thinking and writing, especially in first-year composition students. I do want to be very clear on this point— when I say "thinking," I do not mean an enhancement of cerebral capability. I mean an altered way of thinking or changed way of thinking (this could also include people's perceptions and values). In other words, how the emergence of digital technologies has altered the way in which people think when compared to thinking prior to the emergence of digital technologies.

Unlike Prensky, I believe it is much more complicated to determine how and why these changes have occurred. As many of his critics suggest (see Bennett and Matton, Jones et al., Margaryan et al., and Selwyn), Prensky based his digital natives concept on the assumption that everyone within the same generation uses and understands digital

technologies in the same way. Margaryan et al., Jones et al., and Selwyn also have pointed out that Prensky didn't take into consideration variables that could influence how a person uses digital technology, such as socio-economic factors, lifestyle choices, gender, academic interests, and geographic location.

Recently there have been studies conducted in order to collect more data regarding these variables (see Jones et al. and Margaryan et al.), I would not only like to contribute to the data already being collected, but also extend the conversation to those of us in the field of composition. In chapter 2, I will discuss a survey I conducted in order to analyze how first-year composition students value writing and first-year composition, as a required course, and compare it to the kinds of writing that students report to do on and offline. The purpose of the survey is to discover if students view, relate to, or value online writing differently than offline writing. However, I will discuss the survey and results in more detail in chapter 2.

Chapter 2

This portion of my thesis is where I will discuss my survey, the survey results, and then compare my findings to those theories previously discussed.

Initial Hypothesis and Purpose

As I stated previously, a major concern of mine was to determine why students don't seem to value the mandatory introductory composition course, which is labelled W131 in the school where the survey was conducted. Walking passed a student on a laptop or phone tweeting, texting, or Facebook socializing is an occurrence that happens as often as I hear students complain about their W131 assignments. My observations led to my interests in the digital native theories, due to the theories emphasis on the younger generation's prolific use of digital technologies. If I were to completely buy into the digital native theories, the answer to my question would be simple: the use of digital technologies has changed the brain structure of this younger generation, which, in effect, has caused them to think differently, and the "old" ways of teaching will no longer work. In other words, more digital technologies need to be brought into the classroom. However, as I stated before, I tend to agree more with the critics of the digital native theories (see Sue Bennett and Karl Maton, Chris Jones et al., Anoush Margaryan et al., and Neil Selwyn).

The empirical evidence collected through studies such as, Chris Jones et al. and Anoush Margaryan et al., has mostly demonstrated that (1) overall students do not use digital technologies in the advanced manner that the theories suggest (i.e., Prensky's digital natives theory assert that students have a greater understanding of digital technologies in comparison to the older generation of adults, which Prensky labels digital

immigrants) and (2) students are not necessarily more receptive to a course's curriculum or goals when digital technologies are utilized in the classroom. Although Jones et al. and Margaryan et al. have already collected data regarding students' use of digital technologies and its classroom implications, I needed data more specific to the FYC classroom. The aim of my survey is geared towards finding out how digital technologies affect the way students value writing. I am specifically interested in how students value social digital writing (e.g., writing done in social digital spaces, such as email, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and blog platforms) compared to the way they value academic writing, especially the writing done for W131. By value, I mean the usefulness or importance that students place on the subject in question—in this situation, the value of social digital technologies, W131, and writing in general is being measured.

Context and Demographics

All of the respondents are undergraduates registered in W131, and attend the same "premier urban public research university." According to the university's website, "the campus has a health and life science focus, with a medical school and a nursing school among the largest in the nations." The university offers over 250 degrees in 19 schools, with an average student to faculty ration of 19:1 ("About IUPUI").

At the beginning of the fall semester in 2013, there were 20,738 undergraduate students attending the university. 7,645 are between the ages of 18 to 20. 4,686 are between the ages of 21 to 22. 2,561 are between the ages of 23 to 24. There are 15,745 full-time students, and 4,993 part-time students. 9,226 are male, and 11,512 are female. The survey was conducted the following semester. The English department's writing program had 65 sections of W131. Around the time the survey conducted, there were

1,336 students registered for W131 overall. Out of the 65 sections to receive the survey, 118 students responded. Out of the 118 students who responded, I expected the campus's focus on health and life science to be represented in my results.

Methods and Background

The survey was created using Google Drive, so that it could be easily dispersed to W131 students. W131 professors were sent a link, with a brief description of the project and survey instructions, in order to either distribute the Google Drive link among their students or have their students take the survey during class time (many sections of W131 spend some time in computer labs). The survey is brief, so that students are encouraged to write more detailed answers. It is made up of short answer questions and fill-in the blank.

The survey is broken up into two sections. The first, "W131, Academic Writing, and Writing in the Future" was designed to gather information about how students value W131. Students were asked questions about their academic interests and future career goals, and how they thought W131 and writing would play a role in achieving those goals. The second section, "Writing Outside of School," is focused on gathering information about how students value writing outside school, specifically in social digital spaces, such as Facebook, Twitter, or blogs. Although students are asked generally about their writing practices outside of school (print and non-print mediums), the focus is more geared towards the writing that students do in social digital spaces in order to get a better understanding of how much writing students do online, how students view this writing, and how students value social digital writing, alone and in comparison to school writing.

Key Findings

The results from the separate sections of the survey produced two key findings. In this section, as I go through the results that make up the key findings, I will also discuss the implications of these findings.

Section 1 "W131, Academic Writing, and Writing in the Future"

As stated previously, the purpose of section 1 was to determine (1) how students overall value W131, and (2) what kind of role do students expect writing to play throughout the rest of their college experience and then in their careers afterwards. The survey results revealed that the strongest motivating factor for students, in regards to how they value W131 and writing overall, is largely connected to their future career goals. For instance, 94 of the 118 answers students provided to the question, "What is your major? If you don't have a major, what are your academic interests," coincide with the answers they gave to, "What are your future career goals?" In other words, the high number of students whose major or academic interests coincide with their future career goals suggests that students' academic decisions are highly influenced by their career goals. More precisely, the results indicate that students specifically chose their majors with their career goals in mind. For example, students who indicated to have pre-nursing, nursing, biology, or pre-med majors or interests chose to pursue these interests in order to achieve potential careers in the field of health. The same could be said for those who major or have interests in business, accounting, or marketing—these academic majors and interests were specifically chosen in order to pursue specific career goals.

The extremity and influence of career-centric motivations is not without good cause. I believe that high numbers of students are entering the university with career

goals in mind, due to the pressures placed on the work force because of the new capitalism, as described in chapter 3. Students believe that the only way that they will be considered for jobs that earn higher rewards is by having a college degree of some sort. In that sense, the literacy myth is being perpetuated in the university, in our writing classes, as students strive to complete degrees in order to move forward, towards a career.

The literacy myth, which will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, is a cultural belief that literacy acquisition will equate to economic success. At first glance the results do not seem to support that students are following the literacy myth. For example, 84% of students believe that W131 will help them to be successful in their other classes; whereas, 68% of students believe that W131 will help them meet their career goals. Note the decrease of value of W131 as its usefulness is gauged as it moves from the classroom to potential careers. I attribute this decrease to how students relate to and view the kind of writing that is done in W131, and also how it compares to the writing that students anticipate doing in their major specific courses and future careers. In other words, I believe that more students find W131 valuable in regard to their other courses opposed to their future careers, because they find it to be more applicable. For instance, when students were asked "What kind of writing do you think you will be doing for your major," a wide array of answers were given. Although, many different answers were given, I noticed some common traits emerge from their answers, such as (1) 24 students expect to do research based writing (2) 21 students expect reports to be a large aspect of their writing, especially in the fields of science, business, technology, and engineering, and (3) 11 students see themselves writing analytical papers. These results demonstrate

that, according to students' expectations, they will be more of consumers of information rather than producers.

The way students use the term "research" or "research papers" suggests that they do not believe much critical thought is needed. For example, one student who hopes to become a doctor reports that the kind of writing she will be doing as a biology major is "formal lab reports and writing for research projects." A student who is pursuing a career in land management, reports that the kind of writing she will be doing as an environmental science major is, "mostly research/report papers on theories and natural phenomenons." A more common example is how a business, marketing student described the kind of writing they would be doing as simply "reports or research papers." Based on students' use of the term research writing, and how some even interchange the term with reports, suggest that students may be taking a more passive role as "researcher," in which they become more of a reporter of facts and other scholars' ideas.

The kind of writing that students see themselves doing and the way in which students interact with information greatly influences how students value W131. Although the examples that have demonstrated this concept, in the section above, is specifically looking at students' writing expectations for their majors, it is important to note how closely the students' writing expectations for the major resemble how students' expect to use writing in their future careers. A majority of the students, again, expect report writing to play a large role in the kind of writing that they will be doing in their future careers; however, students do not see research writing to play a dominant role, as they did in their major specific courses. Another difference is that students reported more forms of writing that they designated as "basic," "simple," or "quick notes." In other words, although

students expect to write texts that require more time and detail, such as reports, the results suggests that they also expect to do a great deal of writing which they believe to be much less substantial and describe in terms of simple note-taking. By mostly writing reports and simple note-taking in their future careers, the results indicate that students will still passively engage information.

W131 asks a great deal more from students than what they have reported to expect from their other courses, especially those specific to their majors, and their future careers. Although W131 varies from school to school, critical thought and exhibiting agency over ideas and texts is usually central to most programs' course goals. For instance, at the university where the survey was conducted, W131 has six course goals:

- Discover, explore, and analyze ideas in order to write with strong sense of ownership
- Participate productively in discussions about writing
- Create a clear focus or strong thesis and provide sufficient support
- Use sources effectively by synthesizing ideas, integrating them smoothly, and documenting them correctly
- Learn to reflect on your writing practices to improve them
- Shape, revise, and edit your writing to meet the concerns of purpose and audience ("The Course Goals")

Although the course goals were not created with a specific focus on research writing, closed research writing is a major aspect of the course design, which is reflected in the course goals. For instance, the course goals emphasize students' analysis and reflection of their own ideas, as well as the ideas of their sources. Because students are conducting closed research in this course, the course goals are more focused on encouraging the students to actively engage their ideas, as well as their source materials, while demonstrating the ability to synthesize them fluidly, instead of conducting original research.

Section 2 "Writing Outside of School"

The purpose of section 2 was to determine (1) if students value writing outside of school, specifically with social digital technologies, (2) what kind of social digital technologies are used most, and (3) how students perceive, relate to, and interact with social digital technologies. The survey results regarding how students value writing outside of school appears to contain contradictions. To begin with, the survey results indicate that the way in which students value writing outside of school changes as it moves from the print to digital medium. For instance, 39 out of the 117 students who answered "Do you write outside of school? What do you write?" reported to mainly write poetry, short stories, songs, letters, and keep journals, which all are done in print forms. 11 out of 117 reported to use digital technologies as the main medium through which they write outside of school. The kinds of writing that these 11 students do through digital technologies are mostly email and text messages. Over half of the students, specifically 67, do not write outside of school.

At first glance, these results suggest that students (1) value the print medium more for writing outside of school, and (2) overall do not value writing outside of school. However, these results are contradicted by other survey question results. For example, 114 out of 119 students responded to "I use a cell phone," which prompted them to indicate how often they use a cell phone: every day, occasionally (once a week), rarely (once a month), or never. 111 students reported that they use a cell phone every day. 2 students use a cell phone occasionally, and 1 student uses a cell phone rarely.

When students were asked, "What functions of your cell phone are most important or indispensable," texting (110 of 114), internet access (94 of 114), and email (81 of 114) are ranked among the most important, and social networking applications (71 of 114), a camera (70 of 114), multimedia messages (51 of 114), and voicemail (37 of 114) are ranked lower. These results indicate that students value writing in the digital medium more than they originally reported. As shown above, almost all students feel that the texting function of their phone is important or indispensable, and 81 students feel that email is as well—both, of course, are largely made up of a great deal of writing.

More contradictions come up as students were asked about their usage of social digital technologies. For instance, students were asked how frequently they use Facebook: every day, occasionally (once a week), rarely (once a month), or never. Overall, 95 out of 114 students use Facebook to some extent. 33% of students use Facebook every day. 36% use Facebook occasionally. 17% rarely use Facebook, and 14% never use it. Although students may not use Facebook as regularly as they use a cell phone, it is still a writing activity that large amounts of students participate in at least once a month. This is still more writing than what students reported to do in the original question, "Do you write outside of school? What do you write?"

Another example can be seen in how students responded to the question regarding their usage of Twitter. 64 out of 114 students report using Twitter. 38% use Twitter every day. 8% use Twitter occasionally. 11% use Twitter rarely, and 44% never use it. Again, the 64 students who do use Twitter, may not use it regularly, but they use it at least once a month. Like the texting and email functions of cell phones and Facebook, Twitter was

also not considered by students when they answered how much outside of school writing they do.

The reason why contradictions arose in the survey results is not due to the way in which students value writing outside of school; instead, the survey results suggest that students do not view the writing that they are doing in these digital spaces as writing, at least not in the way students have been conditioned to view writing. For example, this explains when students were asked "Do you write outside of school? What do you write," students mainly reported writing more traditional pieces in the print medium, such as poetry, short stories, songs, letters, and journals, which is also the kinds of writing that they may have experienced doing within school as well. In other words, the writing that students have experienced in school has largely influenced the way in which they relate to and view writing in general.

Writing that takes place through social digital technologies have more in common with orality or speech than writing that takes place in the classroom, which largely contributes to how students are unable to understand social digital writing as writing. In *Language and Learning in the Digital Age* James Paul Gee and Elisabeth R. Hayes describes this phenomenon, which they label the "digital social formation" (125). They believe that social digital technologies, such as text messaging, Facebook posts, or tweets, produce a type of written language that resembles more closely to how people "use face-to-face oral language" (125). Gee and Hayes state, "When people post a text online, send a text message, or use Twitter, readers can quickly get into dialogue with them and ask them, as in an oral culture, what they mean, why they mean it, and why they think it is true" (125). In other words, people can engage with others through social

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digital technologies in ways that simulate face-to-face conversations, even though all communication is being done through text.

Characteristics of social digital technologies also contribute to the phenomenon of digital writing resembling orality or speech. One major characteristic is how social digital technologies typically are shorter in nature, and may, like Twitter or some cell phones, have a word limit. Short texts can be responded to easily and quickly, and are no longer dependent upon many of the conventions of text-based literacies. For instance, there are other forms of correspondence, digital and non-digital, such as letters and emails, which do not take on characteristics of orality or speech, because they usually contain a greater amount text (which inevitably means more information) and are expected to conform to their respective conventions (e.g., dates, inside address, salutation, closing, and enclosures). It is due to the length, adherence to conventions, and response time (especially in regard to letters) that distance these writing forms from orality and make them more text-centric. The point here is that social digital technologies are not more like orality because their rhetorical function is to be communicative; instead, it is the way in which students are able to use social digital technologies to respond quickly through short informal texts, which mimics speech. It is because social digital technologies resemble orality more than text-based literacies that caused students' confusion (i.e., the contradictions that arose in the survey, where students did not acknowledge partaking in social digital technology writing when asked what kind of writing they do outside of school).

With the confusion that students have towards what is considered writing in social digital technologies, it would be unwise to bring them into the classroom, as the digital

natives theory urge. Not only would students find it off-putting, since they do not view academic writing as anything like what is done in social digital spaces, but, ultimately, there was nothing in the survey results to indicate that students have the level of interest in social digital technologies that would recommend bringing them into the classroom. More importantly, bringing social digital technologies into the composition classroom would not benefit the students' writing as intended, because too much class time would be needed in order for students to gain a better understanding of how social digital technology writing is writing, in the same sense that print-based literacies are writing.

Limitations and Conclusion

Although the survey produced some interesting findings, the study has limitations. First, because the survey was created at the onset of my thesis project, it reflects more of my original ideas and hypotheses. For instance, I expected students' responses to indicate that social digital writing is a much important form of writing than the survey actually did. Because I had this expectation, half of the survey was dedicated to analyzing how students view and use social digital technologies. As shown through in the key findings section, the most notable finding from this data was that students did not seem to understand social digital writing as writing, which contributes to why Prensky's digital natives pedagogy would not be appropriate for the FYC classroom.

However, when the survey was created, I did not consider how greatly students' career goals influence their views and decisions regarding literacy and learning. Because I did not consider how greatly students would be influenced by their career goals, the survey was not as concerned with this as an influential variable. In other words, the information gathered regarding students' career goals and writing is less detailed than the

data collected regarding social digital writing. In effect, conclusive evidence and results cannot be drawn from the data collected regarding students' career goals and writing. For instance, the data that I was able to collect suggested that students may not believe that critical thought is necessary for the kinds of writing that they will be doing in their future careers. However, I did not collect enough data to fully substantiate this claim.

Given the opportunity, a follow-up survey would provide the needed data to either substantiate or disapprove these claims. Although the study contains limitations, it does two important things: (1) it demonstrates how students are highly motivated by their career goals, and (2) it indicates that Prensky's digital natives pedagogy is not appropriate for the FYC classroom. The findings of this study provides a starting place to examine what values students bring to the FYC classroom, and what the implications could be for FYC pedagogies.

In the next chapter, I will explore students' career motivations further through examining James Paul Gee, Glynda Hull, and Colin Lankshear's new capitalism concept. By examining Gee et al.'s new capitalism, I will demonstrate how the economic climate that affects the workforce also influences how students perspectives and decisions regarding literacy and learning.

Chapter 3

Since the survey responses pointed to students being highly motivated by career goals instead of driven by the use of digital technologies (and/or the effects of digital technologies), Prensky's digital natives theory pedagogy does not seem appropriate for the composition classroom. This is especially clear when considering the contradictions within the survey regarding students writing activities outside of school, and how the students' responses suggested that they do not understand social digital writing to be writing. Because students do not understand social digital writing to be writing, (at least not in the same way that they understand print-based writing to be writing) it may take a great deal of classroom instruction time in order for students to gain the understanding for social digital technologies to become a viable tool for the composition classroom. As I stated before though, the survey demonstrated that students are driven more by their career goals than by digital technologies, so in order to gain a better understanding of what influences students' perspectives on literacy and learning in this chapter I will examine the economic phenomenon the "new capitalism," which is described by James Paul Gee, Glynda Hull, and Colin Lankshear in *The New Work Order: Behind the Language of the New Capitalism*. By examining Gee et al.'s new capitalism, I will

The New Capitalism/The New Work Order: An Overview

The Old Capitalism

The purpose of Gee, Hull, and Lankshear's book is to investigate "the new work order" (I'll explain this term in more detail a little later on) of the new capitalism and "how it impacts on the social practices of languages, learning, and literacy" (xi). To begin

with, they distinguish the old capitalism from the new. The old capitalism (often referred to as Fordism) took place from the end of World War II to the early 1970s, and was characterized by large industries and assembly lines with a massive, uncrowded market for consumer goods (Gee et al. 17; Gee and Hayes 107). Gee et al. state that compared to today's market, "competition was not particularly stiff" (17).

Gee et al. emphasize on the difference between the workers of the old capitalism and the new. They state that the old capitalism produced "two large categories of workers" (17). The assembly line worker became a symbol of the first category of worker. The first category of workers were "made up of low-level workers hired 'from the neck down' to engage in allegedly mindless, repetitive, and meaningless pieces of tasks, the wholes of which they did not need to understand and certainly had no control over" (17).

The second category of workers were "allegedly the professional brains of the corporation" (17). Middle managers make up this category. They "existed in large, bureaucratic, and heavily hierarchical corporations to pass information between the top and the bottom of the hierarchy and to supervise bottom-line workers" (17).

The old capitalism operated under a top-down system where knowledge and control existed at the top with the bosses. The middle managers relayed information between top and bottom, and carried out the top's instructions. Overall, the old capitalism was quite successful, and the prosperity of the top spread down, which then created what is now known as the middle class (Gee and Hayes 107).

With the onset of the 1970s, scientific and technological advances "allowed for wider global competition since modern conditions of work and the mass production of

commodities could not be carried out successfully in a great variety of countries, even in some so-called 'developing countries'"(107). Industrial work sought low cost facilities, leaving developed countries, and as a result the nature of work changed (107). An example of this is the decline of Detroit's auto industry.

The New Capitalism/The New Work Order

This change is what Gee et al. see to be the new work order of the new capitalism. The new work order is what defines and shapes the new capitalism, and, more importantly, it is what distinguishes the old capitalism from the new. The dominant and most prominent feature of the new work order is knowledge—it is also the most valued (Gee et al. 5). They explain that businesses don't necessarily compete based on the services they offer or what they produce; instead, "they compete, rather, on the basis of how much learning and knowledge they can use as leverage in order to expeditiously invent, produce, distribute, and market their goods and services, as well as to innovatively vary and customize them" (Gee et al. 5). In other words, work knowledge is made of what it takes to "innovate, design, efficiently produce, market, and transform products and services as symbols of identity and lifestyle" (Gee et al. 28). Gee labels the highest form of work knowledge as "sociotechnical designing" ("The New Literacy Studies" 1297). Sociotechnical designing is work knowledge that focuses on creating and designing products or services that are geared towards a specific niche, identity, or personality. Sociotechnical designing is also used to create new niche/identity market, as well as transforming and shaping consumers' identities and values through marketing and advertising (1297).

As shown through Gee's concept of sociotechnical designing, and work knowledge overall, the market has greatly changed from that of the old capitalism. No longer is it concentrated on mass producing commodity goods, because "there is considerable competition that drives prices down for any standard models" (Gee and Hayes 108). In other words, mass producing common products that people use every day, such as toilet paper, paper towels, trash bags, milk, or ketchup, is not where the profits are at, because so many different companies are producing these kinds of products, which makes it very difficult to compete in that market. In the new capitalism, the way to gain bigger profits is to target niche markets (108). In order to be successful in this environment, businesses must "keep innovating products and services perfectly dovetailed to the lifestyle and identity of a particular group of people or to the specific needs of another company" (Gee et al. 18). In other words, to gain the bigger profits and remain competitive, businesses need to create and constantly improve upon products and services that are targeted towards particular identities types or lifestyles. It is the degree of specialization that the niche markets desire to achieve, which requires the work knowledge of sociotechnical designers.

Because work knowledge is now increasingly valued more in the new capitalism due to its focus on niche markets, inevitably front line workers and their workplaces would changes as well. "Front line workers" is a term that Gee uses to distinguish between "knowledge workers," those who are more involved in designing products and services, rather than the front line workers who directly work with the customers. Front line workers are typically service workers. There are many different types of service workers, including everything from restaurant workers, gas station clerks, movie theatre

clerks, coffee shop baristas, and grocery store cashiers to lawn service employees, pest control specialists, home security system technicians, and pet groomers (these are just a few, but the point is that service workers are involved in all jobs that preform some sort of customer service function).

Unlike the old capitalism, where front line workers did not need to know much about the larger process of which they were contributing, new capitalism workers are expected to be knowledgeable of the whole work process, so that they can adapt to new circumstances, be flexible, and fill in for others when they are sick or no longer with the business (Gee 1297-98). Workers are also supposed to be continuously learning and applying what they learn as they work—this is due to the need to keep up with the constant changes of the market to meet the desires/needs of consumer identities and lifestyles. The typical new capitalistic work environment is fast paced, few workers, longer hours, less supervision, and teamwork is essential (1298).

This description of new capitalism front line workers may portray their work and environment as more attractive or advantageous; however, Gee states that there are "several essential paradoxes built into the new capitalism" (1298). The paradoxes that Gee explores are through these questions:

> What, then, is to prevent them [workers] from: A) using their new found knowledge and status to critique the company, or, indeed, the new capitalism itself? B) walking off with their newly important knowledge (now that they, indeed, have something of their own to sell) and selling it to the highest bidder? C) how is knowledge that is continually gained in practice, often tactic, and transformed quickly, going to get stored and passed on for the company's benefit (it won't do to write manuals; they require explicit knowledge and, further, can go out of date before the ink is dry)? (1298)

Gee asserts that the paradoxes he has labelled A-C are solved by the new capitalism

through, what he calls, a "community of practice" (1298). A community of practice is

where the new work order really embraces the concept of workers being fully engaged in

the "whole integrated process" (1298). Workers act as a community to train on the job

and problem solve. In this sense, knowledge also becomes a social good. In other words,

one worker does not have access to work knowledge that another worker doesn't have

access to as well. As mentioned earlier, workers are expected to be knowledgeable of the

whole work process so that they may fill in for others when sick or if they leave the

company altogether. Overall, the work knowledge that front line workers gain is not

empowering, because it is shared by all workers (i.e., no certain aspect of work

knowledge is unique to one worker), and does not give them power or any sort of

leverage inside or outside of the business (1298).

Of course, there are those, who are not front line workers, who possess more

unique knowledge that businesses in the new capitalism desire. These individuals are

referred to as "symbol analysts" (Gee and Hayes 107; Gee et al. 41-7; Gee 1299-1300).

Gee defines symbol analysts as those individuals who have "sophisticated sociotechnical

knowledge to sell" (1300). In other words, symbol analysts have knowledge that is

desirable to businesses in the new capitalism, because they are the ones that "create or

manage new knowledge, designs, products, and services and are paid well for it" (Gee

and Hayes 107). However, only about one fifth of populations of developed countries fall

into the category of the symbol analysts (Gee and Hayes 107). Another one fifth makes

up what is labelled "technical workers" (Gee and Hayes 107) or "enchanted workers"

(Gee 1300; Gee et al. 75-128). Technical workers possess a specialized skill or

knowledge, but are not rewarded as well as the symbol analysts (Gee and Hayes 107).

As demonstrated through the descriptions of workers above, the work hierarchy of

the new capitalism is much different than that of the old. For instance, there is a large gap

between those workers who possess knowledge that is valued by the new capitalism (and

rewarded well for it) and those who do not (i.e., the front line workers). In the old

capitalism, there were middle managers that existed in between those at the top and

bottom of the hierarchy, in order to pass information between the two and supervise front

line workers; however, middle managers have become nearly obsolete in the fast paced

environment of the new capitalism. Gee et al. state,

> Middle managers, as they pass information back and forth, slow the
> business down just when it should be responding as rapidly as possible to
> its customers. They insulate it from the fast-changing market at a time
> when businesses must respond quickly and adaptively. They bloat large
> companies just when they must get as "lean and mean" as possible. They
> separate leaders from workers who are on the front-line closest to the
> customers and who most deeply affect their level of satisfaction. (18)

The easiest solution to the problem of middle managers is to greatly decrease their

numbers. This is done by giving front line workers more responsibilities and less

supervision—it should be noted that this does not mean that front line workers are being

rewarded more for taking on a larger role or function in the business. On the contrary,

once the new capitalism breaks away from how the old capitalism utilized middle

managers, it creates a wide gap between those who are rewarded well and those who are

rewarded meagerly, with not many in between (18-19).

With the gap widening, more people end up on the bottom, where Gee asserts

they will be exploited "in order to make a company, region, or country 'hyper-

competitive' in our global economy" (1300). Gee et al. believe that the gap is so wide that "elites who control information and culture" have more in common with their elite "peers across the developed world" than with those who are less prosperous, fortunate, or exploited in the country in which they reside (41). They go on to suggest that these elites no longer feel "any moral or social obligation" to those in lower socioeconomic classes. Gee et al. state, "The notion of a civic space in which different classes and groups of people share responsibilities with and to each other is seriously eroded" (41). Instead, Gee believes that elites feel more "co-citizenship" with those who share their elite status globally (1300).

The New Capitalism and Education

As discussed above, only a small number of people will have the opportunity to become symbol analysts or technical workers (approximately two fifths of a developed country's population), so competition for those jobs is especially fierce. Gee and Hayes suggests that in order to be successful in the new capitalism, people adapt into "shape-shifting portfolio people" (108-10). Shape-shifting portfolio people "believe they must manage their own risky career trajectories through building up a variety of skills, experiences, and achievements, in terms of which they can define themselves as successful now and worthy of more success later. Their set of skill, experiences, and achievements, at any one time, constitutes their portfolio" (109). The shape-shifting aspect of shape-shifting portfolio people becomes necessary when the market changes and begins to favor other circumstances. For example, Gee and Hayes state,

> They must also stand ready and able to rearrange these skills, experiences, and achievements creatively (as competent and worthy) for changed circumstances. If I am now an "X," and the economy no longer needs "Xs," or "Xs" are no longer the right thing to be in society, but now "Ys"

are called for, then I have to be able to shape-shift quickly into a "Y."
(109)

In other words, having a portfolio is not enough. An individual must also know how to reshape or redefine their portfolio in order for it to maintain its appeal as the market changes. Gee and Hayes believe that by building and maintaining a portfolio is the way in which people can gain job security in the new capitalism (108). Gee and Hayes assert that people who do not see themselves in terms of a portfolio put themselves at a disadvantage in the new capitalism, which is why they believe it is not uncommon for parents to help their children build up their own portfolio, usually first for college applications and then for their professional lives (109).

The Literacy Myth

Education is intrinsically tied to the new capitalism. Education achievements are just one element that could potentially make up an individual's portfolio; however, some sort of education achievement (whether it be a two, four, or graduate degrees) is almost always required in order to be considered for a symbol analyst or technical worker position. As stated previously, the symbol analyst and technical workers are the more desirable positions, because they earn more reward. Because symbol analyst and technical workers are desirable positions, people see a major step in building their portfolio as earning a degree.

However, it is misguided to believe that fulfilling education goals will equate to economic success. Harvey Graff coined the term "literacy myth" to describe the "belief, articulated in educational, civic, religious, and, other settings, contemporary and historical, that the acquisition of literacy is a necessary precursor to and invariably results

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in economic development, democratic practice, cognitive enhancement, and upward

social mobility" (17).

Since the 1970/80s, Graff has critically examined the assumption or belief that

literacy acquisition will lead to economic prosperity. He states,

> The consequences of accepting uncritically the literacy myth are
> continuing to misunderstand the nature of literacy, its development, uses
> and potentials to foster or inhibit social and economic development. The
> same complication, even contradiction, applies if we replace 'literacy'
> with 'education'. (22)

In the quote above, Graff states that the uncritical unacceptance of the literacy myth can

"foster or inhibit social and economic development." He sees this occurring through the

way in which people approach the literacy myth; Graff gives two examples: The first, a

more positive outlook, people take the view that poverty can be eliminated through the

acquisition of literacy. The second, a bit darker, is that people see the literacy myth as a

way to rationalize social inequalities (21). In the second view, "literacy is a symptom and

a symbol" (21). To be more specific, according to the literacy myth the absence or lack of

literacy is a symptom of poverty and other social inequalities. Literacy then comes to

symbolize economic prosperity.

Although the purpose of Graff's literacy myth is to demonstrate the belief that

literacy acquisition equates to economic prosperity is not based on empirical evidence, he

does emphasize that he has never asserted that there isn't any relationship between

literacy and economic success (20). Take for example, Graff's discussion of his book *The*

Literacy Myth,

> We argued for . . . a less direct connection between literacy and, in
> particular, industrilisation, compared with, for example, literacy's more
> direct relationships with commercial capitalism. I urged greater attention
> to the importance of workplace experience and learning on the job, on the

one hand, and, on the other, of schooling's impact attitudinal, behavioural and other noncognitive attributes. No one denied the importance of literacy and education. But they were configured as less direct and independent relationships. (19)

In chapter six of *Literacy in American Lives*, Deborah Brandt also demonstrates that the relationship between literacy and economic success is complex. In this chapter, Brandt is specifically interest in how economic success of parents relates to the literacies that their children acquire and practice, and how the children's literacies affect their economic success. Brandt examines the literacy acquisition and use of two people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, Raymond Branch and Dora Lopez. Brandt chose Branch and Lopez because they both took on self-initiated learning, which was supported by their parents. However, since Branch and Lopez came from different socioeconomic backgrounds, their parents were not able to provide them with same literacy technologies. For instance, Branch's father was a university professor and his mother was a real-estate executive, which allowed them to provide Branch with literacy technologies, such as a personal computer at the age of twelve (173). Brandt states,

> As an adolescent, Branch spent his summers roaming these stores [computer hardware and software stores], sampling new computer games, joining user groups, swapping pirating information, making contact with founders of some of the first electronic bulletin boards in the nation, and continuing, through reading, writing, and other informal means, to develop his programming techniques. (173)

The literacies that Branch was acquiring and cultivating as a youth benefited him in the future. In 1995, when Brandt interviewed Branch, he graduated from the university that his father teaches at with a bachelor's degree and became a freelance writer of computer software and software documentation (172).

Lopez's family also supported her biliteracy acquisition and learning; however, her family did not have the same financial means as Branch, so they were not able to provide her with the same sort of high-tech literacy technologies that Branch had access to. For example, she had access to a typewriter, which her father owned from his college days, but didn't encounter a computer until she was fourteen (174). Brandt explains that she first used a computer at "a federally funded summer school program for the elementary-age children of migrant farm workers" (174). The aim of the program was to help improve students' reading skills (174).

Although Lopez used literacy technologies to extend her learning, she was more interested in acquiring biliteracy. Both of her parents are literate in Spanish, but they did not use written Spanish at home or at work. In effect, Lopez was not exposed to written Spanish, and at twelve it became her goal to be able to do so (174). She first began to learn written Spanish by reading, and then she began writing letters to relatives and compose poetry (174).

Like Branch, Lopez also found a use for the literacies that she cultivated through her youth. During the time the interview took place, she was working a janitorial job, where her supervisor would often need her to translate English documents for the Latina workers. During this time, she was also pursuing a two-year degree, attending classes part time (175).

Although Lopez found a use for her biliteracy abilities, she was not economically rewarded in the same way as Branch. The literacy analyses of Branch and Lopez demonstrates that the market doesn't value all literacy practices in the same way. For instance, Brandt explains, that when she interviewed Lopez, the Latino community in her

area overall was devalued, which "as a result, the legitimacy of her project was not reflected in the broader community in which she lived, and material reward was still elusive" (185). This was not the case for Branch though. Brandt states,

> There was, for Branch, a greater consistency and congruity in the valuing systems through which he moved on his path to learning. The computer language he sought, the locations at which he learned, and his status as a white man all had high-end value. He acquired his computer skills at a time when those skills were escalating in exploitability . . . As a result, his form of literacy was actualized to a full capacity; it enjoyed a broad legitimacy. (185)

Brandt believes that by analyzing people's literacy practices in such a way (i.e., how literacies are used and practiced in every day work, home interactions, and other social interactions), it is more precise in demonstrating "how economic inequality connects to outcomes in literacy and literacy achievements" (185).

Brandt goes on to assert that literacy should be viewed as an economic resource (183). She states, "This analysis has brought attention to the status of literacy as not merely an individual skill or a cultural practice but as an economic resource, as an object of development, and exploitation around which both value and competition intensify" (183). Brandt believes that literacy, like other economic resources, can be passed to their children. She explains that parents' professional statuses can greatly influence their children's literacy practices due to the literacy technologies and resources that they are able to provide for them or gain access to (184).

Brandt's solution to the unequal distribution of literacy technologies is that public learning spaces, especially schools, must make an effort "to stabilize and attempt to augment the value and development of all forms of literacy learning" (186). She also emphasizes that schools should be wary of "replicating market interests within their

institutional practices" (186). In other words, schools should be the place where students, no matter their socioeconomic background, have access to the same literacy technologies, and that students' literacy learning should not be molded to pattern what the market favors, because that would only perpetuate inequality.

Conclusion

Brandt, as well as Graff, clearly demonstrates that the relationship between literacy and economic success is much more complicated than many assume. This is especially clear when considering how deeply ingrained Graff's literacy myth's is into U.S. culture. The reason why the literacy myth is still very real and influential to the larger culture is because it is not "wholly false" (Graff 20). He states,

> Like all myths, the literacy myth is not so much a falsehood but an expression of an ideology of those who sanction it and are invested in its outcomes. Contradicting popular notions, myth is not synonymous with fictive or the false. By both definition and means of cultural work, myths cannot be wholly false. For a myth to gain acceptance, it must be grounded in at least some aspects of perceived reality and cannot explicitly contradict all ways of thinking or expectations. (20)

In short, Graff is explaining, that although the literacy myth is not supported by empirical evidence, it has to be grounded in some aspect of reality for it to be accepted. The literacy myth is not aimlessly grounded in reality. It reflects the values of the market, which are supported by its economic structure, the new capitalism. In other words, people constructed the literacy myth as a response to the economic situation of the new capitalism.

Because many people accept the literacy myth at face value, it holds a large influence over what people think will equate to economic success. This includes how the literacy myth and new capitalism influence the way in which people view and use digital

technologies, but, more importantly it affects the way people value literacy and learning. The literacy and learning choices that people make are based on the idea that they will bring economic success. As Brandt demonstrated, not all literacies are valued in the same way, which is why many students pursue the literacies that reflect the market's values.

In the next chapter, as I discuss my implementation of Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle's Writing about Writing pedagogy, I will also explore the role that Gee et al.'s new capitalism concept and text can play in bridging the values systems of students and the instructors of composition studies.

Chapter 4

Marc Prensky's digital natives theory became popular, because it supplied teachers with answer as to why students were unresponsive to their curriculums. In essence, Prensky's theory asks: what has changed? In most cases, it is not the teachers' curriculums that have changed, so it has to be something else. Prensky points to digital technologies, because teachers are now having to teach students who never knew a world without digital technologies—Prensky, of course, asserting that this changes the way students think, which naturally transfers over to how they learn. In short, it is the students that have changed due to digital technologies. According to Prensky, students, within the digital natives generation, would value their courses more if teachers utilized digital technologies in their classroom.

However, critics of the digital natives theory assert that Prensky has not considered many variables that could have an effect on how students use digital technologies, such as socio-economic factors, gender, education, and geographic location, and ultimately there is no empirical evidence to support the use of digital technologies in Prensky's pedagogy (see Sue Bennett and Karl Maton, Chris Jones et al., Anoush Margaryan et al., and Neil Selwyn).

Although, I mostly agree with the critics evaluations of the digital natives theories, I believe that there are larger economic variables, such as Gee et al.'s new capitalism, that influence how students value digital technologies as well as literacy and learning. This concept was reflected in the survey that I conducted in order to examine how students value W131 in general, the writing done in W131, and writing done in social digital technologies. The survey demonstrated that students do not understand

social digital writing to be writing; therefore, utilizing digital technologies in the writing classroom, as Prensky suggest, would not be beneficial, because it would take a great deal of class time for students to come to the understanding that social digital writing is writing. More importantly, the survey indicated that students are highly career motivated, which influences how students value their courses. For students, a course's value is determined by how applicable it is to students' career goals. The survey results suggest that while students recognize that first-year composition (FYC) has value, they do not necessarily see it specifically valuable to their primary goals.

Although I believe it is important for students to be able to find value in a course, I am not suggesting that FYC should be tailored to cater to students; on the contrary, I believe that the ideal FYC course would acknowledge the values of the field of study that it pertains to, and attempt to demonstrate to students how those values relate to their own. This is ideal—however, by using the Writing about Writing pedagogy, designed by Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle, this kind of value system may be possible.

Downs and Wardle's pedagogy also has the potential to bridge the value systems of the students, and writing studies, because Downs and Wardle's pedagogy focuses on students gaining a better understanding of writing studies as a field of study, by engaging and exploring texts that represent writing studies' central beliefs and important works. Through texts that come out of the writing studies discipline students can gain a better understanding of concepts that come out of writing studies, as well as build a bridge between students' values and the values of the writing studies discipline. Texts such as chapter six ("The Means of Production: Literacy and Stratification as the Twenty-First Century) of Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives*, James Paul Gee's "The New

Literacy Studies and the 'Social Turn,'" and Harvey Graff's "The Literacy Myth at

Thirty," offers students a new perspective on the economic climate that effects the job

market, as well as provide a meaningful way into writing studies. In this chapter, I will

discuss Downs and Wardle's Writing about Writing pedagogy, how I would implement

their pedagogy in a FYC course, and what would be the ideal learning outcomes for this

course.

Downs and Wardle's Writing about Writing Pedagogy

Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle assert in "Teaching about Writing,

Righting Misconceptions: (Re) envisioning 'First-Year Composition' as 'Introduction to

Writing Studies,'" that the current practices of first-year composition (FYC) "silently

support the misconception that writing is not a real subject" by continually reassuring

outside stakeholders (such as parents, non-English department faculty, and

administrators) that FYC will provide students with "a set of basic, fundamental skills"

that will transfer to their other courses, majors, and careers after college (553). Instead,

Downs and Wardle offer a pedagogy that pushes writing studies to the forefront of FYC.

They state, "It [their proposed pedagogy] seeks instead to improve students'

understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy in a course that is topically

oriented to reading and writing as scholarly inquiry and encouraging more realistic

understandings of writing" (553). In other words, the goal of their course is not to teach

students writing in some general sense; instead, students are taught how writing is

dependent on conventions and context-specific, which is necessary when students go to

write for courses that belong to different discourse communities (559). Downs and

Wardle state, "Students leave the course with increased awareness of writing studies as a

discipline, as well as a new outlook on writing as a researchable activity rather than a mysterious talent" (560).

As described in their article, the Writing about Writing pedagogy was created in response to the way in which writing studies has been undervalued by the university, which has been reflected in society's larger culture. The problem of the devaluation of writing, that Downs and Wardle has identified, is a different problem of valuation than what I am examining. Wardle and Downs are analyzing how those in power (i.e., administrators and other members of the university who make curriculum decisions) have constructed FYC in order to support the concept that writing is a "basic, universal skill" (553). Unlike Downs and Wardle, my thesis seeks to analyze how students value writing, specifically in FYC. My purpose in doing so is not necessarily to improve the standing of writing studies in the academic community—of course, I think this outcome would be great; however, I am more interested in what would encourage students to value writing more.

A Writing about Writing Approach

Although my primary purpose is different than Downs and Wardle, I believe that their pedagogical concept could work for my purposes as well, because (1) it provides a way for students values to be represented in a FYC classroom that has an emphasis on writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy, and (2) it also provides an environment where students can gain a better understanding of the main concepts and important works from the field of writing studies in a closed research classroom. In this section, I will demonstrate how I would implement Downs and Wardle's pedagogy in a FYC course.

First, my implementation of Downs and Wardle's pedagogy would seek to bridge the gap between students' values, such as their future career goals, and the values of the field of writing studies. However, as I stated earlier my purpose is not to cater to students. On the contrary, like Downs and Wardle, I believe it is important for students to understand that writing is a serious field of scholarly inquiry, because (1) if they no longer see writing as a basic skill students are more likely to value writing in general if they understand writing studies to be a legitimate field of studies, and (2) more importantly, students will gain a greater understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy. In order to bridge these two value systems, I will bring theories and concepts from the field of writing studies into the classroom, which examine the relationship literacy and economics, such as James Paul Gee et al.'s concept of the new capitalism, Harvey Graff's literacy myth, and Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives*.

By encouraging students to engage in readings that explore the complex relationship between literacy and economics, students have the opportunity to view what they value (i.e., career goals) from a new perspective. For instance, in "The New Literacy Studies and the 'Social Turn,'" Gee specifically examines how the new work order of the new capitalism creates a widening gap between the few who have the work knowledge to gain higher paying jobs and the large amounts of service workers who are exploited as cheap labor. By engaging Gee's texts, and others that discuss the relationship between literacy and economics, students have the opportunity to find a way into writing, language, and literacy through topics and concepts that they are already meaningful to them. The survey demonstrated that 116 students out of the 118 in total indicated that they have future career goals. Although this shows that a large number of students are

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career oriented when defining their academic goals, it does not mean that they are aware of what the economic circumstances they live within are like. Not only will students gain an understanding of the economic climate, which they intend to enter, but they will also see how literacy, writing, and learning plays a complex role in that economic environment.

Once students see how writing isn't disconnected from their career and life, students will find more value in FYC, and writing in general. Also, students will no longer view writing as a means to an end. In other words, students will not just see writing as a necessary aspect to fulfilling coursework. As Downs and Wardle discuss, it is a common misconception for writing to be viewed as a basic skill (553). Like Downs and Wardle, I too, would want students to understand how writing is context-situated and that writing for varying discourse communities requires an understanding of the conventions of those discourse communities.

In order for students to gain a better understanding of what writing is, I would encourage students to actively and critically engage in the readings by conducting and writing closed research. Downs and Wardle's course design does not implement closed research in their classroom. On the contrary, their pedagogy emphasizes the importance of students conducting primary research (562). Downs and Wardle state,

> Primary research projects also clarify for students the nature of scholarly writing processes that the course is tasked with teaching and empowers them to write with legitimate originality and conviction. Perhaps most importantly, conducting first-hand research on writing allows students to take control of problem areas in their own writing when they focus on those problems directly in their research projects. Consequently, the course about writing becomes a *writing* course in which students study writing to learn more about it and potentially improve their own. (562)

In other words, Downs and Wardle view the students' research projects as a way for students to not only gain a greater understanding of writing studies as a field of study, but also a way for students to improve their writing.

However, Downs and Wardle recognize that their research project has a limitation. They state, "Given the limits of time and audience-appropriate resources, students often only grasp the most central concepts of highly nuanced and rich readings . . . Fewer students produce 'complete' and polished final papers in the writing studies course than in other FYC pedagogies" (575). Downs and Wardle believe that by taking a Writing about Writing approach, writing instructors must be prepared to accept "imperfect" work (575). By imperfect, they are referring to students producing incomplete and unpolished final papers. However, Downs and Wardle believe that accepting imperfect work is not problematic, because it acknowledges how research writing is a time consuming process, which requires a great deal of revision, and will never reach a complete state of perfection (575). They believe that "the rewards of accepting imperfection as part of a challenging research and writing curriculum outweigh the deficiencies of courses in which students produce more-polished but less-demanding and realistic writing assignments" (575).

I agree with Downs and Wardle to an extent—I think that students should be challenged by their reading and writing assignments; however, I do have concerns with their reasoning for accepting imperfect work. For instance, if one of the main goals of the course is to "improve students understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy," should the course primarily be anchored around the students' research projects? Downs and Wardle acknowledge that "students often only grasp the most central concepts of

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highly nuanced and rich readings;" however, they mostly attribute this to students' lack

of experience (575). Due to the students lack of experience with scholarly articles,

Downs and Wardle state, " . . . students receive coaching about how to read scholarly

articles (a literacy task too often ignored in courses that purport to teach "academic

discourse"), and the texts serve as examples of principles such as how to cite sources and

how to organize research reports" (574-75).

Although, students gain a great deal of knowledge about the conventions of

writing in the field of writing studies from their research projects, I question how much

more writing, rhetoric, literacy, and language knowledge students have gained. In other

words, I question whether students conducting primary research will equate to a greater

understanding of writing, rhetoric, literacy, and language, especially since Downs and

Wardle need to dedicate a great deal of time to teaching students the conventions and

moves of academic texts. Instead of anchoring the course around a research project where

students conduct primary research, I think that students would gain a better understanding

of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy if they were to engage the readings more

extensively throughout their writing assignments (I will discuss this more in the section

labelled writing assignments).

Readings

The readings used in Downs and Wardle's course are scholarly articles that reflect

core concepts and theories from the field (560-61). My course will also use scholarly

articles and text from the field; however, unlike Downs and Wardle my course would be

situated around a specific text: James Paul Gee and Elisabeth R. Hayes' *Language and

Learning in the Digital Age*. Gee and Hayes' text is specifically geared towards

undergraduate students. It provides undergraduates with an introductory way into language and literacy studies by examining how digital technologies have changed literacy, language, and learning. To be more specific, Gee and Hayes believe that digital technologies have the possibility to promote social justice in ways that were not possible in the pre-digital era.

As mentioned in chapter 3, Gee and Hayes see many types of social digital technologies (such as text messaging, Facebook comments, and tweets) as having more characteristics in common with orality or speech than text-based literacies. These characteristics include things like short, less formal texts, which the recipient/audience can respond to quickly; thus, mimicking speech. Because social digital technologies have the capability to mimic speech, but also has the benefits of digital technologies, it provides people with the opportunity to communicate with others at great distances, to which they can respond easily and quickly. Gee and Hayes state,

> When people post a text online, send a text message, or use Twitter, readers can quickly get into dialogue with them and ask them, as in oral culture, what they mean, why they mean it, and why they think it is true. There is often no authority with real power like the kings, priests, and dictators of old or the formal institutions of the literate formation to interpret or restrict what is said. Some countries try to control such digital talk, but they are successful only to a limited extent. (125)

In other words, Gee and Hayes are arguing that due to the oral nature of social digital technologies, combined with the benefits of digital technologies, those in power have been mostly unsuccessful in trying to control digital communications. A recent example of this can be seen how social digital technologies, such as text messaging, Twitter, and Facebook, played a large role in the 2011 Egyptian revolution, as people organized and spoke out against those in power.

Gee and Hayes continue their concept of social justice through exploring the possibility that Claude Levi-Strauss' theory of global homogenization will be achieved. They explain that Levi-Strauss' theory suggests that because technology can connect countries, allowing more ease in the sharing and borrowing of ideas, the differences and unique characteristics that once separated countries is now "losing some of their distinctiveness as the same businesses, fashions, technologies, media, and trends spread across the globe" (127). Gee and Hayes see this homogenization occurring now, and hopes, that as countries become more similar, the less conflicts and inequality will arise (142).

Although Gee and Hayes text has a social justice purpose, *Language and Learning in the Digital Age* provides undergraduate students with an approachable introduction to language and literacy studies. For instance, chapter two, focuses on what language is (e.g., oral language, language as thought, and language and digital technologies). Chapter three focuses on concepts of literacy (e.g., literacy as a delivery system for oral language, literacy as a social good, the limitations of literacy, and literacy as a technology). Chapter four focuses on language and interaction, which examines how social interactions impacts the way in which the listener (in the case of oral language) or the audience (in the case of written language) interprets language. Chapter five, literacy and interpretation, extends this conversation as it specifically examines how a limitation of literacy is that when a text is not understood it cannot be asked to clarify, so it is common for groups of experts, who specialize in a specific kind of literacy, to dictate what constitutes as the "right" interpretation. It is through these beginning chapters, that Gee and Hayes introduce more complex concepts, such as digital technologies (e.g, social

media and video games) and education, affinity spaces and digital learning, the new capitalism, and social justice and digital technologies.

It is especially important that Gee and Hayes provides students with an introduction to the new capitalism, because, as discussed earlier, it bridges the values of students with the values of the field of writing studies. Not only does it link the two value systems, but, by providing students with an introduction to the new capitalism, Gee and Hayes give students the opportunity to explore the concept of literacy and economics through other texts as well; thus, encouraging them to engage the concept through other perspectives. Other scholarly texts can supplement Gee and Hayes and provide other perspective through texts like, chapter six ("The Means of Production: Literacy and Stratification as the Twenty-First Century) of Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives*, James Paul Gee's "The New Literacy Studies and the 'Social Turn,'" and Harvey Graff's "The Literacy Myth at Thirty."

Writing Assignments

The relationship between the values of students (especially their career goals) and the values and important concepts of writing studies also plays an important role in the writing assignments of my course design. Although, students will explore major concepts of writing studies, they will not be conducting primary research as students do in the course designed by Downs and Wardle. There are two reasons for this: (1) I think that students should be critically engaging the readings in their writing, instead of conducting primary research, and (2) if students conduct closed research instead of primary research, then it can be gauged as to how well students understand concepts and key ideas of the texts they are using and if they are appropriately using in their writing.

Within my closed research classroom, I will be using assignments that (1) encourages students to critically engage the readings by discussing new insights, concepts, or questions in their writing, and (2) teaches students the conventions and moves of academic discourse, specifically in the field of writing studies. Here are some examples of such assignments:

- *Literacy Narrative*—It is common for students to write a literacy narrative in FYC, where the student is asked to consider their personal history as a reader and writer (Wardle and Downs 458). Through examining their literacy practices and experiences, students should be prompted to (1) draw conclusions about how or why the student reads or writes today based on past experiences, (2) the student makes claims about what works or could be better in literacy education based on their experiences, or (3) a story where the student explores a resolved or ongoing literacy conflict/tension (Wardle and Downs 459).
- *They Say/I Say*—Adapted from Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's book of the same title, is a writing assignment that asks students to summarize the argument of the author(s), and then make an assertion, observation, or pose a question in response. The first aspect, the summary or "They Say," allows students to put the author's concepts into their own words, which will increase their understanding of the text. The second aspect, the student's assertion or "I Say," allows students to critically consider the author's text in order to put forth their own thoughts regarding what the author had to say.
- *Literature Review*—In this course, students will be using the assigned readings to write the literature review in order for students to more consciously practice the moves that scholars make in this genre. Since students will be reading literature focused on the relationship between writing, literacy, learning, and economics, writing a review of literature will be a challenging way for undergraduate students to find common strains of thought within the texts and connect them in their writing, by appropriately using and citing the texts. In order for students to find common strains in the different texts while negotiating the conventions of the literature review, students must first gain a good understanding of the texts.

These three assignment are examples of what could be included in the students' portfolio. Although I have not designed a final project for this course yet, I feel like the assignments that I have listed above are representative of how I expect the course

assignments to work together. For example, the assignments are scaffolded in way so that students can build upon the conventions and moves that students learn in each assignment. The literacy narrative prompts students to explore concepts of literacy and their personal experiences with literacy in a critical way that could provide them with new insights. The insights that students gain from literacy narratives do not involve deeply or critically engaging texts, but their own ideas and experiences. However, as students move onto the next assignment, "They Say/I Say," students are asked to engage readings. Based on their reading, they are asked to demonstrate their ability to explain the author's main argument or concepts, and then they are asked to respond to the author, pose a question, or discuss a new insight that they gained. Like the literacy narrative, in the "They Say/I Say" assignment students are asked to discuss and explore their own ideas; however, in this assignment their discussion is in response to a text. This of course, is a major move of academic discourse—viewing academic discourse as entering into a conversation.

The third assignment, the literature review, is a genre of writing that academics use frequently in scholarly publications. Like the "They Say/I Say" assignment students will be asked to demonstrate the ability to explain the author's main argument or concepts. However, the purpose of the literature review is to show a common thread that ties all the texts together. The way in which students weave the texts together depicts the point that they are making, instead of overtly stating a claim. Although students are writing literature reviews in a closed research environment, students will still be challenged by finding common strains in the texts to unify them within the literature

review while negotiating the conventions of the literature review (e.g., MLA formatting, proper use of sources, objectively reviewing texts, and fluid transitions).

Ideal Outcomes

A course that implements a Writing about Writing pedagogy is quite different than a FYC course, because it pushes writing studies to the center of focus, in which the goal is to improve students' understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy, the outcome expectations must reflect this. Here, I will discuss what the ideal outcomes for my course would be:

- ***Students critically engage texts through their writing in order to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and theories of the texts, as well as their own ideas, claims, and questions.***
  Students conduct closed research in order to spend more time with each text, since students are inexperienced with scholarly texts, especially with those in the field of writing studies. Students will have the opportunity to gain more knowledge about writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy through engaging the assigned readings in their writing. For example, students will be able to respond, make their own claims, and pose questions in regard to the texts, allowing them to respond to the texts, and approach them from a different perspective, which will allow the instructor to gauge how well students understand the concepts of the texts.
- ***Students understand writing to be rhetorically situated, context-specific, and appropriateness varies as discourse communities shifts.***
  The goal of Down and Wardle's course is not to teach students to write in some basic, general way. Students in their course learn that the nature of scholarly writing is conversational, dependent on conventions, rhetorically situated, and varies depending on the discourse community. The goal of this course is much like the goal of Downs and Wardle's course. I do not propose to teach them a sort of skill that they will be able to take to all the rest of their classes or their professional lives; however, ideally, students will gain rhetorical knowledge about writing that will help them assess, adjust, and be successful in the varying writing situations that they will encounter.

- ***Students understand the relationship between literacy, writing, learning, and economics to be complex.***
  The survey results showed students to be very career oriented, leading them to value courses that they believe to support their future career goals. Because 67% of students indicated that they would not take W131 if it was not required, it demonstrates that students may not see W131 as aligned with their career goals. If W131 is not seen as aligned with students' career goals, then it is not viewed as valuable. In this sense, the literacy myth is being perpetuated as students value courses they specifically believe will help them gain a job that earns a higher reward. A main goal of my course is to have students explore the relationship between literacy, writing, learning, and economics by thinking and writing about the different concepts and theories discussed in the readings. Ideally, students will leave the class with the understanding that the relationship between literacy, writing, learning, and economics is more complex than what they originally thought, which would encourage them to reevaluate how they determine the worth of their courses, especially W131.

Conclusion

The survey results supported my original hypothesis, indicating that 67% of students do not value FYC enough to take the course if it was not required. As seen in the discussion of Prensky's work, he and other educators have taken the stance that teachers should completely cater to students' values. Recall, Prensky's pedagogy is focused on creating video games that incorporates that curricula of the course in mind (Prensky believes that his pedagogy can apply to any subject matter, in any grade level). Prensky's focus on educational video games is due to his concept that students' minds have been changed due to their use of digital technologies. Because of their cognitive change, Prensky believes that they will be more responsive to the use of digital technologies in the classroom, such as his educational video games.

Prensky's pedagogy has two marks against it. First, the survey demonstrates Prensky's pedagogy would not be a good choice for the FYC classroom. Second, Prensky also puts values of the field of study in question secondary to the values of the students.

In other words, Prensky's pedagogy is strictly focused on the values of students, subordinating the given field of study's values, theories, and central concepts. Through working with Downs and Wardle's Writing about Writing pedagogy, I've learned that if writing studies, as a field of studies, wants to be valued (i.e., viewed as a legitimate field of studies by faculty, administrators, and parents), then writing studies needs to demonstrate the values of the field in a required introductory class, like many other disciplines have, instead of cater to the values of students. However, I believe that if the students' values can be tied into the values, concepts, and goals of the course, then the students may come to the perception that writing studies isn't as disconnected from their lives as they originally thought.

In order for students to build a bridge between the values of students and the values of writing studies, I will implement Downs and Wardle's pedagogy into a closed research classroom where students will actively and critically engage in readings that examine concepts of literacy and economics, such as chapter six ("The Means of Production: Literacy and Stratification as the Twenty-First Century) of Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives*, James Paul Gee's "The New Literacy Studies and the 'Social Turn,'" and Harvey Graff's "The Literacy Myth at Thirty." I specifically chose texts that examine concepts of literacy and economics, because the survey demonstrated that, instead of being highly influenced by digital technologies, students are very career motivated. By encouraging them to negotiate the complex relationships of literacy and economics in their writing, students are not only introduced to a new perspective, but they are also given a way into writing and literacy through concepts that are already meaningful to them.

Although my approach is concerned with what students' value, I do not think that it caters to students, nor puts the values of writing studies on the back burner. On the contrary, while students read texts that come out of out the field, they also practice the writing conventions and moves that scholars often make through their writing assignments. Students will come to see writing as rhetorically situated, context-specific, and appropriateness varies depending on the discourse community. Ultimately, students will gain a greater understanding of writing, rhetoric, literacy, and language.

Annotated Bibliography

"About IUPUI: Quick Facts." IUPUI, 2014. Web. 4 April 2014. This is part of IUPUI's

website, which gives general information about the school and its campus. It

provides a campus profile, which gives a snapshot of the school's programs,

focus, goals, students' opportunities, such as scholarships and internships, and

housing accommodations. It list current national awards that the school received,

such as IUPUI ranked 8th best Midwest public university by Forbes magazine. It

provides a student profile, which gives demographics for the 2012-2013 school

years. It discusses IUPUI's focus on research, as well as civic engagement. It

provides notable facts and demographics about IUPUI's faculty, such as "over

90% of full-time faculty have professional or doctoral degrees." Overall, this part

of the website provides a good overview of what IUPUI is like and what is

important to the school.

Bennett, Sue, and Karl Maton. "Intellectual Field or Faith-Based Religion: Moving on

from the Idea of 'Digital Natives.'" *Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young*

People, Technology and the New Literacies. Ed. Michael Thomas. New York:

Routledge, 2011. Print. Bennet and Maton raises three key points. First, they

demonstrate how the digital native concept is misperception of students' digital

technology use, by homogenizing their interests and digital literacies. Bennet and

Maton cite studies and research that shows students' digital technology use to be

more diverse than what the digital natives concept allows. Second, Bennet and

Maton suggests that the overgeneralizations and assumptions that make up the

digital natives concept has been widely accepted without question, which has

caused a "moral panic" that encourages "intellectual complacency." They assert that due to this complacency, there has been a lack of research and serious discussions about the issues surrounding digital natives and how students use digital technology. Bennet and Maton's solution is to abandon the terminology associated with the digital native concept, so that more productive conversations and research can take its place. They believe that by establishing more productive discussions and research "will avoid the rush to implement solutions to problems we do not adequately understand. The consequences of *not* developing a better understanding are far greater, because with this comes the risk that we will ignore subtle digital divides that do threaten the quality of our education systems" (181). Bennet and Maton's article contributes to the discussion within the first chapter of my thesis regarding Prensky's critics, where I discuss how many of Prensky's critics believe that his concept is too reliant on assumptions and overgeneralizations, and how there is a need for a view of students' digital technology use that is based on empirical evidence.

Brandt, Deborah. "The Means of Production: Literacy and Stratification and the Twenty-First Century." *Literacy in American Lives*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2001. Print. This chapter examines the relationship between individual literacy learning and how literacy achievement is supported by their family's socioeconomic status. In order to examine this concept more thoroughly, Brandt conducted a case study that examines two people coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds, Raymond Branch and Dora Lopez. Branch is the son of a college professor and a real-estate executive. Due to his parents' income, they were able

to provide Branch with high-tech literacy technologies from an early age. For example, Branch received his first personal computer when his was twelve years old. When Brandt interviewed Branch, "he held a bachelor's degree and was a self-employed writer of software and software documentation" (173). Like Branch, Lopez also demonstrated an interest in literacy learning at an early age. For instance, although both of her parents were both literate in Spanish, they did not use Spanish very much at home, so Lopez had to learn how to write and read on her own. Lopez's parents were not able to support her literacy learning in the same way that Branch's could. For example, Lopez had access to a typewriter from her father's time in college; however, she didn't encounter a computer until she was fourteen, which she used in a program aimed to help children of migrant farm workers improve their English reading skills. Eventually, Branch gains biliteracy, which she puts to use in her janitorial job, by performing translations for her supervisor. Brandt shows Branch's literacies to be rewarded more than Lopez's, because they are reflected in the values of the larger society and economic structure. Through Brandt's examination of Branch and Lopez, Brandt demonstrates that not all literacies are valued in the same way by the larger economic structure, and parents economic means influence an individual's literacy learning and literacy achievements. Brandt believes schools should not replicate the values of the market, and work towards providing equal literacy technologies and opportunities to those whose families' socioeconomic status cannot support it outside of school. Brandt's chapter contributes to my discussion of the complex relationship between literacy and economics in chapter 2. Chapter

2 is where I argue that the new capitalism should be considered as a variable that influences digital technology use, but more importantly literacy and learning. Brandt's chapter fits in nicely to this discussion, because, being that the new capitalism defines the economic system, it strongly influences how people view literacy and learning in relation to economic success.

Downs, Douglas, and Elizabeth Wardle. "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re) envisioning 'First-Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies.'" *College Composition and Communication* 58.4 (2007): 552-584. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 April 2014. This article is where Downs and Wardle first presents their Writing about Writing pedagogy. Downs and Wardle created their pedagogy in response to how first-year composition (FYC) supports a view of writing that contradicts twenty years of research by continually allowing administrators, non-writing program faculty, and parents to believe that FYC can teach "'college writing' as a set of basic, fundamental skills that will apply in other college courses and in businesses and public spheres after college" (553). Their pedagogy rejects the concept that writing can be taught as a general or universal skill that can be applied in all classes or situations. Instead their pedagogy seeks "to improve students' understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy in a course that is topically oriented to reading and writing as scholarly inquiry and encouraging more realistic understandings of writing" (553). In Downs and Wardle's course design, students read research about writing studies' central concepts and theories. The readings act as a way for students to explore and consider concepts of writing, literacy, and language, as well as

provide "examples of various textual moves related to scholarly writing based on primary research" (560). The readings are meant to support the major aspect of the course, which is students' research projects. Students conduct primary research on "issues of interest to both themselves and the field of writing studies" (562). The purpose of the research project is for students to learn more about writing studies as they practice the moves and conventions that writers typically make in scholarly writing. Overall, Downs and Wardle believe that their pedagogy will not only help students gain a better understanding of writing studies as a discipline, but also help courses in writing, such as FYC, reflect the work and research that the field of writing studies has been doing for quite some time. In chapter 4 of the thesis, I implement an adaptation of Downs and Wardle's pedagogy in order to construct a course that overtly demonstrates and explores writing studies' values, core concepts, and important publications. By introducing students to writing studies concepts that examine the relationship between literacy and learning and economics, a bridge will be made between FYC students (who demonstrated to be very career oriented in the survey, in chapter 3, which causes students to value courses that reflect their career goals) values and the values of the field of writing studies. In this chapter, I argue that by bridging the two value systems, students will find a more meaningful way into writing studies.

Gee, James Paul. "The New Literacy Studies and the 'Social Turn.'" *The Norton Book of Composition Studies*. Ed. Susan Miller. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009. Print. The goal of Gee's article is to demonstrate the need for the field of literacy studies to reclaim their theories from the new capitalism. Gee examines the inequalities

caused by the widening gap between those who have the work knowledge that the new capitalism will reward well and those who do not. Those who do not have the work knowledge that the new capitalism values will be exploited in order for the company, region, or country to remain "hyper-competitive" in the global economy. In order to reclaim literacy studies' theories from the new capitalism, Gee suggests, "I would argue that a focus on actors, events, activities, social practices, and Discourses as the achievements of recognition and enactment work, with an overt focus on that work (including the researcher's), can help us take back our social theories from the new capitalism, while requiring us to own up to our own projects and engage with other people's—especially 'non-academic' people's—projects at a variety of levels" (1307). Gee's concept that literacy studies' should overtly focus work, because the situations in which literacy, learning, thinking, and language exists is not static. Gee states that these situations "are actively created, sustained, negotiated, resisted, and transformed moment by moment through ongoing work" (1302). This is the kind of work that Gee labels enactive and recognition. Enactive work is defined as the attempt "to get people to recognize people and things as having certain meanings and values within certain configurations or relationships" (1302). Recognition work is other people's efforts to accept or reject another's enactive work (1302). Studying the nature of these kinds of work is what Gee believes is crucial to literacy studies, and will help reclaim their theories from the new capitalism. Gee's article contributes to the discussion in chapter 2, regarding the new capitalism. His article is specifically useful when analyzing how the new capitalism has created a widening gap

between those who are reward well, due to their desirable knowledge, and those

who are meagerly.

Gee, James Paul, and Elisabeth R. Hayes. *Language and Learning in the Digital Age*.

New York: Routledge, 2011. Print. Gee and Hayes' text provides undergraduate

students with an introduction to language and literacy as they explore concepts of

literacy and language in the digital age, as well as alternative ways of learning

presented by digital technologies. A main argument of Gee and Hayes' is that

orality is enhanced by digital technologies. They believe that digital technologies,

such as text messaging, Facebook posts, and tweets, share more in common with

oral language than text-based literacies. The characteristics that orality shares

with digital technologies include things like short, less formal texts, which the

recipient/audience can respond to quickly; thus, mimicking speech. Gee and

Hayes assert that due to certain digital technologies' capability to mimic speech,

those in power, who may want to suppress or restrict free speech, are finding it

more difficult to do so. In other words, Gee and Hayes believe that through their

characteristics that resemble orality, digital technologies has the potential to

promote social justice by creating an environment that doesn't restrict or suppress

speech. Gee and Hayes' book has a role in three of the chapters. In chapter 2, I

use the section of their book that discusses the new capitalism in order to help

build my discussion of what distinguishes the new capitalism between the old

capitalism. In chapter 3, I use the section of Gee and Hayes book to cast more

light on patterns that I found emerging in the survey, specifically regarding why

students do not view social digital technology writing to be a form of writing. In

chapter 4, I also discuss using Gee and Hayes textbook as the central text in the

course that I design based on Downs and Wardle's pedagogy.

Gee, James Paul, Glynda Hull, and Colin Lankshear. *The New Work Order: Behind the*

Language of the New Capitalism. United States: Westview, 1996. Print. Gee et al.

discuss their concept of the new capitalism and the affect that it has on literacy

and learning. New capitalism is the economic trend that began in the 1970s with

advances in science and technology, which prompted wider global competition.

Since commodities have become so much easier to produce, the market became

flooded. In effect, it was no longer profitable for companies to focus on producing

this kind of products, and shifted to niche products, which "speak to" specific

consumer identities and groups. Due to the advances in technology and science

and the shift in market focus, industrial jobs left developed countries.

Consequently, the structure of employment changed. One-fifth of the population

has become symbol analysts, who create or manage the knowledge and designs

for niche products. One fifth of the population becomes technical workers, which

include a wide variety of occupations, such as electricians, family doctors, and

college professors. Three-fifths of the population are service workers who are

responsible for interacting with customers. There are a large number of service

related jobs, such as restaurant employees, bank employees, gas station clerks,

janitorial services, lawn services, and grocery store employee. Gee et al. discuss

that within the new capitalism it is the work knowledge that determines what kind

of work a person will be able to gain and how they will be rewarded for that work.

In the later chapters of their book, Gee et al. provide an ethnographic study of

different work places, where they demonstrate how work knowledge is acquired, viewed, and valued in the various positions held by the workers. Gee et al.'s book is the core text that I used to review and examine the key concepts and ideas pertaining to the new capitalism and how the new capitalism should be considered a variable that may influence students' technology use, as well as how they view literacy and learning. The new capitalism is discussed in chapter 2.

Graff, Harvey J. "The Literacy Myth: Literacy, Education, and Demography." *Education and Demography* 8 (2010): 17-23. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Sept. 2014. In this article, Graff reflects on his book, *The Literacy Myth*, and how the field of literacy studies first responded to his concepts and theories involving the literacy myth. Graff relates that some viewed him as "anti-literate" or "a traitor to the educators' cause" (20). He attributes this response to the misinterpretation of what the literacy myth is. For instance, Graff emphasizes that he never claimed that there wasn't any relationship between literacy and economic success. He acknowledges that socio-cultural myths, such as the literacy myth, are never completely false; "otherwise they would not gain acceptance or hegemony" (20). Instead, Graff believes that by uncritically accepting the literacy myth is to still misunderstand the nature of literacy and "inhibit social and economic development" (22). Graff's article contributes to the discussion, in chapter 2, regarding the relationship between literacy and learning and economic success. His article provides a connection between the concepts of the new capitalism and the concerns and values of society/culture.

Haas, Christina. *Writing Technology: Studies on the Materiality of Literacy*. Mawah: Lawrence Erlebaum Associates, 1996. Print. Although technology has greatly changed since the publication of Haas' book, I found the discussion in chapter one to be most beneficial. In chapter one, "The Technology Question," Haas examines, "What does it mean for language to become material" (3). Haas explains that writing is language made material, "Through writing, the physical, time-and-space world of tools and artifacts is joined to the symbolic world of language" (3). She believes that materiality of writing must be acknowledged in order to fully appreciate literate acts. More specifically, Haas asserts that viewing writing as situated in the material world is necessary in order to understand the nature of computer technologies and their impact on writing.

Jones, Chris, et al. "Net Generation or Digital Natives: Is There a Distinct New Generation Entering University?" *Computers & Education* 54 (2010): 722-732. *EBSCO*. Web. 15 Sept. 2014. Chris Jones et al. responds to the net generation/digital native concept's focus on a "distinct generation" entering the university, which thinks differently due to its advanced abilities and use of digital technologies. Jones et al. argues "that further work needs to be done to examine the characteristics of students entering university in order to identify those changes that are taking place and to provide a fuller and more complex picture of the new generation of learners" (724). The results of their study do not coincide with the assertions made by the proponents of the net generation/digital native concept. Instead, they found that the demands and needs, based on students digital technology use, is not homogenous. In other words, Jones et al. found that the

way in which digital technologies influence thinking and learning is not

necessarily connected to age. In their conclusion, Jones et al. state that

universities and academics "need to be better informed about the kinds of students

that are entering their institutions" (731). Jones et al. contributes to the critiques

of Prensky's digital natives concept in chapter 1, specifically regarding the

variables that influence digital technology use that Prensky overlooks in his

digital native concept.

Marc Prensky: Practical-Visionary. Elumina Communications, 2014. Web. 4 April 2014.

Marc Prensky's website is a place where information can be found regarding

Prensky's focus, publications, speaking engagements, videos, and background

information. This website is pertinent to my thesis, because it provides a wealth of

information that is beneficial to the section of my thesis that reviews and analyzes

Prensky's digital natives concept. For example, Prensky's list of publications was

useful as I reviewed his digital native and digital wisdom concept by allowing me

to see what all he has published in regard to these topics and when and where they

were published. Some of Prensky's articles are also available through his website,

which made helped as I researched his ideas.

Margaryan, Anoush, et al. "Are Digital Natives a Myth or Reality? University Students'

Use of Digital Technologies." *Computers & Education* 56 (2011): 429-440.

EBSCO. Web. 15 Sept. 2014. Margaryan et al. study is a response to concepts,

such as Marc Prensky's digital natives and Donald Tapscott's net generation,

which claim that members of a younger generation have higher digital literacy

abilities, and that their use of digital technologies has changed the way they think

and learn. The problem Margaryan et al. see with these concepts is that they are too reliant on assumptions and observations, and are not grounded in any empirical data. The purpose of Margaryan et al.'s article is to provide empirical research regarding students' digital technology use and the implications that their use has on learning and socializing. More importantly, Margaryan et al. seeks to gain a better understanding of how digital technologies may be implemented into a classroom. Their results do not support the concepts of Prensky and Tapscott. Margaryan et al. state, "Students have limited understanding of what tools they could adopt and how to support their own learning. These findings challenge the proposition that young people have sophisticated technology skills, providing empirically-based insights into the validity of this assertion. The outcomes of our study suggest that, although calls for radical transformations in education may be legitimate, it would be misleading to ground the arguments for such change in students' shifting patterns of learning and technology use" (439). Margaryan et al. suggest that decisions about using digital technologies in the classroom should be based on the educational value of the digital technologies and how they relate to the learning outcomes of the course, which they emphasize the need for teachers to constantly experiment and evaluate the use of those digital technologies. Margaryan et al. contributes to the critique of Prensky's digital natives concept in chapter 1, by specifically looking at Prensky's reliance on assumptions and overgeneralizations, and how there is a need for more empirical data in order to establish how digital technologies could best implemented in a classroom.

Prensky, Marc. "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants: Part I." *On the Horizon* 9.5 (2001):

    1-6. Web. 15 Sept. 2014. This article is where Prensky first introduces and

    discusses his concept of digital natives and digital immigrants. Prensky conceived

    his digital native concept in response to the growing concern that students are not

    meeting the expectations of the educational system in the United States.

    According to Prensky, "Today's students are no longer the people our educational

    system was designed to teach" (1). Prensky states that today's students are the

    first generation of students to grow up completely in a digital world, and that their

    use of digital technologies has changed the way they think. In effect, it has

    changed the way they learn as well. These students are what Prensky calls digital

    natives. Prensky depicts how digital natives are changed/different by situating

    them against those who he labels digital immigrants. Digital immigrants are those

    who were born in the pre-digital era. When Prensky discusses digital immigrants

    he is especially concerned with digital immigrant teachers, and how they are stuck

    in an "older way" of teaching. More specifically, he believes that digital

    immigrant teachers do not completely understand or appreciate digital natives'

    new abilities and ways of thinking, which is reflected in their teaching. Prensky

    states, "Digital Immigrant teachers assume that learners are the same as they have

    always been, and that the same methods that worked for the teachers when they

    were students will work for their students now. But that assumption is no longer

    valid" (4). Prensky asserts that for teachers to successfully reach students, they

    must utilize digital technologies in the classroom. Prensky's preference is video

    game, which are designed to teach a whole course's curriculum. Prensky believes

that any subject matter, at any grade level can be taught in this manner. Prensky's

article is the main article that is reviewed and examined in chapter 1, because it

contains the key concepts and ideas of Prensky's digital natives concept.

Prensky, Marc. "Digital Wisdom and Homo Sapiens Digital." *Deconstructing Digital*

Natives: Young People, Technology and the New Literacies. Ed. Michael Thomas.

New York: Routledge, 2011. Print. In this chapter, Prensky lays out his concept of

"Digital Wisdom," which he claims is a new metaphor to update his older one,

"digital natives/digital immigrants." Prensky states that the reason why his

original metaphor needed to be updated is because it has "a limited shelf life."

Intrinsic to Prensky's Digital Wisdom metaphor is the belief that digital

technologies enhance people's cognitive abilities. Prensky asserts that those who

utilize digital technologies, and are enhanced by digital technologies, are superior

to those who are unenhanced. Prensky sees human cognitive abilities being

enhanced by digital technologies by providing access to a wider array of

information, by conducting "deeper analyses" (Prensky believes that software

now available allows for more accurate portrayal and analyses of datasets), and by

enhancing our ability to plan and prioritize (by plan and prioritize, Prensky is

thinking on a large scale, outside of what solely affects an individual. Examples

Prensky gives are economic and architectural planning). Prensky states, "Digital

Wisdom means not just manipulating technology easily or even creatively; it

means making wiser decisions because one is enhanced by technology" (26). In

other words, the digitally wise person, is the digitally enhanced person. This

chapter contributes to the discussion of chapter 1, because it demonstrates the

development of Prensky's concept and how he ultimately felt that the digital

natives concept has a limited shelf life.

Prensky, Marc. "Do They Really *Think* Differently?" *On the Horizon* 9.6 (2001): 1-6.

Web. 15 Sept. 2014. This article is the follow up article to Prensky's first article,

"Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants: Part I." In this article, Prensky flushes out

his argument more thoroughly on why he thinks digital natives' brains have

changed. First, Prensky reviews the concept of neuroplasticity, which he defines

as the brain's capability to reorganize itself by brain cells being "replenished

constantly" (2). Second, he discusses how social psychologists believe that those

who grow up in a different culture "do not just think about different things, they

actually *think differently*. The environment and culture in which people are raised

affects and even determines many of their though processes" (3). In the rest of the

article, Prensky reviews concepts that he discussed in Part I, such as educational

video games and how digital immigrants should adapt to the digital changes and

the changes that their students exhibit. This article contributes to the discussion in

chapter 1, because it provides more information regarding Prensky's idea that

digital natives' minds have changed due to their use of digital technologies.

Prensky, Marc. *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning*. Thousand Oaks:

Corwin, 2010. Print. Prensky's book works off the belief that digital natives, those

who have grown up in the digital era where technology is an essential aspect of

everyday life, think differently than those who are not. Prensky discusses how

digital natives think differently than their teachers, which poses major difficulties

for classroom practices and student learning. Because Prensky believes that

teachers are failing to provide their students what they need, his book aims to

offer a solution through a pedagogical strategy he calls partnering. Prensky

explains that the main principles behind partnering are not new. On the contrary,

partnering is much like student-centered learning, problem-based learning,

project-based learning, active learning, or learning by doing. More specifically,

partnering is "letting students focus on the part of the learning process that they

can do best, and letting teachers focus on the part of the learning process that they

can do best" (13). Prensky is adamant that in a classroom, with digital natives

especially, the students should be the ones who utilize technology. He states, "In a

partnering pedagogy, using technology is the students' job. The teachers' job is to

coach and guide the use of technology for effective learning. To do this, teachers

need to focus on, and become even more expert at, things that are already part of

their job, including asking good questions, providing context, ensuring rigor, and

evaluating the quality of students' work" (3). It is Prensky's hope that partnering

pedagogy will push students to find and follow their passion, utilize available

technology, seek out information and knowledge, and work in groups to share

ideas and opinions.

Selwyn, Neil. "The Digital Native—Myth and Reality." *Aslib Proceedings* 61.4 (2009):

364-379. *EBSCO*. Web. 21 Sept. 2014.

Selwyn seeks to promote and develop a realistic view of students' technology use.

He examines concepts such as Marc Prensky's digital natives and Donald

Tapscott's net generation, which he describes in terms of their reliance on

commonsense observations that are not grounded in empirical evidence. Selwyn

states, "Whilst often compelling and persuasive, the overall tenor of these discursive constructions of young people and technology tends towards exaggeration and inconsistency. The digital native discourse as articulated currently cannot be said to provide an especially accurate or objective account of young people and technology" (370). In order to gain a more realistic view of students' technology use, Selwyn reviews research that examines empirical evidence, which mostly does not support Prensky's and Tapscott's theories. Selwyn portrays students' technology use to be less homogenous than what Prensky and Tapscott believe, and cautions "information professionals and educationalists to approach the digital native literature with caution" (376). Selwyn's article contributes to the discussion in chapter 1, because he refutes Prensky's assertion that students are using digital technologies in an advanced, highly literate manner, and that through empirical research a more realistic understanding of their digital technology use can be gained.

"The Course Goals for English W131." IUPUI, 2014. Web. 4 April 2014.

"The Course Goals for English W131" is part of the English department's online 2013-2014 curriculum guide. This aspect of the website list the six goals of W131, which are (1) Discover, explore, and analyze ideas in order to write with strong sense of ownership, (2) Participate productively in discussions about writing, (3) Create a clear focus or strong thesis and provide sufficient support, (4) Use sources effectively by synthesizing ideas, integrating them smoothly, and documenting them correctly, (5) Learn to reflect on your writing practices to improve them, and (6) Shape, revise, and edit your writing to meet the concerns

of purpose and audience. I used the course goals in my discussion of students'

writing expectations regarding their major specific courses and future career goals

in the survey section of my thesis.

Wardle, Elizabeth, and Doug Downs. *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*. United

States: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2011. Print. Wardle and Downs' textbook

implements their Writing about Writing pedagogy, which is discussed in their

article, "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re) envisioning

'First-Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies.'" A major aspect of

Wardle and Downs' pedagogy is to have students engage in the concepts and

research through writing studies' scholars work. Wardle and Downs state that

when deciding on which articles to include in their textbook, they "looked for

work that was readable, relevant to student experience, effective in modeling how

to research and write about writing, and useful for helping students frame and

analyze writing-related issues" (vii). Wardle and Downs explain that although the

readings are meant to be challenging, they have reasonable expectations for their

undergraduate students. They state, "We intend for them [the readings] to be used

as springboards to exploration of their own writing and reading experiences. The

readings—and thus this book—are not the center of the course; instead, they help

students develop language and ideas for talking about what *is* center: their own

experiences with writing, discourse, and literacy, and their (and the field's) open

questions on these issues" (vii). Wardle and Downs state that the material is

scaffolded in a way that makes the readings more accessible and "help them build

toward mastery of often complex rhetorical concepts" (viii). There are five

chapters in their textbook: (1) Texts/Constructs: How Do Readers Read and Writers Write? (2) Writing Processes: How Do *You* Write? (3) Literacies: How Have You Become the Reader and Writer You are Today? (4) Discourses: How Do Communities Shape Writing? and (5) Authority: How Do You Make Yourself Heard as a College Writer? The course I design in chapter 4 is based on Wardle and Downs pedagogy, which is the foundation of their textbook. I specifically use this textbook in my discussion of writing assignments, and my expectations for those writing assignments.

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