

Understanding the Literacies of Working Class First-Generation College Students

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(English and Education)
in the University of Michigan
2017

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation project to the fifteen first-generation college students who have made it possible by participating in interviews. Thank you for sharing your experiences with me. Each of you has had a profound impact on my thinking and on my own experiences here at UM. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from each of you.

Acknowledgements

I have been extremely fortunate to benefit from the support and encouragement of my dissertation committee: Anne Gere, Melanie Yergeau, Anne Curzan, and Lisa Lattuca. My co-chairs Anne and Melanie have been overly generous with their time and energy throughout my dissertation process, meeting with me and thinking through this research with me during planning, data collection, analysis, and writing stages of the project. This work has been immeasurably impacted by their efforts. Thanks also to Anne Curzan for her steadfast mentorship from the time I arrived at UM through the final stages of this project. Her mentorship, especially in her graduate level courses in sociolinguistics, has enriched this project and directed its focus to speaking, not only writing, as a formative literacy practice. Lisa Lattuca's mentorship has shaped me into a mindful qualitative researcher and has helped me to realize a home for my work in higher education research. Finally, a special thank you to both Melanie Yergeau and Lisa Lattuca for openly identifying as people who come from working class backgrounds and as first-generation college students. Your examples have emboldened me to do the same and have convinced me that these students' experiences are good and important topics for research. I am so very grateful for your shining examples of professional and personal mentorship.

Thanks to my family for their unwavering love and support throughout this dissertation process and throughout my many, many years of education. As a first-generation college student, I am endlessly grateful for my parents, Kacks and Tony, who insisted that my siblings and I be college educated and who worked tirelessly to make that goal a reality. Thank you to my siblings Meagan, Kevin, and Vinny for supporting me and celebrating with me at every turn. Thanks also to my dissertation dog Bella who has quite literally been by side throughout this long journey. Thank you especially to my partner Russ who has devotedly supported my work and my thinking. You have taught me how to be a person who returns to the work and writes every day until it is done and done right. Thanks also for distracting me with music, travel, and love.

Thanks also to my colleagues, peers, and friends in the Joint Program in English and Education at UM. Our community of support has truly made my persistence through the dissertation and the PhD possible. A special thank you to my thought partner and best friend Merideth Garcia and to William, Merlin, and Gavin for welcoming me into your family these past five years. I could not have made it without y'all.

Finally, The Rackham Graduate School, Joint Program in English and Education, and English Department at UM have provided generous and significant financial support for me to conduct this research and to present this project at conferences. My research has been greatly strengthened by this support, and I am so grateful to have been offered the opportunity to earn my PhD at an institution that values graduate students and graduate student research so highly.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Appendices.....	ix
Abstract.....	x
Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework	1
Introduction and Rationale.....	1
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Theorizing Social Class Identity	7
Theorizing Literacy	10
Literacy Sponsors	20
Literature Review	22
First-generation College Students	24
Working Class College Students.....	33
A Qualitative Study Exploring Literacies Across Contexts.....	42
Chapter 2: Methodology.....	46
Study Design.....	46
Research Questions.....	47
Research Site	48
Recruiting Participants	51
Participant Demographics	58
Data Collection.....	63
Interviews	63
Observations.....	67
Facebook Page.....	69
Data Analysis.....	70
Developing a Codebook.....	71
Interpreting Coded Data	76
Limitations	77
Validity	79
Ethics and Researcher Subjectivity	81
Chapter 3: College-Going and Financial Literacies	85
Defining College-Going Literacy.....	87
Defining Financial Literacy	90

College-Going Literacies	92
College-Prep Coursework	93
Composing College Application Essays	97
Time management, note-taking, scheduling	102
Speaking in College Contexts	104
Combined College-Going and Financial Literacies.....	107
Financial Motivations to Pursue College	108
Managing Finances in College.....	116
Conclusions.....	127
Chapter 4: Speaking in First-Year Writing: A Repertoire of Inclusive Praxis	129
Invitational Rhetoric	130
Audience Awareness.....	137
Rhetorical Listening	143
Conclusions.....	156
Chapter 5: Constructs of Writing In FYW and Work Contexts.....	160
Writing in FYW	163
Writing at Work	172
Writing In Labor and Service Jobs.....	179
Writing in Professional Jobs	182
Writing and Undergraduate Research	194
Conclusions.....	208
Chapter 6: Implications.....	211
Introduction	211
Significance.....	212
Implications and Future Research	217
Appendix A: Student Demographics.....	224
Appendix B: Participant Profiles	227
Appendix C: Survey.....	240
Appendix D: Interview Protocols	244
Interview 1 Protocol	244
Interview 2 Protocol	248
Interview 3 Protocol	250
Appendix E: Codebook For Data Analysis.....	254
References	257

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Students' Self Reported Demographics	58
Table 5.1	FYW Major Writing Assignment Descriptions	164
Table 5.2	Good College Writing versus Good Writing in General	165
Table 5.3	Features of Writing in Various Contexts	183

List of Figures

Figure 1: 2014 Race for First-Year First-Generation College Students at UM.....	224
Figure 2: 2014 Income Levels for First-Year, First-Generation College Students at UM	224
Figure 3: 2014 Sex for First-Year, First-Generation College Students at UM.....	225
Figure 4: 2014 Parental Income, First-Gens versus Continuing-Gens	225
Figure 5: 2014 Race, First-Gens versus Continuing-Gens	226
Figure 6: 2014 Sex, First-Gens versus Continuing-Gens	226

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Student Demographics	224
Appendix B	Participant Profiles	227
Appendix C	Survey	240
Appendix D	Interview Protocols	244
Appendix E	Codebook for Data Analysis	254

Abstract

This qualitative interview study responds to an existing body of literature on first-generation college students that often focuses on the challenges these students face to the exclusion of their strengths or successes. This project pays special attention to strengths or successes associated with first-gen students' literacy practices, both speaking and writing. Findings from the study suggest that in fact first-gens do possess many literacy strengths that they have developed both during and before their time in college. Namely, first-gens have developed a set of financial and college-going literacies—specialized speaking and writing practices that help these students to navigate pathways to college. Additionally, these students bring to their college classrooms a repertoire of inclusive speaking praxis that includes such specific features as rhetorical listening, invitational rhetoric, and audience awareness. Finally, where first-gens' written literacies are concerned, workplace contexts prove to be a major asset, and first-gens' workplace writing has helped them to develop a capacious, nuanced construct of writing that includes but also moves beyond academic writing alone.

Taken together, these findings suggest a need for more qualitative research with this student population, research that might better represent the material reality of these students' daily lives and experiences in college. Moreover, these findings suggest administrative and pedagogical interventions that might serve to improve these students' college experiences by not

only recognizing their strengths but also by encouraging students to draw from these strengths in their literacy learning in curricular contexts such as first-year writing.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

Introduction and Rationale

The overarching purpose of this study is to surface potential connections between the literacies working class first-generation college students (first-gens) practice in first-year writing (FYW) courses and the literacies they practice outside of FYW, so that those students might draw successfully from their outside literacy practices within the FYW writing classroom. In order to make this comparison between FYW contexts for literacy and contexts outside of FYW, I also pursue several additional, related purposes. First, as part of surfacing those potential connections, I seek to better understand working class first-generation college students' literacy practices—their literacy practices within and without the FYW classroom. I bring those literacy practices to the surface through a series of interviews with working class first-generation college students. Additionally, I seek to learn from students which strategies they use to successfully or unsuccessfully navigate the relationship between literacies outside of FYW and literacies in FYW. Finally, I seek to better understand the relationship between social class and first-gens' experiences with varying strategies and contexts for literacy practices. I seek to understand working class first-generation college students' perceptions of their own schooling, particularly their perceptions of literacy instruction encountered in FYW courses, and their perception of the extent to which that schooling engages with the kinds of literacies valued by dominant classes. In short, my focus on working class first-generation college students is an acknowledgement of the

educational component of social class, and I offer these students an opportunity to reflect and report on their educational experiences and education's effects on their social class identities. In this introductory chapter, I explore in more depth each of these goals or purposes for this research, the theoretical framework that guide's my study design, and the existing literature on which this study builds.

First-generation college students are typically defined as those students for whom neither parent has attained a four-year degree (Renn & Reason, 2012). In many cases, first-generation college students will be the first in their families to graduate from college or to complete a baccalaureate degree. First-generation college students include students whose parents have never attended any college as well as students whose parents have attended some college but have not attained a baccalaureate degree. Contemporary research shows that increasing numbers of American undergraduate students identify as first-generation college students. Across four-year public universities in 2014 approximately 37% of first-year students report that their parents have some or no college and approximately 63% of first-year students at public universities report that their parents have attained a college undergraduate degree or graduate degree (Eagan et al., 2014). Even as first-generation college students share a common defining trait, no two first-generation college students' experiences are exactly the same. Instead, first-generation college students also identify in many other ways and come from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, the term "first-generation" is one that students most often encounter for the first time in the institutional space of higher education. You do not become a first-generation college student until you enroll in college, and so first-generation college students' identities are constantly being constructed and reconstructed as they encounter new and different experiences and literacies in higher education.

This diverse group of students' common experience as first-generation does bring with it specific strengths and challenges that set this student population apart from their traditional college student, or continuing-generation, peers. The most consistent and notable of these common traits is lower socioeconomic status than continuing-generation students (Thayer, 2000; Terenzini et al, 1996; Inman & Mayes, 1999; Arzy, Davies, & Harbour, 2006; Balz & Esten, 1998; Wibrowski & Clauss-Ehlers, 2007). This study is directly concerned with this subset of first-generation college students: those students who in addition to identifying as first-generation might also identify as working class. This subset of first-generation college students serves as the focus of this study because unlike middle or upper class students, working class first-generation college students often practice literacies that may not align with academic literacies (Bruffee, 1999; LeCourt, 2006; Lindquist, 2004; Linkon, 2004; Mack, 2006; Rose, 2004; Seitz, 1998; Tingle, 2004; Zebroski, 2006). As is stated above, this study recognizes the differences between working class students' home literacies and academic literacies and learns from students themselves how they perceive and navigate those differences.

Additionally, this study brings together two bodies of scholarship: scholarship on first-generation college students from the field of higher education and scholarship on working class college students from the field of composition and rhetoric (comp/rhet). By bringing together these bodies of scholarship, this study builds from existing descriptions of working class first-generation college students in order to better understand the diverse literacies these students cultivate in a variety of contexts—within and without the FYW classroom. Currently, these separate bodies of research, although concerned about overlapping populations of students, exist with little conversation between them. In higher education, scholars have collected a wealth of data, often through large-scale surveys, about first-generation college students' general

demographics and their overall experiences in college. From this body of literature, scholars have shown that first-generation college students often have difficulty transitioning to college, due at least in part to a perceived lack of institutional support (Inkelas, Dayer, Vogt, & Leonard 2007; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Wibrowski & Clauss-Ehlers, 2007). Resultantly, first-generation college students may be reluctant to interact in the classroom or to experience social aspects of higher education outside the classroom (Arzy, Davies, & Harbour, 2006). Higher education also brings an awareness that first-generation college students are embedded in many other roles and communities on college campuses. These students are involved in extracurricular and co-curricular activities on campus, often hold jobs on and off campus, and interact with other students, administrators, and faculty in particular ways specific to these contexts outside the classroom.

This project links higher education's expertise about first-gen students' experiences across campus to comp/rhet's specific focus on working class students' experiences in FYW. While higher education researchers have analyzed first-generation college students' general demographics and their experiences in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular contexts on campus, comp/rhet scholars have focused on working class college students' literacies, particularly working class students' experiences with literacy instruction in FYW. For example, comp/rhet scholars describe interventions into FYW pedagogy and report students' uptake of those interventions. Specifically, some comp/rhet scholars have analyzed working class students' essays composed in response to FYW assignments (LeCourt, 2006; Mack, 2006; Seitz, 2004). This research project builds on these studies of working class college students' experiences with writing instruction and asks students themselves to describe how they encounter the literacy practices demanded of them in FYW. Additionally, comp/rhet scholars describe working class

adults' literacy practices by observing and interviewing working class adults in work and extracurricular leisure or play contexts (Lindquist, 2002; Rose, 2004). From these examples, I argue that out-of-classroom contexts (like home, work, and extracurricular contexts) are influential sites where working class people might cultivate purposeful, nuanced literacy practices.

In order to more fully account for the range of literacy practices working class first-generation college students take up within and outside of FYW, this study works from an understanding of literacy as embedded in particular social contexts (Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1984; Street, 2003). A social constructionist view of literacy informs my focus on students' literacy practices, literacy events, literacy learning, and literacy development in a range of contexts—a framework I explain in more detail in the “Theorizing Literacy” section below. I understand writing and speaking as socially constructed and embedded practices, and thus ask students to account for the ways in which their participation in different social contexts influences their writing and speaking practices. Some discrete contexts especially significant for working class first-generation college students' literacies include: their family and home, work, academic settings including FYW courses, and extracurricular spaces. A close analysis of these various contexts for literacy bring to the surface previously overlooked connections between the literacies practiced within those separate contexts. As these relevant sites begin to show, literacy is also deeply enmeshed with identity. Particularly, literacy serves as a way to construct and understand our identities as we move through social structures, a way to make sense of structures and systems and our places in them (Moje & Luke, 2009). Literacy also stands as a way to contribute to these structures and to potentially transform them.

Literacy also encompasses several discrete but closely linked practices; typically, literacy refers to reading, writing, and speaking practices (Brandt; 2001; Brandt 2009; Heath, 1983; Heath, 2012; Scribner & Cole, 1981). This study is most concerned with writing and speaking practices because those practices tend to be public in nature and in this way can be stigmatizing for particular populations, like working class first-generation college students, more so than reading can be. Reading is, of course, also deeply embedded in social contexts and closely connected to students' identities as writing and speaking are. Even while recognizing the complexity and significance of reading practices, the scope and purposes of this project necessitate a specific focus on writing and speaking practices; reading practices are considered and examined as those practices surface in students' talk about their writing and speaking practices, but this study is not designed to interrogate reading practices.

Along with this working definition of literacy, I also position FYW courses as particularly influential sites for understanding working class first-generation college students' literacy practices. FYW is often working class first-generation college students' first and most concentrated exposure to college level academic literacy practices—to speaking and writing in college¹. While any group of college students, even at a single college or university, likely have broad ranging experiences with academic literacy practices, gauging students' experiences with FYW might allow for similarities and patterns to emerge in the ways students encounter academic literacy practices. Additionally, FYW has been identified as an especially formative space for new students on campus, a space that influences student engagement and student

¹ It is worth noting that students' previous experiences with literacies in high school might contribute meaningfully to their experiences with college level academic literacies. I am interested in students' high school experiences and literacies in so far as students surface those in their talk about college level academic literacies. Although the study design does not systematically emphasize or examine high school literacies, it welcomes in interviews students' talk about high school literacies that they think of as salient to their college level academic literacies. However, II focus most on students' college level academic literacies.

persistence in college overall (Addison & McGee, 2010; Beaufort, 2007; Kuh, 2005; Webster & Showers, 2011; NCTE, 2013). FYW is often designed to foster college students' learning about language and literacy—about writing and speaking practices. In this way, FYW constitutes a particularly interesting site for exploring students' literacy practices. This is not to say that FYW courses are monolithically designed and structured, but FYW courses do consistently seek to foster students' academic literacy learning, and in doing so structure in a variety of formative literacy events around which students develop new capacities and knowledge—new literacy practices. This project is designed to better understand how working class first-generation college students are encountering and perceiving that literacy instruction in relation to their out-of-school literacies.

Theoretical Framework

In the sections that follow, I discuss the intersecting theoretical frameworks of social class identity and literacy practices. I explore how these theories can highlight potential connections between the literacy practices that working class first-generation college students take up within and outside FYW. The overlapping frameworks of social class identity and literacy practices allow this research to surface working class first-generation college students' perceptions of their own literacy practices as they navigate through multiple contexts.

Theorizing Social Class Identity

I take up a socio-cultural theory of class, acknowledging that social class and social class identity are dynamic and always in flux rather than static or fixed. Social class is a broad category for classifying not only people but also environments, contexts, and characteristics that might be described as belonging to or marking a certain social class. In comparison with the term social class, social class identity or identification is a narrower term that refers to the ways

individuals choose to identify with particular social class groups². In what follows, I theorize the following socio-cultural components of social class: economic, occupational, educational, and linguistic. Economic components of social class include material realities such as income or wealth, occupational components entail types and conditions of work, educational components focus on experiences of schooling, and linguistic components contain experiences with language across contexts. I review each of these components of a social class framework in more detail.

Economic components of social class contribute an understanding that material realities like income and wealth often inform the ways individuals choose to identify with particular social class groups. Social class identifications are in part based in the material reality of economic stratification—that is, in the distribution of means of production or of goods and services—what Bourdieu refers to as economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Parenti, 1994; Zweig, 2011). The kind of work a person does is an economic component of social class identity because the kind of work a person does is often indicative of their income and wealth. While work is closely related to income—an economic component of social class—work also entails occupational components of social class and symbolic meanings—what Bourdieu might refer to as social capital or cultural capital. For example, blue-collar manual labor and nonprofessional service jobs are most often associated with working class status (Boiarsky, Hagemann, &

²Social class identifications intersect with various other identity categories including race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious identity, etc. Though identity categories additional to social class identity are not the focus of this project, I am inclusive of these identities as they are surfaced in students' talk about their literacies. In short, I understand individuals' identities to be intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991; Dill and Zambrana, 2009), and systematically accounts for that intersectionality in the collection and analysis of data. As DeVault (1995) demonstrates, identity categories such as race/ethnicity, gender, and social class might remain below the surface in qualitative interviews if the interviewer does not purposefully make those categories explicit topics of discussion and analysis. This potential for major identity categories to remain implicit can be even more prevalent when interviewer and interviewee identify differently from one another in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, or social class. With this in mind, I include questions about race/ethnicity and gender in an initial survey instrument. Additionally, when participants' responses in interviews include talk about race/ethnicity and gender, I follow up on these responses and discuss these identity categories with student participants. I am particularly interested in how these identity categories might influence students' uptake of literacies in certain contexts and in how identity categories such as race/ethnicity and gender might intersect with students' experiences of social class identity.

Burdan, 2003; Rose, 2004) and entail symbolic meanings such as being unskilled or menial. Considering both economic and occupational components of social class allows me to better understand the intersection between the two and how these components might be similar or different from one another in individuals' lived experiences of social class.

I also position education as an influential component of social class identification—interrogating the ways in which education is often implicated in the reproduction of inequality, including social class stratification. The role of schooling in reproducing social class inequality can in part be attributed to the tendency of schools to be organized in the interest of the dominant class (Bowles, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Yosso, 2006); often, the kinds of learning and teaching that takes place in schools mirrors that which takes place in the homes and communities of dominant classes (Bowles, 1971; Heath, 1983; Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Yosso, 2006). Similarly, the materials, content, and skills taught in schools are often those that are valued by dominant classes (Bowles, 1971; Heath, 1983; Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Yosso, 2006). This study analyzes working class first-generation college students' perceptions of their own schooling, particularly their perceptions of literacy instruction encountered in FYW courses, and their perception of the extent to which that schooling engages with the kinds of literacies valued by dominant classes. In short, my focus on working class first-generation college students is an acknowledgement of the educational component of social class. I offer these students an opportunity to reflect and report on their educational experiences and education's effects on their social class identities.

Linguistic components are also influential in the theory of social class that I adopt because linguistic components inform students' social class experiences both in and beyond school. Both spoken and written language shape, and are shaped by, social class identity

(Bernstein, 1971; Heath, 1983; Lareau; Lindquist, 2002; Ochs, 1993; Rose, 2004; Yosso, 2006; Zebroski, 2006). Language practices can be expressions or performances of our complex identities and those practices are always informing our identities (Moje & Luke, 2009), including social class identity. So, language and identity are reciprocal or recursive in their relationship to one another. For example, when a working class college student says to their peers in the setting of a class discussion that their parent works in a blue-collar labor job, that student is expressing a particular social class identity, namely a working class identity. However, because that students' working class identity may have been invisible to their peers before that expression, their social class identity is also constituted by that linguistic expression in that particular space with their peers. Even when students are not choosing to explicitly express a particular social class identity, particular features of their language use may make their social class identity visible to their peers (Bernstein, 1971). Linguistic interactions saturate students' experiences of social class not only in school but also across home, family, work, school, and extracurricular contexts. Thus, language is constitutive, not only expressive, of social class identity. Educational and linguistic components of social class allow for me to name FYW, a site of literacy instruction, as an important site for understanding students' ongoing development of social class identities.

Theorizing Literacy

This study works from a framework of related concepts around literacy, including: literacy practices, literacy events, literacy learning, and literacy development. Through this theoretical framework, I acknowledge that literacy is embedded in particular social contexts (Brandt, 2001; Gee, 1989; Street, 1983; Street, 2004). The ways that literacy practices are taken up in particular contexts influence or change those literacy practices in specific ways. This process of taking on new capabilities or knowledge where writing or speaking is concerned is

called literacy learning (Brandt, 2001). Literacy learning is often prompted by formative literacy events—for example writing a college application essay or contributing to class discussions in college. The accumulation of literacy learning over an individual’s lifetime is literacy development. This set of related terms—literacy practices, literacy events, literacy learning, and literacy development—inform the design, analysis, and findings of this research project. Because this set of terms is foundational to the theoretical framework I take up, I briefly define each of those terms and their relationships to one another here. I also outline the role of both writing and speaking within this framework.

As scholarship in literacy studies makes clear, “Literacy practices are the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives. In the simplest sense literacy practices are what people do with literacy” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 7). I supplement this definition of literacy practices with an understanding that spoken literacies can also, at times, constitute literacy practices. Typically, literacy encompasses reading and writing, though speaking practices are often assumed as underlying practices to which reading and writing are closely linked (Brandt, 2001; Brandt, 2009; Brandt, 2015; Heath, 1983; Heath, 2012; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 2003). As noted above, this study focuses on writing and speaking rather than on reading because writing and speaking are often public, productive acts with great potential to index or mark social class belonging or identity. Though reading is not the explicit focus of this study, students’ encounters with reading are considered and analyzed as reading is surfaced in students’ talk about their writing and speaking literacies.

Typically, definitions of literacy include reading and writing rather than writing and speaking; however, scholars do recognize the influence of speaking on literacy practices and events (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Heath, 1989; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1984). In keeping

with scholars' acknowledgements that where literacy is concerned writing and speaking often interact, I have chosen to include speaking practices in my definition of literacy. As such, it is important to recognize common distinctions between writing and speaking and the ways in which I distinguish between speaking in general and speaking as a literacy. Writing practices are most often consciously learned through direct instruction (Street, 1984; Heath, 1989); contrastingly, speaking is most often acquired through exposure to speaking practices rather than through direct instruction (Lippi-Green, 2012). This common distinction between writing and speaking notwithstanding, there are ways of speaking that are more directly or formally learned—for example the ways that members of the same community share common moves or tropes for constructing narratives and pass those ways of speaking between generations through direct instruction within that community (Heath, 1989). I include these kinds of speaking practices, that are learned through direct instruction, in my definition of literacy.

In the case of first-generation college students, the speaking practices that I label as literacy are often marked by social class differences or by their use in specialized contexts. For example, in Chapter 4, I label as literacy practices the argumentative ways of speaking that first-gens learn to take up in their class discussions in college. I refer to argumentative speaking practices as literacy because the first-gens in this study report having to consciously learn these speaking practices through direct instruction in the FYW classroom. Additionally, I define as literacy those speaking practices that first-gens learn consciously through direct instruction in workplace contexts, for example greeting customers in their jobs as a server or cashier as well as answering phones with a formal greeting in the contexts of administrative work in an office setting. Contrastingly, I do not label as literacy those speaking practices and more generalized ways of speaking that first-gens take up through typical language acquisition processes in their

families and homes. In this way, I distinguish between speaking practices that first-generation college students learn consciously, often through direct instruction, and those ways of speaking that they acquire less formally through exposure. Overall, my analyses are most concerned with rooting out and better understanding those speaking practices that, in the case of first-gens, might be considered literacy practices.

In recent years, writing has been theorized as overtaking reading as mass literacy (Brandt, 2001; Brandt, 2009; Brandt, 2015; Jenkins, 2006); I take up this notion of writing as mass literacy with a focus on writing practices rather than reading practices within my framework of literacy practices, events, learning, and development. Positioning writing as mass literacy “enlarges what rightly belongs to literacy and to the formative experiences we associate with it” (Brandt, 2015, p. 91); namely, understanding literacy as writing-based recovers an “affiliation with authorship” rather than with readership (Brandt, 2015, p. 91). This study adopts a writing-based notion of literacy because this notion of literacy often structures the literacy instruction that takes place in FYW. FYW courses are explicitly concerned with instructing students in writing. As such, FYW courses entail an “affiliation with authorship” like that which Brandt describes in her theory of writing as mass literacy; specifically, FYW courses encourage students to become mindful authors and writers. The framework that I adopt also includes academic literacy practices—which I define as writing and speaking practices occurring in academic contexts. Specifically, I focus on academic literacy practices in FYW rather than academic literacy practices across students’ many and varied academic courses and experiences in college. I have chosen to focus on FYW because it is a common site of literacy learning required of most students and thus allows for the identification and analysis of commonalities and trends in first-gen students’ experiences and literacies. Additionally, FYW is highly influential to students’

transitions to college and to academic literacy practices. By focusing specifically on FYW, this study helps to illuminate first-gens' cultivation of the literacy practices demanded of them as they transition to college as well as the literacy practices these students bring with them to college and use to navigate and meet those demands.

By positioning both writing and speaking as literacy practices embedded in and influenced by particular contexts, I seek to understand the different literacy practices that working class first-generation college students take up in FYW, work, and extracurricular spaces. Speaking has often been positioned as more narrowly useful in technological and urban societies (Gee, 1989, p. 5). So, even as speech might be foundational to literacy, speech's status as a literacy practice is often contested, particularly when compared to written literacy practices. In fact, many marginalized communities are labeled deficient or even illiterate because of oral traditions and speaking practices that are perpetuated in those communities. I position speaking as a literacy practice precisely because speaking has so often been marginalized or overlooked (Gee, 1989; New London Group, 1996). I also position speaking as a literacy practice because of my focus on the intersections between literacy and social class identity; first-gen students often come from home communities that might be considered marginalized—communities where speaking practices are often taken up in purposeful, specialized ways that are marked by social class status (Johnstone, 2006; Heath, 1983). Because first-gens often come from low income and working class families and home communities, the speaking practices they take up in those contexts—for example, their frequent use of straight-forward, matter-of-fact commonplaces like “everyone deserves a fair chance” or “hard work pays off” or “college is the key to success” (Lindquist, 2002; Mack, 2006; Seitz, 2004; Tingle, 2004)—are often positioned as marginalized or overlooked entirely. As such, I focus on speaking as literacy practice in order to recover these

often overlooked speaking practices that students take up as well as their negotiation between different, specialized ways of speaking in home communities and in college. Even though speaking might not be emphasized by literacy instruction or by recent scholarship in FYW classrooms, speaking is an important literacy practice for many students including first-gen students. I include speaking in my understanding of literacy practices, in order to hear from students about moments of success or challenges in their own speaking practices, within the classroom and without; I also argue that both speaking and writing are valuable literacy practices in a variety of contexts.

In addition to a focus on writing and speaking literacy practices, I also emphasize multiple contexts for literacy: FYW, home, work, and extracurricular contexts. I emphasize multiple contexts for literacy in part to build on the claim that “learning about [literacy goes] on in many contexts beyond formal schooling” (Brandt, 2001, p. 7). Attention to contexts beyond formal schooling is especially pertinent where first-generation college students are concerned because formal schooling can often neglect or marginalize the literacy practices that first-gens might be most familiar with from home, work, or extracurricular spaces. For example, first-gens’ uses of commonplaces in speaking (Lindquist, 2002; Mack, 2006; Seitz, 2004; Tingle, 2004) as well as their preferences for experiential knowledge (Lindquist, 2002; Rose, 2004; Seitz, 2004) and narrative forms of expression (LeCourt, 2006; Lindquist, 2002; Mack, 2006; Seitz, 2004; Tingle, 2004) tend to be overlooked or undervalued by formal educational contexts³. . In this way, formal educational contexts for schooling can be fraught spaces for first-gens’ literacy learning. By looking outside the classroom, I seek to participate in a tradition of researchers who “challenge stereotypes of low literacy that are often pinned on people who already carry other kinds of stigmas” (Brandt, 2001, p. 8). Because first-gen students are often stereotyped as

³ I explore these common working class literacies in more detail in the “Literature Review” section below.

deficient where literacy is concerned, and because their pursuit of college is rife with additional kinds of stigmas, I have sought to better understand their home, work, and extracurricular contexts for literacy in addition to the academic contexts of FYW. Brandt goes on to extol the potential uses and purposes of research about out-of-school literacy practices, saying “these often fine-grained explorations of out-of-school literacy practices provide educators with conceptual tools for bridging between the resources students bring to school and the different practices they must learn to control” (Brandt, 2001, p. 8). As Brandt describes, my analyses of multiple contexts for literacy practices I seek to identify resources students bring and to thus make meaningful connections between in-school and out-of-school literacy practices.

In my view, literacy practices describe the ways people utilize writing and speaking in their lives—what people do with speaking and writing. These practices are, of course, always social and thus imbued with power dynamics that come along with social interaction in varying contexts and communities: “[Literacy] practices are shaped by social rules [...] They straddle the distinctions between individual and social worlds, and literacy practices are most usefully understood as existing in relations between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals” (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). My emphases on different specific contexts for literacy is an acknowledgement of this social dimension of literacy practices—an acknowledgement that literacy practices are always informed by the relations between people.

In addition to literacy practices, I am also concerned with literacy events, or “events which are mediated by written texts” (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, p. 9). These literacy events are “regular, repeated activities” and are often “part of the formal procedures and expectations of social institutions like work-places [and] schools” (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, p. 9). Perhaps

not surprisingly, I am most concerned with those literacy events that occur along first-gen students' pathways to college in contexts like school, work, and extracurricular community organizations on or off campus. Although literacy events are often mediated by written texts, "in many literacy events there is a mixture of written and spoken language" (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, p. 9). My decision to focus on both written and spoken language in my definitions and analyses of literacy is in part motivated by a desire to better understand this interplay between the written and the spoken in first-gen students' formative literacy events.

So, literacy events often take place in the contexts of social institutions and include both spoken and written literacy practices; moreover, "socially powerful institutions, such as education, tend to support dominant literacy practices [...] This means that literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others" (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, p. 12). My focus on multiple contexts for literacies is a direct reaction to this reality: different contexts privilege particular kinds of literacy practices. By studying a variety of contexts for literacy, I seek to analyze not only dominant literacy practices like those most privileged in educational settings but also those literacy practices that are not considered dominant but that might be useful to students in contexts outside formal education like workplaces and extracurricular organizations.

In addition to literacy practices and literacy events, I also take up the terms literacy learning and literacy development. Literacy learning "is specific occasions when people take on new understandings or capacities" (Brandt, 2001, p. 7). Because I am concerned with better understanding the literacy practices first-gens make use of as they transition to college as well as their pathways through college, my data and analyses are filled with moments of literacy learning. A major goal of my analyses is to better understand the contexts in which students

experience literacy learning, in which they take on new understandings or capacities. However, “literacy learning is not confined to school settings or formal study” (Brandt, 2001, p. 7); instead, I seek to identify moments of literacy learning in a variety of contexts. My uptake of literacy learning as a theoretical term claims that such learning likely takes place in home, work, and extracurricular contexts in addition to formal educational contexts. Literacy development is also an influential component of my understanding of literacy. Literacy development is “the accumulating project of literacy learning across a lifetime, the interrelated effects and potential of learning over time.” The concept of literacy development is evident in this project’s design and implementation; specifically, my design of a sequence of three qualitative interviews with each student in the study indicates my interest in literacy development, in individual students’ accumulation of literacy learning, literacy events, and literacy practices over time. Literacy development is also relevant to my analyses of students’ different kinds of literacy practices in various contexts, including their development of college going and financial literacies, spoken literacies in FYW and extracurricular spaces, and written literacies in FYW and in workplaces. By employing this set of related terms around literacy—literacy practices, events, learning, and development, I seek to parse the broad phenomenon of literacy into more discrete, observable, codified units.

Notably, I take an expansive view of literacy as practices, events, learning, and development. In Deborah Brandt’s view, “treating literacy in such broad, connotative ways tries to do justice to the simultaneous forces at play in complex episodes of literacy learning as people described them.” (Brandt, 2001, p. 6). Because I seek to do justice to first-gens’ multivariate literacy practices in a range of contexts, and because those literacy practices and contexts are both shaped by complex forces, I take up this definition of literacy as speaking and writing

practices, events, learning, and development. My focus on social class identity also necessitates an expansive view of literacy; Brandt explains that “[literacy’s] place in American culture has become so complex and even conflicted. Expanding literacy undeniably has been an instrument for more democratic access to learning, political participation, and upward mobility. At the same time, it has become one of the sharpest tools for stratification and denial of opportunity” (Brandt, 2001, p. 1). First-gen students experience literacy practices as both instruments for increased access and mobility as well as tools for stratification and denial of opportunity. Because of this reality—that literacy is implicated in both stratification and mobility—I take an expansive view of literacy in part so that my data collection and analyses can account for these paradoxical features of literacy. As Brandt makes clear, “literacy is so much an expectation in this country that it has become more usual to ask why and how people fail to learn to read and write than to ask why and how they succeed.” Brandt, 2001, p. 1). With this context in mind, I take an expansive view of literacy so as not to overlook the literacy strengths that first-generation college students bring to college or the literacy learning they do in college—the new capacities or understandings they take on as part of their transitions to college.

In addition to accounting for the relationship between social class stratification and literacy, my expansive view of literacy helps to account for both positive and negative value judgments around literacy—that is, moments in which students value their literacy practices and the contexts in which those practices occur as well as moments in which students discount their complex literacy work and contexts. Students’ multiple perceptions of literacy, reported in the chapters that follow, confirm and lend specificity to Brandt’s observation that “the diversity and multiplicity of literacy practices may rightly bear witness to cultural variety and human resourcefulness. But that is not all they tell. Multiple literacy practices are also a sign of

stratification and struggle. Their variety speaks of different and often unequal subsidy systems for literacy, which often lead to differential outcomes and levels of literacy achievement” (Brandt, 2001, p. 8). The analyses I provide in the findings chapters of this dissertation study offer not only instances of cultural variety and human resourcefulness but also instances of unequal systems and differential outcomes. In other words, by taking an expansive view of literacy as not only practices but also events, learning, and development, my project accounts for the strengths first-gens bring as well as the ways in which systems and structures of higher education often overlook those strengths.

Each of the findings chapters included in this dissertation applies the analytical concepts of literacy practices, literacy events, literacy learning, and literacy development in context to students’ qualitative interview data in order to address fundamental questions about literacy learning. In Chapter 3, I ask: how do first gens leverage spoken and written literacy practices to help them pursue college and to help them navigate college-going’s attendant financial situations? In Chapter 4, what spoken literacy practices do first-gens claim to take up in FYW? And in Chapter 5, how do first-gens’ written literacy practices differ between FYW and workplace contexts? Overall, my theoretical framework seeks to account for both writing and speaking literacy practices and their different manifestations in the variety of contexts that first-gens regularly participate in.

Literacy Sponsors

In her 2001 qualitative interview study *Literacy in American Lives*, Brandt theorizes a concept she refers to as sponsors of literacy. In Brandt’s view, sponsors are “any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy” (Brandt, 2001, p. 19). I take up Brandt’s concept of literacy

sponsors in order to better understand those agents who might enable or suppress first-gens' literacy practices, literacy learning, and literacy development. I position the concept of sponsorship alongside a framework of literacy practices in order to more fully analyze first-gens' literacy learning and development in specific contexts. For example, I seek to understand the various sponsors who model literacy for first-gens as they learn to hone their writing practices in FYW and workplace contexts. Additionally, first-gens encounter literacy sponsors as they take up specialized writing and speaking literacy practices for the purposes of college-going and financial management. In many cases, these sponsors are concrete and local; for example when first-gens' literacy learning is sponsored by such people as "relatives, teachers [...], supervisors, [and] friends" (Brandt, 2001, p. 19). At other times, first-gens' literacy sponsors might be understood as distant or abstract.

Because first-generation college students' pathways to college are typically fraught with social class difference, the concept of literacy sponsors illuminates particular power dynamics embedded within their literacy learning and development. In general, first-gens' literacy practices are both supported and suppressed by a variety of sponsors they encounter before and during college. As they transition to college, many working class first-generation college students simultaneously learn and develop academic literacy practices as well as middle-class literacy practices, both of which look markedly different from the literacy practices most common in their home communities. A framework of literacy sponsors enables me to analyze the social class differences between first-gens' home communities and their new college contexts as well as how first-gen students navigate those differences using particular writing and speaking practices. A literacy sponsors framework illuminates the individuals, communities, or institutions

that model or support first-gens' literacy practices and thus facilitate their literacy learning and development.

In sum, I adopt a dual theoretical framework of social class identity and literacy—wherein the broad phenomenon of literacy is understood through more discrete, observable, codified units including practices, events, learning, development, and sponsorship. With this framework, both social class and literacy are understood to be dynamic, multiple, and situated within particular contexts. These frameworks undergird this study's focus on working class first-generation college students and its exploration of those students' literacy practices across FYW, home, work, and extracurricular spaces.

Literature Review

In addition to adopting the above theoretical frameworks, I draw from two major bodies of literature: literature about first-generation college students' experiences at four year colleges and universities, published mostly in the field of higher education, as well as literature about working class college students' experiences with writing, published mostly in the field of composition and rhetoric (comp/rhet). In higher education research, students are typically first identified as first-generation with a secondary marker as working class or low SES (Arzy, Davies, & Harbour, 2006; Bernhardt, 2013; Bui, 2002; Davis, 2010; Balz & Esten, 1998; Inman & Mayes, 1999; Mamiseishvili, 2010; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Somers, Woodhouse, & Cofer, 2004). In composition and rhetoric research, students are often first identified as working class, and oftentimes this descriptor serves to encompass first-generation status without explicitly stating the first-generation descriptor and its implications for students' literacies and experiences (Linkon, 1999; DeGenaro, 2007; Greer, 2014; Lindquist, 2006). Additionally, relevant higher education scholarship works mostly through large-scale surveys (Bui, 2002; Inman & Mayes, 1999; Mehta, Newbold, & O'Rourke, 2011; Pascarella et al., 2004;

Somers, Woodhouse, & Cofer, 2004; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996) while relevant comp/rhet literature works through instructors' anecdotal accounts of teaching working class students (Linkon, Peckham, & Lanier-Nabors, 2004; LeCourt, 2006; Lindquist, 2004; Mack, 2006; Seitz, 1998; Seitz, 2004) or through instructors' retrospective reflections on being working class students themselves (Tingle, 2004; Johnson Black, 1995). In both fields, the scholarship on these students does not yet offer a detailed understanding of students' literacies or of the ways students value those literacies. My study begins to fill this gap—to bring students' voices to the surface in the bodies of scholarship about them. Additionally, my study cultivates conversation about these overlapping student populations—first-generation college students and working class college students—between higher education and comp/rhet scholars.

I draw from literature in both comp/rhet and higher education in order to construct and begin from the fullest possible description of these students, and to spark more sustained conversation about this population of students between the two fields who are already interested and invested in these students. For comp/rhet, a more sustained conversation with higher education can help scholars and practitioners alike to make sense of the broader institutional contexts surrounding composition instruction, of what it means to do the work of teaching and learning within particular institutional contexts. Where working class first-generation college students are concerned, comp/rhet might learn from higher education research to take seriously the first-generation descriptor of this population of students, to better account for the ways that educational status influences social class identity. Additionally, higher education has cultivated a far-reaching, though at times surface level, description of these students' incomes and outcomes—data that is often focused heavily on students' first year in college. Composition

would do well to make use of this broad description of first-generation college students, especially of those studies and those data about first-year first-generation college students.

For higher education, sustained conversation with comp/rhet might allow for a greater understanding of students' perceptions of their own literacies. As it stands, much of the existing research on first-generation college students in higher education offers a broad description of student incomes and outcomes; through sustained conversation with comp/rhet and that field's interest in students' voices and student reflection, higher education might supplement those broad descriptions of students with more closely descriptive, qualitative accounts of students' own perceptions of their literacies including greater focus on the strengths these students bring. In general, sustained conversation between these two fields might enrich research and practice in both. In each of these fields there are also a handful of qualitative studies that offer rich descriptions of working class first-generation college students' voices, identities, and college experiences. I position this small body of literature as a starting point for summarizing what we already know about how working class first-generation college students perceive and value their literacy practices in a variety of contexts.

First-generation College Students

Existing higher education research often describes first-generation college student populations through demographic characteristics and outcomes comparisons with continuing-generation students. Much of this existing research tends to work through a deficit model, referring to the challenges first-generation college students face without acknowledging strengths and diversity that these students bring to the institutions that they join. In other words, there is a tendency to identify disadvantages these students experience and to describe those disadvantages as inherent characteristics that first generation college students bring with them to campus: what

scholars call a deficit model. This deficit model of students often yields compensatory approaches to supporting first-gens on campus. Essentially, the problems with a deficit model of first-generation students is two pronged: it fails to recognize and celebrate these students' strengths and potential contributions to campus, and it fails to identify any kind of lack or deficit that might exist in the campus environment as opposed to in individual students or whole student populations.

With this deficit model approach to describing first-gens, higher education research focuses on such student characteristics as: first-generation college students continue to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, are much more likely to begin their higher education at two-year institutions (Davis, 2010) and to experience difficulty in transitioning to college (Inkelas et al., 2007; Wibrowski & Clauss-Ehlers, 2007). Some link the difficulties these students experience to a lack of academic preparation (Arzy, Davies, & Harbour, 2006; Bernhardt, 2013; Wibrowski & Clauss-Ehlers, 2007) or lack of access to others that have successfully navigated the landscape of higher education (Balz & Esten, 1998; Mehta, Newbold & O'Rourke, 2011). Contemporary explorations of first-generation college students' experiences use surveys and questionnaires to gauge students' perceptions and experiences of campus environment (Bui, 2002; Ostrove & Long, 2007; Mehta, Newbold, & O'Rourke, 2011). These studies garner self-reported details about students' backgrounds and ask students to assess their own higher education experiences or to report and describe their own attitudes about those experiences. In general, these studies' analyses and results characterize first-generation college students as feeling less academically prepared and more worried about financial aid than their continuing-generation counterparts (Bui, 2002; Lee & Mueller, 2014). First-generation college students also indicate that they "know less about the social environment at the university than did

the other students” (Bui, 2002, 9), that they experience decreased “sense of belonging at college” (Ostrove & Long, 2007, 381), and that they often have a misalignment in their perception of their abilities wherein they underestimate their own academic under-preparedness (Atherton, 2014). As this brief overview begins to show, higher-education research often works through a pre-occupation with the challenges that first-gens face. While knowing these challenges helps researchers, administrators, and teachers work to support these students, focusing on challenges to the exclusion of strengths or successes begins to set up a deficit model wherein these students’ are assumed to have *only* challenges in college.

In contrast to the many difficulties explored above, existing higher education research does cite at least one strength that can characterize first-generation college students. First-generation college students tend to decide on an academic major earlier than continuing-generation college students do, which can put them ahead in terms of progress toward degree (Terenzini et al., 1996). This also suggests that first-generation students might have become more careful consumers of higher education than their continuing-generation peers have. Because first-generation college students often set a new familial precedent, their college enrollment decisions are not heavily influenced by the past higher education experiences and successes of parents; consequently, first-generation college students may approach a college degree with more of a pre-professional lens than an academic or personal enrichment lens. Interestingly, even this strength might often be cast as a challenge for first-generation college students; viewing higher education pre-professionally is often inculcated in consumerist models of higher education, and a consumerist model of higher education is often positioned as antithetical to the learning process and to fundamental purposes of education (Magolda & Baxter Magolda, 2011). So, even in this strength, first-generation college students might be positioned

in opposition to traditional or dominant models of higher education; in other words, even this strength might be interpreted as contributing to a deficit model description of first-generation college students.

Most recently, in the last five years, research on incomes and characteristics has brought with it a more positive focus on intersectionality and diversity of first-gen student experience. This intersectional approach in contemporary research entails a focus on additional identity categories and related sub-populations of first-gen students including emphases on race/ethnicity (Kim, 2012; Nuñez, 2011; Nuñez & Sansone, 2016; Parks-Yancy, 2012), socioeconomic status (Hinz, 2016; Kim, 2012; Parks-Yancy, 2012), disability (Lombardi, Murray, & Gerdes, 2012), and regional or geographic identity (Bryan & Simmons, 2009) within particular first-gen student populations. These efforts towards acknowledging intersectionality within first-gen student populations demonstrate an attempt in higher education scholarship to recover nuance in descriptions and depictions of this student population, and I position my research as participating in this recent trend—I explain my focus on intersectionality within the student population in more detail in Chapter 2: Methodology. Additionally, some contemporary higher education research has focused on first-gens' strengths rather than challenges or deficits; one such study emphasizes the emotional support and encouragement to pursue college that first-gens' receive from their home communities (Paulbusa & Gauvain, 2017).

In addition to a focus on intersectionality, interview data in existing higher education research contributes a more nuanced understanding about such first-generation college student characteristics as reluctance to interact in the classroom or hesitancy to experience social aspects of higher education outside the classroom due to their self-consciousness about the stigma of being labeled first-generation college students or low-income college students (Arzy, Davies, &

Harbour, 2006). Qualitative interview methods that allow for different understandings of first-gens have also become more prevalent in recent higher education scholarship (Demetriou, Meece, Eaker-Rich, & Powell, 2017; Hinz, 2016; Nuñez & Sansone, 2016; O’Shea, 2015). Qualitative interview methods help to resist a deficit model depiction of first-gen students by accounting for such self-reported student characteristics and experiences as “positively changing through activities” including “curricular activities, co-curricular activities, and employment activities,” for example “participating in faculty mentored research” (Demetriou, Meece, Eaker-Rich, & Powell, 2017, p. 24). Additionally, in interviews, students report positive experiences with working in college including “bringing familial orientation toward work,” “developing skills and community,” and “finding work to be satisfying” (Nuñez & Sansone, 2016, p. 104). As findings for students’ perceptions of work begin to indicate, qualitative interviews have also allowed for researchers to learn about first-gen students’ social class experiences while in college. For example, in another recent interview study, Hinz (2016) reports that “first-gens were conscious of class differences and were able to describe the working class and middle class in terms of education, income, occupation, and cultural characteristics.” (p. 290).

Overall, contemporary higher education researchers make use of qualitative interview methods in order to identify strengths that first-generation college students bring and thus to identify the ways in which institutions ought to “work effectively with what learners have rather than expect them to change or disregard these strengths.” (O’Shea, 2015, p. 75). As is the case with intersectionality, I position my research as participating in this turn in contemporary higher education scholarship to better understand first-generation college students through qualitative interview methods that take seriously these students’ voices and perspectives about their own experiences.

In addition to a focus on student incomes or characteristics, existing research also often advocates for particular educational programs or interventions. Unfortunately, these programs at times perpetuate a deficit model through compensatory approaches to supporting first-generation college students. For example, higher education researcher Philip Evan Bernhardt reports findings from the “Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, a college-readiness system targeting populations traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education” (2013, p. 203). I include a detailed analysis and response to Bernhardt’s research here because Bernhardt’s approach exemplifies the way in which a deficit model often structures research and resultant programs for supporting first-generation college students.

Namely, Bernhardt ignores the pre-existing literacies and strengths of marginalized students. For example, Bernhardt argues that the AVID program provides students with literacies they need to succeed in college (2013, p. 210) through such measures as “provid[ing] students with specific instruction in test-taking skills and the college application process” (2013, p. 216). Bernhardt argues these skills “provide educational advantage to those individuals who develop them” (2013, p. 213). Research such as this is problematic in a number of ways. First, this research lacks any explicit critique of exclusionary educational structures. For example, while it might be immediately useful for students to practice test-taking skills or to become more familiar with college application processes, Bernhardt fails to explicitly state the ways that these structures often systematically exclude marginalized students. Offering students access to those skills without also critiquing exclusionary structures perpetuates exclusion—effectively offering students access to an unchanging, stratified educational system that in turn positions students themselves as marginal and deficient. Additionally, Bernhardt does not explicitly describe students’ home communities as contributing positively to their educational experiences; students

are not acknowledged as having prior knowledge or experiences, cultivated in their home communities, that might aid them in their pursuit of college. When students' homes and families are mentioned, they are described as needing reform and policing to ensure that students get the literacies and access to college they need (Bernhardt, 2013, p. 211). Research that relies on and perpetuates a deficit model of first-gen students rarely recognizes students' homes as potentially positive influences or students' families as already invested in students' educational futures. Bernhardt's approach exemplifies a dangerous deficit model at work in scholarship about first-generation college students. I avoid such a deficit model by allowing for students to account for their own literacy experiences in their families and home communities. Additionally, I ask students themselves to recount their experiences in educational programs and contexts—effectively making space for students to critique those educational settings that they perceive to be exclusionary of them or of their literacies.

A focus on outcomes also characterizes much of the contemporary higher education research on first-generation college students. A review of outcome patterns for first-generation college students has demonstrated conflicting evidence depending on the criteria by which outcomes are measured. When outcomes are measured by persistence, time to degree, and degree attainment, some evidence has indicated that there are indeed differences in the outcomes for first-generation college students versus continuing-generation college students. For example, 14.3% of first-generation college students graduated with a bachelor's degree within five years versus 41.7% of their continuing-generation peers (Beginning Postsecondary Students Survey, 2009). Additionally, first-generation college students are more likely than continuing-generation college students to leave college after the first year (Mamiseishvili, 2010; Pascarella, Terenzini, Pierson, & Wolniak, 2004). Put simply, “students from first-generation and low income

backgrounds are among the least likely to be retained through degree completion” (Thayer, 2000, p. 1). Additionally, first-generation college students four to five years after graduation are less likely to be in graduate or professional school (Pascarella et al., 2004). In their review of college student outcomes, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) attribute such discrepancies between first-generation and continuing-generation students’ outcomes to an “intergenerational legacy in children’s knowledge acquisition” (p. 590). Yet there is some indication that first-generation college students are not necessarily disadvantaged in their outcomes. Minimal differences exist in cognitive outcomes between first-generation college students and continuing-generation college students (Pascarella et al., 2004). This finding for cognitive outcomes is based in a study that “followed samples of students from 18 four-year colleges for a period of three years,” from their first year through their third year in college (Pascarella et al., 2004, p. 252). This analysis measured “cognitive, psychosocial, and status attainment outcomes” (Pascarella et al., 2004, p. 251). Essentially, this broad reaching measure of a cluster of cognitive and related outcomes suggests that when outcomes are based in student learning and development there are no significant differences in the outcomes of first-generation college students as compared to their continuing-generation college student peers. This discrepancy between criteria for measuring outcomes—between cognitive measures versus persistence, time to degree, and degree attainment—for first-generation college students suggests that broad quantitative survey measures might be overlooking some nuances in these students’ overall experiences. Moreover, these measures have by and large revealed only negative outcomes for first-generation college students, compounding a deficit model approach to understanding these students’ experiences and suggesting that we need to employ other measures in order to get at students’ successes or positive outcomes. Qualitative interview methods, like those employed by this dissertation study,

might better represent students' voices and perceptions and might afford greater specificity and variety in descriptions of first-generation college students' experiences.

One recent study of campus environments across institutions recaptures some nuance in the experiences of first-generation college students and merits close treatment here; this study uses short surveys of both students and administrators to gauge not only students' perceptions but also administrators' perceptions of campus environment (Stephens et al., 2012). A survey of administrators at 75 different colleges and universities, revealed that they believe that "the culture of higher education in American society today" (p. 1183) employs an "independent model of self" in which, "the normatively appropriate person should influence the context, be separate or distinct from other people, and act freely based on personal motives, goals, and preferences" (Stephens et al., 2012, p. 1180). In contrast to this dominant model of independence, first-generation and working class students were shown to subscribe to an "interdependent model of self" in which "the normatively appropriate person should adjust to the conditions of the context, be connected to others, and respond to the needs, preferences, and interests of others" (p. 1180). After exploring these contrasting models of self, the authors suggest that colleges and universities ought "to expand the university culture to include more interdependent cultural norms" (p. 1194); notably, these authors emphasize that such efforts to reform campus culture "will benefit first-generation college students without significantly hindering the performance of continuing-generation students" (p. 1194). The authors also suggest specific changes to campus environment such as acknowledgement of interdependence in institutional mission statements, guidebooks, and advertisements or encouraging different styles of mentoring between faculty and students. Stephens' survey study shows a move toward better understanding the ways in which campus environment impacts first-generation students'

experiences and toward holding institutions accountable for supporting those students. This dissertation study begins from a similar desire to hold institutions accountable and to better understand students' perceptions of campus environment, particularly their perceptions of the literacies demanded of them in FYW as well as in home, work, and extracurricular contexts before and during college.

Survey based literature like Stephens' offers a macro-view of first-generation college students' experiences in higher education. Even though these students might in some cases be academically underprepared and in most cases lack close examples of successful pathways to and through college, they can and often do achieve similar cognitive outcomes to that of their continuing-generation peers. In other words, these students are not cognitively deficient. Instead, the difficulties first-generation college students experience originate from the non-cognitive facets of higher education—from a perceived lack of social and institutional support, from a lack of belonging, or from a campus climate that communicates that these students do not belong. This dissertation study seeks to complicate this picture of first-generation college students and of campus climate by opening up space for these students to recount and reflect on their full experiences—successes and challenges—particularly the successes and challenges of their encounters with literacies in a variety of college contexts.

Working Class College Students

In contrast to higher education literature, comp/rhet literature about working class students begins from concerns about those students' literacy practices. Comp/rhet scholars lament the ways in which working class students' home literacies are often positioned as separate from, and in conflict with, academic literacies. Comp/rhet scholars argue that through this positioning of their literacies, working class students are often perceived as less prepared and

less capable of participating in academic literacies than their middle class peers are. By and large, comp/rhet scholars have critiqued this positioning as reductive (Bruffee, 1999; LeCourt, 2006; Lindquist, 2004; Linkon, 2004; Mack, 2006; Rose, 2004; Seitz, 1998; Tingle, 2004; Zebroski, 2006). In other words, comp/rhet scholars critique the widespread, popular perception that middle class literacies align more closely with the features of academic literacies, both of which are privileged over, and often exclude, working class literacies. LeCourt contends that this tendency to place the working class and the academy in opposition to one another ignores students' lived experiences: "by painting the picture with broad strokes— by presuming an a priori existence of working-class and middle-class academic discourses—we neglect how much messier and more complex the relationship among class positions can be while students are experiencing it, and thus we neglect opportunities for configuring that relationship differently" (LeCourt, 2006, p. 32). Nancy Mack similarly critiques broad cultural views that position the working class and higher education in opposition to one another: "the educational experience should not be misrepresented as a free ride to upward mobility. Hidden beneath the seductive belief that education is the great equalizer is the assumption that being from the working class is a deficit or a liability" (Mack, 2006, p. 54). Critiques like those offered by LeCourt and Mack are the exigence for this research study's dual theoretical framework of social class identity and literacy practices. By paying attention to intersections or overlaps between social class identity and literacy practices, I seek to better represent the messy reality of working class first-gen students' lived experiences and day-to-day encounters with literacy and literacy instruction.

Notably, these assumptions about working class people and students are not only prevalent in broad cultural or scholarly assumptions; instead, this positioning of working class people informs teaching and pedagogy in higher education, particularly in sites of literacy

instruction. In concluding his 2004 qualitative study of working class literacies in sites of work, Mike Rose articulates the influence of a deficit model on educational and instructional practices:

If we believe common work to be mindless, that belief will affect the work we create in the future. If we don't appreciate, if we in some ways constrict, the full range of everyday cognition, then we will develop limited educational programs and fail to make fresh and meaningful instructional connections among disparate kinds of skill and knowledge. If we think that whole categories of people—identified by class, by occupation—are not that bright, then we reinforce social separations and cripple our ability to talk across our current cultural divides (Mike Rose, 2004, p. 216).

In Rose's view, if we appreciate the kinds of intelligence working class people draw on in sites of work, in the very work they do that earns them their social class identifications, then we might better configure our educational programs and instructional strategies for supporting those populations. These critiques, like those that LeCourt, Mack, and Rose offer, acknowledge the tendency of literacy instruction in higher education to reproduce inequality and emphasize the urgent need to hear from students themselves about their encounters with sites of literacy. My study begins from critiques such as these; in designing a qualitative interview study and in analyzing students' own perceptions of their literacy practices in a variety of contexts, I refute a deficit model description of first-gen students with empirical data about the literacy practices, strengths, and resources these students do bring.

One way to resist a prevalent positioning of working class students as outside or other to the academic mainstream is to take seriously the literacies that those students have cultivated outside of academic settings and that they bring with them into their college experiences. Namely, the literacies that these students cultivate in their home, work, and extracurricular

contexts are all influential to the literacy practices they learn and develop in college. There are some researchers working in higher education and in composition and rhetoric who use qualitative observation and interview methods to better capture the experiences, literacies, and identities of working class and first-generation college students (Armstrong, 2012; Arzy, Davies & Harbour, 2006; LeCourt, 2006; Seitz, 1998; Seitz, 2004). Additionally, there are some studies of working class adults (not college students) and the literacies they practice at home, at work, and in extracurricular leisure or play contexts; these studies contribute to an understanding of the literacies commonly practiced in working class students' home communities (Brandt, 2001; Brandt, 2009; Heath, 1983; Heath, 2001; Heath, 2012; Lindquist, 2002; Rose, 2004). From these studies, that take seriously and describe in rich detail working class people's lives and literacies, Seitz (1998) argues, "we can hear what individuals from different social groups think of critical theories that often intend to speak for them" (p. 77). I see my work as participating in this kind of qualitative research, in which working class first-generation college students speak for themselves, their voices are represented more fully, and our theories which often speak for these students can be revised or adjusted to better align with students' lived experiences. I review that qualitative scholarship here, so as to best account for what we already know about working class first-generation college students' literacies.

Studies of working class people, though not always explicitly concerned with students or with academic contexts, offer some insight into the literacy practices commonly practiced in working class communities in a variety of spaces: at home, at work, and in extracurricular leisure or play contexts (Brandt, 2001; Brandt, 2009; Heath, 1983; Heath, 2001; Heath, 2012; Lindquist, 2002; Rose, 2004). These studies contribute to an understanding of the literacy practices that first-generation and working class students are already versed in and bring with them to college.

These studies also offer an understanding of those literacies that students participate outside of school and might cultivate alongside academic literacy. Essentially, these studies afford an understanding of both incoming literacies and literacies that are parallel or lateral or concurrent to academic literacies. For example, several composition and rhetoric researchers note the influence of commonplaces, or straight-forward and matter-of-fact summations of belief, on working class people's speaking and writing practices (Lindquist, 2002; Mack, 2006; Seitz, 2004; Tingle, 2004). Working class people also tend to value experiential knowledge over more theoretical or abstract knowledge (Lindquist, 2002; Rose, 2004; Seitz, 2004). Closely related to valuing experiential knowledge, working class people value narrative forms of expression (LeCourt, 2006; Lindquist, 2002; Mack, 2006; Seitz, 2004; Tingle, 2004). Finally, working class people value emotion and emotional appeals as modes of expression (LeCourt, 2006; Lindquist, 2004; Zebroski, 2006) and often use these emotional appeals to express their own identities and experiences with social class divisions. While the use of commonplaces, experiential knowledge, narrative, and emotion might be implicated in stereotypes about working class people, these complex literacies cultivated in a variety of contexts might be repositioned as resources or strengths that working class students can draw from in college, and some contemporary research works toward this repositioning. With this existing research in mind, this study interrogates these literacy practices in order to determine the extent to which working class first-generation college students engage with these literacies as well as the extent to which these students value or place significance on these literacies that are often attributed to their own home communities.

In academic contexts, many of the literacies that working class first-generation college students learn from their home communities (listed above) might be labeled inappropriate and stigmatizing (Bruffee, 1999; LeCourt, 2006; Lindquist, 2004; Linkon, 2004; Mack, 2006; Rose,

2004; Seitz, 1998; Seitz, 2004; Tingle, 2004; Zebroski, 2006). However, researchers also note particular literacies that working class students practice in academic contexts that might be positioned as strengths instead of stigmatizing setbacks. For example, in describing her experiences assigning a multi-genre folklore assignment to working class student populations, Nancy Mack notes that “The majority of my students have been able to make the connection among the stories of individual people and collective social issues” and that “students have the potential to relate the material conditions of their lives to larger patterns of social, economic, and political theory” (Mack, 2006, p. 68). In examples like this, working class students are positioned as having strengths that they can draw from in formal academic settings. My study participates in this kind of productive re-positioning of working class first-generation college students’ literacies by talking to students directly and by asking them to identify both positive and negative aspects of their experiences with literacy in a variety of contexts. In other words, this study joins this small tradition of researchers who are recognizing and repositioning working class first-generation college students’ literacies as strengths.

Like Mack, Donna LeCourt also conducts qualitative research about first-generation college students’ academic literacy practices, and her research helps to counteract prevalent deficit model positioning of first-gen students. Specifically, in her 2006 *College English* article “Performing Working-Class Identity in Composition: Toward a Pedagogy of Textual Practice,” LeCourt conducts textual analyses of students’ literacy autobiographies as well as qualitative interviews with students about their experiences with this writing assignment. Using these data, LeCourt argues that working class and academic literacies function in relationships, rather than in opposition, to one another, and by reductively imagining the two as in binary opposition to one another, teachers miss opportunities to capture and characterize the complexity and nuance

of their relationship to one another. Based on her analyses, LeCourt argues “However, by painting the picture with broad strokes— by presuming an a priori existence of working-class and middle-class academic discourses—we neglect how much messier and more complex the relationship among class positions can be while students are experiencing it, and thus we neglect opportunities for configuring that relationship differently” (LeCourt, 2006, p. 32). LeCourt suggests that one way to recapture complexity between academic and working class literacies would be to focus on “a more performative, and less structural, theory of class” (LeCourt, 2006, p. 33). By analyzing students’ texts and interviews, LeCourt shows that too often literacy instruction increases working class students’ feelings of difference in ways that position those students as deficient. She acknowledges that class and class identity are relational, are based in difference, and then posits a more performative, rather than structural, model of class as such a model would allow for difference to not be constituted as an inherent lack or deficiency in working class students. Markedly, LeCourt’s research shows that one way to better account for students’ literacy practices and strengths is to talk to students directly through interviews and other qualitative measures; my research builds on the qualitative work of LeCourt and others who take seriously working class students’ perceptions of their own literacy practices.

Finally, I am interested in the literacies that students practice in extracurricular contexts. While much attention has been paid to the extracurriculum of composition and to the extracurricular writing of students in general (Deans, Roswell, & Wurr, 2010; Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor, & Otuteye, 2005; Gere, 1994), little research has focused specifically on the extracurricular literacies of first-generation college students. As such, my focus on extracurricular literacies hopes to bring to existing literature specific details of this often overlooked population of students and their specific extracurricular literacies. Additionally, my

interest in working class first-generation college students' extracurricular literacy practices is grounded in a recognition that academic contexts like FYW courses can be frustrating or alienating experiences for these students as they transition to college. Contrastingly, extracurricular spaces might offer opportunities for different kinds of literacy practices to emerge for these students. In other words, by interrogating students' extracurricular literacy practices I hope to identify strengths that these students perceive themselves as having, not just challenges they face. Because extracurricular contexts can be less formal and less rigidly structured than academic contexts are, students might draw more freely or more confidently from the literacies they practice in their home communities in extracurricular contexts. Consequently, talking with students about their extracurricular literacy practices might offer more and better opportunities for naming and talking with students about their strengths and for discussing the intersection of academic and non-academic literacy practices.

Because literacy is intricately entwined with identity, this project also builds on the ways that existing literature begins to account for working class first-generation college students' shifting identities as they transition to college. For example, in her analysis of students' literacy autobiographies, written in four different first-year writing courses, Donna LeCourt asserts the importance of a theory of multiple, varied identities for making sense of working class college students' college experiences. LeCourt argues that working class students "understand that subjectivity is constantly under construction and that their pursuit of higher education will add to already complicated identities. What they fear and are trying to prevent is a wholesale alteration in the way they view the communities from which they hail" (LeCourt, 2006, 45). In other words, LeCourt's students recognize the complexity of forming an academic identity, but they hope to do so while also maintaining some semblance of the identities brought with them from

their home communities. Similarly, Julie Lindquist claims that “to be a working-class student is to put one’s identity on the line in institutional contexts, time and time again; to be effective and responsible teachers of working-class students is to be willing to do the same” (Lindquist, 2004, p. 204). Here Lindquist highlights, similarly to LeCourt, that academic contexts necessitate constant renegotiation of one’s identity as working class. Perhaps most pointedly, Nancy Mack claims: “If they are to survive at the university, working-class students must construct a position that is not discounted as underprepared or limited to an acceptable imitation of the elite original but a respected, working-class-academic identity” (Mack, 2006, p. 54). Here Mack pools LeCourt’s and Lindquist’s claims about multiple or constantly negotiated identities, arguing instead for a sort of identity-conglomerate: “a respected, working-class-academic identity.” Invoking the dual theoretical frameworks of social class identity and literacy practices, this dissertation study asks students to recount the ways in which their encounters with literacies in college contexts have influenced their understanding of their own social class identities.

Taken together, the bodies of literature reviewed here (literature about first-generation college students from the field of higher education and literature about working class students from comp/rhet) begin to show that working class first-generation college students are not cognitively deficient but do experience particular difficulties or challenges as they enter into higher education. These students might not possess literacies that look like academic literacies or that look like the literacies of their middle and upper class peers; however this mismatch of literacies does not mean that working class first-generation college students’ literacies are not to be valued. Instead, these students do have valuable literacies, literacies that are diverse, complex, and strong; unfortunately, those complex literacies are often ignored or assumed to be inappropriate or insufficient for use in academic contexts. However, this review of existing

literature reveals that this common assumption is unfounded: how can we know if these students' literacies are inappropriate or insufficient when we have not yet described those literacies fully or gauged students' own perceptions about their literacies? These students' literacies are seriously under-theorized and might be better accounted for by paying better attention to critical sites of literacy instruction such as FYW courses as well as sites of literacy outside of the academic, sites that students have been participating in long before their first encounters with higher education and sites that students will continue to participate in during their time in college.

A Qualitative Study Exploring Literacies Across Contexts

The literature reviewed here serves as the basis for my focus on working class first-generation college students. Similarly, my use of qualitative interview methods is largely based in a desire to root out particular perceptions of literacy practices that this population of students might hold—perceptions and literacy practices that are multiple, dynamic, and contextually situated as the framework outlined here begins to show. Moreover, these literacy practices are influenced by the particular conditions and material realities that construct working class people's lives; the literacy practices that first-gen students take up are intricately entwined with their social class identities and experiences in their home communities prior to and concomitant with their experiences in college. While much of the existing literature about these student populations (working class students and first-generation college students) emphasizes the challenges they might face in college, this study is designed to identify both challenges and successes these students experience as they encounter new or different literacies in college. By talking directly to working class first-generation college students themselves and by asking them to account for a variety of contexts for their literacy practices—FYW, home, work, and extracurricular contexts—I seek to better emphasize students' voices, strengths, or successes and

thus to contribute to the existing bodies of scholarship about these students. Additionally, this research begins to show productive overlaps between various fields already invested in these student populations including higher education and comp/rhet. As such, findings from this research can help to cultivate conversation between these fields and develop better student supports in research, teaching, and administrative work relevant to these students.

Following from the driving purposes, theoretical framework, and existing literature explored in this introductory chapter, this qualitative interview study explores the experiences of fifteen working class first-generation college students at a large public university in the Midwest, which I refer to with the pseudonym University of the Midwest (UM). Through a series of three semi-structured interviews, I garner from student participants details about their home, family, and high school experiences that lead to their enrolling in college as well as their experiences with writing and speaking in FYW, home, work, and extracurricular spaces. In addressing each of these aspects of working class first-generation college students' experiences, I seek to offer a fuller understanding of these students' literacy practices as well as the strategies these students use to negotiate differing contexts for literacy. Ultimately, the goal of this approach is to better describe working class first-generation college students' literacies within and outside the FYW classroom as well as to offer better support for these students as they navigate varying literacy contexts.

With this first chapter's theoretical framework and literature review as a basis, Chapter 2 offers a detailed overview of my research methodologies, paying special attention to data collection, data analysis, and ethics and researcher subjectivity. This chapter also presents the research questions that guide this study—research questions about speaking and writing literacies in multiple contexts including first-generation college students' home, FYW, work, and

extracurricular spaces.

Chapter 3 presents findings around college-going and financial literacies that first-generation college students develop before and during college. For example, first-gens practice college-going literacy around such formative literacy events as composing college application essays; they practice financial literacies as they work in college to pay for their own expenses or to send money home to their families; and they combine financial and college-going literacies when they leverage reading and writing to accomplish such tasks as applying for financial aid and scholarships. Additionally, as first-gens' develop of college-going and financial literacies they navigate a network of literacy sponsors that model and support their literacy learning. In presenting findings such as these, I argue that first-gen students' abilities to combine these literacies, engage with literacy sponsors, and persist through their undergraduate education are rooted in their unique first-gen and working class inflected experiences with literacy in their home communities—experiences which demand similar resilience from students as persisting through college does.

Chapter 4 examines what first-generation college students say about their speaking practices in the contexts of their FYW courses. Findings indicate that first-gens bring to their FYW courses a repertoire of inclusive speaking praxis; this repertoire entails complex speaking practices around rhetorical listening, invitational rhetoric, and audience awareness. In presenting these findings, I argue that the tendency of FYW instruction to focus on traditional models of oppositional argument and persuasion often overlooks the repertoire of inclusive praxis that first-gens bring with them to the classroom.

Chapter 5 presents findings for first-generation college students' talk about their writing in FYW and workplace contexts. Overall, this data shows a capacious construct of writing with

both continuity and disconnect between the writing that students value in academic and non-academic contexts. Some features of writing are valuable to students in both academic and non-academic spaces, for example argumentation and audience awareness. Contrastingly, some features of writing that students value at work are conspicuously absent from these students' descriptions of academic writing. At work, students value writing that allows them to engage multiple modes and media, connect to their professional or academic interests, build mentor relationships, and professionalize in their intended fields or careers. These features of writing, encountered in workplaces, allow for first-gen students to develop a more capacious, nuanced construct of writing.

Chapter 6 examines the implications of this study for researchers, teachers, administrators, and first-generation college students themselves. I suggest pedagogical and administrative interventions for literacy instruction around both speaking and writing—interventions that support first-gen students and other marginalized student populations. Finally, I suggest future directions for research about first-generation college students and about varying contexts for literacy.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This study explores how working class first-generation college students' speaking and writing literacies practiced in first-year writing (FYW) courses compare or relate to the speaking and writing literacies those students practice in contexts outside of FYW including home, work, and extracurricular contexts. Specifically, this study entails a series of three interviews with fifteen first-generation college students at the University of Michigan (UM) in the 2015 academic year. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, the goals, purposes, and methods of this study are founded on theories of social class identity and theories of multiliteracies across contexts. This chapter offers details on my study design, data collection, and data analysis methodologies.

Study Design

This study makes use of qualitative case study methods, primarily a series of three semi-structured interviews with fifteen undergraduate student participants. Through this series of semi-structured interviews, this study seeks to surface working class first-generation college students' perceptions about the literacies they practice in FYW courses and the literacies they practice outside of FYW in home, work, and extracurricular contexts. In what follows, I first consider the particular contexts of researching this population of students at the University of Michigan (UM), and then describe methodologies for choosing student participants, designing and conducting interviews, supplementing interview data with observation data, and conducting

data analyses. Finally, I reflect on ethical considerations including my own subjectivity as a researcher.

Research Questions

As *Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework* indicates, existing scholarship on working class first-generation college students might benefit from a specific focus on literacies and from greater attention to students' voices. And so, the research questions guiding this dissertation project seek to describe and theorize those literacies more fully, specifically by surfacing students' perceptions about their own literacies. My overarching purpose for this project is to surface potential connections between the literacies working class first-generation college students practice in FYW and the literacies they practice outside of FYW contexts so that those students might draw successfully from those outside literacy practices within FYW. Thus, the research questions below account for a variety of contexts of literacy and attempt to understand working class first-generation college students' perceptions about the range of literacies they practice in that variety of contexts. This project is guided by the following research questions:

- How do working class first-generation college students describe the literacies they are asked to practice in the first year writing classroom?
 - How do these students describe speaking practices they are asked to practice in the first year writing classroom?
 - How do these students describe writing practices they are asked to practice in the first year writing classroom?
 - How do these students describe relationships between speaking and writing in the first year writing classroom?
- How do working class first-generation college students describe the literacies they practice outside the classroom?

- Where do these students learn and practice different writing practices?
- Where do these students learn and practice different speaking practices?
- What contexts and purposes do these students describe for different speaking and writing practices?
- How do these students describe relationships between speaking and writing practices?
- How do students describe their strategies for successfully or unsuccessfully navigating the relationship between literacies they practice outside first year writing and literacies they are asked to practice in first year writing?

By structuring my project around these research questions, I hope to learn from students what strategies they use to navigate various contexts for writing and speaking. By recognizing intersections between separate contexts for literacy, students and teachers can better value the literacies that students practice outside of FYW and potentially encourage students to draw more from this range of literacies when appropriate.

Research Site

Interviews for this study were conducted with first semester sophomores at the University of Michigan who had recently completed their FYW requirement within the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA). I secured this research site by completing the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) application process and receiving site approval. The university's IRB approved my study, determining that this study did not pose any risk to participants above or beyond standard educational practice. With this research site secured, interviews were conducted between the months of July and December 2015. Institutional contexts at University of Michigan serve as a backdrop for participants' experiences and for our conversations about their literacies; as such, it is important to acknowledge the influences of

institutional context and climate on the design and implementation of this research project.

University of Michigan is classified as a large, four-year, primarily residential, public university with very high research activity. In the Fall 2014 semester the student population totaled 41,674, and University of Michigan is classified as “more selective” (“Carnegie Classifications,” 2015). Working class first-generation college students’ experiences of exclusion from campus culture tend to be intensified or heightened at elite, more selective institutions like University of Michigan compared to the experiences of similar students at other institution types. (Stephens, 2009; Guerra, 2015; “University of Michigan Student Profile Comparison,” 2012; Klein, 2015; Wang, 2015). At more selective institutions, populations of working class first-generation college students tend to be less concentrated than at other institutions types. At elite schools, institutional support for working class first-generation college students is often decentralized into particular departments or administrative offices on campus, and these students might thus perceive a lack of institutional support.

For example, at UM in 2013 only 13% of the total first year undergraduate student population identified their parents as having “no college” or “some college” as opposed to the 87% of the total first year student population that identified one or both of their parents as having a bachelor’s degree (CIRP data obtained through UM Office of Student Life). These low percentages stand in marked contrast to nationwide data in which approximately 40% of first year students at public universities are first-generation and approximately 60% of first year students at public universities are continuing-generation (Pryor et al., 2012). While there may be a variety of factors contributing to low percentages of first-generation college students on campus, these students have recently reported a perceived lack of support on campus at the University of Michigan in several popular media outlets (Guerra, 2015; Klein, 2015; Wang,

2015). This study accounts for the particular institutional contexts at UM through criteria for choosing participants, interview questions that ask students to recount their experiences—particularly their literacy experiences—on campus at UM, and through data analysis methods such as codes that are rooted in students’ descriptions of campus culture at UM.

At University of Michigan, first-generation college students are diverse; even as first-generation college students share a common defining trait—parents’ educational attainment—it is important to recognize that no two first-generation college students’ experiences are exactly the same. Instead, first-generation college students also identify in many other ways and come from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds⁴. For the purposes of this study, I recruited first-generation college students who might also identify or be identified as working class. An initial survey included questions about parents’ occupation, income, and educational attainment that assisted me in identifying and recruiting working class participants. The first interview is also iterative with the survey, following up on questions about social class and seeking to understand from students how and why they choose to identify in terms of social class and in terms of being first-generation college students.

Because this study is concerned with students’ literacies practiced on campus at UM and specifically with students’ literacies practiced in first-year writing courses (exemplified by questions and findings prompted by Interview 2), it is important to also acknowledge the particular contexts of FYW at UM. There are currently twelve possible courses that fulfill the first-year writing requirement within the college of Literature, Science, and the Arts at UM. Those courses are located in a variety of departments and programs on campus and include the following courses: English 124, English 125, Classic Civilizations 101, Classic Civilizations

⁴ For a full analysis of race/ethnicity, SES, and gender for first-generation college students at UM in 2014, as well as a comparison to continuing-generation students, see Appendix A.

121, Comparative Literature 122, Great Books 191, History 195, Honors 240, Honors 241, Lloyd Hall Scholars Program 125, Residential College 100, and Slavic Languages and Literature 151 (LSA Course Guide, 2015). Through a DSP process and attendant academic advising, students at UM choose a first-year writing course that they believe best fits their needs and academic trajectory. Participants in this study were enrolled in various sections of the following first-year writing courses: English 125, English 124, and Great Books. It is also worth noting that six of the fifteen students in this study enrolled in and completed an English 125 section through the Summer Bridge Program, a program housed in the university's Comprehensive Studies Program; these sections of English 125 are taught by particular instructors affiliated with that program. I explore these various FYW courses in greater detail in *Chapter 5: Constructs of Writing In FYW and Work Contexts*. All participants indicated their completion of the FYW requirement and their particular course on an initial survey and then discussed with me their experiences in this FYW course in greater detail during second interviews. I purposefully chose to limit study participants to those students who had completed their first-year writing requirement within LSA at UM.

Recruiting Participants

As institutional data shows, first-generation college students at the University of Michigan only comprise 13% of the total undergraduate student population, and working class first-generation college students are even less present on campus. Additionally, this minority population of students is sparsely dispersed across campus. For these reasons, my recruitment of student participants included three different phases including emails to the list-serve for the *First-Generation College Students at UM* student group, attending meetings for the student group, and a more general email to all sophomore first-generation college students at UM. I review each of these recruitment strategies here and then offer a snapshot of the study's 15 student participants.

Overall, I chose to recruit 15 participants because I anticipated that interviewing this number of students would allow for a range of data that both surfaces patterns across students but also creates space for variations to be identified within those patterns. Additionally, 15 student participants was a manageable and sustainable number of participants to recruit and conduct a sequence of three interviews with during the six-month time period I had for collecting data. I chose to offer incentives for participating in the interview portion of this study—\$100.00 cash to students who completed all three interviews, with the following breakdown: \$25.00 for the first interview, \$25.00 for the second interview, \$50.00 for the third interview⁵. These incentives were appropriate to the study in that they helped recruit students to join the study and ensured that students completed all three interviews for the study. Moreover, I wanted to offer incentives to working class first-generation college students participating in this study because I know that these students' financial situations are often tenuous and their time and energies are often already stretched thin from balancing school work and paid work on and off campus. As I was asking participants to contribute at least 4.5 hours of their time and considerable energy recounting their personal experiences, I wanted to value participants' time and energy participating in this study with financial incentives.

Overall, I used several criteria for selecting participants including: 1) sophomore student status, 2) first-year writing requirement completed in the LSA college, 3) parents' education, 4) parents' income, 5) parents' occupation, and 6) students' first language. Students' fulfillment of these criteria was determined through the use of a short survey that collected general demographic data used to identify potential participants for the study. For the full survey

⁵ These financial incentives for student participants were provided for by a grant from the Rackham Graduate School at UM intended to support doctoral candidates with their dissertation research. I am grateful to have had this support as financial costs for conducting qualitative research are considerable.

instrument, see Appendix C. In the following paragraphs, I briefly describe each of my selection criteria in more detail.

I specifically recruited first semester sophomores because I conjectured that these participants would be able to recount and reflect on their recent experiences in FYW as well as their literacy experiences in roles and communities outside the FYW classroom. I have purposefully chosen to recruit sophomore students rather than first-year students because the transition to college can be such a jarring and tumultuous experience for working class first-generation college students. By recruiting sophomore students, I talked with students who have had time to make sense of that transition and its influence on their literacy practices. Additionally, sophomore students were embedded in particular roles and communities on campus outside of FYW—for example in work contexts or extracurricular contexts—more so than first year students would be. In addition to sophomore student status, I also selected participants based on the criterion that they had completed their first-year writing requirement at UM in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA). At UM, first-year writing requirements are decentralized and dispersed throughout departments and programs; for example, students in the Engineering College complete their FYW requirement through a course widely different in its curriculum and goals than those in the LSA College do. In order to get at trends and commonality in first-gen students' experiences in FYW, I chose to limit my participants to those students who had completed their FYW requirement in a single college on campus—the LSA College. I specifically chose the LSA College because the majority of students on campus complete their FYW requirement in this College.

My third selection criterion for recruiting student participants was parents' education as that criterion identifies students as first-generation college students. I recruited participants who

chose any of the following for both parents' education: "junior high/middle school or less, some high school, high school graduate, postsecondary school other than college, some college." My fourth and fifth criteria for selecting participants are parents' income and parents' occupation; these criteria—along with parents' education—help to identify students as working class in addition to first-generation college students. Students in this study identified their parents' income between the ranges of \$10,000 to \$74,999. While this is a wide range of incomes to consider, I chose this range keeping in mind the particular contexts on campus at UM. Generally, working class populations are identified as earning between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually; in comparison, lower middle class populations are identified at \$50,000-75,000 annually (*Class Matters*, 2005). However, the particular demographic data for income and social class at UM also influenced my consideration of income as one criterion for selecting participants. Data for UM students' family income reveals working-class student populations to be in the minority at that institution. For example, in 2014 62.1% of first-year students' parents earned \$100,000 or more per year and 22.9% of first-year students' parents earned \$250,000 or more per year; these percentages for parents' income are far above national averages, confirming that the UM student population is overwhelmingly upper-middle- and upper-class. With this institutional context and general UM student population in mind, I chose to recruit students whose parents earned less than \$75,000 per year. As is noted previously in this chapter and in Chapter 1, income is not the only determining factor where social class is concerned; instead, social class is determined through a number of criteria including not only income but also education, and occupation. Keeping in mind these intersecting influences on social class, I also took into account parents' occupation as I chose participants—my fifth criteria for selection. Blue-collar labor and unspecialized, non-professional pink-and-white-collar service jobs were considered to be

working class occupations Pink-and-white-collar service jobs are those like secretarial work that might take place in a professional setting but that generally demand non-skilled labor and are achievable without a college degree. So, even in cases in which students' family income might seem to exceed that which would typically be considered a working class income, parents' occupations were in keeping with what would likely be considered working class.

I also considered students' first languages in choosing participants—my sixth criteria for selecting participants. Based on this criterion, I eliminated students who identified their first language as any language other than English. I chose to limit student participants in this way because students who learn English as a second language often have markedly different spoken and written literacy practices from those who speak English as their first language. Students who speak English as a second language or who speak a first-language other than English would introduce variety and variability into the study population that the study itself was not designed to accommodate; because I seek to identify trends and commonalities in the literacies that first-generation college students practice, I chose to limit this aspect of the study population.

My recruitment process worked in three phases including recruiting students through 1) emails sent to the *First-Generation College Students at Michigan* list-serv, 2) in person student organization meetings, and 3) emails sent to a larger list-serv of all first-gen sophomore students at UM. I describe each of these recruitment phases in more detail below.

Because first-generation college students are both sparse and dispersed across the student population at UM, I began recruiting student participants from the extracurricular student group *First-Generation College Students at Michigan*. On its “Maize Pages” profile, shared Facebook group, and official website the *First-Generation College Students at Michigan* group describes itself as “undergraduate and graduate student created.” On these sites, the group also states its

purpose to “offer a variety of resources, advising, and outreach” with the goals of “raising awareness of, and resolving the unique needs of first-generation college students at the University of Michigan.” This mission indicates that students who choose to participate in the group are aware of their position as first-generation college students, at least enough so to join a student group dedicated to supporting this facet of their identity and experiences on campus. My recruitment process included sending emails to the list-serv for the student group and attending the first two meetings of this extracurricular group in September 2015.

I sent recruitment emails to the list-serv for the *First-Generation College Students at UM* student group in July and September 2015. I sent these emails through the faculty advisor to the student group assuming that an email from a familiar sender might help establish trust with students receiving the email, and thus that students might thus be more inclined to participate in the study. The faculty advisor copied me on the email, and interested students contacted me directly by responding to the email. A week after having sent each of these emails, I sent out individual follow up emails to interested students; this follow up email contained a link to the short survey where students submitted their demographic data. The full survey instrument is included in Appendix C. I sorted survey responses based on the six criteria outlined above: 1) sophomore student status 2) first-year writing requirement completed in the LSA college 3) parents’ education 4) parents’ income 5) parents’ occupation and 6) students’ first language. Thirty-six students responded to this survey, and from students’ survey responses in this first phase of recruitment, I recruited my first six student participants. I chose these participants because they met all the selection criteria and remained interested in participating in the study when I followed up with them after they had completed the survey. Interestingly, all six of these first study participants that I recruited were women. This was not a purposeful choice, rather

these six women were simply the people who had responded to my surveys and whose demographic criteria matched those for the study.

In the first month of the semester, I also recruited students who attended the first two meetings of the first-gen student group on campus, which were held on September 14th and September 28th; both meetings were held in a classroom in an academic building on campus at UM. At these meetings, I was introduced by the president of the group, and gave a short (less than five minute) talk about my project. I emphasized that students could earn up to \$100.00, that other students, who I was already interviewing, had reported to me that the interview was a good opportunity to reflect on their experiences, to tell their first gen stories, and to potentially help out future first gen students. I also talked about UM being an elite university and thus an interesting place to talk to first-generation college students. Ten students signed up through the first-gen group meetings but nine out of the ten did not meet the established selection criteria for the study. Most were not sophomores, and the few that were sophomores had parents who earned over \$100,000.00/year or identified their first language as a language other than English. Only one active member of the *First-Generation College Students at Michigan* student group met all the criteria for participation in the study, and she became the study's seventh participant. It is also worth noting that two of the participants I recruited in my first phase of recruitment had previously been active in the *First-Generation College Students at UM* group during their first year at UM, but their attendance and participation in the group had since fallen off.

Although I had had over forty students respond to my emails and survey, most were not sophomores at the University. At this point, I decided to send a targeted email through the registrar's office to sophomores whose parents did not have a four-year degree. I sent a request to the University registrar's office's information technology services. This office sent my email

to all first-gen sophomores on Monday, October 5, 2016; this email reached 577 students. This email effort resulted in 102 email responses from students; I responded to each email individually, sending an email that included a link to the background survey. From this exchange, I received 77 survey responses. I entered all 77 survey responses into an excel spreadsheet, dividing students up into two groups based on their eligibility and non-eligibility for the study. As I did with earlier survey responses, I determined if students were ineligible for the study on the basis of 1) sophomore student status, 2) first-year writing requirement completed in the LSA college, 3) parents' education, 4) parents' income, 5) parents' occupation, and 6) students' first language. From this round of recruitment, I recruited 8 male participants.

Participant Demographics

Table 2.1 provides demographic information on the 15 study participants. In this section, I also identify and describe in more detail demographic trends across the fifteen first-generation college students who participated in this study. More detailed profiles of individual student participants are presented in Appendix A.

Table 2.1: Students' Self Reported Demographics					
	Gender	Parents' Income	Social Class (Survey)	Social Class (Interview 1)	Race/Ethnicity
Chris⁶	Female	\$15,000 to \$19,999	--	Between working class and poor	African American
Luna	Female	\$20,000 to \$24,999	Lower income	Poor	White
Dana	Female	\$15,000 to \$19,999	Middle class	Between working and lower middle	Black/African American
Beth	Female	\$40,000 to \$49,999	Lower-middle class	Between working and lower middle	White

⁶ All student names are pseudonyms.

Tina	Female	\$20,000 to \$24,999	--	Working class	African American
Ivy	Female	\$25,000 to \$29,999	Working middle class	Working class	Haitian
Sarah	Female	\$60,000 to \$74,999	Middle class	Between lower and upper middle	Caucasian
Jason	Male	\$20,000 to \$24,999	Working class	Poor	African American
Jack	Male	\$15,000 to \$19,999	Lower	Poor	Black/Mexican
Armin	Male	\$40,000 to \$49,000	Middle	Working class	White
Ben	Male	\$30,000 to \$39,999	Lower class	Between lower and upper middle	Black Jewish
Henry	Male	\$60,000 to \$74,999	Middle	Lower middle	White
Tom	Male	\$10,000 to \$14,999	Lower class	Poor	Middle Eastern
Daquan	Male	\$15,000 to \$19,999	Umm, lower class?	Poor	Bengali
Levi	Male	\$40,000 to \$49,999	Lower-middle	Between working and lower middle	Black "American"

Though first-gen students share a common defining characteristic where educational status and privilege are concerned, social class status is influenced by several factors including parents' education, students' education, parents' income, parents' occupation, and students' occupation. As such, I collected demographic data for each of these influences on social class. As is stated in the "Recruiting Participants" section above, students in this study reported their parents' income on an initial survey for the study. Parental income for students in the study ranges from \$10,000-\$74,999. In addition to indicating this level of parental income, these two students also indicated that their parents work at blue or pink collar labor and service jobs. Henry's dad works in maintenance and Sarah's dad works as a manager at a grocery store chain. Additionally, both Henry's and Sarah's moms have worked intermittently—Henry's mom as a

secretary at a family owned sprinkler and lawn irrigation company and Sarah's mom as a para-professional in the elementary school Sarah and her brother attended. All other students in the study identified their parents income in the \$10,000-\$49,000 range, and described single parent or non-traditional family structures, which contributed to their family's income status. Overall, each of these students report family structure, parents' income, and parents' occupations indicate that these students might typically be identified as working class.

In addition to demographics like parents' income, parents' occupation, and family structure, I also asked students to identify what social class they feel they belong too. Students indicated their perceived social class in an initial survey and discussed their responses with me in our first interview together. As Table 2.1 shows, two students chose not to identify with a particular social class. Not surprisingly, five students identify themselves as "middle" class, including two students who identify as "lower-middle class"; research has shown that a majority of Americans identify as middle class regardless of income or wealth status (NYT). The remainder of students in the study identify themselves as "lower" or "working" class. Because of the widespread phenomenon that a disproportionate amount of Americas assume themselves to be middle class, and because a variety of definitions of particular social classes circulates in popular and news media, I chose to include students in this study whether or not they explicitly identify themselves as working class.

To account for inconsistencies in definitions of particular social classes, I supplemented students' self reporting of social class with a set of interviews questions based on the New York Times' definition of five social classes in their collection *Class Matters*. The definitions I shared with students, adapted from the New York Times, can be viewed in the Interview 1 protocol in Appendix D. Based on the NYT's definitions of common social class groups, five students

identified themselves as “poor,” three students identified themselves as “working class,” and one student identified themselves as “lower middle class.” Additionally, some students identified themselves as moving between different social classes; specifically, one student labeled themselves as between poor and working class, another three students identified themselves as moving between working class and lower middle class, and another two identified themselves between lower middle and upper middle. As these responses show, social class identity is complex, nuanced, and always in flux. By including students’ who identify in a range of ways where social class is concerned, my data represent both major trends and some variation in the set of students I interviewed.

It is important to acknowledge that though my primary criteria for selecting participants are first-gen identity and social class identity, students in this study also identify in a variety of ways according to additional demographic categories including race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, linguistic identity, religious identity, etc. Because these additional identity categories are relevant to students’ descriptions of their literacy practices across contexts, I include a brief analysis of trends in my study population for these additional identity categories.

In order to better represent a range of working class first-generation college student experiences, I recruited a diverse population for participation in this study. Resultantly, this study includes seven students who identify as women and eight who identify as men. In addition to these gender identities, some students disclosed to me in interviews their identities as concerns sexuality. For example, two students identified as gay and one student identified as “not straight.” In addition to sexuality and gender identities, students at times disclosed religious identities. Two students identified as Catholic, one identified as both Jewish and Christian, another identified as Muslim. Students also disclosed a range of racial and ethnic identities:

seven students in this study identify as black or African American, one of whom also identifies as Jewish and another of whom also identifies as Mexican. Five students identify as white or Caucasian, one as Haitian, one as Bengali, and one as Middle Eastern/Yemeni.

Notably, three students in this study also identify as first-generation or gen 1.5 American citizens in addition to being first-generation college students. Specifically, Sally, Daquan, and Tom are first-generation American citizens. Sally immigrated to the U.S from Haiti with her mother when Sally was just about four years old. Daquan's parents emigrated to the U.S. from Bangladesh shortly before Daquan was born, and Tom's parents similarly emigrated to the U.S. from Yemen shortly before he was born. These students' race, ethnic, and citizenship identities influence their literacies in specific ways; for example, these students described families and households where home languages—Haitian Creole, Yemeni Arabic, and Bengali—were spoken alongside English frequently. These examples begin to show the impact of rich intersectional identities on literacy practices, both spoken and written. By including a range of racial, ethnic, citizenship, and linguistic identities in this study, my findings represent both commonalities and varieties of experiences even within working class first-generation college student populations.

As Sally, Tom, and Daquan's examples begin to show, students in this study also have a range of linguistic identities and experiences. While I selected for participation in the study only those students who identified their first language as English, I also learned that students spoke other languages in addition to English as well. In addition to speaking English, students in this study spoke Spanish, Bengali, Haitian Creole, French, Arabic, and Farsi. Overall, nine participants in this study might be described as bilingual or multilingual speakers. These students speak languages additional to English—languages they have learned and used with their families, in high school, in college, or in workplace spaces.

Participants in this study represent the diversity and difference in the experiences of first-generation college students, not only the commonalities or trends. As I report findings from the study in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I acknowledge the influence of students' identities on their literacies wherever appropriate. In this way, this study offers a richly descriptive portrait of interactions between identity and literacy, as well students' own perceptions and understandings of those interactions.

Data Collection

This study uses qualitative case study methods, specifically a series of three semi-structured interviews with 15 student participants. I conducted interviews during the months of July through December 2015. This interview data is supplemented with observations of the *First-Generation College Students at Michigan* student group and of the student group's shared Facebook page. Supplemental data was not systematically analyzed; instead it served as a reference point for designing and conducting interviews. I describe these data collection methods in more detail below.

Interviews

I conducted a series of three semi-structured interviews with each student participant. I chose to design semi-structured interviews including "a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as some prepared questions" as well as maintaining "openness to changes of sequence and question forms in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the interviewees" (Kvale, 2007, p. 65). By using semi-structured interviews I was able to hear from students' about their experiences and their reflections on those experiences while at the same time keeping our conversations closely aligned with topics and themes related to my research questions for the study.

I chose to conduct three different interviews because I am interested in a wide range of contexts for literacy. I assumed that garnering in-depth information from students about this range of contexts and literacies would be time consuming and possibly fatiguing for student participants. So, I designed a sequence of three interviews to best allow for students' comfort in discussing these topics with me and to allow for the surfacing of in-depth data from students about their literacies. This interview sequence is based in Seidman's (1998) model for in-depth interviews. I have purposefully designed this interview sequence to move from a general life story interview, to a more narrowed interview focusing on FYW, to an interview focusing on students' literacies outside FYW. I have designed the first interview to be a more general interview in which students reflect and report on their identities; this interview is also iterative with the initial survey and asks students to reflect and expand on their responses to survey questions. For example, the survey asks "What social class would you say you belong to," and a particular question in the interview one protocol asks "On the survey you completed for the study, you said you identified as [social class], how did you come to identify that way?" In this first interview, I also identified myself to students as a working class first-generation college student, hoping to facilitate trust and comfort between interviewer and interviewee. Overall, the interview sequence includes three semi-structured interviews with the following general purposes⁷:

1. An initial interview allowed me to come to know each student participant in a general sense. I sought to hear from students how they identify as first-generation and/or working class, and asked questions to expand on students' survey responses regarding their family, work, and educational background.

⁷ Full interview protocols are included in Appendix C.

2. A second interview focused on students' experiences with literacy in their recently completed FYW course. I solicited students' descriptions of the writing and speaking practices they encountered in their FYW courses. The first portion of this interview was prompted by a paper composed by the student in their FYW course (which I requested WHEN??). Interviewing students about an example of their writing allowed for a more concrete understanding of students' written literacy. The example of student writing helped to prompt more specific, detailed responses from students about that piece of writing and about students' experiences in their FYW course overall.
3. A third interview that asked students to describe their general out-of-school writing and speaking practices. In this interview, I heard from students about their writing and speaking practices in their families and homes, workplaces, and extracurricular contexts.

I purposefully ordered interviews in the above sequence. I designed the first interview to be a more general interview in which students reflect and report on their identities. This interview allowed for students to become comfortable with me as an interviewer because it allow for me to listen attentively and show interest in their personal experiences; additionally, this initial interview offered me an opportunity to identify myself to students as a working class first-generation college student, facilitating trust and comfort between interviewer and interviewee. After this initial interview, students seemed willing and comfortable to share their experiences with literacy instruction in FYW courses—experiences that can in some ways be fraught for these students. I positioned the FYW interview as the second interview because I wanted students to be comfortable before talking with me about academic experiences in FYW, but I also wanted to talk to students about FYW as soon as possible, to ensure that they were as close as possible in time and space to those FYW experiences and could thus offered detailed

descriptions of literacies encountered there. Finally, the third interview opened up from the narrowed focus of the second interview. By having already focused in and talked closely about writing experiences in FYW, students were better enabled to identify and reflect on formative speaking and writing practices that have occurred outside of FYW in their home, work, and extracurricular contexts.

The time lapse between each interviews allowed me to scan data from the interviews to develop clarifying questions or to determine if I needed to repeat questions in subsequent interviews. Repeating questions or asking clarifying questions again allowed for the surfacing of in-depth interview data about complex concepts like identity and literacy. In general, I designed this sequence of interviews to both ensure students' comfort and to allow for detailed, descriptive, and mindfully reflective interview data.

Interviews spanned approximately 90 minutes each with the shortest interview lasting 55 minutes and the longest lasting two hours and six minutes. In total, I conducted and recorded approximately 78 hours of interview data. I adhered to the three interview sequence for 10 students, and was able to conduct each interview in the 90 minute allotment. However, four students met with me four times and one student met with me five times. The topics for the interviews and the sequence of questions remained generally the same in these interviews even though I interviewed these students 4 or 5 times. In other words, the sequence of questions remained intact for students who I met four and five times, however our interviews simply took longer either due to students' personalities and individual style in responding to questions or to extenuating personal histories for which the original interview protocols did not anticipate but which were important to understanding students' life histories as well as their literacies. For example, one participant served in the military for six years in between high school and attending

UM, so I chose to ask additional questions throughout the interview sequence with this student relevant to his experiences in the military and those experiences' influences on his literacies and his pursuit of higher education. Similarly, at least two students in the study disclosed non-traditional family structures that involved changes in their legal guardianship throughout their childhood and young adulthood; so again I asked adapted and additional interview questions relevant to these students' experiences. In these cases and others, it took additional meeting times to fulfill and complete the three-interview sequence with individual participants.

All interviews occurred face-to-face on campus except for four interviews conducted with one student in summer 2015. The face-to-face interviews were conducted on campus either in my office on campus or in private rooms in a research center on campus at UM. One set of interviews was conducted electronically through video chatting software because the participant was living at home with family in another part of the state and working retail forty hours per week. We met electronically in the evenings after she had completed her shift work. At the start of the first interview with each participant, I reviewed the consent form for the study, and collected the completed forms at that time. At the start of each face-to-face interview I gave the cash incentive to the participant. The only exception here is the student who conducted her interviews over video chat in the Summer 2015 semester. For this student, I sent consent forms over email prior to the interviews and discussed them with her over video chat. Following her completion of all interviews, the student and I met on campus at UM at the start of the Fall 2015 semester, and I gave her the cash incentive in person at that time.

Observations

In addition to conducting interviews with individual students, I observed six meetings of the *First-Generation College Students at Michigan* extracurricular student group. The student

group is quite active, meeting every other week with varied attendance rates. The group's faculty advisors and student executive board, the leadership entities for the entire student group as a whole, meet weekly. Over the course of the Fall 2015 semester, I attended five meetings and three events for the student group. Meetings ranged from a mass meeting welcoming new and first-year first-generation college students to the group, an interview skills workshop with a representative from Google, two meetings devoted to "sharing your first-gen story," and a panel of graduate students who are also first-generation college students and were giving advice for how to apply and attend graduate school as a first-gen. Events the group hosted included a welcome dinner for new first-generation college students on campus sponsored and funded by the provost's office; a promotional event in which the group gave out donuts on campus and talked to other students about their group; and a discussion and screening of a documentary film about first-generation college students co-sponsored with two other student groups on campus. This range and variety of topics discussed at the meetings and events offered me a snapshot of the overall function of the student group on campus. Observational data consists of ethnographic field notes, which I wrote during and after each of the twice-monthly student group meetings that I attend in the Fall 2015 semester. Field notes were composed using the framework in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995), in which researchers engage in the "depiction of scenes" (p. 68-84), "in-process analytic writing" (p. 100-105), and regular memo writing (p. 100-107). These field notes were used to revise the language of existing interview questions and to design interview questions about students' literacies outside of FYW.

My purpose in observing this student group was twofold. First, observing the student group allowed for me to build rapport with members of the student group and to better ground my semi-structured interview questions in the ways that these students interact with one another

and with me in the student group setting. Second, observing the student group allowed for me to record field notes and build an understanding of students' spoken literacy practices; though I did not systematically analyze these observations, they served as a reference point in my interviews with students. Referencing particular meetings or particular moments in student meetings allowed for greater specificity in interviews with the three study participants who were active members in the group, and they allowed for me to talk generally with other students who may or may not have been aware of the group's existence before our interviews. Overall, attending and observing meetings of the *First-Generation College Students at Michigan* extracurricular student group embedded me in the campus first-gen community at UM and at times positioned me as an insider in my interactions with undergraduate first-generation college students.

Facebook Page

Data collection also included archiving posts from the *First-Generation College Students at Michigan* shared Facebook page during the Fall 2015 semester. This shared Facebook page is closely connected to the face-to-face interactions of the student group. The page includes announcements for group meetings and other events as well as posts by the group's executive board, faculty mentors, undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Michigan, as well as University alum. Similarly to observations of the student group meeting, observing and archiving the group's activity on its shared Facebook page supplements interview data, allowing for me to design interview questions with specific reference to the Facebook page. For example, on this page students often share and comment on popular news articles about first-generation college student issues at University of Michigan and nationwide. Additionally, students share and comment on particular University of Michigan resources ranging from announcements about academic lectures and events, deadlines and links to financial aid opportunities and programs,

and where to find free and cheap spaces to study or have food on campus. Interview questions about the Facebook page asked students why they have chosen to write, share, or comment on these kinds of posts or how they have encountered and taken up these kinds of posts.

Again, I did not systematically analyze data collected from the Facebook page; instead this data served as a reference point in interviews with students. Facebook posts provided examples of students' written literacy in an extracurricular setting, and so referencing the group's Facebook activity in interviews allowed for the consideration of literacies in a variety of contexts. Indeed, at least three interviewees followed this shared Facebook page and commented on its influence on their thinking about being a first-generation college student at UM. One student, a member of the executive board for the student group, talked in detail about the use of the Facebook page and the executive board's recent conversations about how the Facebook page should operate in relation to the face-to-face student group. Essentially, this Facebook page is a site of literacy for these students and as such I have chosen to record the activity there during the Fall 2015 semester and to talk with students about their experiences of that page.

Data Analysis

During the data collection process, I wrote memos in the form of interview summaries immediately following interviews. These summaries helped me to reflect on data collection processes and to begin mapping general trends between interviews with particular students as well as trends and variation across participants. I also conducted preliminary analyses of completed interviews with three student participants in September of 2015; these preliminary analyses helped me again to map early trends in the data and to develop a working codebook for later, in-depth data analysis.

Student interview data was transcribed and coded during the Summer 2015, Fall 2015 and Winter 2016 semesters, shortly after individual interviews were conducted. Of the 78 hours

of interview audio files, I sent 50 hours to transcription services⁸. When I received these transcripts, I listened to the audio interviews and corrected any errors in the transcripts generated by the service. I transcribed the remaining 28 hours of interview data myself. Because I am not conducting in-depth analyses of linguistic features of students' spoken language, I chose to focus on the verbal content of the interviews rather than their linguistic features.

Developing a Codebook

Interview coding occurred in stages including preliminary analyses to develop a working codebook and then a more comprehensive coding stage in which I applied codes and further developed and defined existing codes. I chose to develop a codebook for this project in order to “document the codes and the procedures for applying them” (Weston, Gandell, Beauchamp, McAlpine, Wiseman, & Beauchamp, 2001, p. 396). I began developing my codebook in a Microsoft Word table before importing each code and adapting the codebook to the program Nvivo, where I coded all interview data.

In developing the codebook, I coded interviews for three students who I interviewed in the Summer 2015, during the pilot stage of the study. I coded this interview data using a combination of theme analysis and open coding methods. On my first pass through the data, I coded interview data by the interview and question numbers; for example the first question of interview three and the student's response (including any probes or responses to probes) were coded I3.Q1. In this way I was able to run reports that included all participants' responses to the same question from the same interview at once. Next, I created a matrix in which I matched my research questions with my interview protocol questions. I then read through grouped interview questions pulling examples of student responses to particular questions that also seemed relevant

⁸ Funding for transcription service was provided by research grants from both the Rackham Graduate School as well as the Joint Program in English and Education at UM. I am again grateful for this funding that alleviated costs of conducting research for this dissertation project.

to the matching research question. Once I had pulled exemplary student data for each paired research question/interview protocol question, I developed codes that described the connections between data, interview questions, and research questions. These initial codes, based in both the data and in my research and interview questions, might be described as theme analyses or theory based, a priori, deductive analyses.

The full codebook includes approximately 77 codes across five categories. An abridged codebook, including definitions and examples of categories and codes used to analyze student interview data are presented in Appendix E. In Appendix E, I also include examples of student data receiving each code. After developing this codebook, I analyzed all interview data collected for the project using the codes defined in the codebook—this application of already developed codes might be considered my second pass through the data. This coding was conducted using the qualitative software Nvivo by first uploading interview transcript documents and then applying appropriate codes to segments of data within individual interviews. This coding process allowed for me to identify trends or patterns across individual students' three different interviews as well as trends or patterns between the study's fifteen different student participants.

The initial codes that developed out of the clustering of data, interview questions, and research questions fell into the following five categories: Contexts and interlocutors, Literacies, Speaking, Writing, Identity and background. It is worth noting that codes within and across these categories are not mutually exclusive, and one segment of data might include several codes from a single category as well as codes from many different categories in order to represent the range of contexts, literacies, and identities described within that segment of data. The category Contexts and interlocutors helps to specify particular settings (including places and people) that participants described for their literacies; for example this category includes such codes as “first-

year writing,” “class discussion,” and “friends.” As these examples begin to show, codes for contexts and interlocutors are not mutually exclusive of one another and a single segment of data might receive multiple codes from this category in order to indicate the variety of settings for literacy described by that segment of data. The category Literacies is broader than both the separate categories of Speaking and Writing; Literacies includes codes for literacies additional to speaking and writing such as listening or reading. Moreover, the category of Literacies includes codes for literacies that span or include both speaking and writing literacies; for example, codes like “grammar” or “financial literacy” might be used to indicate moments in which students reflect grammatical or financial aspects of writing, speaking, or both.

The separate categories of Speaking and Writing include codes that are specific to those particular literacies. For example, speaking includes codes such as “changes in speaking,” “bilingual multilingual,” and “code switching;” as such, codes within this category are designed to indicate more nuanced or fine grained aspects of speaking literacies that students describe. The category Writing includes such codes as “changes in writing,” “writing process,” and “writing research;” similarly to the Speaking category, codes in the category Writing are meant to indicate more detailed or specific facets of writing literacies that students describe. Lastly, the category Identity and background includes codes that indicate particular demographic information or descriptions of students’ personal experiences outside of (but often encompassing) literacies. For example, codes in the Identity and background category include “family structure,” “gender,” and “race ethnicity.” In this way, this fifth category of Identity and background allowed for me to account for the influence of students’ specific identities and experiences on their particular literacies.

Taken together, these five categories allowed for me to code particular segments of interview data for a variety of factors at once depending on the variety of literacies and contexts described therein. For example, the segment of interview data below received codes from three different categories—the “contexts and interlocutors,” “literacies,” and “identity and background” categories—and was coded for “parents,” “family,” “family education,” “college-going literacy,” and “first-gen identity” in order to represent the range of contexts, literacies, and identities the student participant describes:

Interviewer: Do you feel your family talks about school or education a lot?

Beth: Yeah. I think my parents always wanted me and my brother to go. All of their...my dad’s two sisters went to college but he didn’t because he said he wasn’t interested in school at that point. It was the last thing on his mind. My mom...two of her brothers started college but they just did a few classes at CC [community college] and quit. I think they always wanted me and my brother to go, but they really didn’t know how to do it.

This coded segment of student interview data exemplifies how codes from multiple categories were applied during data analysis stages. Codes and categories were designed to help me break the data into more manageable segments so that I could draw out similarities and variation in students’ responses across interviews and across participants—specifically, these codes draw out similarities and variation in students’ descriptions of both literacy practices and particular contexts for literacy.

My initial round of coding might be considered a kind of theme analysis because it was grounded in and structured by my research questions for the project. In addition to this more structured approach to developing codes, I also conducted several rounds of open coding or inductive analysis to help develop the codebook for the study. Through an open coding method, I

synthesized out of the data categories and codes that I identified in the data as opposed to imposing already developed themes or theories on interview data. For example, the code “WAC/WID disciplinarity” within the “literacies” category was developed through an open coding process that identified a pattern in which multiple student participants connect particular writing and speaking practices to their work in courses in their disciplines or majors. With an open coding method, I also developed several *in vivo* codes informed by participants’ responses. *In vivo* codes are those codes that have as their name a specific word or phrase taken directly from participants’ language. For example, I developed the *in vivo* code “Mindedness” from multiple participants’ talk about open-mindedness, close-mindedness, narrow-mindedness, and like-mindedness in a variety of contexts. In general, open coding is a component of constant comparative analysis, which involves “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195). I used this method in order to look for similarities and differences across data and to allow for the development of molar categories and subcategories based in the data, in students’ talk about their literacies. In addition to synthesizing codes and categories that I identified in the data, this method for coding allowed for me to “compare one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 30). With this method, I identified meaningful patterns and made connections across the three interviews I conducted with each participant. With this method, I also made connections across data for all fifteen participants. With an open coding method, the coding process was iterative as “each new incident that is coded under a code adds to the general properties and dimensions of that code, elaborating it and bringing in a variation” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195). So, this method allowed for me to identify both patterns as well as variation in data throughout the coding and analysis process.

Interpreting Coded Data

Based in this coding process, I developed participant profiles or brief narratives with details of individual participants' experiences with their families and in their home communities, their pathways to college including high school experiences, as well as major landmark experiences in their writing and speaking literacies on their pathways to and through college. These participant profiles, included in Appendix B, also include details about students' work and extracurricular activities before and during college. In this way, I conducted what Maxwell (2005) might call narrative and connecting analysis that resulted in "profiles or vignettes" (Seidman, 1998). These early analyses allowed for me to capture and maintain the particularities of individual students' experiences while also making comparisons between participants. While my early analysis focused on these individual student cases, my analyses eventually shifted to a constant comparative approach to identify commonalities and nuances in the group's experiences and literacies. In the findings chapters of this dissertation study, I present this thematic analysis.

In addition to coding all interview data and developing participant profiles, I also ran queries based on specific codes. This query stage of my analysis was my third pass through the data. Such queries, for example a query that identified all instances of data coded for all three codes "first-year writing," "class discussion," and "speaking" allowed for me to more precisely compare particular facets of all participants' literacies in a given context. By running approximately 64 different queries such as this, I identified prevalent trends in overlapping codes and thus prevalent trends for all participants' literacy practices in context. Though I often conducted comparisons to identify commonalities in data for different participants, while running queries and scanning data sets, I also noted nuances, differences, or outliers in the data. I did not ignore data or students comments that didn't fit the overview; instead I flagged outliers or differing cases and included them in the findings chapters as examples of disconfirming or

negative evidence that did not fit the typical patterns within the data. In the findings chapters that follow this methodology chapter, many sections end with a paragraph or two exemplifying disconfirming or negative evidence outside the trends or commonalities for most students.

As I ran queries for overlapping or intersecting codes, I also began an iterative process of moving back and forth between the data and relevant literature. In this way, I employed an interpretive process of developing an argument about what the data means and how it extends to previous research or literature. In these iterative moments, I consulted existing literature about first-generation college students and about particular literacies, writing or speaking practices. For example, as I coded data and ran queries for students' speaking practices in first-year writing contexts, I noticed a trend wherein several students described listening to their classmates and instructors as a prevalent and valuable practice. With this trend in mind, I consulted scholarship on listening and silence as rhetorical practices, scholarship originating in the field of rhetoric and composition. By consulting this literature and moving iteratively between existing scholarship and my data, I was able to ground my findings in previously published research and knowledge about particular literacy practices. In this way, my analyses and subsequent findings build on and extend existing research in the fields of composition and rhetoric, higher education, and literacy studies while also representing both commonalities and differences or nuances in my chosen student population of working class first-generation college students.

Limitations

As Maxwell makes clear in his 2005 *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, "it is important to make [research design] explicit, to get it out in the open where its strengths, limitations, and consequences can be clearly understood." (3). Much of this chapter has focused on the strengths and consequences of my research design, while noting limitations where appropriate. In this section, I focus on limitations that my study design entails. In the

following section, I emphasize steps taken to account for potential limitations of my study and to strengthen the validity of my study design, data collection, analysis, and findings.

Some limitations of my study include that I recruit students from a single institution and thus risk that my findings are most relevant to UM or institutions similar to it—namely, elite, large, four-year, public, research universities. First-gen student experiences at UM may be different than those of other students who attend different kinds of colleges or universities. This range of experience at different institution types is not accounted for in my data collection; instead my research offers a detailed account of institutional contexts at elite universities and how that particular institutional context shapes first-gen students' experiences. In order to anticipate this limitation, I consulted literature about first-gen students' experiences at UM and at similar institutions. Additionally, I consulted literature about first-gen students' experiences at a variety of institutions, not only at UM. In this way, I was able to make comparisons and decipher moments in which institutional contexts at UM might be the primary influence on students' experiences. Throughout my presentations of findings, I acknowledge and analyze institutional influence wherever possible; in this way, I combine Maxwell's methods of comparison and modus operandi (2005, p. 257) and account for limitations and threats to validity in my study design. Moreover, because I have limited my study to UM first-gen students only, I have in some ways selected what might be identified as a highly successful population of first-gen students for participation in my study. Additionally, as I mention in the Recruiting Participants section above, I have purposefully chosen to limit the student population participating in this study in particular ways. For example, I chose to recruit only students who identified English as their first language on an initial survey for the study. In this way, my study does not account for the full variation in first-generation college student populations nationwide or globally as those broader student

populations often include students who do not speak English as a first-language. Additionally, I have purposefully chosen to focus on the experiences of students whose families do not earn over \$75,000 per year, and as such I have excluded or failed to represent the experiences of first-gen students whose family income might place them in upper-middle or upper class social class brackets. These limitations were at times limitations of the circumstances of the time, place, and resources of my study; others were purposeful limitations that focused my research on a particular population of students to the exclusion of other similar populations.

Validity

In addition to addressing these specific limitations, I have also taken steps to ensure the validity of my study. For example, Maxwell suggests validity can be strengthened by “using different methods as a check on one another [...] This strategy reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the biases of a specific method, and allows you to gain a more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating” (2004). I have chosen to combine data analysis methods such as inductive and deductive coding, thus accounting for and synthesizing multiple interpretations of data and again ensuring validity in my study, specifically in my data analysis methods and subsequent findings. For example, I have made use of “comparisons” in my data analysis methods; Maxwell explains that in “single-setting qualitative studies, or interview studies of a single category of individual” researchers can use different kinds of comparisons to contribute to the validity of their analyses. Maxwell specifies that “there may be a literature on ‘typical’ settings or individuals of the type studied that make it easier to identify the relevant causal processes in an exceptional case, or the researcher may be able to draw on her or his own experience with other cases that provide an illuminating comparison” (2004, p. 253). I make use of this comparative approach in my own data analyses, described in the “Data Analysis” section above. I compared my data to published research on my population and on the

phenomenon I studied (literacy) in the iterative process between interpretation and literature that I described above. Additionally, I used my coding process and queries as opportunities to compare the experiences of individual participants and in this way illuminated commonalities and nuances between participants' experiences. In this way, my data analysis methods provide useful comparisons that contribute to the validity of my study.

I have also made use of several other strategies for ensuring validity in my study design; Throughout my study design, data collection, and data analysis I have made use of such strategies as intensive long term involvement, rich data, narrative and connecting analysis, asking clarifying questions, and searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases. I have maintained intensive long-term involvement with my study participants. I surveyed each participant and conducted three interviews with them over the course of about a four-month time span. In this way, I sustained my relationship with participants and allowed for “more, and more different kinds, of data, [and] the data are more direct and less dependent on inference. Repeated observations and interviews and sustained presence of the researcher in the setting studied can give a clearer picture of causal processes, as well as helping to rule out spurious associations and premature theories” (Maxwell, 2004, p. 254). Because I have chosen to conduct multiple interviews with each participant and thus have spent several months getting to know and interact with each participant, I have ensured validity in my data collection. Additionally, intensive long term involvement has allowed for me to collect rich data or “data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on” (Maxwell, 2004, p. 254). My data includes over 78 hours of interviews, approximately five hours of interview data with each student. In these interviews students have discussed with me in detail their literacy experiences in a variety of settings, sometimes coming back to describe particular, memorable

literacy experiences on more than on occasion and adding detail, nuance, and variance to their descriptions. The rich data I have collected through repeated interaction with study participants has positively influenced the validity of my data collection and analyses.

Additionally, my development of “narrative and connecting analysis” (Maxwell, 2004, p. 256) in participant profiles and in the findings chapters of this project has strengthened the validity of my project. As I describe in the “Data Analysis” section above, my narrative analyses also involved searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases to include as contrasts to major trends in findings for student participants’ literacies across contexts. Overall, the multiple data collection and data analysis strategies I built into the design of my study allow for triangulation or “collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings or using a variety of methods” and thus “reduces the risk of systematic biases because of a specific source or method” (258). By including fifteen different student cases, conducting multiple interviews with participants at multiple points in time, and allowing for time and space to ask clarifying questions within the interview sequence I took up a comparative approach to data collection and analysis—seeking to understand commonalities and variation in the fifteen first-gen student participants’ experiences around particular themes or topics that I identified as salient in the data. Overall, my study design, though it entails some limitations, works to ensure validity and to accurately represent students’ voices and experiences in close detail.

Ethics and Researcher Subjectivity

As is mentioned in the “Research Site” section above, I completed the Institutional Review Board’s (IRB) application process for this study, which received an exempt status from the IRB. Because I have taken steps to de-identify individual student participants’ data and identities in this study, the university’s IRB approved my study with an exempt status, determining that this study did not pose any risk to participants above or beyond standard

educational practice. Even with IRB exempt status, I have taken steps to ensure ethical treatment of participants as well as ethical analysis of data and presentation of findings. In this section, I offer a brief overview of my efforts to address ethical concerns raised by the study, including my own subjectivity as a researcher.

Because I am studying a student population with which I identify and literacies that resonate deeply with my own, it is important for me to reflect on my subjectivity as a researcher and attendant ethical considerations. I have openly identified myself as working class and as a first-generation college student to study participants. I identified as working class and as first-generation when recruiting students and, when appropriate, in interviews with students. Harding's (2005) articulation of standpoint theory helps me to recognize that choosing to study participants with whom I strongly identify or at least with whom I share similar experiences can be a strength to my research. Harding argues that "[standpoint] theorists have figured out how to use oppressed, dominated, and exploited social positions to identify otherwise hidden realities of social life" (2005, p. 351). In my case, my social position as a working class academic and as a first-generation college student allows for me to identify the otherwise hidden reality that higher education can often be exclusionary, rather than equalizing, especially for working class first-generation college students. I similarly contribute an understanding that classroom literacy instruction can at times be silencing and limits the ways students might think of themselves and their home literacies. Because my subjectivity allows for me to recognize these realities about college environments, this study might eventually identify potential sources of empowerment for these students.

Identifying closely with the population of students I've interviewed also brings particular limitations and challenges that I have tried to anticipate and minimize throughout my data

collection and analysis processes. For example, as working class first-generation college students my participants and I at times shared similar kinds of insider knowledge about our experiences in our home communities, entering college, and practicing literacies in a variety of spaces. For example, some of my students described working in restaurants or working on campus desk jobs while attending UM. Because I also worked these jobs as an undergraduate working class first-generation college student, we had moments of shared understanding about what it's like to wait tables or what it's like to do secretarial work on a college campus and the literacies that these kinds of work require. However, I strived to not let our shared knowledge go unspoken, to not let my own experiences stand in for or speak for similar experiences that my participants have had. Instead, I sought to probe for details about these experience and to practice restraint on my part as I interviewed students; I wanted to hear students' own descriptions and perspectives on these experiences. At the same time, I also recognized that while I might share these particular identities with my student participants, they also each have identities that differ from my own. For example, two of my students, in addition to identifying as working class and first-generation, identified themselves to me in interviews as gay, black, and male. So, while I might have similar experiences to these students in terms of social class and education, even their social and educational experiences are at times different from my own because our identities diverge from one another's in these ways. This is true of all participants: their identities differ from my own in particular way. So, throughout I made sure to listen attentively and probe appropriately when I encountered experiences and identities that differed from my own.

With this understanding of the affordances and limitations of my own subjectivity as a researcher, I value my own subjectivity and my own ability to use qualitative research methods for studying working class first-generation college students and their literacy practices.

Qualitative research methods, especially those that account for students' voices, can help me to more fully describe the complexity of students' literacies across contexts. These methods are also valuable for exploring intersectionality within and among diverse populations of first-generation college students and the kinds of literacy practices those students enact. Qualitative research methods might surface the commonalities in working class first-generation college students' literacies and identities, while also maintaining their nuanced differences. By recognizing these differences and the presence of intersectionality within first-generation student populations even at the University of Michigan, I hope to ethically allow for and recognize a variety of working class first-generation college students' literacies, even and especially those that might be different from my own. Most importantly, qualitative research methods can help to represent the strengths that these students perceive themselves as possessing and drawing from as they navigate between different contexts for literacy within and without the FYW classroom.

In the next chapter, I present findings around participants' college-going and financial literacies develop before and during college. First-gen students have developed these specialized speaking and writing practices in order to navigate their pathways to and through college. In presenting these findings, I argue that participants' abilities to combine these literacies and persist through their undergraduate education are rooted in their unique first-gen and working class inflected experiences with literacy in their home communities—experiences which demand similar resilience from students as persisting through college does.

Chapter 3: College-Going and Financial Literacies

This chapter offers detailed analyses of first-generation college students' talk about their financial literacies and college-going literacies. My data show that first-gens engage in a great deal of literacy development around college-going and around financial management. As is outlined in Chapter 1, literacy development is “the accumulating project of literacy learning across a lifetime, the interrelated effects and potential of learning over time,” and literacy learning is defined as “specific occasions when people take on new understandings or capacities” involving literacy (Brandt, 2001, p. 7). My analyses in this chapter explore first-gens' descriptions of their own literacy development and accumulation of literacy learning around formative college-going and financial experiences or literacy events. In these analyses, I highlight the ways in which first-gens use writing and speaking in specialized ways—what I refer to as college-going and financial literacy practices. My emphases on literacy learning in this chapter aim to better understand what events prompt literacy learning for first-gen students as well as to identify and describe in more detail the particular new capacities, understandings, and literacy practices that first-gens take on in these moments. By also focusing on literacy development, I seek to understand the ways that discrete moments of literacy learning build, accumulate, and complicate students' literacy practices, capacities, and understandings around the complex concepts of college-going and financial management. In my analyses, I focus on both literacy learning and development in order to better understand the array of literacy

practices that first-gens take up, as well first-gens' own perceptions about these literacy practices, throughout their long, complex pathways to college and as they matriculate into college and manage financial challenges along the way.

As first-gen students develop new capacities around college-going and financial literacy practices, they also interact with a wide range of literacy sponsors—including individuals, communities, and institutions that “enable, support, teach, and model as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy” (Brandt, 2001, p. 19). Because first-generation college students' pathways to college are often fraught with social class difference, the concept of literacy sponsors illuminates particular power dynamics embedded within their learning and use of college-going and financial literacy practices. As I analyze the particular college-going and financial literacy practices that these students take up, I also note the particular sponsors—both local and distant, concrete and abstract—who support and model college-going and financial literacies for first-gen students. My analyses reveal that though at times first-gens' uptake of college-going and financial literacies aligns with the goals, purposes, and values of sponsoring individuals, communities, or institutions, in other instances first-gens take up college-going and financial literacy practices while remaining critical of those literacies and of their attending sponsors' values. By remaining critical of certain sponsoring institutions and individuals, first-gens develop the capacity to take on new literacy practices that help them access college even as they critique educational inequality within the stratified educational system they are accessing.

At times, first-gen students' financial and college-going literacy practices are sponsored by their home communities and by specific individuals within those communities who model and support financial or college-going literacy practices. As I will show in this chapter, the financial situations that first-generation college students in this study encounter in their home communities

become hugely motivating factors for pursuing college. Though at times first-generation college students face financial burdens and various barriers on their pathways to college, the financial and college-going literacy practices that these students develop and leverage in response to those challenges, often with support from particular individuals like high school teachers or extended family, are an asset that sets this student population apart from their mainstream middle class and continuing-generation college student peers. At other times, first-gen students' literacy practices are sponsored by peers or programs on campus in college; by interacting with these sponsors from their college contexts, first-gens develop and accumulate an array of college-going literacy practices over time.

As is outlined in Chapter 1, these students' literacies are under-described and under-theorized, especially their literacy strengths. This chapter helps to fill this gap in existing research about first-generation college students by describing in detail the various college-going and financial literacy practices that a group of these students develop on their pathways to college. Examples presented throughout this chapter make clear that first-gens' abilities to learn and apply college-going and financial literacies, as well as their abilities to navigate relationships with a range of literacy sponsors, constitute major strengths in these students' overall literacy repertoires. By better acknowledging first-gens' college going and financial literacies—and by better understanding these students' interactions with literacy sponsors—researchers, teachers, and administrators can begin to construct a fuller, more detailed approach to serving this student population that addresses their literacy strengths and takes seriously the material and financial realities of these students' lives before and during college.

Defining College-Going Literacy

The concept of college-going literacy arose in this project as an inductive code while analyzing students' interview data. For the purposes of this study, college-going literacy includes

the spoken and written literacy practices that students take up or make use of during their college choice processes as well as during their actual enrollment in college and lives on campus. For example, a student's description of doing internet research to decide how many colleges she should apply to constitutes a college-going literacy, as does a student who meets with her peer mentor on campus to map out a semester schedule and choose the courses she will enroll in. Both of these examples qualify as college-going literacy practices because of their deep imbrication in verbal practices including speaking and writing. Additionally, these college-going and financial practices are considered literacies because they are a means of decoding and encoding, and thus navigating, a particular discursive world—namely, the world of college education. That is, these literacies contribute to students' efforts at navigating their pathways to college. In their interviews with me, first-gen students describe their experiences of building and expanding on these college-going literacy practices; this recurring theme of learning and accumulating college-going literacies might be best understood through the term literacy development. Throughout this chapter I use the term development to suggest that even though these practices might at times seem to be discrete or separate from one another in students' descriptions, they have in practice amalgamated with one another as a set over time while individual first-gen students have sought to pursue college and progressed through varying contexts over time in college.

For the first-gen college students that I talked to, college-going literacies were taken up in a variety of contexts including at home, with family, in high school, at work, in extracurricular spaces, and in college settings such as FYW courses. Indeed, these literacies—both the development and practice of them—occupied a distinct and constant concern in the literate lives of first-gen students. While all students' development of literacy learning over time occurs around specific literacy events, for example writing their college application essays, the first-

gens in this study describe taking on new understandings or capacities around college-going and the speaking and writing practices that college-going demands. That is, taken together, these literacy events map the contours of students' literacy development over time. During formative literacy events and literacy learning, first-gens often interact with literacy sponsors like extended family, teachers, or peers residing in a variety of contexts including home, high school, and college contexts.

Overall, first-gen students likely have some similar college-going literacies to those of their mainstream or continuing-generation college student peers. For example, all college students likely need to learn how to choose and register for classes in a given academic semester, and this process often involves particular literacy practices like talking with peers or faculty advisors and completing specific forms. The analyses presented in this chapter show that even in examples of college-going literacy practices that might be common to all students, first-gens' likely learn and develop such literacy practices in different ways and with different kinds of sponsors than mainstream, continuing-generation college student peers might. In the example of registering for classes, continuing-generation students can speak with parents about their past experiences or advice for navigating this process. Contrastingly, first-gens have to turn to sponsors outside their parents, and in this way first-gens' development of this college-going literacy differs from that of their peers.

With these kinds of differences between student populations in mind, I focus most closely on those college-going literacies that seem unique or distinctive to first-gen students. Specifically, students in this study completed Honors, AP, and IB coursework that they perceived as preparing them for college and offering them significant literacy learning and development; though many kinds of students likely complete college-prep coursework, for

several of the first-gen students in this study, this college-prep coursework stands as a gateway to college-going and thus holds a special authority or influence on their literacy learning and development. Additionally, first-gen students in this study view their college application essays as formative writing experiences or literacy events. Participants also report learning such college-going literacies as time management, note-taking, and scheduling in high school and college extracurricular programs. Students report taking up specialized speaking practices in their courses. In each of these examples, first-gens also described interacting with a complex network of literacy sponsors who modeled or supported their development of college-going literacies. In these ways, first-gen students' college-going literacies are marked by their identities and positionalities as people whose parents have not completed college and as people whose social class standings are often different from those of people whose parents have completed college. Perhaps most importantly, first-gens take up these literacies and adapt them to their new college contexts even without parental precedent for them to do so, and in this way their college-going literacies represent a major literacy strength.

Defining Financial Literacy

Financial literacy also arose in this study as an inductive code based on participants' descriptions of managing money in a variety of contexts. For the purposes of this study, financial literacy is defined as students' use of literacies, such as writing and speaking, to manage money, or to plan, navigate, or reflect on financial situations. Students in this study described taking up financial literacies in a variety of contexts including home or family, high school, college, work, and extracurricular contexts; much like college-going literacies, first-gens' financial literacies are learned and accumulated in multiple contexts over time and as such constitute literacy development. At times students' financial literacies spanned multiple contexts simultaneously; for example, some students described working a job in college and using the money they earned

through that job to both pay for their own financial needs and to send money home to family in need of financial support. In these moments, first-gen students used speaking and writing for the specific purposes of managing their finances and solving financial problems on campus or for their families back home—they learned financial literacy practices. Examples like this begin to show that these students’ financial literacies are distinctive to their identities and positionalities as first-gen and working class. That is, their financial literacies are influenced by the material realities of being in the first-generation of their families to attend college. Similarly, these students’ financial literacies are marked by their identities and positionalities as working class people with working class families. Because of these identities and positionalities, these students have varied experiences with financial literacies before and during college—and their financial literacies are distinct from those of their middle-and-upper class or continuing-generation college student peers. Markedly, their financial literacies are a point of pride for first-gens that often help them to build confidence in their own abilities and distinction from more affluent peers, and I offer examples of this development of literacies, pride, and confidence throughout my analyses in the “Combined College-Going and Financial Literacies” section below.

Financial literacy is also a long held and often invoked concept in literacy studies research. Most recently, in her 2012 book about the grandchildren of families from Roadville and Trackton—who are also first-generation college students—Heath invokes financial literacy as influential to her participants’ literacy development and to their pursuits of college education. As I do here, Heath positions financial literacy as influential in different contexts including college, extracurricular, and home or family contexts (2012, p. 97-98). Additionally, Heath describes the financial literacies that young people practice in community organizations, or what I describe as extracurricular contexts (2012). Finally, Heath describes the financial literacies that people use to

secure personal property and wealth for example to buy and maintain a home (2012, 94-95). Like Heath, this study invokes financial literacy in multiple contexts. I also add to Heath's descriptions a focus on the financial literacies that students develop and make use of in work contexts. Building on examples offered by Heath and other literacy studies scholars, this project offers detailed analysis of first-generation college students' talk about their own financial literacies. Findings from these analyses reveal that students' financial literacies are marked by their resilience and complex problem solving abilities—qualities first developed in home contexts that aid first-gens in their persistence to college; in the cases I present in this chapter, first-gens' home communities are often major sponsors of their financial literacies.

Overall, my categories of college-going and financial literacies take up Brandt's definition of literacy in which she acknowledges that "Reading and writing occur instrumentally as part of broader activities (for instance, working, worshipping, governing, teaching and learning, relaxing)" (Brandt, 2001, p. 3). In the analyses that follow, I understand speaking and writing literacy practices to be implicated in the broader activities of college going and financial management.

College-Going Literacies

In the remainder of this chapter, I first analyze the various practices, events, and learning that constitute first-gens' college-going literacies. Next, I shift to an analysis of first-gens' financial literacies—demonstrating the ways in which these financial literacies overlap with college-going literacies and prompt first-gens' to pursue college and to manage the particular financial situations that arise on their pathways to college. Throughout, I take a close look at the various sponsors of literacy that populate first-gens' pathways to college. Overall, these findings reveal that on their pathways to college, first-gens not only develop new college-going and financial literacies, but also navigate a complex system of literacy sponsors—sponsors

originating both in their home communities and in their new college contexts. Though first-gens do face barriers on their way to college, for example often attending high schools and coming from communities where academic college-preparedness is not the norm, their abilities to learn and apply college-going and financial literacies, as well as their abilities to navigate relationships with a range of literacy sponsors along the way, constitute major resources in these students' overall literacy repertoires.

College-Prep Coursework

Specialized high school coursework like Honors, AP, and IB programs often include significant writing and literacy experiences. For example, Sarah described the extensive writing she did for her IB high school including research papers in multiple subjects. Chris also described writing a lot for her AP classes in junior and senior year of high school. Overall, six students in this study described participating in specialized college-prep programs and coursework in high school. Students who took honors, IB, or AP courses often made connections between that high school coursework and preparation for college. Ivy describes the ways that IB and AP coursework are positioned as college prep at her high school, saying "If you're in IB and AP courses, they really, really want you to ... As soon as you take an AP course, they're like, 'Okay, this is what could be transferred. This could be like when you get to college or not.' So as soon as you put the idea out that you want to do these courses, they're like, 'Okay, you want to go to college.'" In Ivy's description, her high school counselors and AP and IB coursework prepared her for applying to and attending college. Specifically, these experiences had her already thinking about such college-going concerns as transfer credits. In other words, Ivy's AP and IB courses were sponsoring institutions that helped her to develop useful college-going literacies on her pathway to college. Ivy goes on to say: "Junior year, they start like branding you

for college. Heavy SAT courses [...] these are classes you should take next year, your senior year, because these are required for the colleges that you want to look into. I started looking at colleges like December of sophomore year.” Ivy’s reflections on her college-going literacies reveals that her high school was an integral literacy sponsor that supported her development of college-going—for example, encouraging her to take the SAT, to take certain college required or preferred courses, and to research college choices early.

Ivy’s experiences show that first-generation college students often rely heavily on their high schools to sponsor and structure in this kind of college preparation. Whereas middle class or continuing-generation students might rely on family, school, or the support of private counselors, the many of the students in this study turned specifically to their high schools to help them on their pathways to college—pathways that called on specialized literacies like those that Ivy describes. Where first-gens are concerned, applying to college demands a complex development and employment of new literacy practices as well as interaction with high school courses, teachers, and counselors as sponsors of college-going literacies.

These students recognized the benefits that enrollment in honors, AP, and IB courses afforded them on their pathways to college. For example, Ivy emphasizes the small classes, tight knit groups of students, and competition and support that those classes offered. Of her IB college-prep coursework, Ivy says: “I had those classmates for two years [...] It was really good, because it's like you grew off of each other. We all helped each other out. They really strived, although it was competitive, they really strived for us to interact, because it was so small.” With her astute evaluation of the social and academic benefits of college-prep coursework, Ivy describes the kinds of sponsorship of college-going literacies provided to her and other AP, IB, and Honors students by their high school.

Several students talked about these courses preparing them to attend college either because of the challenging work required of them or, like in Ivy's example, because of the community and atmosphere of pursuing college that those programs perpetuated. Of these kinds of communities created in high school courses, Tina says, "We all have the same goals in mind because we come from the same area. We're trying to get out of that area. We can do that with a degree. We all have the same goals in mind." Tina's comment demonstrates common college-going literacy practices that she and her classmates share: a desire to pursue higher education as a means of social mobility; because this desire to pursue higher education is often developed and expressed through practices like writing and speaking with like-minded members of first-gens home communities—for example Tina's and Ivy's descriptions of conversation in a community of their peers, I label this desire to pursue college a literacy practice. For first-gen students, going to college is an especially classed, marked goal that can create dramatic social change for them; contrastingly, mainstream middle class and continuing-generation college students might pursue college as a means of maintaining the status quo for their lives and their families. First-gen students feel these distinctions and express them through college-going literacies like those that Tina and Ivy describe. Markedly, IB and AP coursework might at the surface level seem to be only aimed at building academic literacies, at gaining students access to college in the academic sense. But for first-gens, this coursework also allowed for the development of college-going literacies—including taking the SAT multiple times, researching college choices early on in their high school careers, and expressing their desire to pursue college, with the supports of such literacy sponsors as IB and AP coursework and the community of students those courses create.

As they describe these college-going literacies, students also at times critiqued their high school and college contexts and in this way demonstrate a misalignment between their own

values and the values of particular literacy sponsors. Specifically, enrollment in college-prep coursework allowed for some students to recognize the distinctions in their high schools between treatment of students who planned to attend college and those who did not—distinctions that some students felt uncomfortable with. Some students state this difference matter-of-factly, saying that this was simply how things were in their high school: some students were being prepared for college, others were not. However, some students stated their dissatisfaction and discomfort with this divide between students. For example, Ivy comments:

If you were in remedial courses, or you weren't really involved in Honors courses, you didn't really like ... You weren't aware as much [...] That really bothered me a lot, because there are so many kids who when we were taking SAT courses and we took the SATs early as possible, as we could. After we started...after we didn't like our scores and were like, "We're going to retake it," that's when everyone started taking it for the first time, yeah. I was like, "Why aren't we all collectively doing this together?" [...] It was kind of just not nice. Some of my good friends were in those classes too, and it would be weird.

Ivy's comments show the ways in which sponsoring institutions like high school college prep courses can create tension or distance between first-generation college students and their home communities as some students prepare for college and others do not. In this case, the sponsoring institution of college prep courses is supporting the college-going literacy of SAT preparation for some students like Ivy while at the same time withholding that literacy from others including students who were enrolled in remedial coursework. Ivy's observation about this stratification between students in her high school, as well as her discomfort over such stratification, reveals a misalignment between her own values and the values of the sponsoring institution. Moreover,

this example showcases some distinctly first-gen challenges as well as the literacy practices that first-gens develop and use as resources for overcoming those challenges. Some challenges that first-gens face include that pursuing college can be distancing for first-gens who have marked themselves as different than their home communities simply by their efforts to pursue college; additionally, these students face the challenge that pursuing college can entail partnerships with sponsoring institutions whose values might conflict with your own. First-gens subsequently develop college-going literacy practices that allow them to critique educational inequality even as they seek access to college within a stratified educational system. This ability to both pursue college and remain critical of stratification stands as a remarkable strength in first-gens' overall development of college-going literacy practices.

Composing College Application Essays

First-gens experience varying degrees of challenge and success, frustration and fulfillment around their college application essays, but in all cases these essays are formative literacy events that involve literacy learning and taking on new college-going literacies. Previous scholarship holds that working class first-generation college students often express difficulty and apprehension around self-representation (Seitz, 2004; Tingle, 2004). Additionally, the need for effective self-representation continues into college settings, like those described in other examples from this study including Luna's apprehension talking to professors, Sarah's uncertainty around attending a career fair, and several students' experiences working in professional settings on campus. Many students comment on the opportunity for reflection and self-representation that their college application essays offered, including making sense of their own working class and first-gen experiences. For first-gen students, pursuing college can be a jarring experience rife with questions of identity; with these fraught contexts in mind, first-gens'

abilities to practice self-representation, especially in the contexts of a college admissions essay, constitute an influential college-going literacy. For example, Ben talked about putting himself and his voice into his college application essay. For Ben, and for many other students in this study, having this opportunity to represent themselves and their achievements in their college admissions essays was a formative and fulfilling literacy event. Ben says:

If we're gonna talk about my college admissions essay, I think what the beauty of that was that my application kind of [...] you saw what I did in high school, and then you read my paper you could see that this is the same person. [...] So if, you know, I have all these adventuristic things and this really creative mind with all of these academic accolades, you would then in my paper see the creativeness coming along with the academic coming along with the adventure. You know, you would see it all happening together.

For Ben, a performing arts theater major, writing his college application essay offered the opportunity to reflect on and present both his academic and creative achievements. Ben also demonstrates here the college-going literacy of self-representation and its role in composing a successful college admissions essay.

Ben's example demonstrates that college application essays are a good opportunity to learn and develop the common college-going literacy practice of self-representation—a practice that first-gens often have difficulty learning (Setiz, 2004; Tingle 2004); moreover, examples from Ben and other students do not include the same sense of apprehension about self-representation that previous scholarship attributes to first-gen students. Instead, Ben narrates his experience of writing his college application essay with pride and confidence; in this way, major literacy events can allow for first-gens to develop literacy assets around college going—assets that challenge a common deficit model description of first-gen students. By talking with students

directly about their literacy practices, my interviews better account for these kinds of literacy practices and resources that previously have gone overlooked or misrepresented in scholarship about these students.

Alongside representing their academic and professional selves, some students used their college application essays as an opportunity to reflect on and describe their first-generation and working class experiences. For example, Luna describes her high school teachers encouraging her to write about family financial hardships in her college application essay and her subsequent experience doing so. Luna says,

[My teachers] kind of told me to write about my experiences with my parents getting divorced, and my dad leaving, and my mom not having any money. They said that it was very important that you write about this because you kept straight A's while doing this, and it's emotionally traumatizing and what not. It wasn't really that emotionally traumatizing, so I wrote about it. They advised me to talk about my background more, which was kind of cathartic to write about actually. I kind of had some closure with everything that happened with my dad leaving and us losing our house and everything like that.

In this example, Luna's teachers serve as literacy sponsors, supporting her in developing the college-going literacy of self-representation. Luna was encouraged by her teachers to write about the family and financial hardships she faced as a high school student—experiences rooted in her positionality as a working class first-generation college student. Though Luna minimizes the emotional trauma that her teachers tell her was important, she also comments that writing about these experiences was cathartic for her and helped her to gain closure around such issues as her parents' divorce and losing their house to the bank in her senior year of high school. Luna's

example demonstrates that home contexts can become motivations for pursuing college. For many first-gens, financial hardships like those that Luna describes are motivating factors that require resilience from students in their home contexts, and this resilience likely contributes to first-gen students' persistence on their pathways to college. Notably, representing personal identities and experiences such as these can be especially fraught moments for first-gen students whose social class experiences likely stand in stark contrast to the typical social class experiences of middle and upper class continuing-generation college students as well as to the decidedly middle and upper class contexts of college campuses. With the aid of specific literacy sponsors, Luna demonstrates her prowess at this particular college-going literacy of self-representation, and she is encouraged to see her differences from other kinds of students as strengths in her college application.

Students also described literacy sponsorship by extended family like cousins, aunts, and uncles; many students in this study also described support for college-going from friends or neighbors. Because their parents had little expertise about applying to colleges, students instead turned to these extended networks of support and literacy sponsorship. One student, Dana, describes sponsorship from both extended family and teachers while applying to college and writing her admissions essay: "when I wrote my essays, my aunt helped me revise them and stuff." Dana sought help from her aunt, who had returned to night school to pursue a college degree while Dana was a high school student; through her aunt's sponsorship, Dana does some important literacy learning around the formative literacy event of writing a college admissions essay. Additionally, like many of the students here, Dana received support from teachers and counselors at her high school—in this case her college counselor. Dana says "But my college adviser, she helped me look at it first just to like say, 'Oh, well, you know? This doesn't sound

like you probably think that it's supposed to, and just change this. I think this would be better.”

With her adviser's sponsorship, Dana develops new capacities like considering audience and language use in her essay. Through interactions with these sponsors—both extended family and college advisers—Dana demonstrates not only important college-going literacy but also her ability to navigate a complex network of literacy sponsors.

Daquan also engaged literacy sponsors as he sought support for writing and revising his college application essay. Daquan described having support on college essays from his senior year AP English teacher. Daquan says this teacher helped him to add more of his voice into his college essays: “She made it so I wasn't very like textbook definition and more like I put my voice into it. And like, I was actually telling them about myself instead of writing a research paper basically. I was like putting more voice into it. [...] like added my own personal experiences.” For Daquan, Dana, and Luna, sponsorship from high school teachers supported them in revising their college application essays and in more adequately fulfilling tacit expectations for this specialized, fraught genre of writing. By reflecting on their experiences and taking social action to consult with mentors, these first-gen students successfully leverage college-going literacy practices. While all kinds of students might seek feedback for college application essays, these first-gen students have to look beyond immediate family and parents in order to find literacy sponsors with expertise about college-going processes and about the genre of the college application essay. Because these students' parents and families have not attended college and thus have little expertise for navigating the college-going process, support from high school teachers seems especially important to these first-gen students' development of college-going literacies and their navigation of literacy events that populate their pathways to college. These students' dual abilities to engage literacy sponsors and develop new college-going

literacies represent considerable assets in their overall literacy repertoires. While all students might engage sponsors to help them develop college-going literacy practices, my analyses highlight that the first-gen students in this study are proactive about seeking out particular kinds of sponsorship outside of their immediate families and parents.

Time management, note-taking, scheduling

In addition to participating in college-prep coursework and composing college application essays, participants also report learning college-going literacies in high school extracurricular programs. As they enrolled in college, students also joined college extracurricular organizations that supported them in developing and maintaining college-going literacies. In these kinds of extracurricular programs in both high school and college, first-gens report developing such college-going literacies as time management, note-taking, and scheduling. As with college prep coursework and composing college application essays, in their extracurricular programs students also interacted with a range of sponsors who supported their college-going literacies.

In extracurricular contexts, first-gens describing writing for the purposes of time management, scheduling, and note-taking. For example, Tina describes her experience meeting with her academic success partner—an undergraduate upperclassman—in the UM extracurricular group Leaders and Best, saying “when I'm with my mentor meeting we write a lot of different things, it just depends on what's planned for that week. I remember last week we wrote out a daily schedule, like what we were going to be doing for every hour and things like that. Just the focus for that exercise was just to map out time management essentially.” Importantly, this extracurricular space offers students the opportunity to consult with such literacy sponsors as peer mentors and through these sponsors to learn and practice college-going

literacies like time management and scheduling. In examples such as this, extracurricular contexts are especially important settings for first-gen students to build college-going literacies in a safe space with the support of literacy sponsors.

Overall, three students in this study described participating in the Leaders and Best program, and the college-going literacies they developed there were also taken up outside that setting as students navigated their individual pathways through college in general. In one case, Tina demonstrates that the sponsorship around literacy learning in this extracurricular group helps her to develop and continue these kinds of college-going literacies on her own as well, Tina explains that “at like the beginning of the semester when things aren't as heavy with homework and readings and things like that, and I have time to actually sit down and think about what I want to achieve for this semester” she takes up literacy practices around time management and scheduling in college. Tina attributes her habits of mapping out goals and scheduling to “people telling me to do it, like mentors and upperclassmen, and I think just giving me their personal experiences. I think that has helped me.” Through the support she has received from literacy sponsors (upperclass peer mentors) in Leaders and Best, Tina has developed and begun to regularly practice these college-going literacies. In addition to continuing to write out her goal setting and scheduling for the semester, Tina also says her participation in Leaders and Best helps her to reflect on and be more aware of her college-going experiences. Tina says, “it makes you more aware of why you're here and what you're doing well and what you need to work on to help your experience here at the university.” By developing college-going literacies like goal setting, time management, scheduling, and awareness of their own habits in an extracurricular group with the support of literacy sponsors, Tina and her peers expand their literacy repertoires.

Students also described developing college-going literacies in extracurricular settings in high school. For example, students reported joining groups in their high schools and home communities like Upward Bound, QuestBridge, and Midnight Golf—all of which shepherd students through the college application process and offer students financial support for the college application process. Chris, Dana, Sarah, and Jason all describe joining these kinds of extracurricular groups aimed at getting high school students to college. Students describe many college-going literacies learned through these extracurricular programs. Chris describes that she “learned a lot about note taking. I’m someone who, I like to write a lot of things down, but it’s not really organized. So we learned different ways to organize our notes. I think I combined a few things. What else? There’s time management. Yeah, those things have stuck with me throughout the years and I really think about that.” For Chris, writing strategies like organizing her notes are college-going literacies first learned and encountered through the sponsorship of a high school extracurricular program. These kinds of college-going literacies might be taken for granted by other kinds of students, but for many first-generation college students learning these literacies with the support of a sponsoring program affords access to college culture and helps them to persist to college.

Speaking in College Contexts

Notably, many of the examples of college-going literacies offered thus far in this chapter (completing college-prep coursework, composing college application essays, time management, scheduling, and note taking) combine both writing and speaking practices. As a part of learning specialized college-going literacies, students speak with classmates, peer mentors, teachers, and other sponsors of literacy. Students in this study commented on the specialized spoken literacy

practices demanded of them in college as well as on the particular sponsors who modeled or supported their development of such spoken college-going literacy practices.

Specifically, Luna, Tom, and Dana commented on spoken college-going literacy practices demanded of them in college. Luna describes her experience of observing classmates introducing themselves to the professor on the first day of classes. Luna says other students “would go up and introduce themselves to their professors on the first day of class. And like I didn’t really know if that was normal or not. [...] Then maybe this is one of those first-gen things. I’ve always wondered this. I’ve wondered if kids whose parents have gone to college have told them if you’re supposed to talk to your professors or not.” In this example, Luna’s classmates serve as literacy sponsors as they model the college-going literacy of introducing oneself to professors. Because she is the first person in her family to go to college, Luna cannot turn to her parents to seek advice about such college-going literacies as introducing oneself to professors. Luna does reflect on the difference in literacy sponsorship between herself and her classmates—she presumes that her classmates may have learned this literacy through their parents while she has not and instead encounters this literacy for the first time through her classmates. Through her peers’ sponsorship, Luna learns that speaking to professors and introducing oneself to professors is a normative literacy practice in college.

Other students, including Tom and Dana, anticipated and experienced some anxiety around the spoken literacy practices that might be demanded of them in college. Tom was specifically anxious about the quality of his high school sciences and preparation for his biology major at UM, and he says that when he first started courses here, he thought that “some of the words that they’d use would be like very specific to the scientific field, that I wouldn’t have known. But, actually I’ve never had a class where a professor was speaking and I didn’t

understand like what he was saying or what she was saying. And even if they did mention something that they'd know people didn't know what it was, they'd clarify it." Because first-gen students often have little familiarity and little immediate experience with people who've successfully completed college, these kinds of assumptions about college and college preparedness abound. In Tom's case, his professors serve as literacy sponsors who model spoken college-going literacy practices like using specific scientific jargon in academic contexts. Whereas interacting with professors and using field-specific scientific jargon might be literacies taken for granted by mainstream students, some first-gens anxiously anticipate and mindfully cultivate these spoken college-going literacies.

Dana similarly develops spoken college-going literacies with the aid of literacy sponsors. Dana's development of spoken college-going literacies begins before she even enrolled at UM. Dana describes visiting UM as a high school student, being paired with an undergraduate student ambassador, and observing that student's courses at UM. Of this experience, Dana says "One of her classes was a big lecture I forgot how many people was in it, but it was one of the bigger classes. Then she also had a very small class with 20 people in it. That was interesting for me to see because at first I thought that all the classes at UM were just huge." For Dana the opportunity to visit UM and observe courses helped her to learn about the structure of the university and the experience of different courses there—to develop college-going literacies around courses and coursework. Importantly, Dana goes on to describe the ways that students spoke in the courses she observed, and her descriptions demonstrate her cultivation of spoken college-going literacy practices. She comments that "Some of the different language that [students] used, I was just like, man, I've never heard anyone speak like this. [...] It was like scholarly almost. You could tell they're really educated and they're really passionate about the stuff that they were learning

just from some of the vocabularies they took the time to learn.” Even though Dana’s observations of these students are brief and limited to this one instance, these undergraduate students serve as literacy sponsors as they model college-going literacies like vocabulary use and class discussion. Dana goes on to describe how these sponsors influenced her own learning around spoken college-going literacies. Dana reflects: “before I came to college, I thought I was just going to go in, like have this really big vocabulary, and just be able to talk about anything. But it's kind of like the way people work towards it. They learn more, so they have more to say about it. That's kind of how they gain their knowledge of it.” More experience and exposure to college have shown Dana that college-going literacies, such as specialized vocabulary and ways of speaking, are and can be learned, rather than inherent qualities or qualities automatically bestowed on people who go to college. Taken together, Dana and Tom’s experiences showcase the anxiety around college preparedness that first-gen students may experience as well as the ways in which these students overcome such anxieties, aided by sponsors such as college student peers and professors, and develop college-going literacies around speaking.

Combined College-Going and Financial Literacies

First-generation college students also practice financial literacies in combination with college-going literacies. Often, these financial literacies are sponsored by students’ working class home communities. Students practiced these financial literacies before and during college, and they constitute a considerable asset to these students’ overall literacy repertoires. In particular, first-gen students demonstrate financial literacy when they use speaking and writing to express their motivations to pursue college and as they manage financial hardships during college. As noted in Chapter 1 and in the introductory sections of this chapter, my analysis of first-gens’ financial literacies adopts an expansive definition of literacy wherein literacy is understood to be specialized writing or speaking practices. Where financial literacy is concerned, this expansive

view of literacy allows for me to “do justice to” (Brandt, 2001, p. 19) the material realities of first-gens’ lives before and during college as well as the range of practices and purposes that first-gens use speaking and writing for as they pursue college and manage its attendant financial situations and consequences.

Financial Motivations to Pursue College

While the children of middle class or college-educated parents might attend college as the next expected step in their education, first-gen students have very consciously made the decision to attend college even though there has been no familial precedent set to do so. In our interviews together, I asked students what motivated them to make that decision, to set themselves apart from their parents and their families and to pursue college after high school. In this section, I analyze students’ responses to this interview question and demonstrate a particular set of financial literacy practices that first-gens take up: the use of speaking and writing to express a motivation or desire to pursue college as a way of changing their financial standing. This set of literacy practices is deeply imbricated in first-gens’ literate lives and interactions, often through speaking, with other people in their communities.

Oftentimes, these students were motivated to attend college by the financial pressures they had experienced growing up in their families or by their observation that certain kinds of careers help to alleviate that financial pressure, and that these careers are achievable by attending college. In this way, first-generation college students’ working class home communities helped to sponsor their financial literacy. One way in which first-gens’ home communities serve as sponsors of financial literacies is by exemplifying financial hardships that in turn motivate first-gens to attend college. As Brandt points out, sponsors may be “any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract” that support or withhold literacies (2001, p. 19). In many of the examples of

college-going literacy offered above, first-gens' literacies are sponsored by concrete, local agents including classmates, high school teachers, or professors. Where financial literacies are concerned, first-gens' literacies are often sponsored by the accumulation of financial experiences, influences, and agents in their home communities. First-gens' peers in college also help to sponsor their financial literacies, though in a markedly different way than their families do. As I will show in this section, first-gen students report perceiving their upper and middle class peers as having unlimited resources and considerable financial support from parents and families; however, many of the first-gens in this study do not feel less-than or deficient as a result of their interactions with wealthier peers. Instead, first-gen students' interactions with wealthier peers often engender pride and confidence in their own financial self-sufficiency. As local agents who model financial literacy practices markedly different from first-gens' own, first-gens' more traditional college student peers serve as sponsors of financial literacy—supporting (through contrast) first-gens' development of pride and confidence in their own abilities to manage financial situations. Analyses throughout this section reveal that even as first-gens develop financial literacy practices, they also navigate a complex system of distinct and differing sponsors of literacy; as is also the case with college-going literacy practices, first-gens' development of financial literacy practices are major strengths in these students' overall literacy repertoires.

First-gens in this study learn combined college-going and financial literacy practices through the cumulative examples of financial hardship and financial management they encounter in their home communities. For example, when I asked Jack how he decided that he would attend college, he responded:

When I figured out it was necessary. So, I grew up with major financial troubles. Just always. And so I realized I didn't want that for my life. I didn't ever want to have to struggle, and if I decide to have a family, I don't want them to ever have to struggle. Or to ever have to worry about having food on the table or having clothes or whatever. I didn't want that for my family. I didn't want that for myself. So, I realized that college is the only way to not do that [...] I realized that...middle school sometime.

For Jack, the decision to attend college started as early as middle school, and he made this decision in part through the sponsorship of his home community. Specifically in this example, Jack decided to pursue college by observing the financial troubles his family had undergone and making the connection that college could alleviate or prevent those kinds of financial hardships—I position this realization that college can alleviate or prevent financial hardship as a financial literacy practice. Overall, about six students offered similar examples of family financial troubles as a motivator for their decision to pursue and attend college.

At times, sponsorship from home communities came from concrete, local sponsors such as high school teachers. For example, Jack also describes his high school English teacher as a sponsor of his combined college-going and financial literacies. Elaborating on his first response, Jack says he realized that going to college would help him to avoid financial troubles in part because of his teachers: “Because I'd either not have money for food and teachers would see that. I would be...I would have like a mental break down because of all the shit that was going on at home, and teachers...they'd pay attention to that. And so they would talk to me...they're like, college. This is what you do. This is how you get away from this. This is how you make a change. This is how you go out and do something with your life. You go to college. That is your step.” In Jack's case, his high school teachers and home community provided both concrete and

abstract, local and distant sponsorship of his college-going and financial literacies. His teachers provided local, concrete sponsorship while the amalgam of financial struggles from his home community provided a more abstract kind of sponsorship. In combination, this sponsorship helped Jack to infer that going to college would help him to avoid financial struggles and thus started him on his pathway to college.

Though he views college as a way to escape financial struggles, Jack does not take a wholly instrumentalist or consumerist approach to college as previous scholarship has suggested can be common for first-gens to do (Magolda and Magolda, 2011; Terenzini et al., 1996). That is to say, that though Jack demonstrates financial literacy in his realization that college can help to alleviate financial burdens, his pursuit of college is not only motivated by this financial literacy. Instead, Jack combines financial literacy and additional college-going literacy practices to pursue college for the dual purposes of financial security and personal fulfillment. For example, Jack is pursuing Psychology and Criminal Justice majors at UM, working in a Psychology lab on campus, and serving in the local prisons through a campus outreach program. These contexts, and Jack's roles in them, help Jack to not only pursue a career in Criminology (his intended professional field), but also to participate in other goals and purposes of learning in college, including academic inquiry, personal enrichment, and giving back to home communities. Jack's initial pathway to college is marked by a desire to escape financial struggles; however, he also moves beyond that initial financial literacy practice and motivation to pursue college with other related goals and purposes in his pursuit of his college degree. Jack's development of these multiple literacy practices around college-going and finances before and during college represent considerable resources in his overall literacy repertoire.

First-gen students in this study cited their family's financial hardship as motivation to not only attend college but also to be financially successful and to give back or take care of their families financially later on. These students' desires to give back demonstrate college-going and financial literacies. For example, Jason explains: "The stress that I see my Dad go through, trying to make it from paycheck to paycheck. I don't want to go through that stress. I know what I want to do that makes me happy, which will be helping people, will help me. I won't be working class. Also I want to take care of my Dad when I get older." Here Jason cites his father's example of living paycheck to paycheck as a motivator for him to try and be successful; in this way, Jason's father acts as a kind of literacy sponsor—modeling for Jason the kinds of financial hardships that then motivate Jason to pursue college. In Jason's case, being successful means financial stability along with helping others as he plans to use his college education to pursue a career as a doctor. Throughout our interviews, Jason remained passionate about pursuing a career in a medical field, and like Jack he pursued his future intended profession through coursework, work in a lab on campus, and leadership in relevant extracurricular groups including the Black Undergraduate Medical Association. In this way, Jason's pathway through college, like Jack's, has helped him to not only move towards a more secure financial future but also to learn and develop academically, professionally, and personally throughout his time in college. Overall, Jason's critique of his dad's financial hardships and initial motivation to pursue college demonstrate financial literacy, and his astute reflection on those hardships as a motivator for his own college education and future career demonstrates college-going literacy. In this way, Jason's combination of financial and college-going literacies is a sophisticated literacy strength specific to his experiences as a working class first-generation college student.

Jason is also motivated by his desire to take care of his dad financially, and many students in this study described similar motivators. Tom says, “One of my goals is like as soon as I’m successful hopefully I’ll be able to like make [my mom] live comfortably.” Specifically, Tom describes taking care of his mom, taking her on trips, and buying her jewelry as well as giving back to his older brothers who have worked to support their family instead of going to college. This kind of giving back to their parents, families, and home communities was often described as motivation for students to pursue college and be financially successful themselves. With these examples, first-gen students demonstrate both financial and college-going literacies through which they develop and express their desires to disrupt or change their financial situations through their own education and careers.

At times, financial factors also influence students to motivate one another in college. For example, Daquan explains: “when my friends say man I don’t want to do college anymore. And then another friend will be like no we have to do college. It’s like important. We got to protect...we got to like give back to our families. And then they’re like you’re right, you’re right, and then we just get back to our work. [...] It’s like just a reminder to us why we’re doing this.” Like Daquan and his friends, many students in this study stated that they wanted to give back to their families and communities and that they wanted to provide financially for their families after finishing their college degree and starting a career. Notably, Daquan’s example showcases both the challenge that first-gens face in trying to persist through college as well as the literacy practices they learn and develop in response to that challenge. In Daquan’s case, talking with friends on campus about their motivations for pursuing college is a specialized college-going and financial literacy practice that further encourages them to “do college”; though they may not be talking explicitly about finances in this example, Daquan and his friends’ motivation to “give

back to our families” mirrors comments from other students in this study, including Tom and Jason, who clarify that giving back to their families also entails providing for them financially. In this example, Daquan and his friends serve as one another’s literacy sponsors, supporting and modeling for each other the desire to continue pursuing college and to give back financially to their families. Overall, the desire to give back financially to their homes and communities, and the ability to discuss this motivation and thus serve as sponsors for one another, is a combined financial and college-going literacy practice founded in these students’ identities and positionalities as first-gen and working class.

In some cases, financial motivations to pursue college grew out of students’ workplace experiences, and in these cases too agents from students’ home communities serve as literacy sponsors. Every student in this study has worked and held a job, either while in high school, in college, or both. Several students described interactions at work that reinforced their decisions and desires to pursue college. For example, Henry talked about working fifty hours a week in the summer as a landscaper. At this job, Henry worked with many other working class people, most of whom were not attending four-year colleges like he was. From this experience, Henry describes having conversations with his coworkers about college and college-going, and these conversations demonstrate both financial and college-going literacies that he developed with the support of his home community: “There’s four other kids my age. We’re all in the same grade. I don’t know how that happened. Yeah, but they were all going to community colleges for ... They don’t even know what they’re doing yet with their life. Or they’re not in college. Then Chris, he didn’t go to college at all, the foreman guy. He’s in his 30s now, and he’s just doing landscaping.” By working in college, first-generation college students remain embedded in their working class communities and maintain particular literacies during college that were first cultivated in those

working class home and work contexts. In Henry's case, working during college puts him in contact with other students his age who have pursued alternate forms of higher education or alternate career paths without pursuing college at all. By working as a landscaper in the summers during college, Henry develops distinctive college-going and financial literacies—literacies that are grounded in his experience working in a blue-collar, labor intensive setting and interacting with people of working class financial and social class statuses. Moreover, his coworkers and foreman serve as literacy sponsors, modeling alternate college-going literacies.

Moreover, Henry says that conversing with his coworkers, particularly with his foreman, helps him to stay motivated to pursue college: “We talked a lot. He regrets it now, because he's working a lot, and he's 30 something, and he's trying to get a life. He's only making \$14.50 an hour. It's just...that would suck. It was really hard. He was like, ‘I understand. You stay.’ He always told me, ‘Stay in college. I know it's probably really hard, but you're probably the smartest one here.’ They always said that too, I was the smartest. I don't know. It was weird.” Henry's experience shows the ways in which first-generation college students remain embedded in their home communities even while attending college. Henry returned home and lived with his family and worked this landscaping job in the summer between his first and second years in college. From this position embedded in his home community, Henry gains college-going literacies—namely, the motivation to pursue college and thus change his financial status—by the examples and advice of his coworkers. By remaining embedded in this community, Henry develops financial literacies like a first-hand understanding of earning wages and what kinds of wages are available to people who are very similar to him except that they have not pursued college. His foreman Chris encourages him to stay in college despite the challenges that college-

going poses, and Henry's reflection on this advice demonstrates the influence of sponsors from his home community on his development of college-going and financial literacies.

Managing Finances in College

All fifteen students in this study report managing a variety of financial situations in college including working to provide for themselves or to help out with family financial hardships back home. While doing so, students make use of campus resources and interacted with wealthier or more financially privileged peers; in these cases, particular programs and resources on campus help to sponsor first-gens' college-going and financial literacies as do first-gens' undergraduate student peers and classmates. While managing these financial situations and interacting with a variety of literacy sponsors, students also question and critique financial and social class systems. In these ways, first-gens' financial literacies in college demonstrate a considerable asset in their overall literacy repertoires.

Students in this study commented on the influence of work and financial constraints on their college experiences. For example, Ben describes working full time in the summers and part time during the semester to help him get by financially in college. Ben describes this experience of working as "Hard. Not easy. I'm not in the best place financially. Working, working. I'm working, like this summer I probably worked fifty-hour weeks, stayed in [town] 'cause going home and coming back was just financially not feasible. You know, working twenty hour weeks as a student, on a eighteen credit schedule." Ben describes a common experience for all students in this study: working a job while going to school. In many cases, students have transitioned from watching their parents work and live paycheck to paycheck to working and living that way themselves as college students. While working full time in the summers and part time in the semester is hard for Ben and poses some obvious challenges to his life in college, I argue that he

has also likely developed important strategies for success like discipline and resilience to stay working, financially afloat, and succeeding in college simultaneously.

Like Ben, Jack also offers a useful reflection on the kinds of financial situations first-gens face and manage in college. Jack describes his first-gen experiences saying, “Mostly just like not knowing or having a precedent for college in general. For being an adult in college. So, having to manage school and work and bills and all of that sort of thing. I don’t have a precedent for that. I don’t have anyone to tell me how to buy books or if I should even buy the books or rent the books. I don’t...I don’t have people to tell me that. So I’m just kinda paving the way.” Jack’s explanation showcases the resilience and financial boundary-crossing that college demands of first-generation college students. Many of the first-gen college students in this study demonstrated the kind of managing work and bills that Jack describes as well as the mindset and experience of paving the way that he attributes to being first-gen. Importantly, college comes with major financial obligations, and first-gens prove themselves to be resilient problem solvers in tackling these obligations. As they manage these financial situations in college, first-gens often leverage writing and speaking in specialized ways—for example by conversing with coworkers about financial motivations for pursuing college—combining both college-going and financial literacies.

Many first-gens work during college in order to manage major educational expenses like computers, textbooks, study abroad, and off campus housing, and in doing so these students cultivate financial literacies. In approaching these major expenses, students draw on such local sponsors as well as more distant or abstract sponsors like loans and financial aid. One student, Jason, describes financing a computer, saying, “I took a loan out because I wanted to buy a computer that was reliable.” Similarly, Beth described managing her finances and saving up

from her job at a nursing home in order to buy a computer for college. Other students describe textbooks as a major expense that they manage in different ways. Ivy says, “ [My mom] helped me pay for books my freshman year, but this year I worked the summer and I paid for my books.” In Ivy’s case, both family support and saving up from working a summer job helps to manage the major financial burden that textbooks pose. Tina relies on resources and input about finances from her peer mentor in the Leaders and Best program; Tina says, “She brings me a lot of resources...just about a lot...specifically the off campus housing and scholarships while you're currently a student. She definitely gives me a lot of resources about different things.” With these examples, first-gen students show financial prowess in anticipating and solving considerable financial expenses throughout their time in college. Additionally, they navigate a complex system of literacy sponsors from family, to peers, to university financial aid, to external loans and funding. These examples also showcase the resilience and financial boundary crossing that featured as a recurring theme in first-gens’ talk about managing finances in college.

Perhaps not surprisingly, students in this study also worked for pay in order to help manage their family’s financial hardships back home, and these family financial hardships are influential to students’ financial literacies. In these instances, first-gens begin to live out and put to practice their motivations for pursuing college—described earlier in this chapter—including being financially successful and giving back to their parents and families. For example, Jack describes sending money and goods home to his mother, the primary caregiver for his family. Jack says he remains involved in family finances “because I’m concerned for [my mom]. Because she is the primary caretaker to the majority of my siblings and then also my nephew. So, she has a lot weighing at all times, and so I try to help out as much as I can.” Jack’s experiences exemplify that first-gen students remain embedded in their home communities, and in their

family's financial situations, even while managing their individual lives and finances in college. In Jack's case, these family financial situations are managed and resolved through the use of financial literacies—of specialized, writing, speaking, and digital practices. For example, Jack describes managing major family financial burdens like a car as well as regular, everyday expenses like groceries and diapers:

I bought a car over the summer. And so, you know all the things that come with owning a car, insurance and all of that nonsense. And so, because I'm here and it costs three hundred dollars a year to have a car on campus, I decided to not do that. So I left my car at home. So we had an agreement for my mom and stepdad to pay the car insurance for it every month because I'm not using it, but they are or whatever. And because of the current financial standing, my brother being a deadbeat, I said okay, fine, I will handle that. I'll take care of that. So now I'm paying that again, not a big deal. But I also will buy groceries or diapers for instance. Amazon is great for diapers, I just bought a big ass box [...] So Amazon's a great thing that I have. I pay for prime too. So, I just send whatever she needs. I'll text her every couple days saying do you need something? She will argue with me about it for ten minutes straight. But I will still go ahead and buy whatever she needs.

Jack's example includes such financial literacies as buying a car, maintaining car insurance payments, negotiating payments with his family, using Amazon to buy and send groceries or diapers, and texting with his mom to decipher his family's financial needs. Each of these examples constitutes a specialized speaking, writing, or digital literacy practice that Jack has adopted and adapted in order to manage not only his own but also his family's financial situations. Even as he is away in college at UM, Jack manages his family's financial hardships,

demonstrating resilience and financial boundary crossing back and forth between home and college contexts—and his strategies for doing so constitute major literacy resources specific to his identity and experiences as a working class first-generation college student.

Jack's pattern of managing family financial situations in college was common among study participants. Even though Jack's family lives in a major city about three hours away from UM, he remains embedded in their lives and financial management on a regular, more-than weekly basis. Daquan similarly remains embedded in his family's finances, particularly when he visits them back in their home city, which is only forty minutes away from UM. Of his involvement in family financial situations, Daquan says "sometimes I pay the bills, and I check the banking account [...] When I'm home like they make me pay the bills [...] when my sister's in school they make me do it, get on the computer paying their bills. [...] like the family bills [...] yeah she's usually the one that does it [because] she's home, and they don't know how to work a computer." Similarly to Jack, Daquan combines specialized writing, speaking, and digital literacies to help pay his family's bills and keep track of their finances. Daquan's management of his family's financial situation is also influenced by his family structure. In addition to being a first-generation college student Daquan is a first-generation American. His parents, his older sister, and he were born in Bangladesh, and they immigrated to the United States when Daquan was only one year old. Daquan also has two younger sisters who were born in the U.S. Interestingly, Daquan speaks English and identified English as his first language, but he also understands and communicates with his parents in Bengali, though he does not describe himself as speaking Bengali. With this context in mind, Daquan's management of his family's finances involves communicating in multiple languages as well as navigating digital literacies that he describes his parents as incapable of.

At other times, students' awareness of their family's financial hardships makes them more critically aware of broader systemic financial concerns, and this kind of awareness is a sophisticated financial literacy. Notably, an awareness of their families' financial hardships helps students to be more empathetic towards people's financial struggles in general. Armin compares his personal finances to that of his parents, saying: "I mean like, I might even have more saved up than [my parents] with like my measly couple thousands. Because they're spending like all they have on keeping themselves afloat. But the problem is what happens when that goes away? They're really just counting on social security to be there for them. And a lot of people do that, but that is a tight life." Importantly, Armin distinguishes between his own and his family's financial situations, positioning himself as more financially secure than his family is. However, Armin's distancing of himself from his family also displays critical literacy around financial systems like social security as well as reflective empathy for people like his parents who rely on such financial systems rather than relying on their own abilities to save and manage financially. This kind of financial literacy has developed out of Armin's familiarity with his family's finances as well as his efforts to approach his own finances differently than his parents do theirs; in other words, these financial literacies have developed out of Armin's positionality and identity as a working class first-generation college student. Armin's experience highlights the trend in participants' talk about their literacies wherein family financial hardships, rather than resulting in shame or dejectedness from first-gens, engenders pride and confidence in their own financial self-sufficiency. First-gen students' families have motivated them to succeed financially.

Even as they manage major financial expenses in college themselves, participants also comment on their peers' approaches to managing finances, often emphasizing the stark differences between their own financial situations and that of their middle class and continuing-

generation peers. Because first-gen, working class, and low-income students are in the minority at UM, and middle and upper class students are decidedly a majority, first-gens at UM often encounter wealth and financial privilege on campus. Specifically, participants rightly perceived many of their classmates as wealthier and as having their finances taken care of by their parents. For example, Daquan says:

There was this girl in my class last year, she told me like she was on a budget of like a hundred and fifty dollars a week. I'm like, a week, hundred and fifty dollars. I was like, wow. I...I didn't say it to her, but I was just thinking like, wow that's a lot. That's like my budget for like probably two or three months. 'cause I don't spend much money. [...]

They have like extravagant...like they go out shopping all the time. Stuff like that. I was like, wow.

For first-gen students who come from working class families and home communities, going away to college affords the opportunity to interact with new and different kinds of people than students might already be familiar with. One aspect of this interaction includes examples like Daquan's in which first-gen students realize and come in close contact with wealthier and more financially privileged people than they might otherwise or previously have encountered. By taking up the speaking practice of conversing with wealthier classmates about financial matters and in making these comparisons between his own financial situation and that of his wealthier classmates, Daquan practices financial literacy. In Daquan's case, interacting with wealthier peers in college demonstrates his skills in boundary crossing; moreover, when he comes in contact with wealthier students who receive financial support from their families, Daquan expresses pride and confidence in his own financial self-sufficiency and problem solving.

In some cases, interactions with other students allowed for a mutual exchange or

comparison of financial literacies wherein both first-gens and their classmates learn something new about one another's financial situations, and in these cases first-gens and their peers help to sponsor one another's financial literacy learning. In one example, Armin describes a conversation he had with another student about renting off-campus housing. Armin says:

There's another kid in my class in one of my classes that like we were discussing like apartments, and he's like eighteen. so like I was tryna give him like a little bit of advice [...] And he was just discussing like what amenities each place he was thinking about had and things like that. I'm like okay. And it came to a point where I was like well what's your budget. You know, like what are you, what are you planning on spending each month. And like, he had never even considered a budget you know. And to me that's how I picked a home, is like you know I can't go above like eight hundred say, so like what is available at eight hundred and where is it. But to him it was like the amenities were the first thing. And that's, and that I think is a class distinction. Like he was only thinking about like his wants, and I was only thinking about my needs, and also my wants but like that was the focus is like okay I need to spend eight or less because I'm gonna need that other money. And like eight's a lot, and so like for him to spend like fifteen, as long as he's getting everything he wanted like that was, that was fine.

Like Daquan, Armin is taken aback by his classmate's budget, which far exceeds his own. Many students in this study discussed off-campus housing as a major financial expense that they had to negotiate in different ways, and Armin showcases this point in his example. Moreover, Armin comments on the difference between his and his classmates' mindsets that accompany those budgets, demonstrating financial literacy. Armin says he focuses most on financial needs, while his classmate focuses on amenities and wants; Armin attributes this difference in mindset to

social class, saying “that I think is a class distinction.” Importantly, this example again shows that college exposes first-gen students to new and different kinds of people who have a range of financial statuses and a range of financial literacies.

In both Daquan and Armin’s cases, encountering a wealthier student with greater financial means was surprising and jarring. However, both Daquan and Armin leverage this encounter with financial differences between themselves and their classmates as an opportunity to take pride in their own financial problem solving and self-sufficiency. For example, Armin went on to describe the interaction between him and his classmate further, and his description shows that he has learned and developed sophisticated capacities and knowledge around financial literacies:

I said okay well who’s, who’s paying for this, your folks? ‘Cause I mean for an eighteen year old to have that kind of money didn’t make any other sense. And he was just like, yeah my folks are paying for it. He might not have said that, implied. And then I was like oh man that’s nice dude. I wish I had that. He was like, your parents don’t help you pay for stuff? And I was like no they don’t. And you know he’s young too so he doesn’t realize especially...And so he’s just like why not. And I was like, they can’t. You know like, it’s not a possibility.

In this example, Armin and his classmate both encounter a new approach to managing finances. Armin’s classmate learns that some students do not have family or parental financial support to cover their living expenses in college; Armin learns that some students do rely on family financial support in college. This kind of social exchange around finances demonstrates the kind of financial boundary crossing that first-gen students like Armin learn and develop in college. In these moments, students like Armin practice financial literacy as they open up conversations

about financial and social class differences between themselves and their peers.

Even as first-gens encounter new and different financial statuses to their own, they also find and build community with students similar to them on campus at UM. Specifically, Jack talks about his experience interacting with other students in the bridge program versus students on campus in general. Of his peers in the bridge program, Jack says, “These people are more accustomed to having to work hard to do things instead of having everything handed to them. Not trying to say that everyone here gets everything handed to them on a silver platter, ’cause that’s an over generalization. But, the ones who are in bridge are typically the ones who know how to work, and they come from backgrounds where they’ve faced challenges.” In this example, Jack demonstrates the financial literacy of distinguishing between differing financial statuses he encounters on campus through his interactions with his classmates. For first-gen students, who typically might feel isolated from campus culture, building community with students who face similar financial situations and challenges is an important practice combining both financial and college-going literacies. Markedly, even as he describes differences in these populations of students—students in bridge and students at UM in general—Jack is careful not to overgeneralize about students who he perceives as different from him. And this ability to recognize differences and resist overgeneralization constitutes both college-going and financial literacy that many students in this study displayed as they described the differences among students on campus, including financial differences. Overall, the financial literacies that participants demonstrated in our conversations together are heavily influenced by their identities and positionalities as first-generation college students as well by the material realities of their lives before and during college; as they manage financial situations in college, first-gens draw on both financial and college-going literacies in a variety of ways. This array of complex literacies

is certainly a strength that first-gens have cultivated that sets them apart from their upper and middle class and continuing-generation college student peers.

At times, participants also made use of campus resources to support them in navigating financial situations during college as in Tina's above example of learning about how to manage off-campus housing costs from her peer mentor in the Leaders and Best program. These students' experiences using campus resources again showcase financial literacies as well as their abilities to navigate relationships and interactions with sponsors of literacy. For example, Sarah describes the First-Gens at UM extracurricular group and Facebook page as important sponsors that helped her to learn and share about financial resources in college. At the First-Gens at UM meeting, Sarah describes having a conversation about financial aid with other members of the student group: "Financial aid, that was a conversation because some of us have it handled differently than others. It's like, 'Wait, how do they handle it for you? How do we handle it?' [...] Just from there, it's voicing your experience with financial aid." In this example, Sarah and other first-gen students practice financial literacy as they converse about financial aid systems and enact peer mentorship for one another. Importantly, this example takes place in the First-Gens at UM student group, a safe space for first-gens to come together and share their experiences. By participating in this student group, Sarah gains a more nuanced understanding of the various college-going and financial pathways available to her and to other students at UM. Sarah goes on to describe her use of the First-Gens at UM Facebook page. On this group page, members often share resources like links to financial aid, scholarships, and other supports. Sarah describes her experience of sharing a financial resource with the group on their Facebook page. Sarah says, "I posted when I found out about spring-summer scholarships through the university. [...] At a previous meeting, we had been talking about how to afford staying in [town] over the summer. I

think I had mentioned that I was going to apply to that. [...] I thought if anyone else was in a similar situation, then I'd share it with them.” Through the Facebook page for the First-Gens at UM student group, Sarah enacts financial literacy through the practice of sharing a financial aid resource with her peers. Moreover, this example combines both college-going and financial literacies: Sarah shares a scholarship that would allow students to stay on campus in the spring and summer semesters and to complete coursework in those semesters. In this way, Sarah leverages complex literacies, both financial and college-going, in order to help sponsor her classmates’ literacy learning and support them through their pathways in college.

Conclusions

These examples of first-generation college students’ financial and college-going literacies practiced during their time in college indicate considerable strengths in first-gens’ overall literacy repertoires. These examples engage with the literacy framework set out in Chapter 1 of this dissertation in the following ways: when first-gens encounter formative literacy events on their pathways to college, for example composing college application essays, speaking in class discussions in their new college courses, or working to pay their bills and manage financial expenses, these students take on new capacities and understandings around speaking and writing—literacy learning. This literacy learning accumulates over time, constituting literacy development for individual first-gen students who use writing and speaking in specialized ways on their pathways to college. First-generation college students also navigate relationships with a complex network of literacy sponsors, both local and distant, concrete and abstract, and in many ways these literacy sponsors make first-gens literacy development possible. This navigation of new literacy practices and literacy sponsors allows for first-gen students to move successfully back and forth between home and college contexts for literacy. As is shown in examples

throughout this chapter, when first-gen students work out of financial need—a practice rooted in their home communities, they also often strengthen their resolve to pursue college as a way of achieving financial security; in this movement back and forth between work and college contexts, first-gens also rely on literacy sponsors who model literacy practices and thus support first-gens literacy learning and development of new capacities and knowledge. In this way, first-gens’ movement back and forth between home and college is successful—that is, first-gens continue to enroll in coursework in college, to take up literacy learning in those college contexts, and to stay embedded in their home communities and workplaces that also offer new capacities and knowledge around literacy.

Moreover, these literacy practices are distinctively marked by students’ identities and positionalities as working class first-generation college students and by the material conditions of these students’ lives before and during college. Perhaps most importantly, these literacies are impressive assets that these students have developed in multiple contexts and in multiple stages of their college-going processes—assets that set this student population apart from their upper and middle class and continuing-generation college student peers.

Chapter 4: Speaking in First-Year Writing: A Repertoire of Inclusive Praxis

As I discuss in Chapter 1, literature on first-generation college students often describes these students through a deficit model wherein first-gens lack literacies that are demanded of them in college contexts. The data on speaking practices presented here—collected through qualitative interviews with first-gen students themselves—tells a different story. Rather than being inherently deficient in literacies, the first-gens in this study bring a variety of resources and literacies with them to their new college contexts, particularly to their first-year writing (FYW) courses. Based on students' talk about their speaking practices, I describe this set of literacies as a repertoire of inclusive praxis—that is, an interconnected set of literacies and ideologies that these students practice in their FYW contexts. Though my qualitative interview data limits me from fully analyzing the effects of these first-gen students' literacies on other students in the classroom, I argue that recurring themes—specifically, listening and being receptive to others' perspectives—in first-gens' talk about their speaking indicates incoming literacy practices that as of yet have been largely overlooked and under-theorized in scholarship about these students. Some specific practices that I have identified in first-gens' repertoire of inclusive praxis are: invitational rhetoric, audience awareness, and rhetorical listening. In the sections that follow, I offer examples from my interview data of students' descriptions of specific features of this repertoire of inclusive praxis; as I offer data and analyze the features of this repertoire, I argue

that particular literacy events in FYW—for example class discussion—allow for first-gens to both make use of their incoming literacy practices and to expand and develop those literacy practices through literacy learning.

My analyses also demonstrate that first-gens take up these literacy practices for a variety of reasons. For example, first-gens listen rhetorically in order to validate their own ways of thinking and in order to recognize similarities and differences between themselves and others. My findings lend empirical evidence to Lindquist’s claim that for working-class students “the process of acquiring academic literacy entails complex affective mediations between past experience and hopes for the future, between loyalties to the very different public constituencies of home communities and middle-class institutions” (2004, p. 188). In presenting and analyzing this qualitative interview data about first-gens’ speaking practices in FYW, I ask, how can writing instructors better support these students’ mediations between vastly differing home and college contexts for literacy—between differing kinds of literacy events and literacy sponsors in those contexts? One way to do so is to open up space in FYW for those literacy practices that first-gens bring and build on in FYW, practices like invitational rhetoric, rhetorical listening, and audience awareness.

Invitational Rhetoric

First-year writing is an especially rich space for analyzing first-gens’ descriptions of their speaking practices. Because FYW is often these students’ first or earliest encounter with college-level literacy practices like academic argumentation, first-gens’ experiences in FYW often highlight the influence of prior contexts and prior strategies for communication. FYW also demonstrates these students’ complex negotiations with new and different demands for communicating in college. In fact, first-gens in this study named FYW as one setting in which they were afforded the opportunity to hear or see different ways of thinking and communicating

around such literacy events as class discussion. For many students, FYW is the smallest and most intimate course setting they will experience throughout their academic courses at UM, allowing them to get to know their peers and their instructor at this pivotal moment in their transition to college and to college-level academic literacy practices. Because first-year writing is structured around such literacy events as the exchange of ideas in class discussion of readings and sharing writing, this course affords students the opportunity to encounter new and different perspectives. As first-gens make sense of these new and different literacy events and the exchange of perspectives that those literacy events entail, these students show their facility with invitational rhetoric.

In this section, I distinguish between varying forms of argument at work in students' talk about their speaking in FYW, including invitational rhetoric. Because forms of argument are essential to my analysis here, I offer a brief description of relevant theories of argument in composition and rhetoric literature. Specifically, my data shows that first-gen students in this study practice invitational rhetoric, wherein argument might be described as arguing to understand rather than to persuade (Knoblauch, 2011; Foss and Griffin, 1995). In her analysis of the kinds of argument that composition textbooks tend to privilege, Knoblauch distinguishes between a model of "traditional argument, one that privileges argument as winning" and an expanded definition of argument that considers "the radical potential of argument as understanding across difference" (2011, p. 245). Arguing to understand involves gaining knowledge from others, learning from their differing perspectives, and adjusting your own perspectives based on what you have learned. By making these distinctions between traditional and expanded definitions of argument, Knoblauch argues, "while traditional argument is essential, as is persuasion itself, we do our students (and ourselves) a disservice by not taking

seriously a wide variety of definitions, practices, and goals of argument” (2011, p. 245). In this section, by presenting data about first-gen students’ experiences with argumentation in FYW, I seek to acknowledge a variety of definitions, practices, and goals of argument and, similarly to Knoblauch, I highlight distinctions between models of traditional arguing to persuade and more expanded arguing to understand.

In her analysis, Knoblauch draws from communication scholars Foss and Griffin’s theory of “invitational rhetoric—a process in which one seeks understanding rather than persuasion” (Knoblauch, 2011, p. 247). In Foss and Griffin’s view, the purpose of invitational rhetoric is to “offer an invitation to understanding” and this purpose is achieved through “offering perspectives and through the creation of external conditions of safety, immanent value, and freedom” (1995, p. 2). In this chapter, I refer to persuasion and invitational rhetoric as Foss and Griffin define them and to specific features of invitational rhetoric, particularly to the transformative potential of arguing to understand and to the common invitational practice of offering perspectives (Foss and Griffin, 1995). In the remainder of this section, I offer examples of first-gen students’ talk about argument and argumentative strategies, highlighting first-gens’ facility with an expanded model of argument as understanding in FYW. This preference for invitational rhetoric wherein argument is aimed at understanding is one prevalent feature of the repertoire of inclusive praxis that first-generation college students bring to bear on their literacy learning in FYW.

First-gens’ talk about their speaking in FYW indicates that these students bring a model of argument as understanding rather than argument as persuasion. These students like that argumentation in class discussion allows for them to hear from their classmates and engage multiple perspectives rather than arguing for the purposes of persuading or winning. Specifically,

Jason, Ivy, and Ben highlight this trend towards argument as understanding. For example, Jason emphasizes that he likes whole class discussion with his classmates because in this context argument can be about offering perspectives—about agreeing or disagreeing with one another: “Hearing their perspective and if it was different from mine’s [sic] or if it was the same as mine, I would just be like, ‘Okay. Well, I agree with one of my classmates that X, Y and Z, and I also like to add that P, Q and R.’” Here Jason demonstrates that argumentation in class discussion can be additive rather than oppositional, allowing him to hear his classmates’ perspectives as well as offering his own—a major feature of arguing to understand or invitational rhetoric as Foss and Griffin define it. Similarly to Jason, Ivy gives examples of her preference for argument as understanding. In her talk about class discussion of course texts, Ivy emphasizes hearing and building on classmates’ opinions or perspectives in FYW: “Yeah just in stating opinions and bouncing off of other people’s opinions and like making even bigger connections [...] We really bounced off each other a lot with our opinions and reactions and stuff. We made even bigger connections by doing that so we could see a little bit bigger than the picture that [the course texts] drew.” In this example, Ivy gets at the idea of argument as understanding in her descriptions of stating opinions, bouncing off other people’s opinions, and making connections—all of which again point to offering and understanding varying perspectives. In FYW, the literacy event of class discussion allows for these students to invite and learn from their classmates’ perspectives, building on and further developing the literacy practice of invitational rhetoric. As such, this model of argumentation as understanding is one major component of the repertoire of inclusive praxis that first-gens bring with them to FYW.

The rich literacy learning that first-gens demonstrate around argument as understanding in FYW constitutes an example of the complex thinking and argumentation that FYW curricula

often endeavor to teach; however, typical FYW curricula often privilege argument as persuasion as is evidenced by the kinds of textbooks taken up in FYW (Knoblauch, 2011) and by the kinds of reading and writing most often assigned there (Fulkerson, 2005). Ubiquitous reading and writing assignments like rhetorical analyses and research papers showcase the privileging of persuasive argument that is common to FYW curricula. The first-gens in this study demonstrate skills in critical thinking and complex argumentation that typical persuasive arguments in FYW are aimed at modeling, but these students demonstrate such thinking and argumentation skills alongside their prowess with argument as understanding, with invitational rhetoric. In this way, first-gens in this study model a literacy practice in FYW—argumentation as understanding—that gets at some common learning goals around rhetorical awareness while also diverging from FYW’s modus operandi of persuasive argument. In this way, first-gens’ literacy practice of invitational rhetoric is a particular literacy strength and resource that they both bring to FYW and build on and develop further there.

Ben also shows a proclivity for argument as understanding rather than persuasion. Specifically, Ben shows an aversion to models of argument as persuasion. Ben’s first-year writing course was literature based, and he described class discussions as making arguments about particular novels: “I would definitely contribute to talking about the novels. But I just got uncomfortable when people would challenge how I felt about them because then it got into an argumentative type of thing, and I don’t like to argue so. So then they got into that type of thing, so that’s where I got uncomfortable and that’s usually where I would stop talking as far as class goes.” Whereas Ivy and Jason express having productive experiences practicing argumentation as understanding with their peers, arguing with peers makes Ben uncomfortable, perhaps because in this instance argumentation in FYW seems to have been geared toward persuasion. Ben

experiences discomfort at being challenged, discomfort with an oppositional or persuasive model of argument.

Ben seems especially uncomfortable being challenged on his viewpoints, saying “those things usually segued into like talking about how you like view people’s viewpoints, essays, all those things. And that really made me uncomfortable.” Moments of opposition or evaluative judgments around one another’s perspectives not only make Ben uncomfortable but also silence him in FYW; upon being challenged, Ben says he “would stop talking.” In this way, Ben shows a preference for argument as understanding, for offering rather than challenging perspectives. Whereas Jason and Ivy find ways to build on and develop the invitational rhetoric practices they brought with them to FYW, Ben feels silenced by the persuasive argument practices he encounters. Teachers of writing might learn from Ben’s example of being silenced; specifically teachers might be more explicit about welcoming multiple perspectives and celebrating students’ differing literacy practices like arguing to understand and invitational rhetoric. By positioning forms of argument—like arguing to understand and arguing to persuade—as different components of a broad repertoire of literacy practices, teacher might celebrate the invitational rhetoric practices that students like Ben bring while also encouraging students to take up differing practices like persuasive argument when appropriate. This approach calls for a slight shift away from typical views of persuasive argument as the best or the only literacy practice and towards an understanding of many kinds of practices within a broad, varied repertoire of literacy.

Too often first-gens’ silence in class is viewed only through a deficit model; Ben’s example demonstrates the literacy work below the surface of what might seem to be silence on the part of first-gens. In Ben’s case, his silence is both a reaction to being challenged and an example of the “negotiation and deliberation” possible through silence whether with oneself “or

in dyadic, small-group, or large scale situations” (Glenn and Ratcliffe, 2011, p. 3). In these ways, Ben’s silence constitutes a resource for learning in his FYW classroom, where he feels uncomfortable at being challenged. Moreover, Ben’s example of the silencing effects of persuasive argument reinforces Knoblauch’s argument that “we do our students (and ourselves) a disservice by not taking seriously a wide variety of definitions, practices, and goals of argument” (2011, p. 245). Ben’s example helps to demonstrate the strengths that first-gens bring, and the ways in which a student might shut down when they feel challenged, like they cannot draw from their literacy strengths. Where FYW instruction is concerned, Ben’s example helps to show writing teachers how to react to such silencing. For example, positioning persuasive argument in the classroom as one kind of literacy practice, rather than as the best or only literacy available to students, might help to celebrate a students’ literacy resources and to encourage them to also expand their repertoire of literacy practices. Overall, examples such as these from Ben, Ivy, and Jason give researchers and writing instructors insight into students’ literacy practices, so that the practices can be acknowledged and included more into the classroom context.

My emphasis on invitational rhetoric is not intended to essentialize first-generation college students or their literacies—a risk that Maureen Mathison makes clear in her critique of invitational rhetoric (1997). Certainly, first-gens are not all necessarily adept at invitational rhetoric nor are first-gens only equipped for arguing to understand. Instead, my findings suggest that invitational rhetoric is one resource that first-gens bring with them to FYW—a resource that often gets overlooked or marginalized in favor of more common traditional models of arguing to persuade. To be sure, first-gens likely will need to call upon a variety of models of argumentation throughout their speaking and writing communicative situations in academic

contexts and beyond; my data shows one model of communication—invitational rhetoric—with which these students already have facility.

Based on these findings, I suggest that FYW might do more to acknowledge and include a variety of modes and models of argumentation, not only arguing to persuade. For instance, FYW might make space for invitational rhetoric alongside such common models as arguing to persuade and alongside the variety of persuasive models of argument and communication that already pervade FYW pedagogies—for example, Aristotelian, Toulmin, and Rogerian models of argument as well as narrative, persuasive, and informational modes of communication.

Additionally, I do not intend to set up a reductive binary between types of argument nor to position arguing to understand and arguing to persuade as diametrically opposed to one another. Instead, I suggest that in order to better support first-gens and recognize the strengths these students bring, we might approach literacy practices as an interconnected set of resources and redouble our efforts at teaching alternative models of argument, models like invitational rhetoric. These students' literacy practices are in that they offer transformative models of arguing, like invitational rhetoric and arguing for the purposes of understanding rather than persuasion.

Audience Awareness

In addition to a preference for argument as understanding, first-gens' repertoire of inclusive praxis entails an acute awareness of audience. Importantly, audience awareness is an oft-sought-after outcome of FYW instruction; in their talk about their speaking in FYW, first-gens in this study demonstrate that they are adept at audience awareness. Composition theorists understand audience as one feature of rhetorical situations: audiences are embedded with all other elements of the rhetorical situation including the text, the context, and the writer (Ede and Lunsford, 1987). Moreover, audiences can be both addressed and invoked, and it is often the writer who, through the creation of the text, determines what role a particular audience will

play—either addressed or invoked (Ede and Lunsford, 1987). All too often, audience awareness is pursued in the FYW classroom through a model of argumentation as persuasion, wherein the author approximates and anticipates the perspectives and values of both addressed and invoked audiences. However, first-gens show that audience awareness is also possible to achieve through argumentation as understanding, wherein writers or speakers do not always anticipate their audiences' beliefs and values but instead are receptive of differing beliefs and values as they arise. In an invitational rhetorical model, or arguing to understand model, audiences can transform the text or discourse, and as such writers may be truly surprised by their audiences' perceptions (Foss and Griffin, 1995). In their descriptions of class discussions in FYW, student participants in this study showed their prowess with audience awareness; specifically, first-gen students Sarah, Tom, Ben, Jack, and Jason show their facility with audience awareness within an invitational rhetoric model as they name a range of interrelated strategies for argumentation in FYW. In this subsection, I offer examples from these students' talk about their speaking in FYW, arguing that speaking in FYW is one important way in which first-gens construct knowledge about audience awareness and that their facility with audience awareness is a resource in first-gens' repertoire of literacy practices.

Students in this study say their speaking in class discussion in FYW helped them to better acknowledge multiple views or perspectives in argumentation—an important example of both audience awareness and inclusion. For example, Tom mentions that FYW discussions taught him to “draw on like different sources and look at it from multiple views,” emphasizing the imperative to incorporate multiple views or perspectives into arguments. Similarly to Tom, Ben explained that speaking in FYW taught him about introducing multiple points or topics both in speaking in class discussions and in writing papers. When I asked Ben what strategies he uses to

participate in his FYW class discussions, he said, “You usually have to incorporate something that, that the teacher was either talking about or the person before you was speaking about in order for everybody to hook into. Because I realized that people like to like hook into ideas and like hook into a consistency in conversation. Or if you’re completely switching the topic you just have to say, ‘so just to jump off of this topic and go to this one’ because you have to introduce.” Like Tom, Ben describes acknowledging and signaling multiple viewpoints as an important facet of argumentation in FYW class discussions. Ben also linked this strategy of signaling multiple viewpoints to his writing in the course, saying, “It’s kind of like in a paper you just kind of have to introduce things before you start talking about them [...] So it’s one of those things where you have to kind of introduce people to, to the next thing. And then you just have to be really clear in, in what you’re trying to get across because if not people will tune out. They will tune out if you don’t know what you’re asking or what you’re responding to.” Class discussion helps Ben to structure his arguments in particular ways, for example by introducing multiple viewpoints into his arguments and thus engaging his audience in both his speaking and writing. With this strategy, Ben considers the audiences for his arguments and speaks and writes in ways that engage previous points or makes clear the introduction of new topics. Ben says that this kind of speaking that considers the audience’s desire to “hook into ideas” and “consistency in conversation” is “kind of like in a paper you just have to introduce things,” making an important connection between argumentation in both speaking and writing. So, while recognizing the need to incorporate multiple perspectives, both Ben and Tom demonstrate audience awareness—a rhetorical skill they build alongside their preference for a model of argument as understanding.

Like Ben, Sarah also describes the ways in which both speaking and writing in FYW help her to consider audiences and their reception of arguments. When I ask Sarah if the discussion in

FYW had any influence on her writing, she responds, “It was my goal to make the argument, or everything that I wrote about [...] I try and have the essay read in a way that was still interesting. It was interesting to the reader. That would be my influence of talking in writing, I'd say. I'd want it to be interesting for the reader, and I want it to be fun to write.” For Sarah and Ben, the important argumentative strategy of considering particular audiences reaches across both the writing and speaking practices they took up in FYW.

Similarly to these students, Jason also emphasizes audience awareness at work in his literacy learning in FYW. For instance, Jason describes the ways in which listening and speaking with classmates in first-year writing helped him to build audience awareness, saying, “And [class discussion] also helped my thinking in terms of when I portray like when [...] I'm talking about it from this perspective, what is the audience going to get from it? If I'm saying this in this group of perspective and someone is agreeing with me or agree with bits you know that just made me realize how I should highlight specific parts that people agree on more or understand more and stuff like that.” Jason’s participation in class discussion helped him to realize and anticipate audience responses and to adjust his arguments accordingly, highlighting specific points that this audience might agree with. Because of his awareness of particular audiences, Jason includes more perspectives and highlights particular perspectives in his arguments. In other words, Jason offers perspectives, an important component of invitational rhetoric, in part because of his awareness of particular audiences. Like Sarah, Ben, and Tom before him, Jason positions class discussion as an opportunity to practice argumentation and audience awareness. Specifically for Jason, class discussion allows him to listen, anticipate particular audiences, and emphasize particular points that would appeal to those audiences. Essentially, listening and speaking in

class discussion taught Jason about argumentation, particularly about how to construct arguments with particular audiences in mind.

Markedly, Jason's descriptions of his participation in class discussion in FYW show his facility with both invitational rhetoric and persuasive argument. In the previous example, Jason considers his audiences' perspectives and incorporates those perspectives into his own arguments—common invitational rhetoric practices. However, Jason also expresses his affinity for counter-arguments, saying at one moment in our interviews together, “You know I love my counter-arguments.” Specifically of class discussion in FYW, Jason says, “It enhanced my thinking to more of a counter-argument or like a counter-argumentative style of thinking [...] because when you say something to the class and someone disagrees like politely, not just, ‘I disagree with you.’ But they’ll just say like, ‘Okay. You know I appreciate, I understand where you come from, but I would like to disagree simply because X, Y and Z.’” For Jason, class discussion affords the opportunity to develop counter-arguments—a practice common to persuasive models of argument. In this example Jason acknowledges his classmates' perspectives and offers his own perspectives in counterarguments, showing not only audience awareness but also, when paired with the previous example above, that he can take up both invitational rhetoric and persuasive argument in FYW class discussions. These examples from Jason show the repertoire of varied literacy practices that first-generation college students like him both bring and build on or develop through their literacy learning in FYW class discussion. Jason exemplifies that arguing to understand and arguing to persuade can co-exist in first-gen students' literacy repertoires, and Jason's ability to choose between and deploy these different literacy practices is in and of itself a considerable literacy strength.

At times, students described audience awareness in class discussion as influencing their writing, particularly as influencing their approaches to argumentative writing. Sarah and Ben, in the data presented above, both emphasize that drawing on multiple perspectives is an important component of argumentation and they locate this argumentative strategy in both their speaking and writing practices. Jack also emphasizes that argumentation should consider multiple perspectives, and that considering multiple perspectives was instrumental in both his speaking and writing in FYW. Jack said that the discussions in FYW influenced his writing “in the way that one can gain more ideas from hearing other perspectives and the way that other people interpreted things, and then their thoughts on the matter. I think I suppose that that can easily spark my own ideas.” In this example, arguing to understand and the imperative to consider multiple perspectives cuts across both writing and speaking practices.

Similarly to Jack, Tom described class discussions in FYW as informing the way he drew on multiple sources and perspectives in his writing. Tom also links his speaking and writing in FYW to being passionate in your stances— a practice he learned from his classmates’ examples. Tom says that “just hearing everybody’s ideas” in class discussion “and how different they were from [his]” taught him “to be brave with what you’re writing and to have the confidence that your paper is a strong paper. [...] Seeing everybody when they’re talking about their stance and their ideas, especially when somebody’s passionate and they have like the courage enough to be that passionate about something. And then you think okay, I can be like that too.” Importantly, Tom describes several features of argumentation that influence both his speaking and writing of arguments and demonstrate his prowess at audience awareness. Namely, Tom mentions stance and being passionate as important practices in both his speaking and writing in his FYW course, and these audience aware argumentative practices are modeled for him by his classmates in

FYW. Tom's descriptions of class discussion in FYW shows that first-gens are acutely aware of audiences and marry that audience awareness with their valuing of arguing to understand, particularly offering different perspectives, in both their speaking and writing.

This data shows that first-gen students do a great deal of learning about argumentation and audience through speaking in FYW. Perhaps most importantly, these speaking practices are often employed in order to pursue a transformative model of argument as understanding rather than persuasion, but Jason's example shows that he can employ speaking to argue for the purposes of understanding and persuading. In valuing audiences and a model of argument as understanding, first-gens demonstrate their repertoires of literacy practices. Specifically, these student examples show that oppositional arguing to persuade is not the only way to build the important literacy of audience awareness. Instead, first-gens build audience awareness as they encounter and try to understand, not only argue against, their classmates' perspectives. Notably, first-gens develop audience awareness through their interactions with real or addressed audiences of their peers in class discussion and then carry that knowledge of audience awareness with them to their considerations of invoked or imagined audiences in their writing in FYW. In these ways, the complex audience awareness that first-gens cultivate in FYW contributes to a more capacious theory of audience awareness—one in which writers can build audience awareness through understanding and dialogue, not only through argumentation and opposition. As such, these qualitative examples of first-gens' building audience awareness through transformative models of arguing to understand exemplify a resource these students bring with them to their FYW contexts.

Rhetorical Listening

Examples of first-gens' facility with invitational rhetoric and audience awareness are closely connected to the role of rhetorical listening in these student' repertoire of inclusive praxis

in FYW. Namely, listening rhetorically and arguing to understand showcase a kind of reciprocity at work in first-gens' repertoires of inclusive praxis. Valuing differences of opinion is a key feature of invitational rhetoric and of the model of argument as understanding that first-gens often tend to privilege. By listening rhetorically to differing opinions in FYW courses, first-gen students in this study begin to approximate strategies for arguing to understand. In addition to supplementing their approach to argument as understanding, first-gens also listen rhetorically for reasons beyond argumentation: they listen as a way of building cross-cultural conduct and incorporating new information into their world-views and behaviors. In this section, I offer a brief definition of rhetorical listening and provide examples of first-gens' uses of rhetorical listening in FYW. In analyzing these examples, I argue that, as is the case with invitational rhetoric and audience awareness, literacy events like class discussion in FYW allow for first-gen students to make use of and expand their incoming literacy practice of rhetorical listening.

First-gens' talk about their speaking in FYW reveals that rhetorical listening is one important feature of their repertoire of inclusive praxis. The term rhetorical listening engages recent scholarship in composition and rhetoric that calls for renewed attention to listening as a rhetorical art (Glenn and Ratcliffe, 2011; Ratcliffe, 1999). By including rhetorical listening among first-gens' repertoire of inclusive praxis, I recognize that listening is itself an act, a practice, and rhetorical listening especially so— rhetorical listening means listening in order to enact cross-cultural conduct, and as such the process of listening rhetorically involves acknowledging the discourses of others, listening with intent, and consciously integrating new information into your world-views and decision-making (Ratcliffe, 1999, p. 206). My data shows that first-generation college students are adept at rhetorical listening. Indeed, the students in this study listen in ways that showcase listening's role as an active, participatory practice, a practice

intricately entwined with speaking. In this subsection, I offer data that demonstrates the ways in which first-generation college students listen rhetorically in FYW courses. In presenting this data, I argue that these students are adept at rhetorical listening and that their rhetorical listening is one of many resources that make up their repertoire of inclusive praxis. First-gens' versatile uses of rhetorical listening—including rhetorical listening in order to validate their own ways of thinking, to value simultaneous similarities and differences between themselves and others, to value differences of opinion, and to distinguish between disciplinary differences—demonstrate a particular strength that these students have cultivated outside the classroom and mindfully adapt to their college coursework contexts, including FYW.

First-gens in this study express that they like to listen, perhaps because it is a strategy that has served them well in various settings outside the classroom. Because they have crossed boundaries and been exposed to so many different kinds of contexts—often out of financial necessity—these students have had to listen, to listen and learn, before they can jump into speaking in a particular context. In her theories of rhetorical listening, Krista Ratcliffe (1999) emphasizes that listening is an especially important practice for marginalized or non-dominant groups of people. First-gens are students who are marginalized or non-dominant in their new college contexts, and they also often come from home communities that might be identified as marginalized. From these positions and standpoints, these students are practiced at listening because they have had to be in order to pursue college and become first-generation college students in the first place. In FYW courses, these students confidently and skillfully take up their rhetorical listening prowess developed in outside contexts.

For example, Jack, Beth, Chris, Sarah, and Dana express that they benefit from listening in FYW. In fact, Jack indicates that he prefers listening over speaking, explaining: “I like to

know other people's perspective on things. I like to know what's going on in other people's head." Similarly to Jack, Dana also says, "I like to listen to other people's ideas and the stories that they can create rather than create my own. I guess I have a pretty good imagination, but I like listening to other people's stories instead of my own." As with Ben's earlier example of shutting down when faced with persuasive argument in class discussion, Dana's comments that she would rather listen might be read as a hesitancy or refusal to participate. From cases such as Dana's, writing instructors might learn to recognize that listening does not necessarily indicate refusal to engage. Instead, Dana and other first-gen students included in this section demonstrate that such listening allows for literacy learning and development in the classroom. that they like to listen—by doing this they attend to the stories and perspectives of others and may begin to incorporate new perspectives into their worldviews and behaviors—an important purpose of rhetorical listening as Ratcliffe (1999) defines it. As additional examples in this chapter show, rhetorical listening allows for these students to take in new and different information and to incorporate that information or perspectives or stories into their world views and behaviors. In the examples presented in this section, first-gen students successfully adapt their rhetorical listening practices to FYW contexts.

Moreover, first-gens' practice of rhetorical listening might be described as cross-cultural. By virtue of the fact that they are now first-generation college students, these students have crossed and continue to cross-cultural boundaries. Coming from a culture where going to college is not the norm—where educational, occupational, and economic disadvantage are common—these students now have been thrust into a campus culture that normalizes college-going, often erasing their experiences that going to college might be a jarring or tumultuous experience. Listening is one strategy these students use to make sense of their own cross-cultural

experiences. In FYW especially, listening rhetorically validates first-gens' thinking when they pick up on similarities between theirs and their classmates' thinking; rhetorical listening in FYW also allows for first-gens to simultaneously honor similarities and differences between themselves and their classmates, and in this way, rhetorical listening helps first-gens to understand and value differences of opinion in FYW; finally, rhetorical listening in FYW and in WAC/WID courses helps first-gens to distinguish between disciplinary standards in various academic settings and to enter into particular disciplinary roles more mindfully as they “consciously incorporate new information into their world-views and behaviors”—another important aspect of rhetorical listening as Ratcliffe defines it. In what follows, I analyze examples of these features of first-gens' rhetorical listening in FYW; my analyses show that rhetorical listening is a prominent feature of first-gens repertoire of inclusive praxis, which they bring to bear on their literacy learning in FYW.

In some cases, first-gen students' rhetorical listening in FYW helps to validate their own ways of thinking; for instance, when first-gens listen to their classmates' opinions or arguments that are similar to their own. For example, Ivy says that listening to her classmates' opinions showed her similarities between ways of thinking and made her more comfortable in class: “[the professor] stressed a lot that you know, no opinion is really right. In most of...I think when I started hearing everyone else's ideas...the first thing that made me more comfortable was seeing people seeing things how I saw it as well, so we had similarities.” Because transitioning to college level coursework can be so staggering for first-gens coming from vastly different backgrounds and settings than the college classroom context, rhetorical listening is a useful strategy to validate and reinforce students' own ways of thinking and contributions to the college classroom. As Ivy makes clear, hearing the similarities between their own and their classmates'

ways of thinking in FYW can be a motivating and comforting experience for first-gens who listen rhetorically in order to validate their own ways of thinking in this new college context.

Even as first-gens encounter similarities between their and their classmates' ways of thinking, they simultaneously encounter differences as well—and first-gens express that they value these simultaneous similarities and differences. As a course with heavy emphasis on class discussion (as well as writing and reading), FYW is especially ripe with opportunities for encountering both similarities and differences between individuals' ways of thinking. Ivy continues to describe her practice of listening in FYW, saying: “Then after that, seeing new things of how I could've saw it or could have inferred it somehow differently or whatever. That made me more comfortable like, ‘Oh okay. They have an interesting way of looking at it.’ Then what made me more comfortable was like, if I found something that I found really unique or interesting or whatever, seeing other people going like, ‘Oh okay. I didn't think about that. Yeah.’” Because first-gens do not have parental or close familial examples of college-level communicative practices, rhetorical listening in FYW allows them to observe their peers as models for speaking in FYW. In the case of first-gens' participation in FYW, I argue that observing their peers and contributing to class themselves are both instances of cross-cultural conduct: first-gens are observing students from differing cultures than their own and contributing their own unique ways of thinking to the dominant college discourses they encounter in FYW. Cross-cultural conduct is a driving purpose of rhetorical listening, and with their descriptions of participating in FYW, first-gens like Ivy show their prowess with this facet of rhetorical listening.

Time and again, first-gens in this study demonstrate literacies, like rhetorical listening and invitational rhetoric, that they bring with them and build on in their FYW contexts.

Moreover, this kind of rhetorical listening reinforces for Ivy her own ability to form and express unique opinions in an academic setting. Again, this kind of reinforcement or motivation through rhetorical listening is especially important for first-gens who might experience trepidation acclimating to the communicative demands of college coursework. Too often first-gens' hesitation to contribute to classes is viewed only through a deficit model; Ivy's example, like Ben's earlier example of arguing to understand, demonstrates the complex literacy work below the surface of what might at first seem to be silence on the part of first-gens. Namely, first-gens' silence allows for them to deliberate and negotiate with their new college contexts and expectations for communication there, and first-gens' rhetorical listening allows for them to observe and imitate typical ways of speaking in FYW as well as contribute their own unique thoughts and opinions with greater confidence.

Similarly to Ivy, several other students, including Tina, Jason, and Tom describe rhetorical listening as helping them value differences of opinion in FYW. For example, Tina says that listening helps you to see that "some people think of things in different ways than you were thinking." Taken together, Ivy's and Tina's comments show that first gens are receptive of differences in perspective. First-gens, by nature of having come from working-class backgrounds and having pursued college, have experience interacting with many different kinds of people and ways of thinking. First-gen students, out of necessity, have practiced speaking with people in their home communities, with people in their new college contexts, and in a variety of contexts in between and outside of those two. This kind of mobility and experience communicating in a variety of settings with a variety of different kinds of people is a practice that first-gens bring with them and develop further in FYW contexts. While continuing-gen and middle class students may have experience in different settings, their home communities and ways of communicating

are often closer to the setting and communicative practices of college than those of first-gens are. In these ways, rhetorical listening is an important practice that first-gens have cultivated as they move through different contexts and acculturate to different ways of speaking in those contexts. Students in this study named FYW as one setting in which they were afforded the opportunity to hear or see different ways of thinking, and in these moments listening rhetorically in FYW is a strategy for learning that first-gen students like Tina make adept use of.

Like Tina, Jason describes engaging with his classmates' perspectives in class discussion, perspectives that often differ from his own: "I began to talk less about the book and more about people's views about the book because that's what became interesting to me. Like how everybody doesn't perceive something like you would do. Some of the books that we read had lots of symbolism in it and [the professor] would just give some lines in the book and then each one of us gives an interpretation of what that symbol means in the book." Like Tina and Ivy, Jason values hearing his classmates' opinions and interpretations, especially those that differ from his own; interestingly, Jason uses his listening to classmates' perspectives as a way to learn about the course texts. For first-gens like Jason, rhetorical listening allows for them to approximate such academic literacies as responding to texts. Because they often lack prior examples of college educated family and friends, this kind of rhetorical listening and observation of peers' communicative behaviors allows for first-gens to acculturate to academic literacy in college classroom contexts.

Tom similarly expresses that he learns from listening to his classmates in class discussion and values the differences of perspective he encounters there: "Like I love hearing other perspectives and fresh ideas and how other people are thinking of things, and it's very shocking to see when it's like very different from mine. It just proves like not all people think alike." In

Jason's and Tom's cases, listening rhetorically in FYW not only allows for them to better approximate academic literacies but also to value the differences in opinions and perspectives encountered there. In this way Jason's and Tom's classmates act as sponsors of literacy—modeling different perspectives and academic ways of speaking that Jason and Tom then learn and incorporate into their own worldviews and behaviors. For Jason, Tom, Tina, and Ivy listening is learning—learning that not all people think alike, and these students enjoy listening for the purpose of learning about other people's perspectives. Because of their experiences moving through and communicating in a variety of settings, first-gens are adept at this kind of rhetorical listening and adapt those practices to fit their new college settings, including FYW courses. In this way, the rhetorical listening practices that first-gens bring to FYW are a major strength and resource.

Another way in which first-gens make use of rhetorical listening in FYW is by listening in order to distinguish between disciplinary differences encountered there. By listening rhetorically for disciplinary differences in both FYW and WAC/WID contexts, first-gens can enter into particular disciplinary roles more mindfully as they “consciously incorporate new information into their world-views and behaviors”—another important aspect of rhetorical listening as Ratcliffe defines it. Both Ben and Jack describe their listening practices in FYW in ways that highlight the usefulness of rhetorical listening for making sense of disciplinary differences, specifically to the particular contexts of communicating in their disciplines or majors—in theater for Ben and in psychology for Jack. Rhetorical listening allows both Ben and Jack to consciously integrate new information from their majors and disciplines into their own world-views and decision-making. In these examples, literacy events in FYW allow for Ben and Jack to build on and develop their rhetorical listening practices. In this way, rhetorical listening

in FYW and in courses across the curriculum aids first-gens in joining particular academic discourses relevant to their majors and disciplines. When I asked Ben how he learned to contribute to discussions in his FYW course, he responded:

I think it was just like observation of behavior, really. 'cause I was doing the whole LSA [College of Literature, Science, and the Arts] classes and theater classes my first semester so I was kind of seeing the, the differences in the two and the way we operate. Because in theater you know we're like all hands on and in your face and like nobody cares, but when we're in a classroom I mean everybody's at their desks and their computers are out and their notebooks. So, yeah. I...it was just basically through my observation of what was happening in both. Maybe not even consciously, but just like over time it kind of clicked in my head that the way the two were operating were different.

Ben emphasizes that observing or listening in multiple contexts—in LSA courses like FYW and in theater courses—helped him to make comparisons between communicative situations and thus to learn appropriate communicative practices in those varying disciplinary settings. With this description, Ben demonstrates his facility with an important facet of rhetorical listening—consciously incorporating new information observed through listening into your world-view and behaviors (Ratcliffe, 1999, p. 206). First-gen students like Ben are adept at this kind of rhetorical listening in order to incorporate new information because of their experiences in many different kinds of contexts, before and during college, in which they often encounter and incorporate new information. First-gens like Ben are also adept at rhetorical listening in order to gain access to new settings because of their past experiences moving through many different contexts with different kinds of people and different communicative practices. In examples like Ben's, first-

gens adapt their rhetorical listening to differing academic contexts in order to better communicate in those particular settings.

Similarly to Ben, Jack also describes his rhetorical listening in FYW as influenced by his discipline. Though throughout this chapter I have attributed students' tendencies toward rhetorical listening to their first-gen statuses, Jack credits his own listening practices to his identity as a psychology student. I include this example as an interesting piece of disconfirming evidence that shows the range of influences—including but not limited to their first-gen identities—on students' literacy practices in college and in FYW. When asked why he prefers listening over speaking in FYW, Jack responds: "I'm a psychology student. I care about what's going on in other people's heads. Yeah. I live with my mind, I don't get to live with yours everyday, so I would like to know what's going on." Jack ties the kinds of listening he likes to do in FYW to his discipline and to his own disciplinary identity saying "I'm a psychology student." For Jack, listening in any context, including FYW, is tied closely to his disciplinary identity and to the kinds of learning and communication that occur in his discipline. Because first-gens encounter an array of differing academic discourses in college—as Ben's above example makes clear—students like Jack take up particular disciplinary ways of thinking, communicating, listening, or speaking in order to make sense of and perform these new and different academic literacies. Jack aligns his listening with the field of psychology and with his identity as a psychology student, and in so doing is better enabled to look at other disciplines from this perspective and mindfully participate in his FYW contexts. Though he attributes his rhetorical listening practice to his disciplinary field, Jack's example demonstrates that first-gens' literacy practices are influenced by a variety of factors including their first-gen identities, their FYW contexts, and their experiences in their chosen academic disciplines. Ben's and Jack's examples

of listening for disciplinary differences show that by being receptive and listening rhetorically in FYW and other classroom contexts, first-gens engage in formative literacy learning and thus add to their literacy repertoires a better understanding and valuing of differing literacy practices in particular disciplines.

Importantly, listening rhetorically in FYW also influences the speaking practices students take up there. Ben goes on to describe the ways that listening rhetorically in his first year writing class affected or influenced the ways he talks, again pointing to the differences he observed between FYW and speaking in his major:

Because [FYW] was the first class that I have ever taken younger life up to now that... 'cause I'm in, I'm a theater person, so I know how to talk to people in like performance spaces sometimes public speaking. But when we're talking in terms of academia, it was just introducing me to that whole thing. Seeing how people respond to certain presentations the way they interact, so it's kind of a thing where you have to learn the manners of speaking publicly in different environments. Yeah, So. It definitely has had an effect on the way that I speak and answer questions and ask questions in the classroom.

For Ben, speaking practices are closely tied to the contexts or environments in which they occur, in this case the contexts of FYW and of his coursework in his major. Listening helped Ben to “learn the manners of speaking publicly in different environments,” particularly in the differing disciplinary environments he encountered. Ben’s reflections on his rhetorical listening and subsequent speaking practices in multiple contexts make clear that rhetorical listening is a strategy that allows first-gen students to gain access, adapt, and acculturate to particular contexts. Moreover, by virtue of having listened rhetorically in a variety of home, work, and

extracurricular contexts before and during college, first-gens like Ben are well equipped to encounter and approximate the variety of differing academic contexts for speaking that college entails. As adept rhetorical listeners, Ben and other first-gen students leverage their coursework in various disciplines as models for inventing and imitating speaking practices in FYW. In these ways, rhetorical listening is a robust literacy strength in first-gens' overall literacy repertoires.

In the examples analyzed in this subsection on rhetorical listening, first-generation college students demonstrate that they are good rhetorical listeners—they can leverage listening in order to accomplish a variety of goals in FYW including validating their own ways of thinking, acknowledging simultaneous differences and similarities between themselves and their classmates, valuing differences of opinion, and recognizing disciplinary differences. What's perhaps most interesting in the above data about first-generation college students' listening is that these students often listen in order to approximate and step into the dominant culture: into academic ways of speaking. As such, this speaking and listening—as students have described it here—is cross-cultural on the part of first-gens, but perhaps not reciprocal. Instead, in classroom contexts these students often listen in order to contribute to the dominant ways of speaking in college.

Put another way, first-gens are adept at rhetorical listening, but are these first-gen students being listened to? The deficit model that pervades literature about first-gens suggest that no, these students are not being listened to; contrastingly, my qualitative interview methods and resulting data attempt to listen more carefully to these students than we have previously. Similarly, pervasive privileging of oppositional argumentation in FYW courses also indicates an unwillingness to listen to these students—an unwillingness to recognize their literacy strengths in the classroom. As Julie Lindquist makes clear in her argument for greater attention to affect

around social class in the writing classroom, “what matters is not just what we ask students to produce, but also how we engage with the products of their labors” (Lindquist, 2004, 195). By and large, as the existing body of literature about these students makes clear, we are not listening to the strengths that first-gens bring with them into our FYW classrooms. My data shows that making space for first-gens means not only offering them seats in our classrooms but also making space for the rich literacy practices they bring with them—making space for their repertoires of inclusive praxis including rhetorical listening, invitational rhetoric, and audience awareness. With the examples from data explored in this chapter, it becomes clear that first-gens are already taking the risk to bring these literacy strengths into their FYW classrooms and would benefit from greater support and encouragement of their efforts to do so.

Conclusions

As the findings presented in this chapter indicate, invitational rhetoric, audience awareness, and rhetorical listening are literacy strengths that first-generation college students bring to their speaking in FYW contexts and develop further as they encounter new literacy events and new literacy sponsors there. Though in the subsections of this chapter I have explored each of these literacies individually, they are certainly interconnected and work to strengthen and perpetuate one another. For example, first-gens’ preference for invitational rhetoric is strengthened and perpetuated by their facility with rhetorical listening: because they frequently seek to understand rather than to persuade. These students are practiced and skilled at listening rhetorically, at listening in order to incorporate new information into their worldviews and perspectives and thereby enacting cross cultural conduct in their speaking. In other words, this data positions invitational rhetoric as the overarching literacy practice that guides students’ speaking in the classroom, especially in the context of the major literacy events of class discussion; through this literacy event in FYW, first-gen students in this study also take on new

capacities and understanding around their invitational rhetorical speaking practices through rhetorical listening and audience awareness. Taken together, these literacy practices demonstrate the literacy learning and development that first-gens take up as they hone their incoming literacy practices in the context of FYW.

Notably, rhetorical listening and audience awareness also overlap a great deal: as good listeners seeking to better understand their fellow interlocutors' perspectives, first-gens demonstrate that audience awareness does not always entail anticipating or opposing audiences' perspectives. Instead, first-gens demonstrate that speakers who seek understanding and cross cultural conversation might in some cases be genuinely surprised and changed by their audiences' perspectives. While taking up literacy practices such as rhetorical listening, audience awareness, and invitational rhetoric in FYW, first-gens value difference and celebrate opportunities to encounter new, varying perspectives from their own. Taken together, these literacy practices stand as a repertoire of inclusive praxis. These findings and analyses indicate that existing theories of argumentation and audience necessitate a reshaping in order for those theories to include a wider range of literacy practices that marginalized students like first-gen college students bring to their literacy learning in FYW contexts.

Instead of neglecting these students' strengths, FYW instruction might pay better attention to the repertoire of inclusive praxis that these students bring. Perhaps first-gens are often described through a deficit model because their literacy practices do not always look like mainstream, middle class, academic literacy practices. In a few of the examples presented in this chapter, first-gen students—including Ben and Dana—fall silent or resist speaking out when they encounter and are expected to practice literacies like persuasive argument that differ from their own literacy practices. In other cases, like Jason's, first-gen students learn to make arguing to

understand and arguing to persuade coexist in their literacy repertoires. The various examples presented throughout this chapter suggest that writing teachers might support first-gen students by positioning persuasive argument as one kind of literacy practice in a broader repertoire that also includes and values such literacy practices as invitational rhetoric, audience awareness, and rhetorical listening. Greater emphasis on alternative and transformative models of argumentation outside the traditional model of oppositional arguing to persuade would allow for first-gen students to bring their rich, complex histories with literacy learning into the classroom more often and more explicitly, as would greater emphasis on their strengths around audience awareness and rhetorical listening.

Arguably, many writing teachers and scholars are already making efforts to welcome diverse populations and the differing kinds of literacy practices that they bring into the FYW classroom. Explicit attention to first-gens' repertoires of inclusive praxis, including their preference for invitational rhetorics, amounts to a turn away from FYW pedagogies that privilege models of traditional, oppositional argument as persuasion only, especially those pedagogies that privilege persuasion to the exclusion of alternative kinds of argumentation. Qualitative examples of first-gens building audience awareness through transformative models of arguing to understand challenge the pedagogical assumption that arguing to persuade is the best or only literacy learning to be taken up in FYW. Instead, teachers might use data presented in this chapter to better understand the literacy practices that first-gen students bring and to acknowledge those literacy practices at work in the FYW classroom.

In the next chapter, I build on the concept of first-gens' literacy repertoires as I describe and analyze the particular writing practices these students take up in FYW contexts and in workplace contexts. Specifically, I argue that these students' vast and multivariate experiences

with writing in workplace contexts allows for them to build a more capacious construct of writing that includes but also moves beyond a typical model of academic, persuasive argument.

Chapter 5: Constructs of Writing In FYW and Work Contexts

In this chapter, I present findings about students' writing in first-year writing and workplace contexts, arguing that in FYW first-gens in this study develop a construct of writing as persuasive, and in workplaces these students add to their writing constructs an understanding of writing as informative, transactional, social, and archival. The construct of persuasive writing that first-gens develop in FYW is rich in some ways but also limited in that it tends to minimize other possible features and purposes for writing outside persuasion. These findings respond to commonly held assumptions about working in college. Historically, perceptions of students who work while in college position work as a deficit and student workers as marginalized (Warner, 2002)—these typical portrayals of student workers posit that students are compelled to work out of financial need, and their time in work detracts from time, energy, and attention students might otherwise have devoted to academic work (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Renn & Reason, 2012). While these drawbacks to working in college may in some cases hold true, students in this study also describe positive experiences with work and with writing in the workplace. In fact, these students' reports of working in college indicate that workplace contexts and the literacy learning those contexts entail allow for first-gens' to develop a more capacious, nuanced construct of writing. I call this construct capacious because it allows for students to build out from a narrower view of writing as persuasion only; additionally, I call this construct nuanced because it allows for students to add to their construct an understanding of writing as not only persuasive but also

informative, transactional, social, and archival in nature. Notably, working during college makes possible this expanded understanding of writing even when students' perceptions of their writing do not explicitly value their workplace writing practices—as is often the case with writing done in the context of service and labor jobs, a phenomenon I explore in more detail in the “Writing In Labor and Service Jobs” section below.

While the notion of writing constructs is central to scholarship on writing assessment (Elliot & Perelman, 2012; Elliot, Gere, Gibson, Toth, Whithaus, & Presswood, 2013; Takala, 1987), I take up this term in order to describe first-generation college students' own constructs of writing. Writing constructs have been defined as “the way writing is conceptualized” (Takala, 1987) and “the way writing is understood by a given community” (Elliot et al., 2013). In academic contexts, an institution's or instructor's construct of writing “determines how writing assignments are created and how written products are analyzed and rated” (Takala, 1987). I build on this term from writing assessment scholarship to also consider students' own constructs of writing and the construct of writing perpetuated in out-of-classroom contexts like workplaces. In what follows I offer specific examples of students' talk about their academic and workplace writing indicating wherever possible particular writing constructs that students develop in a given writing context.

My method for analyzing students' talk about writing in first-year writing and workplace contexts is one of recovery. That is, I seek to recover the often-overlooked literacies students practice in contexts outside the classroom. As such, this data resists a typical deficit model positioning of working class first-generation college students and instead positions work and workplace writing as strengths these students have cultivated. My analyses also engage the four-fold framework outlined in Chapter 1 around literacy practices, events, learning, and

development. Specifically, I position both FYW and workplaces as spaces that entail formative literacy events. In the case of first-year writing, opportunities to write formal academic arguments are formative literacy events; in workplaces, students report such literacy events as writing job applications, designing and delivering presentations, and co-authoring research articles. In each of these contexts, literacy events allow for students to do some formative literacy learning as they “take on new capacities or understandings around writing” (Brandt, 2001, p. 7). The accumulation of such literacy learning constitutes literacy development; in the case of first-gens, workplace contexts allow for the development of a multifaceted construct of writing and accompanying repertoire of workplace writing literacy practices. Perhaps most importantly, first-gens report valuing the literacy learning they take on in FYW contexts more so than that they take on in workplace contexts.

Overall, this data shows a capacious construct of writing with both continuity and disconnect between the literacy learning and writing practices that students value in academic and non-academic contexts. Some features of writing are valuable to students in both academic and non-academic spaces, for example argumentation and audience awareness. Contrastingly, some features of writing that students value in work contexts are conspicuously absent from these students’ descriptions of academic writing. In their work contexts, students value writing that allows them to engage multiple modes and media, connect to their professional or academic interests, build mentor relationships, and professionalize in their intended fields or careers. These features of writing, encountered in workplace contexts, allow for first-gen students to learn and develop a broader construct of writing. Importantly, this capacious, nuanced construct of writing bears the indelible mark of these students’ identities and positionalities as working class and first-generation. Because these students work, often out of financial need—a phenomenon

explored in detail in Chapter 3's analyses of financial literacy practices, and write at work while in college, they develop a rich understanding of features and purposes for writing in varying contexts.

In order to demonstrate first-gen students' capacious construct of writing learned and developed through writing in multiple contexts, I begin from their talk about the writing demanded of them in FYW contexts. In the later sections of this chapter, I explore the rich construct of persuasive writing that first-gens develop in FYW, and in later sections I demonstrate how students' writing in workplace settings complicates and expands this construct of writing.

Writing in FYW

As is outlined in Chapter 2, the fifteen students in this study were enrolled in fifteen sections of FYW across four different kinds of required FYW courses. Four students in this study—Luna, Ivy, Henry, and Tom—completed English 125: Writing and Academic Inquiry through the English Department Writing Program; four students—Beth, Armin, Ben, and Daquan—completed English 124: Academic Writing and Literature; one student, Sarah, completed a Great Books course for her FYW requirement; and six students—Chris, Jason, Jack, Levi, Dana, and Tina—completed English 125 through the Comprehensive Studies Program (CSP) at UM⁹. In addition to describing to me their experiences in these courses, participants in this study each shared a paper with me that they had written in their FYW course. Students discussed with me in detail their experiences writing, submitting, and receiving feedback on these major writing assignments. Overall, the fifteen different papers that students shared with me might be categorized in the following ways: seven argumentative research papers, four literary analysis papers, two comparative analysis papers, and two personal narratives. Table 5.1,

⁹ Full descriptions for each of these FYW courses can be found in Chapter 2: Methodology.

below, offers a brief summary of the major writing assignments students shared with me.

Student	FYW Course	Genre	Summary
Chris	English 125 CSP	Researched Argument	supporting Common Core as an effective education policy
Jack	English 125 CSP	Researched Argument	about the wrestler The Rock, using Barthes' theories
Jason	English 125 CSP	Researched Argument	supporting pro-choice and pro-abortion stances
Beth	English 124	Researched Argument	about first-gens challenges transitioning to college
Levi	English 125 CSP	Researched Argument	about the influence of technology on people today
Daquan	English 124	Researched Argument	about the effects of books on people
Henry	English 125	Researched Argument	about the pop-culture importance of The White Stripes
Tom	English 125	Comparative Analysis	of the Roman gladiatorial games to contemporary boxing
Luna	English 125	Comparative Analysis	of a band's two different albums using music theory lens
Dana	English 125 CSP	Personal Narrative	about life before college
Sarah	Great Books	Personal Narrative	about being first-gen and transitioning to college
Tina	English 125 CSP	Literary Analysis	of racial tensions in the novel <i>Disgrace</i>
Armin	English 124	Literary Analysis	of character's leadership in the novel <i>The Mosquito Coast</i>
Ivy	English 125	Literary Analysis	of debt and obligation in the novel <i>Song of Solomon</i>
Ben	English 124	Literary Analysis	of main character in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>

Based in these FYW experiences, participants describe both good college writing and good writing in general as evidence-based argumentation that engages particular audiences and has strong organization or structure. This understanding of what writing is, or construct of writing, is rich especially where persuasion and academic contexts for writing are concerned. As I will show through specific examples of students' talk about writing, these first-gens' understandings of persuasive writing include the role of evidence, the role of structure or organization, and the overarching purpose of engaging and convincing an audience. With their descriptions of good college writing and good writing in general, first-gens demonstrate a rich construct of writing as persuasive. However, because they ascribe this construct of writing to *both* good college writing and good writing in general, these students' overall construct of writing might be considered reductive or truncated. Especially given first-gen students' experiences with a wide variety of features and purposes of writing outside academic contexts, this construct of writing as only persuasion seems limited.

Findings for students’ definitions of good college writing and good writing in general are extrapolated from responses to culminating questions in both the second and third interviews. In the second interview, after we had discussed students’ FYW courses in detail, I asked students to describe good college writing. At the end of the third interview, after we had discussed in detail students’ various work and extracurricular contexts for writing, I asked students to describe good writing in general and to comment on whether they thought good writing in general was similar to or different from good writing in college. In this regard, I believe that student responses about good college writing draw heavily from their literacy learning around particular literacy events in FYW like writing argumentative papers. Their responses about good writing in general might include these kinds of literacy learning and events but also draw from students’ experiences writing in contexts outside the academic, such as their work and extracurricular writing contexts, as well as the specific kinds of literacy events and literacy learning that those contexts entail, for example writing job applications or designing and delivering presentations. Table 5.2 offers an overview and comparison of students’ definitions of “good college writing” and “good writing in general,” focusing on the three most prevalent features for each category of writing.

Table 5.2: Good College Writing versus Good Writing in General	
Features of Good College Writing (number of students naming each feature)	Features of Good Writing in General (number of students naming each feature)
Evidence-based argument (13)	Audience (11)
Organization and structure (9)	Evidence-based argument (4)
Audience (6)	Organization and structure (3)

As Table 5.2 shows, students' descriptions of good college writing and good writing in general are not very distinct from one another and instead focus on three major features—argument, audience, and organization or structure, to varying degrees.

Students offered clear descriptions of common features of good college writing. The most prevalent of these features was evidence-based argument, which thirteen out of the fifteen participants in this study mentioned. Dana offers a clear articulation of evidence-based argument similar to that offered by many other students in the study.

I would say good college writing has a clear thesis [...] It's something that has a lot of supporting details and uses primary sources you can go to. [...] It has a good, strong point...well strong thesis. It also needs to have supporting details. A lot of the stuff that we write about now, we're always supposed to have proof of what it is that ...whatever our topic is. By using quotes or different life examples, just something to pretty much explain in detail what it is that we're trying to get across.

Dana's description importantly identifies that good college writing should have a clear thesis or a good strong point with supporting details. Interestingly, Dana clarifies that supporting details might include source material, quotes, or different life examples—so long as those details provide proof of the argument or thesis. Here Dana offers an exemplary description of the evidence-based argument that was prevalent in student participants' descriptions of good college writing. However, Dana's comments also demonstrate the way in which students conflate persuasive writing with all writing or writing in general. Dana's comments about good college writing "whatever our topic is" shows a kind of formula she's developed for good writing in college—a formula she uses without complicating or adjusting for different writing topics. In this way, Dana's description of good college writing lacks some nuance about purposes or modes of

writing. Dana's comments are paralleled by the trend in all participants' comments wherein persuasive writing is ascribed to not only good college writing but also good writing in general.

In conjunction with evidence-based argument, nine students mentioned organization or structure as a feature of good college writing, and six talked about audience awareness as important to good college writing. Henry offers a description of both organization and audience awareness, saying that good college writing should be "organized in some fashion to an extent where, when the person reading it, they don't feel like they're reading it, I guess you could say. It just kind of happens, and that they feel something afterwards. Even if they're just thinking about it for a few minutes afterwards or something." With his description of the reader's experience, Henry emphasizes both organization and audience awareness in his account of good college writing. This description shows a rich construct of persuasive writing wherein major features like structure and audience awareness overlap and interact with one another.

At times, students' construct of persuasive writing included descriptions of audience awareness as tied closely to evidence-based argument. For example, Sarah described good college writing as having "a clear argument or a message that the reader can walk away with, and be able to say what the writing was about. I think within that writing, there should be evidence of, or at least support from other sources, that also builds upon what they say." These examples show students' understandings of complex and challenging concepts. Impressively, these students grasp the culminating purpose of persuasive writing—to leave an audience or reader with a particular message. These students also recognize the role of evidence and structure in achieving that purpose. With examples like these, students' descriptions of their learning in FYW show a rich construct of writing as persuasive. While it is heartening that based on their literacy learning in FYW these students acknowledge such rhetorical staples as evidence-based

argument and audience awareness in their descriptions of good college writing, this construct of persuasive writing gets attributed to *both* college writing and writing in general—as is mentioned previously in this chapter. Because these students do not differentiate between good college writing and good writing in general, this construct of writing as only persuasive might be considered limited even in its richness.

Student participants showed less cohesion or agreement about what good writing in general looks like than they did for good college writing, but in general the same three features emerged as Table 5.2 shows. In the case of good writing in general, eleven of the fifteen students described audience awareness or engaging the reader; four said evidence-based argument; and three mentioned structure.

Audience awareness was the most prevalent feature of good writing that students mentioned. Similarly to findings presented in Chapter 4, in which first-gens value audience awareness as an integral feature of their speaking, first-gens also value audience awareness as a feature of good writing. For example, Beth described good writing as writing that is “very clear to understand and that a wide audience could understand it. Maybe not everybody, but it could reach a wide audience of people.” In a similar vein, Ivy described good writing as “knowing who your audience is.” So, whether it’s reaching a wide audience or knowing who your audience is, audience awareness is a key feature of good writing for both of these students. Additionally, students stated that a writer should not only be aware of their audience but should write to engage their audience. Specifically, Luna said that good writing should “just be able to convey to your reader or your audience what you’re trying to do.” So, in addition to being aware of potential audiences, this student stipulates that a writer should be able to convey what they are trying to do to that audience. Similarly, Tina states that writing is good “if whoever is reading it

can understand what you're saying...like what idea you're trying to get across." Tina too emphasizes audience in her comments. Though Tina's reference to the "idea you're trying to get across" might begin to indicate kinds and purposes of writing beyond argument and persuasion, she does not specifically name forms of writing that she values as good writing. Instead, her comment indicates that she broadly values audience awareness for good writing in general. Taken together, these students' responses show that an important aspect of good writing in general should be not only audience awareness but also the writer's ability to engage and convey meaning to that audience, and students most often tie this value around audience to persuasive, argumentative writing.

These responses begin to show that for these students, audience awareness is closely connected to argumentation or conveying an argument. For example, Jack states, "As long as you have some sort of thesis, you're good writing. As long as you can convey this thesis to people and you have it, it's there, beautiful. Awesome. You are great." In Jack's view, engaging your audience is closely connected to argumentation, to having a thesis that you can convey to people. Tom also connects audience awareness to an additional feature of good writing—to organization and structure in writing. Tom says of good writing that "the reader can relate to it, it's not going above their head. It flows, like I said last time. While you're reading it, you're never like thinking like how does this fit in. it kind of like has transitions, It transitions well. Has a good intro that catches the reader's attention. And the conclusion is kind of not like a cliff hanger. It kind of summarizes it nicely and closes up." With his descriptions of flow, transitions, an intro, and a conclusion, Tom links engaging the audience to structure or organization in writing, and in total three students in this study named structure or organization as a defining feature of good writing in general. As with good college writing, students' descriptions of good

writing in general reveal an acute awareness of persuasive writing, its overarching purpose (to engage an audience), and the role of structure or organization in pursuing that purpose. Again, these students' construct of persuasive writing is rich and complex. However, they reductively attribute this construct to both college writing and writing in general and thus overlook a vast range of features, purposes, and contexts for writing outside persuasive writing.

One student, Daquan, offers a helpful reflection on why there might be parallels between good writing in general and in college. When I asked Daquan, "What about good writing in college? Do you think that's different from good writing in general or are they similar?" he responded: "Similar because college writing prepares you to write well. They should go hand in hand." For Daquan, the continuity between college writing and writing in general lies in the purpose of college writing, which he perceives as preparing you to write well in general. While the acknowledgement of some continuities between college writing (or academic writing) and writing in general (or non-academic writing) is admirable, these students' definitions of good writing overlook several valuable features of their literacy development around writing including specific workplace writing practices that they themselves have considerable experience with. For example, in workplace settings, these students value the multimodality that writing for social media allows. I explore this and other features of workplace writing more fully in the sections below. Importantly, these features of non-academic writing help to expand first-gen students' construct of writing beyond academic writing only and beyond a limited emphasis on persuasive writing.

The construct of writing that first-gen students espouse in their definitions of good writing seems limited, especially in comparison to their descriptions of the broad range of writing they take up in workplace contexts. Even with the variety of FYW courses my

participants were enrolled in (English 125, English 124, CSP 125, Great Books), the variety of genres they wrote there (researched argument, literary analysis, and personal narrative), and the variety of workplace contexts they describe writing in and for, the emphasis on argumentation in the learning goals for FYW at UM seems to influence these students' definitions of not only "good college writing" but also "good writing" in general. Notably, evidence-based argumentation is the cornerstone of first-year writing instruction at UM. Students' emphases on audience awareness in their definitions of good writing in general might begin to open up space for more and different writing genres, purposes, and contexts; but, as I note above, students stop short of describing the kinds of writing they do in work and extracurricular spaces as good writing. This data suggests that first-gens are relying on schooling and formal literacy instruction, rather than their own experiences in a variety of contexts, to shape their definitions of writing. However, there are valuable contexts for literacy learning outside of formal schooling (Brandt, 2001), which often entail different kinds of literacy events, and thus differing kinds of literacy learning, than formal schooling does. Moreover, "socially powerful institutions, such as education, tend to support dominant literacy practices" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 12). Findings for students' tendencies to collapse together their definitions of good writing and good writing in college show the force of the socially powerful institution of education on these students' literacy learning. Writing constructs are not static; they are dynamic and complex. In the case of first-gen students, I argue that their overall construct of writing is informed both by the curricular construct of persuasive writing that they explicitly describe as "good writing" and by the more capacious construct of writing they implicitly showcase in their descriptions of their workplace experiences.

Writing at Work

In order to demonstrate first-gens' capacious, nuanced construct of writing developed in workplace contexts, this section offers a summary of the various workplaces that student participants described writing in and for as well as an analysis of the kinds of writing students valued in those workplaces. The purpose of this summary and analysis in this section is to show the ways in which writing in work contexts, rather than in only academic contexts, allows for different kinds of literacy events than students might encounter in academic FYW contexts; These new writing events also allow for different kinds of literacy learning, or new capacities and understandings, that broaden students' in this study's construct of writing beyond persuasive writing only and beyond academic contexts for writing. In some cases, students' work writing mirrors their academic writing; for instance, in work contexts first-gen students value writing that allowed for them to practice persuasion and engage new and different audiences. At other times, first-gens' writing in workplace contexts adds to their construct of writing; for instance, in their workplace writing, students make use of multiple modes and media, connect to their professional or academic interests, build mentor relationships, and professionalize in their intended fields. By demonstrating the contributions of workplace writing to first-generation college students' literacy learning and development of constructs of writing, my analysis seeks to recover an often-overlooked site of literacy learning and positions working in college as a strength rather than a deficit for these students.

It is worth noting that first-generation college students are not the only students who might work during college or who might write at work during college. Nationwide, 48% of students at public four-year universities nationwide indicated a "very good chance" that they would "get a job to help pay for college expenses," and 7% of students at public four-year universities nationwide indicated a "very good chance" that they would "work full-time while

attending college.” At UM in 2014 specifically, 39% of students indicated that they would get a job while in college to pay expenses. Interestingly, all fifteen of the students in my study hold jobs and work for pay while in college. This comparison begins to show that while all kinds of students might work jobs during college, first-gens are far more likely to work than is the general student population. Because first-gens tend to work during college more than their continuing-generation college student peers do, it becomes increasingly important to better understand the experience of working during college as a definitive marker of first-gens’ college-going. By discounting the literacy events and learning that take place in work contexts and conversely privileging literacy events and learning that take place in academic contexts, we overlook an influential site of literacy learning that first-generation college students are embedded in throughout their time in college.

Because specific analyses of first-generation college students’ literacy learning and development at work are scarce, I draw from a variety of literature in my analyses. In this chapter, I combine scholarship about college students’ work trends (Gallup-Purdue Index, 2014; Eagan et al., 2014; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Renn & Reason, 2012; UM Student Profile; Warner, 2002) with analyses of workplace writing (Brandt, 2015; Heath, 2012; Spinuzzi, 2012) and analyses of working class people’s literacy experiences at work (Lindquist, 2002; Rose, 2004). Grounded in these various bodies of scholarship, my analysis reveals that working in college positively contributes to first-generation college students’ literacy learning.

For the purposes of this study, I define a job or a work context as any context in which students were paid for their work or if students were not paid but described a particular professional experience as an “internship.” According to this definition, the fifteen students in this study described approximately thirty-eight different jobs and internships that they held in

high school or in college. These various workplace settings each entailed particularly literacy events and thus facilitated specific kinds of literacy learning and development of specialized literacy practices. I offer an overview of these various contexts before analyzing the specific literacy events, practices, learning and development that students' describe encountering in these varying workplace contexts. During college, students worked administrative jobs in offices and departments on campus at UM; students described doing office work in the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program, at the Language Resource Center, at an academic commons building, in the School of Nursing, and at the University ID Card office. In addition to office jobs on campus, students also worked a variety of other jobs in different on-campus contexts at UM including as a peer advisor in an academic living learning community, as a course assistant, at the university telethon, at a campus convenience store, in dining halls, and at cafes on campus. Some students also worked off-campus jobs while they were in college including waitressing at a nearby restaurant and administrative work at the leasing office for a local property management company.

Finally, six students worked in a lab on campus at UM through work study in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity (UROP) program. Students participating in UROP worked for pay in several different labs on campus in the following disciplines: nursing, neuroscience, psychology, biology, and computer science. Because UROP is a unique workplace environment with specialized kinds of writing for research purposes, I explore students' experiences in UROP in a separate "Writing and Undergraduate Research" section below. Markedly, data from students' work study experiences as UROP research assistants reveal additional features of students' writing constructs, including writing that sparked the development of mentorship relationships and professionalization in students' intended fields. These additional features of

students' writing constructs are especially important for first-gen students for whom college might be considered a gateway into middle-class, white collar professional fields markedly different from those of their families and close networks.

Several students also worked for pay during their summers in college. In their summers in college, students described working as a middle school tutor for math at a university in their home city, at Walmart in their hometown, and in landscaping around their hometown. Two students also held internships during summers in college at a musical theater performing arts intensive and at an accounting firm. Before enrolling in college at UM, students worked a variety of jobs for pay in high school and between high school and college including work in the military, as a busboy at a restaurant, as a farmhand, at Kmart, as tutors for middle school students, as a waitress, and as a kitchen worker in an elder care facility. In high school, students also pursued internships at community revitalization projects in their home cities, in a church youth group, and as an assistant to a hospital pharmacist. At least one student, Ivy, pursued a professional certificate prior to enrolling in college—she earned her certificate as a Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA) while still in high school, and Armin earned the equivalent of an associate's degree through his work as a linguist in the military.

This summary of workplaces shows that even as sophomores in college, these first-generation college students are experienced workers. These students' work experiences span a variety of contexts and a range of professional fields. Students also described varying and overlapping motivations for working. Some students in this study worked to earn their own leisure money, some worked to pay their bills, some worked to send money home to their families, and some worked to gain experience in their intended professional fields. These students' experiences offer details about the material realities of first-generation college

students' lives before and during college. Moreover, these students' experiences offer a better understanding of the typical work-study student or student worker, students who may or may not also be first-generation college students. By paying closer attention to these students' experiences with work, we can better account for a range of student experiences, especially the experiences of those students who might be on the margins or outside of the mainstream in college.

As is mentioned in this chapter's introductory paragraphs, perceptions of students who work while in college often position work as a deficit and student workers as marginalized (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Renn & Reason, 2012; Warner, 2002). Contrastingly, students in this study often emphasize the positive experiences they have while working alongside the challenges that working poses. Working on and near campus allows for first-gens to interact with fellow students, administrators, and faculty in capacities and contexts outside the classroom. The position of work-study student allows for participants to experience campus as a multi-faceted institution housing a range of complex systems and structures, rather than simply as a school where they take classes. Moreover, students describe positive experiences at work interacting with coworkers, bosses, customers, and clients in various fields and contexts. Basically, these student workers seem to be thriving even as they balance their work obligations and academic obligations.

Notably, working while in college is also in keeping with these students' working class backgrounds and upbringings; for example, in her study of working class literacy practices and values, Julie Lindquist contends that "the conviction that work is a moral—as well as an economic—obligation is an enormously important theme" (2002, p. 92). In the case of working class first-gens, the moral obligation to work that Lindquist defines means that students might

choose to work during college not only because they have to but also because they feel they should and possibly even want to. In some ways, working in college allows students to bring their working class values to bear on their decidedly middle class college educations. In working class communities “work is seen as a discrete activity driven by economic necessity” as well as “a ‘state of grace,’ an authenticating experience that gives value and meaning to the individual” (Lindquist, 2002, p. 92). For the students in this study, work is not only an economic need as typical deficit model descriptions of these students might often espouse. Instead, these students work because of their tacit belief, cultivated in home communities, that work is meaningful.

Even as working during college connects these students back to their home communities and values, college also constitutes for these students a pathway into middle class professional jobs and careers that distinctly differ from the jobs and careers of their working class families. Depending on the kinds of work contexts students participate in, literacy events encountered at work might be similar to those encountered in home communities, as is often the case with the kinds of labor and service jobs that first-gen students populate where they encounter such literacy events as writing inventory notes or register or drawer counts. Conversely, while working in more professional jobs on and off campus during college, students begin to encounter new and different literacy events that facilitate a new different kind of literacy learning that is more aligned with middle and upper class contexts and literacy practices—for example composing literature reviews or writing formal letters to donors of a particular community organization. In other words, even in the midst of new educational contexts and opportunities for literacy learning, work remains a constant for these students; a through-line from their home communities, to their educational present, to their future professional careers.

Working during college also allows for students to encounter and participate in a variety of writing situations. In general, students name approximately thirty-two different kinds of writing they produced in workplaces; the opportunity to produce these different kinds of writing constitute literacy events or “regular, repeated activities” that are often “part of the formal procedures and expectations of social institutions like workplaces” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 9). Through such formative literacy events in their various workplaces, students describe writing application essays, drawer counts, presentations, spreadsheets, emails, blog posts, coding or computer programs, social media marketing, speeches, food and drink orders, reflections, phone messages, and a range of templates and forms. Students’ work contexts also include writing a variety of letters including thank you letters, letters seeking donations, and letters helping people to obtain visas. Students describe writing project proposals, grant proposals, and a variety of different reports, including performance reports, lab reports, and inventory reports. Students who work in educational contexts as tutors or course assistants write various curriculum materials including lesson plans, writing prompts, math problems, test questions, progress reports, and feedback on writing. Importantly, this variety of genres reaches beyond those students describe writing in academic contexts into professional writing genres that respond to the particular demands that specific workplaces bring. This kind of professional writing in context is especially important for first-generation college students who likely have had little exposure to middle class white-collar jobs and the writing they entail. Because college is for these students both an educational experience and a pathway to middle class careers, the workplace offers formative literacy learning including exposure to a broad range of professional writing genres. Through their literacy learning in workplace contexts, first-gen students are also exposed to different purposes for writing additional to the persuasive writing they encounter in FYW and thus add to

their overall writing constructs additional purposes and kinds of writing like informative, transactional, social, and archival writing.

Writing In Labor and Service Jobs

Perhaps not surprisingly, students often overlooked or devalued writing they did in labor or service , labeling this writing as “not writing” or as “tedious.” As is noted in my above analysis of FYW, first-gen students’ constructs of writing are informed by both those kinds of writing they explicitly value and those they practice but do not describe as valuable. In this section, I demonstrate the complexity of first-gens’ writing constructs by offering examples of writing students practiced but did not value. These first-gens’ tendency to devalue this kind of writing might be attributed to the fact that this writing is often template-based, and template based writing is generally overlooked or minimized as compared to other kinds of writing (Spinuzzi, 2012). In response to these findings, I instead suggest that writing done in labor and service settings is in fact valuable, provides complexity or nuance in first-gens’ constructs of writing, and thus merits some recovery work in our understanding of first-gen students’ literacy learning and development.

For some jobs, students reported doing no writing; for example, in labor and service jobs in both high school and college first-gen college students reported not having to do any kind of writing. These jobs included landscaping, working as a busboy, farmhand, kitchen worker at an elder care facility, server at a restaurant, tutor for middle schoolers, and as a Kmart floor associate. Students also reported labor and service jobs where they did write including writing register or drawer counts, food labels, food and drink orders, inventory stickers, emails, spreadsheets, phone messages, and completing forms in a variety of retail, office, and food service contexts on and off campus. In these cases, even though students reported writing at

work, they often did not value this writing or see a connection between this writing and the kinds of writing they do in academic contexts. For example, students say that this kind of writing is “quick,” “messy,” “tedious,” “shorthand.” Oftentimes, students are working from templates for these kinds of workplace writing, and thus discount this kind of writing by saying it is “template writing,” or that “the stuff is already there, you just have to put it in different parts” or that “everything was templated. There was a specific form that I just had to fill in the blanks.” In the case of drawer or register counts student say, “it's just simply counting and writing down the numbers” and “it's more numbers rather than words.” With these descriptions of the kinds of writing they do in various workplaces, working class first-gen students diminish the valuable work and writing experiences they have cultivated before and during college.

Contrastingly to these students' perceptions, previous research has shown (Rose, 2004; Lindquist, 2002; Brandt, 2015) that jobs like these in retail, food service, and office administration settings likely do include valuable literacy events and valuable literacy learning around those events. However, as the student examples here show, first-gen students do not state or express value for these complex, situated literacies in their descriptions of their workplaces and workplace writing. This might be attributed to the template-based nature of much of the writing students encounter in labor and service jobs. Spinuzzi defines this kind of template-based writing as “generic labor” saying this kind of writing “involves using a formalized solution that was once generated and made repeatable” (p. 498). Several of the genres of writing students mentioned writing at work, including register or drawer counts, food labels, inventory stickers, spreadsheets, phone messages, and a variety of forms, might be described as template-based writing or generic labor. For example, Chris discounts the writing she does as an office assistant because of the “substance” of this writing compared with writing she does in her courses. Chris

says, “I feel like writing takes like a lot of thought. When I'm doing the office work, it's just like the information is already there and I don't have to put it into my own words.” While students' descriptions reflect popular conceptions that these types of writing are tedious, composition scholars assert that “much labor that is treated as generic [...] is really self-programmable, involving considerable discretion and autonomy” (Castells as cited in Spinuzzi, 2012, p. 497). Especially where working class labor or service jobs are concerned, complex literacy practices are often demanded of workers, but just as often these literacy practices are discounted by outsiders and by workers themselves.

Overall, these first-gen students' talk about their writing in labor and service jobs show that they tend to devalue the literacy and writing practices they perform in those contexts. In other words, a major asset influencing working class first-generation college students' overall writing constructs is the variety and extent of writing they do in workplace settings like labor and service jobs. By writing in the contexts of labor and service jobs, first-gens encounter a capacious, nuanced understanding of what writing can do in the world; namely, they use writing to organize routines, archive transactions, convey information in the absence of (or to supplement) face-to-face communication, and a range of other economic and social functions. However, these students' descriptions of their writing overlook these features of a nuanced construct of writing they have encountered and leveraged in the context of service and labor jobs. By paying closer attention to these and other workplace contexts for writing, we might support first-generation college students in better valuing these writing contexts' contribution to their literacy learning. In this way, these findings for students' writing experiences in labor and service jobs hold implications for literacy instruction in academic contexts. Namely, the complexity of students' workplace literacies, even in labor and service settings, shows the

importance of both offering instruction in new academic literacies and respecting or celebrating those literacies first-gens have already cultivated, or are currently cultivating, and bring with them to their college courses. A “both and” approach would acknowledge the literacy strengths these students have developed in their considerable workplace experiences and reposition working class experience and identity as assets rather than deficits for first-generation college students.

Writing in Professional Jobs

In addition to FYW contexts and labor and service jobs, these first-generation college students’ writing constructs are also informed by their participation in more professional or white collar work contexts. First-gens’ writing in these contexts adds to their constructs an understanding of writing as multimodal, and of writing as a way to engage their particular interests, build mentor relationships, and professionalize in their intended fields or careers. Additionally, writing in these workplaces also confirms features of writing constructs encountered in academic contexts including the use of writing to persuade and engage audiences. Unlike their writing in service or labor jobs, first-gens tend to explicitly value these features of writing even though they do not name these features of workplace writing in their definitions of “good writing,” as is outlined in the FYW sections above. In their descriptions of writing at work, students value such genres as application essays and cover letters, thank you letters, letters seeking donations, project proposals, emails, PowerPoint presentations, social media posts, and blog posts.

In this section, I analyze students’ descriptions of valuable workplace writing experiences, arguing that writing in the workplace strengthens and expands first-gens constructs of writing. I first focus on features of writing that students value in both workplace and academic

writing—namely, persuasion and audience awareness—and then analyze valuable features unique to first-gens’ descriptions of workplace writing including multimodality and connecting to individual professional interests. Table 5.3 offers a summary of these valuable aspects of workplace writing and a comparison with good college writing and good writing in general. These findings reveal that unlike writing done in labor or service settings, students did value writing they did in more professional workplace settings, especially when that writing reinforced learning from their academic contexts or offered new and different learning about writing additional to that which their academic contexts offer.

Table 5.3: Features of Writing in Various Contexts
(number of students naming each feature)

Features of Good College Writing	Features of Good Writing in General	Features of Academic and Workplace Writing	Features of Workplace Writing
Evidence-based argument (13)	Audience (11)	Persuasion (3)	Multimodality (3)
Organization and structure (9)	Argumentation (4)	Audience (2)	Engages Students’ Interests (3)
Audience (6)	Organization and structure (3)		Mentorship (4)
			Professionalization (2)

Students’ valuing of consistencies between academic and workplace writing confirms recent survey findings that having “an internship or job that allowed [them] to apply what [they were] learning in the classroom” greatly enriched the learning and working lives of students during and after college (Gallup-Purdue Index Report, 2014). While consistency in writing experiences between academic and non-academic contexts might be beneficial for all students, my findings suggest that these writing experiences are especially important for working class first-generation college students because college is not only an academic sphere for these

students but also a gateway to white collar, middle class, professional jobs and careers that are markedly different from jobs that their families, friends, and close networks likely keep. For first-gens, an important aspect of working during college is the opportunity for writing and literacy learning that this work allows.

For these reasons, students valued workplace writing that allowed for them to practice persuasion; for example, Tom, Luna, and Ben valued workplace writing genres including application essays, project proposals, email, and letters because these genres allowed for them to practice persuasion. In her on-campus desk job at the University ID Card office, Luna described writing emails to students and parents as well as interoffice emails—emails which she described as “persuasive in a way.” Specifically, Luna gave the example that “the medical center, they printed a bunch of cards and they sent them to us for some reason. I had to write an email to all of these nursing students explaining how to find our office. Telling them to come get their cards basically.” In comparing this workplace writing task to her essay writing for her college classes, Luna says: “Both of them are very like formal you know. I’m pretty formal in emails that I send to students and parents, that’s the same [as essays for class]. The content is different. It’s just instructions and very to the point, which my writing for class is concise too. It’s just a different tone. Like, ‘Please come and pick up your [ID] card. Our hours are 8am to 5pm. We’re located at this location behind the union,’ as opposed to an essay.” In her workplace emails, Luna had to make requests of students, parents, and coworkers, requests that often demanded a call to action like encouraging readers to come down to the office to pick up their ID cards. In this kind of real-world workplace setting for writing, Luna confirms and puts into practice persuasive writing techniques—for example striking a balance between a formal but not too commanding tone and integrating informative and persuasive aspects of writing into her emails—similar to those that

students also cited learning and valuing in their academic writing with the common overarching purpose of persuading a particular audience to do something.

Ben also described his workplace writing as persuasive; Ben described writing letters asking for donations for his internship at a performing arts intensive summer program for theater where he worked on the development team. Ben described this work saying, “People would fund and give donations, so I’d have to like write to sponsors sometimes to like sponsor kids to get scholarships because it’s a very expensive intensive.” With a real world audience and purpose in mind, Ben is offered the opportunity to practice persuasive writing and reinforce his classroom learning about persuasion. Ben goes on to say these letters are “persuasive writing” because “it definitely kind of gave me that information I needed to ask without asking, kind of informing you to be on my side, hooking you in rather than saying this is why you should give me money. I’m like, ‘no see there are these people and they need it, I’m not asking you for it, they just need it. And I know you have it, so, why not?’ [...] it taught me how to be more persuasive with the words I use, yeah.” For Ben, writing letters asking for donations is valuable workplace writing because it allows him to put into practice persuasive writing techniques similar to those he and other students emphasize as valuable to their academic writing as well. These students’ accounts of writing in different contexts show that practicing persuasion in both academic and workplace contexts usefully informs their constructs of what writing is and does in the world.

Taken together, students’ experiences with writing in academic and workplace contexts adds to their writing constructs an understanding of invoked or imagined audiences versus real or addressed audiences (Ede & Lunsford, 1984). Workplace contexts add to these students’ constructs an understanding of real or addressed audiences embedded in particular writing contexts, whereas academic contexts offer an understanding of imagined or invoked audiences

that often accompany persuasive writing assignments. As such, the workplace allows for nuance in these students' writing constructs by providing real or addressed audiences and exigencies for persuasive writing and by giving students repeated opportunities to practice and adapt their persuasive writing with each new and different audience or purpose for writing. In these ways, audience awareness is a staple of students' writing constructs developed in both academic and workplace contexts; however, each context offers an understanding of differing, though complimentary, kinds of audiences.

Similarly, to Ben and Luna, Tom also used persuasive writing at work. In his internship at an automotive company in his home city, Tom described a project proposal he wrote for a community recycling program. Tom described this project proposal as “persuasive writing... you're trying to make the reader like view your thoughts, view your ideas and agree with them.” With this description of project proposals, Tom emphasizes persuasion and engaging new and different audiences. With both features of writing—persuasion and audience awareness—first-gens confirm and mobilize learning about writing gained in academic contexts. This kind of cross-context learning about writing strengthens students' understandings of what writing is and does in the world, and perhaps most importantly, apprentices first-gens into the kinds of writing that will be demanded of them in the white collar professional careers they aspire to after college. In these ways, this data shows that first-gens' practice of persuasive writing in workplace contexts is a valuable feature of their writing constructs—one that goes overlooked when academic contexts for learning are valued or emphasized to the exclusion of extra-academic contexts for learning, including workplaces. By working, first-gens confirm the construct of writing as persuasive learned in academic contexts like FYW, and they put that construct to practice as they persuade readers for specific purposes in real world professional contexts.

Along with Tom's valuing of project proposals, Ben and Sarah valued workplace writing genres like PowerPoint presentations and social media writing in which they too could engage new and different audiences. For example, in his performing arts internship, Ben also described doing a lot of "social media writing" and "social media marketing" on several platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. On these platforms, Ben was writing to "participants in the foundation, also to get people who were already in [the foundation] excited, like pump-ups type of stuff. We also did like a lot of like daily like quizzes, trivia type things [...] or we would do the person who could get like the most selfies." While describing these kinds of social media posts, Ben reflected on such aspects of his writing as engaging particular audiences, saying this kind of writing "taught me to point out the important things. And maybe not, I wasn't able to you know describe them as much on social media, but it definitely taught me to put in the writing the things that will catch someone's eye." With his emphasis on catching someone's eye and pointing out important things, Ben highlights the influence of audience on his social media writing for his internship. Ben's reflections on the particular constraints of social media writing, for example that he "wasn't able to you know describe [important things] as much on social media" also introduces nuance to his understanding of audience awareness. With these comments, Ben recognizes different strategies for engaging audiences in different kinds of writing. Ben's version of engaging an audience in his social media writing at work is likely markedly different from engaging an audience in his literary analysis papers in FYW. Ben's recognition of constrained time and space in which to engage an audience on social media productively complicates and strengthens his understanding of audience awareness as well as his overall construct of writing. While audience awareness might be a valuable feature of learning about writing in academic contexts, students might not always be offered the opportunity to

practice audience awareness through social media writing in the classroom. Instead, this kind of social media writing to address real audiences is much more common in students' workplace writing; in this way, the opportunity to write in particular workplaces strengthens and extends learning about writing in academic contexts.

Sarah similarly describes working to engage audiences in her workplace writing. In her on campus job at the Language Resource Center at UM, Sarah worked the desk, answering phones and checking out materials like books and movies to students. At this job, Sarah says "There was one time I had to make a PowerPoint of Spanish words, because I have some Spanish experience, for a middle school that's visiting, so that was fun [...] It was bringing me back to my middle school phase, because it's like, 'Okay. If I'm a middle schooler, sitting in a library for a PowerPoint, what do I want to see?' I included some pictures of Frozen stuff, and I tried to make it fun." In this example, Sarah considers a new and different audience for her writing and composes her PowerPoint presentation in an effort to engage this audience effectively. While in strictly academic contexts like her coursework, Sarah might not be afforded the opportunity to engage an audience of middle school students. While audience awareness is often a feature of academic writing, and one that first-gens report valuing, in the classroom these audiences are often only imagined or invoked and in workplaces these audiences become real or addressed (Ede & Lunsford, 1984). Namely, writing at work confirms here an understanding of writing as an effective way to engage an audience across academic and workplace contexts and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the need to adapt and change writing for different audiences, contexts, and purposes.

In addition to valuing aspects of workplace writing that are consistent with academic writing, first-gens also identified valuable features specific to their literacy learning in workplace

writing contexts. In their workplace writing, first-gens valued the opportunity to integrate multiple modes and media and to connect to their individual professional and academic interests. In the above examples, Sarah and Ben's experiences of writing PowerPoint presentations and social media posts at work begin to indicate that students valued workplace writing that included multiple modes and media. Specifically, in the above example, Sarah's use of images from the movie *Frozen* in her PowerPoint for middle schoolers showcases one way in which these students engaged multiple modes and media in their workplace writing. In addition to this PowerPoint presentation, Sarah also contributed to the Language Resource Center's blog as part of her job there. Sarah says: "We have a blog for that, and over the summer I wrote two passages for it. That was fun. [...] I blogged about the spelling bee, actually, and how knowing a language of origin can tell you a lot about how to spell a word. [...] That was fun. I added GIFs. It was a fun blog." These findings for Sarah's and other students' multimodal writing in the workplace confirm previous studies that show students value the few opportunities for multimodal writing they encounter in the classroom and that students most often encounter multimodal writing in workplace or extracurricular contexts (Heath, 2012, p. 123). My data demonstrates the contribution of multimodal aspects of writing encountered in workplace contexts to first-gens' literacy learning and their overall writing constructs.

Ben's example of social media writing and marketing also demonstrates the use of multiple modes and media in workplace writing and the ways in which this workplace writing goes beyond what might be possible or typical in academic writing. In his social media writing for his performing arts internship, Ben described writing on "Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, [and] Snapchat," saying,

Instagram was very much so short, caption-y, hashtag-y, emoji. Twitter usually involved

photos and links to things. And just like four big words and then maybe a hashtag. Snapchat of course video, and then Facebook was usually like the longer posts that you would like write a headline then you would have to like write a little description, maybe attach a photo, and attach a link, so it kind of just had to like click here for more information but put like the most important thing. [...] So you kind of had to strategize you know what did you want to capture within this small little ten second window that people would scroll up and down.

With this description of social media writing at work, Ben shows a sophisticated understanding of various social media platforms and the appropriate purposes, modes, and media to employ for different platforms, audience expectations, and different kinds of posts. Ben has cultivated this sophisticated understanding of social media writing in part through his writing professionally on these platforms during his internship. In this example, Ben again is writing for an addressed—rather than invoked or imagined—audience; these kinds of real world audiences and purposes for combining and leveraging different modes and media cannot be authentically recreated in the classroom, and in this way Ben’s workplace writing supplements his learning about writing in academic contexts. For Ben and the other first-generation college students in this study, workplace writing is a valuable asset in their development of expanded, more complex, nuanced constructs of writing.

In addition to Ben’s social media posts and Sarah’s PowerPoint presentations, Chris also made use of PowerPoint as a valuable tool in her workplace writing as a course assistant for an undergraduate writing course on campus at UM. In this context, Chris used PowerPoint to help structure her talking points for class when she was leading class discussion. With this combination of PowerPoint and speaking, Chris demonstrates the importance of multimodality in

her writing for her course assistant job. Chris says, “When I start class I always, I usually have a PowerPoint. I’ll start out, ‘Hey guys, let’s get started. Today we will be talking about ...’ ‘This week ...’ straight off of the power point what we are going to be doing. [...] I just read right off of it. But I don’t try to be boring with it.” Chris composes these PowerPoints in order to help her structure her leading of class discussions, and she values this writing as a supplement and support to her speaking in this workplace context. Interestingly, Chris’s use of a PowerPoint to organize her lecture and to structure the class period is both digital and multimodal in nature—combining digital and analogue modes including text, image, voice, and gesture; In this example, Chris’s participation in the particular workplace contexts of being a course assistant affords her the formative literacy event of structuring and leading a class and addressing an audience of fellow college students. As in Sarah’s practice of writing PowerPoint presentations, Chris’s experience writing PowerPoint presentations at work also contributes to her understanding of writing as multimodal. In Chris too develops a construct of writing as multimodal prompted by specific workplace literacy events.

Additionally, some students valued workplace writing that connected to their professional or academic interests including Sarah’s use of multiple languages in a PowerPoint presentation, Luna’s work composing tutoring materials for high schoolers, and Ben’s use of social media writing to market the performing arts intensive where he holds an internship. In her description of composing a PowerPoint presentation for middle school students learning Spanish, Sarah says “It was fun because I hadn’t used Spanish in a while and I missed it. I looked for that job, or I was interested in applying for that job, because it got me back into the foreign language areas, which is something that I haven’t had time to study in college, but I really miss.” Sarah, a neuroscience major who also speaks three languages, leverages her work study job as an

opportunity to engage an academic interest outside of coursework in her major. In this workplace context, Sarah also takes up a construct of writing as multilingual. In Sarah's work at the Language Resource Center, writing is used to communicate with many different speakers and learners of different languages—a facet of writing that most college courses likely overlook.

Sarah also used her individual writing tasks at her job to help her engage topics that interest her. As is mentioned above, for her work study job in the Language Resource Center on campus, Sarah wrote a blog post about her personal experiences watching and participating in spelling bees in middle school and “how knowing a language of origin can tell you a lot about how to spell a word.” Sarah says of her blog post: “I kept it pretty like third-person, but my experience in spelling bees definitely made me aware of how much it helps. I'd watched the ... watching the National Spelling Bee is so much of a spectator sport for me.” The literacy event of blogging for her on-campus office job allowed for Sarah to write about one of her interests, and she had a successful and fulfilling experience with this workplace writing. Moreover, blogging at work helped this student to connect back to her foreign language skills developed in high school but that she was not able to take coursework for in college. While writing in coursework might usually be limited to the particular themes or content of a single course, workplace writing allows for students to connect to academic and professional interests of their choosing. In Sarah's case specifically, the workplace literacy event of writing a blog post allows for her to do some formative literacy learning around what writing is and does in the world, and she develops an understanding that writing can help her to explore her professional interests parallel to but often distinct from the interests she explores in strictly academic contexts. In this way, the opportunity to connect to professional interests through workplace writing is a formative feature of first-gens' literacy learning and development of a construct of writing—their understandings

of what writing is and is for.

Similarly to Sarah, both Luna and Ben also worked jobs that helped them connect to and pursue their professional interests. For example, in her high school job tutoring middle school students, Luna wrote a variety of curricular materials including lesson plans, writing prompts, math problems, test questions, progress reports, and emails to parents. Of this writing, Luna says, “That was fun, because I want to be a teacher. It was like being a teacher without...you know, in high school.” The working class first-generation college students in this study work out of financial need, but they also leverage their need to work as an opportunity to connect to their interests and to professionalize in their intended career fields.

Similarly to Luna’s tutoring as a way to connect to her intended profession of teaching, Ben chose to pursue an internship that related directly to his academic and professional interests in theater and education. Ben describes his application essay for his internship as an opportunity to make comparisons and connections between his different theater experiences, saying, “It’s just, you basically just have to take what you already gained and then say what you have and then what you hope to get. So you kind of have to make them mix in together, compare and contrast them basically from your past experiences to the experiences you have had and hope to have and are having. And so that’s helped me in that sense, ‘cause it helps me draw the ties and see where things haven’t matched up and where I want them to.” Ben leverages his application essay writing as a chance to take stock of his theater experiences and set goals for the future, and this application writing shows him that writing is useful for both reflection and connecting to professional and academic interests. Even though some FYW courses at UM allow for narrative and reflective writing similar to that which Ben describes here, Ben’s FYW class focused most closely on literary analyses and writing about literature. Moreover, student participants, in their

definitions of good writing, generally emphasized the persuasive, argumentative aspects of their writing in FYW more so than any narrative aspects. Application writing allows for students to synthesize, reflect on, and make meaning from their personal experiences in ways that are less common or less commonly valued in their FYW contexts. These opportunities to reflect on past experience and connect to their future professions is especially important for first-gen students who, because of their positionality as working class and first-gen, tend to have few close mentors working in the kinds of white-collar professions their college degrees will likely lead them to.

Overall, first-gen students' accounts of writing at work before and during college demonstrate their range and depth of both work and writing expertise. These students compose in a variety of genres for specific purposes at work and altogether describe 38 different workplaces and 32 different workplace writing genres. In some cases, these students' overlook the value of this workplace writing, especially when that writing takes place in labor or service contexts. However, these first-gen students do value their workplace writing when it allows them to practice persuasion, engage new and different audiences, make use of multiple modes and media, and connect to their professional and academic interests. In these ways, workplace writing both reinforces and supplements working class first-generation college students' learning about writing cultivated in academic contexts. As such, the literacy events first-gens encounter in the workplace and the literacy learning and development that those events spark contribute considerable nuance to first-generation college students' constructs of writing.

Writing and Undergraduate Research

First-generation college students' writing constructs are also expanded and nuanced by their participation in the professional setting of the Undergraduate Research Opportunity (UROP) program at UM. As is noted above, six students in this study worked in research labs on

campus at UM through work-study in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity (UROP) program. Students participating in UROP worked in several different labs on campus in the following disciplines: nursing, neuroscience, psychology, biology, and computer science. UROP occupies a blurry space for these students. It is at once a workplace and an extra- or co-curricular activity tied closely to their coursework and career aspirations in their particular disciplines. UROP students can choose to join UROP for course credits or for work study, and all the students in this study—perhaps not surprisingly given their first-gen and working class statuses—chose to join UROP through work study. So, for the students in this study, UROP is a paying job—an on campus workplace context; however, the writing students do in UROP blurs the lines of academic, workplace, and extracurricular writing and indicates that this is both a co-curricular and work context for these students. In UROP contexts, first-gen students in this study report writing grant proposals, lab reports, emails, coding or computer programs, research cover letters, abstracts, data graphs and charts, poster presentations, literature reviews, and in one case a student contributed to a research article and earned an authorship credit upon the article’s publication.

In UROP contexts, students again encountered a construct of writing as persuasive and as multimodal; however, students also came to understand writing as a way to build mentorship relationships and to professionalize in their intended fields and careers. In this section, I analyze these new features of a writing construct that UROP introduces students to, arguing that UROP contexts also productively complicate first-gens’ writing constructs. Findings around mentorship in UROP are in keeping with broad scale survey data in which recent college graduates name “having a mentor who encouraged me” as an influential aspect of their lives during and after college (Great Jobs Great Lives). My findings lend more detailed examples from first-generation

college students' workplace writing experiences to this broad scale survey data and offers a nuanced perspective on the specific role of mentorship in the lives of marginalized students like first-generation college students.

Moreover, I consider the overlapping influences of mentorship and literacy sponsorship (Brandt, 2001) on first-generation college students' UROP experiences. Students most often use the terms mentors and mentorship—rather than sponsors or sponsorship, in their talk about their UROP experiences; this is not surprising given that the UROP program itself, in its promotional materials and on its official website, also uses the terms mentors and mentorship. UROP describes “Research Mentors” who “provide undergraduate student researchers an opportunity to engage in research activities that help students learn about the pursuit of knowledge within an academic discipline” (“Research Mentors”). In addition to this broad conception of mentorship, through my analyses, I also add a more specific understanding of how these mentors serve as sponsors of literacy. For example, while engaging undergraduate students in research activities, UROP mentors also sponsor these students' literacies by helping them to develop specialized reading, writing, and speaking practices relevant to their research. I also recognize that this mentorship and sponsorship is not limited to first-gens' interactions with faculty research mentors in UROP; instead these students also gain support from graduate students and undergraduate peers in the UROP program.

In UROP contexts, students build mentorship relationships around writing. In fact, four of the six students who participated in UROP described mentorship and support they experienced while writing in their different labs; these mentors are sponsors of first-gens' literacy practices around such formative literacy events as learning to write code, writing a job application, writing email, and writing literature reviews of published academic research. Namely, Sarah, Beth, Jack,

and Jason all described mentorship relationships with undergraduate peers, graduate students, and their faculty advisors in UROP, and these mentors also sponsor first-gens' literacy practices by supporting their literacy learning and development around workplace writing practices. For example, Sarah's UROP neuroscience lab included computer programming and coding, and Sarah says she valued the opportunity for mentorship and support that this writing in UROP contexts allowed for. Of her work writing code for her UROP lab, Sarah says,

There was just a Ph.D. student, teaching me, or pretty much giving me goals and seeing how I reached them with that program. I think before I knew how computer programs worked, I had a certain idea of how I would solve a problem, and then it was just applying the computer concepts, to make that problem solved. Often, I'd know what I wanted to do, but how I got there, there was some creativity to get there. I think what I did over the summer varied a lot. How I wrote the program a few months ago would be a lot different if I had to write the program again. [...] When I would show my solutions to the Ph.D. student, then he'd be like, 'Oh. I wouldn't have approached that at that way, but that works.' I always thought that was a good moment. Yeah. I'd say there's creativity in writing code, for sure.

In this description of her experiences writing code, Sarah values the mentorship and support she receives from a Ph.D. student in her UROP lab. Additionally, with his feedback about her approach to programming, this mentor also serves as a literacy sponsor—supporting Sarah's development of specialized writing practices. With this support, Sarah can problem solve and be creative in her approach to coding, and she feels successful when her mentor recognizes the good work she has done with her coding. In these ways, Sarah's mentor helps her to expand her writing construct to include creativity and problem solving.

As a program that brings together faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students in related fields, the mentoring and sponsorship that UROP facilitates allows for first-generation college students to gain experience with such literacy practices as conducting research and writing in their academic disciplines and potential future professions. This mentorship and literacy sponsorship between faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students is unique to the blended co-curricular and workplace contexts that programs such as UROP allow and likely is not duplicated in strictly academic contexts. In fact, first-gens in this study do not include mentorship in their talk of academic writing in college. Instead, mentorship through writing is a specific feature of workplace and extra- or co-curricular contexts, confirming findings from Brandt's 2015 study of young people's writing literacies, in which writing mentorship "occur[s] not only and not mainly through traditional academic channels, but in extracurricular, off-site, or alternative school spaces." (Brandt, 2015, p. 110). This kind of extra-academic mentoring is especially salient for first-generation college students who might experience literacy instruction in the classroom as a fraught experience in conflict with their home literacies—as is demonstrated in Chapter 4's analysis of speaking practices in the first-year writing classroom, wherein some first-gen students in this study resist the academic model of argumentation as opposition and persuasion in favor of a more conversational, invitational model of argument. Because they are often welcoming of a wider range of literacy practices than classroom spaces are, extracurricular spaces are generally less fraught for first-gen students than academic contexts are. In the less fraught space of extracurricular and workplace contexts, first-gens benefit from mentoring and sponsorship around literacy, especially around writing practices, in ways that differ from and productively complicate constructs of writing built in other academic and workplace settings.

Similarly to Sarah, other students including Beth, Jack, and Jason also described sponsorship they experienced for writing in their UROP lab contexts. These students described sponsorship from faculty mentors when writing several genres in UROP contexts including coding or computer programming, applications, and email writing. Beth says she valued the application process for UROP because “they walk you through the application process and how to do a specific research cover letter.” Beth’s description of being “walked through the process” highlights a valuable aspect of UROP and the writing that UROP entails: mentorship and support for writing new and different genres. In examples such as these, UROP structures major literacy events like writing an application for a position in a research lab and thus serves as a literacy sponsor for first-gen students while facilitating their literacy learning and development of new capacities and understandings around writing. Importantly, this kind of sponsorship for accessing programs like UROP and for accessing new genres like cover letters supports first-generation college students in making connections to professional fields and genres which they likely have little example of or prior knowledge of. In this way, mentorship in UROP contexts allows for students to develop and leverage knowledge about writing in distinct ways that set these contexts and literacy practices apart from learning and writing in academic contexts.

Similarly to Sarah and Beth, Jack and Jason both describe mentorship in UROP; in their cases, mentorship comes from UROP faculty who support Jack and Jason’s literacy learning in regards to writing emails. Jack’s mentor praises his prowess at writing emails and confirms for him writing strategies he uses for writing emails; contrastingly, Jason’s mentor guides him in revising and adjusting his approach to email, thus strengthening his email writing and helping to make that writing more professional. Jack describes his experience communicating with his mentor in his UROP psychology lab saying, “so typically my like research instructor, I’ll send

her emails about different things [...] and then after a couple emails back and forth she'll say, 'that was really good man.' Just things like that and then we'll talk about it in our meetings. And, 'wow, you're really really really good Jack, you write well in your emails.'" For Jack, this communication back and forth and praise from his mentor about email writing reinforces for him some strategies he was already using in email. Jack describes his typical approach to writing email saying, "emails are interesting cause you'll start out super professional and then end up being very personal." In Jack's case, the combination of both written and spoken face-to-face communication with his UROP mentor allowed for him to get general feedback on his approach to email writing and to solidify this approach of moving from professional to more personal in his email writing. Notably, major literacy events often work through a combination of written and spoken literacy practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 9), and Jack's example demonstrates that this combination of literacy practices around a formative literacy event facilitates learning and development. Through the mentorship relationships that UROP structures, Jack experiences literacy sponsorship around strategies for writing professional emails, an important supplement to his writing in academic contexts where mentorship and literacy instruction might be less personal and more distributed in a classroom setting with one teacher and many students. In a co-curricular or workplace setting like UROP, more personalized one-to-one mentorship allows for first-generation college students to hone their professional writing skills and to expand their understandings of what writing is and is for. In Jack's case, his mentor helps him to add to his writing construct an understanding of writing as professional communication.

Jason also experienced sponsorship and support from a faculty mentor for his email writing in his UROP lab. After having worked in a UROP position, Jason says his email is "much better. It was horrible when I started my job as a research assistant because I had to email

my boss at least 3 times a day. She was just telling me, ‘Jason your email etiquette is horrible. I’m telling you this because I know you’re going to have to email people in the future so I wanted to help you now.’ Whereas in Chapter 4 first-generation college students often pick up on communicative norms through observation and listening, in his UROP context, Jason gains direct instruction from his mentor in how to meet the communicative demands of sending professional emails. Importantly, Jason’s mentor rightly stresses that professional email writing will be helpful to Jason now and in future writing contexts. With this emphasis on present and future contexts for professional email writing, Jason’s mentor also offers him a set of strategies or a template for writing email—thus directly modeling this specialized literacy practice and sponsoring Jason’s literacy learning and development; Jason recalls advice from his mentor saying “you should say hello, blah, blah, blah, put a Mr., or Mrs., Dr. and put like a thank you for your time, blah, blah, blah. Make sure it’s not like I’m just talking to you. Make it like, I’m sending you this email in regards to X, Y and Z blah, blah, blah. If you any other questions, comments, concerns, let me know. Thank you.’ Simple things like that. So, she really helped me out with that because I email a lot of people now” Similarly to Jack’s experience with mentorship in UROP, Jason’s mentor talked with him in their regular meetings about his email etiquette and helped him develop a template for this kind of professional communication. This kind of literacy sponsorship from faculty mentors is especially important for first-generation college students who likely have little familial or close support in their network for this kind of professional communication, and through mentorship in UROP Jason and Jack add to their constructs of writing an understanding of writing for the purposes of professional communication.

Jason's mentor emphasizes that the email template she teaches him will also be useful to him in future communicative contexts, and this advice has already proved true for Jason. Jason goes on to describe situations in which he uses the knowledge about email writing that he gained from his UROP mentor, saying, "I use that etiquette for basically any email that I'm writing to others. My GSI, somebody on the eBoard that has funding, people in my org who email me because like paying... like this is ... Today is the last day to pay dues, so like a bunch of people are emailing me today telling me, 'Hey can we meet here, can we meet there, what's your availability?' Being professional there because I can't just be like 'I can meet here at this time where you at,' like something like that." Jason's mentor supports him in developing literacy practices that are useful not only in writing for his UROP internship itself but also in writing for curricular and extracurricular contexts, specifically in the literacy practices of writing email to his GSI or emailing undergraduate student peers in his role as treasurer for the Black Undergraduate Medical Association.

As a first-generation college student, Jason's experience of mentorship in UROP supports him in communicating professionally in a variety of contexts, not only in UROP. Brandt also notes the importance of mentorship that extends beyond a single writing experience, noting that in her findings for young people's uptake of mass writing "their [mentors'] presence, their attentiveness, their mentorship prove critically instructive to aspiring writers. And what they teach goes well beyond the techniques of textuality, extending to the broader character of the writer and the writing life" (Brandt, 2015, p. 105). In Jason's case, his mentor's attentiveness to his growth as a writer allowed for him to adopt and adapt particular techniques of writing for professional communication to multiple situations and contexts in his writing life. Through the unique mentorship opportunities that UROP allows, first-gen students gain literacy sponsorship

around formative literacy events and thus learn and develop complex, nuanced understandings of what writing is and does in the world, especially of the way in which writing is used for the purposes of professional communication.

Mentorship in UROP often comes from students' superiors like faculty or graduate students, but also comes from the peer mentorship of other undergraduate students. Jason also wrote literature reviews in his UROP lab, and writing these literature reviews earned him an authorship credit when the lab eventually published a paper. In the case of writing literature reviews, Jason turned to his fellow undergraduate students working in the lab for support and peer mentorship. Jason explains, "Lit reviews were so hard because like my PI, Principal Investigator, she was always saying, 'Jason, I need you to make 10 lit reviews. I'll give you a week, but I need them by Monday.' And I was like, 'Okay, I got all this work to do, I got homework to do also, but I'm at work right now, so I'm going to just get as many as I can do now. I could probably do like, on a good day, I could probably do 5 in 3 hours because like ... Yeah 5 lit reviews in 3 to 3 and a half hours. She wanted like 10 or 15 and I was just like, 'Okay, I can't do this.'"

Jason's description of writing literature reviews in UROP contexts highlights several challenging features of workplace writing, including encountering new specialized genres and navigating a boss's expectations for work and workload demands. These challenges set workplace writing apart from strictly academic writing, and Jason met these challenges in part by consulting with a peer who mentored him through these demands for writing in UROP. Jason continues, "I asked one of my co-workers and she was like, 'Oh you're reading all of the articles from the beginning to the end?' I'm like, 'Yeah, isn't that what you're supposed to do?' She's like, 'No, you're just supposed to read the abstract, the first couple of paragraphs, the last paragraphs and just write some things about it.' I'm just like, 'Oh.'" By

consulting with his coworker in UROP, Jason learns important skills of reading selectively, skimming, or scanning to help him process 10-15 articles and write literature reviews. Importantly, this peer-to-peer mentorship helped Jason to make sense of a new specialized genre, develop strategies for writing literature reviews, and tackle the work expectations and demands in his UROP lab contexts. Again, first-gens rely on mentors and sponsors of literacy to help them access new and unfamiliar kinds of writing and new and different contexts for writing and thus to expand and complicate their constructs of writing. Through the literacy sponsorship of his peer mentor, Jason adds reviewing literature to his understanding of what writing is and does in the world.

When first-gen students build mentorship relationships around particular workplace writing experiences, they add to their writing constructs an understanding of writing as social and transactional. In Jason's case, seeking help for his writing structured his social interaction with his peer and demonstrated for him that writing can—and in some cases must—be social. Moreover, Jason's experience of writing and submitting literature reviews to his faculty mentor in UROP showcases a construct of writing as both social and transactional. Jason negotiates the time and energy constraints demanded of him in this transaction and in return for his efforts gains useful experience with writing in a scientific field as well as an authorship credit upon the publication of an article that included his literature reviews. Because UROP is a professional setting in which Jason builds relationships with peers and faculty around his writing, this workplace allows for him to develop a more capacious construct of writing that includes social and transactional writing.

As with email, Jason found this support for writing literature reviews in UROP to be useful to him in other writing contexts as well. Markedly, Jason also makes use of these literature review strategies in his courses where he says

now I'm comfortable writing lit reviews because a lot of my classes are article based. [...] I do have to read 3 articles that are above 30 pages each, three articles that are 30 pages each, and I have to talk about them in discussion tomorrow. I know the style that I can read, I can read the abstract, the first couple of paragraphs, the last few paragraphs and still be able to talk about it because, I would look at all the charts and data because that's like ... the whole article is not going to be able to be discussed in class. If there's something I'm interested in, it will get discussed in class, I don't have to read all 30 pages like I was in the beginning of my UROP stages.

In this case, Jason makes use of literature review skills to prepare for class discussion of course readings in his classes. By having the support and mentorship that UROP offers, Jason's writing is improved in a variety of contexts, and his writing construct gains an understanding of what literature reviews are and how writing literature reviews can be useful across academic, extracurricular, and professional contexts. Through the literacy sponsorship of both faculty and peer mentors in UROP, Jason supplements and strengthens his approach to writing and adds to his writing constructs an understanding of writing as a useful way to process scholarly literature.

As Sarah, Beth, Jack, and Jason's experiences in UROP show, mentors offer valuable support for writing and literacy learning outside the classroom in college. In Heath's analysis of young people's literacies outside of school in paid and unpaid contexts, "supportive mentors" help students gain the "educational guidance of outsiders willing to invest in their talents." Such mentors "enabled [students] to avoid debts for their education and to find careers with promise"

(Heath, 96). My own findings demonstrate how mentors' support can be especially important for first-generation college students as they leverage their college experiences, both academic and non-academic, to access middle class careers distinct from those prevalent in their home communities. As with Heath's students, professional opportunities such as UROP allow for such mentorship and defray the considerable expenses of attending college. Additionally, mentorship in UROP and other extra-academic settings helps students to develop professional identity. In Heath's words, young people's "many roles outside home and school socialized them into appreciating what was meant by having a professional identity in community organizations and taking part in public events [...] They worked alongside and had a chance to question professionals who represented areas of specialization unfamiliar or unknown to either their parents or teachers" (Heath, 2012, p. 49). Because workplace and extracurricular settings like UROP offer students opportunities for mentorship outside their home and classrooms, these settings, and the literacy practices demanded of students there, help students to professionalize and to expand their literacy repertoires.

Jason says UROP literature reviews helped him to professionalize by becoming more comfortable with terminology or jargon in his field. Jason explains, "lit reviews you have to use professional writing. You have to use terms that you wouldn't feel comfortable using, but [...] like researchers use these words all the time that's why when I see the paper I'm like, 'What is that?' I guess I got to use them in my lit review because obviously my PI knows what it is, but I have just a tad bit of information of what that word is. I'm not comfortable using it, but I'm going to have to use it for this." By writing literature reviews for his mentor in UROP, Jason develops literacy practices for learning new vocabulary relevant to his field when he encounters it. Jason says he learned these new words by "Googling them, looking up sentences, synonyms

that have simpler words with this so I would associate the bigger word with smaller words. Or use it in a sentence and see how it was used in that sentence, so yeah that's how I really got it." With these literacy practices, Jason leverages writing in UROP contexts as an opportunity to professionalize in his field. Jason also says of his UROP writing "It got me authorship, so if I had to do all that I'd probably do it again." By helping him compose literature reviews, use jargon from his field, earn an authorship credit, and write professional emails, Jason's writing in UROP served to professionalize him in ways that are less likely to be supported in academic contexts than in a workplace context. Through these experiences with writing in a professional context, Jason expands his understanding of writing to include writing for the purposes of professionalization.

Daquan also cited professionalization as one reason he valued his UROP writing experiences. Daquan says that his experience in UROP "built my resume a lot... up a lot. Like I have stuff to like put on my resume now." In Daquan's case, resume-building included opportunities to work with data and engage multimodality, including writing graphs, charts, lab reports, research posters, and coding or computer programming. For example, Daquan, who worked in a computer science lab through UROP, says he wrote "a poster board, where it has a bunch of information on it. It was basically interpreting graphs, and data." Daquan also described having to "understand the graphs and like put it into words [...] cause I had to make sure like what I was writing was true from what the graphs were like telling... like information... like if I messed up like one number, it... the paper would've been wrong." From this kind of writing, Daquan says he "learned a lot," including "programming, and like, sourcing data together through programs." Similarly to other students' descriptions of multimodal workplace writing, in the context of his lab research writing, Daquan valued the opportunity to engage digital and

multimodal composing—valuable professionalization in his intended field of computer science. For first-gen students who often work out of financial need, UROP offers the opportunity to both earn money and earn valuable professional experiences in academic fields that students care about and are invested in.

Overall, writing in UROP is valuable for first-gen students because it allows them to practice persuasion, to engage multiple modes and media for writing, to professionalize in their intended fields, and to work with mentors; by working with mentors in UROP students also learn that creativity, problem solving, professional communication, and reviewing scholarly literature are all useful features and purposes for writing. In these ways, UROP both reinforces and supplements literacy learning about writing that students take up in academic contexts. As with other contexts for workplace writing, writing in UROP contexts entail specific literacy events that support first-generation college students in expanding their construct of writing beyond persuasive evidence-based argumentation alone.

Conclusions

The data analyzed in this chapter reveals that first-generation college students in this study develop a more nuanced understanding of what writing is by working during their time in college. Whereas writing in academic contexts like FYW affords these students an understanding of writing as persuasive, academic, evidence-based argumentation that can be used to engage a particular audience, writing in workplace contexts not only includes this construct of writing as persuasion but also expands that construct to include such features as informative, social, transactional, archival, and multimodal writing that can be used to engage students' particular interests, build mentor relationships, and professionalize in particular fields or careers. These nuanced features of a construct of writing are especially important for working class first-gen

college students for whom college is not only an academic endeavor but also a pathway to middle class professional jobs and careers.

Even though students only assign the label of “good writing” to academic, evidence-based argument, their overall construct of writing is still informed, expanded, and strengthened by their workplace writing experiences. The question now is, how can teachers and scholars help students to ascribe value and power to their considerable workplace writing experiences, to augment those aspects of their writing construct that they themselves seem to overlook? Because writing in workplace contexts strengthens’ first-gen students’ literacy learning, these contexts and this writing should be made more visible and acknowledged as valuable. As the analyses in this chapter have shown, better acknowledging the wide variety of settings these students write for before and during college certainly makes for a complicated construct of writing, but that expanded construct of writing is a richly complex and nuanced one that better aligns with these students’ lived experiences as first-gen and working class.

Moreover, this more capacious construct of writing also helps to build and strengthen students’ literacy repertoires explored in Chapters 3 and 4. The findings presented in this chapter make clear that even as students begin to cultivate a particular understanding or construct of writing, they also put that construct to practice. By writing in multiple contexts—FYW and the many and varied workplaces that first-gens populate—students encounter a greater variety of literacy events and thus take on diverse and multifaceted literacy learning, developing a range of different literacy practices. In short, participating in both FYW and workplace spaces strengthens first-gens literacy repertoires and offers them a greater range of literacy practices to draw from in any given contexts. In these ways, writing in different workplace contexts both expands students’ constructs of writing and strengthens their literacy repertoires.

In the next chapter, I conclude this dissertation by offering implications for how researchers, administrators, and instructors might put these findings, and those presented in previous chapters, to use. These implications emphasize first-gen students' strengths and are intended to help researchers, administrators, and instructors to do the same.

Chapter 6: Implications

Introduction

In this final chapter, I consider implications of the major findings of this study as well as what those findings suggest for future research, pedagogy, and administration. The findings presented throughout this dissertation show that the fifteen student participants in this study bring a variety of valuable literacies with them to the first-year writing classrooms, and to their literacy experiences across contexts including at work and in extracurricular settings. As Chapter 3 shows, first-gens develop a set of specialized college-going and financial literacy practices while also interacting with a complex network of differing literacy sponsors. Where speaking is concerned, as is shown in Chapter 4, these students bring and develop literacy practices around rhetorical listening, invitational rhetoric, and audience. Where writing is concerned, Chapter 5 reveals that these students' literacy learning in workplace contexts helps them to develop literacy practices that differ from a typical academic model of persuasive, evidence-based, argumentative writing. By foregrounding student voices, this study better illuminates and celebrates the oft-overlooked literacy strengths these students bring, and in doing so hopes to inspire pedagogy, research, and administrative interventions that better respond to the lived realities of these students' college-going experiences.

While at first glance these findings for students' literacies in various contexts might seem fragmented or distinct from one another, I argue that working class first-generation college

students' multifaceted array of college-going, financial, speaking, and writing practices and ideologies form a repertoire of literacies that these students can choose to leverage or mobilize in sophisticated ways. Importantly, this repertoire makes use of literacy practices first learned or encountered in a variety of home, college, work, and extracurricular contexts. In fact, it is precisely these students' experience of mobility, of moving through varied communities and contexts for literacy, that has prompted their cultivation of such a multifaceted repertoire of literacy practices. Because their mobility and navigation between communities and context is a direct result of the material realities of their lives as working class first-generation college students, it follows that these students' sophisticated literacy repertoires are considerable strengths specific to their identities as working class first-generation college students.

Overall, this study reveals that first-gens bring a variety of literacy strengths with them to college. However, those strengths are often marginalized or neglected by students' new college contexts and even by students themselves. Many of these students seek the middle class and academic literacies that college offers them while simultaneously desiring to remain connected to their home literacies and communities. By seeking to simultaneously value and at times combine their home, working class literacies and college, middle class literacies, these students defy easy categorization where literacy and social class identity are concerned. In addition to complicating reductive depictions of first-gens, these students disclose a variety of identities in addition to their working class first-generation college student statuses. As such, implications from this study offer insights into better supports for first-gen students as well as a variety of additional, intersecting marginalized student populations.

Significance

This study makes several contributions to the field of composition and rhetoric. First, it offers a methodology for privileging student voices. Specifically, the results of this study hold

implications for research methodologies in composition and rhetoric and in higher education.

Where research is concerned, findings from this study suggest that more qualitative research on first-generation college students' literacy strengths would enrich our existing body of scholarship about these students and help to avoid a typical deficit model approach to understanding and serving these students. Moreover, this research offers a demonstration of the need for more student voices in both comp/rhet and higher education research; especially where marginalized student populations are concerned, qualitative research that privileges students' perspectives helps to empower students and to allow them to respond to bodies of scholarship that tend to speak for them. Through qualitative interview studies, researchers can open up space for marginalized students to speak for themselves, reflect on their own college-going experiences, and represent themselves more fully to scholars, administrators, and teachers seeking to serve them better.

This study's implications include a renewed focus on rhetorical listening; my findings for the study indicate that first-gen students are adept at rhetorical listening—noting that first-gens bring and take up rhetorical listening practices in their first-year writing courses. My consideration of rhetorical listening has also lead me to reflect on the ways in which rhetorical listening would be a useful tool for qualitative researchers. Many qualitative researcher likely already practice rhetorical listening without necessarily labeling their practices as such. By putting the name rhetorical listening to these on-going practices, researchers might be made more aware of aspects of rhetorical listening at work in their research—for example the practice of cross-cultural conduct and the practice of integrating new information into their own worldviews and behaviors (Ratcliffe, 1999) at work in their research. Rhetorical listening might serve as an important ethical methodology for qualitative data collection and analysis, especially when

researchers are working with students whose identities differ from their own and thus might be engaged in cross-cultural conversations with such students. As part of qualitative interviews, rhetorical listening can allow for the ethical representation of participants' intersectional identities and those identities' influence on their literacy practices. Even when working with student populations with identities similar to their own, researchers might make use of rhetorical listening in order to give voice to those students in ways that respect the particularities of individual student experiences and literacy practices.

My experiences with qualitative interview methods while conducting this study also offer some implications for working with first-gen student populations in terms of the kinds of mentorship those students might seek out. Specifically, my experiences indicate the ways in which a researcher should be prepared to act in a mentoring capacity. For example, because I identified openly to students as a first-gen myself, some of the students in this study during the interview process would turn questions back to me, inquiring about my experiences as a first-gen. In cases such as this, I often opted to share my experiences and perspectives with them because I know and believe in the importance of mentorship in these students' lives. Because of my commitment to reciprocity in research, I sought to build such conversation back and forth between researchers and participants. Additionally, because students knew that I was first-gen and also studying in graduate school, they often asked me, during the interview process and after, for advice on pursuing graduate school themselves. I felt it was most ethical in these moments to provide students with the kind of advice and mentorship they sought. In future research studies, researchers might consider the particular kinds of mentorship that first-gens and other marginalized student populations might seek out and be as transparent as possible with students in these moments.

While research that studies broader trends in student demographics and outcomes is in some ways important, these common methodological approaches can be supplemented and strengthened by qualitative research that foregrounds students' voices and thus lends detail and nuance to our understanding of particular populations and their literacy practices. Additionally, while analyses of students' writing might be useful for gauging the products of students' literacy practices, qualitative research can allow for students themselves to comment on the product and processes of their writing. Many researchers in composition do take up qualitative research in a number of ways, and my study further demonstrates that qualitative interviews can allow for researchers to honor students' voices in the scholarship about them and can allow for a better understanding of those students' perceptions around literacy and literacy learning in college contexts.

Second, this study suggests that administrators and instructors might pay better attention to the strengths that first-generation college students bring with them to first-year writing classrooms. Especially when students' literacies do not mirror or align with middle class, academic literacies, these literacies tend to go overlooked; however, these literacies are valuable to writing instructors and administrators if they can only learn to see them. For example, if we truly seek to facilitate the kinds of diverse, inclusive spaces that many universities claim to value, then first-generation college students are important models for us to consider. First-gens are practiced at invitational rhetoric, rhetorical listening, and audience awareness. As such, some of these students' literacy practices should be acknowledged and held up as models for best practice in such curricular contexts as class discussion and peer review. My data also show that some challenges do arise for students—for example persuasive argument as a part of class discussion proved to be a challenge for at least one student in this study. By more fully

describing and understanding the literacy practices that students bring to FYW from their home, work, and extracurricular contexts, teachers can perhaps better address moments of challenge or difficulty that students face in the classroom, for instance when a student shuts down at the expectations of a class discussion. In general, findings from this study about first-gens' wide array of spoken and written literacies suggest that current curricular models that emphasize persuasive argument to the detriment or exclusion of other models of speaking and writing are reductive, limited, and exclusionary to marginalized student populations. Rather than privileging persuasive argument (in both speaking and writing) to the detriment or exclusion of other forms of argument and other modes of writing and communication, the composition curriculum should open up space for alternative models of writing and speaking and thus position persuasive argument as one form of literacy in a diverse array of literacy practices available to students.

Finally, this study entails implications for the study of literacy practices in contexts. Specifically, more cross-context analyses of students' literacy learning—including but not limited to first-gen students—would strengthen our understanding of the relationship between home, college, work, and extracurricular literacies as well as our potential for facilitating transfer of knowledge and skills between these sites of literacy learning that too often are studied in isolation from one another. Particularly, this study indicates that greater research on students' incoming and concurrent literacies helps to provide more detail about the array of literacy practices these students take up and might also make use of in first-year writing contexts. My findings indicate that much of the literacy learning and development that students take up in FYW begins from their incoming and concurrent literacy practices that they bring with them—for example their rhetorical listening and invitational rhetoric practices as well as their varying workplace writing practices. Through the particular literacy events that FYW entails—including

class discussion and major writing assignments—these first-gen students accumulate new capacities and knowledge around writing and speaking. They develop their incoming and concurrent literacy practices. By better describing and understanding these incoming and concurrent literacy practices, writing instructors can design appropriate literacy events in FYW that will help students to even more effectively begin from and develop these literacy practices within their overall literacy repertoires.

Implications and Future Research

Being in the first generation of your family to go to college is no easy feat; first-generation college students often experience tension around their home literacies, which they simultaneously value and feel the limitations of. In a similar vein, these students encounter academic literacies with excitement over the opportunities these literacies afford and apprehension about the special power and privileges with which these literacies are imbued. These findings indicate that first-generation college students would benefit from more and better support in making connections between their home literacies and academic literacies. In the writing classroom, this support might take the form of curricular interventions that foreground the intersection of literacy and identity as well as better representation of spoken and written literacies outside of academic, persuasive argument. Administratively, universities might build programming that better acknowledges the strengths these students bring in addition to helping students navigate potential challenges. Where research is concerned, scholarship in composition and rhetoric and in higher education would benefit from a renewed focus on students' voices and qualitative research. By discounting student voices in research, we risk only understanding the challenges students face to the exclusion of their successes and thus perpetuate a deficit model of first-generation college students and related marginalized student populations in the pedagogical and administrative programs we design.

Findings from this study suggest curricular interventions for first-year writing. Namely, my study supports, through empirical data, ongoing movements in composition to foreground intersections of literacy and identity in the first-year writing classroom. This intervention seems to be especially suited to writing about writing approaches to FYW that purport to teach students about writing rather than teaching students how to write. For example, first-year writing curricula might include such readings as literacy narratives written by authors who identify as first-generation, working class, or as other marginalized identities. These narratives, for example the work of Richard Rodriguez, Adrienne Rich, Gloria Anzaldúa, Sherman Alexie, Victor Villanueva, Amy Tan, Geneva Smitherman, and others like them help to represent the difficulty that many marginalized populations experience when they encounter academic literacies and middle class literacies for the first time, often in the contexts of college. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, literacy narratives such as these help to highlight the strengths and successes people from marginalized populations experience in their home communities and as a result of their home, work, and extra-curricular literacies. Though in some cases, writing instructors might already be incorporating literacy narratives into their curriculum, wider uptake of literacy narratives authored by individuals who identify with marginalized populations helps to model negotiating between widely different expectations for literacy—modeling that benefits all students in the classroom, especially marginalized students. By helping students to reflect on such literacy strengths, we communicate through the curriculum that students' home communities and literacies are to be valued alongside academic literacies rather than overlooked or discounted.

Additionally, findings from this study indicate that first-year writing would benefit from greater attention to spoken and written literacies outside of persuasive, evidence based argument.

In many cases, first-year writing emphasizes speaking and writing as persuasion, so much so that other modes of argument and other kinds of communication are neglected entirely. Students in this study were adept with such communicative modes as rhetorical listening and invitational rhetoric, and they also learned and developed practices around workplace writing in a variety of forms including multimodal composition both digital and analogue. Without overstressing FYW beyond its purposes or capacities, these kinds of writing and communication could easily be acknowledged and discussed as alternatives to persuasive argument. For example, FYW courses might include a revision assignment in which students revise a piece of writing first written as a persuasive, evidence based argument and transform that writing into an invitational model or Rogerian model of argument. In a similar vein, students might be encouraged, in a FYW course, to identify, analyze, or write a professional genre of writing such as email, cover letters, or grant proposals. Opportunities to write genres such as these help students to position persuasive evidence based argument as one possible kind of writing in a vast array of possible kinds of writing and literacies.

FYW also would benefit from greater acknowledgement of speaking as a form of literacy. FYW already includes expectations for speaking in specific ways, for example speaking in class discussion or in peer review; oftentimes these expectations for speaking in FYW privilege persuasive evidence based argumentation. Moreover, these expectations for speaking in FYW usually remain tacit. One way to make literacy instruction in speaking more transparent would be to include concepts from sociolinguistic in FYW curriculum and pedagogy. Readingsthatthat includes readings and reflective writing around such sociolinguistic concepts as dialect, standard language ideology, and register would help students to learn about varying demands for speaking in particular contexts or communities by making explicit such concepts as

dialect, standard language ideology, and register. Equipped with sociolinguistic concepts such as these, first-gen students might more mindfully and productively reflect on differences and similarities between home and academic demands on speaking. Additionally, instruction in concepts from sociolinguistics would equip all students, not just first-gens, with a better understanding of language differences—important concepts to examine at the formative moment of transitioning to college. Altogether, greater attention to sociolinguistic differences and alternative rhetorics additional to academic evidence-based persuasive argument would support all students in realizing the repertoire of diverse literacies demanded of them both in college and outside college contexts.

Finally, first-year writing courses themselves might begin from some small-scale qualitative research. For example, offering students a short survey at the beginning of a FYW course can help to garner demographic data about students as well as descriptions of students' past and concurrent literacy experiences. In the FYW writing courses that I teach, I distribute a short two page survey during the first week of class; this survey encourages students to identify (if and when they are comfortable doing so) their hometown, their educational status (for example, if they have attended any other universities or colleges), any jobs they have worked, their majors, their intended fields or careers, and other demographic information. Additionally, this survey encourages students to provide short answers around why they have enrolled in the course as well as descriptions of past positive and negative experiences with writing. This survey is also supplemented with short (fifteen minute) follow-up interviews or meetings with individual students in which we discuss their responses to survey questions. Through small scale qualitative methods such as these, students are afforded the opportunity to identify in different ways and to reflect on their literacy experiences. For writing instructors, measures such as these

can help to take stock of students' incoming and concurrent literacies and to design writing assignments and lesson plans that acknowledge these literacies and encourage students to contribute to class based in these literacy experiences and strengths. While measures such as these can be time consuming for instructors, they help to alleviate to some degree students' apprehension about college-level literacy learning, to validate their prior literacies, and to create an inclusive space in the classroom. These measures would work to benefit all students, but would be especially beneficial for first-gens and other marginalized student populations for whom literacy instruction in college can be especially fraught.

As I have mentioned throughout this chapter, findings from this study suggest implications not only for first-generation college student populations but also for additional, similarly marginalized student populations. All students in this study identified as first-generation college students, but they also identified in a variety of other ways. For example, students in this study hold a variety of identities around social class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, citizenship status, and language use. Nationwide, first-generation college student populations tend to overlap and intersect with economically disadvantaged student populations, racial minority student populations, first-generation American students, veteran students, multilingual students, and speakers of non-standard dialects of English. Many of the curricular interventions suggested here would also be beneficial for these marginalized student populations. Moreover, research would greatly benefit from greater attention to the voices of these student populations. Future research might also consider the intersections of these student populations more purposefully. I purposefully designed this study to recruit and examine the experiences of a diverse set of first-generation college students; because existing research so often takes a

reductive approach to first-gens and categorizes them as deficient, I sought to complicate such research and represent trends and nuances for literacies in a diverse group of first-gen students.

With the findings of this study as a basis, future research might consider how particular socioeconomic, racial, gender, or linguistically similar populations of first-gen students might confirm or complicate the trends reported here. For example, would a population of all white, upper-middle class, first-generation college students report similar experiences as this racially and socioeconomically diverse population of first-gens does? What literacies would a population of Latina women first-gen students report? As is mentioned in earlier chapters of this dissertation, approximately nine students in this study are multilingual students, and three are first-generation or generation 1.5 American citizens. Would a population of all multilingual students or a population of all first-generation American citizens complicate or confirm the findings of this study? This study is also limited by the institutional context at UM—a large, highly selective, public, research institution where only about 13% of undergraduate students identify as first-generation college students. Future research might consider the ways in which first-gen students at other kinds of institutions, perhaps institutions with higher concentrations of first-gen students, experience literacy learning across contexts on campus.

Although this research project represents a particular population of students at a specific kind of institution, its findings and implications are useful for administrators, teachers, and researchers seeking to better understand the perspectives and lived experiences of first-generation college students and similar marginalized student populations. As a first-generation college student myself, I have had a special empathy and interest in these students when I have encountered them in my writing classrooms. However, I knew their strengths and successes with literacy were not being represented accurately or fully enough in the broader scholarship about

them or in the kinds of writing instruction they were encountering in college. This study highlights the importance of making such literacy strengths known, so that teachers, administrators, researchers, and students alike can learn from, harness, and build upon the example of nuanced literacy repertoires that first-generation college students bring.

Appendix A: Student Demographics

Figure 1: 2014 Race for First-Year First-Generation College Students at UM

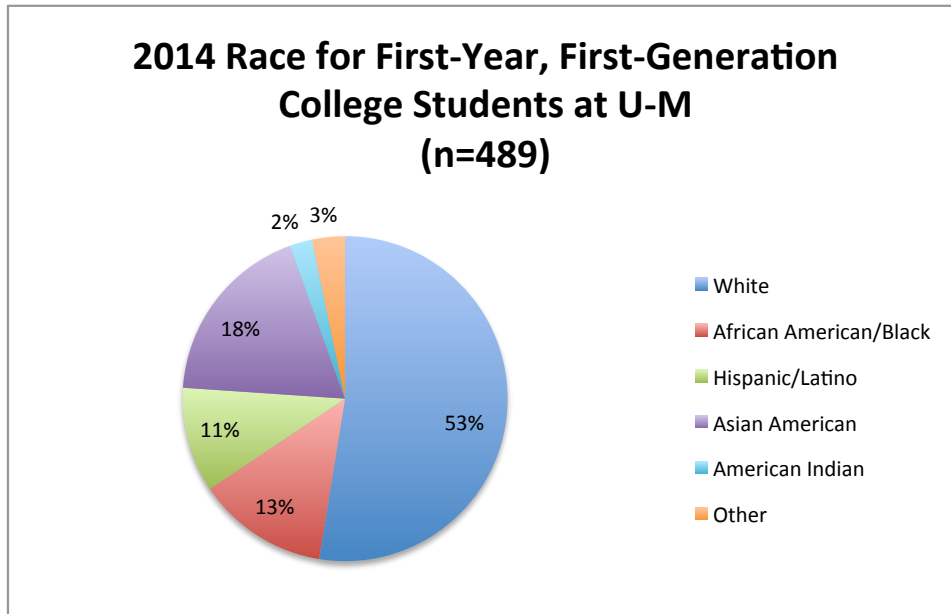


Figure 2: 2014 Income Levels for First-Year, First-Generation College Students at UM

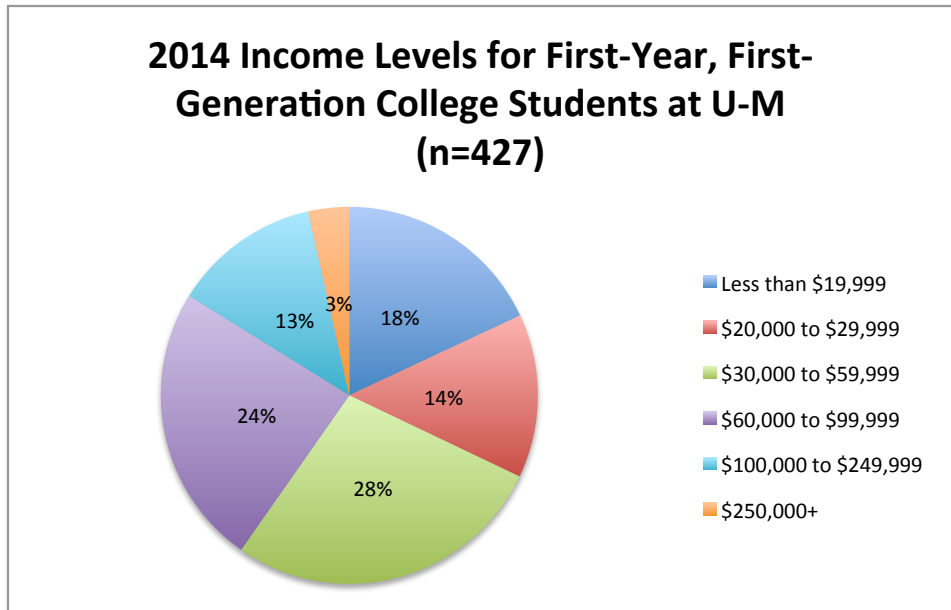


Figure 3: 2014 Sex for First-Year, First-Generation College Students at UM

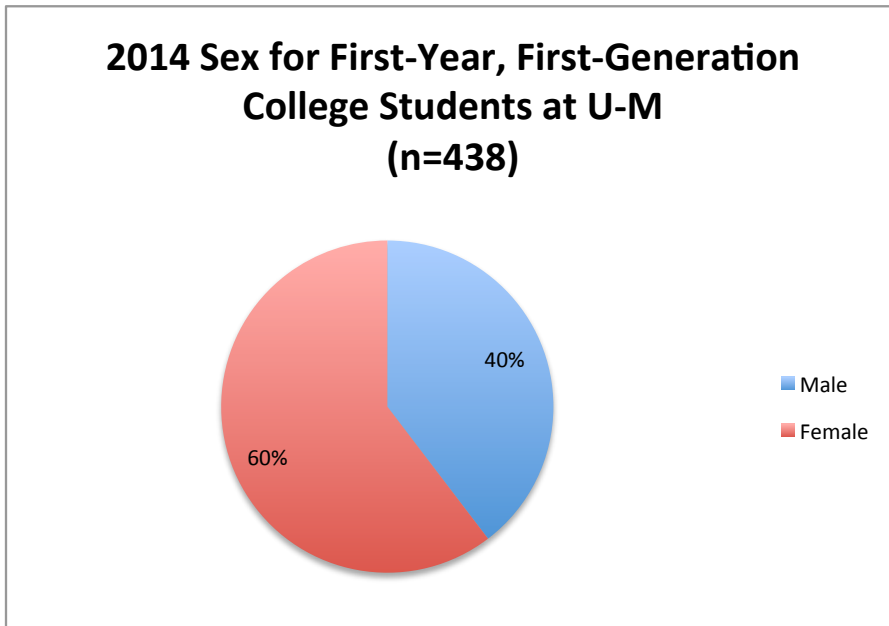


Figure 4: 2014 Parental Income, First-Gens versus Continuing-Gens

THE FOLLOWING CHARTS ILLUSTRATE THE 2014 U-M SURVEY OF FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

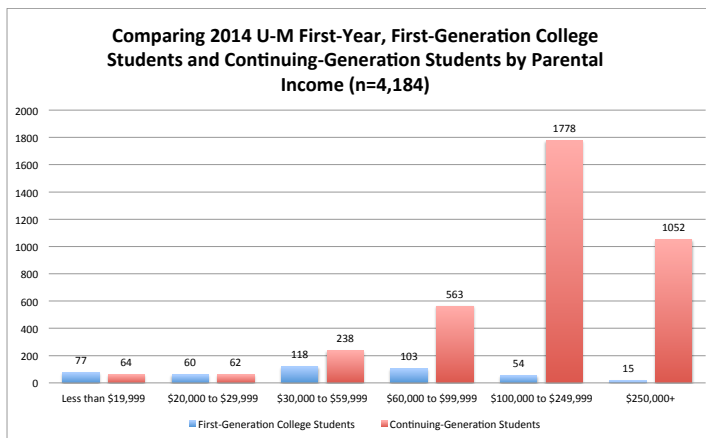


Figure 5: 2014 Race, First-Gens versus Continuing-Gens

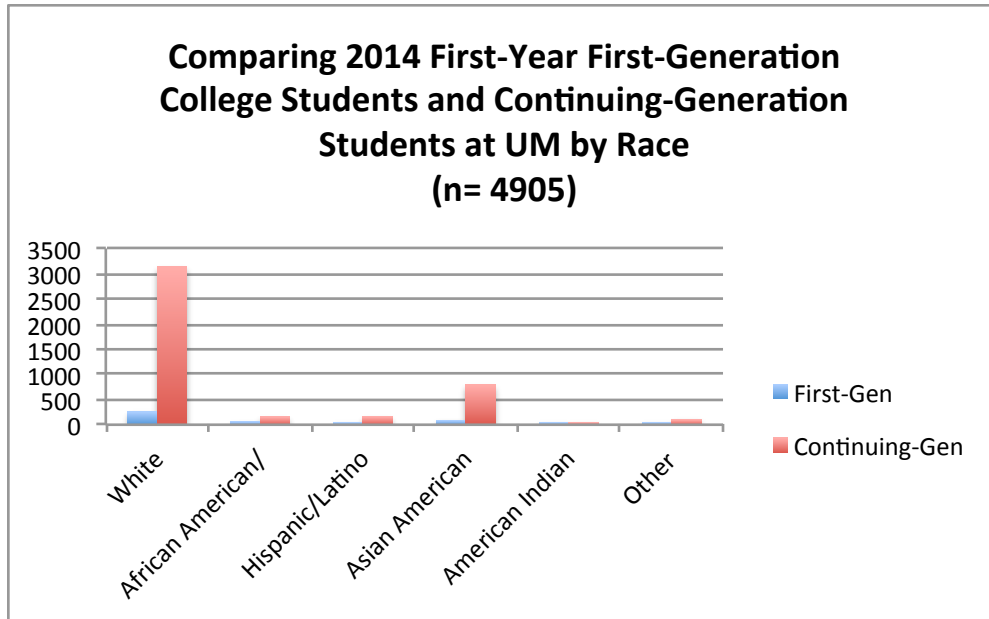
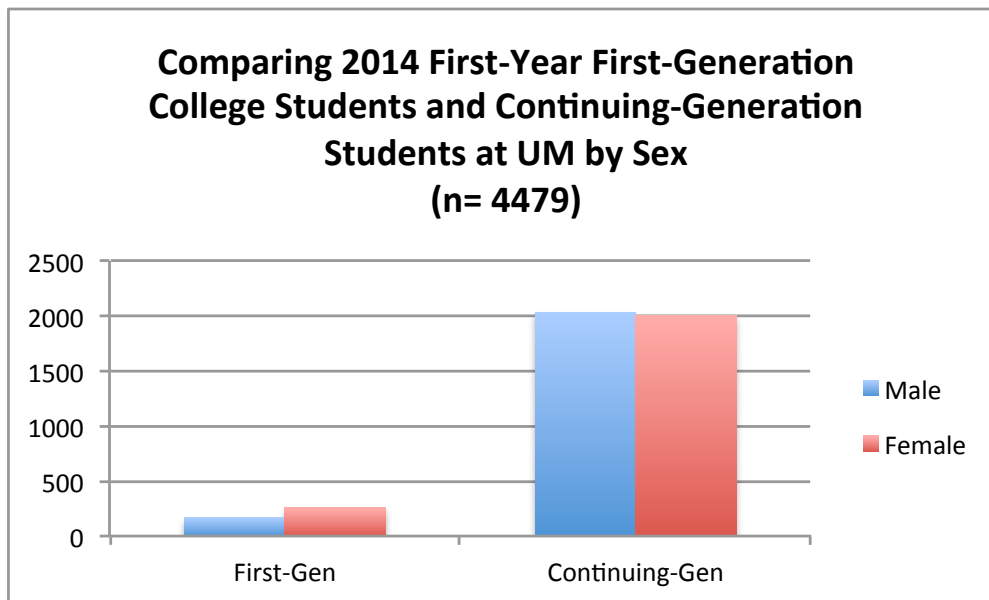


Figure 6: 2014 Sex, First-Gens versus Continuing-Gens



Appendix B: Participant Profiles

CHRIS: Chris is a female student who identified herself on her survey as African American but also mentioned in an interview that she is mixed race; she also described herself to me in an interview as “not straight.” Chris declined to identify her social class on her survey, but in our interviews described herself and her family as “low income.” Chris is very friendly and warm. I was surprised by how often she mentioned in our interviews that she doesn’t like to talk because she was so open and friendly with me from my first time meeting her. She’s very thoughtful, taking some time to answer questions but often finding something detailed to contribute after long, quiet pauses. Chris was raised by her father and her grandmother, who’s house she lived in growing up; she also has six siblings. While she is not the first person in her family to go to college, she did say that she feels pressure to do well and succeed in college because some of her siblings have started and not finished college. In high school and even earlier, Chris made friends through church and through soccer. In high school Chris was also heavily involved with Upward Bound, a program designed to help high school kids get interested in, apply to, and go to college. Through Upward Bound Chris applied to a lot of colleges, about 18 in total. She says she wanted to go to UM and applied to UM early action. She goes to UM on a full scholarship and was really excited and proud to be accepted. She says before she joined Upward Bound in the middle of high school, she never thought she would go to college.

LUNA: Luna is a female white student who identifies herself as lower income and is also the first in her family to go to college. She’s very direct and concise; she was always quick to answer my questions in interviews and rarely offered follow up responses. Luna describes herself and her friends as “a pretty socially aware bunch.” For example, she identifies herself as a feminist and often attributed her experiences to her social class identity. Luna wants to be a teacher and is very passionate about school. Luna grew up with her mother and younger brother, and described her dad leaving as a pivotal moment in her life and in her family’s life, especially as relates to their social class status and financial hardships. Luna’s mother used to be a janitor at a hospital and is now a technician in a medical lab. Luna talked about standing out in her high school because most of the students were more affluent than she and her family were, and she described herself as the poorest kid in her high school class. She didn’t like that her high school wasn’t very diverse and that other students weren’t very socially aware. Even so, Luna said she had a tight knit group of a few friends and enjoyed her IB (International Baccalaureate) classes where she was close with her teachers. She also did forensics (debate team) in high school and continues to do forensics in college at UM. Luna feels like she can fit into a lot of different social situations and that this is specific to people who are in a different social situation now than the one they grew up in.

DANA: Dana is a female student who identified herself as Black/African American and as middle class. Dana is upbeat and kind. Throughout our interviews, she was always smiling. She would often pause to think and mutter quietly to herself in our interviews, repeating the question or asking herself things like “what did I...” or “I’m trying to think...” or “I’m trying to remember...” Even when we talked about difficulties or challenges in her life she was always positive and upbeat, pulling a lesson out of the difficulties. Things like “It wasn’t that bad...” or “Maybe that did have some purpose or good...” Dana has four siblings, one of whom started college but discontinued after having a baby and another who is a year younger than Dana and

just starting out at a nearby university. Dana grew up living in a few different households including her mother's, her father's, and most recently her aunt's where she lived for most of her high school years. Her aunt had gone back to community college and finished a degree while Dana was living with her. Dana's parents were both factory workers when she was growing up, and her mother continues to work in a factory. Her father is now a maintenance worker at an auto repair shop. Dana emphasized that her father was a big motivation for her to go to college; he was always telling her she had to go to college and have the opportunities that he had missed out on. Dana was highly involved in her IB high school—always enjoying academics, joining several clubs and activities, and making close relationships with her teachers. Dana, like Chris, was involved in Upward Bound as a high school student. At UM, Dana keeps a job in the dining hall. She also joined programs on campus including Gear UP, Leaders and Best, and the Black Student Union. Gear UP and Leaders and Best are both intended to support low income and first-generation college students on campus.

BETH: Beth identified herself as white and lower-middle class. She also identified strongly as Catholic and as a Michigander. She talked about identifying as a nursing student recently in her experiences at college. Beth talked about identifying with these aspects of her personality more than being first-gen, especially after her first-year in college. Beth is thoughtful and soft-spoken; she says people tell her she speaks calmly and has a clam personality, which I definitely felt while interviewing her. She often gave to-the-point, thoughtful answers and declined to follow up. Beth also says she's organized and likes to keep busy, giving the example that she keeps several jobs and works 30 hours a week in addition to school. Beth grew up with her mother, father, and her younger brother who she says she's very close with and who started college the year after her at another university in their home state. Beth described herself as the person who helped him most during his college application process, taking him to visit schools and encouraging him to complete his essays and application materials. Beth's mother works in medical billing and worked from home while the kids were in school. When they were in high school she started working out of the house but kept her work-from-home job as well, both in medical billing. Beth's father owns a tire and auto repair shop that he started with his cousin who went to college and came back and asked Beth's father to start a business with him. Beth also has a cousin who she's close with who went to college, and Beth says she watched her family support her cousin and learned a lot about the social aspects of college from talking with her cousin.

Beth liked high school and says her AP classes in sophomore and junior year were especially good and helped to prepare her for college and college writing because they had high expectations for student work in those courses. Beth was also highly involved in her Catholic church and its youth group during high school. She took a theology course with the youth minister, attended and lead retreats, attended youth group, and many of her friends were friends she met through Church. Beth also worked at a nursing home in the kitchen during college, tutored (for pay or on a volunteer basis), babysat, and did volunteering and service in her small town community and in a nearby city. Beth is in the nursing school and wants to be a midwife. Beth attended the first-gen student group in her first year at UM, attends a Catholic bible study group on campus, and went to at least one meeting of the College Democrats on campus. Beth also works several jobs including a restaurant job off campus, an on campus desk job, the

Telefund (calling alum for fundraising at UM), and UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunity) for work study in her first year.

TINA: Tina is a female African American student who also identified her family as “lower working class.” Tina grew up in a major city, and she identified herself as the first person in her family to go to college. Tina is thoughtful and straightforward; she often worked out her thoughts while responding to questions in our interviews, stopping and starting and revising herself as she answered. Tina grew up with her mother, her older sister, and her sister’s children. Tina talked about her mother being a single mother and working hard to take care of their family. Tina’s mother is a janitor and used to clean schools in their neighborhood, but Tina says with the closing of schools in the city, her mother now cleans office buildings instead of schools. Tina attended a big high school, which she described as a top tier school in her city. Tina talked about her friends in high school as people she really only saw at school because she lived on the east side of her city and her high school is on the west side of the city. Tina did say all of her friends from high school attended college and if people from high school didn’t attend college she doesn’t really consider them friends anymore. She says she felt like she and her friends were close in high school because they were all from the same place and trying to get out of that place. Tina says that about 20 students from her high school’s senior class attended UM, and she even lives with her best friend from high school now at UM. Tina is currently in LSA and applying to the nursing program. She says if she doesn’t get into the school of nursing she’ll do something in public health. Tina is involved in Leaders and Best at UM and also works at the café in the undergraduate library as a cashier.

IVY: Ivy is a female Haitian American student. She identifies as working middle class, black, Catholic, and is the first in her family to go to college. Ivy might be described as a generation 1.5 American in addition to being a first-generation college student. She immigrated to Florida from Haiti with her mother when she four or five years old and shortly after moved to New England. Ivy is one of two out-of-state students who participated in this study. During her senior year of high school she became a U.S. citizen. Although she identified her first language as English on her survey for the study, Ivy also speaks Haitian Creole and might be identified as a multilingual student. Ivy is friendly and upbeat, and described herself as introverted and quiet, which surprised me because she was so willing to talk about her experiences and often talked at length giving personal examples. She’s also thoughtful and often backtracked during her responses, rethinking her answers and working out her thought process while we talked. Ivy lives with her mother, two younger sisters, and her grandmother. Her parents recently divorced (in the last year), and Ivy’s father moved out of their apartment. He still lives in her town in New England and Ivy talks to him and is close with him. Ivy is also close with her aunt (her mother’s sister) and her aunt’s two daughters. Ivy talked about staying with them, having dinner with them, and seeing them several times a week growing up and whenever she goes home. She described her cousin who is one year older than her as her best friend, and Ivy talked about watching her cousin try to go away for college and live in the dorms before returning home and becoming a commuter student. Ivy knew she wanted to go away to college herself when the time came in part from watching her cousin’s experiences. Ivy’s mother is a CNA (certified nurse’s assistant) and works in a nursing home. Ivy described that this is a common career for Haitian people in her community, and that she achieved her CNA herself through nursing courses in her high school, though she never officially worked as a CNA. Ivy described her father as a laborer; he

drives a truck doing deliveries and works for an event company setting up and taking down chairs and tables. Ivy says her father is spiritual and tells her often that knowledge is power; Ivy says she always had deep conversations with her dad and this encouraged her to pursue school and college. Ivy attended a public high school in her town that also had an IB program, which she pursued and completed in her junior and senior years of high school. Ivy talked about taking IB courses with the same small group of students throughout high school and making her closest friends through these courses. Ivy applied to lots of colleges in and out of state, and she said UM was one of her top choices.

SARAH: Sarah is a female, white student who identifies as middle class. Sarah's mother attended community college and did coursework in paralegal studies. Sarah also has an older brother who attended a state school in their home state four years ahead of Sarah's start at UM and now works as an engineer. Sarah talked a lot about the affordances of having a sibling who attended college before her. Sarah is friendly and welcoming and made a lot of jokes and puns during our interviews. She's also heavily involved in band at UM and was in her band in high school; she talked a lot about the influence of band in her life. Sarah also describes herself as loving school and school being her thing. Sarah's mother worked as a paralegal until she had kids and then stayed home with Sarah and her older brother. Sarah's mother also volunteered at the elementary school where Sarah and her brother were in school; even when Sarah finished elementary school, her mother continued to work as a paraprofessional for special education students at that school and continues in that job today. Sarah's father is the night manager at a grocery store in her hometown. Sarah says her father's job is physically and mentally demanding, he works a lot of overtime, and he sleeps during the day and works at night.

Sarah describes herself as having attended two high schools: an IB "international academy" high school for academics and the local public high school for band. She had a leadership role in band in her junior and senior years, and she said this took a lot of planning and effort because she had to make sure she had a presence at the band high school and people knew her even though she didn't do academics at that school. Sarah applied to many schools throughout the Midwest and chose UM in part because they offered her so much financial support, so UM turned out to be the cheapest option for her. Sarah is heavily involved in band at UM and serves as an executive board member for the *First-Generation College Students at UM* student group. Overall, Sarah says most of her friends on campus are from band and from the honor's program. Sarah is also a neuroscience major and volunteered in a biomedical engineering neuroscience lab last summer. Sarah also works at the language resource center on campus and has written a blog post and a PowerPoint presentation for that job. Sarah talked about the concept of micro-aggressions and said she takes those concerns seriously and wants to make sure that all students feel included at the university.

JASON: Jason is a black male student who also identifies as gay. He referred to himself and his family often as working class, and he is the first person in his family to go to college though he does have distant aunts, uncles, and cousins who attended college. Jason also identifies himself as a feminist, saying he started to identify that way after his first women's studies course at UM. Jason is friendly and welcoming; we laughed a lot together in our interviews, and he seemed extremely comfortable talking about his experiences, more so than most other students I interviewed. Jason is also very understanding and empathetic towards other people, for example

the people we talked about in our interviews. He would often say that he didn't want to speak for others or generalize and instead tried to use specific example from his own experiences. Jason grew up in a major city and has a non-traditional family structure; he and his younger sister were raised by their dad, who is actually their great uncle who became their legal guardian. His younger sister just started college at a nearby state university, and Jason says he sees her about once a week still. Jason has a complicated family history and structure. Jason's parents had him when his father was 18 and his mother was 17, and Jason's mother turned guardianship over to Jason's great uncle and great grandmother when he was young and did the same with his younger sister who is one year younger than Jason. Jason's mother stayed living and working in their home city and would visit him about once a week when he was younger. Jason's mother died when he was 11 (of cancer), and his grandmother died a year later when he was 12. From then on he was raised by his "dad." Jason's dad (his great uncle) works security around the city and has worked security for most of the years he's raised Jason. Jason has two other younger siblings through his mother—his younger brother lives in Alabama with his maternal grandmother and his youngest sister was adopted and is living somewhere in Texas, but Jason has never had contact with her.

Jason attended a public high school in his home city, and he talked a lot throughout our interviews about that school's reputation as the number one, highest ranking public high school in the city. Jason talked about the support he got there through his counselor, who he said was his best friend, and his teachers. Jason's history teacher was also a gay black man, and he had attended an Ivy League school and encouraged Jason to apply to prestigious colleges. Jason talked a lot with this teacher about the experience of being a black minority student at a PWI (predominantly white institution) while he was trying to make decisions about his college plans. Jason was also in a dual enrollment health sciences course through the local community college; this course showed him that he wanted to be a doctor and wanted to go to college as a pre-med student. Jason also has an auntie who attended UM, studied journalism, and now writes for a newspaper in their home city. She brought Jason to visit UM and encouraged him to apply, attend, and start a tradition of UM graduates in their family. Jason said it was really cool to visit UM with his auntie and she told him a lot about the school and showed him the halls where she had had class and lived as a UM student. Jason ended up attending UM because it was the cheapest and because he had looked into the pre-med programs here and knew they were strong. In addition to his pre-med bio-cognitive neuroscience major, Jason is pursuing a women's studies/gender studies minor. Jason was involved in several organizations his first year and continues to be involved in the BSU (black student union), the Spanish Club, and BUMA (the black undergraduate medical association) where he is on the e-board. Jason studied abroad in Spain to fulfill his LSA language requirement, and this was the first time he left the country or flew in an airplane. Jason says he loves to travel now and has applied to several more travel opportunities through UM.

HENRY: Henry is a male, white, middle class student. He grew up in a rural suburban area with his parents, in a house one mile away from his father's childhood home where his grandmother still lives. Henry says his grandparents were farmers, and he and his father would still help his grandmother around the house with things like maintenance and keeping up her gardens. Henry is friendly and made a lot of dry, flat jokes during our interviews. He also talked about his life philosophy being "play it where it lies" which to him means you can't stress about every little

thing; he talked about this in relation to applying to colleges but also said that it has become a regular phrase for him that he uses in a lot of aspects of life now. Henry described his family as regular or normal. His dad is a maintenance man, and he described him as a “typical dad.” Henry’s father was in the army for a while after high school and since then has worked the same maintenance job for decades. Henry talked about his dad being lucky and making more money than most people would with a job like his because he’s been working there so long. Henry’s mother mostly stayed home with him while he was growing up, though she used to work as a secretary at Ford before Henry was born, and while Henry was growing up she worked part time as a secretary for a business that Henry’s uncle owned. Henry says he remembers his mom sitting at the table with him every night while he did his homework and volunteering a lot in his classrooms at his schools when he was younger. Henry mentioned several times that his parents got married and had Henry late, after they were in their thirties. Henry is an only child though he talked about his mother’s side of the family staying or living with them a lot including various aunts and uncles and their kids, so he felt like he got to have a bit of a sibling experience when all his cousins were around.

Henry talked about the three different high schools around him having different reputations in relation to one another and about his high school being the average or middle of the road high school. He said he was mostly in the accelerated or honors/AP classes. Henry also took a health sciences class through the community college/career center near his high school and he says this experience helped him to know that he wanted to study nursing in college. He is now studying nursing at UM, and is enrolled in the Health Science Scholars Program (HSSP). He was a member as an incoming freshmen last year and now as a sophomore is a peer advisor or PA; so he lives in a residence hall on a floor with all HSSP students, and he mentors other students on things like classes and school work. Henry worked fifty hours a week over the summer as a landscaper but doesn’t keep a job on campus during the school year.

BEN: Ben Jupiter is a male student who identifies as black and Jewish. Ben described himself as lower class. Ben also identifies as gay and talked with me in our interviews about his experiences coming out to friends and family in high school. Ben is one of two out of state students who participated in this study. Ben left his family and home, a large metropolitan area in the South, to attend UM. Ben is also a theater major, attended a performing arts high school, and has been heavily involved with theater and performing arts organizations throughout his high school and college years. Ben has a bubbly, vibrant, friendly personality. He’s also funny and sarcastic, making jokes and laughing often in our interviews together. Ben described himself in our interviews as outgoing and open minded, willing to talk to anyone and able to fit in in most social situations. Ben comes from a big family and has seven siblings, all brothers. Ben’s parents both attended some college, but neither finished their college degrees. Several of Ben’s brothers have also gone off to college before him but none of them has finished, and they’ve all left college early to start working instead. Ben talked about having a lot of examples of aunts, uncles, siblings, and cousins who are successful in their jobs and careers without having a college degree. He also talked about his own desire to attend and graduate from college. Ben reflected in our interviews about his experiences in several social classes and in a variety of social situations, saying that overall this experience has made him more open-minded because he realizes that you never know what someone is going through or where they are coming from. For example, Ben’s father works as an activist and political “fixer.” For many years when Ben was young his parents

owned a business that worked to rehabilitate prisoners; his parents were very successful with this business and with local politics and activism. When the governor decided to cut this program and ended its contract with Ben's father's business, Ben described that they quickly began losing money, selling assets, and moving from house to house for a few years. At this time, Ben's mother took a job in his high school as a counselor. From this experience of moving between multiple social classes, Ben says he has become comfortable interacting with lots of different kinds of people.

Ben attended a performing arts high school in his neighborhood. A couple of his brothers had also attended that high school. Ben's mother also works at his high school as a counselor's secretary. Ben talked about his high school having a lot of different cultures, being a majority black high school, and representing other cultural groups as well including an Hispanic population of students. Ben also talked about being close with everyone and being able to fit into a lot of different groups at his high school. Ben says that being so involved and embedded in his high school was also challenging. Despite some social and academic challenges, Ben says he's grateful looking back on his high school years, especially because of the presence and celebration of what Ben called "urban culture" that went on at his high school. Ben applied to several colleges all over the country and was considering programs for performing arts, pre-med, and engineering. Ben knew he wanted to go away for college because he had seen his brothers go to college close to home and not finish, so he thought that actually going away to college would help him to stick it out and graduate. Ben had a high school teacher who encouraged him to pursue performance in college and to apply to UM. Ben decided to attend UM in part because of their excellent program for performing arts and in part because they offered him excellent financial support. Ben is heavily involved in theater on campus both in his major and in the Educational Theater Company (UMETC) extracurricular organization which puts on educational performances for undergraduate students; for example, UMETC produces a performance at freshmen orientation which takes on issues like roommate contracts and bystander intervention. Ben has also been an intern for several summers in high school and college at a performing arts intensive called Broadway Dreams. Ben is also a Community Action and Social Change (CASC) minor, and hopes to use this minor to help him in pursuing a career in performing arts and education. Ben is also involved in a fraternity on campus.

TOM: Tom Riddle is a male Arab student who in addition to being a first-generation college student is also a first-generation American. His parents immigrated to the United States from Yemen before Tom was born, and Tom grew up in an ethnic enclave neighborhood in a large Midwestern city with a large concentration of Arab and Muslim residents. Tom also identifies as Muslim and is involved with the Muslim Student Association at UM. He also identifies as bilingual, and speaks both English and Yemeni Arabic. Tom is a pre-med student studying biology and math; if he doesn't become a doctor he plans to become a math professor. Tom is soft spoken and incredibly kind. In our interviews he described himself as introverted and stoic. Tom was also super generous towards other people in his responses to interview questions. He asserted often that he didn't want to speak for others or that he couldn't wholly describe another person's experiences because he'd only interacted with them in one setting. Tom is very close with his family and talked fondly of them all, especially his mother but also his siblings. Tom says his parents immigrated here so that their family could have a better life. His father started working at an automotive factory and worked there for years. He died when Tom was a very

young child. Tom's mother stayed home and raised Tom and his siblings. Tom's older brothers work in their uncle's gas station to help provide for the family, and Tom says they could not go to college because they had to provide for the family. One of his older brothers started at college but only did a semester before stopping school and going back to work. Tom is very appreciative of his family and everything they've done to help him achieve a college education, and he talked often about wanting to take care of them in the future. Tom also has an older sister who is a Master's student at another state university in their home city, studying math. She recently got married, and lives close by Tom's family. Tom also has a cousin who is a math professor. From their examples, Tom has chosen math and teaching as his back-up plan for med school and being a doctor. Tom says that although it's common in his culture for your parents' to push you to be a doctor, his mother never pushed this career on him. Instead, she simply wanted him to be happy and do what makes him happiest. Tom still talks to his mother everyday and goes home to visit every couple weeks, taking a free bus from campus back home. Tom says he is also close with his aunts, uncles, and cousins. His uncles lived in Yemen for a while longer than his parents did, and he would go back to Yemen to visit them. Eventually his uncles moved here and now live close by Tom's family. Tom says he learned a lot from his cousins when he was applying to colleges because so many of them had gone to college.

Tom says his high school was diverse, more so than UM is, and that his high school had a lot of different kinds of people. Tom really enjoyed his math and science classes, and he helped tutor underclassmen in math. He was involved in NHS, where he became the president, and says this was an important leadership role for him that helped him a lot with public speaking and with writing; for example he had to write grant proposals for their club to try and get approval for events or funding from the school. Tom says a lot of his friends from high school stayed close to home and attended state colleges or community colleges in the area. However, a few of his high school friends came to UM with him, and one of those high school friends was his roommate freshmen year at UM. Tom knew he wanted to stay close to home and applied to schools in his home state only. He says when he got accepted to UM he knew he would go here, especially because they offered him so much financial aid (a full scholarship), and it would cost his family nothing to send him here. Tom seems to like UM a lot. He's pre-med and studies a lot all the time, but he seems to like it here and be genuinely interested in what he's studying. Tom says he knew he wanted to be a doctor and go to college at least in part from watching TV shows like House or reality TV shows about medicine, for example Monsters Inside Me. Tom lives alone this year and says he likes being able to study in his room and that he's meeting new friends through his classes. He's involved in the Muslim Student Association and the Pre-Med club here at UM.

DAQUAN: Daquan is a male, Bengali American student who also identified himself in his survey as lower class. In addition to being a first-generation college student Daquan is a first-generation American. His parents, his older sister, and he were born in Bangladesh, and they immigrated to a large Midwest city in the United States when Daquan was only one year old. Daquan also has two younger sisters who were born in the U.S. Daquan speaks English and identified English as his first language, but he also understands and communicates with his parents in Bengali, though he does not describe himself as speaking Bengali. Daquan also says he didn't realize he was low income until coming to UM and seeing the wealth on campus, for example a student he knows who says she lives on a \$150.00 budget per week that her parents

send her. Daquan says he lives on this much money in a month or two. He says he wants to do well in school and have a successful career so that he can take care of his family. He says he always thought he would go to college and take care of his family to give back to them for all they've given him. Daquan seemed shy and maybe a bit uncomfortable and distracted during our meetings together, though he warmed up as the interview process moved forward. Daquan's father works in an automotive factory doing assembly line work, and his mother stays home raising the family. Daquan says it was nice having his mother around when he was young because she helped him meet neighborhood kids, make friends, and go outside and play. Daquan's older sister goes to a state school in their home city; he says they don't talk about college much together. His younger sisters are in high school and middle school, and he says they want to go to UM like Daquan. Daquan says his father is strict about grades and other things and that doing badly in school or talking back to your parents is considered being too "Americanized."

Daquan attended a high ranking high school in his home city, and he talked about the two halves of the school. He talked about students who went there and took the general classes as one half of the school, and he talked about the kids who took the accelerated, honors, or AP classes as another half of the school. He took mostly AP or advanced classes and had classes with a lot of the same students. He says he was cool with his teachers. He especially liked math class and had a math teacher who challenged them and pushed them to do well; he said everyone got Bs in that class, not As, and that the teacher taught them that it's more about learning than about grades. Daquan was also in NHS and his school Multicultural club. For NHS, he helped tutor younger freshmen students in math. Daquan also worked at a hospital shadowing a pharmacist when he was in high school. Daquan says some people would describe his neighborhood and his high school as ghetto but that he doesn't like that word because it has a negative connotation. Daquan applied to and was accepted at 10 public schools in Michigan. Once he was accepted at UM, he knew he would attend here because it's such a good school. Daquan also received financial aid and attends UM at no cost to him or his family. Daquan visited UM after he'd been accepted; he visited for tech day and talked with engineering students on North Campus who were working with and building technology on campus, which he said was really cool. Daquan says he likes UM. He likes meeting lots of different kinds of people at UM from all over the world and learning about their lives and the places they've lived. He says this experience makes him more open-minded and more knowledgeable about the world. Daquan described UM as hard, and he talks with other students a lot about how they're all working hard and "dying together." He says he feels like everyone at UM is equal because they're all here, they're all working, and they're all trying to do well. Daquan says he has a few friends from his high school or friends of friends from high school here at UM that he still hangs out with occasionally. Daquan is involved in his dorm's Hall Council and in RHA, the resident housing association. Daquan is studying computer science, and says he likes writing code and programming because it's hard work but it feels so good when you finish it and do it right. He likes that coding is objective, meaning that if you get it wrong the program simply won't work. Daquan also worked in a UROP computer science lab his freshmen year doing work study. Daquan says he wants to use his major to have a career in designing apps.

JACK: Jack Harkness is a male student who identifies as black, Mexican, and lower class. Jack grew up in a major city in his home state and is the first person in his family to attend college.

Jack talked a lot about how he doesn't believe in labels, identities, or the stigmas that come with them. Jack speaks both English and Spanish; he described himself as fluent in Spanish and uses Spanish to speak with his grandparents and his mother, who he lived with off and on throughout his childhood. Jack studies psychology at UM and talked a lot about how he's a psychology student and a psychology person, at one point saying "I'm psychology." Jack had a lot to say in our interviews, and he often responded to questions with specific personal examples. Jack also talked a lot about how he doesn't want to speak for others or generalize about other people. Jack described that his family is complicated. He has lived with his mother, her parents, and his father's parents at different moments in this life. Currently, he stays with his mother at her parents' house when she goes home, but for much of middle and high school years he lived with his father's parents. Jack's father lives with them now too, though for most of Jack's childhood he was not around and during Jack's high school years his father was incarcerated. Jack's mother worked as a phlebotomist when he was growing up and is now an in-home caretaker for Jack's grandfather. Jack owns a car that he left with his mother and that she uses; he also sends her money or groceries or other necessities regularly, about once a week or whenever she needs it. Jack's father is currently a cook at a bar and throughout Jack's life has worked in auto factories and has been involved in gang activities and has spent time in both jail (short term) and prison (long term) as Jack described. Jack says his dad is really intelligent and always reading and that one of his favorite things about being in college is sending a book or something he's read to his dad and discussing it with him. Jack's grandmother worked for the state of Michigan selling college tuition at a prorated rate, and Jack often went with her to events and helped her with this work when he was living with his grandparents. Jack also has seven siblings. His two older siblings did not attend college and he is trying to encourage his younger siblings, who are mostly teenagers, to apply to and attend colleges.

Jack talked a lot about the bad reputation his high school had as dangerous and about people's perceptions of his high school compared to the other high schools in his home city. Jack talked about fights and knives and guns at school, about having security and police officers at school. He also talked about how this was the norm for him and that he didn't really know there were different kinds of high schools at the time. Jack said he learned how to defend himself and that people knew not to mess with him or his friends. He also said that he was close with his teachers and was good at school. At one point in our interviews Jack said school was his sanctuary, at another point he said school was terrible. Jack was close with his English teacher from Junior and Senior year and still is. In high school Jack worked as a social justice ambassador for a local community program where he lead privilege walks and talked about his experiences growing up at nearby colleges and for businesses and corporations. Jack applied to colleges all over the Midwest and in Texas. He decided to go to UM because it was farther from home than some of his other options were and because UM gave him the most money to attend, so it was his cheapest option. Jack also completed the summer bridge program before his first year at UM and said it was great for transitioning to UM but that he sees some problems with it, for example he and the other students felt that it was presented to them as a punishment or threat, that they couldn't attend UM unless they successfully completed the bridge program. Jack says he doesn't think UM is the right fit for him and that people here are often narrow-minded, and he finds it hard to connect to them. He says his roommate is at least open to conversation and is the exception to this experience of close-mindedness on campus. Jack says he doesn't know any other first-gens on campus. He had a hard time adjusting, finding support, and battling

depression his first year, and he attends campus counseling services and recommends those services to other students often. Jack is a psychology major and enjoys learning from other students about their perspectives and how their minds work. Jack did a UROP work study semester in a psychology lab during the Fall semester of his freshmen year on campus and remains working in that lab through an independent study. Jack is also involved in a community outreach project, through a sequence of psych classes he took in his freshmen and sophomore years. Through this program, he goes to the local detention center and works with juveniles there. Jack was a student in this class his first year and is now a group leader of four other undergraduate students in the class as a sophomore. Outside of school, Jack also works at a hotel on campus. He is not longer an active member of any extracurricular organizations on campus, but in his first year he was involved in a group that wrote letters to local elementary schoolers, the blood drive, and group that does “Random Acts of Kindness” like offering free hugs or high fives on campus.

ARMIN: Armin is a white male student who identifies as middle class. Armin is the first person in his family to go to college, and he is the only student in this study who might be described as a “non traditional” college student. At the time of our interviews together, Armin was 24 years old and a sophomore at UM, and he had spent six years in the military working as a linguist and earning the equivalent of an Associate’s degree in Farsi language studies prior to enrolling at UM. With these credits transferring in, Armin was a sophomore but in his first semester of study at UM during the time of our interviews. Armin says that being first-gen means for him that he’s a pioneer but that he doesn’t identify as first-gen often, and usually identifies as a veteran more so than a first-gen student. Armin grew up in a rural area and described himself and his speaking as “country” often in our interviews. Armin is friendly and offered thoughtful, thorough responses to interview questions, often including personal examples. Armin has two younger brothers, one who currently attends a private college and commutes from home and one who does not attend college but works construction. Armin’s dad is a factory worker and his mother stays home. He says his parents have few expectations for him in college because they are simply proud of him. Armin has held several jobs from high school to now including working on a farm, in a restaurant as a busboy, at a state park for the department of natural resources, and in the military as a linguist. Armin says that having worked since high school has taught him a lot about money management and the value of a dollar.

Armin decided to leave the military and go back to school in part because he was ready for a career change. He did not want to spend his entire career in the military, and he had the financial assistance of the G.I. Bill to help him pursue college, so he decided to do that. He did not apply to many colleges, only applying to about three schools all in his home state, because he was confident in his application and his chances of getting accepted at UM. Armin is an earth science major and wants to work in the oil and gas industry, though he’s also interested in international studies and looking into middle eastern studies courses. Armin is involved in the SVA (student veterans association), the Geo or Earth Science club, and the Persian Students Association which he just recently joined through his involvement in a middle eastern studies major and Farsi courses. Armin says he likes UM in part because it’s in a bigger city than the place where he’s from and has a lot of different culture and people in it. He also says it can be challenging for him to connect with the younger undergraduate students, especially because they seem to be much wealthier and from a different financial situation from him. Armin gave the example of a

younger undergraduate student who was apartment hunting with no budget and the assumption that his parents would pay his rent, whereas Armin budgets carefully and lives off his G.I. Bill stipend. For these reasons, Armin says he likes having the SVA to help him socialize with students that are more like him.

LEVI: Levi is a male student who identifies as Black American and lower-middle class. Levi grew up in a major Midwest city and is the first person in his family to go to college. Levi talked with me a lot about race and gender and about his experience being a black male student at a predominantly white university. Levi also told me that I was the first person who was not a black man that he was talking to about these issues. Levi grew up with his mother and also has an older sister and a younger sister; he says none of his siblings have the same father he does. Levi's mother worked in an automotive factory, and received a buy-out which she used to buy their home. After that, Levi's mother was a hairdresser for a long time, and she knows a lot of people from doing that work. Now she works as a L.P.N. (licensed practical nurse), which is a degree certificate she pursued and achieved in the time since Levi went to college. Levi says now that he's in college everybody in his family wants some college, using his mother and older sister as examples. His older sister wants to pursue her C.N.A. (certified nurse's assistant) degree. Levi says he doesn't talk much with his family about college, but he knows they're proud of him. Levi also talked about living in the city in a rough neighborhood, moving to an affluent suburb for awhile, and then moving back to the city to a nicer neighborhood where his mother now owns their house. Levi talked about his "second family," a white family who lives in the suburb he once lived in; he's close friends with the sons in that family because he went to school and played sports with them and spent a lot of time with their family in their home when he was growing up. Levi says this experience of moving around and interacting regularly and closely with a white family has taught him to be accepting and willing to talk to lots of different kinds of people.

Levi went to high school in just outside the city, and he says he liked high school ok, and that his teachers were generally cool with him. He says he only had a couple close friends in high school, and these were his friends from the tennis team. Levi also played baseball growing up and was heavily involved in sports in high school. Levi says he doesn't really remember deciding he would apply to colleges; he applied to UM because a friend of his suggested that he should because she was applying and UM had always been her dream school. Levi completed the summer bridge program at UM and talked about liking bridge in general because he was on campus before the semester started and because he met good people who he's stayed in contact with and will talk to when he sees them on campus. Levi also said though that there was an understanding in bridge that students' admission to the university was contingent on completing bridge, and that this made bridge a little bit strange or intimidating somehow. Levi says he feels fine with his choice to attend UM so far, but he doesn't like that people are so focused. He says he feels like he's not UM, but that he appreciates the opportunities UM will afford him after college. Levi is a movement science major and wants to work as a trainer or own his own gym after he graduates. He says his degree isn't for himself, it's for his family and that he won't hang his degree on the wall but that he'll give it to his mother instead. Levi worked at a fast food restaurant in high school and has worked in gyms and as a trainer in both high school and college. In his first year, Levi was a member of the health science scholars program and is now a member of the advisory board for the Lead Scholars program on campus, a tutor for elementary

school students through America Reads, in the black student union, the black business undergraduate society, and the HEADS (here engaging a destiny through scholarship) program—a group where black men on campus to have dialogue.

Appendix C: Survey

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What year are you at the University of Michigan?
4. What is your major, minor, or program of study? Please list all that apply.
5. What is your gender?
6. What is your race or ethnicity? Please list all that apply.
7. What social class would you say you belong to?
8. Do you currently have a job or occupation? If yes, what is your job or occupation?
Yes (If yes, please name your job or occupation): _____
No
9. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your father?
Junior high/Middle school or less
Some high school
High school graduate
Postsecondary school other than college
Some college
College degree
Some graduate school
Graduate degree
10. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your mother?
Junior high/Middle school or less
Some high school
High school graduate
Postsecondary school other than college
Some college
College degree
Some graduate school
Graduate degree
11. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your legal guardian (if applicable)?
Junior high/Middle school or less
Some high school
High school graduate
Postsecondary school other than college
Some college

College degree
Some graduate school
Graduate degree

12. What is your father's occupation?
13. What is your mother's occupation?
14. What is your legal guardian's occupation (if applicable)?
15. What is your best estimate of your parents' total income last year? (Please circle one).
- Less than \$10,000
 - \$10,000 to \$14,999
 - \$15,000 to \$19,999
 - \$20,000 to \$24,999
 - \$25,000 to \$29,999
 - \$30,000 to \$39,999
 - \$40,000 to \$49,999
 - \$50,000 to \$59,999
 - \$60,000 to \$74,999
 - \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - \$100,000 to \$149,999
 - \$150,000 to \$199,999
 - \$200,000 to \$249,999
 - \$250,000 or more
16. How many people lived in your household last year?
17. Do you have any siblings?
Yes (If yes, how many siblings do you have?): _____
No
18. Have any of your siblings attended college?
Yes
No
19. Are you from the state of Michigan?
Yes
No
20. If someone asked, "Where are you from?", what would you say?
21. What educational experiences have you had before attending the University of Michigan?
(Please choose all that apply.)
I attained a high school degree
I attained my GED or high school equivalency

I attended a 2-year college or community college
 I attended another 4-year college or university

22. What is your first language?

- English
- Spanish
- Other (please specify):

23. What are the first languages of your parents or legal guardian(s)? (Please choose all that apply).

Mother	Father	Legal Guardian (if applicable)
English	English	English
Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Other (Please specify):	Other (Please specify):	Other (Please specify):

24. Have you fulfilled the first-year writing requirement at University of Michigan?

- Yes
- No

25. What first-year writing course did you complete?

- English 124
- English 125
- Classic Civilizations CLCIV 101
- Classic Civilizations CLCIV 121
- Comparative Literature COMPLIT 122
- Great Books GTBOOKS 191
- History 195
- Honors 240
- Honors 241
- Lloyd Hall Scholars Program LHSP 125
- Residential College RCCORE 100
- Slavic Language and Literature SLAVIC 151
- Other (Please specify): _____

26. Would you be willing to participate in a brief interview about your experiences with writing and speaking in college?

- Yes
- No

27. If you are willing to participate in an interview, please supply a phone number and email address where I can contact you.

28. How would you prefer to be contacted?

Appendix D: Interview Protocols

Interview 1 Protocol

Brief: Hi, thanks so much for talking with me today. You might remember from [my email about the study] [when I presented at the first-gen student group], but just to remind you, this study is hoping to understand how first-gen students are experiencing writing and speaking at University of Michigan. So today, we'll just talk in general about your experiences being a first-gen college student

1. First, I'll ask you a few questions about your home and your family. In your survey, you said you are from [town, city, state]. What was it like growing up there?

- What was your neighborhood like?
- Was your family typical in your neighborhood? Were they like everyone else?

2. How would you describe your family?

- You said in your survey your mom is a [occupation]. What was that like for you growing up?
- Did your mom work full time? Was she home with you often? What was that like for you?
- In your survey you also said your mom has [some high school, high school diploma, some college]. How do you know that about your mom?
- Does your family talk about education or school? When they do, how do they tend to talk about it?

- You also said in your survey that your dad is a [occupation]. Did your dad always have that job? What was that like for you growing up?
- Your dad also has [some high school, high school diploma, some college]. How do you know this? Does your family talk about this often? If yes, how do they talk about it?

- Do you have siblings? How would you describe them? What are your siblings like?
- How old are your siblings?
- Do they go to college? What is that like for you?
- What do they do for a living?

- Does anyone else live in your house with your family? What is that like for you?
- How would you describe your extended family?
- Did anyone else in your family attend college? What was that like for you?

3. So now we'll talk about your experiences with school. What was your high school like?

- Did you enjoy high school? Why/why not?
- Did you have any subjects that you especially enjoyed? Why?
- Did you have any subjects that were especially challenging or that you disliked?
- What were your interactions with your teachers like?
- Did you do any after school clubs or activities? What were those like?

- Did you have many friends in your high school? If yes, what are your high school friends like? If no, who else did you hang out with? How would you describe your friends?
- Did any of your friends go to college? Where? What schools?

4. How did you decide that you would go to college or how did you know you wanted to go to college?

- What was it like applying to college?
- Did you have a chance to visit any colleges while you were applying? What was that like?
- How did you choose University of Michigan?
- Are you happy with your choice to attend UM so far?

5. So, you joined this study through the email list for the first-gen group here at Michigan. I'm going to ask a few questions about that group now.

How did you find the first-gens at Michigan group?

- How did you decide to join the group?
- What do you like about the first-gen group?
- How often do you attend the group meetings?
- Do you go to any of their events? How is that experience for you?
- Do you ever use their Facebook page? What kinds of things do you use that page for?
- Would you make any changes to how the first gen group meetings or events work?

6. In the first-gen meetings, they talk a lot about what it means to be first-gen. What does being first gen mean to you?

- Do you identify yourself/think of yourself as a first-generation college student? Why is that?
- How did you know you were first gen?
- Do you talk with your friends about being first gen?
- Do you think your friends know you're first gen?
- Do you talk about being first gen with your family or your parents?
- Do you think your family or your parents know that you're first gen? How do you think they know/don't know?
- Do you think other people know that you're first gen? Why/why not?
- Do you tell other people often that you are first gen?
- Who do you tend to tell?
- Why do you choose to tell [these people]?
- Why don't you tell [these other people]?
- Do you know a lot of other first gen students on campus?
- How do you think you know those people are first gen?
- Do you want to say anything else about being first gen?

7. In the first gen group they also talk a bit about social class and the idea that the amount of money you make, the kind of job you do, or how much education you have puts you in a certain social class group. So, I'm going to ask you a few questions about social class now. On the survey you completed for the study, you said you identified as [social class], how did

you come to identify that way?

- How do you know you belong to that class?
- How do you think you realized you were [social class]?
- Yeah, so then, just in general, what do you think the term social class means or when I use the term social class, what does that mean to you?
- What are the messages you think you got about social class growing up?
- From your family, from teachers, neighbors?
- Did you ever even talk about social class with your family? Does your family talk about social class? If they do, what do they say?
- Do you know a lot of other [social class] people on campus? How can you tell those people are [social class]?
- Do you think other people can tell that you're [social class]? How do you think they know/don't know?
- Do you want to say anything else about social class?

**8. Ok, so keep in mind that idea about what social class means. And take a few minutes to read through these cards that describe different social classes. As you read them think about where you might fall in these cards or in these social class groups.
[give participant 3-5 minutes to read the cards]**

Adapted from the New York Times' collection *Class Matters*, 2005, pg. 24

Poor: Bottom fifth: less than high school, up to \$30,000/year

These people may do manual labor jobs, be unemployed, or employed only part time. The jobs these people do are often not considered prestigious. These people might also be described as struggling to make ends meet and often worry about financial burdens like paying monthly bills on time. These people tend not to have pursued education beyond a high school degree.

Middle three-fifths:

Working Class: High school or equivalent, \$30,000-50,000

Working class people are generally described as doing unskilled work such as manual labor or service jobs. The jobs working class people do generally have little prestige. Working class people might be described as blue-collar workers. Working class people tend to have often not attended college. Working class people often make enough money to get by, but they may feel stress over their financial situation for example about paying monthly bills or about not having enough money saved.

Lower Middle: Some college or two year degree, \$50,000-75,000

The middle class is often described by two levels: the lower middle class and the upper middle class. The lower middle class might do unskilled or skilled work; for example lower middle class people might be managers, small business owners, or teachers. These people may or may not be college educated, but they often make enough money to feel financially stable most of the time. These people tend to pay their bills regularly each month and to occasionally spend money on extra things like dining out or taking a yearly vacation.

Upper Middle: Bachelor's degree \$75,000-100,000

Upper middle class people are generally described as doing skilled professional work such as

management positions. Their jobs have some prestige associated with them, and their jobs might mean that they are the boss of something or of other people in their job. Upper middle class people might be described as white collar workers. The upper middle class are often highly educated with college degrees or graduate degrees. These people have high incomes, and might be doctors, lawyers, engineers, or CEOs. Middle class people often make enough money to feel secure in their financial situation, to pay their bills regularly each month, and to spend money on extra things like dining out occasionally or taking vacations.

Upper Class: Top fifth: Graduate degree, \$100,000+

The upper class is often exceptionally rich and can be highly educated with college degrees and graduate degrees. These people are often described as elite and their jobs are considered prestigious. People in the upper class might be doctors, lawyers, engineers, or CEOs. These people often own their homes and may own several homes or properties.

Where do you think you fall on the cards?

- How did you decide that?
- Where do you think your family would fall in these cards? How did you choose that?
- Do you think you're in the same social class as the rest of your family? Why do you think that is?

9. So, next time we'll talk a lot about writing and your first-year writing course here at Michigan. But for now, I'll just ask you a few questions about writing in general, and then we'll be finished for the day. How would you describe yourself as a writer?

- Do you enjoy writing? Why or why not?
- What kinds of writing do you do? For school? For work? For fun?
- Do you think writing is easy? Why is that?
- Do you think writing is difficult? Why is that?
- Did you do a lot of writing in high school? What kinds of writing did you do there?
- Did any of your high school teachers have an influence or change the way you think about writing?
- Do you think you've grown as a writer since high school? How so?
- Does anyone in your family write? For their job or just for fun? What kinds of things do they write?
- Overall, how has writing in college been going for you?
- Do you want to say anything else about writing?

Thanks so much for meeting with me today. I'll contact you within a week to set up our next time to talk. In our next meeting, we'll talk about your experiences in your first-year writing class. Would you be willing to share with me a paper you wrote in that class? That way we can discuss that paper in our meeting and that might help us to talk about your writing class in general. You can send me any paper from that class that you can still find. If you have an electronic copy you can email it to me. If you only have a hard copy you can just bring it with you to our next meeting. Well thanks again, and I'll see you soon.

Interview 2 Protocol

Brief: Thanks so much for coming in to talk with me again today. Thanks also for bringing along your paper. We'll start out today talking about that paper and then we'll talk about your experiences in that first-year writing class in general. Let's go ahead and take a look at your paper together.

1. So, you completed this paper for [first-year writing course]. What is the paper about?

- How did you choose to write about that?
- Can you talk about what the assignment or prompt was?
- Was this assignment similar to or different from writing assignments you had in high school? How so? Can you give an example?
- How did you feel about this paper when you turned it in for the course? Why?
- What elements of your writing in this paper do you feel confident about? Proud of?
- Given the chance, what would you change or revise further in the paper?
- What feedback or grade did you get on your paper? How did you feel about that feedback or grade?

2. Can you describe how you wrote this paper?

- What did you do first? How did you begin writing this piece, thinking about the prompt, brainstorming?
- What other kinds of things did you do to help write this paper?
- Did you do any revising for this paper?
- Did you do peer review for this paper? What was that like?
- Do you want to say anything else about this paper?

3. So, was this paper typical for the course or was it different from the other kinds of writing you did in the class?

- In general, what kinds of writing did you do in the class?
- How did you feel about the writing in that class? Why do you think you felt that way?
- Did you enjoy the writing in that class? Why?/Why not?
- What, if anything, was difficult about the writing in that class? Why was that difficult for you?
- What, if anything, did you dislike about the writing in that class?
- Why did you choose to take this class? (Rather than a different first-year writing class)?

4. What did you learn or take away from your first-year writing class?

- If not, why? If yes, can you give an example of how you changed or grew? What do you think helped you grow in this way?
- Did you ever seek help for your writing in that class? If yes, where did you get help? If not, why?
- What kinds of things helped you with writing in that class?
- Do you think you've used skills or strategies learned in that course in your other courses or other writing? If not, why? If so, can you give an example?

5. In general, what do you think good college writing looks like?

- Can you give some examples?
- Do you consider yourself a good writer?
- What makes you characterize yourself in this way?

6. What other kinds of work or activities did you do in your first-year writing class?

- Did you have class discussions? What was class discussion like?
- How often would you say you contributed to class discussion?
- Did you think it was easy to contribute to class discussion? Why or why not?
- Did you enjoy participating in class discussions? Why or why not?

- Did you have small group discussions or group projects?
- Were those difficult? Why or why not?
- Did you find participating in small groups to be enjoyable? Why or why not?

- Did you ever give a presentation in that class?
- Was that difficult? Why or why not?
- Did you enjoy presenting in that class? Why or why not?

- Did you do peer review in your first-year writing class? If yes, what was it like to receive feedback from your peers? What was it like giving feedback to your peers?

7. Do you think the discussions in your first-year writing class had an effect on your writing at all?

- Do you think your first-year writing class had any effect on the way you talk?
- Did you prefer talking (for example in class discussions, in small groups, or in a presentation) or writing in that class? Why do you think that is?
- To what extent would you say you “write the way you talk”?
- Do you think in your first-year writing class you wrote the way you talk?
- Should people write the way they talk? If yes, always/in every situation? If no, why not?

8. In our first interview you said you do [kind of writing] outside of class, for your job, or for fun. Can you imagine any way for your first-year writing class to value that kind of writing that you usually do outside of that class?

- Can you imagine any way for your first-year writing class to value the kinds of speaking that you usually do outside of that class?
- Can you think of anyway this class could have been better or easier for you?
- If you could change anything about your first-year writing class, what would you change?
- Is there anything else you’d like to add about your speaking or talking in your first-year writing class?
- Do you want to say anything else about your first-year writing class in general?

Alright, well thank you so much for answering all these questions about yourself and your writing today. I know it can be hard to remember and talk about all these things. I’ll be in contact with you in the next week to schedule our last meeting. The only thing I’ll ask you think about for our next meeting is what you’d like for me to call you or refer to you as when I write

about you in the study.

Interview 3 Protocol

Thanks for talking with me again today. So, last time we met we talked about your first-year writing class. Today, we'll spend some more time talking about your writing and speaking but we'll talk about the writing and speaking that you do outside of class— in your family or at home, at work, and in any extracurricular activities you're involved in on campus. Towards the end of our conversation today, we'll talk about your experiences in the first-gen group here at Michigan.

1. You've been at UM for a couple years now, but to start out I'm going to ask you to try and think back to when you first came to UM. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you first came to college?

- Did you do any specific kind of writing before you came to college?
- What kinds of writing did you do in school before college?

2. What kinds of writing, if any, did you do out of school before college?

- Did you have a job before college? If yes, what was your job like?
- Did you do any writing for your job?
- If yes, can you give an example of a time you had to write for that job?
- Do you think this writing you did for your job is different from the kinds of writing you do in college?

- Do you have a job now? If yes, what is your job like now?
- Do you do any writing for your job now?
- If yes, can you give an example of writing you do for your job now?
- Do you think the writing you do for your job now is different from the writing you do in your college classes?

- Are you involved in any extracurricular groups or activities on campus? If yes, can you describe that (those) group(s)?
- Do you write at all for any of the extracurricular groups you're involved in on campus? If yes, what kinds of writing do you do?
- Is that writing similar to the writing you've done for your classes? Can you give an example?

3. So, thinking about all those different writing experiences, how would you describe good writing in general?

- What about good writing in college?
- Do you think those are different?

4. Do you think being in college has changed you as a writer? How so? Or why not?

- Can you give an example?
- Do you want to say anything else about writing?

5. Now, I'll ask you a few questions about speaking and talking. Have you noticed anything interesting about the ways people talk here?

- How would you describe the way people talk on campus? (their accents, the words they use, or anything else)?
- For example, have you noticed anything about the way other students talk?
- Have you noticed anything about the ways your professors talk?
- Is it different than the ways other students talk?
- Is it different from the way you talk at home or in school?
- What do you think people (professors, classmates, friends)? notice about the way you talk when you're at college?

6. Do you contribute much to discussions in your classes? Why do you think that is?

- In general, how would you describe the way you talk in your classes?
- How do you tend to talk with your classmates? In class discussions? With your professors?
- How do you think you learned that? Do you remember how you learned that there was some stuff you could say in the classroom/with classmates/with professors and some you couldn't? Did someone explicitly tell you how to talk there? Do you have models you were working from?
- Do you think being in college or being at UM has changed the way you talk?
- What do you think has made that change for you? How do you think you learned to talk differently here? Did someone explicitly tell you how to talk here? Do you have models you were working from?
- Do you share stories with other first gens or with your friends about talking in class? If yes, would you be comfortable talking with me about that?

7. Is the way you talk in school any different than the way you talk outside of school? If yes, can you give an example? If no, why do you think that is?

- Did you have to talk to people in any specific ways in your job before college?
- How would you describe the way you talked for that job? Can you give an example?
- How do you know how to do that? Do you remember how you learned to talk that way? Did someone explicitly tell you how to talk there? Do you have models you were working from?
- Do you think you could talk at school in the same way you did in your job?
- Do you think that kind of talking was different from the kinds of talking you do in college?

- Do you have to talk to people in any specific ways for your job now?
- How would you describe the way you talk for that job? Can you give an example?
- How do you know how to do that? Do you remember how you learned to talk that way? Did someone explicitly tell you how to talk there? Do you have models you were working from?
- Do you think you could talk at school in the same way you do at your job?
- Do you think that kind of talking is different from the kinds of talking you do in college courses?

- What about extracurricular groups or activities you're in? How would you describe the ways people talk there?
- How do you talk there? Do you feel comfortable contributing to conversations or discussions in those groups?
- How do you know how to do that? Do you remember how you learned to talk that way? Did someone explicitly tell you how to talk there? Do you have models you were working from?
- How are the discussions or conversations you have in extracurricular groups different from the discussions in your classes?

8. How would you describe the way your family talks (their accents, the words they use, or anything else)?

- How do you talk with our family?
- How do you know how to talk that way? Do you remember how you learned to talk that way?
- Do you think you talk differently with your family than at your job?
- Do you think you talk differently with your family than at school?

9. Do you think the way you talk (your accent, or the words you use, or anything else) plays a role in how other people perceive you? If yes, Can you give an example? If no, can you talk about why you think that is?

- Has anyone ever given you a hard time about the way you talk? If yes, how so? Can you give an example? If no, why do you think that is?
- If yes, has that ever made you try to talk differently? Do you try to do something different with your speaking?
- Is this uncomfortable to talk about? Well we don't have to talk about it? What's hard about it?
- Do you think the way you speak has ever benefitted you or helped you in any way? If yes, can you give an example? If no, why do you think that is?

10. Do you think your talking and your writing are similar to one another? If yes, How so? If not, can you talk about how they're different from one another?

- Can you give an example of how your writing and your speaking are [similar/different]?
- Do you want to say anything else about your speaking or talking?

11. So, you heard about this study from the email list for the first-gen group here at UM. Can I ask you some questions about that group? How often do you attend the group's meetings?

- Why do (don't) you choose to attend those meeting regularly?
- Do you talk often in those meetings?
- Do you find it easy to talk in those meetings? Why do you think that is?
- Do you like to talk in those meetings? Why is that?
- Do you think you talk the same way in those meetings as you do in your classes? Can you give an example?

- Have you attended any of the group's events? If yes, what kinds of events have you attended? Can you describe your experience attending an event for the group?
- Do you want to say anything else about the first-gen student group?

12. The group also has an active Facebook page that they use to communicate with first-gen students on campus. Can I ask you a few questions about your use of the group Facebook page? Why/how do you use the group Facebook page?

- How often do you check the page?
- Have you ever written on the group's Facebook page? If yes, what did you post about? How did you decide to write a post for the Facebook page? If no, why do you think you haven't posted to the page at all?
- How would you describe the kind of writing that happens on the Facebook page? Do you think the writing for the Facebook page is similar to or different from the writing in your classes? Can you give an example?
- Do you find the Facebook page to be helpful or not? In what way?
- Can you give an example?
- Do you want to say anything else about the Facebook group?

Is there anything else that is on your mind that we haven't talked about today – or throughout our interviews?

Well thanks so much for talking with me, if I have anymore questions about our conversation today, can I contact you again?

Appendix E: Codebook For Data Analysis

Definitions and examples of categories and codes used to analyze student interview data are presented here. The full codebook includes approximately 77 codes across five categories. In this Appendix, I offer an abridged codebook with examples of three codes from each of the five categories. I also include examples of student data receiving each code.

Category	Code	Definition	Example
Contexts and Interlocutors	FYW	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their FYW course or their literacies (ie speaking or writing) in their FYW course	Interviewer: Do you think that that class [FYW] could have done anything to support you because you're a student who doesn't like to talk in class? Chris: I think there could be different forms of participation because there's always going to be the talkers in the class and then there's going to be people who are shy and maybe don't want to speak up, and I don't think it's right to penalize the students who don't feel as confident with speaking up in class.
	Class Discussions	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their literacies (ie: speaking or writing) in the context of a full class discussion	Interviewer: Do you think it's easy to contribute to class discussion? Chris: No. Interviewer: Why not? Chris: At least in my experience, during discussions, I don't know, I feel like people can think of what to say so fast and I'm over here trying to form something to say in my head and I just can't keep up. When I do have to contribute in class though, when it's dependent on my grades, sometimes I try to write it down really quick. Even that, I'll write it down and then it'll change to a different topic and I'm like, "Oh crap, I don't want to go back to that." I just don't say anything at all. It's just hard. I can't think of things fast. [...]
	Friends	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their literacies (ie speaking or writing) when interacting with their friend(s)	Interviewer: What do people say about the way that you talk? Chris: Usually my friends will like use the word ghetto, which I don't really take offense to. It depends on who I'm with however I talk. Interviewer: Your friends say that you talk ghetto? Chris: Yeah, or my little sister. She's kind of like my friend, "Chris, you're so ghetto." You know what I mean?
Additional codes in this category: Peer review, Small Groups, High School, Bridge Program, Presentations, GSIs, Classmates Peers, High School Teachers, Family, Parents, Work, College, Extracurricular Orgs Clubs Activities, First Gens @ Michigan, Self Perception			
Literacies	Speaking	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their experiences with speaking	Interviewer: Then, how would you say you talk with your professors? Luna: I try to be as formal as possible without being weird. My professors make me nervous, talking to them because usually you speak with your GSIs and stuff or at least I did my freshman year.
	Writing	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their experiences with writing	Interviewer: Okay. How did you feel about the writing in the class? Dana: I don't know. At first I kind of felt like I struggled. I can't remember what grade I got on my first paper but I was so nervous to write because it was my first actual college paper. I thought it was supposed to be something extravagant with all these big words I'm supposed to use. Just different things like that. She helped us all understand that you grow into writing like that based on the different classes that you take and how early you pick up on certain topics and different things like that. After that it wasn't as scary.
	Digital Literacies	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their digital literacies	Chris: In class discussion, I don't know. Sometimes we have, not in English 125 but in one of my classes, we could discuss online through a website and it's easier for me to write the stuff down because I have all this time to think about what I want to say. But in in-class discussions, I can't, I don't have any time to think. It's just so fast and people throwing out ideas and trying to get their opinions in. I feel pressured to say something. With all that type of pressure on me, it makes it harder and it makes me more nervous. Then I just end up breaking down and not saying anything at all. I think if it wasn't graded, maybe it would be easier. Maybe I'd feel more comfortable with speaking up.

	Additional codes in this category: Course Evaluation, Argumentation Persuasion Support Evidence Examples, Personal Narrative, Networking or Self Promotion, Financial Literacy, College-going Literacy, Transition to College, Belonging in College, WAC/WID Disciplinarity, Reading, Listening, Audience Listener Reader, Mindedness, Grammar, Vocabulary, Register, Ghetto, Grades, Comparisons Between Literacies, Strengths, Challenges, Strategies		
Speaking	Changes in Speaking	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating ways in which their speaking has changed	Interviewer: Then would you say that being in college has changed the way that you talk? Luna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I'm definitely a lot more like, I do rehearse before I say things in my head. I think about what I'm going to say a lot more before I say it. Interviewer: Any other differences with the way that you talk? Luna: I am more concise. In high school if I raise my hand, I could take up like a minute maybe or I'd go on a little bit too long. Now, I make sure that I cut myself off when I've said what I need to say.
	Bilingual Multilingual	Any instance of a student describing or evaluating their experiences speaking more than one language	Interviewer: yeah, why does that shock you? Tom: I guess because in my household we speak Arabic. Especially, my mom, she...even though she understands English very basic, I always speak Arabic to her and some people whose parents speak English because they work, and they speak English with their parents, so I guess, like if you don't use the language you'll forget it. I guess that's what happened.
	Code switching	Any instance of a participant using the term "code switching." Should be specific and explicit use of the term	Interviewer: Okay, cool. Then what do you think people like your professors or your classmates or your friends on campus, what do you think those people notice about the way that you talk while you're at college? While you're on campus? Tina: I guess, I don't know if they notice it but I kind of code switch sometimes from when I'm at work and just when I'm talking with my friends because when I'm talking with my friends I'm a little more careless with what I say, like I use finna and gonna, y'all but when I'm at work I try to be a bit more formal or proper or whatever just because I don't know who I'm talking to.
Additional Codes in this Category: Slang, Dialect, Swearing Cursing Cussing			
Writing	Changes in Writing	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating ways in which their writing has changed over time or between different writing assignments or different writing contexts. Should be broader than "Writing Revision"	Interviewer: Do you remember if those discussions had an affect on your writing at all? Chris: I don't think so. During the big discussions, I don't think it changed my writing really or had an impact on it. At least a significant impact on it, just reminders to explain things more or back up your claims. That's something you should always be thinking about.
	Writing Process	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their writing process, should make explicit reference to "process" and should be more general than a reference to a certain stage in the process such as proofreading or prewriting	Interviewer: Did you prefer talking or writing in your 125 class? Chris: I liked writing better. Interviewer: Why do you think that is? Chris: Because it's easier to express myself through writing. I can take as much time as I need to. There's talking in class you know you have to think of things faster. Writing's just a slower process for me and I have more time to think about what I have to write down.
	Writing Research	Any instance of a participant describing or evaluating their research process or strategies	Interviewer: How did you make those decisions about what you would want to talk about? Chris: I talked to the professor because we had to get the policy approved by him, and he said the common core would be okay. Then I just did research. I used the M Library and searched different common core on the search toolbar and I just Googled it.
Additional Codes in this Category: Writing Assignment Prompt, Writing Prewriting, Writing Citation Mechanics, Writing Revision, Writing Instructor Feedback, Writing Models, Journal Writing, DSP, Creative			

	Writing, Good Writing		
Identity and Background	Family structure	Any instance in which a student is describing their immediate or extended family structure, including the students' relationship to individual family members	Interviewer: How was that having your grandma home with you? Chris: In ways it filled in the gaps of not having my mom around, but it was still sort of different. She's a lot older. She has more experience than all of us and so she's always on us about doing little things and making sure we're reading and doing homework. I think it is a little different from having an actual mother.
	Neighborhood City Town	Any instance in which a participant is describing the place where they grew up	Interview: what was it like growing up there? Tom: very very diverse. I loved it actually, like there was so much culture and everybody was so into tradition, it was held fast and strong to people, and I love that. Our high school was very diverse, different faces as opposed to here which is kind of...I don't know, it's different from my high school.
	Race Ethnicity	Any instance in which a student uses the term race or describes their own or another person's race or ethnicity	Chris: Like I said, we are African American. Most people we hung out with were white, and being low income, at one point my dad didn't even have a car, so we'd have to walk to school sometimes or back from after school activities. Other kids didn't have that problem, you know. I feel like even the way we presented ourselves, me and my siblings, I don't know how to describe it, but it wasn't ... You could just tell that we were different from the other families you know, like the way we dressed, the way we talked, just everything.
	Additional Codes in this Category: Social Class, NYT Social Class, Gender, Sexuality, Religious Identity, Family Work, Family Education, Identity, First Gen Identity, Perception of UM		

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