The Power in Defining "Good" and the People Trying Their Best: An Exploration of Good Student Discourse in First-Year Writing and Mathematics Courses

by

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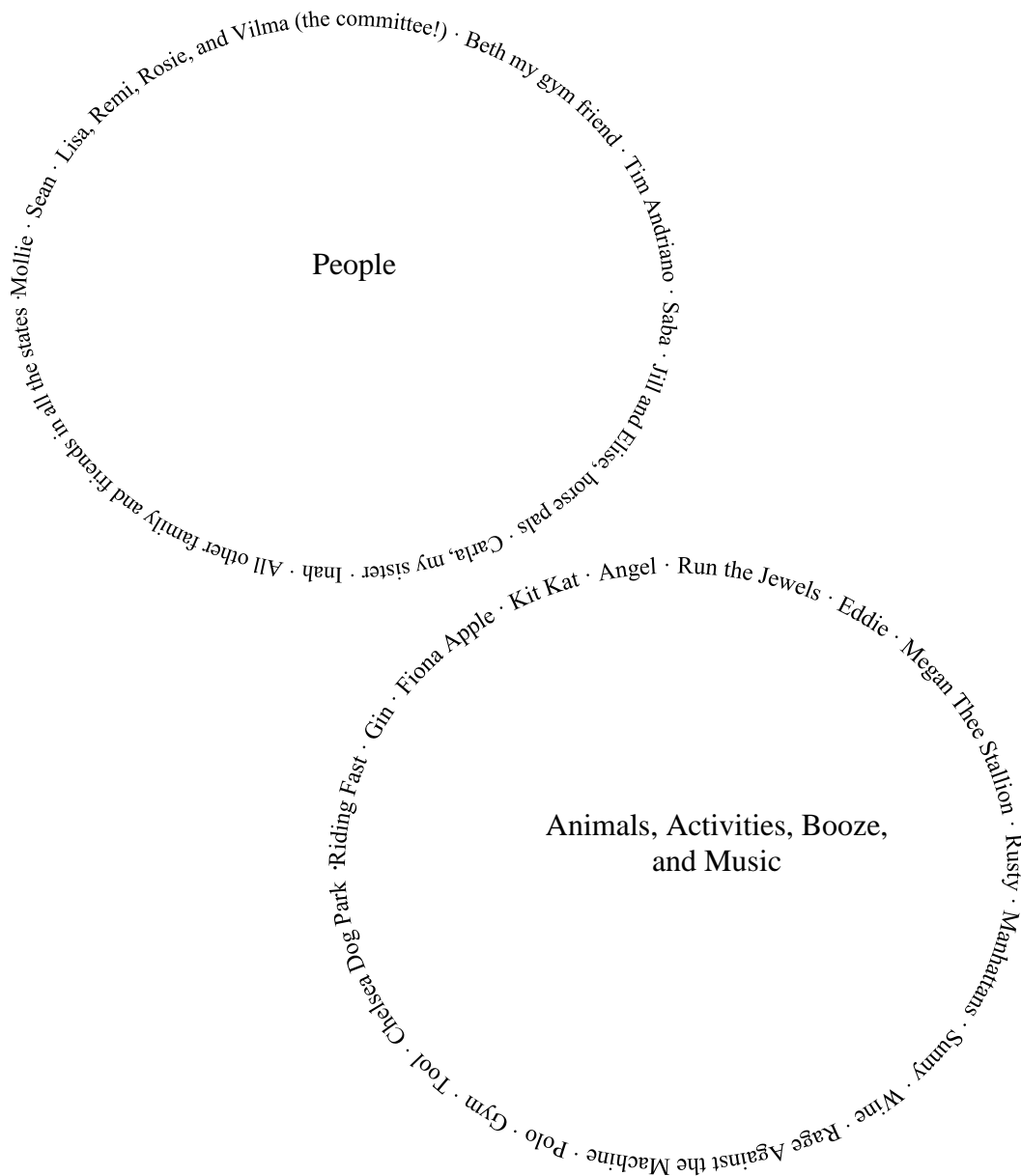
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Dedication

       I dedicate this dissertation to Wilbur Wright College, the legacy of my paternal grandparents Glenn and Irene Boeck, and to all of the people who have ever been made to feel as if they were not "good students." Teaching and working at Wilbur Wright College was undoubtedly one of the most formative periods of my life. I am forever grateful to all the colleagues and students at Wright who taught, inspired, and supported me. Wilbur Wright College was full of fighters and advocates for students and I was glad to raise my voice among them. My grandparents were loving, kind, and brave. They tried new things all of the time and excelled at them! They were multitalented, brilliant, and humble. They showed up to countless horse shows, field hockey games, track meets, violin recitals, basketball games, and whatever else my cousins and I had going on. I miss them and think often of ways to honor them.

       To anyone who has been made to feel they were not a "good student": you do not have to accept that label. You may not have the power to enter grades or write your recommendation letters, but you have the power to decide how you see yourself.

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Abstract

Instructors can play an important role in students' transitions to college by explaining academic expectations and offering support. Yet, less is known about college instructors' beliefs about *what* students should do and why. In addition, students' beliefs and experiences regarding what students should do to succeed may not align with the instructor's beliefs. I used Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981) concept of discourse to conceptualize descriptions of which student behaviors are valued, how they are communicated as Good Student Discourse, and how power manifests in that discourse. The purpose of my study was to explore the Good Student Discourse (GSD) of students and instructors in first-year mathematics and writing courses at a broad access university, how instructors GSD was reflected in course policies and practices, and instructors' and students' understandings of the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful.

This study was conducted at a broad access university in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. My data came from 11 instructors and 49 students in six mathematics courses and five first-year writing courses. Eight of the instructors were graduate students. I conducted observations of the first day of class, interviewed instructors, collected course announcements, and interviewed and surveyed students.

I found similarities between instructors' Good Student Discourse (GSD) and students' GSD; in particular, both students and instructors valued effort. I identified four dimensions in instructors' definitions of a Good Student: *engages during class, puts effort and attention towards coursework, communicates with the instructor,* and *strives to learn (math).* The last

dimension was predominantly discussed among math instructors. All instructors discussed their approaches to create conditions that support students' enactment of GSD dimensions, including offering multiple options for students to participate in class and how they reward students by giving extensions on assignments, verbal praise, or grades on assignments. Instructors' GSD also highlighted how power operates in defining, communicating, and enforcing the criteria for being a Good Student. I identified five dimensions of being a Good Student in students' GSD: *attends and focuses during class, pushes self for academic success, seeks academic help, manages time and coursework,* and *takes care of self.* Students reported that the GSD they hear in college is the same as what they had heard from family members and prior teachers, suggesting Good Student Discourse is systemic in educational systems and embedded in social discourses.

Nearly all the students and instructors stated that being a Good Student would result in a good grade most of the time, though several students said that natural ability at taking tests or in a particular subject might be a reason why Good Students are not academically successful. Instructors noted that placement tests and assessment practices might prevent a Good Student from getting a good grade.

These findings contribute to our understanding of what is communicated to first-year students about being a Good Student as well as what ideas they bring with them to college. In addition, my study points to ramifications of Good Student Discourse as it can affect students' grades in the course and perpetuate dominant values. I offer recommendations for future research on how discourse operates in education as well as note the need for better professional development in pedagogical strategies and consistent, collegial support for graduate student instructors, such as a professional community of practice.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Purpose and the Study

The motivation for this study was to increase understanding of the role that instructors play in facilitating students' transitions to college. I examined the discourse of what it means to be a "good student" in first-year undergraduate mathematics and writing courses. Specifically, I focused on the ways in which instructors communicate their beliefs about what defines a "good student" to first-year students, how these beliefs are reflected within their course policies and practices, and how instructors' beliefs compare to students' definitions of a "good student." For the rest of this dissertation, I will capitalize Good Student is capitalized because it refers to the concept of a "good student."

Rationale

During their first year of college, many students are navigating an unfamiliar environment, meeting new people, and learning about instructors' academic expectations. This transition period has important implications for students' well-being, sense of belonging, and academic outcomes (Bowman et al., 2019; Credé & Niehorster, 2012; Harper & Newman, 2016; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Hurtado et al., 2007; Yazedjian et al., 2008; Yee, 2016). Higher education researchers and scholars have argued that interacting with instructors is an important mechanism for socializing students to the college environment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993; Wiedman, 1989). Much of this research has focused on students' frequency of interactions with instructors (Kim & Lundberg, 2016; Kim & Sax, 2009; Kuh et al., 2008) and their perception of the quality of those interactions (e.g., supportive, respectful, discriminatory)

(Komarraju et al., 2010; Lundberg & Scheiner, 2004; Park et al., 2020). Studies have found that positive instructor-student interactions could help students feel more confident in their academic abilities (Kim & Sax, 2014; Komarraju et al., 2020) and have beneficial effects on academic outcomes and satisfaction with college for students of color (Kim & Sax, 2009; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). This focus on instructor-student interactions centers the student's activities or perceptions of the interaction and typically does not directly examine what instructors communicate to the student. For example, common measures of instructor-student interaction related to course experiences include discussing course content with the instructor (Kim & Lundberg, 2016; Kuh et al., 2008), and students' perceptions of the quality or frequency of such interactions with faculty, yet the content of the specific messages that instructors give to student is not examined. Consideration of what instructors communicate to students and why is needed to understand how faculty-student interactions might facilitate students' transition to college.

Similarly, instructors' affirmations of students' abilities to succeed in college, which Rendón (1994) theorized as instances of validation, could be particularly important for students who are marginalized in postsecondary spaces and for first-year students who are navigating new academic expectations and contexts (Hallett et al., 2020; Rendón, 1994, 2002). Applying validation theory to instructor-student communications centers the content of the instructor's message instead of the frequency or format of the interaction (e.g., attending office hours, discussions with faculty outside of class). However, research that explores the effects of instructors communicating to students that they belong and can succeed does not attend to what students are being encouraged to *succeed at* in a course, why an instructor believes a behavior is important for students' success, or how the supportive intent of the messages is reflected in course policies. Thus, while supportive messaging is important, it is less clear how such

supportive messaging connects to instructors' specific academic expectations of students within a course or course policies and practices that can influence students' outcomes.

A small set of studies that examine instructors' expectations of students illustrate the importance of making expectations explicit, particularly for students who are first in their family to attend college, and who may be less familiar with the hidden curriculum of postsecondary education (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Yee, 2016). Instructors' explanations of their expectations to first-year students have been considered part of the socialization process (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2014). However, the relationship between individual instructors' expectations and students' socialization to college as a whole is difficult to understand because studies have shown variation between specific disciplines in faculty beliefs about what makes students successful (Ferrare & Miller, 2020) and how faculty convey expectations to students (Thompson, 2007). In other words, if each instructor has a particular set of expectations and beliefs about the behaviors and characteristics that contribute to students' success, then a student must negotiate multiple discourses about college success. This raises questions about the generalizability of an instructor's message to a student about how to succeed in college. Moreover, some of the behaviors and characteristics that instructors emphasize in their courses may confer advantage on one group of students to a greater or lesser extent than another. For example, if Instructor A expects students to be independent and Instructor B expects students to successfully work in groups, then students who have more experience with or preference for working independently potentially benefit more from Instructor A's expectations and perhaps less so from the expectations set by Instructor B.

Furthermore, instructors have the power to assign grades to students and implement course policies, such as deductions for late work, which could have implications for students'

grades. Therefore, if and how instructors incorporate beliefs about what students should do into their grading practices and policy implementation illustrates the potential impact on students' outcomes. One of the most powerful predictors of first-year to second-year persistence is first-year GPA (Ishitani, 2016), thus the relationship between what instructors think students should do and how that is reflected in grading practices has implications for students' transition experience, academic outcomes, and persistence.

With this study, I seek to enhance our understanding of instructors' roles in first-year students' transition to college by focusing on instructors' beliefs about what students should do to succeed in the class or college and why, and how they communicate that to students. Previous research on student-instructor communication as interaction, validation, or expectations lacks specificity as to what an instructor believes, expects, and conveys about what students should do to succeed in their course. Studies on expectations have not problematized what instructors expect students to do or what influenced those expectations, though scholars have argued it is important to question if and how such beliefs and expectations are assumed to be normative and as a consequence, marginalize students (Ball, 2018; Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

A second missing element of our understanding of students' experience transitioning to college is what first-year students believe students should do to succeed in college and why. Understanding what behaviors and characteristics first-year students believe are important for success could offer insight into students' decision-making about if, when, and how to engage in a course (e.g., participating in class, studying, completing assignments). Though previous studies have provided insight into students' reactions to the interactions they have with instructors (Komarraju et al., 2010; Lundberg & Scheiner, 2004; Park et al., 2020) and shown that instructors and students may have different ideas of what should be expected of students (Collier

& Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2014; Yee, 2016), less is known about what students think is

associated with academic success. In other words, examining students' reactions to instructors'

expectations attends to how the students are responding to what they are being told is required,

yet it is not clear what students independently think they should do to be successful in college.

Because expectations can vary among instructors (Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Wong & Chiu, 2021),

studying students' responses to an instructor's expectations might not provide a comprehensive

picture of what students believe. Students may have their own beliefs regarding what a good

student should do that are rooted in their backgrounds, identities, and experiences (Yee, 2016),

which might not be evident if researchers focus only on students' reactions to their instructors'

expectations. Comparing students' and instructors' beliefs—beyond students' reactions to the

instructor—could shed light on the underlying explanations for challenges students face in the

transition to the academic expectations of college.

    In this study, I extend insights from previous research by exploring what instructors and

students believe college students should do to succeed and how instructors communicate those

beliefs to students. I used Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981) concept of discourse to

conceptualize instructors' communications to students about what it means to be a Good Student

in first-year writing and mathematics courses. Foucault conceptualized discourse as a set of

statements expressing ideas about what is true and judgements about desirable/undesirable

values and behaviors. Discourse is a tool of power that can be used to influence and categorize

individuals and can be distributed by and embodied in social institutions, such as schools and

prisons (further discussion in Chapter 2). I define Good Student Discourse (GSD) as any

statements or actions that describe desirable and undesirable student characteristics or behaviors,

as well as actions that communicate certain behaviors or characteristics are valued (e.g., course

policies). I also used a critical theoretical lens (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011; Martínez-Alemán, 2015) to interrogate assumptions of normativity in what defines a Good Student. I focused on the beliefs and communications of instructors teaching courses in two disciplines that first-year students typically experience, writing and mathematics, based on studies that found such beliefs vary by discipline (Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Wong & Chiu, 2021). In addition, the disciplines of writing and math have historically assumed that success in the subject matter requires intrinsic ability (e.g., Edwards & Paz, 2017; Louie, 2017; Parrott, 2017), which has implications for equitable outcomes and classroom experiences. Students who are assessed as having intrinsic ability could be categorized as Good Students by the instructor, and be treated differently than students deemed to be lacking such ability. Exploring discourses of being a Good Student in those disciplines digs into assumptions of who can succeed by doing what.

Research Questions

In order to enhance understanding of students' and instructors' beliefs about what students should do to succeed, I address the following research questions in this study:

1. What is the Good Student Discourse (GSD) of instructors teaching first-year math and writing courses at a broad access public university?
    a. What do instructors try to communicate about being a Good Student to students in their writing/math course?
    b. What factors do instructors perceive as influences on their Good Student Discourse?
    c. What role does GSD play in instructors' implementation of course policies and practices, if any?
2. What is the Good Student Discourse (GSD) of students enrolled in first-year math and writing courses at a broad access public university?
    a. When do students feel they are Good Students and not Good Students in their first-year math or writing course?
    b. What factors do students perceive as influences on their Good Student Discourse?
3. What relationship, if any, do instructors of and students in first-year writing and math courses see between being a Good Student and being academically successful?

RQ1 addresses instructors' beliefs about the characteristics and behaviors of a Good Student in the form of discourse. All subquestions of RQ1 support examination of instructors' Good Student Discourse: its content (RQ1), communication and implementation (RQ1a and RQ1c), and factors that influence it (RQ1b). I used the phrase *Good Student* instead of *successful student* as the term *successful* implies an outcome, whereas in this study *Good Student* pertains to behaviors and characteristics. Instructors may equate being a Good Student with successful academic outcomes, but I did not make that assumption because there is evidence to suggest that instructors may prioritize students' efforts and dedication over grades as signs of Goodness (Wong & Chiu, 2020). The concept of *discourse*, a set of statements that express knowledge about what is valuable (Foucault, 1969/2010, 1977/1980b), allowed me to examine those beliefs as communications to and by students.

RQ1 focuses on instructors' definitions of a Good Student in first-year writing and math courses. The definitions are situated within the context of the course they are teaching, as it is possible instructors' definitions of a Good Student would be different for students taking upper-division major courses than for first-year students taking entry level courses. RQ1a attends to what instructors' Good Student Discourse communicates to students. I include a variety of methods of communication, including written or verbal statements and pedagogical techniques, as possible ways to disseminate GSD. RQ1b attends to what experiences, contexts, or individuals informed instructors' Good Student Discourse. Understanding influences on Good Student Discourse is one approach to examining why instructors value some behaviors and characteristics more than others. RQ1c attends to the role of instructors' Good Student Discourse in their implementation of course policies. If Good Student Discourse plays a role in course policy enforcement, GSD may be consequential for student's grades. when it impacts a student's

grade (e.g., a late work policy). This subquestion allows me to study the possibility that Good Student Discourse is related to structures of a course, which could be an important aspect of the ways that instructors support first-year students' transition to college, a topic that has not yet been thoroughly studied to date.

The second research question centers on students' Good Student Discourse. As discussed, much of the research on instructor-student communications or interactions focuses on the student's perception of such exchanges. RQ2 acknowledges that students may bring their own Good Student Discourse with them to the classroom and interactions with instructors. RQ2a seeks to understand if and when students experience feeling like a Good Student in their first-year math or writing course, which may also help understand how students respond to instructors' Good Student Discourse. RQ2b parallels RQ1c regarding what influenced students' Good Student Discourse. This subquestion also allowed me to explore if and how instructors' GSD affected students, which could also vary by student identity.

RQ3 seeks to understand any links that instructors and students believe exist between being a Good Student and being academically successful. RQ3 is directed at a reasonable assumption that the instructor's communications and expectations of students—their GSD—are designed to tell students what to do to be successful in the course. It is possible that instructors and students have other views on how being a Good Student relates to being academically successful.

Having parallel questions for instructors and students allowed for comparison of their respective Discourses. By exploring the students' and instructors' Good Student Discourse, I seek to enhance understanding about the relationships between instructor communication and first-year student experiences and understand the implications of Good Student Discourse.

Overview of Methods

The data used in this study was collected from 11 instructors and 49 students in first-year writing and mathematics courses at a broad access university in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. Focusing on first-year writing and mathematics courses allowed for examining Good Student Discourses in different disciplines and targeted courses that first-year students are required to take. In addition, researchers have noted an attention bias towards highly selective institutions in higher education research even though broad access institutions—two- and four-year institutions that admit at least 80% of applicants—outnumber highly selective institutions and serve an important role in educating students (Crisp et al., 2019; Kirst et al., 2010). I observed the first day of class for each of the instructor participants, five of whom taught first-year writing and six taught first-year mathematics courses. I also interviewed each instructor twice, interviewed students, and conducted follow-up surveys for the students. These multiple data points provide a detailed picture of instructors' and students' Good Student Discourses.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to understanding of first-year students' college transition experiences by providing insight into what students and instructors believe students should do to be successful, and how instructors communicate their beliefs to students. In addition, it illustrates how such beliefs could have implications for students' academic success if instructors operationalize such beliefs in course policies or grading practices. Using Foucauldian (1969/2010, 1970/1981) discourse to conceptualize beliefs and communications offers a framework through which to study instructors' expectations and how they are conveyed to students and how power is manifested in instructors' expectations and communications. The Good Student Discourse I found embedded in instructors' communications to students and

grading practices were evidence of the instructor's power to state what defines a Good Student. In addition, I found a lack of transparency regarding what and how Good Student behaviors are assessed. Such a lack of transparency could create misunderstandings for students about what is necessary for academic success in a course, including that intrinsic ability is what determines grades.

With this study I am also drawing attention to the importance of understanding how beliefs about what defines a Good Student are influenced by discourses in education systems and those of authority figures, such as family members. Students' and instructors' experiences in education systems were powerful influences on their Good Student Discourses, illustrating how discourses circulate in systems to uphold those who are in power and dominant views (e.g., ableism, individualism as an explanation for outcomes instead of systemic inequities). The Good Student Discourse of both students and instructors reflected socially dominant ideologies and values that could marginalize those who engage in nondominant behaviors because of their circumstances, identities, and values. Yet I also found that students and instructors exhibited agency and critiqued notions of a universal definition of a Good Student. In addition, I found instances in which a student's Good Student Discourse could have been influenced by their gender, race, disability, or socioeconomic class.

Based on findings from this study, I offer recommendations for K-12 educators, postsecondary instruction, and institutional support for instructors, particularly in supporting graduate student instructors teaching first-year courses. I did not find any evidence that instructors' Good Student Discourse (GSD) influenced students' behaviors or was new to the students; rather, students reported their instructors' comments about good student behaviors repeated the GSD they had heard prior to college. Instead of facilitating students' navigation of a

new environment and academic expectations, instructors' GSD perpetuated messages about what students should do to meet the expectations of being a Good Student, which led to students feeling guilty or insufficient when unable to enact Good Student behaviors. Students noted that their difficulties in transitioning to college were not based on the information about *what* academic behaviors to do, which the instructors' GSD centered on, but rather, *how* to transition to living on their own and *how* to consistently meet the expectation that they enact GSD, which most of them had not been expected to do in high school. I interpret this finding as an indication that instructors may not receive enough institutional support or resources to learn about a variety of instructional techniques and discourses that could attend to students' transition challenges. Pedagogical training and support could have been particularly important at the site and time of my study because the needs and experiences of the student population at broad access institutions become increasingly diverse, and in the wake of a pandemic that has had lasting effects. In particular, most of the instructors who participated in my study were graduate students who received little pedagogical training or support.

Lastly, this study indicates the importance of critically reflecting on Good Student Discourse. Educators of all levels and types have the power and platform to support student learning and academic outcomes. One tool for doing so is in what we say to students, how we say it, and how those messages manifest in other ways.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework and Guiding Literature

I applied a critical perspective in my study of instructors' and students' understandings of a Good Student,[1] what instructors try to communicate about being a Good Student, and the relationship between being a Good Student and academic success. To conceptualize those communications and definitions of a Good Student, I used Foucault's (1969/2010) concept of discourse because it offers explanations for how discourse is created, enforced, resisted, and related to the instructor-student power dynamic. I was also guided by empirical and theoretical literature on discourse in K-12 and postsecondary education settings, which indicate that instructors have a variety of beliefs about the characteristics of a Good Student and that the resulting Good Student Discourse that instructors share with students has consequences for how students navigate and make meaning of their educational experiences. I drew from literature on postsecondary faculty-student communications, particularly regarding instructors' expectations and validation of students, as these relate to how instructors convey their characterization of the Good Student. Research on the role of first-year courses in students' transition to college provided empirical insights into the context in which students are exposed to Good Student Discourse and why it may be different for courses intended for students new to college than for courses students typically enroll in after their first year. Research on how behaviors included in

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[1] I capitalize Good Student because I am referring to a construct, not an actual person. I will capitalize Good Student Discourse to distinguish it from discourse in general because Good Student Discourse concept is the topic of my dissertation, not the general concept of discourse itself.

Good Student Discourse factor into teachers' grading decisions also informed my interpretations of my data. First, I will provide an explanation of a critical perspective and how I used it in my study, followed by a discussion of Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) concept of discourse. Then I will discuss the findings and insights from the aforementioned literature, as well as the limitations of current research.

Conceptual Framework

Critical Theoretical Perspective

I applied a critical theoretical perspective in this study in order to account for diverse students' perceptions of and reactions to Good Student Discourse. Critical theory is a branch of social research that includes poststructuralism, Critical Race Theory, feminism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). Though there are a variety of critical theories, a common feature is a focus on questioning what is believed and marketed to be normal or natural, because asserting one view as normative is an imposition on people's agency (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011; Martínez-Alemán, 2015).

A foundational element of critical theory is how relationships between individuals are influenced by social constructs and categorizations (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011). Critical theory has roots in Marxism, in that Marxism interrogates how capitalistic economic and social structures create and perpetuate inequality; critical theory extends such questions to other aspects of society, such as language, culture, and race (Crotty, 1998; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). For example, a cultural norm within a postsecondary institution that a college student is supposed to be self-sufficient could be problematized in terms of the meaning of self-sufficiency, assertion of individualistic cultural values over community-based cultural values, and how that perspective removes responsibility from the institution.

Questioning social norms is a core element of critical theory because imposition of some perspective, value, or belief as normative is an imposition upon the individual's agency and subjectivity (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011; Martínez-Alemán, 2015). In positing that norms repress individual subjectivity, critical theory is grounded in the premise that multiple interpretations and truths are possible, and that one interpretation should not silence another (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011). The assumption that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and processes, rather than viewing knowledge as a set of objective facts, is foundational to critical theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011).

Higher education researchers have used critical theories, including postcolonialism, feminism, and Critical Race Theory, to illustrate how policies and norms privilege some views as facts (see Martínez-Alemán et al., 2015; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). Critical theories are particularly relevant for analyzing higher education because institutional policies and practices reflect inequal power dynamics and are laden with discourses that reflect dominant beliefs that can privilege some identities over others and mask structural inequities (e.g., meritocracy).

One debate among critical theorists has been the degree to which theory should be combined with practice. Some scholars, including Foucault (1969/2010), use critical theory to expose injustices, identify who benefits from a social structure or norm, and at what cost. Other scholars argue that critical theory should be used to inform action and return power to the marginalized (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011). Jürgen Habermas and Paulo Freire argued that the goal of critical theory is to make social change, therefore theory must be followed with and informed by practice (Crotty, 1998; Martínez-Alemán, 2015; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). This link between practice and theory has made critical theory attractive to social scientists, including higher education researchers.

Poststructural theories, including Foucault's (1969/2010) work on discourse, are critical in that they examine social problems, inequitable power dynamics, and critique assumed definitions and norms (Harcourt, 2007; Treiber, 2021; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). However, as David Stinson (2009) explained, "Poststructural theory rejects this notion of an essential, unified self who is always present, because it minimizes the force of social structures on the person" (p. 502). Foucault (1970/1981, 1976/1990, 1982) conceptualized humans as objects and subjects of discourses. Discourses do not determine identity because people can critique them, but those critiques can only be expressed through the discourses that are available to a person (Foucault, 1976/1990; Stinson, 2009). Thus, identities are formed and expressed by discourses, rather than being something intrinsic to the individual.

Though I agree that discourses limit how we conceive of and express ourselves, I think conceiving of people only as subjects and objects of discourse dehumanizes them, a perspective which can have consequences for how research is conducted. Viewing people as objects or subjects in research increases risks of being judgmental, essentializing or reducing people to their social identities which perpetuates stereotypes, ignoring people's perspectives and experiences, and causing harm (the Tuskegee syphilis study comes to mind). Foucault (1969/2010; 1975/1995; 1976/1990) analyzed discourse in texts, not interviews, thus his conceptualization of people as subjects and objects of discourse likely helped him make connections between power shifts, social trends, new forms of knowledge, and statements produced by people experiencing a particular sociohistorical context. However, I agree with Winkle-Wagner et al. (2018) that critical research should be humanizing and strive for change.

In the conceptualization of this study, I view the students and instructors as agents acting within social structures; both are exposed to, utilize, and are influenced by discourses of what it

means to be a Good Student. Students and instructors could have various truths regarding what it means to be a Good Student and attempts to normalize a definition of a Good Student as truth should be critically examined. Students and instructors are whole beings with social identities that also inform how they experience social structures and discourses and why. I am not examining the role of identity or focusing on a particular identity group (e.g., Latinx, first-generation college student, queer), which is why I frame my approach to the study as taking a critical theoretical perspective rather than using a particular critical theory (e.g., LatCrit, CRT, feminism). Though I am not focusing on a particular identity group, I assume that GSD is not identity neutral because the structures, systems, and individuals with power to author and declare Good Student Discourse are reflective of the White, middle- or high-income, cisgender, nondisabled people who are dominant in our society. In my analysis, I attended to any instances in which the assumption of what it means to be a Good Student could lead to the marginalization of any identity. Therefore, combining Foucault's conceptualization of discourse with a critical perspective guided my interpretation of how and what instructors communicate regarding the desired and expected characteristics and behaviors of a Good Student through Good Student Discourse and students' definitions of a Good Student.

Foucault's Conceptualization of Discourse

I used Michel Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) poststructuralist conceptualization of discourse to ground and frame my study of definitions and communications regarding Good Students. Foucault described discourse as a set of statements expressing ideas about what is true and judgements about desirable/undesirable values and behaviors. Discourse can be a tool of power because it imposes truths onto others. He also offered explanations for how discourse is created, enforced, and related to unequal power relations. In my study, I

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assumed that instructors have power over the students in their courses in that they can determine and enforce course policies, assess students' learning, and assign grades. I also considered how instructors' power is affected by institutional and departmental discourses and policies; for example, an instructor may be required to use a departmental syllabus or rubric or hear messages about who is a Good Student from other faculty members. Graduate student instructors could be particularly susceptible to institutional discourses because they are also subject to GSDs they hear from their professors or the department chairs overseeing their delivery of the course. Therefore, discourse is a useful conceptualization for instructors' and students' ideas and communications about what it means to be a Good Student.

Unlike linguistic or structural approaches to discourse, which seek to identify how language expresses knowledge, experiences, or social identities (e.g., Gee, 2015), Foucault focused on the role discourse plays in power relationships and the creation of knowledge (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1976/1990). Poststructuralism assumes that there are no universal truths or definitions (Gutiérrez, 2013; Harcourt, 2007). Instead, truths are generated through discourse, as people impose meaning onto experiences and generate knowledge through discursive statements. Foucault (1970/1981) explained that his approach to discourse analysis "does not reveal the universality of a meaning, but brings to light the action of imposed scarcity" (p. 73) of the available truths. In other words, Foucauldian discourse analysis highlights how discourse limits what knowledge is available and what can be accepted as true. There are many characteristics or behaviors that one could associate with being a Good Student, but a Good Student Discourse would suggest a particular set of characteristics or behaviors are the primary ones that can define a Good Student.

My use of Foucault (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) for a conceptual framework was focused on Foucault's concept of discourse, not his broader agenda of demonstrating the power dynamics behind how that truth is produced and how it relates to the oppression and marginalization of people over time (Foucault, 1977/1980a; Trieber, 2021). For example, rather than asking a structuralist question, "What is the definition of a Good Student?", Foucauldian poststructuralist questions would ask "How and why did the very notion of a Good Student come into existence? Why this definition in this particular context? Who benefits from the discourse of the Good Student?" This perspective is useful for historical analysis of shifts in power and ideas, yet this ten-thousand-foot view would obscure the agency, experiences, decisions, and emotions of the individuals who interact with such discourse as well as the role discourse plays in interactions between people, and would not be appropriate for a qualitative study with human participants.

Power and the Construction of Discourse. Discourses are created from statements arising within a particular social context and time (Foucault, 1979/2010). Statements are pieces of communication that exist in written, verbal, or visual form that express knowledge or judgement about a particular context. For example, an instructor saying that students need to study ten hours a week to pass their course is a statement, as their words are directly related to the specific context of their classroom. Statements must be explicit because the purpose of discourse is to define truth and structure knowledge (Foucault, 1969/2010).

Foucault described the processes under which statements become a discourse as *discursive formation* (Foss et al., 2002; Foucault, 1969/2010). The formation of discourse is rooted in social context and power relationships. In order for statements to become discourse,

they need to be disseminated throughout and accepted by society. Power relations determine

which statements are distributed and represented as true.

> Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of
> discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances
> which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is
> sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the
> status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1977/980, p.
> 131)

Which statements are prohibited from being stated or repeated, who has the authority to be a

producer of knowledge, and the epistemologies and ontologies that undergird that society are all

aspects of discursive formation.

In my application of the concept of discourse, I considered a classroom as a microlevel

society, which can have its own "regime of truth" (Walshaw, 2004). I also acknowledged the

classroom is within an ecology of societies, such as the discipline and the university, that also

produce discourses and power relations in deciding who has the power to create discourse.

Situating the processes of discourse formation and dissemination within an educational context,

the instructor determines and declares which behaviors are characteristic of a Good Student

because the educational institution positions the instructor as the authority figure who has the

power to assign grades. Though the instructor determines and distributes the Good Student

Discourse in their course, the Discourse can vary by discipline. For example, disciplinary

discourses about how knowledge is generated (e.g., through individual questioning or

collaborative discussion) could also influence an instructor's Good Student Discourse about how

and under which circumstances students should participate in class. In addition, educational

institutions are subject to broader discourses and can participate in the reproduction of those

discourses (Foucault, 1970/1981). Broader societal discourses such as the importance of meeting

deadlines or being respectful to authority figures are not specific to education, but they can be

dominant within a college course and classroom. Explicitly presenting Good Student Discourse as representative of discourses in a broader context also connotes normalization or universality of that discourse. For example, an instructor's statement that students should be more independent and responsible because that is part of being a college student (Karp & Bork, 2014; Schademan & Thompson, 2016) implies that *all* college instructors expect those behaviors of college students. Though the statement is shared in the local context of that particular class, the instructor generalizes to the broader context of college. Yet, higher education in the United States is a complex web of multiple institutional types, campus climates, departments, and disciplines, in which a myriad of individuals teach and attend courses. Thus, discourse at the local classroom level can still draw upon and be influenced by the discourses at the discipline, department, institution, and broader sociocultural context.

Discursive Objects: What Discourse Can Create. Discourse can also create concepts which become objects of study or conversation in society (e.g., madness or sexuality) (Foucault, 1961/2010, 1969/2010, 1976/1990). Foucault called these concepts *discursive objects*. I conceptualized the Good Student as a discursive object because Good Student Discourse does not describe the behaviors or characteristics of a real individual; rather, a Good Student is an abstraction (e.g., an idealized version of a student) and a categorization. That abstraction is founded on the types of knowledge and discourses created and perpetuated by those who exercise power (this includes instructors as well as other powerful voices in the university and academy). Though the particulars of what defines a Good Student likely vary among instructors, the discursive object of a Good Student as an idealization is prevalent in educational systems, as evidenced by the use of tracking and ranking students (De Lissovoy, 2012). Good Student

Discourse creates the Good Student and those not measuring up to the Good Student are implicitly 'Not Good' or 'Bad' Students.

Discourses are used to regulate behaviors and perspectives but they are not solely repressive. Foucault (1969/2010, 1977/1980b) described discourse as being able to create desire, influencing what people strive towards. Creating objects of desire through discourse increases power's effectiveness and endurance:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weight on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure (Foucault, 1977/1980b, p. 119)

Good Student Discourse could include prohibitive statements *and* enticing statements to frame a Good Student as something a student wants to become. The seductive aspect of discourse acknowledges that power can operate in manipulative, subtle ways that exert control without being obviously coercive. A person who is convinced that they *should* be a Good Student might experience guilt and blame themselves for not living up to a standard imposed on them because the power subtly operating through discourse. As I will discuss later in this paper, Foucault (1976/1990, 1982) acknowledged people have agency and can critique discourses, but only by using other discourses to which they have access. Thus, a student may resist one instructor's framing of a Good Student while being motivated to become the Good Student as described by a different instructor, a high school teacher, or a parent. A limitation of Foucault's work is lack of explanation for how people negotiate multiple discourses and choose which one(s) to endorse.

Technologies of Power: How Discourse is Deployed. Discourses are operationalized and enforced through *technologies of power*, "which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject" (Foucault, 1982/1988, p. 18). Foucault described technologies of power as tools and strategies used to

control people and normalize discourse (Behrent, 2013; Foucault, 1975/2010, 1982/1988). Technologies of power can be physical, political, or epistemological. For example, the discursive object of sexuality, and the discourse surrounding its dangers were manifested in laws, scientific studies, and diagnoses, resulting in the institutionalization, surveillance, and other forms of harm against people marginalized by society (Foucault, 1976/1990).

I conceptualized course policies and practices as technologies of power for the Good Student discourse. Course policies are any rules that, if enforced, influence a student's grade or experience in the course (e.g., penalizing assignments submitted past the due date). Course practices refer to how an instructor provides resources to and assesses students. Policies could be created by the instructor, department, or the institution. Examples include policies pertaining to late work, attendance, usage of electronic devices, plagiarism, accessing disability services, and how to participate in class discussions. While policies are regulatory in that they control behavior, they can also support students. A policy requiring students to meet with the instructor for additional support if they earn a low grade on an assignment could lead to the instructor and student developing a relationship and learning gains while communicating that a Good Student meets with the instructor when they are struggling. Similarly, an instructor could provide additional resources (including their own time) or round up a grade for a student who they perceive to be a Good Student. In those cases, resources and grades are tools that the instructor could use to enforce discourse and exert power.

In sum, the statements and the discourse they comprise exert power by declaring what counts as knowledge, declaring what is true, what is valued, and can be covert and coercive. Technologies of power are tangible tools and practices that uphold that discourse, including laws, institutionalized practices, and physical constraints. Therefore, Foucault's (1975/2010,

1976/1990, 1982/1988) concept of technologies of power provides a link between Good Student

Discourse statements, structures that manifest that discourse, and the effects of Good Student

Discourse.

Resistance to Discourse. Though Good Student Discourse is an expression of power and

the instructor typically holds power over the students in the class in some form (e.g., grades), I

view instructors and students as agents who can change or challenge discourse. Foucault

(1976/1990) also disagreed with a deterministic view of power and discourse and points out that

power and resistance are intertwined: "there are no relations of power without resistances"

(p.143). Critiquing discourses is the main way to resist power because overthrowing one

discourse or body of authority simply to replace it with another is to continue limiting the

discourses available to people and presenting a single discourse as normative.

There are ways instructors could disrupt and critique the dominant criterion used to

define a Good Student. For example, an instructor may decide not to enforce their policy on late

work based on a student's individual circumstances or eliminate all assignment deadlines.

Colleges or academic departments may require some policies to be included in syllabi, such as

automatic drop policy for too many missed class sessions, that instructors do not enforce because

they view them as discriminatory or unnecessarily harsh. Similarly, students could question

instructor's policies and descriptions of a Good Student or continue to hold on to their own

definition of a Good Student, regardless of the instructor's discourse or assessment.

How Good Student Discourse is Different from Expectations. While some have used

the terms discourse and expectations interchangeably (Schademan & Thompson, 2016; Wong &

Chiu, 2020), I argue that Good Student Discourse encompasses requirements, recommendations,

and to some degree, rewards, whereas expectations are required behaviors and characteristics.

Furthermore, Foucault's (1969/2010) concept of discourse acknowledges the power dynamics used to classify students as "Good" whereas this is absent in conversations about expectations.

Expectations and discourse have different scopes. As with Good Student Discourse, expectations are behaviors and tasks students are required to enact to pass the course. Yet, instructors' advice to students on how to become successful can also indicate notions of what it means to be a Good Student. Thus, an instructor's expectations of what a student must do to pass the course is part of their discourse of a Good Student, but discourse can also include advice instructors pass on to students. In addition, the concept of Good Student Discourse acknowledges the value of being recognized or identifying as a Good Student, which can function as a reward for the individual student and make being a Good Student worth the effort.

Within higher education research on expectations, the focus is on what students must do to succeed and the power dynamics of the expectations are generally ignored. Expectations are often presented under the assumption that they are valid and should not be questioned (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Wong & Chiu, 2020). Even when biases of expectations are identified, such as expecting coursework to be the student's first priority even though they are working or are a parent or expecting students to communicate in a particular manner, researchers have still argued that students have to conform to succeed (Karp & Bork, 2014; White & Lowenthal, 2011). For example, Karp and Bork argued that "successful students must, at a minimum, learn about and participate in postsecondary culture, even if it conflicts with their own culture" (p. 30). In addition, assuming students just need to learn the expectations is insufficient for examining how some students benefit from the assumptions and biases within those expectations (Yee, 2016). The framing of expectations in research on higher education tends to position the students as the ones with the responsibility to conform, ignoring the power instructors enact when enforcing

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expectations, the agency of instructors to change their expectations, or that institutional structures can be flawed. For example, Collier and Morgan (2008) recommend designing orientation programs for first-generation college students to train them how to "recognize and respond to professors' expectations" (p. 444) without recommending similar training for professors. In contrast, from a Foucauldian perspective, discourse cannot be separated from power (1969/2010). The concept of discourse acknowledges that the instructor is enacting power through their discourse, that discourse is portrayed as normative but it is not a universal truth, and that a discourse can be used to classify individuals. Thus, discourse offers advantages over expectations to studying what instructors think a Good Student is because it allows examination of how a Good Student is constructed and accounts for the power dynamics.

Definition of Good Student Discourse. I define Good Student Discourse as a set of verbal or written statements describing (un)desirable behaviors and characteristics of students. What is desirable and undesirable could be indicative of student success in terms of learning or grades, but not necessarily. The definition of Good is determined by the speaker or writer of the Good Student Discourse. Thus, it can vary from individual to individual, and instructors as well as students articulate Good Student Discourse. I include statements about undesirable behaviors in Good Student Discourse because they declare what a Good Student does *not* do. I see statements about undesired behaviors as part of Good Student Discourse rather than a separate Bad Student Discourse because the function is the same: to categorize students. Furthermore, Good Student Discourse attends to the aspect of desire that is important for the effectiveness of discourse, as discussed earlier.

Good Student Discourse can be communicated directly to students verbally or through written communication (such as course announcements). I am not including course content

knowledge, such as knowing how to find a derivative, as part of Good Student Discourse as that is a learning outcome and not a behavior (a person's conduct and actions) or characteristic (defining quality or feature of a person). Descriptions of Good Students that is not directed at students, such as an interview in which a student or instructor explains to a researcher how they define a Good Student, is still Good Student Discourse because it reflects that person's understanding of what it takes to be a Good Student.

In the interests of taking a critical perspective, I viewed course policies and practices as technologies of power for Good Student Discourse. Critical theories examine structures and policies that are framed as normal but discriminate against and/or marginalize people (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011; Martínez-Alemán, 2015; Patton, 2016; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). Enforcement of course policies operationalize the power within Good Student Discourse. As noted earlier, I did not view policies as inherently punitive or detrimental, as they can ensure the instructor supports students learning or outcomes (for example, a policy about extensions).

My perspective and analytical approach are consistent with Foucault's (1969/2010) focus on the content of discursive statements rather than the linguistic aspects. However, I recognize that content, style, and method of communication all combine to create a singular communication moment experienced by the speaker/author and the listener(s). I conjecture that linguistic conventions were of less importance for Foucault's work, as his agenda focused on societal discourse trends and influence, rather than how discourse was communicated form one person to another. My study does consider messages that are communicated interpersonally, therefore I made note of when the style or method of communication contribute to the exercise of power in the discursive statement.

In sum, I took a critical perspective on Good Student Discourse by viewing the instructors and students as agentic individuals who have myriad life experiences and identities and by looking for assumptions of normativity in those communications and policies. I used Foucault's (1969/2010) concept of discourse to conceptualize postsecondary instructors' communications about how a student can succeed in the course because it offers a theory of how those communications, and the values they espouse, are mechanisms of power that can influence a student's experience in the course. Consistent with poststructuralist theories, Foucault's concept of discourse allows for critiquing assumed norms, identifying power dynamics, and exposing consequential discourses. I define Good Student Discourse as descriptions of and communications about the behaviors and characteristics of a successful or desired student. Course policies and practices function as technologies of power to enforce Good Student Discourse.

Guiding Literature

I used research on discourses about students, instructor-student communications, first-year courses as socialization to college, and how effort and behaviors are graded to inform my study. When research conducted in higher education contexts was limited, I drew from K-12 literature.

Discourses about Students

In this section, I discuss postsecondary and K-12 research that has identified discourses about what characteristics and behaviors define a Good Student in interviews with instructors and students and in educational and institutional policies. Findings suggest that disciplinary, institutional, and sociocultural discourses influence the Good Student Discourse instructors use and to which students are exposed (Agger & Shelton, 2017; Cameron & Billington, 2017;

Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Wade-Jaimes, 2020). Some Good Student Discourses harbor stereotypes that marginalize students (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Gebhard, 2019). As individual agents, instructors and students do not always accept a discourse to which they are introduced and resist institutional or societal discourses that privilege one set of characteristics or behaviors over others (Boeck et al., 2020; Cameron, 2019). This literature on discourses about students contributed to my study design and claims because it illustrates what is known about Good Student Discourse and the limitations of what is known due to gaps in the research.

Instructors' Good Student Discourse. Extant research on postsecondary instructors' discourse indicates that they hold beliefs about the behaviors and characteristics of a Good Student (Cameron, 2019; Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Schademan & Thompson, 2016; Wong & Chiu, 2020). In Wong and Chiu (2020)'s study with lecturers in the social sciences at two universities in the United Kingdom, dedication, academic skills (e.g., structuring a writing assignment), and reflecting on their own learning were common themes in instructors' discourse of the ideal student. The study participants emphasized that effort, not grades, define a Good Student. Some participants were reluctant to describe the ideal student and were more comfortable discussing their expectations of students rather than idealizations. Wong and Chiu hypothesized this hesitancy was due to participants not wanting to stereotype students. Thus, there could be tensions between Good Student Discourse and other discourses, such as equity and inclusion.

In another study conducted in the UK, Cameron (2019) conducted focus groups with university instructors, asking them to describe academic intelligence. Instructors' discourse constructed types of students based on the kind of intelligence possessed, such as performing well on exams, navigating the educational system, being creative, or being able to complete

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skilled labor tasks (Cameron, 2019). Instructors disagreed with one another during the group interviews on the relationships between intelligence and grades. Some instructors argued that grades reflect an ability to "play the game" but was not an indication of academic intelligence, while others argued that low grades are an indication of insufficient academic abilities (Cameron, 2019, p. 328). Similar to Wong and Chiu's (2020) experience, some participants used hedging language as they struggled to negotiate describing an intelligent or good student in a manner that does not convey socially unacceptable elitist or discriminatory positions. These studies indicate the complexities of instructors' articulation of Good Student Discourse as well as the variation of beliefs.

Studies have found descriptions of ideal or successful students could be related to the discipline and institution in which instructors teach. In Ferrare and Miller's (2020) multi-institutional study, believing students succeed in STEM fields due to their own ability was more prevalent among instructors teaching introductory math and chemistry professors than those in biology, computer science, physics, and engineering instructors. Wong and Chiu (2021) compared the definition of ideal student by UK university type (pre- or post-1992, the latter perceived as less prestigious and more teaching than research oriented) and academic discipline. They surveyed and interviewed university students and staff (lecturers, tutors, administrative, research staff, and other academic support staff). STEM staff gave higher ratings to intelligence and academic skills, having a positive and confident attitude, and being a supportive team member than staff in social sciences and Humanities. Nearly all the differences in the definition of an ideal student by institution type were not statistically significant, yet qualitative data showed that instructors at pre-1992 universities assumed high grades to be a norm and an ideal

student is "effortlessly brilliant" (p. 81) compared to instructors at post-1992 universities emphasized students being able to persist through challenges.

It is important to note that Cameron (2019) and Wong and Chiu (2020, 2021) utilize theoretical perspectives about the topic at hand (intelligence and ideal types, respectively) but do not offer a theory or conceptualization of discourse, suggesting that discourse is a type of data or an approach through which to address the topic, not a concept. Limiting discourse to the means through which to study a topic ignores the richer theoretical aspects of discourse (e.g., power dynamics, resistance) and its implications for instructor-student communications. While both studies contribute to understanding of Good Student Discourse from a content perspective, it is unclear how this Good Student Discourse functions in the instructors' teaching practices or relationships with students.

Instructors' meaning-making about what behaviors or characteristics make students succeed and who bears responsibility for students' success can have a disproportionate effect for students who are first-generation college students or other student identities marginalized in higher education spaces. To address the question of how instructors conceptualize college-readiness, Schademan and Thompson (2016) interviewed six faculty and 21 students in a holistic support program for first-generation college students at a community college and attended eight professional development meetings among the faculty. They found that some faculty believed that students are still in the process of becoming "college-ready" while they are in college, and that both instructors and students are accountable for students' readiness. Yet, one instructor repeatedly expressed in meetings among program faculty that student readiness is a predetermined, fixed aspect of the student. For example, that instructor argued that students should not be in that class or in college if they were not prepared. That instructor did not change

their instructional practices to help students meet their definition of "college ready" and continued to rely on lecturing. First-generation college students reported that it was difficult to engage in classes taught by instructors who lectured and did not make an effort to work with the students to develop the skills or knowledge needed for the course. Schademan and Thompson's findings suggest that instructors who believe students are responsible for their success might be reluctant to examine the assumptions in Good Student Discourse. However, it is difficult to interpret these findings as it is unclear how the students in the course with the instructor who described college readiness is fixed reacted to his teaching. Using the findings from the study is also problematic because the authors do not specify how many instructors were in the department meeting, how many of the students interviewed were in classes taught by the instructors interviewed, if they asked the students to only comment on the faculty in the support program, etc. This lack of specificity makes claims about instructor practices tenuous, especially given that they suggest all but one instructor had a similar view of college readiness, and it seems as if that instructor was only observed in meetings, not interviewed. An interview could have yielded more information about that instructor's understanding of college readiness and whether there were contextual influences on that definition, such as pressure from their department or articulation agreement with a four-year institution to cover a certain amount of content within the semester. Instructors may see themselves as part of an unfair system that rewards only some forms of academic engagement or intelligence, without agency to resist or reform such practices (Cameron, 2019; Hakkola et al., 2021), while others may actively work to critique notions of academic ability and intelligence (Cameron, 2019). Thus, instructors may feel trapped to perpetuate a certain notion of college readiness or feel that they do not have the time to take up the role of facilitating students' development towards college readiness. Though Schademan and

Thompson's study suggests that discourses of college readiness could have implications for students with marginalized identities, there are several methodological limitations, highlighting the need for more rigorous research on this topic.

There is not much research on postsecondary instructors' definitions of a Good Student, which is surprising given how much research is devoted to studying why some students complete their degree and some do not. Perhaps this is reflective of the relatively high degree of discretion postsecondary instructors have in their teaching practices and course policies and the value placed on academic freedom in the United States. In addition, many studies that attend to instructor's Good Student Discourse use interviews or surveys with faculty members as their only source of data (Cameron, 2019; Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Wong & Chiu, 2020), thus it is difficult to know how students interpret and experience the discourse in course policies, instructor's communications during class, and the extent to which students agree with instructors' Good Student Discourse. None of the studies cited above draw from Foucault's concept of discourse, which could explain why they focus on how instructors describe or categorize students in interviews or surveys and pay less attention to how descriptions of a Good Student are manifested in the classroom through instructor communications or course policies (Cameron, 2019; Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Wong & Chiu, 2020). Examining instructors' discourse without attending to the technologies of power that manifest the discourse or how students experience that discourse ignores the systemic production of Good Student Discourse and Good Students.

Influence of Broader Discourses. An instructor's Good Student Discourse does not appear out of a void; instructors and students are also exposed to broader institutional, policy, and sociocultural discourses that influence ideas of who is a Good Student. Educational

institutions and research produce discourses describing Good Students (Agger & Shelton, 2017; Ives & Castillo-Montoya, 2020; Stinson, 2008; Wade-Jaimes, 2020) and given the view that universities and academics are generators of knowledge, these discourses are likely to be taken seriously by the instructors who are exposed to them. Institutional communications about what defines a Good Student could create cultural norms about what qualities are desirable and influence instructors' Good Student Discourse. An analysis of biology and political science syllabi at eight postsecondary institutions show that the school honor code was frequently cited as a justification for prohibiting some behaviors, indicating some instructors may employ the Good Student Discourse of their institution (Agger & Shelton, 2017). Policies regarding documentation of emergencies were more common at larger universities than smaller ones, again suggesting that institutional culture and practices might influence instructors' Good Student Discourse. However, Agger and Shelton's findings should be interpreted with caution as the researchers noted that five of the eight universities in the study required specific components to be included in the syllabus, which possibly included the honor code. Given the lack of clarification in the study regarding if honor code references were required text by the institutions, claims about how widespread instructors' endorsement of the institutional discourse is cannot be made. In addition, Agger and Shelton do not include criteria to define a large versus small institution, making it difficult to interpret and apply claims about patterns by institution size. As noted earlier, Wong and Chiu (2021) found differences in academic, research, and support staff members' definitions of an ideal student by university type, suggesting that institutional culture could be a factor, though it is not clear if that is because of the staff members that an institution attracts or the influence of institutional discourses.

While there are few studies how the Good Student Discourse of postsecondary institutions influences instructors' views, Wade-Jaimes (2020) study at one all-girl 6th-12th grade school provides insights into how discourses are spread through institutional common spaces and classrooms, as well as how discourse can be raced and gendered. Wade-Jaimes examined discourses about Black girls in STEM at the school, finding explicit messages in posters in the hallways and from instructors that express a unified discourse about who is a Good STEM Student. Good Students follow the rules, are "poised," have a "polished" appearance, and are "professional" (Wade-Jaimes, 2020, p. 6). Interviews with students illustrated that being an obedient, nice, poised, and polished student was equated with high grades, and regardless of whether students were interested in STEM, those with high grades were invited to participate in STEM activities. Thus, the school structures, hallway posters, and teacher communications all supported the discourse that only students who behaved in an appropriate manner could be a Good STEM Student and that STEM students were those who earned high grades (Wade-Jaimes, 2020). The discourse at this school contains the assumption that Black girls are not "poised" or "polished" and thus need instruction in achieving that, however those terms are defined.

Instructors' academic activities, such as the research literature they read and the discipline in which they are trained or teach, could also influence their Good Student Discourse. Educational research on first-generation college students and Students of Color has been criticized for perpetuating deficit discourses and failing to reflect students' lived experiences (Ives & Castillo-Montoya, 2020; Stinson, 2008; Yosso, 2005). If deficit messages are prevalent within the research literature and professional communities with which instructors engage, the messages could influence instructors' definitions of a Good Student. Similarities and differences by discipline in how instructors explain why some students succeed in and others do not (Ferrare

& Miller, 2020) or how students learn (Hora, 2014) suggest that disciplinary ideas are influential. However, research on instructors' Good Student Discourse either includes a single discipline (Wong & Chiu, 2020), does not disaggregate responses by discipline (Cameron, 2019), or examines differences among STEM subjects only (Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Hora, 2014). Thus it is unclear how disciplines with potentially less in common (such as mathematics and English) might propagate different Good Student Discourses.

In addition, broader social discourses about race, culture, and meritocracy could intersect with and inform notions of the Good Student (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Gándara & Jones, 2020; Gebhard, 2019; Martin, 2000). Gándara and Jones' (2020) findings from a policy discourse analysis show how some groups of individuals, such as undocumented individuals, are portrayed by policymakers as less deserving of postsecondary educational assistance than others. Discourses of merit has implications for notions of who belongs in the classroom, who is expected to succeed, and who is responsible for that success. Similarly, neoliberal ideological discourses emphasize the importance of individual effort and responsibility as drivers of success, shifting responsibility away from the government to address social inequities (Cameron & Billington, 2017). Those discourses discourage seeking assistance, which can be harmful for groups who are marginalized within educational systems, such as students with dyslexia (Cameron & Billington, 2017).

Sociohistorical ideas about race and culture have also been identified as powerful factors in discourses about K-12 students. For example, Martin's (2000) multilevel framework illustrates that beliefs about Black youth's mathematical abilities at the community, school, and student level all interact with one another to influence students' mathematical identity development. Those beliefs are steeped in social and political histories of discrimination against Black people

in education. Gebhard (2019) found that teachers from one province in Canada heard discourses that declare schools with high proportions of Indigenous students as inferior and undesirable places to work before beginning teaching there. While teaching at the schools, some teachers continued to support discourses they had heard previously that frame Indigenous students as "wild" (Gebhard, 2019, p. 908). Those characterizations reflect sociohistorical and political racist discourses of Indigenous peoples. Drawing from observations and interviews with Puerto Rican middle-school girls and their teachers, Rolón-Dow (2005) found that teachers' descriptions of their students' behavior and their home lives contained stereotypical claims about Puerto Ricans, such as the students having parents who do not care about education or with substance abuse problems. The school discourse Wade-James (2020) identified about Black girls in STEM being "poised" "polished" and "professional" reflects raced and gendered assumptions about how girls are supposed to behave and evoke racist stereotypes of Black people as being dirty, loud, irresponsible, and unprofessional. Though these studies were conducted in K-12 education, it is plausible that similar dynamics between societal discourses and postsecondary instructors' Good Student discourse exist as we are all subject to discourses (Foucault, 1969/2010).

The aforementioned studies indicate that educational institutions and academic research, contexts that postsecondary instructors operate within, and broader social conversations contain Good Student Discourse, and therefore it is likely that instructors encounter those discourses. Yet, from these studies, it is unclear how postsecondary instructors incorporate those discourses shared in interviews into their communications with students and their course policies. Little is known about if and how the discourses at the institution or within their discipline influence instructor's Good Student Discourse, as research in the field of higher education has tended to

focus on students' actions or characteristics rather than the actions of instructors or practitioners (Bensimon, 2007). Attending to instructor's resistance to other discourses would be an important component of researching how other discourses influence an instructor's Good Student Discourse, as studies conducted in the United Kingdom show that postsecondary instructors do not always agree with their university's criterion for a Good Student (Cameron, 2019) and experience tension in describing a Good Student because it can endorse stereotypes (Cameron, 2019; Wong & Chiu, 2020). Studies of students' experiences with Good Student Discourse indicate that they too are influenced by and/or resist Good Student Discourses.

Students' Responses to Good Student Discourses. Research conducted in secondary and postsecondary contexts shows that students are aware of the discourses of Good Students within their educational environments and students adopt strategies to respond to those discourses. Some students internalize Good Student Discourse (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Wade-Jaimes, 2020), others perform Good Student behaviors without agreeing that those behaviors universally define a Good Student (Grant, 1997; Manuel & Llamas, 2006), and some rebel against it (Boeck et al., forthcoming; Grant, 1997; Manuel & Llamas, 2006).

Institutional discourses can shape a student's understanding of what characteristics equate to being a Good Student at an early age, such as middle school girls associating being nice with earning high grades and being liked by the teacher (Wade-Jaimes, 2020). Students with dyslexia at a university in the United Kingdom described their approach to academics in meritocratic and individualistic terms, arguing that they could succeed in school through their own hard work, believing that is what a good student should do and overcoming a narrative of being deficient (Cameron & Billington, 2017). Some focus group participants indicated that they did not deserve credit for their success if they requested or used additional supports because they could not meet

the "standards" of university education. The students believed they had to conform to the norms of university teaching and performance standards and that accommodations would preclude them from being Good Students who earned their success independently (Cameron & Billington, 2017). Yee's (2016) ethnographic study of first-generation college students' academic strategies in their first year at a regional university also reflects this belief among students that, in college in particular, they have to be self-reliant and that asking for help devalues their accomplishments. These findings indicate how powerful and damaging societal and institutional discourses about being a Good Student in college can be, particularly for students who are marginalized by postsecondary structures and spaces, because students could internalize the ideology that proving their independent abilities is a requirement of the college academic experience (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Yee, 2016).

Some students identify Good Student Discourses and perform the behaviors of the Good Student without internalizing the values or find ways to resist the Good Student Discourses. Studies conducted at universities in the United Kingdom (Cameron & Billington, 2017), Spain (Manuel & Llamas, 2006), and the United States (Agger & Shelton, 2017; Boeck et al., forthcoming) indicate that students experience discourses that encourage them to be individualistic, competitive, overachievers, and obedient. Students at a New Zealand university pushed against the institutional discourse of solitary studying by working together (Grant, 1997). One Maori student described her experience as wearing the "mask" of a Good Student in order to earn her degree while not adopting the perspective that a Good Student can acquire and apply knowledge quickly. Some students point out the hypocrisy in that an undergraduate education is supposed to encourage critical thinking, not conformity (Grant, 1997; Manuel & Llamas, 2006). Boeck et al. (forthcoming) found that transfer students who were marginalized by their

socioeconomic status and race at a highly-selective university resisted the institutional discourses of prestige, such as competing against other students and stigmatization of community colleges.

While these findings from locations outside postsecondary education in the United States indicate that Good Student Discourses influence students' educational experiences, there is little research on this topic conducted within postsecondary institutions in the United States. Findings from studies conducted in K-12 spaces may not be transferable to postsecondary contexts because the instructor-student relationship is different in undergraduate education than in elementary or secondary school. The prestige placed upon a college education and the power of a faculty member over a student's future career (e.g., recommendation letters, passing an introductory course as a requirement to pursue a specific major) could make students feel more pressured to conform to Good Student Discourse in college compared to other levels of education. In addition, societal discourses within higher education institutions in the United States could influence the ways in which students respond to the Good Student Discourse, calling into question the degree to which findings from universities outside the United States apply. Furthermore, much of this research takes a systematic approach, considering how students respond to discourses within a broader educational setting but does not consider how students respond to specific discourses from individual instructors (Boeck et al., 2020; Cameron & Billington, 2017). Some of the aforementioned studies shed light on institution- or society-wide discourses about Good Students but did not inquire about discourse related to specific courses, so it is unclear if and how specific instructors challenged or perpetuated that discourse and how that could influence students' understandings of a Good Student. As discussed earlier in this paper, Good Student Discourse could vary from one instructor to another, and some instructors may opt to work against broader discourses. Similarly, most of these studies do not separate or examine

Good Student Discourse by discipline, though Ferrare and Miller's (2020) study indicates that definitions of a Good Student could vary by discipline.

Overall, research on the discourse of the Good Student indicates that instructors have a logic of what determines a Good Student, discourses about a Good Student circulate within broader societal, political, and institutional contexts, and students react to discourses. However, it is unclear how those discourses are communicated to students, operationalized into course policies, how students respond to individual instructors' Good Student Discourse, and how those discourses benefit students within a course more than others.

Instructor-Student Communications

In this section, I discuss research on two types of instructor-student communication, validation messages and expectations. Instructors' communications to students about what it means to be a Good Student is included in my conceptualization of Good Student Discourse. I focus on the content of the communication and rather than the style (tone, syntax, etc.) because it aligns with my use of Foucault's (1969/2010) concept of discourse as statements that convey knowledge or truth. Discourse, as defined by Foucault, refers to the content not the method or style of delivery.

Research on instructors' validating messages illustrates the powerful influence postsecondary educators can have on students' sense that their academic contributions are valued and that they are capable of success (Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Barnett, 2011; Rendón, 1994, 2002). In other words, validating messages can communicate to a person they are a Good Student. Research on instructor's validation of students often does not incorporate how those principles are manifested in course structures or policies. Thus, research on instructor's

expectations of students provides some insight into what faculty tell students they must do to be a Good Student (e.g., participate in class).

However, expectations are not always explicit or clearly explained (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2014; White & Lowenthal, 2011; Yee, 2016). For students who are marginalized within higher education spaces because of their race, socioeconomic status, or being the first in their family to attend college, validating messages from instructors may be particularly meaningful (Hallett et al., 2020; Rendón, 1994) but faculty expectations may be less familiar to them than for more privileged peers (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Harper & Newman, 2016; Yee, 2016). Therefore, research on instructors' communications helped guide my study of Good Student Discourse.

Instructors' Validating Messages. Validating messages affirm students' abilities to succeed and appreciate students' identities (Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011; Rendón, 1994). Rendón (1994) developed her theory of validation based on findings from a multi-institutional study of students' transition to college. Doubts about capacity to succeed in college were much more commonly expressed by Students of Color, community college students, students at a predominantly Black university, first-generation college students, and students who were returning to college after a number of years than White, four-year, continuing generation students (Rendón, 1994). Thus, learning environments and interactions that validate students' abilities and identities are particularly important for students marginalized in postsecondary spaces, especially as they may have received invalidating messages about their status as a Good Student in the past (Rendón, 1994). Rendón (1994, 2002) also stresses that validation is most important during the first year or weeks of college to assuage students' fears they are not college students.

Instructors academically validate students during class by expressing care for students, demonstrating devotion to students' learning, appreciating students' knowledge and experiences, and communicating their belief that students can succeed. Rendón (1994, 2002) conceptualized validation has having two types, academic and interpersonal, and found that validation can occur outside of the classroom with family, friends, and support staff (Rendón, 1994, 2002). Because findings regarding how postsecondary instructors academically validate or invalidate students is most relevant for my study of Good Student Discourse, I review those studies next.

Findings indicate that postsecondary instructors' academically validating messages facilitate students' perceptions of belonging, transition to college, and academic outcomes (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015; Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Barnett, 2011; Card & Wood, 2019; Deil-Amen, 2011; Hallett et al., 2020). Hallett et al. investigated validation practices in a comprehensive college transition program for low-income students at three public four-year institutions. The researchers drew from interviews with faculty and staff, interviews and journal entries from students, and observations of program activities. They found that instructors validated students by consistently providing students with positive feedback and affirmation that students can learn challenging academic content. Studies conducted at community colleges echo Hallett et al.'s findings that providing personalized feedback and encouragement are ways in which instructors validate students (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015; Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Barnett, 2011; Rendón, 2002). Holding high expectations for students and incorporating course content that relates to students' identities have also been identified as ways in which instructors validate Latinx community college students (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015; Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Rendón, 2002). Yet instructors can invalidate students by implying students should already

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know course content or give condescending responses to students' questions (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015; Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020).

In terms of scope and transferability, one limitation of the literature on academic validation is that much of it is conducted within community colleges (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015; Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Barnett, 2011; Card & Wood, 2019; Rendón, 2002). This is understandable given that Rendón's (1994) theory was built upon finding that community college students had significant concerns about their academic potential, thus they greatly benefited from encouragement. It is possible the findings could apply to students at four-year institutions with similar racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds similar to those of the students in the studies conducted at community colleges given the importance of validation for marginalized students (Rendón, 1994, 2002). Hallett et al.'s (2020) study suggests instructor validation has a meaningful impact for low-income students at four-year institutions. However, the content of validating messages for instructors at four-year institutions may differ from those of community college instructors, as larger classes may make it more difficult for instructors to give personalized messages about academic potential.

Another limitation is that academic validation from instructors is typically framed in terms of encouraging messages and/or showing investment in students' learning (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015; Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Barnett, 2011; Rendón, 2002). Rendón (1994, 2002) does not restrict validation to communication; she argues that institutions need to implement validating practices into their programs and structures. In response, researchers have examined first-year transition or transfer programs that incorporate validation into their processes, policies, and design (Baber, 2018; Hallett et al., 2020; Rendón, 2002). Yet little is known about course policies, such as late work policies, validate or invalidate students as Good. An instructor could

make encouraging statements to a student (e.g., "I know you understand the material on this past exam, even if your grade did not reflect that") while enforcing policies that contradict that message about being a Good Student (e.g., not allowing make-up exams). Support program policies, such as providing extra support to struggling students instead of dropping them from the program, are mechanisms through which students are validated as being college students (Hallett et al., 2020). It is possible that parallel course policies, such as allowing paper re-writes or makeup exams, could have a similar affirmative impact on students and that Good Student Discourse that values persistence not just perfection can validate such students. Therefore, validation theory has implications for research on Good Student Discourse because it helps understand the impact of faculty messages to students and points to the importance of policies that support such messages, though examinations of validating messages and policies within specific classroom contexts or by discipline at four-year institutions has not been explored. Using Foucault's (1969/2010) concept of technologies of power to examine how course policies are manifestations of Good Student Discourse is one approach to addressing this gap.

Furthermore, little is known about how validation varies by discipline or course format. Courses with fewer students or are discussion-based, such as a writing class, could provide more opportunities for instructors to affirm individual students' abilities than courses that are larger or focus on mastering concepts and procedures (e.g., mathematics). Comparing Good Student Discourses across disciplines could attend to this.

Instructors' Expectations. Instructors also communicate their expectations of students' behaviors and performance. Role theory is often used to conceptualize expectations of student behavior because taking on a new role, such as being a college student, includes learning the responsibilities of such a role (Bork & Rucks-Ahidiana, 2013; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp &

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Bork, 2014). Yet, which behaviors are expected of a college student are not always clearly

defined and/or in conflict with what students expected (Agger & Shelton, 2017; Bork & Rucks-

Ahidiana, 2013; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Cox, 2009; Harper & Newman, 2016; Karp & Bork,

2012; White & Lowenthal, 2011). Expectations can also vary across instructors; thus, students

may have to learn multiple sets of expectations every semester (Agger & Shelton, 2017; Collier

& Morgan, 2008). In addition, the college student role may be different from other roles students

hold, such as being an employee or parent (Karp & Bork, 2012). Therefore, explicitness of

expectations is viewed as an important aspect of instructors' communications with first-year

students and constructs Good Student Discourse.

As noted earlier in this chapter, expectations research in higher education assumes

students should learn and comply with instructors' expectations. Drawing from focus groups

with instructors and students at a public university about expectations for first- and second-year

students, Collier and Morgan (2008) found that instructors emphasized expectations to students

on how much time students need to spend preparing for the course and that students should

prioritize college above other responsibilities and accept that college courses are more difficult

than high school. These findings are echoed in other studies conducted at four-year and two-year

institutions (Agger & Shelton, 2017; Cox, 2009). However, assuming that students must

prioritize college ignores the needs of students who are working or are caring for dependents and

implies a deficit view casting those parts of a student's life as barriers.

Another finding consistent in studies at four-year and two-year institutions is that

instructors expected students to attend office hour or reach out to them when they were

struggling (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jack, 2016; Karp & Bork, 2014; Tevis & Britton, 2020).

The expectation of taking initiative to seek help can be viewed as contradictory to the

expectation that students must be self-sufficient and independent (Bork & Rucks-Ahidiana, 2013; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2012). The expectation that students will reach out to instructors for assistance can also create advantages for some students, particularly from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and first-generation college students, who have been exposed to and accepted Good Student Discourse that they must work completely on their own in college (Yee, 2016). Yee's ethnographic study showed that first-generation college students at a university believed success in college is attained through independent effort and that asking for help would lessen their accomplishments. In contrast, continuing-generation college students believed they had to approach the professor for assistance, but they were entitled to receive help from the professor. Thus, Yee's study illustrates how an expectation of responsibility in help-seeking is interpreted differently based on their socioeconomic status, which could have implications for the Good Student Discourses to which students have been exposed. Similarly, Jack (2016) demonstrated that compared to Black and Latinx students from high-income backgrounds or low-income backgrounds who attended elite high schools, Black and Latinx students from low-income backgrounds were unsure how and reluctant to approach instructors for help at a highly selective university. However, Yee and Jack did not collect data on the discourse or expectations students experienced in college, thus clear connections between instructors' messages of expected behavior and students' reactions cannot be made based on those studies.

Students who are continuing-generation college students, from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, or who had significant educational opportunities have had more experience in learning and responding to the academic expectations in college (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jack, 2016; Means & Pyne, 2017; Yee, 2016). Researchers have framed this issue in terms of students' lack of cultural or social capital (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jack, 2016; Karp & Bork, 2014), yet

this implies the deficit view that students must find ways to compensate for what they lack rather than instructors reflect on their practices (Yee, 2016). Instructors have reported making changes to what information they provide students, such as resources on MLA style, after realizing their expectations were implicit or assumed prior knowledge (Collier & Morgan, 2008). However, providing additional information about what a student should do does not attend to the issue of how a particular expectation is based on a student's academic history, not their current efforts, and how that could be inequitable.

Thus, Good Student Discourse conveying instructors' expectations of first-year students in terms of required behaviors, how to perform those behaviors, and expectations of rigor may privilege some students over others as already being Good Students based on the knowledge with which they enter college (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Harper & Newman, 2016; Schademan & Thompson, 2016; Yee, 2016). Good Student Discourse, in the form of explicit expectations and validating messages, could also be beneficial in that it provides directions and encouragement towards becoming a Good Student (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Rendón, 1994). However, the context in which these expectations are expressed and how policies and practices that enforce them, are important factors to consider when examining the construction and effects of Good Student Discourse. In addition, considering expectations, practices and policies points to questions of what do students get for being Good Students? Therefore, in the next section I present literature regarding how behaviors associated with Good Student discourse factor into teachers' grading practices.

Grading Effort and Behaviors

Researchers have shown that effort and behaviors noted above as being associated with a Good Student, such as participation and politeness, are reflected in grading practices. Rogers

(2013) found that half of their sample of 352 college instructors grade participation. The most common reasons instructors provided for not grading participation is it assesses personality and is unfair to students. A smaller percentage of mathematics and science instructors graded participation than instructors of social sciences and humanities. However, this study does not explain what counts as participation (verbal comments, active in group work), how it is assessed (frequency, in-class assignments), or what participation represents (effort, interest in the subject, etc.). Findings from Dirk (2010) illustrate the importance of considering the subjectivity in participation; among first-year writing instructors who participated in Dirk's study, participation had a variety of definitions. Some instructors could not explain the criteria for assessing it or assessed it based on "a feeling" (p. 130) of how much effort and participation the student put into the class. Dirk raises questions about how fair it is to assign grades for effort, which is largely based on an impression, though acknowledges that students may want to feel their effort of participating in class is worthwhile and reflected in their grades. In a quantitative study comparing students' and full-time faculty's beliefs how much effort should account for in a student's grade, students reported effort (versus performance), the mean percentage reported was 38% compared to the mean for faculty of 17.2% (Adams, 2005). Students prioritized effort over performance for liberal arts and general education courses more than medical or major courses, suggesting that the extent to which a course prepares a student for a career influences the value of effort versus performance. Adams (2005) operationalized effort as hours spent studying, which offers a very narrow definition of effort and raises questions about how faculty would observe that effort in the first place. For example, faculty may have placed a lower value on effort than the students if effort is defined as hours spent studying because the faculty would not likely be able to verify how many hours students study. There is limited information about if and

how behaviors and effort are included in postsecondary instructors' grading approaches, but K-12 research could add insight to how behaviors and perceived effort influence grading decisions.

Studies have shown that K-12 teachers thought that grades should be fair, and fairness in grading meant considering individual students' improvement and effort into the grade (see Brookhart et al., 2016). Despite an agreement on the importance of fairness, grading practices vary between teachers. Researchers have found relationships between teachers' beliefs about how to best support students and their grading practices (see Brookhart et al., 2016; Kenneth, 2017). McMillan (2001) found that among the 1,483 middle and high school teachers who participated in their quantitative study, math teachers were less likely than social studies or English teachers to consider "academic enablers (such as effort, ability, and improvement, and participation)" (p. 28) in their grading decisions. McMillan posited that teachers might associate academic enabling behaviors as indication of students' engagement in learning the content. Similarly, research shows that K-12 teachers and postsecondary instructors see behaviors (e.g., working hard, participation) as distinct from academic achievement (meeting learning objectives, performance on assessments) but teachers grade behaviors because they see them as supporting academic achievement (Brookhart et al., 2016). High school teachers have reported grading effort is important to reward students for their work, even though it is subjective (Kunnath, 2017). Evidence from a study with 516 elementary, middle, and high school teachers showed that behavior and effort can influence the grades teachers assign, irrespective of academic achievement (Randall & Engelhard, 2010). Using 36 scenarios of students with mixtures of high, average, and low achievement, ability, effort, and behavior, the researchers found that when teachers perceived a student as trying very hard and having good behavior (e.g., being polite in

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class and not being disruptive), they gave those students final grades that were higher than the students' reported level of academic achievement.

There has been a movement in K-12 and to a lesser extent, postsecondary education to move towards standards-based grading (Brookhart et al., 2016; Buckmiller, 2017; Peters et al., 2017; Scriffiny, 2008). Standards-based grading assesses if students meet a learning outcome or standard; students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate they are proficient. One argument in favor or standards-based grading is that it focuses on assessment of student's learning of content, whereas in other grading systems, the student's level of understanding could be obscured by grading non-academic achievement factors, such as participation and assignment completion, and avoids subjective assessments of effort (Buckmiller et al., 2017; Scriffiny, 2008). Striving for making the grade represent students' learning of content could ensure that students are prepared for future courses (Scriffiny, 2008). One study about students' responses to the implementation of standards-based grading in an educational technology class found that students reported standards-based grading being more difficult than grading systems they were used to, but standards-based encouraged them to engage with the content instead of "playing the game" of completing assignments for points (Buckmiller et al., 2017, p. 154). However, 16 of the 21 student participants were graduate students and 18 were education majors, thus it is possible they would be more interested in learning content related to their intended profession than first-year students taking a required general education course.

If and how effort is reflected in grades could be a salient factor in students' perceptions of fairness in the course and has implications for equity. Peters et al. (2017) analyzed written comments from over 500 high school students about standards-based grading and one theme they found is students thought standards-based grading was unfair because homework assignments,

which were considered by the school as practice for the quizzes and tests, were not graded. Students argued that they invested effort into homework so it should be graded, and quizzes and tests should not be the determinant of a student's grade because some students are not "good test takers" (p. 17). Inoue (2019) has argued that assessment in college first-year writing courses should use a labor-based contract grading model because it avoids privileging White norms of writing and is an antiracist, equitable practice. As discussed above, effort itself is a vague and subjective concept. Quantifying effort in terms of time spent could put disabled students at a disadvantage because some disabilities may prevent a student from investing the expected amount of time (Carillo, 2021). Thus, it is possible that grading for effort appears to offer a more level playing field for students who are racially minoritized and from low-income backgrounds by rewarding their investment of time and work, yet that might not be the case when considering the subjectivity of what counts as effort, and whether opportunities to exert and display effort are equitably distributed among student populations.

In sum, extant studies on K-12 teachers' grading decisions illustrate how behaviors discussed in Good Student Discourses could be reflected within and rewarded by grades, and that grades function as a technology of power. High school and college students think grades should account for the effort students invest in the course. Course discipline could influence which, if any, behaviors teachers factor into grading decisions, with evidence suggesting mathematics educators are less likely to grade participation and other behaviors. Yet, none of those studies problematized what counts as effort, or how instructors recognize effort or participation. Even though students' grades in college have consequences for their future, such as graduating or being accepted into a major, there is less research on college instructors' grading decisions than on K-12 teachers' decisions. In theory, adhering to instructors' expectations and advice for being

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a Good Student would have a relationship with a positive outcome for the student in terms of learning course content and a good grade, but this relationship has not been studied. Thus, more research is needed to understand the extent to which the discourses about being a Good Student are reflected in measures of academic success, such as grades. Academic success can be an indicator of how well a first-year student is adjusting to college expectations, thus the Good Student Discourse and academic success in first-year courses could be particularly important for students' transitions to college.

First-Year Courses as Socialization to College

First-year or introductory courses may contain Good Student Discourse beyond what it means to be a Good Student in a particular course, and also describe the behaviors and characteristics of a Good Student in a particular discipline and in college. Students' first year of college is frequently conceptualized as a period of adjustment or transition (Bowman et al., 2019; Credé & Niehorster, 2012; Hurtado et al., 2007; Karp & Bork, 2014; Ostrove & Long, 2007). The courses they take during that first year introduce them to college academic expectations, thus playing a role in students' transition to college. For example, researchers and instructors have argued that a first-year college writing[2] course has a socializing function in that it teaches students the reading and writing skills, genres of writing, and behaviors required in more advanced college courses and in various disciplines (Bartholomae, 1985; Beauvais, 1996; Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014; Wardle, 2009). Beauvais described the first-year composition course as one of the first points of contact students have with academic

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[2] Many students do not take first-year composition, college algebra, and/or calculus in their first year because they are placed into a developmental course (Chen, 2016). I use the phrase "first-year college composition/math" to refer to courses that are designed for first-year students regarding their location in the academic plan of majors and for which institutions award undergraduate credits. I am not suggesting that all students take those courses in the first year, or that those who do not and may be taking developmental courses are not truly college students.

research and writing methods. Thus, discourse about what it means to be a Good Student in first-year composition has implications for what it means to be a Good Writer and Good College Student. Similarly, math courses are required for many STEM majors and can serve as gatekeepers to advancement in STEM (Douglas & Salzman, 2020; National Research Council, 2013; Suresh, 2006). Good Student Discourse within math courses for first-year students, such as college algebra or calculus, could also describe the characteristics and behaviors of a STEM student beyond the math course. Findings from a nationally representative sample of part-time and full-time instructors indicated that those teaching first-year math and first-year writing take the skills students need to learn in future courses under consideration when planning their course (Stark, 2000). Those instructors also reported their students' characteristics as a significant influence on their course design. Thus, the Good Student Discourse communicated in introductory courses—such as writing, college algebra, or calculus—could be instructors' attempt to socialize students into broader academic expectations and desired behaviors of a Good Student. Foucault's (1969/2010, 1977/1980b) argument that discourse creates desire could be helpful for studying how instructor's Good Student Discourse offers a model of a Good Student and is presented in a way that makes being a Good Student seem attractive.

Good Student Discourse in first-year courses could have implications for inequities in major selection and academic outcomes. It is documented that Women and Students of Color have reported being discriminated against by STEM instructors (Leaper & Starr, 2019; McGee & Martin, 2011; Park et al., 2020) and that Women and Black students change majors out of STEM at a higher rate than White or Asian students (Chen, 2015; Park et al., 2020). Scholars have also argued that first-year writing courses can privilege White middle-class values, such as emphasizing efficiency (Bloom, 1996) and mastery over effort and development (Inoue, 2014).

While connections between the Good Student Discourse and inequity has not been studied, these findings suggest that messages and policies of Good Student Discourse in first-year courses could categorize some students as incompatible with a Good College Student or Good STEM Student based on their identities.

The amount of research on first-year seminars' potential effects on students' satisfaction, study skills, grades, and persistence at four-year institutions implies a recognition among higher education scholars and practitioners of the important role first-year courses can have in supporting students' transition to college (Clark & Cundiff, 2011; Culver & Bowman, 2020; Jairam, 2020; Zerr & Bjerke, 2016). There is a high degree of variation on the content and topics of first-year seminars, with some emphasizing skill development and others learning how to navigate the university (Clark, 2005; Jairam, 2020; Zerr & Bjerke, 2016). However, it is unclear how those courses communicate to students what it means to be a Good Student beyond skill mastery or how they benefit some students more than others. In addition, when such courses are not gateways to advancement within a major or required, the Good Student Discourse in a first-year seminar may not carry the same weight as the Good Student Discourse in a required course, such as first-year college writing or math (Clark, 2005).

Overall, the extant literature shows that both students and instructors are exposed to discourses defining Good Students, and that instructors have definitions of a Good Student they may try to communicate to students. Demonstration of effort was found to be important and valued by educators and students, to the extent that middle and high teachers will boost students' grades based on perceptions that the student tried hard. First-year courses introduce students to academic expectations of college, thus they can be particularly salient contexts for Good Student Discourse. There is limited research on college instructors' definitions of a Good Student and

how that is manifested in course policies, practices, and grades. My study seeks to address this

gap.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Methods

The purpose of this research is to contribute to current understanding of first-year students' transition to college, including how instructors influence that transition. In this section, I explain the methodologies and methods I used in this study of Good Student Discourse (see Research Questions). I begin by explaining the methodological perspectives I take and how they informed my choices for the design of this study. I then explain my rationale for the site selection and participant recruitment. Then I discuss the six types of data I collected—course syllabi, course announcements, observations of the first day of class, instructor interviews, student group interviews, and student follow-up surveys—and how I analyzed the data. I conclude this section with a discussion of my positionality.

Methodology

The design of my study is grounded in a blend of social constructionist and constructivist epistemologies. Both epistemologies contend that knowledge is created by humans, but they differ in their focus of how this knowledge is created. Social constructionism posits that knowledge is a result of "the collective generation of meaning as shaped by conventions of language and other social processes" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 240). Constructivism emphasizes individual meaning-making of social experiences; thus the individual creates knowledge for themselves (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 1998). I blended these epistemologies because I believe that we individually make meaning of our social experiences, but the frame of those interpretations is grounded in the discourse and norms we are exposed to in our societies. In

other words, the manner in which we interpret an experience is grounded in the language, perspectives, and norms in society, but our individual meaning-making is not completely determined by those social, cultural, and collective knowledges.

Connecting to this study, I posit that students' and instructors' meaning-making of what it means to be a Good Student is constructed through the interplay of social experience and individual interpretation of such experiences, but that their interpretations are influenced by cultural ideas, discourses, and norms. Consistent with social constructionist and constructivist epistemology, I assume that instructors and students alter their Good Student Discourse in response to experiences and social interactions. Though I view a Good Student as a discursive object—a concept created by discourse (Foucault, 1969/2010) —a person's definition of a Good Student is informed by their interpretations of lived experiences of events. In addition, constructionism accounts for how meaning making is embedded within sociocultural contexts (Crotty, 1998). Scholars have argued that disciplines (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Braxton et al., 1998; Jones, 2011; Lee, 2007; Smart et al., 2000; Umbach, 2007) and institutions (Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Umbach, 2007) have their own cultures, which could influence instructors' and students' Good Student Discourses. Similarly, individuals' experiences and social identities (race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) could pertain to their interpretation of experiences with Good Student Discourse. Therefore, I designed the study to attend to how instructors' and students' experiences influence their Good Student Discourse, as well as how the disciplinary context of the course being taught might have a relationship with the instructors' Good Student Discourse.

One could argue that there is tension between constructionism and Foucault's (1969/2010) poststructuralist conceptualization of discourse, as poststructuralism is associated

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with the subjectivist epistemological stance that knowledge and truth are created by individuals and then imposed onto the world and other people (Crotty, 1998). Subjectivism, constructivism, and social constructionism acknowledge that truth and knowledge are not universal. However, subjectivism's stance is that truth is completely manufactured by the individual, while constructivism argues that people make meaning based on experiences and interactions with other people and phenomena in their world (Crotty, 1998; Jones et al., 2013). Yet I would posit that Foucault would not have endorsed an absolutist subjectivist epistemology, as he argued that people can exercise agency by recognizing discourse that has made them subjects and resisting that discourse (Foucault, 1982). In addition, discourse is created and disseminated through social structures (Foucault, 1977/1982). Thus, Foucault's conceptualization of discourse can still be situated in a constructionist and constructivist epistemology.

Study Design

My study design included instructors and students in courses from two different disciplines, English and mathematics. Given my interest in the influence of context on Good Student Discourse, it was important to compare courses from different disciplinary contexts. Including math and writing courses was also consistent with research and theory on the role of disciplines and academic departments in influencing individual instructors' teaching (Lattuca & Stark, 2009; Umbach, 2007). As discussed in Chapter 2, mathematics and first-year writing courses can socialize students to academic expectations in college. In addition, first-year writing and at least one mathematics course are common requirements in higher education institutions so those courses have potential to offer insights about Good Student Discourse that could be relevant for other institutions.

Study Site and Participants

Study Site

I selected a broad access public university (hereafter, Lake University) for the site of my study. I wanted to focus on a broad access public university, defined as admitting 80% or more of applicants (Crisp et al., 2019) as these institutions serve a large percentage of undergraduate students in the United States. According to data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), in Fall 2021 broad access public institutions that awarded bachelor's degrees enrolled over 2.9 million students, which was 40% of all undergraduates attending a public, baccalaureate-granting institution. In that same year, there were 297 baccalaureate-granting public institutions that accepted 80% or more of applicants. Though Lake University is classified by the Carnegie System a high research activity (R2) university, its mission statement highlights the values of accessible education and learning and does not mention research. Thus Lake University expresses values consistent with being a broad access public university.

Good Student Discourse could be particularly impactful for first-year students at a broad access university as those students may not have attended high schools that prepared them for postsecondary academic expectations. Instructors at a broad access institution could place more emphasis on Good Student Discourse than those at a highly-selective institution because they might be aware that that incoming students have not yet learned expectations about academic behaviors and strategies but that raising their awareness will help them succeed in their courses.

I sought a research site with a relatively diverse undergraduate population because per my theoretical and methodological perspective, a person's Good Student Discourse is influenced by their identities and experiences, and I wanted to examine assumptions of normativity within Good Student Discourse. In Fall 2021, Lake University was almost 70% White and nearly 20%

Black, African American, Hispanic, or Latinx.[3] Nearly a third of undergraduate students at Lake University in Fall 2020 received Pell grants, which are awarded to students from low-income backgrounds. The proportion of students awarded Pell grants indicates variation in socioeconomic backgrounds. Though White, non-Pell students were the majority at Lake University—reflecting widening inequities in higher education participation by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013)—I hoped there would be opportunity to hear from diverse students at Lake University. While my findings are not intended to be generalized, they could have implications for similar university contexts.

I collected data in the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fall 2021 was the first semester that Lake University offered classes in-person since the onset of the pandemic in 2019.

Course Selection

The instructors and students who participated in the study were all from first-year college writing course sections and first-year college math courses. I defined first-year college writing as the writing course required for the majority of baccalaureate degrees at Lake University. Identifying first-year college math courses was not as straightforward as that of first-year college writing, because different majors require different math courses (e.g., finite math for business majors, calculus for STEM majors, statistics for social science majors) and students' high school mathematics course history can determine their first math course at Lake University (e.g., pre-calculus or calculus). Drawing from the Lake University Fall 2020 course schedule, I identified precalculus, calculus I, and finite math as having the highest enrollments and used Lake University webpages to confirm that several majors required at least one of those courses. I also

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[3] I am aggregating Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx to prevent the institution from being identified.

wanted representation from at least two different types of the three aforementioned math courses to allow for investigation of potential differences in instructors' discourse or students experiences based on the course. For example, assuming that the Good Student Discourse in a calculus class may be different from that in a quantitative reasoning course because instructors might emphasize the behaviors and characteristics associated with the majors with which those courses are associated.

Instructor Recruitment

To recruit instructors, I looked at the Lake University course schedule to identify who was teaching the courses of interest and emailed them requesting their participation. At first, I focused on instructors who I could confirm were faculty or instructors rather than graduate student instructors. At the beginning of August 2021, I emailed all the individuals who were teaching, in-person, the first-year writing course, finite math, pre-calculus, and calculus, except for the graduate students (see Appendix A:Chapter 7Appendix A:). However, most of the instructors teaching first-year writing were graduate students.[4] Because graduate students' emails were not publicly available, I emailed the first-year writing course coordinator to explain the study and to ask them to forward my recruitment message to first-year writing course instructors in that term. Due to a low response rate from faculty instructors, I expanded my search to include a quantitative reasoning course and also to recruit graduate student instructors of mathematics courses.

For Fall 2021, five instructors agreed to participate in the study. Two taught first-year writing, one taught calculus, one precalculus, and one quantitative reasoning. I extended my data

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[4] A 2014 survey found that on average, graduate students taught over 38% of first-year writing courses in English departments granting PhDs (MLA, 2014); this percentage has likely increased as universities have tried to adjust spending in the face of reductions in state appropriations, declining undergraduate enrollment, and other rising costs.

collection into Spring 2023 because the majority of student participants came from the one quantitative reasoning course, which would limit the possibility of making claims about Good Student Discourse in first-year math courses. I used the course schedule to identify people teaching calculus and pre-calculus and emailed them. I limited the mathematics courses in the spring recruitment to calculus and precalculus because the same instructor who taught quantitative reasoning in the fall taught it in the spring, and adding more data from students in precalculus and calculus courses could presumably strengthen the foundation of my claims about instructors' discourses and students' experiences in precalculus and calculus. I also asked the writing coordinator to send my recruitment message to the Spring 2023 first-year writing instructors and made a brief announcement at their pre-semester orientation meeting.

Instructor Participants

A total of eleven instructors participated in the study. As Table 1 shows, eight of the 11 instructors were graduate students; all the writing instructors were graduate student instructors. Hiring graduate students to teach first-year writing courses is a common practice among public universities (Bettinger et al., 2016). Six instructors taught mathematics courses and five taught first-year writing; the writing instructors were studying a variety of fields, including medieval literature, history, and creative writing. I asked the instructors about their teaching experience, race and ethnicity, and gender at the end of the first interview.

Table 1

Instructor Participants

Pseudonym[a]	Course	Semester	Position	Years of Postsecondary Teaching Experience	Race and/or Ethnicity	Gender Identity[b]
Alex	Calculus I	Spring 2022	Associate professor of mathematics	24	White	Woman

Buster	First-year Writing	Spring 2022	Graduate student instructor, MA student in medieval literature	2	White	Woman
Clark	Calculus I	Fall 2021	Graduate student instructor, PhD student in mathematics education	4 (plus 6 in K-12)	White	Man
ElizabethP	Precalculus	Spring 2022	Graduate student instructor, PhD student in mathematics	3 (plus 1.5 in K-12)	White	Woman
Ellie	Quantitative Reasoning	Fall 2021	Full-time instructor and PhD student in mathematics education[c]	18 (plus 4 years in K-12)	White and Hispanic	Woman
Flora	First-year Writing	Spring 2022	Graduate student instructor, MA student in literature	1	White	Woman
Irene	First-year Writing	Fall 2021	Graduate student instructor, MA student in history	2	White and Arab	Woman
Kevin	First-year Writing	Spring 2022	Graduate student instructor, MFA student in creative writing	3	White	Man
May	First-year Writing with additional workshop[d]	Fall 2021	Graduate student instructor, MA student in medieval literature	2	White	Woman and agender
Sam	Precalculus	Fall 2021	Full-time instructor in mathematics	21	White	Woman
Toby	Precalculus	Spring 2022	Graduate student instructor, MS student in mathematics	2	White	Nonbinary[e]

Notes: [a]Instructors picked their own pseudonyms. ElizabethP has a "P" at the end because there was a student participant in Fall 2021 who selected Elizabeth as her pseudonym. [b]Some instructors described their gender in male/female terms, others man/ woman. I use man/woman instead of male/female to avoid conflation with biological sex. [c]Though Ellie was a doctoral candidate at the time of this study, she had been a full-time instructor at the university for several years, thus her status was very different from the other graduate student instructors. For this reason, I do not classify her as a "graduate student instructor." [d]Depending on their academic histories, students could be placed into sections of first-year writing that had an extra workshop each week to provide additional writing support. I did not ask instructors for their pronouns except for May and Toby. May said she used "she/her" and Toby said "they/their."

After instructors agreed to participate, I scheduled a Zoom interview with each to make an interpersonal connection. I introduced myself, briefly discussed the logistics of data collection, and answered any questions they had. I believed it was important to have those short meetings before data collection begins so instructors could feel more comfortable in the first interview. In our discussion, I also emphasized I was not there to judge or evaluate instructors' teaching and I would not share information with their department chairs.

Student Recruitment

To recruit students, I asked instructors to forward an email message to the students on my behalf or to post it on the announcements page of their course site in the university's learning management system. The recruitment message (see Appendix B:) contained a link to a Google form (the text from the form is in Appendix C:). The purpose of the form was to screen participants, plan logistics, and learn about student participants' backgrounds and identities. In the form, I asked students if they were in their first year of college. Students who responded that they were not in their first year of college were thanked for their interest but not invited to be interviewed. Regarding logistics, I asked about their availability for the interview, and the form of payment the student would like ($15 Starbucks gift card, Amazon gift card, Mastercard, Target gift card). To learn about students' backgrounds and identities, I included questions in the form asking what their major was, if they have taken college courses through dual-credit or dual-enrollment programs, if their parents attended college, if they received financial aid based on income level, their social identities (race, gender, disability) and pronouns. This form allowed me to gather demographic information that I did not want to ask during group interviews as doing so could have forced students to disclose information in front of others they did not want to share. I also visited the classes of the participating instructors in the middle of the Fall 2022

semester but that only yielded two additional participants, so in the spring I continued to recruit through email only.

Student Participants

The 49 student participants were first-year students enrolled in the course sections taught by participating instructors. I define first-year student as an individual who indicated that they were in their first year of college, regardless of having taken a college course through a dual-enrollment or dual-credit program in high school. The student participants' demographics are presented in Table 2, organized by the instructor of the course, with math courses listed first. In total, 28 students were in the participating mathematics courses and 21 in the first-year writing courses. Ellie's quantitative reasoning class had the highest number of student participants, but it was also the largest class, with over 70 students enrolled at the start of Fall 2021. Thirty-one of student participants were recruited from the fall courses. I included students who identified as Latinx, Black, and Asian as Students of Color in Table 2. I aggregated those numbers for the sake of table format though I recognize students holding those identities have very different experiences and that the ways in which those identities have been systematically discriminated against in the United States are different. There were a total of six students who identified as Black, six who identified as Latinx, and one who identified as Asian. Students were allowed to select multiple racial and ethnic identities; if a student selected White and Black, I counted them as identifying as Black and as White. Most of the students had parents who attended college. Nearly half reported receiving financial aid based on income. The most common disability students reported was ADHD. See Appendix D:for a table describing the student participants at an individual level.

Table 2

Student Participants in Each Instructor's Course

Instructor	Number of Student Participants	Students of Color	Women	Gender Non-Binary	First-Generation[a]	Receiving Financial Aid Based on Income	Disabilities or Mental Health Concerns
Mathematics Instructors							
Clark	3	1	1	0	1	2	0
Sam	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Ellie	18	3	17	1	3	6	2
Alex	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Toby	3	1	1	0	0	3	0
ElizabethP	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Writing Instructors							
Irene	4	1	2	1	1	1	2
May	4	1	2	0	0	2	3
Flora	4	1	2	0	0	3	2
Kevin	7	2	4	1	3	5	1
Buster	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	49	13	32	3	8	22	10
Percentage of Total		27%	65%	6%	16%	45%	20%

Notes: [a]First-generation was defined as neither parent attended college, including community college or four-year college.

Data Collection

I collected six types of data for each course: course announcements, syllabus, classroom observation, instructor interviews, student interviews, and follow-up surveys with students. Collecting four types of data related to the instructor—interviews, course announcements, syllabus, and observations—allowed for triangulation of findings because each type of data provided a different perspective on the phenomenon, in this case, of Good Student Discourse

(Denzin, 1989). Triangulation also enables the researcher to examine the phenomenon under different conditions (Denzin, 1989; Jones et al., 2013). For example, an instructor's Good Student Discourse could vary between the interviews, the course announcements, and when teaching on the first day of class. Some have criticized triangulation for assuming that the researcher can arrive at a single, objective truth by comparing findings from multiple data types and sources and argue that crystallization is more consistent with poststructural epistemology of multiple truths (Tracy, 2010). Crystallization also involves using multiple methods and types of data with the intention to reach a "more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue" (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). In comparison, triangulation aims for a more complete understanding of a phenomenon. I argue triangulation better describes what I was trying to accomplish by collecting multiple types of data to identify instructors' Good Student Discourse. My reporting on the variation within my findings on instructors' and students' Good Student Discourse acknowledges there is not a single truth or discourse that defines a Good Student.

My data collection procedures were approved by the University of Michigan Institutional Research Board (IRB) and were exempt from full board review. Lake University's IRB office reviewed and agreed with my procedures as well. I collected data at several points in the semesters during the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters at Lake University. Table 3**Error! Reference source not found.** contains an overview of the data collection schedule and identifies the sources of the Good Student Discourse each method provided.

Table 3

Data Collection Schedule

Week of the Semester	Data Collection Method	Whose Good Student Discourse

Before the Semester or Week 1	Course syllabi*	---
Ongoing	Course announcements	Instructor
Week 1	Observation of first day of class	Instructor
Weeks 1-3	1st individual interview with instructors	Instructor
Weeks 6-10	Group interviews with first-year students	Student
Weeks 18+	2nd interview with instructors	Instructor
Weeks 18+	Follow-up survey to students	Student

Note: *Most of the syllabi were not authored by the instructors, who used the program's template; thus, they were not considered data sources of instructors' Good Student Discourse.

In the following sections, I will describe the data collection protocol for each data type and how that data was used to address my research questions.

Syllabi

I collected a syllabus from each instructor prior to collecting other types of data, because syllabi often contain descriptions of course expectations and policies that may be sources of data regarding Good Student Discourse. However, during interviews with instructors, I learned that the writing instructors did not have authority to change the syllabus created by the course coordinator and that three of the mathematics instructors did not change the syllabus provided by their course coordinator, though they could change it if desired. For this reason, I used syllabi only to compare instructors' enactment of course policies, per their description in the interviews, to what was outlined in the syllabus.

Course Announcements

I asked instructors' permission to be an "observer" of their course management site so I could receive announcements without instructors having to send them to me. All of the instructors agreed, and I worked with Information Technology at Lake University to get observer status for each course. Each time an instructor posted an announcement, I copied and pasted the

text into a Word document where I compiled the announcements for that instructor. Some of the mathematics courses had teaching assistants who occasionally sent announcements to students about the study sessions they hosted. I did not include these in my data corpus since the goal of was to collect possible examples of instructors' Good Student Discourse.

Before conducting the study, I hypothesized that course announcements could contain Good Student Discourse as instructors might be using announcements to remind students to prepare for exams, clarify deadlines, or offer guidance for how to do well on an assignment. The course announcements were in fact a useful source of data on instructors' Good Student Discourse throughout the semester. In addition, because course announcements are student-facing they could be used to triangulate what instructors shared in interviews as well as what instructors said on the first day of class, as the first day of class, for most instructors, was focused on the expectations and processes of the course. I did not ask for or analyze grading rubrics as those primarily pertain to assessing learning and content.

Observation of First Day of Class

Observing the first day of class allowed me to see how the instructor presented their Good Student Discourse. I selected the first day of class for observation because the first day of class is often used by instructors to introduce students to the course, explain expectations, as well as clarify course policies, thus likely to have more Good Student Discourse than other class meetings. Observations were a useful data point to triangulate with interviews and course announcements.

I observed the first day of class for each of the courses. With one exception, all of the observations were in conducted person (one instructor was exposed to COVID-19 and taught online for the first week of the term). I distributed a consent form for students to indicate whether

they consented to be audio recorded during this observation session. With one exception, all the students in the course agreed for the lesson to be audio recorded. For the one class observation session that was not recorded, I took extensive notes. Some instructors preferred that I distribute the consent forms after their initial introduction to the students while others wanted me to distribute the forms at the very beginning of the class, so the portion of the first day of class I was able to record varied between instructors. Appendix E: contains the observation protocol I used to focus my note-taking on the Good Student Discourse, the instructor's teaching philosophy, and how students responded to the Good Student Discourse. The observation notes also informed my interview protocol; during the instructor interview, I reminded instructors of the elements of Good Student Discourse they emphasized that day and asked them why they emphasized those behaviors.

Instructor Interviews

The interviews were useful for learning about how instructors thought about Good Student Discourse, as observations and announcements alone would not likely have made that evident. The interviews were designed to reflect social constructionist and constructivist epistemologies by inquiring how individuals' experiences influenced their Good Student Discourse.

I conducted two semi-structured interviews using Zoom with each of the eleven instructors; The first interview was during the first or second week of the semester and focused on instructors' definitions of a Good Student, influences on that definition, how instructors communicate their definition of a Good Student to the students in their class, the relationship between a Good Student and academic success, and implementation of course policies (see the protocol in Appendix F:). The purpose of the second interview was to learn about any potential

changes in the instructors' thinking about being a Good Student and provide a space for the instructor to reflect on what the students in their class shared in their interviews (see protocol in Appendix G:). All the interviews were recorded with the instructors' permission. Instructors were compensated with a $50 gift card of their choice (Starbucks, Amazon, Target, Mastercard gift card) for each interview they completed. Interviews ranged from 44 minutes to 86 minutes, with most interviews being about one hour long.

In the spirit of reciprocity, I included feedback from the students to the instructor that we could discuss during the second interview. For each instructor, I summarized findings from the student group interviews and shared the summaries with the instructor after they submitted final grades but in advance of the second interview. The second interview took place after grades were submitted to prevent any risk of the summaries from the students influencing the instructors' perceptions of the class. The summaries provided information that I conjectured would be most useful for the instructors, including how students prepared for class, why they did or did participate in class, what Good Student Discourse they heard from the instructor, and their general feedback on the course. Each instructor was interested in what the students shared and thought aloud with me about what they could try in subsequent semesters to support students. Several instructors noted the end-of-semester course evaluations typically have a low response rate and thus did not provide as much useful detail as the summaries.

Interviews with Students

I planned to conduct *group interviews* with students in each course to learn what individuals experienced and the meaning they make of that experience. During to students' scheduling limitations, however, I also conducted some individual interviews.

The original study designed called for group interviews because the group setting can help make participants more comfortable sharing and stimulate reflection, as participants can be inspired by and react to other participants' responses (Acocella, 2012; Barbour, 2011).[5] I organized group interviews by class to facilitate reactions to common experiences in the course and with the instructors' Good Student Discourse, acknowledging that students may have different reactions to the same experience or Good Student Discourse. The interviews with students were useful for collecting data on their Good Student Discourse and their perceptions of what influenced it, as well as provided an opportunity to learn about what Good Student Discourse they heard from their first-year writing or math course instructor. Interviewing students from each course allowed me to compare instructors' and students' Good Student Discourse and how it is communicated across courses.

I conducted the interviews after week five of the semester so students would have enough experience in the course and at Lake University to describe their instructors' Good Student Discourse and how being a Good Student in college was different from high school. I avoided interviews near the end of the semester when students were busy preparing for finals.

I limited the size of a group to three participants, as during my pilot study I found that groups over four students prevented me from gathering rich data about each of the students' experiences and Good Student Discourses. Using this approach, I conducted a total of 28 students in small groups interviews, including one student interview via email (this student rescheduled several times due to work commitments; in the end she responded to the interview questions over email). I interviewed eleven students individually because their availability did not match that of their classmates' or because they were the only student who signed up. One

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[5] Group interviews differ from *focus groups* in that the latter are useful to learn how a collective of individuals interacts and thinks (Acocella, 2012; Barbour, 2011).

student rescheduled several times due to work commitments; in the end she responded to the interview questions over email. I did not notice any differences in data gathered from individual interviews compared to group interviews. All interviews except two took place over Zoom (one via email and one in-person at Lake University). All the interviews were recorded with the students' permission. The duration of an interview depended upon the number of students who were interviewed at that time; in general, interviews with one student lasted around 35 minutes, with two students 45-60 minutes, and three students 60-87 minutes. Students were compensated with a $15 gift card to Starbucks, Amazon, Target, or a Mastercard gift card. Each semester, I drew two names for a raffle for a $50 gift card. I did this by assigning consecutive numbers, starting at 1, to each participant then using a random number generator to pick the raffle recipients.

The student interview guide focused on how students prepare for and participate in the course, their Good Student Discourse, what influenced their Good Student Discourse, the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful, if some behaviors or characteristics are more important in college than high school, and when participants feel like they are Good Students (or not). I made minor revisions to the interview questions for the Spring 2022 data collection based on preliminary findings from the fall. For example, in the spring I asked students to provide an example of what being responsible or self-sufficient looks like because fall data indicated students had different definitions of those terms.

I also asked students about influences on their ideas of a Good Student. In the Fall, I prepared a Google Jamboard (see Figure 1) that included behaviors and characteristics I have heard expressed, in my experience as both a student and instructor, by other students and instructors regarding the characteristics and behaviors of a good student, and I augmented these

with those in the education research literature. During the fall Zoom interviews, I asked students

to type their answers to one of the last interview questions about who influenced their ideas of

being a Good Student. I assumed students would need time to reflect before answering that

question, and typing the answer gave them more flexibility and reduced pressure to respond right

away. However, that method made it awkward to ask for more explanation or context. Thus, in

the spring data collection, I asked students to answer that question verbally in the interview

instead of reflecting then typing their answer into the Jamboard. Both versions of the protocol are

in Appendix H:. The terms on the Jamboard elicited a rich response from the students in the pilot

study, which corroborated that the terms reflected what students heard from educators.

Figure 1

Jamboard Aid for Student Interviews
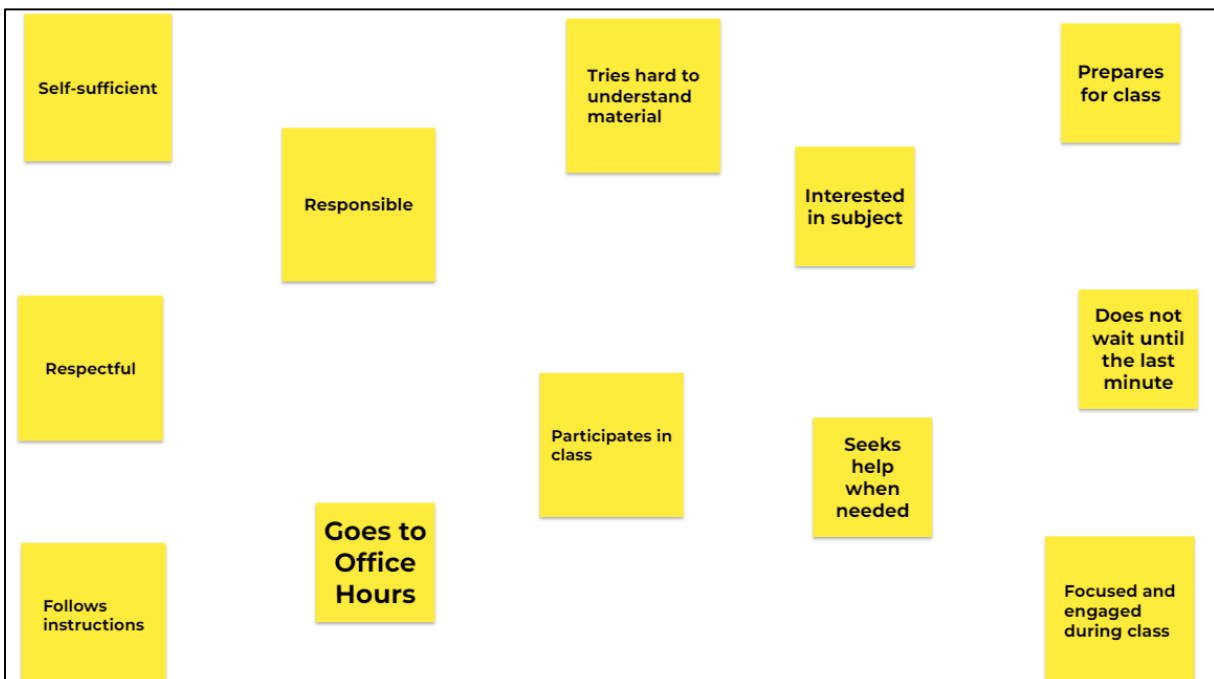
I made a Jamboard for each interview and granted students editing access to that specific

Jamboard through a link presented during the Zoom interview. I told students they could write

notes directly on the Jamboard or rearrange the text boxes as they pleased; I shared my screen so

students who were participating via phone could interact with the Jamboard more easily. If none of the students made edits to their Jamboard, I annotated it based on what they said in the interview and asked them to tell me if the notes I added or the rearranging of the text boxes were correct. For the in-person interview I printed a copy of the Jamboard. At the end of each interview, I told students that the first year of college can be difficult and that they could reach out to me for any reason. Doing so was important to me for reciprocity and because in interviews for previous studies, students have asked me for assistance locating financial aid or advising resources.

Student Follow-Up Surveys

I used the follow-up surveys to learn about any changes to students' Good Student Discourse, to collect examples of how they enacted their Good Student Discourse, and to learn more about their experiences in the first-year writing or math class. Preliminary review of the student interview data showed that students selected "responsible" and "respectful" as resonating with their definition of a Good Student, yet it was not clear if students defined responsible and respectful in the same ways. Thus, the follow-up surveys were also important for gaining clarity on students' understanding of those terms.

I sent a follow-up survey to each student I interviewed after the semester ended (see recruitment the survey in Appendix B:. I used Google Forms to create and distribute the surveys. Twenty-five of the 49 students who participated in interviews completed the surveys. Table 4 shows that the demographics of the sample of students who completed the surveys are comparable to the demographics of the whole group of student participants; however, none of the students from Flora's writing class, ElizabethP's precalculus class, or Sam's precalculus class submitted a survey.

Table 4

Follow-Up Survey Student Participant Comparison

Group	Number of Student Participants	Students of Color[a]	Women	Gender Non-Binary	First-Generation[b]	Receiving Financial Aid Based on Income	Disabilities or Mental Health Issues
Completed follow-up survey	25	6	19	2	5	10	5
All Student Participants	49	13	32	3	8	22	10

Notes: [a]I included students who identified as Black, Latinx, or Asian as Students of Color. [b]First-generation was defined as neither parent attended college of any type.

Students were compensated with a $15 gift card for completing the survey. The surveys were distributed in Google Forms and contained only open-ended questions (see Appendix I:). Because I wanted to be able to confidently make comparisons between what students shared in the interview and in the follow-up survey, I tailored each survey to each student using the information they shared in each interview. For example, for the first question,

> In our interview, you selected [x, x, x] as important parts of being a Good Student. Please give me an example of when you [x or x or x] in or for [Course] and it helped you succeed. Please be as specific as possible in your response (for example, did this happen during class, on an assignment, over email, in office hours, etc.)"

I replaced the bracketed fields with information provided by each individual student.

Data Management and Confidentiality

I stored data in my University of Michigan password protected Dropbox account and on my audio recorder if they were not Zoom interviews. In addition, I maintained confidentiality by keeping the crosswalk of participants' names and pseudonyms in a file that did not contain any interview or survey data. I did not reveal any instructors' or students' identities to other participants or any other members of Lake University; students knew their instructors were participating, but instructors did not know which students from the course participated.

Instructors signed consent forms prior to the class observation and students signed them prior to the interview. Upon the successful defense of my dissertation, I will destroy the file containing participants' names and any other files containing information that could be used to identify participants; I included this in my IRB application. In preparing the corpus for analysis, I removed any identifying information in a transcript (e.g., a student refers to an instructor by name).

Analysis

I transcribed roughly half of the observation and interview recordings and used a transcription service (Scribie) for the other half. Performing a large number of transcriptions myself allowed me to become familiar with the data. I conducted a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the data, which consisted of multiple rounds of coding, identifying and testing themes, in conjunction with writing memos and conference papers about my findings.

I developed the initial codebook based on the interview protocol and supplemented and edited it based on what I learned through data analysis. I did not use a priori codes from Foucault's (1969/2010) theory because his theory describes how discourses function, and I needed to attend to the content of Good Student Discourse and how it is communicated before considering how Good Student Discourse functions. Before developing codes for a data type (e.g., instructor interviews, student interviews, observations), I read through all examples of that data type from that semester and took notes about what I was seeing in the data. I then compared those notes to my research questions and protocol to draft a set of codes to describe what was present in the data type. For example, I drafted the codes regarding instructors' definitions of a Good Student after reading their fall semester interviews. I made new codes for each data collection type to assist with triangulation and to capture differences; for example, "I-Def GS:

Seeks help" is a code for interview data when an instructor defined a Good Student as a person who seeks help, and "I_A: help/comm/OH" is a code for instructor LMS announcements telling or encouraging students to reach out the instructor for help, ask questions, or attend office hours. Those codes are from different data sources but contain a similar discourse about what behaviors define a Good Student. When a new code was needed, I returned to data I had already coded to check for instances of that new code being relevant. This process required me to recode the fall semester student interviews based on codes I generated and used for the spring semester student interviews; the spring semester data required a few codes not present in the fall semester because of I used a slightly revised interview protocol for the spring term data collection. The codebook for this study is in Appendix J:.

I used MAXQDA for coding the data. After the first round of coding, I compared what I identified in the data with the proposed research questions and revised the research questions based on the preliminary findings. I then selected codes that best addressed the revised research questions and that appeared frequently in the data; for example, codes related to the definition of a Good Student, how instructors communicate being a Good Student, influences on instructors' and students' Good Student Discourse, relationships between being academically successful and being a Good Student, and students' perceptions of their instructors' Good Student Discourse. To facilitate the analysis by course I organized the Good Student Discourse of the students and instructors using a cross between a table and a memo, which I called *tablemos* (pronounced table-mows). The tablemos were systematic in that I determined which codes' content went in which section of the tablemo (see the template and a completed tablemo in Appendix K:). The tablemos were organized by research questions and codes that could be used to address them. In between sections of a tablemo, I wrote memos summarizing what I found. I made one tablemo

per course. After I completed each tablemo, I wrote a separate memo about what I found and continued to add to that memo after each tablemo, noting differences and similarities between courses. The tablemos allowed me to immerse myself in the data and facilitated looking across courses. After completing the tablemos, I realized that there were a lot of similarities but few significant differences between courses; I also noticed differences between the Good Student Discourse of math and writing instructors. Furthermore, completing the tablemos helped me identify which codes had promise to address my research questions.

Following the steps of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I then drafted themes and used constant comparison techniques (Charmaz, 2014) to check the validity of the themes against the data. Constant comparison involves continuous consideration for what codes group together and why (Jones et al., 2013). Moving from codes to themes "raises the conceptual level of the analysis from description to a more abstract, theoretical level" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 341). I pulled code reports from MAXQDA based on the codes I thought would be relevant for particular themes; those decisions were informed by the tablemos. After drafting themes, I applied them to each piece of coded data pertaining to that theme to ensure that the theme appropriately represented and captured the content of the data. The themes resulted in the dimensions of instructors' Good Student Discourse, dimensions of students' Good Student Discourse, themes in the influences on their respective Good Student Discourses, and themes in the relationships between being a Good Student and academic success. When examining how well the Good Student Discourse dimensions described the data I collected for the study, I also checked for consistency across data types. For example, it would have been noteworthy if the only instances of a dimension were in instructors' interviews and not observed in class announcements or class observations. I triangulated the findings by making sure that each

dimension of Good Student Discourse was present in announcements, observations, and interviews. In addition, I wrote memos, drafted propositions for claims I could make based on the themes, and wrote two conference papers while I was constructing and refining the themes. This writing activity was part of the analysis process and helped me think through arguments that could be made from the findings and self-critique the robustness and meaningfulness of the claims.

I also conducted a synthesis of critical discourse and rhetorical analysis of the observation and class announcement data. I selected those types of data for this analysis and not the interview data because the instructors' announcements and comments I observed during the first day of class are directed at the students. My approach to this analysis was inspired by the guide to and application of critical discourse analysis in McGregor (2004) and Martínez-Alemán (2015). I coded the data for punctuation, tone, justifications for claims, and repeated words and phrases that highlighted the instructor as being in a position of power to decide what students should or need to do. For example, imperative statements conveyed a tone of authority and urgency and justifications for claims posed the statement as absolute truth. The critical discourse-rhetorical synthesis analysis is secondary to the thematic analysis; the thematic analysis findings informed my understanding of the observation and class announcement data I recoded for the critical discourse-rhetorical analysis. See Appendix J, Table 12 for the codebook.

Note about Presentation of Quotes

I transcribed interviews and observations verbatim but the transcription service I used did not. This discrepancy mainly shows up with instructors and students verbalizing "kinda" instead of "kind of" and "gonna" instead of "going to." For consistency's sake, I adjusted all to formal language ("going to" and "kind of"). I chose the formal language instead of colloquial because it

is possible that not all readers are familiar with the colloquial. Furthermore, including quotes

with formal language (because of the transcription service's practices) alongside quotes with

colloquial language, could make some readers assume that the speaker in the colloquial language

quote is less educated, unprofessional, or evoke other stereotypes. Regarding my conventions for

presenting quotes, I use ellipsis (…) to indicate an omission and a hyphen for when a participate

leaves a thought unfinished or pauses. I included "like" and other filler words in the transcripts I

completed but the transcription service did not, thus the presence or lack of those words should

not be considered significant. Hesitation markers ("um, uh") were not transcribed.

Limitations

There are four main limitations to my design: transferability, potential impression

management efforts on behalf of the participants, most of the instructor participants were

graduate students, and using a Jamboard to prompt students. All the data were collected at a

single institution, Lake University, and therefore may not reflect the Good Student Discourse at

other postsecondary institutions. However, I was seeking to explore Good Student Discourse and

how it might relate to first-year students' experiences without aiming for generalizability. In

addition, at the time of the Fall 2021 data collection, the COVID-19 pandemic was a serious

threat as the Delta variant took over the country and vaccines had only recently become widely

available. The majority of K-12 learning took place online in 2020 (NCES, 2022). The pandemic

took a serious toll on youth's mental health and learning gains in ways we may not fully

understand for years.[6] The COVID-19 pandemic could have influenced Good Student Discourse

in the wake of shifting to online learning and being more aware of mental health concerns. I

coded for references to COVID-19 in the data and did not see evidence that the pandemic was an

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[6] One example of a report supporting this statement: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf

influence on Good Student Discourse, though writing instructors discussed relaxed attendance policies to acknowledge its impact and some students mentioned that their senior year of high school may have been less academically challenging because of it. Because I cannot state that the COVID-19 pandemic did not have an influence in Good Student Discourse, the findings may not reflect the Good Student Discourse at Lake University before or after the pandemic.

The second limitation is that instructors may perceive me as someone evaluating their teaching which could influence what they share in interviews. I attempted to minimize this by having the first meeting with instructors before data collection, in which I emphasized that this study was not an evaluation of the instructors or their teaching. It is also possible that students in group interviews agreed with one another for the sake of impression management for their peers, yet there was no indication that this was the case and the data in the individual follow-up surveys were consistent with what students shared in their group interviews.

Another limitation is that most of the instructors who participated in my study were graduate student instructors. Most of the graduate student instructors had little teaching experience, which could have influenced their Good Student Discourse and how they communicated it. In addition, as students, they may also have been contending with the Good Student Discourse of their own instructors that term, which could have impacted how they defined a Good Student and manifested those definitions in their practices. Thus, my findings could have been very different if I had been able to recruit full-time instructors. However, given the prevalence of graduate student instructors teaching first-year courses (Bettinger et al., 2016), my findings and claims could still be relevant for students' experiences and instructors' discourses in first-year courses at other public institutions.

Fourth, using the Jamboard to prompt students' discussions about what it means to be a Good Student may have prevented students from reflecting independently on their definitions of a Good Student. The Jamboard could have had an influence on students' Good Student Discourse, because they were responding to it rather than providing their own definitions of a Good Student. I used the Jamboard because students might have found it difficult to answer the interview questions without a prompt, as they may not spend significant time reflecting on the behaviors that are associated with being a Good Student. Students shared strong opinions in response to the terms on the Jamboard and explained their level of agreement or disagreement that the Jamboard terms were characteristics of a Good Student, which suggests they did not feel they had to agree or conform their definition of a Good Student to the terms on the Jamboard. Finally, to avoid limiting students to what was presented on the Jamboard, I also asked them if there was anything they did not see represented; some students did offer behaviors that were not listed.

Trustworthiness

I took four approaches to improve the trustworthiness of my claims: (1) triangulation, (2) sharing students' reports with the instructors, (3) reflective memoing, and (4) conversations with others. Triangulating across data types can contribute to the trustworthiness and rigor of a study because it requires the researcher to (re)examine their interpretations and to view a phenomenon in different contexts (Denzin, 1989; Tracy, 2010). As discussed in the Analysis section above, I used and triangulated data from instructor interviews, observations, and announcements to identify dimensions of instructors' Good Student Discourse. I did the same with student interviews and follow-up surveys.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the data collection and analytical instrument; thus, my perspectives, assumptions, biases, and past experiences are influences on my interpretations of findings. I engaged in critical memo writing to evaluate the assumptions I was making, including writing memos about my experience as a student and an instructor and how my personal understandings of a Good Student could be affecting my interpretations of instructors' and students' statements. I also asked friends with teaching experience or who are working on PhDs in education for feedback on my findings and claims to check if my arguments were logical and resonated with their knowledge and experience in education. My dissertation co-chairs provided critical feedback on my findings chapters that helped sharpen my analysis and increase the clarity of my arguments.

Positionality

I am a White cisgender woman who does not have a disability, who was born in the United States, and who was raised in a middle-class home that subscribed to politically conservative and libertarian ideology. While economically middle-class, the ideology and circumstances under which I was raised reflect a working-class upbringing, and 'working-class' better describes my identity and work experiences, such has having three jobs at one time, not having employer-provided health insurance until I was a PhD student at the age of 31, and not having a salaried position until this year at the age of nearly 37. These aspects of my identity and experiences motivated my desire to situate my research in a broad access institution where I would likely find more students from working class backgrounds. Having waited tables and bartended in restaurants for 13 years, I learned from my coworkers about the inequities they faced that I did not because of documentation status, race, sexual identity, and family economic background. I was also faced with insults, derogatory comments, and stereotypes when waiting

tables and bartending. I know what sustained physical labor and outdoor work can do your body, and the pressure of having to go to work tired, sick, and injured because of the need to pay rent. Those experiences have had a profound influence on how I think about justice as well as human dignity.

However, even with efforts to use a critical lens, my White, cisgender, non-disabled, food-secure experiences, which place me in a relatively privileged social position, limit my ability to understand the experiences of student participants in my study, particularly those with marginalized identities, regarding how they have been described as a Good/Not Good Student and the meaning they make of those experiences. How I responded to students' and instructors' comments in interviews and interpret data could have been influenced by my Whiteness. My Whiteness could have help me understand the perspectives, experiences, and Good Student Discourses of White instructors and students. I have not had to navigate the discrimination or oppression that people with marginalized identities contend with, but years of teaching at a diverse community college may have supported my ability to understand the perspectives and experiences of students in my study.

Another motivation for this study was an assumption that some instructors at four-year institutions would have harsh policies that demand conformity from students. I attended selective universities for my undergraduate (University of Minnesota Twin Cities), master's degree (University of Chicago), and doctoral degree (University of Michigan Ann Arbor). I grew as a learner at each institution. However, I am wary of assumptions of what counts as "prestige" or "quality" in terms of education, as I think that supporting students as humans and learners is as important as academic rigor. At the University of Chicago, I felt that some of my instructors did not care about the students, had unclear expectations and policies, and assumed their intellect

was worthy of worship. Yet, as I discuss in subsequent chapters, my findings showed that the instructors in my study cared deeply for their students and did their best to support them—suggesting that institutional context could matter, and illustrating how a researchers' assumptions need to be interrogated during the analysis process.

My experience teaching also informed the study purpose, design, and analysis. For nine years, I had the privilege of teaching Humanities courses at a community college in Chicago. During my teaching experience, I questioned and revised my own definitions of a Good Student. After my master's program, I associated curiosity about Humanities and a thirst for intellectual debate with being a Good Student, but the students at the community college were very different from those at University of Chicago. The community college students were inspiring, brilliant, hard-working, compassionate, and brave, which I valued as aspects of being a Good Student but did not always recognize because of the weight I placed on curiosity and intellectual argumentation. During my teaching career, I became more open and able to recognize those other Good Student behaviors and characteristics. The community college may not be considered "prestigious" but the thinking and care that the students brought to the classroom surpassed anything I saw as an undergraduate or master's student. I believe those experiences are an asset of the perspective I bring to this study because they taught me there is not one Good Student type, thus allowing me to appreciate variety in students' and instructors' perspectives on what defines a Good Student and to make sense of instructors' discourse.

Reciprocity

I believe that research should benefit the participants involved. Brayboy et al. (2012) described reciprocity as a "'pay it forward' notion. That is, we take so that we can give to and provide for others" (p. 439). I practiced reciprocity in three ways: I shared summaries of the

students' interviews with the instructors, offered myself as a resource to the student participants, and provided each instructor and the first-year writing course coordinator an executive summary of findings (see Appendix L: for the latter). The summaries of the students' interviews provided feedback for the instructors they may not have otherwise received. This is important as many of them will continue teaching, either as faculty or as graduate students. At the conclusion of each interview with students, I said that I would be happy to help them in any way possible, including assistance with locating resources or if they just wanted to talk about the transition to college. I have used this strategy in the past and students have contacted me seeking help locating financial aid, scholarships, and transfer resources. None of the students in this study contacted me for assistance but some of them thanked me for the interview because it was a positive experience and an opportunity for reflection; one described it as being similar to a therapy session. Sending the summaries to the instructors and course coordinator could be useful for instructors as they continue to reflect upon their teaching practices as well as the course coordinator when he designs course policies and orientations for new instructors.

Chapter 4

Instructors' Good Student Discourse

I define Good Student Discourse (GSD) as any statements or actions that describe characteristics or behaviors, both desirable and undesirable, as well as actions that communicate certain behaviors or characteristics are valued (e.g., course policies). GSD is also reflective of the contexts in which the GSD is being communicated. Situating within my conceptual framework, how we as instructors define a Good Student reflects what we value, what we have experienced. Good Student Discourse is a description of what instructors think students should or could be; thus, it is a description of *someone else,* that may reveal information about the instructor's beliefs, experiences, and values, yet the instructor is not the one being described, objectified, categorized. The instructor is doing the describing, categorizing, and in doing so, makes the discursive object of a Good Student. The instructor can do this because they are the one with the power (and responsibility) of assessing the students in some aspect (their learning, their progress, their work, etc.). I, the researcher, have also turned the Good Student into an object of study, and asked the instructors to do this work of articulating their definition of a Good Student.

I found that instructors' GSD emphasized and valued being invested in the course in terms of effort and caring about their performance in the course. Striving to learn the course content was in the GSD of nearly all of the mathematics instructors and one writing instructor, suggesting there are disciplinary differences in what defines a Good Student. I also found that instructors worked hard to create opportunities to support students' enactment of GSD behaviors, as well as having policies to reflect their GSD. Instructors were influenced by a number of

experiences and individuals and intentionally did not use GSDs they had experienced as harmful

or unproductive. The instructors demonstrated thoughtfulness in reflecting critically on their role

in communicating Good Student Discourse and thinking about what would most benefit first-

year students. In sum, this chapter shows that instructors' Good Student Discourse was

influenced by their experiences and that the instructors were focused on how they could support

students.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the theme and dimensions I found in instructors' Good

Student Discourse, followed by instructors' critical reflections on defining a Good Student. Then

I will discuss the influences on instructors' GSD.

Good Student Discourse: A Good Student Invests Effort in the Course

I identified the theme "A Good Student invests effort in the course" by analyzing data

from interviews with instructors, announcements instructors posted on the learning management

system (LMS), and observations of the first day of class. Across all of the instructors, I found

three dimensions to being a Good Student: *engages during class, puts effort and attention*

towards coursework, and *communicates with the instructor* (see Table 5)*.* Those three

dimensions describe behaviors a student enacts because they invest effort in being an active

member of the course and are invested in their course performance.

Table 5

Dimensions of a Good Student in Instructors' GSD

Dimension	Dimension Definition
Engages During Class	Student participates during class (verbally, in group activities, or though silent modes of participation), asks questions during class, pays attention during class (not distracted on electronic devices), attends class.
Puts Effort and Attention Towards Coursework	Student submits assignments, follows assignment instructions, applies feedback, does reading for class, tries to meet assignment deadlines,

	pays attention to the progression of the course content, uses the syllabus or other resources to stay informed of course deadlines.
Communicates with the Instructor	Reaches out to instructor when experiences difficulty with an assignment or course content, or about any obstacles that could make it difficult for the student to succeed in the course; attends office hours, notifies instructor of absences, requests extensions if needed.

I identified a fourth dimension, *strives to learn (math)*, that was present in six instructors' GSD. The word *math* is in parentheses because five instructors—Alex, Clark, Ellie, Sam, and Toby—taught math courses, and Flora was the only writing instructor whose GSD included this dimension. I define *strives to learn (math)* as a student who asks questions to understand material, practices metacognition, takes risks and is not afraid to make mistakes in the process of learning, aims to master or extend content. The *strives to learn (math)* dimension aligns with the theme of students investing effort in the course, as this dimension describes a student putting time and energy into the course because they are invested in learning the material.

In this study, instructors' Good Student Discourse includes how they defined a Good Student during interviews and what they communicated to students. Combining instructors' explicit definitions and communicated messages allows for a fuller picture of a Good Student. The data pertaining to the definition and the communication come from different questions. For instructors' definitions of a Good Student, I used their responses to the question, "When you think about a Good Student, what comes to mind?" asked in the first interview, and responses to the following question from the second interview "In our last interview, you described a Good Student as [customize from first interview]. Is there anything you would like to change or add?" I also used other data from the interviews in which instructors were explicitly describing a Good Student as part of their response to another question. For the GSD instructors communicate to

students, I used data from observations of the first day of class, announcements posted to the course learning management system (LMS), and instructors' responses to interview questions about how they communicate their definition of a Good Student to students and how it is reflected in their teaching practices. Thus, I triangulated multiple forms of data to identify the theme of a Good Student as investing effort in the course, and the four dimensions of being a Good Student.

I organized the subsequent subsections of this chapter by the GSD dimensions. In the discussion of each dimension, I will provide more explanation and evidence of the dimension's definition, how GSD factored into instructors' grading and policies, and if applicable, discuss differences between instructors' definitions and communications. Though I identified the theme and four dimensions in instructors' Good Student Discourse communications and definitions, for the dimensions *engages during class* and *communicates with instructor* I found differences in what instructors communicated to students and how they defined GSD in their interviews. The comparison between instructors' definitions and communications is meaningful because the communications are student-facing, thus what likely has an impact on their experience with the instructors' understanding of a Good Student. I will identify the course the instructor teaches and the data source when I present quotes. The source of data is important for transparency so the reader can see how I drew on multiple sources of data to identify the theme and dimensions of GSD and to support my claims.

Engages During Class

The dimension of *engages during class* refers to students attending class, paying attention during class, participating in class activities and groupwork, and making verbal and non-verbal

contributions during class. Instructors noted that just attending class is not enough, a Good

Student pays attention in class and is not distracted by their devices.

> They're showing up to class and they don't have their phone out, and they're not playing a game on their computer, and they're actually there. They're present, truly present, not just physically, but also mentally. (Buster, writing, interview)

Some instructors told students that when they attend class and pay attention, they receive

valuable information about course assignments and deadlines.

> Make sure that you do attend class, especially since we have just finished a major assignment so spent today looking at the next assignments in this class. Class is where we go over materials and are a chance for you to ask questions. (May, writing, LMS announcement)

Several instructors used this strategy of explaining how attending class was beneficial for the

students. Providing a justification could frame the Good Student Discourse as being in the best

interests of the student; in the quote from May's LMS announcement, students who attend class

could get access to information and have their questions answered. However, the quote also

highlights how power manifests in GSD. May's statement draws boundaries around when and

where learning happens (in class). Not attending class (not being a Good Student) could mean

not having an opportunity to ask questions or to go over the next assignment, and the instructor

controls access to such opportunities. Furthermore, it is an imperative statement, telling students

what to do. Imperative statements were very common in the LMS announcements, which could

be due to the delivery method of such announcements that students cannot directly reply to. This

unidirectional communication highlights how the mechanics of communicating GSD reflects and

maintains a power structure.

Instructors described engagement during class as part of the learning process and having

implications for students' chances of succeeding in the course. For example, Kevin (writing,

interview) explained that, "attendance is important. I think that - I'd like to think what I'm

covering in the classroom is important and they're going to do better if they pay attention."

Mathematics instructors viewed engagement as important for students' understanding of the processes, steps, and concepts involved in solving math problems. As Sam was going over the syllabus on the first day of class, she said:

> You're expected to come to class and not just sit there. So my expectations are that you are active in class, you participate, right? That means if I ask a question I would love to hear feedback, right. We are going to solve problems, I would like to solve them together. Not just me and here's the solution, boom. We're actually going to talk about the process of solving a problem. So I do need your participation. (Sam, precalculus, observation)

Instructors discussed asking questions as an important component of participating in class that can benefit other students. Alex (calculus) told students on the first day of class that, "it is a contribution to the conversation to the class to say, 'wait a minute, this part doesn't make sense to me'" because everyone can learn from either a more thorough explanation or what is incorrect about a proposed solution to a problem. Similarly, some of the writing instructors shared how participating in group or pair discussions makes the class more enjoyable. This Good Student Discourse indicates that a Good Student is active during class because it supports the learning and positive experience of others, not just themselves.

When participants discussed participation in class, they tended to use positive reinforcement, which was less or not prominent in the other GSD dimensions. Some instructors thanked students for participating in class: "Thank you for your engagement to those you who were able to attend today's class" (Clark, calculus, LMS announcement). Clark's announcement highlights for the whole class, even those who did not attend, that engagement is valued and appreciated. Ellie's (quantitative reasoning) announcement also conveys a positive message: "You have been rock stars at participation this week! I hope you are enjoying our new topic of statistics as much as I am. :) Keep up the great work!!" Ellie's message cheers for students to maintain their level of engagement in addition to praising students for their participation.

Similarly, instructors encouraged students to participate by assuring them all questions are important and complimenting comments or questions students bring up during class. For example, Flora (writing) shared in an interview that, "I think as we move through the semester, I try really hard to encourage any sort of engagement to be really effusive in my praise, 'Yes, great question, love that.'" Instructors also complimented students for being active in groups during in-class activities, particularly when they are focusing on the course material:

> You guys did an awesome job of talking to one another. I don't know if you noticed this but there was a lot of talking amongst you about mathematical things which is what we are going to try to do here in class. (Alex, calculus, observation)

These findings show that GSD is not necessarily declarative or imperative, consistent with Foucault's theorization that discourse can also create desire. For example, positive statements and practices as part of Good Student Discourse can influence a student to want to be a Good Student. By using positive messaging, instructors make engagement something a student begins to want to do on their own; the student chooses to engage in class because they have decided they want to be a Good Student.

Instructors used various strategies to complement the verbal GSD about participating in class, such as how they engaged with students in the classroom and how they structured class sessions. Strategies in which instructors selected students and asked them to participate highlighted the power of the instructor over the students and functioned as technologies of power because they enforced the GSD of participation being required: "Sometimes I will cold call people, so be prepared, please do the reading, be ready to provide some sort of answer" (Kevin, writing, observation). Cold calling is when an instructor asks an individual student who is not volunteering to contribute a comment or question to the class. Similarly, Irene used a tool to randomly select students, then called on them. Use of this strategy enforces the message that a Good Student should always be prepared for class and ready to participate because the instructor

has the power to compel their participation at any time, which would also reveal the extent to which they were a Good Student in other ways (prepared for class). Flora (writing) used a different strategy to prompt students to participate. She explained in an interview that student engagement is built into the weekly structure of the class.

> I would kind of approach the week and sort of divvy out the effort with my students. I would just sort of tell them, "Hey, here's the plan for this week. Today I'm going to be lecturing. So, it's mostly me kind of carrying the load. You can kind of sit back and just listen. Wednesday, I'm going to be expecting you guys to lead the conversation and I won't talk very much. And then Friday, we'll sort of do like half and half or something like that."

Flora's strategy indicates a sense of balance and shared responsibility, in which students knew when they need to participate.

Using multiple strategies to solicit student participation generates a Good Student Discourse that a Good Student participates, but participation is not strictly defined by verbal contributions, thus expanding opportunities for students to enact the Good Student behavior of engaging in class. ElizabethP (precalculus) shared in an interview that, "In that I think good student ask questions and participate, I try to encourage that asking questions and participating in giving different ways to participate." She used a variety of practices, including asking students to volunteer to do problems on the board, passing out notecards for students to write down their answers anonymously, and general class question and answer. Ellie had over 70 students in her quantitative reasoning class and wanted to make sure that her GSD of being engaged during class reached all students, not just the ones who consistently volunteered to participate. In an interview, Ellie (quantitative reasoning) discussed how persistence is key when communicating GSD:

> There was one student in particular who was very strong mathematically but would not say anything. And at one point she never came to the board, even though I invited her many times, because I'd walk around and see what she had on her paper and say, "Oh, you should share that with us." But she did actually. At one point, I got her to at least

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share something orally with the class, so to me that was just kind of elevating her to that next step of helping her to become a better student.

Ellie's example illustrates how instructors tried to balance concerns about making students feel uncomfortable while still communicating the importance of participating through their GSD. However, Ellie's statement also implies a hierarchy of engagement. The student sharing something orally in class was considered an improvement, a step above her usual method of engaging in the class by following the discussions and doing the problems in class. The assumption embedded in that GSD is that verbal participation is of high importance, but it does not take into account the possibility that verbal participation may be harmful or particularly difficult for some students. For example, verbal participation could create high levels of anxiety for students who who have disabilities or mental health issues or for students from cultures that view verbal participation in a classroom as inappropriate. Furthermore, students might not participate because they had negative experiences when participating in prior courses and do not wish to risk further harm to themselves. One of the reasons that discourse is powerful is that it contains judgments about what is valued, and what is not.

Comparison of Instructors' Definitions and Communications: Participation. In general, the definitions and communication about being engaged in class aligned. Instructors included attending class and paying attention in their definitions of a Good Student and in the statements they made to students. I found one significant difference in that the writing instructors were critical of verbal participating in class being part of the definition Good Student, yet in their communications to students, the writing instructors emphasized the importance of verbal participation. Flora and Kevin shared examples of students who do not participate in class but who they considered to be strong writers. Irene, who described herself as a quiet student in college, discussed the tension between knowing participation in class does not define a Good

Student but also the value of participation to the instructor's assessment of students' learning. Below is her response to my question, "when you think about a Good Student, what comes to mind?"

> I wish this weren't the thing that comes to mind, but the thing that comes to mind is somebody who participates a lot in the class discussions… But I struggle with that sometimes because that's how I check understanding, is asking them about the reading, about the assignment, about how things are going. And so if they don't answer, that stresses me out, right? Whereas if I'm getting somebody who's consistently giving responses, I'm like, "Okay, that person is on. That person knows what's going on." So I think that they're a good student. So that's just one thing…They try, they put in the effort, they're just not quite brave enough to just shout out an answer when I ask for something.

Irene admitted that lack of participation in class could be an indication that a student is not "quite brave enough" and not necessarily a lack of engagement or investment in being a Good Student. However, she used participation as informal assessment of the student's understanding or the readings and assignments, suggesting an assumption that students who participate in class are keeping up with the coursework. She explained how she worked through her assumptions:

> And so I don't want to think that they're bad students because they don't do those things, but my instinct is like, "If you're participating, then you're doing well." So I try and remind myself of that whenever I feel like I'm judging a student too harshly, which thankfully doesn't happen very often, but there are definitely times where it just sticks with you, you're like, "Oh, that's the person that always talks in class," so I'm kind of predisposed to think a little bit better of them.

Irene was aware of the bias towards participation in class and reminded herself that participation is not an accurate assessment of a Good Student's investment in the course. She also commented that "graduate classes are almost entirely participation-based," referencing her own experiences with the discourses she hears as a graduate student. Irene's grappling with the assumptions about participation defining a Good Student is an example of how power functions through discourse, because the discourse of Good Students participate in class has influenced Irene's GSD, even though she knows that is not true or fair for students in her first-year writing course. Her resistance illustrates that people can show agency by refusing discourse, but resisting endorsing

dominant values in discourses about Good Students is challenging because discourse can affect people's beliefs, judgements, and values—all of which undergird interactions and assessments.

Though Irene, Kevin, and Flora expressed doubts about or rejected the assumption that participating in class is a defining behavior of a Good Student, all three of them included participating in class in their Good Student Discourse communications to students. They framed participation as required by using cold calling (Kevin), a randomizer to call on students (Irene), and telling students the course requires their participation (Kevin and Flora). In addition, Irene and Kevin told students that the class is "more fun" (Irene) and "less awkward" (Kevin) if students participate. It is not clear how the instructors connected learning, not just understanding the readings and assignments, to participation; for example, are students learning through participating, or are they participating because they are learning? One possible explanation for telling students participation is required is that instructors' communications to students about participating in class reflect aspirations, not strict criterion for being a Good Student, and their definitions are more inclusive in terms of recognizing not all students feel comfortable participating in class. Furthermore, it is curious that this difference between how instructors discussed participation as not required for being a Good Student but then telling students they need to participation was only identified among writing instructors. It is possible that by offering multiple ways for students to participate in class, as Ellie and ElizabethP did, instructors can balance being inclusive towards students' needs and preferences while adhering to being engaged in class as a criterion of being a Good Student.

Attendance Policies. The Good Student Discourse of engages during class was evident in most of the instructors' grading and policies on attendance. All of the instructors had attendance policies — grade deductions for absences, allowing a set number of excused absences

— except for Alex and Toby. Alex (calculus, interview) shared that attendance policies are inequitable because "you're giving a boost to the people who can actually make it to class reliably, which some of is - for some students -- is beyond their control." Toby (precalculus, interview) framed the lack of attendance policy as assuming the students are doing their best and want to come to class, but can't always make it, and should not be penalized for circumstances beyond their control:

> In some way, you guys have made it to Pre-Calc, so there is a level of trust and autonomy that went, like I felt comfortable giving the students of like, If you guys need to miss a class, you don't necessarily need to tell me. I'm going to trust that. You're doing the best that you can do and something came up, or you just need a mental health day or something like that.

Toby's statement illustrates an example of how the instructors could communicate their ideas of what it means to be a Good Student without emphasizing direct control over the students. The processes of instructors monitoring and punishing (via grade deductions) students' absences and students having to disclose their absence to the instructor all function as technologies of power for an instructor's GSD, and highlights that the instructor is in a position of power. By directly refusing to use those processes and trusting the students to make their own decisions about attendance, Toby disrupted the instructor-student hierarchy. In this case, the GSD is more about hoping than demanding students attend class, which still functions as a statement about which behaviors are valued. In their explanations for not having attendance policies, both Toby and Alex indicated an awareness of Lake University students having to commute or having other responsibilities outside of school. Alex and Toby's explanations indicate the role of institutional context in GSD and how it is enforced in policies, because students at a broad access university may be more likely to need to work or be commuter students than students at a highly selective institution.

Though nearly all of the instructors discussed being lenient with grade deductions for absences, they did not always disclose that to students because they wanted to uphold their Good Student Discourse of attending and participating in class. To clarify, the writing instructors were not allowed to change the grade breakdown of the course or course policies because those were determined by the course coordinator. Toby, May, and Buster were open with students about not enforcing grade deductions for absences, but Ellie, Kevin, Irene, Flora did not tell students they were going to be lenient or ignore the attendance grade altogether. Irene's explanation of why illustrates how instructors wanted to avoid punishing students for absences but not wanting to suggest students do not need to come to class:

> I kind of made up my mind like halfway through the semester [to not enforce the attendance grade deduction policy], but then I had heard that the other sections were having real problems with attendance and I was like, well I don't want to tell them that they don't have to come because obviously that's what, how some of them would take it, right. Like some of them would continue coming I'm sure, but some of them would also kind of feel like "Oh well, it's Okay, if I just like blow this off." (Irene, writing, interview)

Irene was concerned that if she was forthcoming that she was not going to apply grade deductions for absences, some students would interpret that as attending class is not required and not go to class. Instructors thought attending class was important as it has implications for students' learning and preparation for doing well on course assignments. Kevin (writing) explained he did not emphasize anything about grading attendance to students because it might distract from the point of attending class:

> Part of it is, in my experience, that the students that miss a lot of class end up not doing as well anyway…if you fail the class because you've missed too many [class] meetings, that's sort of like an easy one to brush off like, "I'll just attend more classes next semester." But if you can see like, "Hey, I missed all that instruction, I didn't know how to write the papers, and then I got poor grades on my papers, maybe I should go to class." I feel like that is a better lesson.

Kevin's explanation mirrors the justifications instructors gave to students for why attending, paying attention, and engaging in class is important. Thus, though attendance is a behavior instructors identified as being a Good Student, instructors wanted students to see the value in attending class rather than attending because it is in exchange for a grade.

The COVID-19 pandemic could have influenced instructors' decisions about being flexible with attendance policies. Some instructors noted that university policies surrounding excusing absences because of COVID-19 infection were too narrow because they did not account for students being exposed to COVID-19. In addition, in an interview, Kevin raised the question of values embedded into excusing absences because of COVID-19: "But someone who was in a car accident, they don't get a relaxed attendance policy? So you start weighing who deserves it, which feels kind of bad." Kevin's assessment illustrates how values are built into policies that uphold an institutional GSD, and how instructors make decisions to subvert those policies. Even though instructors described attendance as important and it was part of instructors' GSD, the instructors considered justice and equity when deciding to use or enforce course policies.

Puts Effort and Attention Towards Coursework

A second dimension of GSD in this study is that a Good Student puts effort and attention towards coursework. This dimension includes students submitting assignments on time, trying their best on assignments, doing the reading or coursework that is required for the next class session, and paying attention to assignment criteria and deadlines. Below is Buster's response when I asked her how she knows students are trying hard on an assignment:

> I would just say, "Are you hitting the standards that are put forth by first your writing, hitting the page number count? Are you following the directions?"…Are you reading the rubric and all that kind of stuff? That's how I can tell that someone's kind of thought about it, put in more effort.

For Buster and the other writing instructors, following the instructions and answering the prompt was evidence of students devoting effort towards the coursework. The mathematics instructors also emphasized the importance of taking time to think about their coursework:

> And there's this SLO homework and they're going to think about it in a fairly timely fashion, and they're going to go home and they're going to... When they feel like they know the material, they're going to do that SLO homework. (Alex, calculus, interview)

Alex's quote illustrates the perspective that a Good Student is diligent in considering what the assignment as asking them to do and in preparing themselves to complete it, which is similar to the writing instructors' comments about paying attention to assignment criteria.

The emphasis on staying on track with coursework being the students' responsibility varied across instructors' Good Student Discourse. Several instructors discussed the importance of a Good Student taking responsibility for devoting sufficient time to coursework and using resources to determine what needs to be completed. Ellie (quantitative reasoning) argued that "committing time to doing work both inside and outside of class is critical." All of the writing instructors went over the syllabus in detail on the first day, discussing the value of the course schedule.

> If you're ever confused about the homework, check the syllabus, ok. Check the syllabus. If you're still confused about the homework, you can email me, you can text me you can call me, but check the syllabus first. Don't just say "I don't think we had nothing due." And then you show up and you did, that would not be great. So do check the syllabus. (Irene, writing, observation)

Irene's quote is an example of instructors wanting students to take responsibility for being attentive to assignment deadlines and communicating that in their Good Student Discourse. Her instructions to students are imperative statements of what to do ("do check the syllabus") and what not to do ("don't just say"), creating a binary indicative of what separates a Good Student from a Bad Student. In her definition of a Good Student, Sam said "really they should be responsible" and self-motivated to complete the homework and study for class. Similarly, Alex

did not have due dates for assignments but wanted students to adhere to a schedule for completing assignments she suggested students follow so they can complete the course.

While some instructors emphasized that staying on track with assignments is the student's responsibility, other instructors used the learning management system (LMS) announcements to regularly remind students of what assignments or readings they need to complete. For example, in a LMS announcement, May (writing) told students that, "This is a reminder that the exploratory essay is due tomorrow night at midnight in the [LMS] dropbox." ElizabethP and Ellie posted the due dates as a list each week, illustrated here with an excerpt from ElizabethP (precalculus): "Due Dates: 2.6 Due Monday; 2.7 and 2.8 Due Thursday." Elizabeth also shared that she writes what is due that week on the classroom whiteboard. By providing reminders, the instructors could support students to enact the Good Student behavior of completing coursework. Irene, Alex, and Sam did not send reminders to students about their coursework, which aligns with their GSD that a Good Student is responsible for checking the syllabus and paying attention to coursework due dates. There was not a clear pattern between instructor position (graduate student, professor) or discipline of course taught regarding sending reminders or wanting students to be responsible for deadlines.

Instructors occasionally explained that students needed to submit assignments or complete reading on time because it is necessary for the following class session, thus linking the dimensions of being an engaged student and putting time into coursework. In addition, this Good Student Discourse implies that students must or should complete an activity because of what the instructor has planned for the following class.

> The second part of class on Tuesday will focus on Limits so you should complete this pre activity prior to Tuesday's class [link]. (Clark, calculus, LMS announcement).

Students would have a difficult time being engaged in class without having prepared an activity on Limits because that is what Clark planned for the second part of Tuesday. This is an example of how GSD can subtly express expectations of compliance and reinforce power relationships. Using the word "should" connotes an obligation that Clark expects the student to meet but does not cross the threshold of necessary (e.g., "you need to complete"). Using "should" instead of "need" emphasizes that the pressure is on the student because the student theoretically has a choice to do the Good Student behavior, whereas "need" implies there is no choice. In this statement, Clark has the power to announce the Good Student obligation, and a Good Student chooses to comply, even though it is not clear what the student gains from it. Use of "should" statements were more common in the LMS announcements than in observations or interviews. LMS announcements about doing coursework also featured imperative statements that include "please."

> Please remember that we have some [peer review] assignments due tonight. Please make sure you get those done, because we will be working with those drafts tomorrow in class. (Buster, writing, LMS announcement)

When "please" is part of an imperative statement ("make sure you get those done") and not a question, "please" is no longer a request because the imperative is a command to do something. "Please" softens the imperative's tone, but does not disarm it or reduce its power. The GSD in Buster's statement implies that if a student does not complete their peer review assignment, they will have simultaneously disobeyed an instruction and denied a personal appeal. In addition, not completing a peer review has implications for the other student whose work they are assigned to review, because that student would be missing out on feedback. A Good Student turns in their assignments and does not disappoint their instructor; thus, it has a similar effect to using "should." In sum, there was a variety of ways instructors communicated the reminders of coursework, such as framing them as expectations (Clark's "you should…"), imperative pseudo-

requests (Buster's "please make sure..."), or lists of due dates as a reference. Yet all indicate that completing coursework and complying with course deadlines is something a Good Student does.

In their communications to students, some instructors explained how doing assignments would benefit the students beyond just earning a grade for that particular assignment. Sam (precalculus) told the class on the first day the importance of devoting "10-12 hours, right, that you have to study outside of class. Take it seriously, really it will pay off, I promise you, when you get to Calc 1 and Calc 2 especially." Sam's Good Student Discourse expresses that a Good Student is serious about investing time and effort into studying outside of class. She assumes that the precalculus students are planning on taking calculus and calculus 2 and that being a Good Student now will help them in higher level courses. Completing assignments on time can also help students stay on track with the course and do well on other assignments. Some instructors pleaded with students to submit their work, even if their work was not completed:

> You're now in review groups for Eli [peer] Review Feedback Task 8. Only about 55% turned this in on time which means 45% of you are in the late group. This is me urging you to please turn in your draft ASAP even if it's not the 2 pages Eli asks for. And then please give feedback (remember you need to review 2 peers for full credit). Participating in Eli cycles will help you see how your classmates are handling the assignment and also give you valuable advice for your next draft. In short, it helps you stay on pace with the rest of the class.

Kevin's appeal to the students includes the justification that participating in peer review assignments will help them on their own drafts and stay on track. Coursework is an investment the Good Student makes for their academic future, not just an obligation that must be met. By providing explanations for why and how the student might benefit, instructors showed their commitment to supporting and guiding students' efforts to enact Good Student behaviors.

However, instructors' GSD in course announcements also highlighted their power to monitor and decide who is a Good Student by making comparisons and assigning students to categories. Returning to Kevin's announcement in the previous paragraph, the students are

separated into two groups, represented by percentages, and then compared using deductive logic ("55% turned this in on time which means 45% of you are in the late group"). Kevin took this approach to persuade students to do something in other LMS announcements by alluding to a number who have or have not completed something. Clark, Ellie, May, and Irene also made comparison announcements, such as complimenting a group who did something or calling out a group who has not, or telling students to do an assignment "if they haven't already," implying that some students have already started and those who have not are behind:

> This is a reminder to sign up for writing conferences on Friday if you have not done so already. (May)

> If you have not done so already, it is essential that you carefully review the midterm preparation guide in the midterm review module. (Ellie)

> Please complete the desmos slides here, if you have not done so already. (Clark)

Counting and comparing students categorizes them, and when it is done in a class announcement it explicitly divides students into those who are being Good Students and those who are not. All of the comparisons I found were binary, suggesting little understanding or gray space between Good Student and not. While instructors may be using that counting and comparison strategy to let students know they are paying attention and remind them what is due, comparing who has and who has not completed something reinforces the instructor as the person with the power to surveil and assess student engagement with coursework. In addition, those comparisons make it public that some people are doing what they are supposed to be doing and others are not, performing a social shaming function, even if students' names are not shared. Such comparisons are an example of how power can be coercive and expressed in discourse.

Providing justifications indicates that instructors don't assume a Good Student submits coursework just because they are graded on it, they submit assignments because it is in their own

interest. On the one hand, these instructors are using their communication platform to encourage students to do their coursework even though they do not personally benefit from students' submission of assignments. On the other hand, the instructor still has the power of the gradebook; taking a more macro perspective, submitting coursework is one component of a system that, for the most part, uses student's coursework to categorize them with grades. Distinguishing who is (not) trying hard based on submitted work prioritizes products that can be observed and assessed by the instructor. Thus, the GSD of completing coursework while of itself could be motivated by the instructor wanting the student to ultimately pass the course, it is indicative of the power relationship in the educational system that puts the instructor in a position of power to assess a student based on what they can observe, as opposed to a system in which the student self-reports on what they have learned.

Late Work Policies and Grading Effort. The Good Student dimension of putting time and attention into coursework was reflected in instructors' grading decisions as well as part of their course policies. All of the instructors except Alex and Buster had policies regarding acceptance of and grade penalties for late assignments. May, Irene, and Flora gave extensions on deadlines if students asked for them in advance of the due date; all three of them were very clear with students about that extension policy on the first day of class. Ellie, Clark, Kevin, and Toby also gave students extensions if students were struggling with an assignment or having a personal issue, though they did not openly advertise that point. Having a late work policy as well as granting extensions on the condition they are requested in advance of the deadline communicates the importance of paying attention to deadlines.

Some of the writing instructors discussed how students' effort in the course assignments factored into their grades.

I told them, you don't have to turn in some kind of Shakespeare, I don't know, who wrote something really great, I don't know. You don't have to turn in some kind of Pulitzer Prize-winning piece of art. Just turn something in, I'll pass you…if you turn stuff in, if you stay, like you're putting in effort, you definitely are going to get through the class just fine. (Buster, writing, interview)

As noted earlier, Buster defined effort as trying to meet the page length and following the directions. Her references to Shakespeare and a "Pulitzer Prize-winning piece of art" imply that students do not have to submit exemplary writing in order to pass the course, which she defined in the interview as an "A or a B." Similarly, Kevin said that "because I think writing is subjective, I sort of grade in a narrow band from the B, which is 83 to 100 for students that actually make a good faith attempt." For Kevin, this consisted of answering the prompt and getting close to the required page length. Flora had a slightly different perspective, that:

If I can see that you've put effort forth, you'll get a good grade, particularly in the later assignments, if I see improvements. And I'll have students send me early drafts of stuff sometimes, and then if they turn in the final and I can see that they've used my comments from the first draft, that speaks to an amount of effort, I think, and attentiveness. (Flora, writing, interview)

Flora defined effort in terms of students improving their writing from one assignment to the next, and rewarded students with that grade-wise. Her consideration of improvement indicates valuing the student who puts effort into learning how to write or advance their skills. In contrast, Buster's implied definition of effort ("turn something in") conveys low expectations of students in terms of the quality of their writing. Buster and Flora's quotes illustrate how vague instructors' GSD can be, and that the definition of a Good Student behavior can vary from one person to another. It is not clear if they ever explicitly defined "effort" for the students.

The emphasis of a Good Student does their best to meet assignment requirements without the expectation of learning or improving could be related to how instructors view writing. In addition to Kevin, Flora and May noted that what defines quality writing is subjective. Thus, grading the effort that the students put into meeting the requirements of the assignment is the

instructors' attempts to include fairness in their grading policies that enforce their Good Student Discourse. Grading effort could be reflective of instructors' considerations that most of the students in the class are in their first year of college and it is a broad access institution; the role of supporting first-year students on instructors' GSD will be discussed later in this chapter.

Communicates with the Instructor

Instructors in this study also defined a Good Student as one who communicates with the instructor about the coursework, challenges they are facing, their attendance. I include exchanges that happen outside of the classroom in this dimension. For instructors, such communication was an indicator of student investment in the course, including when that communication alerts the instructor to an absence. Sam told students on the first day of precalculus class, "If you cannot attend class, please let me know, ok? And especially if we have a quiz or an exam you need to let me know beforehand." Sam specified the importance of notifying her when there is a quiz or exam because she allows students to make up exams or quizzes if they notify her of their absence in advance, thus including an incentive for being proactive in communication. Being proactive was very important to some instructors. For example, Clark (calculus) defined a Good Student as,

> one that will communicate with me and is kind of proactive in communicating with me
> about maybe they know they have a trip coming up months in advance and that's going to
> affect what's happening…their attendance, or what they're able to complete in the course.

Clark and other instructors valued students reaching out about absences because by acknowledging they are missing class, they are indicating that they think about the course as a part of their schedule.

Several instructors emphasized that a Good Student seeks help from the instructor when they are facing any challenge that is preventing them from being successful in the course. Seeking help is also an indication of the student being invested in the course, as capture in this

quote from an interview with Kevin (writing): "I think just by nature of asking for that help, it shows that they care." Instructors saw communication as the necessary catalyst for supporting the student. For example, ElizabethP (precalculus, interview) shared that "what's important to me is communication with me. I will work with whatever situation and will help them out as much as I can." Some instructors noted that being able to ask for help is a very important skill for a Good Student to have, because not asking for help can place a student's grade and confidence in more jeopardy. Irene (writing, interview) narrated that situation as, "they just try and figure it out, they don't get it right, and then they get frustrated and like discouraged and it all kind of spirals down so that's [asking for help] a big one." May phrased seeking help as something that is learned in the process of becoming a Good Student:

> I guess being able to ask for help is I think something that folks who are learning how to be good students learn to do. Because it can be hard to ask for help. And I think that that's something that, especially if somebody is sort of trying to be a good student, I think that that's sort of the thing that might tip them over the line to being like, "Yeah, you're a good student." (writing, interview)

The instructors described their GSD as assuring students it is important to ask for help and helping them get into the habit of doing so. Their comments showed how GSD can have a socializing function, which might be particularly important for students who are new to college.

As the above quotes indicate, part of being a Good Student is seeking help when struggling in the course. Every instructor encouraged students to reach out to them for assistance; several did so by reminding them of their office hour times and prompting students to reach out with any questions in class or through learning management system (LMS) announcements. For example, Kevin (writing) posted, "Don't be afraid to email me with questions!" Instructors also offered options for ways in which students could reach out to them.

> I will say many times through the semester of here's what my office hours are if you want come to those, or just send, email me, if you don't want to talk to me in person, you can talk to me over a computer. (ElizabethP, pre-calculus, interview)

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ElizabethP wanted students to know that contacting her was not limited to office hours and that she was happy to have conversations online. Other instructors focused on text-message based approaches.

> As far as the contact stuff information goes for me, you're always free to email me. I'm thinking about opening up either Google talk thing so there's a phone number that you could like text me questions or text me pictures and be like, "Hey, I'm working on this problem. I'm just not getting it. Please help." (Toby, precalculus, observation)

Two of the writing instructors, Irene and Buster, shared their phone number with students. The instructors' GSD communicated that a Good Student reaches out to the instructor and acknowledged that students may feel comfortable contacting the instructor in more immediate and informal ways than email or office hours. In addition to encouraging students to communicate when they need help, Clark (calculus) shared in an interview that he explicitly complimented students:

> when I send emails to students, I do try to comment on, and just like thank them, like "thanks for reaching out with your concern" or "thank you for communicating with me about what's coming up next week and how you won't be able to join us."

Though he was the only instructor to report using this strategy, it is similar to instructors using positive feedback and praise to encourage and reward students who participated in class.

> Key to this dimension is that the student initiates the contact. Instructors were clear that the Good Student is responsible for seeking help, and preferably does so sooner rather than later.

> You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink and that's kind of my motto with this, and that's why I was really stressing office hours the first day of class last Tuesday, because it's important that they kind of get that in their head. You can reach out to me. You can get help. This is not out of reach. (Buster, writing, interview)

Buster's quote is an example of how several instructors' GSD explicitly stated that seeking help from the instructor is an important step to take and that succeeding in the course is not an impossible task that students must struggle through alone. A Good Student reaches out to the

instructor as they are experiencing difficulties with the assignment, rather than using those

difficulties as a reason for not completing their coursework:

> One thing I'm trying to get them used to is not coming to me after the fact and saying, "Well, I couldn't do this assignment because I didn't understand this."…Kind of getting them used to, well, if you didn't understand this question on the homework, email me, I'm really responsive about that. Email me and don't wait until its [deadline] already passed and then just tell me after the fact, "I couldn't do it." Take some initiative to reach out and ask questions when things aren't making sense. (Ellie, quantitative reasoning, interview)

Ellie explained that this method of reaching out to the instructor when experiencing difficulties is

something that she tries to teach or normalize for students, suggesting that most of the students in

her classes do not ask for help as needed. Similar to Ellie, Kevin (writing) emphasized the

importance of being proactive, stating that, "A good student will ask questions early if they're

confused rather than do the whole assignment wrong, and then have to do it again." On the first

day of class, Kevin shared an example of a student from a prior semester who waited too long to

ask for help and disclose their disability. He used that case to stress the importance of

communicating with the instructor as proactively as possible. These examples illustrate how

communicating with the instructor relates to the dimension of putting effort and attention

towards coursework; there are times in which students may need to reach out to the instructor in

order to complete their coursework.

Though instructors include communicating with them as part of their Good Student

Discourse, they also recognize their own power to create conditions in which students are more

likely to reach out. These instructors saw their role as supporting students into making choices

and taking actions that can help them succeed in the course. However, those connections were

not always made explicit for the students. Most of the LMS statements encouraging students to

reach out to the instructor ended in an exclamation point, possibly to convey the instructor's

enthusiasm to help students, and focused on the student notifying the instructor without

explaining what the instructor will do. For example, Buster regularly posted a sentence like, "let me know if you need anything at all!" Buster's comment assures students that she is willing to assist them with "anything" but it is not clear what kind of help Buster will provide. Thus, being a Good Student could be interpreted from those announcements as notifying the instructor of their needs or questions, thus emphasizing the disclosure of struggle, without clarifying the role of the instructor in providing assistance. An alternative would be for Buster to tell the students that she will help clarify the prompt for the writing assignment, offer suggestions for organizing their paper, explain the grading rubric in more detail, help the student locate resources to support their points, or provide feedback on the student's ideas. Providing more specificity could help normalize seeking help from the instructor for those particular questions or needs, as well as assure students that they will receive worthwhile, valuable assistance if they contact the instructor.

Policies and Grades Reward Communication. Instructors considered the degree to which students communicated with them in their grading practices and policy implementation. For example, May, Irene, and Flora granted extensions to any student who asked for them; thus, students who communicated, who initiated contact, could avoid a late penalty.

> No project will be considered late if you've spoken with me prior to the due date. I have no problem giving extensions and there's no reason I wouldn't extend the project for anyone of you, if you come to me before the due date. (Flora, writing, observation)

May and Irene used very similar messaging to Flora's, indicating that students who reached out and requested and extension would receive one. Instructors also made decisions about policy enforcement when students approached them after the event. For example, Clark (calculus, interview) noted that he makes his decisions about enforcing the attendance policy on a "case-by-case" basis in terms of if the student communicates with him about the issues they were facing. If students contact him about their absence, he is "usually pretty flexible" but for students

who did not attend class or contact him, he enforces the grade deduction for absences as listed in

the syllabus. Sam, Toby, Flora, and Irene also discussed relaxing penalties for late work or

allowing students to make up a quiz if students talked to them about any obstacles that prevented

them from meeting the deadline.

Writing instructors Buster and Kevin rewarded students' communication in other ways,

such as with grading and additional assistance. Kevin (writing) rewarded students who

communicated with him by providing them with additional support, even when students do not

ask for it. He described this scenario in an interview:

> So it's like if you tell me you're not going to be in class or "I'm sorry, I missed class, I
> was sick." I'll send you the lecture slides for the day, and anything else that we did and
> offer to meet with you. If you miss class and you don't say anything to me, then I'm not
> going to hunt you down, maybe I'll assume that you can look at the syllabus... You
> looked at the syllabus and you know what to do, so I do try to match their engagement in
> that sense, so if you're going to be responsible and tell me that you're out, then I'll reward
> that and help you out and etcetera.

Thus, Kevin conferred a potential advantage to the student who told him they were absent, even

though the student did not request the slides. Kevin's quote also shows he views reaching out to

the instructor as the student's responsibility and if that responsibility is met, he will reciprocate

by sharing information. This illustrates how an instructor can use their power to reward Good

Student Behaviors and punish students who do not do those behaviors. Though the punishment

here is not direct or advertised to the student, such as applying a grade deduction, the student

who does not email Kevin does not receive the lecture slides or materials they missed. Kevin

withholding information from the student who does not email about their absence is an example

of how an instructor's practice is a technology of power and enforces their GSD. Buster (writing,

interview) shared that for

> The students who are always coming to office hours, they're always wanting help…I
> know that you've been putting in a good effort and I've been working with you closely
> throughout the semester, I don't hose people on grades, I just don't do that because I think

that you need to instill confidence. And one of the ways that you instill confidence is by rewarding people for doing what they're supposed to do.

Buster wanted to reward the students who were confident and committed enough to ask for help. Thus, she didn't want to grade them harshly because they were doing what she thinks are Good Student behaviors: attending office hours and asking for help, and because they asked for help and attended office hours, she could see them "doing the work." In this sense, communicating with the instructor allowed the instructor to observe the effort and attention a student invests in their coursework as the student is trying to complete it — a process typically not observed by the instructor because students complete assignments out of class. Thus, Buster's claim to "know" who was putting in effort based on those observations is suspect and a reminder of how the definition of "effort" and how it is recognized is slippery. In sum, instructors rewarded students for reaching out to them in the form of extensions, additional support, or grades; yet rewarding that behavior could have the adverse effect of privileging those who are comfortable or able to communicate with the instructor.

Strives to Learn (Math)

I categorized references to a Good Student making effort to understand and engage with the ideas presented within the course in the theme of *strives to learn.* In this dimension, the Good Student wants to learn for the sake of learning, not just to complete an assignment. As Table 5 indicates, this dimension was identified in nearly all the mathematics instructors' definitions, but in only one of the writing instructors' (Flora). Flora described a Good Student as thinking critically about the course material, generating questions from the readings, and being "willing to engage with the ideas." Though the specifics of striving to learn may be different between the mathematics and writing instructors' definitions, Flora's definition is aligned with the theme of being intellectually engaged with the course content for the sake of learning.

Instructors described students making extra effort to learn the material by using resources such as the math tutoring lab and asking questions for the purpose of understanding the course content, as opposed to asking questions about how to complete an assignment or making up an exam.

> If I have somebody who's attending office hours, going to the tutor lab, just emailing me all the time being like, "How do I do this? Well, what do you mean by this? We covered this in class, but I don't still quite get it," that sort of thing. I look at that student, I go, they are a good student, they are trying their best to really grasp this material. (Toby, precalculus, interview)

Toby's quote portrays a Good Student who aims to understand the material and who makes additional effort to do so. Clark (calculus, interview) also described a Good Student as being active in their learning, "not just kind of passively receiving it," asking questions about course concepts in class, and taking those concepts beyond the assignments:

> Maybe in an ideal sense the students would do - kind of come with their own questions and pose their own problems, trying to extend what we had done in class into something, something new or something that seems like an interesting extension on what we did. Just kind of out of their own curiosity.

Clark was the only instructor to directly reference curiosity, but his thought is similar to how other instructors framed a Good Student as working towards understanding for the sake of learning.

Mathematics instructors also specified that a Good Student practices metacognition and tries to learn from their mistakes. They described this as students pausing and asking themselves questions to make sure they understand the content. Sam (precalculus, interview) distinguished a Good Student as engaging in "That metacognition part of it, asking like, 'Wait a minute, do I get this?'" not just "mimicking" what they see the instructor do in class when working through a problem. Multiple mathematics instructors discussed the importance of being able to reflect on errors made and to learn from them as well as reflecting on the problem-solving process. After

having students work on a problem in groups in the first day of class, Alex asked groups to

present their solutions. Two groups shared their process and answer. Then Alex told the class:

> We were able to take a look at these two solutions and for those of you who didn't get all
> the way here, you're going to have this opportunity to go home and reflect like, "where
> was I? What you know, was I on the way to a solution like this? Do I have a different
> solution I'm thinking about? Like, is there something else, did these make sense to me?"

Alex encouraged students to continue working on understanding the content after the in-class

activity was over. Thus, for a Good Student striving to understand a problem is not limited to the

time in class under the watch of the instructor; they will invest effort to learn on their own. To

clarify, revising drafts and peer review were part of the first-year writing course curriculum, but

the writing instructors framed those activities as "practice" or improvement of writing without

discussing learning writing strategies or techniques.

Some mathematics instructors noted that students could rely on online resources, such as

StackExchange[7] or other math help sites, to complete their assignments or get the correct answer

to a problem but argued that would not support their learning. In contrast, a Good Student wants

to understand the course concepts and content. In an interview, Sam explained her GSD of

striving to understand, not just complete, assignments to students on the first day of her

precalculus class:

> So, homework is done online. There are lots of resources out there, I'm sure you could
> probably find every single problem on this book somewhere, right. I don't want to
> discourage you from using those resources, you can use them, but use them wisely. Ok?
> Be mindful. So, what do I mean by that? And we can, we can always, I see a problem, my
> problem is very similar to it, just the numbers are different, I can try to follow what they
> are doing, and I'm mimicking right? But am I learning anything if I do that? You're not, I
> mean, maybe you will remember the process for short term, but you will not learn
> anything out of it. The purpose for the homework is to prepare you for the quizzes and
> the exams, ok? And the quizzes and the exams are the majority of your grade. So don't, I
> mean, it's fine with me you can try to get perfect scores on the homework, but again
> you're only undermining your learning and your grade in the course because you're not
> going to be able to have that on the exams. So instead, you could use those resources, see

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[7] https://stackexchange.com/

how they did it but ask yourself, why did they do that? Why can't I think of doing that? What's going on behind it? Why? So always ask yourself why, and if you can't figure out why come and see me. (Sam, precalculus, observation)

Sam explained that using resources to learn is distinct from using them to get the correct answer, and that a Good Student should strive to learn for the benefit of learning as well as their grade. Similarly, Clark (calculus) told students via LMS announcement that when students attend tutoring sessions with the course learning assistant, they should not copy what the assistant's explanations because "You need to demonstrate that you've made sense of what it was you discussed with [course learning assistant]." Similar to other instructors' discussions of using online resources, Clark is emphasizing that learning, not correct solutions, is the goal of working with the learning assistant.

The instructors also encouraged students to be independent thinkers. Ellie (quantitative reasoning) explained in an interview how she used what she described as "implicit teaching moves" to reinforce the GSD of striving to understand:

I'm hoping that they get used to not relying on me to validate their thinking. In fact, I often will have just a poker face and I won't validate it because I want them to think for themselves, and I want them to hash things out as a class.

Ellie's quote is an example of how a Good Student who is striving to learn wants to work through concepts for themselves through discussions with peers. For Ellie, if students relied on her to know if they are using correct methods or reasoning, they would not be doing the important work of deciding for themselves if their methods are correct and why. Flora (writing) echoed the importance of being an independent thinker, telling students on the first day of class that respectfully disagreeing with peers in class discussions is "encouraged. Think critically about what your peers are saying and what you think and come to your own conclusions." Similar to a Good Student striving to learn by considering other approaches to solving a

mathematics problem, a Good Student in a writing class strives to learn by considering others'
interpretations and opinions on the course material.

There was no evidence of if or how the instructors who included striving to learn in their
GSD incorporated that behavior directly into their grading or course policies. It is possible that
by striving to learn, students would benefit via test scores and assignments, thus instructors do
not see a need to incentivize or require it. In addition, much of the activity related to striving to
learn—asking themselves questions, checking for understanding—would be performed outside
of the instructor's observation, making it more difficult to assess than the other GS dimensions.
In other words, being engaged during class and communicating with the instructor are easily
observable. Instructors can also assess the extent to which students put effort and attention to
assignments by checking if students followed instructions and completed it. Yet, determining if a
student is striving to learn the content is more difficult. In addition, the dimension of striving to
learn attends to being motivated to learn, not just to complete the assignment. That emphasis on
motivation could also make this dimension more complicated and potentially problematic to
directly tie to a grade or policy.

The difference between writing and mathematics instructors' emphasis on the importance
of a Good Student striving to learn could be due to the academic structure of the curriculum, with
first-year writing as a required course but one not directly tied to one or more other courses that
students need for their major, making it is more difficult to argue that students should be
motivated to learn the course content. All of the mathematics instructors except Ellie, who taught
a math course for non-STEM majors, assumed that students needed to learn the content because
they are going to take calculus courses that require knowledge of concepts taught in precalculus.
The precalculus instructors reported that the course is designed to prepare students for calculus 1

and 2 and explained that to students ("We're prepping you not just for Calc 1, but for Calc 2 as well," Elizabeth, precalculus, observation). In contrast, writing instructors acknowledged that students may not have any interest in the course and discussed wanting to make the class a positive experience. For example, Irene noted a goal of her class is to help students avoid viewing the class as just a requirement they don't enjoy, because "you do get a lot of people who feel like they're not good writers or don't like English or that sort of thing." On the first day of class, May told students that her goal is "to help you guys all pass this class. And to hopefully pass it in a way that is not miserable and, to make this class as tolerable as possible." In an interview, May shared her reasoning for with the students:

> Well, it's a Gen Ed. I mean this in the best possible way: Nobody's there because they want to be there. And I am aware of that and they're aware of that. It's never going to be a fun set of materials, but I want it to be something that they really will get out of it because it's not a choice for them.

May asked all of the students to share what their majors are, explaining she did that so she "can make sure that we are able to spin the assignments in ways that are useful to you guys." Similarly, Flora told students on the first day of class that "I know that everybody has to take this class, and so some of you are probably like, 'This is the last thing I want to be doing'" and that she hoped students would "take at least something out of" the class. All of the writing instructors' GSD stressed the importance of trying hard to meet assignment criteria, reflecting the assumption that students are there to fulfill a requirement. Thus, the writing instructors may have not emphasized striving to learn in their GSD because they were concerned with finding ways to make the class interesting and encourage students to complete the coursework, rather than emphasizing the pursuit of understanding course content.

Instructors' Critical Reflections on Definitions of a Good Student

During interviews, most of the instructors shared their own critical reflections about what behaviors are representative of a Good Student and the implications of defining or being a Good Student. Flora, Buster, Alex, May, and Irene viewed being a Good Student as subjective, noting that there are multiple ways someone can be a Good Student and that the criteria of being a Good Student differs between individuals. Flora (writing, interview) explained her hesitancy to tell students what it means to be a Good Student for those reasons:

> Just that people are coming at it from different places, and so different strategies might be more or less helpful for different students, and different students have their own definition of what it means to be a good student for them. I don't think that I can be prescriptive in my limited viewpoint of what it means to be a good student. I think that's unfair.

Instructors recognized that the students' educational history, goals for the course, and current situations challenge the possibility of a universal definition of a Good Student. Irene (writing) said,

> I try and remember that, that sometimes it's like they're working two jobs and they're going to school and their grandmother is sick or whatever, and it takes pretty much everything they've got to just show up. So, I think that can also be a good student, in his or her own way. It's just different for everyone. Some people have different strengths.

Alex (calculus, interview) shared that when thinking of what it means to be a Good Student in her calculus class, "it depends a little bit on their preparation for my class" as some students will need to learn material that others already know, and for students who already know some course concepts, it might be unfair to expect them to do the assignments that cover those concepts.

In addition to acknowledging that students have their own definitions of a Good Student, Buster, Flora, and May noted that their ideas of a Good Student are not going to be consistent with that of other instructors:

> I wouldn't want them [students] to think like, "Oh, if I don't get this thing done just so, then I'm not a good student." I would want them to understand that it's still subjective.

> This is my idea of what a good student would do, but that's not necessarily the next instructor's idea of a good student. It's a very subjective thing. (Buster, writing, interview)

Buster's quote indicates a concern that if she were to tell students that her definition of a Good Student is absolute and universal, they would think there are criterion they must perfectly follow ("get this thing done just so") in order to be Good Students. Throughout both interviews, Buster discussed wanting to support students feeling confident in their academic abilities; telling students there is one definition of a Good Student that must be met would not align with her efforts to encourage students and increase their confidence. Viewing the definition of a Good Student as subjective was more common among writing instructors, who connected it to the field of writing, as the except from May's interview below illustrates:

> And I think the fact that it's a writing class, so much of this is going to be subjective. It's how [Course Coordinator] thinks about writing, filtered through how I as the instructor think about writing, and that genuinely may not be helpful for some students. And I want to try and present some things as - I guess as neutrally as I can, but I'm never going to be able to remove all the biases because I'm a person, and I'm still going to have, "This is how I do it, this is how I think, this is how my brain works." And, yeah, so I'm not sure I've ever said to a student like, "This is how to be a good student." Because I think that, especially in a writing course, a lot of it's going to be very subjective. And I think rather than how to be a good student overall, it's more how to be a good student in a way that works for them, it's something that I guess I think about it that way.

Kevin and Flora also argued that writing is subjective, while none of the mathematics instructors suggested that mathematics is subjective. One interpretation is that writing instructors recognize that writing serves many purposes and looks different in different academic fields. The instructor participants teaching first-year writing represented different academic fields; May and Buster were studying Medieval literature, Irene history, Kevin creative writing, and Flora English literature. It is possible that viewing writing as subjective is due to their experiences learning that writing for their discipline is different than writing for other disciplines, and different from what is expected in first-year writing courses. It is also possible these instructors are wary of declaring what is good writing in a first-year course because they have not been trained specifically in

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writing as a discipline, but Lake University hires them to teach first-year writing regardless. Lake University requires instructors who teach first-year writing to attend professional talks and invites them to participate in a professional learning community. However, none of the writing instructors identified those experiences as being helpful pedagogical resources for teaching first-year writing..

The instructors' critical reflections on the subjectivity of a Good Student indicates that they were concerned about the unfairness of declaring what it means to be a Good Student. This is consistent with all of the instructors' efforts to support students enacting Good Student behaviors in that when instructors thought a particular behavior was important, they used various strategies to encourage, facilitate, and make opportunities for students to do that behavior. The instructors were doing their part and trying to be fair, rather than assuming students would immediately know how to be a Good Student and agree it is important.

Influences on Instructors' Definitions of a Good Student

Instructors' definitions of a Good Student reflected their views of what it means to be a Good Student as well as experiences that showed them which Good Student Discourses can support students' academic success, be humanizing, or be harmful. For example, Good Student Discourses about not asking for help and placing a heavy priority on a high GPA rather than on learning, can be harmful for students. Instructors shared how their understanding of what it means to be a Good Student was influenced by positive and negative experiences they had as students, pedagogical research and resources, parents, and experience teaching. I organize this section by influence, not by dimension, as the experiences instructors shared did not always map directly onto a single dimension of Good Student Discourse.

Experiences as a Student Changed Definitions

Experiences of being a student were particularly salient, with several instructors sharing how transitioning to college or graduate school led them to re-evaluate their definition of a Good Student as a person who has good grades. When they were in high school, Toby (precalculus, interview) defined a Good Student as "somebody who got good grades" but changed that when they started community college, to think of a Good Student as someone who works hard to understand material. In high school, Toby could "get by on things a lot and not really try super hard, and just flow through the school system. I hit college and that all changed, I couldn't do that anymore. I had to change myself as a student." Similarly, Clark, Ellie, and May shared that in high school, they did not have to try hard or truly understand the material because they could get good grades but learned in college that they had to learn how to learn. Ellie (quantitative reasoning) explained that "I was really good at mimicking what the teacher did" and had "perfect scores in these math tests" but in college, she took "courses for teaching secondary ed math, I started to realize how little I really understood." Clark, Ellie, and Toby all included strives to learn in their definition of a Good Student, and May (writing) emphasized "putting time and energy" and "some care back into school" which reflected the lessons between learning and achievement that they took away from their experiences as a student.

Other instructors discussed how stressful, competitive, individualistic academic environments influenced their current understandings of a Good Student. For example, Irene (writing) also believed grades defined a Good Student, saying she "was very, very concerned with getting all As when I was in high school, and then my very first semester at Duke, I did not get all As, and it required a giant shift in my perspective." She described her undergraduate experience as "very competitive" with "people [who] were very obsessed with grades." In

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addition, an assistant professor told Irene that what she remembers about students is not what

grades they get, but who participates and shows an interest in the class. Irene shared that

"definitely shaped my idea of what makes a good student, is to just think, what is it that

professors really notice?" Thus, she wanted her definition of a Good Student to reflect what she

thought mattered in college and would not be so stressful for students: "I'm just kind of mirroring

it off of, 'Okay, what did I get from college? And how do I do that without also including all of

the terrible parts where I was upset about things?'" ElizabethP (precalculus) had a realization in

graduate school that strongly impacted her definition of a Good Student for her students and for

herself:

> There's a whole new level of struggling with classes in grad school, that is then very
> much, "I'm struggling with a problem, I need to get it through my head, I should reach
> out for my professor," that was not the way I often felt through high school or even
> college by having to, and I say it to my friends a lot when we're talking about teaching
> things like the expectations we have of our students of, reach out if you need help, should
> also be the expectations we have of ourselves. I say that because I need to remind myself
> of that...It's a changing of expectations of myself because my whole life has been that
> "You can do this on your own." And now I'm trying to change that expectation of myself,
> of like, "No, you might need help and it's okay to ask for it."

ElizabethP's quote illustrates how her definition of a Good Student was not part the Good

Student Discourses she heard in high school or college. Instructors who had negative experiences

wanted to provide a more humanizing, supportive, and successful experience for students

through their Good Student Discourse. Several other graduate student instructors, but none of the

full-time instructors, echoed this sentiment of having a challenging undergraduate or graduate

experience and not wanting to repeat that for the students they taught. In contrast, Alex

(calculus) reported learning a lot about being a Good Student from having excellent

undergraduate and graduate instructors. Sam (precalculus) shared that she drew her definition

from what worked for her has a student, implying that the strategies and actions she took would

work for others. Flora (writing) also reported having "really formative relationships" with instructors in college who encouraged her to think critically and focus less on grades.

Instructors Learned from Successful Students

Instructors also discussed their teaching experiences as informing how they define a Good Student. They noted what the students who passed the course and learned the material did, which confirmed or informed their understanding of the behaviors Good Students do. Kevin (writing) explained how his experiences have shown him that, "attendance is something that I think would make them successful, and I've seen it." He explained that the first-year writing course coordinator had explained to him that if students miss several classes early in the semester and do not communicate with the instructor, they feel they cannot catch up or feel they "don't want to show [their] face again" and will stop coming to class altogether. Kevin said that "unfortunately, he's right" and his experiences matched the description of the course coordinator. Kevin was in his fourth semester of teaching first-year writing and had seen enough instances to justify including attending class and communicating with the instructor in his definition of a Good Student. Toby (precalculus) also confirmed the importance of communication through their experience teaching:

> As far as communication goes, I have had the most success turning like a student's grade around in a class or their performance around in the class, when they're communicative about what's going on in their lives. I particularly think there's a - I'm going to use the word, I don't think it's quite the right word, but I'm having trouble thinking of a different analogy. I think there's a plague in math classes that I call suffering in silence. [chuckle] You don't say anything to the professor, you don't say anything to anyone else, you're doing bad, and then by the end of the class, there's only resentful negative feelings towards everything. Whereas a student who communicates with you, being like, "I'm really having a rough go of it, this thing just happened to me, I need some help, I need some time." We can do things based off of that, but that will only happen if there is that line of communication between us.

Toby raises the issue of students in mathematics courses believing they cannot ask for help, which aligns with ElizabethP's (precalculus) explanation of how her undergraduate and graduate experience influenced her definition of a Good Student.

Teaching experience also changed instructors' understanding of what behaviors are key aspects of being a Good Student. Three of the math instructors—Ellie, Clark and Elizabeth—taught in K-12. Elizabeth rewarded effort, defined as completing assignments, when she taught high school but realized that students were not learning the material, which made her rethink focusing solely on effort. Similarly, when Clark was teaching middle school and high school math, he emphasized growth mindsets and trying hard, but decided that neither of those discourses supported student learning and instead blamed students for lack of achievement. Two of the writing instructors, Kevin, and Flora, initially assumed that participating in class is an indicator of a Good Student, but observed this was not the case:

> It's easy to see that people participating in class and think like, "Oh, they're a good student." But there are some of my strongest writers, and some of my students with, some with just the most interesting ideas hardly said a word in class. Just like, I mean one student straight up told me that it made him really anxious, and he didn't like to share things out loud. I'm like, "Man, you've got a lot of really good ideas, I wish you'd speak up more." He's like, "Oh, no." [chuckle] And so I think it's been interesting for me just to kind of think about that and sort of reframe for myself. (Flora)

Flora's quote illustrated how that student led her to reflect on participating being an indicator of someone who is engaging with ideas in the course and being a Good Student. Similarly, Kevin shared how he learned he cannot rely on participation as an indicator of being a Good Student and regularly checks that assumption when he reviews data on who is completing assignments.

> So, by week five, I kind of have a good idea of who's participating, who's not, who's coming to class. So sometimes when I open up that data, the graphs on [peer review platform], it's like, "Oh, wow, this person's actually doing all the work and writing a ton, even though they don't talk." So yeah, I guess participation in class doesn't necessarily equal quality of work for good or bad, which is something that I maybe didn't think about or realize when I first started, so I guess that that's something that's changed. (Kevin)

Irene (writing) also questioned the importance of participating in class as part of being a Good Student. The assumptions about what participation indicates could be based in the instructors' own disciplinary backgrounds—literature, creative writing, and history—which have courses that are mostly discussion-based.

Pedagogical Resources Changed Definitions and Instructional Practices

Clark, Alex, Ellie, and Flora shared how pedagogical resources and research specific to their discipline had an impact on their understanding of a Good Student. Alex was part of a teaching team striving to improve the pass rates of calculus courses, which was an enjoyable and informative professional development experience. Clark, Ellie, and Flora drew from research on teaching on their own or through their graduate coursework. Clark (calculus) said he was really influenced by research on

> effective pedagogical techniques and lines of questioning or curricula that are productive in supporting student learning…Some of it wasn't even necessarily educational researchers, but just kind of maybe mathematicians that are just speaking about kind of what is math and what does it take to be successful in math and yeah.

Similarly, Ellie (quantitative reasoning) said she found research, including the recommendations from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics were important for her "in terms of what we value and in having students really become mathematical thinkers… because it was not something that I really ever had as a student growing up in the 80s and 90s." Flora (writing) shared that "my reading about pedagogy and grades from the perspective of an instructor have changed that [definition of a Good Student] a lot." Flora was doing that reading during her master's program.

Parents Promoting Thinking

Only Flora and Alex shared how their parents were a strong influence. Flora (writing) described her parents as being "big readers" who fostered an interest in learning and independent

thinking. Alex's parents were physicists, and her mother emphasized the value of thinking

deeply about assignments and course content. In responding to an interview question about what

or who influenced her ideas about being a Good Student, Alex (calculus) said

> My mother. My mother's really big. Until I left the house, my mother was really... You're
> supposed to understand this. Think about it till you understand it. Do your work reliably
> in a consistent way, and then don't really study, just going to go sit in a tree and think
> about it when the exam is coming because you've done all the work already. Yeah, yeah,
> I suppose... When I think about what a good student is, it's my mother and how she
> treated me and what she... What expectations she set for me.

Flora and Alex also reported having wonderful, engaging teachers. The positive examples these

instructors had could be used as models for their Good Student Discourse.

Considering First-Year Students in Good Student Discourse

In our interviews, all the instructors said that they consider the needs, experiences, and

perceptions of first-year students in particular when they communicate GSD. Several described

this as setting a foundation for successful strategies to use throughout college. For example,

ElizabethP (precalculus) shared that "they are learning how to be a student in college. It's very

important to start setting those, I guess, expectations." Instructor participants noted they made

sure to explicitly tell students about the expectations that first-year students might not be aware

of or know how to meet, such as using a syllabus or studying effectively. For example, in her

precalculus syllabus Sam included study tips and healthy habits, such as sleeping and eating

healthy foods, that she did not include in upper-level courses because the majority of students in

precalculus are first-year students, and "I wouldn't say that I baby them, but I try to give them

some tools that they might not have been aware of before college life."

In addition to describing their perceptions of what students do not know, instructors

acknowledged that students bring knowledge of processes that worked for them in high school,

but that high school teachers had different expectations of how students engage in the learning process.

> So, it's not like they're a blank slate, but they've learned some patterns of what teachers expect in high school and now they're going to try and make new patterns in college, and then some things you need to throw out things that help them understand what you think a good student is (Alex, calculus)

Clark and Kevin shared they wanted to use their GSD to shift students away from a "high school mindset" of learning where students are told what to do and can be less involved in the learning process. Clark (calculus) described this high school mindset as "you show up, you write notes and listen to a lecture and then that's just how you know things as a passive receiver." Similarly, Irene, Ellie, and Toby noted that first-year students may struggle with the increased autonomy and responsibility in college compared to high school.

Nearly all of the instructors discussed wanting to emphasize to students the importance of reaching out to them for help. They explained that first-year students, in particular, might need support as they face challenges adjusting to college academic expectations and some are hesitant to ask for help because "they don't want to look stupid and admit they don't know something" (Kevin, writing). Instructors also wanted to make students feel welcome in their course, particularly on the first day of class, as first-year students might be nervous. Irene pointed to discourses students may have heard about college, saying that "their whole lives they've been told college is hard and college is serious, and so they expect that, and they are nervous about that" so she emphasizes that she is available to students and that the writing course can be an enjoyable learning experience. Thus, instructors intended for the Good Student Discourse they communicated to first-year students to support their transition to college by providing information about expectations for engaging in learning and encouraging them to contact the instructor.

Chapter Summary

I identified three dimensions describing a Good Student that were present in all of the instructors' Good Student Discourse (GSD): *engages during class, puts effort and attention towards coursework,* and *communicates with the instructor.* I also found *strives to learn (math)* in the discourse of five math instructors and one writing instructor. Thus, my findings also highlight how GSD can differ between course disciplines, with the mathematics instructors in this sample placing a high value on students striving to learn and the writing instructors focusing on students trying hard to complete assignments. All four of those dimensions portray a Good Student as investing effort in the course.

Instructors discussed their efforts to create opportunities for students to enact the behaviors described in their GSD, such as offering multiple ways to participate in class or methods of communication. Instructors also rewarded students for being Good Students by praising students for communicating with them or asking questions in class, giving extensions on assignments when students reach out to the instructor, and accounting for perceived effort when grading the assignment. Several instructors reflected critically on the universality of a Good Student Discourse, pointing out that the definition of a Good Student is subjective. These instructors noted that students have different goals, educational histories, and external responsibilities that would make it unfair to hold all students to a single definition of a Good Student.

Instructors shared several experiences that influenced their definition of a Good Student. Several had experiences as college students that radically changed their understanding of a Good Student from a person who gets high grades to a person who invests effort into the course and into learning. Instructors also learned about what behaviors are important from teaching because

they took note of what academically successful students did. Pedagogical resources were important influences on the definition of a Good Student and the instructional practices that can support those Good Student behaviors. Only two instructors, Alex and Flora, discussed their parents as an influence. All of the instructors considered the specific situation of first-year students in their GSD, as first-year students might need more explicit encouragement and direction on keeping track of their assignments and asking for help.

These findings highlight the complexity of being an instructor, as they have the power and responsibility to assess students while also trying to support them. In Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) theorization, discourses are a tool of power that can be used to create, maintain, or disrupt power relationships, influence what is believed to be true, and categorize individuals. The instructors expressed GSD through verbal and written communication, policies, and grading, all of which indicate the instructor is the person with the authority to define, assess, and categorize Good Students. I found examples of GSD that placed value on some behaviors more than others, indicating the power of judgment and assigning value. Similarly, instructors' power was manifested through technologies of power, such as withholding information, rounding grades, providing extensions, and other practices that enforced what the instructor believed to be Good Student behaviors though reward or punishment. The application of power was not always obvious or directly tied to course outcomes but nonetheless are examples of how power is manifested and reinforced through discourse, such as in the case of categorizing and comparing binary groups or using "should" statements indicating an obligation a Good Student chooses to meet even if they are not required.

The instructors also showed care for the students and recognized their individuality; they tried to facilitate students' enactment of behaviors associated with being a Good Student and

questioned the universality of Good Student Discourse. Instructors did not follow university or department policy when they thought it was punitive and the graduate student instructors described changing their GSD based on what they learned in a previous teaching term, indicating the instructors' concerns for meeting the specific student population in their class. Instructors who had access to professional development and pedagogical resources found them helpful, but providing those resources to graduate student instructors was not an institutional practice at Lake University.

Interlude I

I think a dissertation should be personal. It is years of your life, make it yours. One way for me to make this mine was to share my own reflections on Good Student Discourse and being a Good Student in Interludes at the end of Chapters 4 and 5. Stylistically, the interludes are in honor of and influenced by some authors who had a significant impact on how I think about the absurd oppression of social normed values and what resistance looks like: Nietzsche's aphorisms, Oswald de Andrade's modernist poetic Cannibalist Manifesto*, and Montaigne's* essais *that teasingly attempt to arrive at but never give an answer. Plus Calvin and Hobbes. Which I could not include because of copyright laws.*

Here I offer my reflections of being a Good Student from a student perspective to balance the instructor findings. I will offer reflections from my instructor perspective at the end of Chapter 5, which contains findings about the student participants' Good Student Discourse. This organization highlights the need for conversations such as this, between students and instructors.

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When I was 9 or so I was sweeping the barn aisle (I was a horse girl from day 1) and Carol, the matron of the barn, took the broom out of my hand. She then swept with vigor; with intensity; with purpose, and handed it back to me, saying sternly, "take pride in your work." Twelve years later in a master's program an art history professor was amazed nearly beyond words when I noticed a broom was hung backwards in an assembled artwork—like it was some brilliant intellectual conclusion I was reaching when really the orientation of a broom was burned into my mind and muscles from years of sweeping…the irony of what makes you a Good Student, and gets you recognized as one.

***

In high school I took as many Advanced Placement courses as I could because I was on my own financially for college and was looking for any opportunity to save tuition dollars. I also liked the idea of being in Advanced courses (argh, they had me! Tracking feeds egos and inequity!). I got a book meant to help people on the AP Economics test, took it to the gym, stuck that thing on the Stairmaster and tried to study while climbing the rotating stairs to nowhere. I had to study because my teacher wasted class time talking about his pro-legalize marijuana stance and I felt unprepared for the AP test. I had lost all respect for that teacher because of his disregard for our time and our education. I told him in class one day that I was irritated I had to use my own money to buy that book and study on the Stairmaster after working my night shift at IHOP because he was not teaching us anything in class. He stared at me and said, "Claire you are what is wrong with America."

<center>***</center>

I slept through so, so many classes in high school and college. Even during timed essays in English literature class. And no one cared, maybe because despite being a Bad Student in many ways I got Good Grades, which is a whole other level of unfairness and systemic flaws. I tried apologizing once to a professor of Islamic art history for sleeping through her class. She looked at me as if she didn't recognize me at all and what I was saying was of no consequence. Never mind I had been sitting in her class for months. Question: should I have been able to get As on all of the exams and papers if I slept through at least 70% of that class, which took place in the morning and totally in the dark while she clicked through slides and I was running on little sleep because I had to close the restaurant the night before? Should she have cared about what I said, that I was trying to explain myself?

<center>***</center>

Mr. Coulsby made me fall in love with art history my senior year of high school; he taught me that being a Good Student can be motivated by interest and curiosity not just the expectation of being diligent and obedient. That was the first time I remember truly loving a subject so much I was excited about class and doing my homework. For Christmas in my first year of college I asked for the art history textbook we used in Mr. Coulsby's class because I wanted my own copy; it had been sad to part with it at the end of the school year. Mr. Furrow, Professor Blocker, and Professor Gaudio taught me that being a Good Student is re-examining things from a different perspective (including questioning what art made it into that beloved textbook!). The PhD student who taught my British history class (cannot remember his name…oops) and my 10th grade Humanities teacher Ms. Logan taught me that being a Good Student means the teacher will pull you aside, give you something super hard to read, and want you to read it (oh the dilemma— I don't have time to read this, but if I don't am I letting them down? Will I cease to be a Good Student? And Homi Bhabha and James Joyce are hard to read – what if I don't understand anything I read?).

<center>***</center>

University of Chicago taught me that being a Good Student has such reverence for ideas that they are willing to throw down in an intellectual debate, and will even seek one out, which could be fun. But also, why? My thesis advisor in my master's program asked me "What is at stake

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with understanding these prints?" Referring to the 16th century prints my art history thesis was on.

      I thought:
          Nothing.

<p align="center">***</p>

Sometimes I am glad I was a "good student" in the stuffy sense because that meant I got to enjoy Nietzsche, Montaigne, Fanon, Said, Foucault, and Swift, whose works just made me want to rebel against the foundation that constitutes and privileges stuffy good students. What kind of circular logic is that?

<p align="center">***</p>

It has taken me a long time to think about being a student as "work." I thought being a Good Student was turning your stuff in, doing the reading, participating in class, making smart points, and getting good grades. Being a student could be boring and sometimes what I had to do or learn felt completely pointless, but it could also be fun, a confidence-builder, and mind-blowing. Work was waiting tables. Work was cleaning horse stalls. Work was putting up a fence. Work was stacking hay. I still struggle with thinking of being a student, or describing my research, as my "work."

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Good Student Discourses have affected how I thought about myself. Sometimes I felt like an exceptional human, other times like I was ignorant and a failure. I wonder if there were times I failed to stand up and defend my humanity and dignity because I was too focused on trying to be (or be recognized as, which has implications for "feel like") a Good Student. I learned a lot about dignity waiting tables. Around year 5 or so of waiting tables I started spitting in people's food or drinks, or rubbing their food on the floor, when they failed to treat me as a person. I didn't do it often; perhaps a couple of times a year, and it was reserved for the most egregious cases. Spitting was my secret reassertion of my dignity and humanity; I rebel against dehumanization, therefore I am. I was not the only one who did this, so be mindful of how you treat people! But where do you spit when it is an entire system laden with discourses and policies that dehumanize you by making you believe you have to strive to please it?

<p align="center">135</p>

Chapter 5

Students' Good Student Discourse

When designing this study, I thought I would find that students were influenced by and had responses to their instructors' Good Student Discourse (GSD). I conjectured that the students would be influenced by the GSD of their instructors because the research literature has illustrated how instructors' communications to and expectations of students impact students' experiences and outcomes (e.g., Rendón, 1994). The literature on expectations and college transitions (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jack, 2017; Karp & Bork, 2014; Yee, 2016) informed my assumptions that students would share how instructors' GSD changed or challenged their definitions of a Good Student. I also suspected I could find examples of students feeling their instructors' GSD was validating or disheartening, welcoming or marginalizing based on previous studies (Battey et al, 2022; Rendón, 1994). However, I did not find evidence to support those assumptions from the students who participated in my study; on the contrary, the students in my study did not identify instructors' GSD as an influence on their definitions of a Good Student and did not share negative or positive reactions to instructors' GSD. Instead, students had their own Good Student Discourse informed by previous years of schooling and from their family members. Therefore, rather than focusing on how students reacted to their instructors' GSD, in this chapter I focus on the students' Good Student Discourse.

Students' discussions about what it means to be a Good Student do not perfectly align with Foucault's (1970/1981, 1976/1990, 1977/1980b) concept of discourse because students are not disseminating their GSD to others as authority figures and they are not imposing truth or

knowledge onto others. In contrast, instructors' GSD is distributed within a formal institutional structure (a college class) and by an authority figure (the instructor) to students about what it means to be a Good Student. However, I will describe students' definitions and discussions about being a Good Student as Good Student Discourse because, as described later in this chapter, students' GSD was influenced by their parents, educational experiences, and K-12 teachers, thus it reflected the Good Student Discourses that students are exposed to in social institutions and from authority figures. In addition, though the students were not imposing their GSD on anyone else, it still had power over students, who tried to enact their GSD and felt guilty when they did not. The power that students' GSD had over them was coercive and manipulative because students had internalized it, and at times it affected how they felt about themselves. Students' GSD also contains an assumption that the definition of a Good Student is subjective, which is a critique against Good Student Discourses that claim to be universal. In that sense, the students' GSD disrupts the power of a discourse that claims universality to achieve normalization. If I did not refer to students' discussions of being a Good Student as discourse, I would be ignoring the power contained in students' critiques and the power that their own GSD holds over them.

Foucault (1976/1990) notes that discourses can be used to disrupt hegemonic discourses and that people can achieve agency by recognizing they are the subject of a discourse. Though the students are not actively distributing their discourse, their GSD is reflective of those aspects Foucault described. I also refer to students' discussions about being a Good Student as Good Student Discourse because it is consistent with a critical theoretical lens, which argues research should be humanizing and problematize power relationships (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018). By conceptualizing and naming the students' descriptions of a Good Student as Good Student

Discourse, I aim to acknowledge the agency students displayed in their Good Student Discourse, as well as how the students' GSD was connected to their lives and feelings.

This chapter illustrates that students' Good Student Discourse (GSD) is complex and personal, and that students are trying their hardest to enact that GSD. Good Student Discourse has direct implications for the student, as the discourse conveys expectations about what a person must to do in order to be a Good Student. I found that for the student participants, being a Good Student in college was very important and was broader than just academic behaviors and outcomes; being a Good Student included being able to live on their own. In addition, students considered the subjectivity of what it means to be a Good Student because people have different perspectives. Some students made connections between being a Good Student and being a good person. Students' parents, K-12 teachers, siblings, peers, and their experience transitioning to college were important influences on students' GSD.

First, I define and explain the five dimensions of being a Good Student that I identified from the students' data. Then I discuss the subjective and moral aspects students ascribed to being a Good Student. In the third section, I attend to the influences on students' GSD.

The Good Student is Academically Diligent and Responsible

I used students' definitions of a Good Student and examples they shared of when they feel like a Good Student or not to identify students' Good Student Discourse. I identified five dimensions of being a Good Student: *attends and focused during class, pushes self for academic success, seeks academic help, manages time and coursework,* and *takes care of self* (Table 6). When considered together, those dimensions portray a Good Student as a person who is academically diligent—consistently invests effort into academic work, is thorough, and

conscientious—and who is responsible—they are accountable for their decisions and actions, and

fulfill their personal and academic obligations.

Table 6

Dimensions of a Good Student in Students' GSD

Dimension	Definition
Attends and Focuses During Class	Goes to class consistently, pays attention during class and is not distracted by electronic devices.
Pushes Self for Academic Success	Invests additional effort to learn course content or produce high-quality work; goes above the minimum requirement; tries to do well even when the content is difficult.
Seeks Academic Help	Identifies when they need help completing an assignment or learning the material, reaches out to the instructor, peers, tutor, or online sources.
Manages Time and Coursework	Meets assignment due dates, starts assignments early, has a study schedule, prioritizes commitments, uses syllabus or planner to stay organized.
Takes Care of Self	Completes household duties (laundry, dishes), maintains healthy habits (makes sure to get enough sleep, de-stress time, food).

I identified those dimensions through analyzing data from interviews with 49 students

and follow-up surveys from 25 students. During the interview, I shared a Jamboard (see Figure

1) with the students with some terms that have been used to describe a Good Student in the

literature and from my personal experience as a student and community college instructor. I

asked students, "Do any of those descriptions resonate with you?" while displaying the

Jamboard. Their responses to that question and to questions about when they have felt like a

Good Student in their respective class (writing or math) were the primary sources for identifying

the dimensions of being a Good Student. Students most frequently selected the terms respectful,

responsible, and self-sufficient, thus I prompted them for examples in interviews and the follow-

up surveys. Their examples also helped add depth and context to the Good Student dimensions. Unless otherwise noted as being from a follow-up survey, all quotes are from interviews.

In the following sections, I will discuss each dimension individually. For the three dimensions of *attends and focuses during class, pushes self for academic success,* and *manages time and coursework*, multiple students explained whether enacting those behaviors made them feel they were being a Good Student or not being a Good Student. One of my interview questions was,

> Has there been a time in this class when you …
> a. felt like a Good Student? If so, tell me about that.
> b. felt you were not a Good Student? If so, tell me about that.

Therefore, I highlight students' responses about when they felt they were and were not Good Students within my discussion of those dimensions. When students held different or nuanced perspectives on the specifics of a dimension, such as if attending office hours is part of seeking help, I address that in a subsection.

Attends and Focuses During Class

Students' Good Student Discourse highlighted the importance of attending class and focusing during class. I also included in this dimension specific references to attending class as an illustration of being responsible and paying attention as a form of respect. Defining a Good Student as consistently attending class, paying attention during class, and associating those behaviors with responsibility and respect connote academic diligence.

Several students noted the value of attending class for learning and passing the course, and in college, they are responsible for going to class. Students noted that in college, parents and teachers are not monitoring their attendance as closely, if at all, compared to high school, yet a Good Student does not use that as a reason to skip class:

I feel like some college students see being in class as more of an option. It's like: I can attend class if I want to, and if I feel like I don't understand. But you know I feel like I understand everything, or I feel like I don't need the class, so I just won't attend." And that's... Those can definitely be seen characteristics as a bad student, in a sense. (Jacob, Clark's math class)

Other students echoed Jacob's sentiment that attending class is not optional, it is a requirement for being a Good Student. Jennifer (Ellie's math class) stressed what students risk by being absent:

In order to be successful you will need to go to every class. No matter what you need to be there. You don't have your mom telling you to go. But you will not succeed if you don't go to class.

A Good Student goes to class "no matter what" because it is imperative for passing the course. Overall, students took the importance of attending class very seriously, and emphasized that it is their responsibility to get to class. As Jennifer pointed out, college students living on campus do not have a parent present to monitor their attendance and make them go to class.

Other students endorsed being responsible as criteria for being a Good Student and including attending class as a sign of being responsible. Several students noted that in college, no one makes them go to class, thus they are more responsible for ensuring they attend class. For example, Nikolai (Buster's writing class) defined responsible as, "always going to class and being on time for class." In addition to explaining that attending class is important for getting information about assignments and having a positive influence on their own learning, students described attending class as an obligation they try to meet because they value being responsible. For example, Johnny (Flora's writing class) defined a responsible Good Student as:

I would say a person not only takes accountability for their actions, but a person at least knowingly tries to do, I don't want to specifically say the right thing, but they try to do the correct things. They actually try to go to class, they try to pay attention, try to engage. Because it's a good thing to do or the correct thing to do.

Johnny argues that a Good Student tries to attend and focus during class because that is the "correct thing" to do. This reference to "correct" or "good" imply it is a duty of being a student. For context, Johnny said before college, he defined a Good Student as not getting into trouble. He experienced disciplinary action when he was younger and viewed his autism as a barrier to knowing how to behave in a manner consistent with that version of a Good Student. Johnny identified as Black, and his intersectional identities of Blackness and autism could explain why he experienced punishment at school.[8] His emphasis on a Good Student tries to take accountability and do "the correct thing" could reflect how his ideas of a Good Student were shaped by the discourses he encountered about personal accountability as an explanation for his experiences (instead of systemic inequity and discrimination).

A Good Student focuses on the course content or activity during the class. Several students described being focused as taking notes, following along with the lesson, and avoiding distractions. For example, Lily (Kevin's writing class) defined being focused as, "Keeping your eyes and your stare on the board and what he's teaching in person and showing, and also not like fidgeting around and moving around a lot, as well as not playing games on your computer." Lily portrays a scene of a Good Student being so fixated on what the instructor is showing or saying that they are physically still. Some students defined being respectful as paying attention to the instructor. Attending and being focused during class is showing respect for the instructor's time and for the instructor as a person, as the below excerpt from an interview illustrates. For context, Joanne and Presley (Ellie's math class) thought that being respectful is an important part of being a Good Student, and I asked them to explain what being respectful means:

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[8] Black students and disabled K-12 students experience discipline in school at disproportionate rates; see chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/school-climate-and-safety.pdf for an example.

Joanne: For me, being respectful in class is listening to the teacher and giving her her - like she's trying to teach or he or her is trying to teach. You should be listening and being respectful and giving her your attention, like not having side conversations not playing on your phone…

Presley: I would definitely agree with that and, like just like one main thing is just like showing up for class like that's showing respect right there.

Like Joanne and Presley, several students made a connection between respect and attending class and listening to the instructor. Most of the students who associated respect with being focused during class were education majors; their interest in being an educator could be related to valuing showing respect for instructors by paying attention during class. These students enact what they want their future students to do: pay attention in class and be respectful. Attending and being focused in class are outward-facing demonstrations of being invested in the course. If these education majors continue to value those behaviors when they are teachers, they could perpetuate this GSD of attendance and focusing during class. Discourses have a long lifespan when they are embedded within social systems and institutions, and students have spent significant time in education institutions that enforce a GSD about attendance and paying attention. In sum, attending and being focused during class is important for being a Good Student because it benefits students, shows respect for the instructor, and is their responsibility as a student.

Feeling Like a Good Student. Students' responses to the question about when they have felt they were or were not a Good Student made it evident that attending and being focused during class are important criteria for being a Good Student. Even when students did not enjoy the course, they thought it was important to attend and pay attention during class.

I mean, as much as math is like my least favorite subject ever, I try very hard to be present, while in class. I, as much as I don't [verbally] participate, I'm still actively listening and learning and anytime someone's talking, I'm looking. I put my phone away even though it's so tempting to just pull up and just like tune everyone out. I actively try in the class and I feel like that makes me a good student in class. (Skyler, Ellie's math class)

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Skyler's quote expresses how they felt they were being a Good Student when they made a concerted effort to pay attention to the class. Skyler's quote implies that listening leads to learning; trying to listen is one way of trying to learn. Attending and paying attention in class could be a consistent source of confirmation for students that they are being Good Students. For example, Eren (Toby's math class) said, "every day that you're going to lecture and you're paying attention and you're trying your best to do the material, I think, every day is succeeding as a good student at that point." Eren pointed out that he has regular opportunities to feel like a Good Student by attending and being focused in class. A person can feel like a Good Student in their daily behaviors, which attends to being diligent and responsible. A Good Student consistently enacts Good Student Discourse of attending and paying attention during class and is in charge of making sure they do so, with the satisfaction they are being Good Students as a reward.

Missing class was the most common answer students gave for when they felt they were not being a Good Student, even though students explained they missed class because they were experiencing mental health struggles, were sick or exposed to COVID-19, or because of family or personal emergencies (e.g., one student had his credit card stolen).

> Yeah, there has been times, to be honest, where I wouldn't be able to get, wouldn't be able to be in class for mental health reasons, where I'd be like, "Oh, you should've went to class, you should have done this, you should have done that." Even if I looked at the material, I'm like, "Oh my God, I should have been in class." And so, yeah, there are definitely times that I feel like a bad student (Mariah, ElizabethP's math class)

Mariah's quote illustrates how students felt guilty for not attending class, even though they missed class because they were prioritizing their health. She echoes a point other students made that on top of feeling they were not Good Students when they missed class, their stress increased seeing what and how much content was covered in the class they missed. This indicates that for students, attending class is not just showing up, it is an opportunity to stay on track with the

course content. Most of the discussions around feeling guilty for being absent were in relation to

missing mathematics classes, as opposed to writing classes. Not showing up to class made

students feel they were not fulfilling an important responsibility of being a Good Student. Ana

(Ellie's math class) explained that when she didn't attend class because she was tired, "I feel

guilty because I'm like, 'All these other people are definitely in class right now and I'm just in

bed.'" For Ana, missing class made her feel singled out for not living up to the Good Student

behavior of attending class. She imagined everyone else being in class while she was in bed,

which made her feel worse because other students were being a Good Student and she was not.

Some students said they felt they were not being Good Students when they were not

paying attention in class because they were so tired they were unable to focus or because they

were not interested in the material. Lily (Kevin's writing class), who valued the importance of

being focused in class in an earlier quote, explained how she still struggled with this behavior:

> Personally, more lately, I haven't been interested in what we're talking about, so I don't really pay attention. I'll daydream or whatnot, and I guess that kind of makes me feel like I'm not a good student because I know I should be paying attention, but it's kind of just hard for me at the moment.

Lily's quote indicates a tension between wanting to focus during class because the behavior is

part of being a Good Student, but not finding an educational reason to pay attention; she later

explained that the content covered in the writing class is a repeat of what she learned in high

school. This tension shows how Good Student Discourse can justify being a Good Student

primarily or solely because it is, to use Johnny's phrase, "the correct thing to do," compared to a

justification that being a Good Student facilitates learning or academic achievement in the form

of grades. Drawing on Foucault (1975/1995), the view of being a Good Student for the sake of

being a Good Student illustrates how the discursive object of a Good Student can become

attractive enough for students that they would strive to be Good Students, even if it is not clear

what they benefit academically from being in that category. That attraction is the product of coercion, because discourses manipulate desire. Furthermore, the feeling that one must be a Good Student, or perform in a manner consistent with being a Good Student, reflects the power of discourse and judgments about which behaviors are valued. Students enacting certain behaviors because they believe they should or need to be Good Students also promotes and perpetuates the dominance of the behaviors they were told are indicative of Good Students.

Students described the Good Student behaviors of attending and paying attention during class as part of their identity of the type of student they are. Joanne (Ellie's math class) explained that she didn't attend class because she was sick "and I felt like, this is not how it should be, that's not the type of student I am." When she attended the next class session, she felt behind and it was hard for her to focus, which compounded her feeling that she was not being the Good Student that she sees herself as normally being. Similarly, Stevo (Irene's writing class) shared that, "the times that I missed class, when I couldn't attend, I felt like I wasn't being a good student because I like holding myself to this standard of attending the class consistently." Students had high expectations of themselves enacting their Good Student Discourse and expressed frustration and guilt when they did not attend or focus in class. Feeling guilty for not paying attention or attending class highlights the normative and obligatory aspects of Good Student Discourse; everyone is supposed to attend class, and when these students did not, they felt they were violating a normed obligation everyone else was meeting.

Discussions of guilt or feeling one is not being a Good Student were most commonly reported with missing class. This could be due to the fact that the instructor can observe when students attend or do not attend class. In college, other people might notice when you are not in class, and in high school, attendance was monitored. Being observed as (not) enacting Good

Student Discourse attends to Foucault's (1975/1995) arguments about how surveillance and observation are mechanisms through which people learn how to impose discipline upon themselves. For the students in my study, a student demonstrates they are a Good Student by being present in class, which is a concrete way to show they are responsible and diligent because in college, they decide when to go to class.

Pushes Self for Academic Success

The dimension of *pushes self for academic success* refers to the student investing additional effort in order to do well on an assignment or exam and being self-motivated to do so. A Good Student goes above the minimum on their coursework, explained by Marcus (May's writing class) as "in college, being a good student is putting actual effort into work you might care more about." Marcus' quote shows that a Good Student invests effort, and cares about the quality of the work they submit. Esteban (Flora's writing class) echoed that same point, that a Good Student strives for "creating quality work or creating something where, handing in work that you can be proud of, essentially." Thus, a Good Student pushes themselves to do excellent academic work, not just complete an assignment.

Other students' GSD focused on the attitude and motivation a Good Student should have. Being self-driven to achieve academic goals was part of being a Good Student.

> What makes a good student is their willpower and their grit in understanding that even if I don't understand this, even if I'm like, if I'm totally out of my league with this, I will work on it, I will seek the help that I can and I will work hard on myself. And even if I don't succeed the first time, I'll keep trying and trying. And that's really what kind of finds how successful you are and what it means to be a good student is just how badly you want it and how much effort you put towards actually accomplishing it (Jacob, Clark's math class).

Jacob stressed the importance of being self-motivated as criteria for being a Good Student. Using terms such as "grit" and "willpower" suggest the belief that a Good Student is characterized by

persistence and drive to accomplish academic goals. Key to this dimension is being individually

motivated because college students are on their own, as Jennifer (Ellie's math class) explained:

> You have to want to succeed, no one will ever be there to hold your hand. You might get help but you will have to do it all on your own. You won't be able to be fully guided and you will need to drive yourself and push yourself.

Jennifer explains that being self-motivated and self-sufficient is what is required of being a Good

Student, who will push themselves towards academic success. References to "no one will ever"

hold their hand or that a Good Student has to drive themselves implies that it is the student's

responsibility to motivate themselves. Jennifer's mention of the possibility of help suggests that

students are not alone in their academic journey and could get help, but they have to rely on

someone else to drive or guide them. This dimension of pushing themselves attends to the idea of

a Good Student being diligent in that the students described the value of working to overcome

challenges and it is their responsibility to motivate themselves.

Feeling Like a Good Student. Several students offered an example of when they worked

especially hard on an assignment or to study for an exam as an illustration of feeling like a Good

Student. Their discussion of pushing themselves or trying hard acknowledged that some students

need or choose to try harder on some tasks than others. Katie shared an example of when she

pushed herself and invested additional effort on a writing assignment[9] in Ellie's math class:

> I think the one time, I will say that I was actually like proud of my work which is like a very foreign concept for me for math because typically it's just like one and done. For our first writing assignment, I like I realized that those were weighted like pretty heavily, given that we don't have many of them... And so I really wanted to get the first one to be a 100 so then I would have wiggle room throughout the semester. And I just went absolutely crazy on it, and it was like three pages long. And I got 100 on it, it was great, and I got good feedback. I was like, "wow, I'm doing it today." (Katie, Ellie's math class)

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[9] Ellie's math class had writing assignments. Her syllabus describes them as: "Writing assignments are more extended, rich tasks, that will provide you with an opportunity to more deeply explore a topic and communicate your solution in a detailed written response."

Katie explained that she typically does not push herself to do high-quality work in math, but she wanted to do really well on the first assignment in case she struggled on assignments later in the term. She felt like a Good Student because she invested that additional effort which seemed to surprise her ("wow, I'm doing it today"). Several students gave examples of feeling like Good Students when they persisted in the face of obstacles, such as difficult content, lack of interest in the subject matter, or missing class due to illness or personal emergencies. For example, Ana (Ellie's math class) was determined to get 100% on an automatically graded online assignment and to understand the course content, so she spent considerable time reviewing her notes, talking with peers, consulting online resources, and attempting the problems over and over again until she got 100%. None of the students described feeling like Good Students in their writing class because they pushed themselves to understand content, though they did talk about feeling like Good Students when they completed a large writing assignment. This echoes the lack of discussion around learning in the writing instructors, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Students shared examples of not feeling like a Good Student when they didn't do assignments or knew they could have done higher-quality work. Similar to Katie's interest in how much each assignment is worth, students shared it was more tempting to not complete assignments that were only small percentages of the overall grade.

> Yeah, definitely, some of the [peer][10] reviews, I kind of skipped at them, because I know that they're not worth a ton of points...it was kind of a lot of work because you'd have to go through three different students and give multiple comments, like long comments on their work, and it was just difficult, so sometimes I wouldn't fully finish the assignments, and that definitely was the time when I was not the best student. (Sally, Kevin's writing class)

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[10] Lake University subscribes to a peer review platform. I replaced the name of the platform with "peer" to help conceal the identity of Lake University.

Sally's quote captures the dual sentiments of feeling she should be a Good Student by pushing herself to do the assignment and that effort should be reflected by the grade value. A Good Student would have done the peer review assignments, but Sally indicates that she was not going to get a proportional return for her investment of effort. Sally and Katie are examples of students making choices about when they push themselves.

Not all students seemed to have the same level of freedom in choosing when they push themselves; several students were working and taking a full load of classes and shared they want to be Good Students but sometimes had to balance that ideal with the reality of time limitations. Rachel, in Flora's writing class, was working two jobs while taking "a ton of classes" and felt "drawn out too thin." When asked if there has been a time in the writing class when she felt she was not a Good Student, she shared:

> Yes. I guess not my best student that I could be, because sometimes I'll turn in work that is just the bare minimum, and I feel like I could do so much better, but I just had to get it done. So I guess not being like fully - I don't know how to describe it, but not giving my all for a specific paper or something.

Rachel's quote of doing the minimum just to get the assignment out of the way, off of her to-do list, offers insights into how students have to make decisions about when they need and can push themselves and adjust their levels of effort to meet a situation. Students' GSD framed a Good Student as a superhuman who can always push themselves, yet students' narratives of when they felt they were not Good Students suggest they know that the GSD of pushing themselves is an ideal that cannot always be implemented in reality. Returning to Foucault (1977/1980), discourses can create concepts, truth and knowledge. These students' Good Student Discourse establishes the concept of a Good Student who pushes themselves to learn and do well on assignments, yet that discourse cannot alter the reality of students' time constraints due to taking several classes or like Rachel, working.

Seeks Academic Help

Students included seeking academic help in their definition of a Good Student, explaining that a Good Student knows when they need help and are not afraid to obtain it. Seeking help, and knowing when they need help, is the Good Student's responsibility:

> Getting the help that you need and doing that as like, as your own person, knowing that you need help and being responsible and asking for help, like that resonates with me a lot. (Kara, Toby's math class)

Kara's reference to "your own person" illustrates the perspective that a Good Student can diagnose when they need help. Katie (Ellie's math class) also connected seeking academic help to being responsible because a student is responsible for learning the content and completing their assignments, which could require seeking help. She pointed out that "need to able to get your work done, you're an adult in college, but I guess that goes hand in hand with seek help when needed" because if a student does not seek help when they need it, they will end up with a bad grade, and "guess what, its your fault." Thus, seeking help is an example of being a responsible adult, not a contradiction. Several students noted that students should take the initiative to seek help and not be hesitant. For example, Rachel (Flora's writing class) shared that for her, "a really big part of being a good student, is getting help and not being afraid to get help." This element of not being afraid points to fears and difficulties students have or have had regarding seeking academic help.

Some students shared they learned the value of seeking help from past experiences. Bella (Ellie's math class) explained that seeking help is so important to her because she "really struggled with that in high school" and now "the second I start to not understand something, I know that I need to get help immediately with that." Similar to Kara, Bella identified that part of seeking help is recognizing when they do not understand something. Bella's quote captures a sense of urgency with the use of the word "immediately." This expresses a point made by other

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students that a Good Student gets academic help as soon as they realize they need it because

prolonging seeking help will make it even more difficult to understand the material. Thus,

seeking help is related to being thorough, diligent, and proactive.

Other students pointed out that knowing how and when to seek help is an important skill,

so even if they don't need help in a particular class at the moment, they may need help in future

situations. Elizabeth (Clark's math class) explained her definition of a Good Student as:

> Seeking help when you need it, especially because if you stay secluded and only depend
> on yourself, you're eventually going to run into a problem you can't fix or solve on your
> own. And you're not going to know how to ask for help.

Elizabeth framed seeking help as something a Good Student knows how to do. She pointed out

that one consequence of being too self-sufficient is not knowing what to do when faced with a

problem they cannot solve. Most students valued seeking help as part of being a Good Student,

because it helps them succeed in the course.

> Seeking help when needed is definitely something that I feel like any good student should
> do... When you get to more advanced courses or courses that you don't necessarily relate
> too much to, or don't have that much experience with, of course you are going to not
> understand some things. And it's entirely natural to need to go see a professional about it,
> and just get more of that one-on-one time. (Jacob, Clark's math class)

Jacob later described tutors and the instructor as examples of a "professional," which

acknowledges that a Good Student is a student, not yet an expert in the material they are

learning. Students described the need for seeking help as a normal part of being a student. Jacob

illustrated this perspective by pointing out that people will need help when they encounter

material they do not have experience with and that help is "natural." Some students were

explicitly critical of expecting students to be completely independent and not seek academic

help. For example, Jamie (Ellie's math class) said that an emphasis on being self-sufficient could

prevent a student from seeking help to understand content. Jamie argued that "everyone learns

differently" and math is "something that a lot of people struggle with" and an over-emphasis on

being self-sufficient could be detrimental to people. A Good Student is expected to seek help in order to understand course material, rather than being expected to understand it completely on their own.

Office Hours Not Required. Though seeking help was prominent in students' Good Student Discourse, students felt that attending office hours was not an important component of being a Good Student. There were a few exceptions, as illustrated with this quote from Ky (Ellie's math class):

> And when it comes to going to office hours, I feel like that's a nice way to get your questions out or concerns out, especially if you're uncomfortable with speaking in front of the classroom, or especially your concerns to her [the instructor] at that moment, so I feel like that's a great source to use.

Ky identified as Black and a first-generation college student. While she did not bring those identities into the conversation, it is possible they inform her perspective that people can be "uncomfortable with speaking in front of the classroom." Students who are marginalized could be less comfortable raising concerns during class. Lake University was predominantly White and all but a few students in Ellie's class were White presenting.[11] Ky was one of the few Students of Color who may have been hesitant to ask questions in class because of the fear of stereotypes about Black people being less capable academically, intellectually, and mathematically, or because she received negative responses when participating in prior classes. Instead, Ky uses another strategy of attending office hours to meet her needs. Most of the students who participated in this study were White, which might explain why they did not express an opinion similar to Ky's.

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[11] I do not know how all of the students in Ellie's class identified; this statement is based on my personal observations of the classroom and the identities of the students from her class who participated in the study.

It was more common for students to argue that students can find help in forms besides office hours, thus office hours are not a defining characteristic of a Good Student. For example, Skyler (Ellie's math class) shared that "I have yet to go to anyone's office hours, I don't understand what office hours are needed for, especially in this class where there's so many opportunities to get help, not with her office hours." Skyler suggested that office hours are redundant given tutor, peer, and online resources. They were not alone in suggesting that office hours might not be worth a Good Student's time; attending office hours was the most common response to the interview question, "Can someone be a Good Student without being one or some of these descriptions [listed on the Jamboard]? If so which ones?"

Students pointed out that office hours might not be an option for students seeking help given busy schedules.

> I think you can be a good student if you don't go to office hours. I know it's shocking, but let me explain. Because a lot of people don't really have the time to go to office hours because they might have a job, they might have to support a family, and so I think what really matters is being able to email that teacher or that professor or TA [teaching assistant] or LA [learning assistant]. And so, yeah, I think being able to just communicate with them is more... It should be more of like, I guess, the objective versus just simply going to their office hours, because again, not everybody is able to go to those exact office hours. (Mariah, ElizabethP's math class)

Mariah argued that the real value of attending office hours is reaching out to the instructor, which can be accomplished other ways. Mariah also acknowledged it would not be fair to define a Good Student by being able to attend office hours. This sentiment was echoed by several other students, including Jess (Flora's writing class), who was on the University softball team:

> The one I definitely, personally, probably don't use as much is going to office hours, I usually go to class early if I know that professor is there, and then that's the way I'll communicate with them or email…Typically, the office hours just don't align with my practice schedule, so emailing gives me that flexibility to do it while I'm at practice or before practice kind of thing, because with practice schedules, I'm not able to go all the time.

Jess viewed herself as a Good Student and enacts the Good Student behavior of seeking help

through approaches other than office hours. Going to class a few minutes early or staying late

was a strategy other students used as well. Students noted that email is more efficient and

convenient for them as well as the instructor.

> I personally don't really use office hours, probably maybe once or twice, I've used them. But I use email more, I would say if I have a really burning question, I would just email them because it seems like less of a hassle for the professor. If I just email them rather than setting up a meeting time. (Lilly, Buster's writing class)

Examples like those provided by Jess and Lilly suggest that these students are seeking answers to

questions, rather than having detailed conversations. This could also illustrate the sense of

urgency with which a Good Student seeks help explained earlier. This emphasis on seeking help

or answers through email because it is more immediate ("burning question") and efficient relates

to the dimension of a Good Student manages their time.

The dimension of seeks help is different from the other dimensions in that very few

students offered examples of when they felt like a Good Student by enacting that dimension. One

exception is Oz in Clark's math class. Oz emailed Clark his questions and felt like a Good

Student when Clark thanked him for his questions, but felt he was not a Good Student because he

did not attend office hours.

> I feel like a bad student if I don't attend enough office hours the way Mr. Clark presents office hours, because he always presents himself like, "If you need help, I'm available at office hours. Reach out to me at office hours." And there's some days, and maybe like weeks, I don't go to any office hours, and I don't want to say I guilt trip myself, but I just kinda feel like sometimes I ponder after the class like: Hmm, should I be attending office hours as much as I really should? Should I be going more often? And I'm not sure if that's just like me contemplating like, am I a bad student because I don't go to office hours?

Oz valued seeking help as a defining behavior of being a Good Student. Even though he

primarily used email to be more efficient, he still felt guilty for not seeking help in the manner he

thought his instructor endorsed.

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Manages Time and Coursework

Students defined a Good Student as a person who *manages their time and coursework*, including meeting assignment deadlines, organizing their entire schedule (not just academic), and who makes sure they devote time outside of class for studying or working on assignments. Students described time management as essential to doing well in college. For example, in his explanation of what it means to be a Good Student, Stevo (Irene's writing class) said, "I think the last thing I could probably stress is time management. It's a skill that you're going to be forced to work on in order to be comfortably successful." Stevo described time management as something that a student will inevitably be required to do to avoid stress. His reference to "forced to work on" echoes the imperative tone other students used to describe attending class. Other students argued that time management has proven itself to be important in college. Jane (Ellie's math class) said time management had "seemed to really help me with college so far so that's one I would emphasize" as part of being a Good Student.

Multiple students described time management and submitting assignments by the deadline as their definition of responsible or self-sufficient, which they argued are important for being a Good Student. This excerpt from an interview with Sally (Kevin's writing class), in which she explains what she means by responsible and self-sufficient, illustrates how for students, being responsible and self-sufficient ties into the transition to living on their own in college and having to manage their schedules.

> Definitely attending all their classes as much as they can, and making sure to submit assignments on time, making sure to organize their study habits well enough that it's not overwhelming for them when you have a test coming up or something like that. Also working, making sure you're organizing your school schedule with your work schedule, and, that's just really important to me to be a successful student…[In college] you're definitely a lot more responsible for your own schedule. In high school, you were constantly on just this set, like wake up at 7:00 AM in the morning, go to school, come back, and your parents were kind of controlling what you were doing almost, when you

were in high school, and now you're just kind of on your own and you have to figure it out yourself, and so it's a lot, it's - You have to be a way more self-sufficient and responsible in college than you did when you were in high school, and it definitely forces you to grow up a little bit.

Sally echoes points made by other students that in college, they decide what to do and when to do it. A Good Student views this freedom as a personal responsibility to adhere to a study schedule and submit assignments on time. Similar to the imperative language used by Stevo, Sally's reference to "forces you to grow up" implies that college is a context that demands students be more responsible. Students explained that it is more important to manage time in college than in high school because in college, students are more responsible for their schedules and keeping track of coursework.

> You really need to like, be on top of this stuff on your own. You don't have - because some people, like their parents would kind of keep them on top of things, or like their teachers were a little bit more on top of it. Like using the syllabus is something completely new to me. (Paige, Ellie's math class)

Paige indicates that in high school, it was typical for parents or teachers to make sure their children were meeting their obligations. I interpret Paige's comment that using a syllabus is "completely new" to her as communicating a contrast with high school when parents and teachers did the work of reminding students to do their course assignments and study for exams. Earlier in the interview, Paige said she used the syllabus for keeping track of assignment and exam dates; every student I interviewed said that is the primary, if not only, reason they look at the syllabus. However, several students, including Paige, in Ellie's math class, Toby's math class, and May's writing class said they do not need the syllabus for those classes in particular because those instructors frequently give them reminders of what is due. Though Good Student Discourse emphasized the student is responsible for managing their own time, there is evidence that instructors did try to help students with that responsibility.

Different Perspectives on Waiting Until the Last Minute. I identified two different

perspectives regarding doing assignments right before the deadline in students' Good Student

Discourse. Waiting to start assignments until the due date was an issue multiple students said

they wanted to avoid, thus a Good Student started their work early.

> [Waiting until the last minute] is very stressful. And I feel like I don't do my best work when I'm under a time crunch. I feel like I rush everything. I don't look at questions thoroughly when I'm under a time crunch. So it's not... It's a very unnecessary evil that everyone can avoid. (Oz, Clark's math class)

Oz's quote is an example of a common sentiment among the students, that waiting until the last

minute is stressful and can have a negative impact on the quality of their work. The connection

between quality work and managing time illustrates how the dimensions of students' Good

Student Discourse related to one another. For some students, part of Good Student Discourse is

planning ahead to avoid last-minute time crunches which attend to being responsible and

diligent.

Yet other students argued that some of them do higher quality work when they wait until

close to the deadline to start the assignment, and that as long as the assignment is submitted on

time, they are a Good Student. They still managed their time by meeting the assignment

deadline. Jamie explained:

> One [term on the Jamboard] I strongly disagree with is "does not wait until the last minute." I don't know like, I just feel like as long as, like as long as you're getting stuff done, it doesn't really matter. Like if it's late then like that's totally different. But like if I start on a paper at 9pm and it's due at 11:59 and I get it done, like, in my defense like that's like - I don't know there's so much other stuff going on and like Skyler was saying before like our brains kind of work differently... sometimes I mentally or physically can't like sit down and get an assignment done. Until it's like I actually have to wait until the last minute, because, like if I do something, if I like push myself to do something, when I like actually don't want to do it, it's not going to be good work. Like that's just something I learned about myself like it's not going to be good work. So, I don't think it really matters as long as like your work is good and like you tried your best. (Jamie, Ellie's math class)

Jamie "strongly" disagreed that not waiting until the last minute should be a criterion for being a Good Student because it fails to consider students' experiences and contexts. Her quote illustrates a couple of points other students raised: they do better work close to the deadline, people have different strategies that work for them in terms of managing their time ("our brains kind of work differently"), and students have assignments for several courses to consider ("so much other stuff going on"). The deadline and the quality of the work are what matter, regardless of when the work is started. For these students, the dimension of being a Good Student in terms of managing time is measured by the result not the process. Similarly, David (Ellie's class) pointed out that waiting until the last minute to do an assignment is a successful strategy for her:

> Because I've had ADHD my whole life, and I feel that waiting until the last minute, having the pressure on me to get an assignment done forces me to do it, especially since with our e-learning program [learning management system], it closes at a certain time.

David explained that because of her ADHD, the last-minute pressure to complete an assignment helps motivate her to complete the assignment. The pressure is increased because the submission window closes at a specific time, so she feels forced to do the assignment as opposed to postponing it. David's case draws attention to how Good Student Discourses could be discriminatory by failing to consider neurodiversity.

Feeling Like a Good Student. In contrast to students who needed to feel pressure to complete assignments, other students indicated that submitting assignments before or on the due date and starting assignments early were key sources of feeling like a Good Student. At the time of the interviews, students in the writing courses were submitting parts or all of their first big project. Completing all portions of the writing project on time was prominent in examples of when students like a Good Student in writing class.

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I don't think I'm a very good writer. It's just hard for me to be consistent with my writing, so the [project]¹² when we did the [peer review] and had to submit one of our notes one at a time, it was just easy to stay on track, and I really hadn't - Every other writing assignment I've ever done, I've procrastinated on, so just staying consistent with this assignment really felt like I was being, I felt like I was being a good student in this class, and I felt successful in this class. (Sally, Kevin's writing class)

Similar to Sally, other students shared they were proud of themselves for being able to meet the deadlines for all components of that project. When discussing submitting work early, students framed it as feeling relieved they do not have to worry about that assignment. For example, Ariana (May's writing class) said she felt like a Good Student when she finished her project before the deadline and "I felt like I was like ahead of the game like I didn't have to worry about it so much compared to other people." For these students, part of the experience of feeling like a Good Student is feeling prepared and not stressed.

Students in mathematics courses shared examples of starting homework right after class as examples of feeling like a Good Student. Jordan (Ellie's math class) explained she felt like a Good Student "when I get my homework done immediately after class, that I'm using the best time to do homework and actually doing the homework consistently at the same time…it's benefiting me to do that." Jordan's system of doing her math homework right after class helped her feel she was managing time and her coursework by being efficient. She and some other students from Ellie's class noted it is easier to do their homework right after class because the concepts they learned in class are fresh in their minds.

The behaviors related to time management that made students feel they were not Good Students were the reverse: starting or submitting assignments late. Students did not like submitting assignments late, even when they were granted extensions. For example, Eren

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¹² Students used the project name; I replaced that with "project" to conceal the identify of the University as it was a project all first-year writing classes at the University used and could possibly be used to identify it.

(Toby's math class) said he felt he was not a Good Student in "Times I've procrastinated homework for sure, up until, and the very last point, and I've been stressed, but it's usually on an extension so thankfully, but I'd say that, for me." Regardless of having an extension, the stress of being behind on an assignment and the feeling they were not managing their time, had an impact on students' feelings of being a Good Student. Similar to feeling they were not Good Students when missing class for health reasons, students felt they were not Good Students when health or personal struggles made it difficult to stay on track with deadlines. This is illustrated in the excerpt below from my interview with Marcus, in May's writing class.

> Claire: Has there been a time in this class when you felt you were not a good student? And if so, could you tell me about it?
>
> Marcus: Getting a bunch of my [project] stuff in late. I didn't feel great about that. But I was just very overwhelmed and a little bit behind.
>
> Claire: Could you tell me, were you overwhelmed with going to college, like the whole new-to-college thing or was there other stuff going on, too?
>
> Marcus: Might have been that. There was a lot of mental health stuff going on with me. A lot of it was related to my major and different stuff like that. But there was just so much that it felt like it was piling on top of me. So it was very hard to deal with.

Marcus shared that he has ADHD, which could make managing time more difficult, in addition to the mental health struggles he was experiencing. Students who reported having disabilities and mental health struggles, who discussed family emergencies, depression, and not being able to get ADHD medications as reasons why it was difficult to maintain their academic coursework schedule. Because a Good Student is a discursive object—a concept generated by discourse (Foucault, 1971)— and not reflective of a real person, people can strive but not always be a Good Student due to existing as a real person who may have physical, emotional, and situational limitations. What students shared in interviews suggests that to some extent, they agree that enacting Good Student Discourse is important, regardless of their personal or health situations. Students' GSD—which was influenced by discourses they had heard from other authority

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figures, as discussed later in this chapter—contained the ableist assumption that regardless of disabilities and mental health, students can enact Good Student behaviors if they hold themselves responsible and work hard at it. And because they can enact GSD, they should. Good Student Discourse coerces and manipulates students to value and strive to enact behaviors even when those behaviors are privileging normativity at the expense of neurodivergent and disabled students.

Takes Care of Self

The dimension of *takes care of self* means that a Good Student performs household tasks, such as keeping their room clean, as well as taking steps to be physically and mentally healthy. I identified this dimension primarily from students' definitions of being self-sufficient, which was one of the terms on the Jamboard. Students emphasized that a Good Student is self-sufficient in academic aspects as well as personal ones. For example, David (Ellie's math class) said, "I think self-sufficient, in my mind, roughly translates to independent and being able to live on your own, and know what you need and when you need it, and taking care of yourself kind of." David shared taking out the trash regularly and doing dishes as examples of living on her own. She captured the routine quality of household chores by noting a Good Student knows what to do (take out the trash) and when (regularly). A Good Student is self-sufficient and self-managed because they take care of their household responsibilities without being told what to do and picks up after themselves. In the below excerpt, Jess (Flora's writing class) stressed a self-sufficient Good Student does not wait for others to take care of them or their chores.

> Like, if you need your laundry done, you just go and do it, you don't kinda wait for someone to do it for you. Or same with dishes in the sink, with roommates like, if there's dishes in the sink, you just get it done, you don't let it sit there until someone else does it for you.

Jess' reference to "wait for someone to do it for you" highlights the idea of a Good Student does not expect someone to clean up after them. Taking care of oneself is a set of actions a person performs but also a mentality of self-sufficiency and responsibility. This resonated strongly with students who had not had to take care of themselves before college. When I asked Esteban (Flora's writing class) to explain what he has to be self-sufficient for, he replied:

> Just everything, overall. Even tiny things like when you're going to go eat or you're starting to run out of laundry detergent. Just getting used to keeping track of all of that, is definitely like a big change.

Several students shared the same sentiment as Esteban that taking care of themselves includes a constant check on what responsibilities need to be attended to, how, and when. The "tiny things" add up to "a big change" due to having to think about them on a regular basis.

Students argued that attending to those self-care responsibilities are part of being a Good Student because health and academics are related, as illustrated by this exchange between Presley and Joanne in Ellie's math class:

> Presley: Yeah because you need to take care of yourself and like yourself comes before anything else, so if you can't, like if you don't get enough sleep for your class, that's [at] like 9am, then you're not going to do well in it. Like you're not going to have the energy to like, "oh i'm going to do really good in this class today." Or even if you fall asleep in class.

> Joanne: I feel like you have to take care of yourself to succeed. Like, for example, like if I'm not getting enough sleep I'm not be able to pay attention and retain all the information I want, so. I also feel like if I'm not eating well I'm going to be cranky and I'm not going to pay attention and zone out more, also, so that doesn't help.

Both Presley and Joanne connect taking care of their health to their ability to perform academically and enact other dimensions of Good Student Discourse. The physical demands of sleep and nutrition need to be met in order for students to be focused during class. A Good Student eats well and gets enough sleep so they can pay attention in class; health is a step

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towards academic success, not a separate goal. This concept was expressed by other students as well:

> I feel like sleep and making sure that like you're healthy is a really big one, because if you're not doing well, you're not going to do well in class, and your mental, like your mental state. (Kara, Toby's math class)

Kara's quote illustrates her view that mental health and academic outcomes are influenced by sleep and physical health.

Though more students discussed taking care of themselves in terms of household duties and health, some stated that a Good Student balances academic and non-academic activities so they can have an enjoyable college experience and avoid stress. I included these discussions of balance in this dimension because students framed it as a form of self-care.

> Claire: And based on your definition of a good student, is there anything I should add to this Jamboard? Is there anything missing?
>
> Johnny: I would probably put like relax, something like relax…because if you just do schoolwork and schoolwork and schoolwork, and schoolwork, you're going to get tired out, or you're not going to want to probably stay in college all that much. Because it just seems more like a chore than something. That's why I actually do some clubs, or I might do other stuff other than just school work. Actually, have some kind of plan to do other stuff other than work.

For Johnny, a lack of balance between relaxation, clubs, and schoolwork could make college a negative experience with implications for persistence ("not going to want to probably stay in college all that much"). Johnny shared later in the interview fears about college students getting "burned out." A Good Student makes "a plan" for having relaxation time or fun activities as part of taking care of themselves because taking time to destress helps maintain motivation.

The students' Good Student Discourse included household duties and health maintenance because, though not directly part of academic behaviors or performance, the students viewed them as markers of being an independent, adult college student and because health has implications for academics. Emphasizing the transition to living on their own is not surprising

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considering the student participants were 18-20 years old. College is not just an institution; it is a

representation of self-sufficient adulthood. The discourse of a Good Student in college

highlighted the broader discourses of what characterizes an adult. In addition, by considering

their health and care, students' Good Student Discourse prioritizes what works for them and

meeting their needs, which allows them to criticize GSDs that do not align with their needs or

values. Focusing on wellness could be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased

public conversations about mental health. However, even though a focus on wellness may have

empowered students to critique GSDs they saw as harmful, it did not raise a critical

consciousness so to speak about the broader issue of social and institutional pressures to be Good

Students.

Subjective and Moral Aspects of a Good Student

The students' Good Student Discourse included assumptions of subjectivity—that

different individuals will have different definitions of being a Good Student—and connections to

morality. Though Good Student Discourse is aspirational in the sense that it does not always

allow room for students' individual realities (e.g., missing class because you are sick), students

had personal connections to being a Good Student, as their definition of a Good Student reflected

what they felt worked for them and what they valued. Some students explicitly critiqued the

notion that there is a universal definition of a Good Student.

> I think it's important challenging that the definition of a good student can fit every single
> person. There's people with different disabilities, or who need accommodations, or
> people who just aren't -- maybe they're just going to college because their parents told
> them to. They don't really want to be here, but it's free, so they might as well. So I think
> it's, you can't fit the mold always. (Annette, Kevin's writing class)

Annette considers a variety of perspectives and contexts students bring with them to college,

which impacts the ways in which a person can be a Good Student. A definition of a Good

Student that assumes or privileges neuronormativity and ableism could discriminate against

students who are neurodivergent or disabled. Annette also points to the case in which students do not want to be at college at all, thus it might not be fair to expect them to be a Good Student in the same ways as a person who is excited about and devoted to college. The perspective that "you can't fit the mold always" and the influence of disabilities might be particularly important for Annette, as they identified as having bipolar disorder, being gender nonbinary, and a first-generation college student who, in addition, was working 20+ hours a week. Similar to Annette, Ky (Ellie's math class) also argued that "being a good student, just like good and bad, are both relative and subjected [sic] to the person who's considering it." For Ky, each individual is going to have a different idea of what it means to be a Good Student. Jenna and Jane, both in Ellie's math class, argued that as individuals, they should figure out their own definition of a Good Student. For example, Jenna said that her definition of a Good Student is about "what is most important to *me*." I used bold and italics to represent the emphasis Jenna placed on the word "me." Annette, Ky, Jenna, and Jane all express the view that the definition of a Good Student is not universal, due to the variety of circumstances, experiences, values, and identities people hold.

Though only a few students were explicit regarding the subjective nature of definitions of a Good Student, most students shared examples of why the specific criteria of being a Good Student is not and should not be universal. For example, Melvin (Alex's math class) argued that being a Good Student is about enacting most of the terms on the Good Student Jamboard and taking steps to balance the behaviors they do not do, rather than trying to fulfill all criteria.

> If you're not prepared for class all the time, but you're self-sufficient and you're participating, then that would make up for that. So, I think any of them [Jamboard terms], you could be a good student without, just you have to have a majority…but yeah, any of them really, you can argue for not having to have. Because I know plenty of good students that don't go to office hours, or plenty of good students that aren't really that respectful all the time.

Melvin said that all the terms on the Jamboard were part of his definition of a Good Student except for being focused and engaged during class and interested in the subject. Thus, his examples of Good Students who do not go to office hours or are not always respectful shows that he recognizes they are Good Students, even if they do not enact the behaviors he thinks define a Good Student. Melvin's quote illustrates the perspective that people have their own styles for being a Good Student and can customize the combination of Good Student behaviors to enact, rather than trying to live up to every behavior associated with Good Students. Including "all of the time" also nods to the difficulty of students always being able to enact Good Student Discourse. A few other students shared Melvin's holistic view rather than a zero-sum tally of who meets the Good Student criteria and who does not.

Several students explained how a particular behavior is an unfair criterion for being a Good Student:

> Um there's really only one [term on the Jamboard] that I just feel like it's just a little bit too general. And that would be the tries hard to understand material. Because I think it really depends on the subject, and everyone learns differently. So, while like let's say in comparison to Skyler and Jamie I was really good at math, which I'm not, then I, for example, would not have to try hard to learn math but they might have to, and I think that's kind of a bogus thing to put on people. Like, well to be a good student, you have to try hard, but like I'm a good student in other classes and I don't have to try hard. (Katie, Ellie's math class)

Katie echoed points other students raised about how trying hard depends on the class and the student. If a student is doing well in a class without trying hard, they should not be characterized as not being a Good Student; what is at stake is the student trying hard enough to do well, and that varies by individual and class.

Students reflected that behaviors they do not enact or value as part of being a Good Student could be very important to other students, and therefore should not be categorically excluded or included in criteria for being a Good Student. For example, Prisilla (Kevin's writing

class), as well as others, argued that even though they do not do well when they wait until the last minute to study or do an assignment, that is a successful strategy for other students: "And then also, there are some people that work best when they cram things. I'm not sure how. So, like, the not waiting until last minute, like people have different strengths." Prisilla was clear that she does not know how cramming works for people, as it does not work for her. However, if a person waits until the last minute, they should not be excluded from being considered a Good Student. While most students argued that attending office hours is not part of their definition for being a Good Student, some acknowledged that office hours could be useful for other students. Paige (Ellie's math class) stated that, "going to office hours too, like I feel like that's something you could get away with not doing, but for some people like that's something that's really important." For the students, Good Student Discourse was individualized and personal. Being a Good Student is not about meeting a predetermined list of expected behaviors or characteristics; it is living up to the expectations students have of themselves. As discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter, the content of students' GSD was influenced by other people in their lives who were authority figures communicating GSD as well as individuals whose lives were counterexamples to GSD. Students recognize that subjectivity and defend it, simultaneously demonstrating empathy and critiquing normativity. However, even though students commented that not everyone should have to follow the same GSD, the student participants' Good Student Discourses reflected dominant discourses of individual responsibility and diligence. The students' GSD perpetuated those dominant discourses and behaviors, even though they did not condone pushing them onto others. This is another illustration of how power works through discourse; it becomes so embedded into values and beliefs that people do not have to be

explicitly forced to comply, and will follow them even when the potential for counterdiscourses is acknowledged.

Some students' Good Student Discourse had moral connotations, in that they explicitly linked being a Good Student to being a Good Person. For example, Oz (Clark's math class) explained that being a Good Student, "is moral, like it's more of who you are as a person." Oz distinguished being a Good Student from someone who gets high grades because for him, being a Good Student is grounded in morals and reflected in how a person treats other people, not in academic outcomes. In particular, students identified the Jamboard terms of "responsible" and "respectful" as being connected to morals. I found it interesting that even some of the students who viewed the definition of being a Good Student as subjective assumed there is universal agreement that being respectful towards others and responsible are valued.

> Melvin: Where it gets a little iffy, I guess, is respectful and responsible. But those are kind of just given. They [instructors] don't blatantly say, "Be responsible in class," or, "Be respectful in class." But it's just a given, almost.
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> Claire: What do you mean by it's a given?
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> Melvin: Just something that you just know going into it that you should just be respectful of the other person because they're there to teach you. You're paying them to teach you and so you should have a respect for them or for your professors or for the subject, or just in general, be a good person, don't be a dick. (Melvin, Alex's math class)

Melvin's reference to "in general, be a good person" indicates that regardless of if you are in the classroom, respecting others is a norm that any good person does. Similarly, Skyler (Ellie's math class) said, "the respectful and responsible are like the main ones, because I mean obviously there's just, it's just human decency, it's just being a good person." Skyler's use of "obviously" and "just human decency" suggest that being responsible and respectful are not to be argued with as markers of being a good person, and for Skyler, they are also the primary criteria for being a Good Students. Of the students who said that being a Good Student is reflective of a person's

morals, participants who identified as men were overrepresented. One possible explanation is that the GSD reflects behaviors that men are socialized to value, such as overcoming challenges, respecting authority and preserving hierarchies, and advocating for their needs (seeking academic help).

Viewing Good Student Discourse as subjective and as related to morals points to the complexity with which students thought about what it means to be a Good Student. Nearly half of the students interviewed argued that the definition and criteria of a Good Student are not universal; students should enact the behaviors that help them succeed and that they value. Other students made the case that the GS criteria of being responsible and respectful are universal morals, applicable for other contexts. Some students expressed both perspectives: that GSD should not be so restrictive it dictates specific actions a person should take, and at the same time, their Good Student Discourse reflected other seemingly universal moral discourses and expectations. Examining influences on students' ideas of what it means to be a Good Student shows that their GSD is a combination of the values with which they were raised and their personal academic experiences, which could explain the subjective and moral aspects of GSD.

Influences on Students' Good Student Discourse

Students' Good Student Discourse (GSD) was influenced by discourses they heard from other individuals in their life as well as their experience of transitioning from high school to college. Parents and high school teachers had explicit discourses about what it means to be a Good Student. Students reported observations of peers and siblings as influencing their idea of being a Good Student, as they saw peers or siblings modeling (or not) Good Student behaviors. The transition to college highlighted for some students that being a Good Student in college is not the same as being a Good Student in high school; yet nearly half of the students interviewed

said that their ideas of what it means to be a Good Student did not change with the transition to college, what changed is the GSD had to be enacted. Though all the students acknowledged the GSD their instructors communicated, only one reported it influencing his understanding of what it means to be a Good Student. All the students brought GSDs with them to college, signaling the influence of prior discourses on students' understanding of what it means to be a Good Student. I will first discuss the influence of parents, followed by teachers, peers and siblings and the transition to college.

Parents' GSD and Educational Journeys

Nearly half of the students described their parents as being an influence on their understanding of a Good Student because their parents raised them with a set of values and behaviors they see as integral to GSD, or parents were explicit about the importance of academics. Several students discussed their parents instilling in them the importance of respecting others and having self-discipline, which they associate with being a Good Student. Jess (Flora's writing class) shared that her parents raised her to be self-sufficient and respectful, as well as doing quality work:

> I was raised in a very old school Italian household, so it was, "You get your stuff done and you get it done correctly, no ifs, ands, or buts" kind of thing. So that definitely influenced the way I look at being a good student.

Jess' description of the discourse in her family about doing something correctly is not specific to academics, but she sees it as directly applicable to how she understands being a Good Student. Other students made the same argument, that many of the values and behaviors their parents raised them with influenced how they think about being a Good Student. Students discussed their parents not allowing students to leave the table until their homework was completed, making them attend school even if they were not feeling well, and monitoring grades. Mariah's (ElizabethP's math class) mom assigned book reports to her and her siblings and graded them.

All of those students interpreted these structures and rules as their parents working hard to help them be successful and now they are realizing the benefits of those behaviors, even if at the time they thought their parents were being harsh.

Parents who had overcome academic or other significant challenges were also a source of inspiration and influence for students. Johnny (Flora's writing class) shared that he learned a lot about being a Good Student from his dad, who had "gotten in trouble" when he was younger but changed his behavior (Johnny did not provide details about the "trouble" and I thought it was inappropriate to probe). Kenzie (Ellie's math class) described her dad, who had faced economic struggles, as "a huge influence" on her views about being a Good Student. Her dad grew up working on the family's farm and his family struggled financially. He attended college when Kenzie was a young child. She described her dad person who spent most of his life "trying to make ends meet" but was now successful. Kenzie's father served as an inspiration story, raised her and her siblings to strive for success, and provided structures for being Good Students.

> He has always been all about me doing better than him and setting myself up for success. One specific situation that has impacted me is when he would make us sit down after dinner to do our homework together so if we needed help or were having troubles focusing on the material; he was there to help us or enforce discipline. I believe this allowed me to be a better student in the long run because I established those behaviors at a young age, and I try my hardest to practice that behavior today. Even when its [sic] extremely hard to do my homework I will force myself to sit down, shut off my phone, and just push myself to do that work.[13]

Kenzie received financial aid based on financial need, indicating her family is socioeconomically disadvantaged. The importance of discipline and a "do it anyway" attitude could be reflective of that background and identity. Pushing oneself to get the job done is necessary and incompletion is not an option when household finances are tight. In such households, failing to get the job

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[13] Kenzie typed this text into a Jamboard slide. I corrected spelling errors and typos (e.g., "infoce discipline" was the original, I changed to "enforce discipline", it was "younge age and I tey my harderst" and I changed to "young age and I try my hardest")

done could mean being unable to pay rent, buy groceries, and specific to education, continue at Lake University. Similar to Kenzie, other students shared about how their parents introduced routines to ensure students completed their homework and did well in school. Several students were inspired by parents who had endured academic struggles, such as not doing well in high school or not completing college. Those parents encouraged their children not to repeat their mistakes and stressed the importance of education.

> I would say my mom has influenced my thinking because she was kind of like - she's told me how she was in high school, and she's the complete opposite of me. She wasn't the best student, she didn't get very good grades, and then she actually went to a community college for a semester and then she dropped out. And so, growing up, pretty much my entire life, she has always preached to me and my siblings how important it is to be a good student, and to get good grades because, not that she's in a bad place now, but she wishes that she did better back then. So, she's been a big help in showing me what it means to be a good student. (SamM, Irene's writing class)

SamM learned from her mom the consequences of not being a Good Student and her mom supported her by helping her learn to consistently enact Good Student Behaviors. SamM clarified that her mom was the opposite of how SamM is in terms of being a Good Student, suggesting that her mom's experience was a powerful influence with tangible outcomes. A few students had a parent or grandparent who went to college or graduate school relatively late in life and learned from watching their parent or grandparent what it meant to be a Good Student. Bearing witness to how hard their parent or grandparent worked to do well in school served as a model for what a Good Student does. Multiple students had parents who are teachers, and they heard their parent's Good Student Discourse frequently, in the form of reminders to do homework and seek help as well as their parent generally discussing their work of being a teacher. Overall, students described their parents as being powerful influences on their GSD by teaching them the importance of Good Student behaviors though encouragement, discipline, and sharing their personal educational journeys.

Prior Teachers' Encouragement and High Expectations

Students shared how teachers, mostly high school teachers, influenced their Good Student Discourse because the teachers encouraged them to enact GS behaviors and by having high expectations of what students could do. Some students described having teachers who expressed confidence in their ability to succeed and provided advice about how to be a Good Student. Teachers were particularly influential on students when they had a close relationship. For example, Kara (Toby's math class), shared that she learned the importance of seeking help when needed from her science teacher. She described their relationship as "really close" and that teacher is the reason she is majoring in physics.

> She was like, "You know how we have this relationship? Make sure you build a relationship with your teachers so you can ask for help." Because she knew I was really shy and that I don't like talking to people. So, she was like, "If you make a connection with your teacher, you'll be able to ask for help more easily."

Kara's science teacher provided her with a strategy for relationship building to encourage her to seek help whenever she needed it. Kara noted that her teacher knew she was shy, highlighting how teachers could use knowledge about the student to support and advise them.

Teachers who had high expectations and who consistently enforced their Good Student Discourse motivated students and taught them how to be Good Students. The teachers with high expectations stood out to the students, as nearly every student described their overall high school experience as being very easy. Most of the students who discussed teachers with high expectations as a positive, motivating influence were Students of Color: Katie and Melvin identified as Latinx and White, Lily as Latinx, and Kara as Black. It is possible that as Students of Color, they were more likely to have teachers hold low expectations of them than White students due to systemic bias and inequities. The teachers who had high expectations taught these students how to enact the dominant GSD embedded in the school might have had a greater

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influence on these students because enacting that GSD resulted in academic success, and was one of the rare instances when a teacher validated the students were capable of succeeding. Katie (Ellie's math class) explained that her AP Language teacher had a major impact on her ideas about being a Good Student because that teacher "pushed us really hard." Prior to that class, Katie "put little to no effort and just floating through." Katie explained that though the class was difficult, it prepared her for the academic workload of college courses. In addition, she viewed her teacher as caring about the students because she wanted them to learn, "rather than just guess on a test or write a dumb essay." By being invested in Katie's learning and having high expectations, that teacher influenced Katie's definition of being a Good Student and her skills for enacting GS behaviors, such as managing time and coursework. Similarly, Melvin (Alex's math class) shared that his high school statistics class was one of the most demanding classes in terms of workload:

> He made sure we knew what was going on in the class, and he made sure that we were staying on top and taking notes and all this stuff, and I take a lot of... I recall back on that class a lot, like what I would do and what my strategies that were kind of forced on me [chuckle] while in that class. I'm like, "Okay, what would Mr. [Teacher Name] make me do if he were teaching this class?"

Melvin learned strategies for being a Good Student from that math teacher that he still draws upon in college. He also described it as "a work ethic class" because of how the teacher stressed the importance of staying on track with assignments. Thus, teachers who demonstrated an investment in the student by encouraging them, providing guidance and strategies for being a Good Student, and having high expectations were influential on students' college GSD.

Peers and Siblings as Models

Students explained how their siblings, high school peers, and college peers influenced their definitions of a Good Student by being an inspiration for being a Good Student, illustrating the difference between academic success and being a Good Student, teaching strategies for being

a Good Student, and by being a cautionary tale of what not to do. For example, Presley (Ellie's math class) shared in her follow-up survey that she is committed to attending class and staying on track with her coursework because she sees her brother, who did not finish college, "as an example and think that will be me if I don't work towards my potential." Similar to the students who were motivated to avoid the same experience as their siblings who did not finish college, Presley saw the consequences of not attending class or completing course assignments. Other students had siblings who were very successful academically and served as inspirations and shared advice. Oz's brothers attended and graduated from Lake University; they stressed the value of time management and seeking help and provided strategies for time and coursework management. Having brothers who could serve as role models might have been particularly important for Oz because his parents did not attend college and as a Latino, he was racially minoritized at Lake University. Students learned from their siblings, both academically successful and unsuccessful, how to enact Good Student behaviors that could translate to academic achievement.

High school peers, college peers, and siblings also influenced students' criteria of being a Good Student and challenged previous definitions they held. Stevo (Irene's writing class) had a peer mentor at the University, and his peer mentor shifted his definition of a Good Student from a person who has high grades to a person who does their best to be a Good Student, and learning why they did not get the grade that they were trying for is part of being a self-sufficient, Good Student. Students also shared how they valued effort and hard work more than grades because of friends' or siblings' experiences.

> I had a friend in high school who had severe dyslexia, and she worked super super hard to always get the best grades for herself. I used to think being a good student was all about how well you were doing/your[14] grades and test scores, but she made me shift my

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[14] Verbatim from text she typed into the Jamboard.

thinking. I now think a good student is someone who works really hard despite any challenges they may face and who focuses on what is best for themselves in an academic setting! (Bella, Ellie's math class)

Bella's quote is an example of how peers changed students' fundamental definition of a Good Student. For Bella, her friend with dyslexia illustrated how defining a Good Student based on grades fails to acknowledge students' hard work and is unfair, particularly if they have identities or conditions that could make it difficult to get high grades. Similarly, David (Ellie's math class) shared that:

> A person that has influenced my thinking about being a good student would be my younger sister. She has had a very difficult time completing schoolwork in recent years due to mental health and ADHD and it has shown me that even if I am simply putting effort into my education that I am being a good student.

David shared that she also has ADHD, thus her sister's experiences had additional significance for her. Her sister helped David realized that a person can be a Good Student by "putting effort" into their education, even if they cannot complete assignments, which would have implications for grades.

Experiencing the Transition to College

Nearly every student pointed out numerous ways in which high school was different from college, yet the extent to which transitioning to college influenced their GSD varied. Twenty-one students said their *definition* of a Good Student did not change, but the *importance of being* a Good Student did. For example, when asked if his idea of what it means to be a Good Student has changed since he started college, Leonard (Toby's math class) replied,

> Not really…I didn't follow everything in high school that I believed [about being a Good Student], but even though I - but I didn't feel like I needed to, and I still did well without it. So, I guess the only thing that's really changed, hasn't been what I believe a good student is but how important it is to sort of follow that guideline of what a good student is. I'm just trying to be more like that, especially in college.

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Leonard's definition of being a Good Student was the same as when he was in high school, but in high school he did not feel he had to be a Good Student because he was able to do well academically without doing those Good Student behaviors. Leonard also noted during the interview that high school was easy and did not require as much time investment as college. Some students pointed out that they were seniors during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in light of the pandemic, the workload and expectations for attending school were reduced. Yet even prior to COVID-19, high school did not require much effort on the students' part. Several students described high school as easy; they could complete assignments in a few minutes and didn't have to pay attention during class. For example, Sally (Kevin's writing class) shared that, "It was a lot easier to put in the bare minimum" to be a good student in high school, so definitely it just takes a lot more effort to be a good student in college." I interpret Sally using "good student" to refer to a person who gets good grades, not as a person enacting Good Student Behaviors; this occasionally happened during interviews. Lily agreed with Sally and said in high school, "you could sleep in class or you could do this or that and not pay attention and you could still end up doing well on the assignments and not having to work very hard for a good grade." Students have known that managing time to study and complete assignments, attending class, paying attention in class, and seeking help are important behaviors for being a Good Student, yet their high school academic workload did not require them to do any of those behaviors to be successful. Transitioning to college influenced the importance of being a Good Student but necessarily not the definition.

There is little evidence that university instructors' Good Student Discourse was an influence on the GSD of the students in my study. Among the students who shared they changed their definition of a Good Student, only one of them attributed that change to a college

instructor's Good Student Discourse. Nearly all the students described GSD they heard from their instructors, but they were all part of GSDs students had encountered before. All the students said they had heard the Good Student terms presented on the Jamboard from parents, K-12 staff (coaches, band directors), and K-12 teachers. Some students described school settings that formalized GSD in acronyms and having posters around the school endorsing GSD. For example, Ana's school "had a PRIDE matrix…they would shove it down our throats." PRIDE stood for "personal responsibility, respect, integrity, discipline, and engagement." The behaviors and concepts related to being a Good Student were not new information or ideas; the students had been hearing Good Student Discourses for years from a variety of sources. Thus, for these students in their first year of college, it was a matter of deciding what to include as criteria for being a Good Student, rather than learning about new criteria.

Some students shared that transitioning to college influenced their criteria for being a Good Student because they experienced the consequences of not enacting important behaviors, specifically time management and seeking help. SamM (Irene's writing class) shared that she struggled with the exams in her psychology course and asked a friend for help. This was a significant shift in her Good Student Discourse:

> I've always thought that being a good student means doing -- putting in hard work and doing your best and achieving your goals that you have in school. But I definitely learned in college that, also part of being a good student is not being afraid to get help when you need it. Because like I've mentioned, I've been pretty self-sufficient. I always tend to do everything for myself, but in college, you definitely need to reach out to your classmates and your teachers and just to get that help.

In high school, SamM could be self-sufficient and do well in her courses. Yet, she adjusted her criteria for being a Good Student based on her experiences in her first semester in college.

While students discussed adjusting to a higher workload and increased responsibility for themselves, overall, they enjoyed that college required them to be Good Students more than high

school. Though GSD was prevalent in high school, it was a seemingly pointless discourse in that students did not have to enact those behaviors to do well academically. Students also had more freedom in choosing which GS behaviors to enact; for example, they decide that attending class is important, rather than being mandated to in K-12. Grace (May's writing class) shared that the independence to make decisions in college contributes to "a sense of individuality for yourself" which was a relief compared to high school. Multiple students described high school as a dehumanizing experience, where they were "getting dragged around by a leash" (Katie, Ellie's math class") and "more like being a drone than being a student" (Marcus, May's writing class). Others noted how rampant cheating on assignments was in high school. In comparison, they perceived college valuing Good Student behaviors such as pushing themselves for academic success. College was an opportunity to show off how academically diligent and responsible they can be as well as being able to take care of themselves. This added responsibility was a motivator and made students feel like individuals capable of and expected to be Good Students.

Chapter Summary

Students' Good Student Discourse was multidimensional, complex, and encompassed more than academics; it also attended to self-care. The five dimensions I identified—*attends and focused during class, pushes self for academic success, seeks academic help, manages time and coursework,* and *takes care of self*—combined describe a Good Student as academically diligent and responsible. Students viewed being a Good Student as their responsibility, which marked a dramatic shift from high school. Good Student Discourse and how students tried to live by it illustrated how being a Good Student was highly personal for them. I found that Good Student Discourse was tied to students' experiences and the individuals who influenced them by offering advice or instilling values. Students used those experiences and guidance to decide on their

criteria for being a Good Student and recognized when those criteria may not work for all students. Students said did their best to enact those Good Student behaviors in college, and experienced emotional reactions when they felt they did or did not live up to GSD. The student participants also included taking care of themselves as part of being a Good Student, which could be reflective of the students in my study, who were traditional age and most of them lived on campus, as well as reflect broader societal discourses about being in college translates to being an adult. The COVID-19 pandemic could also explain the need to care for one's mental health and well-being. Overall, this shows the amount of labor that these students invested in being a Good Student.

The five dimensions also speak to the student population represented in my study. Lake University is a broad access institution and almost half of the students in my study received need-based financial aid. Several discussed growing up in households with parents who experienced financial struggles and who were raised on the values of hard work, no excuses, and self-sufficiency. I found instances in which students' GSD may have reflected students' gender, race, and disability, highlighting how identities and experiences inform Good Student Discourse. For many of these students, college was the first time they had to try hard in school. They may have attended high schools that were underresourced and were not feeder schools for highly selective universities, another reflection of the student participants' economic and racial backgrounds. The Good Student Discourse expressed by the students at Lake University who selected into this study might be very different from that of wealthy students or those who attend highly-selective institutions. For example, students who attend highly-selective colleges might have discussed academic achievement, such as class rank or test scores, in their definition of a Good Student.

Foucault's concept of discourse (1970/1981, 1977/1980) is useful for understanding how first-year college students grapple imposing self-discipline regarding being a Good Student and the complicated interplay of resisting and taking up Good Student Discourses. The students engaged in self-monitoring, identified standards for themselves, and felt guilty when they did not meet those standards, all supporting Foucault's (1975/1995) notions of power structures shifting from visible, direct means of power into self-discipline, where subjects apply discourses to themselves. The dimensions of being a Good Student I identified among the student participants' GSD were influenced by authority figures in students' lives, such as parents and teachers, and was similar to the dimensions I identified in instructors' GSD in Chapter 4. I interpret that finding to mean that students' GSD reflected dominant beliefs and discourse about what Good Students do. However, students built a personalized version of Good Student Discourse out of the GSDs they heard from others and were ready to critique assumptions of normativity when it comes to being a Good Student. The students' criticism relates to Foucault's (1981) argument that in order to achieve agency, a person must recognize they are a subject of a discourse. Though the students' Good Student Discourse was influenced by what they heard from others and from their experiences—factors that reflect students' racial, gender, socioeconomic, and disability identities—they also recognized the individuality of other students by noting that some Good Student behaviors work well for some but not others. The students have the power of resisting objectification and normalization by working on their own Good Student Discourses and respecting the GSDs of other students. Discourses can be used to resist other discourses and challenge power dynamics (Foucault, 1976/1990). Criticizing assumptions of normativity in addition constructing and enacting their own Good Student Discourse may be a source of empowerment for students.

Interlude II

I started teaching at Wilbur Wright College when I was 22. They hired me to teach Western Humanities but my degree was in Art History. It did not occur to the department chair that I did not know what I was doing, that maybe I did not have any business designing and teaching a Humanities class by myself when I had never taken philosophy, music, or literature courses, that it might be awkward for a 22-year-old to teach students older than herself. That all occurred to me but I thought I could figure it out. After all, I went to good schools. I got good grades.

My professors and education experience told me that Jacques Lacan matters, that Caravaggio is crucial, that the negative reputation of the Hellenistic period is unwarranted thus we must be its ardent defenders, that studying ekphrasis is A MUST, so anyone who seems to like that shit must be a Good Student, right? The students will all be interested, because that stuff is rare, beautiful, and thought provoking. You feel pretty awesome able to name-drop. I thought pointing out the racism, sexism, and classism in Humanities would be enough to make it relevant for students at this college designated as Hispanic Serving and with a large population of people from MENA (Middle East North Africa) countries. *But wait, the sea of faces look back at me like 'what does this have to do with us, why is she going on about this…'*

I learned my lesson quick. Massive quantities of information really only applicable for going on *Jeopardy* or throwing around at snobby dinner parties in an attempt to show you do in fact, deserve to be there, is not enough. Interesting is not enough, because who decides what is interesting? And the real big note here, the students had no choice in taking this course, so interest is a ridiculous (and racist and classist) expectation.

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Being an instructor at Wilbur Wright College taught me that being a Good Student when you are facing concerns over deportation, when you are your family's hope for breaking a cycle, when you are a parent wanting to provide for and make your children proud, when you are working 40 hours a week, when you are living out of your car….just is not the same as the Good Student Discourse that saturates and suffocates much of academia.

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I remember using larger font size, bolding and capitalizing sentences in my syllabus, thinking that it would convince students to follow Good Student Discourse. But now I wonder if it was just obnoxious and a repeat of what students already knew. But then I remember hard lessons I learned about I should not assume what students know (how to attach a file to an email, who Hitler was, for example). So how do you know who would benefit from hearing what? And when do you know if what you are saying is being helpful or being demanding?

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I was never being sure what to do when a student asked me if it was ok if they do not come to class. Such an awkward moment – how to respond? Either way, I was screwed. Saying "sure, don't worry about it" might indicate that I did not think class time was valuable. Saying "no"

was cold; most of the time students had to miss class because of a job, child, parent, or other obligation. In fact saying anything at all indicates that I have the authority to grant permission about students' whereabouts, which made me feel like an elementary teacher (which I was not). How does one balance the message of "class is important you should go" with "I know you have an emergency, I am so sorry/have a lot on your plate, its understandable if you cannot be here."

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

I think effort mattered to me, which I recognized as going to class and turning in work. I didn't expect verbal participation, but making eye contact with me went a long way. If they made eye contact, then I was engaging them, I was doing a *good job*. When you are teaching, it is hard to know if you are getting results, earning that dollar. Waiting tables, I knew how many plates I carried, how much people liked my service. Cleaning horse stalls, I know the shit has been removed; I hauled it out, put in new bedding, and truly made a difference for another living creature. Instant satisfaction with progress. But oh-too-often with teaching you don't know if you are doing *anything* for the students. I wanted to give them something they would not get anywhere else, wanted to support them, inspire them, help them develop Good Student behaviors. But I have no way to know if I did anything at all besides put them back on a treadmill of *one more useless class I have to go to and will never think about again*.

<p style="text-align:center">*Wait*
Was I defining a Good Student as the student who validates that I am, in fact, doing a good job? That I am a good teacher?
Maybe a Good Student just reflecting my own desires: to be recognized as a good instructor. The more Good Students in my class, the better the teacher I must be.
What a selfish perspective, to make a Good Student really about *me*.</p>

But how else was I supposed to know if I was doing a good job? The Protestant Work Ethic, Capitalism, and The American Dream combine to make a supernova of guilt and pressure to work harder, to get results. Years of being a Good Student means you are supposed to be a Good Teacher, and also that you yearn for assessment, feedback, validation of your work and if you are not doing a good job, then you blame yourself, not the system. So do Good Students make Good Teachers, and do Good Teachers make Good Students? *We should not even be asking that question.* Rather, *what good are these Good [insert here] Discourses doing for us?*

Chapter 6

The Relationship Between Being a Good Student and Academic Success

Instructors and students agreed that being a Good Student (enacting the behaviors associated with being a Good Student) should lead to academic success, yet they also noted exceptions: Good Students do not always get high grades, and having a high grade is not necessarily reflective of being a Good Student or of learning. In this chapter, I discuss instructors' and students' descriptions of the relationship between being a Good Student (GS) and academic success, including exceptions regarding why being a Good Student does not guarantee academic success. For methodological context, in the interviews, I asked instructors and students about the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful, then asked them to define academic success.

Instructors' Perspectives on Being a Good Student and Academic Success

The instructors I interviewed shared that most of the time, enacting the behaviors that define a Good Student are associated with being academically successful. Yet, instructors also noted exceptions, when being a Good Student did not result in academic success. In addition, instructors had differing perspectives on the relationships between being a Good Student, the student's grade in the course, and the student's learning.

Being A Good Student is Strongly Related to Grades

Eight of the instructors—Buster, Flora, May, Irene, Kevin, Alex, Toby, and Sam—said that in general, being a Good Student leads to a passing grade or higher. Sam said, "I think there's a strong relation" between being a Good Student and being academically successful. Flora

stated that, "I'm not really sure how you could meet the standards of being a good student in my definition and not be academically successful" in her class. Those eight instructors referenced a grade as the definition or part of their definition of academic success.

Most of the instructors said they were not sure if being a Good Student would always lead to academic success in terms of a grade, but they would "like to believe" (Alex) or "like to think" (Kevin) being a Good Student will result in a grade representative of academic success. Irene acknowledged that it is not certain that being a Good Student leads to a good grade, but that happens most of the time:

> I would say most of the time, if you're willing to put in the effort to participate and actively seek out help and look ahead in the book and - if you're willing to put in all that effort, you're also probably willing to put in a decent amount of effort on the homework, and since that is what ends up getting graded, then you're probably academically successful, most likely. (Irene)

Irene references the Good Student dimensions of *engaged during class* and *puts effort and attention towards coursework* in her explanation of behaviors that will "most likely" result in a good grade because homework is "what ends up getting graded." May pointed out that,

> Being a good student, you really start learning how to study, how to put work in, how to actually prepare for things, and I think that often leads to academic success. And I think that once you have to actually work for a grade, I think you value it a little bit more as well.

May indicates that the reason being a Good Student leads to academic success is because the Good Student behaviors related to *puts effort and attention into coursework* will equip the student with skills and habits that lead to academic success. Toby said something similar to May: "a person who is a good student is more likely to be able to be academically successful, either in the immediate future, or maybe not in the immediate future, maybe a little bit into a year or two." Toby explained that a Good Student has academic skills and habits, including attending office

hours and striving to understand the course content, that help them persist and overcome academic challenges.

Instructors frequently discussed "effort" or "work hard" to refer to the behaviors of being a Good Student and to explain why being a Good Student is related to academic success in terms of a grade. One example is the following segment from Irene's quote shared above: "put in the effort to participate and actively seek out help and look ahead in the book." Similarly, Buster said, "I think all academically successful students are academically successful because they've tried and they've put in some kind of effort." Buster defined effort as turning assignments in on time, seeking help when they need it, and paying attention in class, all which correspond to the Good Student dimensions. Thus, effort is a key explanation for why being a Good Student leads to academic success.

Grades Should Reward Effort. Buster, ElizabethP, and Kevin argued that grades should reflect the student's efforts in enacting Good Student behaviors and that they implement that in their own approaches to grading. Kevin explained that, "the way I handle the grading and what I tell the students is... I said, 'No one who hands in all the work in good faith is going to get lower than a B in this class.' And it's true." He provided an example of how his grading system rewarded a student who demonstrated multiple Good Student behaviors and effort.

> I had a student last semester who, I think, because I grade in that narrow band, he ended up with a B+…And he was very engaged, and he asked a lot of questions, and he always came to class, and he told me this was a great class and everything. He really enjoyed it, he loved it, but his writing was rather poor. It was hard to understand a lot of the time…Anyhow, I sort of in the background, justified. He really tried and he put in a lot more effort and had a lot more energy than most of the class, so overall is he a B plus student? Sure.

Kevin's quote illustrates how he used his power, in the terms of assigning grades, to ensure that being a Good Student results in academic success. Buster shared a similar perspective:

Here's the thing, if I know that you've been putting in a good effort and I've been working with you closely throughout the semester, I don't hose people on grades, I just don't do that because I think that you need to instill confidence. And one of the ways that you instill confidence is by rewarding people for doing what they're supposed to do. And I don't mean that in a participation trophy kind of way, I just mean that as like, I know that you put in an effort. I know that you were doing work, I saw you doing the work, you're going to get credit for that.

For Buster, being a Good Student should lead to academic success in terms of a grade because the student was "doing what they're supposed to do." Buster suggested that rewarding students for their effort will make them more confident and assure them that their Good Student behaviors were worthwhile. ElizabethP expressed a similar perspective regarding the grade having the potential to give a student encouragement and a sense of accomplishment. She shared an example of a student who:

> Worked very hard to pass. I believe technically final grade, he should have fallen out of C, but he was close enough to that C-B[15] that I was like, "He worked for it. I'll give it to him." Does that change his ability to go on to the next class? No, he passed. He can go on. But it is a little bit more of that encouragement, looking at the grade card being like, "I've worked for that."

ElizabethP stressed that rounding the student's grade up to a C-B is not a significant enough change that it would influence his ability to go to the next class (calculus), but it could be very meaningful for the student. Thus, Kevin, Buster, and May discussed actions they took to ensure that a grade rewarded the student's effort, supporting the relationship that being a Good Student leads to a good grade.

Exceptions to the Relationship of Being a Good Student and Grades

Instructors also noted cases of when being a Good Student does not result in a high grade, when grades do not reflect being a Good Student, and when grades are not a measure of academic success if they do not represent student learning. These exceptions and tensions in the

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[15] Lake University has a grading scale of C, CB, B instead of C, C+, B-.

Good Student-academic success relationship illustrate how some factors relating to grades are outside of the instructor's control and that some instructors grapple with what a grade assesses.

Being a Good Student Does Not Result in a Good Grade. Irene, Toby, Kevin, and Buster discussed examples of when being a Good Student does not or might not result in a grade they associate with academic success. However, they provided different explanations for why that is the case, with Toby discussing the form of assessment, Irene the student's academic performance, and Kevin and Buster, the instructor. Toby shared that they have had students who attended office hours to work through problems and tried "their best in a given course," but does not do well on tests. Toby said that, "I would say that is a good student who's not really being academically successful…[because] maybe the traditional problems on a piece of paper assessment type just wouldn't work for them." Despite seeking help, investing time and effort into the course, and being able to successfully solve problems in office hours, the style of assessment prevented the student from getting the grade representative of their effort and understanding. Toby, a graduate student instructor teaching precalculus, noted that they "don't quite have the power" to change the assessment style, a reminder of how instructors do not always have complete authority over the course. Irene did not provide a specific reason for why "students who are participating and are asking questions, but they're just not quite there on the writing side of things." Even though some students "are really trying hard" they do not get a high grade in the first-year writing course. Irene's example highlights the perspective that even if a student is enacting Good Student behaviors, they still need to be able to academically perform at a certain level to get a good grade.

Kevin and Buster noted that the relationship between being a Good Student and academically successful is not guaranteed because the instructor assigns the grades. As discussed

earlier in the chapter, both Kevin and Buster said that grades should reward effort. Buster

explained that "Academic success is partially based off of who recognizes that [effort], which is

unfortunate because it's a crapshoot at that point." Not all instructors will recognize a student's

Good Student behaviors, thus a person can be a Good Student but not get a good grade. Kevin

made a similar point, noting that some of his colleagues grade more harshly than he does.

A Good Grade Without Being a Good Student. May, Toby, and Alex discussed the

opposite case: when a person can obtain a high grade without enacting Good Student Behaviors.

Alex and May referenced the student's preparation for the course as a reason why they could get

a good grade without having to invest much effort. Alex, who taught calculus, shared that,

> Well, if they had taken calculus in high school, and they can do well enough on some of
> the assessments that are based on the high school material, then…they don't really have
> to engage in the, with the assessments in the way that I want them to engage, if they're
> well prepared. They might be able to get the grade they want, pass onto the next class
> without doing what I think is being a good student.

Alex identified that students could do well on the assessments without enacting behaviors related

to the GS dimensions of *striving to learn* and *puts effort and attention towards coursework*. Toby

noted placement tests as an issue, because a student's score on the placement test might put them

into a class they can get a high grade in without much effort. May argued similar points to Alex

and Toby, and also indicated intelligence as a factor: "you could have a kid who's really bright

and can just sort of glide along." May described a student who was very "smart" who "got an A

in the class, because he just came in writing well, and I don't think he needed to be in the

[workshop][16] section." That student did not attend or engage in class, which May viewed as an

important component of being a Good Student. The examples instructors provided of students

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[16] May taught a section of first-year writing that has an additional writing workshop to it, intended to help students
who would benefit from additional academic support. Students were recommended for placement into that section
by advisors based on their high school GPA.

getting good grades without being Good Students echo students' reports of being able to get good grades with little effort in high school (Chapter 5). However, students identified low expectations as the reason whereas these instructors attributed it to course placement issues and student preparation.

Learning is Academic Success, Not Just the Grade. Four instructors—May, Alex, Sam, Clark, and Ellie—discussed the relationship between learning, being a Good Student, and grades and problematized grades as the defining criteria of academic success. In the example discussed earlier in this chapter of a student who got an A in the class but did not go to or engage in class, May pointed out that the student "did miss a few of the sort of things that we were hoping that students would get out of it, because he didn't come to class." Thus, the student missed out on specific learning opportunities that class time provided. From May's perspective, that student was only partially academically successful. She defined academic success as a passing grade and as learning something students can apply to future situations. Enacting the Good Student behavior of attending class may have helped the student learn more.

Alex and Sam discussed how being a Good Student can lead to success in terms of learning academic skills; even if a student gained skills but did not pass the class, they were successful. Alex explained that,

> So another one [definition of academic success] is that you learn something from the class. For some students, it'll turn out that they're going to learn that they're not ready for this class. But sometimes it's actually a successful experience that they were in some situation, they came in however they are and they manage to improve where they are, so they're in a significantly better position to do it again.

Alex's quote describes a student who did not pass the class but made substantial learning gains so when they retake the course, they are more "ready for this class." For Alex, that is an example of academic success. Though this sounds similar to Toby's point earlier about a Good Student

might not pass the class now but will in the future, the distinguishing factor is their definitions of success. Toby defined academic success as a passing grade or higher, and being a Good Student can lead to that, whereas Alex offered many definitions of academic success, one of which is a student makes learning gains and is more prepared for the class. Sam shared a similar perspective to Alex:

> [Academic success] is not just about learning this [content], I want you to be successful and to taste what success is in smaller portions. It doesn't have to be a big thing, but if you could accomplish something, get something, get a good study habit or something out of this. If a light bulb goes off at some point about something in this class, maybe you didn't get a good grade in the course but at least you've made progress in how to learn and you've realized something, or maybe that this is not the area you should be in.

Sam defined academic success as improving academic skills ("get a good study habit") and also students learning about themselves, such as what major they should pursue. Sam expanded academic success beyond her class to students experiencing an academic or personal accomplishment, even if they do not pass the class.

Clark and Ellie raised concerns about the extent to which grades assess student learning. Ellie argued that being a Good Student—being focused and engaged in class, striving for understanding, asking the instructor for help, investing effort into assignments—should support students' learning of the course content, and that grades should reflect learning. When asked what the relationship between being a Good Student and academically successful is, she expressed concerns about the strength of that relationship: "To be completely blunt, I don't know that those are always tightly connected the way they should be…I don't know that all faculty really give students those opportunities." Ellie defined academic success as students being "able to articulate their thinking" and make a mathematical argument. For Ellie, the grade should reflect what a student learned and being a Good Student should support student's learning, but she was skeptical that other instructors agree with her. Clark defined academic success as

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students understanding the course material and learning skills that will be helpful in a future

course or career. He challenged grading systems that reward Good Student behaviors but not

learning:

> I think there are plenty of students that are really good at, um, I've always thought of it as kind of like playing the game of school. Like if you go to every class and you're on time and you submit every assignment on time, but still just have a very kind of superficial understanding or maybe a very rough understanding of the big ideas of the course, I think many times, you can get by with a pretty good grade which many people see as a good measure of a good student. But then I also think there's many students who do you understand things pretty deeply and are capable of doing, uh, I guess demonstrating very high-quality work but don't necessarily do those uh, "playing the game of school" things, and so they end up getting pretty poor grades when they actually understand the content pretty well. So, I guess thinking of it from like a statistical standpoint…I think the correlation [between being a Good Student and academically successful] is sometimes pretty low.

The behaviors Clark mentions about "playing the game of school" align with some the

dimensions of a Good Student, yet as Clark points out, students who are Good Students are not

truly academically successful unless they learned the content; the reverse is also true. He

problematized the assumption that Good Student behaviors will result in learning. By calling it

"playing the game of school," Clark portrayed being a Good Student as a person who follows

school rules but does not have to engage in the seriousness of learning.

Clark's quote is a useful contrast to Kevin's quote shared earlier in the chapter about a

student who was highly engaged but his writing was "rather poor" but ended up with a B+

because of Kevin's approach to grading. Clark and Kevin represent the variety of perspectives

instructors could have regarding the relationship between being a Good Student, grades, and

learning. Only May, Alex, Sam, Ellie, and Clark made the explicit argument that grades alone

are not a measure of academic success because learning matters. Yet, eight of the instructors

included learning or skill development in their definition of academic success. As these findings

show, grades, learning, and Good Student behaviors are intertwined and further complicated by discussions of what to assess and how.

The instructors' discussions of the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful show that instructors consider the multitude of circumstances as to why students may not have the outcome they worked hard for and what should be assessed in their course (effort, learning content). May and Toby discussed aspects of the education system beyond their control—assessment styles and course placement processes—that disrupt the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful. Alex offered multiple definitions of academic success and said it depends on what the student is trying to achieve. Flora, Buster, and Kevin noted that the relationship of being a Good Student and grades could vary between instructors, and Clark and Ellie indicated that if and how learning is assessed differs among instructors. Though there were a variety of definitions of academic success and how that relates to being a Good Student among these eleven instructors, all of them agreed that being a Good Student should result in successful outcomes. The variety of definitions has implications for students, who may have instructors with different theories about what a grade should reflect: Good Student behaviors (effort), learning, or a mixture of both. Though Kevin said he explicitly tells the students.

Students' Perspectives on Being a Good Student and Academic Success

Similar to instructors, nearly all students thought that being a Good Student, per their definition, could make it more likely to get a passing or high grade. However, the most common explanation students gave for why being a Good Student does not always to a good grade was different from those provided by instructors; students emphasized intrinsic abilities. Similar to instructors, some students argued that tests are not a reliable measure of effort or learning.

Students argued that even though a good grade is not guaranteed, it is important to try their best and be Good Students because of the learning they could gain as well as to avoid wasting time or money.

Being a Good Student is Strongly Related to Grades

The majority of students said that most or all of the time, being a Good Student will result in a passing or good (A or B) grade. Similar to the instructors, most of the students who discussed being a Good Student having a strong relationship with grade framed it in terms of investing effort or trying hard. Sunny, who defined academic success as a GPA of 3.0 or above, said that being a Good Student and getting a good grade are "pretty closely related" and it is "pretty straight forward, you put in the work and you get the good grades and you get a good GPA." Sunny framed the relationship of being a Good Student and academic success as causal and consistent. Similar to Sunny, several students referred to being a Good Student as investing work and the grade is the reward.

> I definitely think there's a lot of pay-off for being academically successful when you're a good student, like doing, just trying to do a lot of things that we talked about on the Jamboard that definitely is a straight shot to academic success. It's kind of hard to fail when you're trying as hard as you can or trying as much as you, yeah. (Sally)

Sally expressed a high degree of confidence that a person will not fail the class as long as they are trying their hardest to be a Good Student. She shared that she did not try very hard academically in high school but in college was aiming for high grades, thus she wanted to enact Good Student behaviors and work hard. Some students argued that being a Good Student is representative of a person's motivation and priorities.

> Prioritizing your academics is really the main part of it. I think anybody can do it and can do whatever they want to succeed in academically, it's just whether or not you're prioritizing it and actually putting in the work more than anything. I don't think anyone is born naturally smart and that everybody can learn how to do something…so I think like

being a good student and just putting in that work is directly equated to academic success. (Eren)

For Eren, who defined academic success as passing his classes and graduating, anyone can be successful as long as they want to be and invest the effort.

Melvin, Leonard, David, and Mariah explained how specific Good Student behaviors, learning and grades are connected.

As a student, your pay is your grade, and so I think the better of a student you are, the more you're preparing for class, and the more you're going to office hours, and the more you're trying to understand material, you're just going to get better grades. You're going to understand things more and be able to perform better on tests and exams and whatnot. (Melvin)

Melvin described a relationship in which being a Good Student, specifically behaviors related to the dimensions of *pushes self for academic success* and *seeks academic help*, leads to understanding the course material which results in doing well on tests. His description implies this relationship is certain; saying "you're going to" depicts a causal chain of Good Student results in learning, which results in better grades.

For some students, a good grade was validation of their Good Student efforts. A high grade on an assignment or positive feedback from an instructor made them feel like Good Students.

I felt like I was a good student when I've gotten my grade back for the [project], because I did a lot better than I thought I was going to, and I just felt like all that hard work paid off and I felt accomplished. (SamM)

The grade was confirmation to SamM that her hard work at being a Good Student was worthwhile and recognized. SamM explained that she didn't think she would get a high grade, even though she described herself as a "decent writer," because she thought that her instructor, Irene, was going to "nitpick certain things" and grade more harshly. These expectations came from high school teachers who described college as very difficult and different from high school,

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which made SamM nervous about the extent to which her efforts of being a Good Student would be realized in a grade. Thus, it is possible that the grade confirming students' feelings about their work is more meaningful for first-year students as they are navigating the transition to college. Similarly, David said that, "It makes me feel good in myself knowing that I've completed it [homework] and that I feel confident in my answers, and then getting a grade that reflects that confidence." If the grade reflects the work she invested and her level of confidence, this serves as feedback that David understood the course material and the academic expectations of the course. In addition, it confirms that she can trust that, at least in Ellie's math class, being a Good Student leads to academic success.

The Value of a Grade Depends on Effort and Difficulty. Several students shared that their grade goal differed between courses because of how much effort they would invest and the difficulty of the course. For example, Ky shared that:

> I have this one class, the ADA drug class. He doesn't have a syllabus or a timeline at all. You have to do the work by a date on your own time like that, so, that's different from the math class, we have set dates and help and all that stuff. I have to do things on my own, and I'd much rather get a B in that [ADA] class by working really hard, than get an A in this [math] class because I know I could do it [?] here rather than there.

For Ky, a B in her ADA class would matter more than an A in Ellie's math class because the B captured the additional effort she had to invest, particularly in the Good Student dimension of *manages time and coursework* and *pushes self for academic success*, whereas she did not have to try as hard in the math class. Other students shared that they changed their grade expectations based on the course subject because some subjects were more difficult for them. Those students argued that they had to seek academic help and spend more time on assignments for those courses so if they ended up with a B, that was academic success because their extra effort mattered. Joanne shared that, "English I struggle in so if I'm like reaching out for help and

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reaching a problem but I'm getting like a B or C I'd be okay with that" even though in other classes, she defined academic success as an A or a B. These statements echo May's point shared earlier in the chapter: "once you have to actually work for a grade, I think you value it a little bit more."

Exceptions to the Relationship of Being a Good Student and Grades

Students discussed two main exceptions to the relationship of being a Good Student results in a successful grade: intrinsic academic ability and that test grades do not reflect Good Student behaviors.

Intrinsic Academic Ability Results in Good Grades. One of the most common reasons students provided for why being a Good Student does not require academic success, and why someone can be academically successful without being a Good Student, is the student's intrinsic academic abilities. References to being smart or a natural in a subject area were frequent. Some students argued that everyone can be a Good Student but not everyone can be academically successful because the latter is about intrinsic abilities.

> You can all be a good student, but hey, some of us aren't that gifted in academics. Maybe I'll try super hard, but the most I'll get is a B+. So, I feel like being a good student can contribute to academic success. It really can. It's a good habit, to be responsible, to study, to use all the resources you can, and you might do well, but I feel like there's not really a strong correlation between being a good student and being a 4.0 GPA.

Oz pointed out that being a Good Student has the potential to lead to academic success but also suggested there is a limitation to what a person who is not "gifted in academics" can achieve, regardless of their efforts. For Oz, being a Good Student is not enough to get a 4.0 GPA, which requires innate ability. It is disheartening that Oz identified himself as not "gifted in academics." Oz's quote is a reminder of why discourses about Good Students and academic success are

important, as they can perpetuate claims of natural ability. Students expressed a sense of unfairness that some people have to work harder than others:

> It's almost natural in a sense of some people just can learn better, and it's kind of a combination of how they were brought up, but also how their genetics is. Sometimes you can just take in information better and don't need to be paying that much attention or you're just really good at guessing, and somehow it's just like some people just always seem to be able to be just successful without having to put in nearly as much work as others. (Jacob)

Genetics and upbringing are both factors that students cannot change. Jacob conveyed the perspective that some people can succeed with less effort than others because of who they are; thus, they can be academically successful without being a Good Student. Similarly, other students described people being very smart or prodigies who can get high grades without enacting specific Good Student behaviors such as attending class, pushing themselves for academic success, and managing coursework.

Some students focused on people having intrinsic ability to do well in some subjects while others do not. For example, in their interview together, Bella, Jane, and Ky said that being a Good Student and academically successful "go hand in hand" (Ky) but that does not always lead to a good grade because of the student's abilities or interests in the course subject.

> I feel like sometimes people are just naturally better at certain subjects or like more inclined to do well on them, or also maybe you're just genuinely not super interested in it, so no matter how hard you work, there's always going to be a little bit of a mental block when you go to take the test. So, I feel like even though you work super hard, it could be maybe you're just like really genuinely not great at it or just not super interested in it. (Bella)

Bella's reference to being "naturally better" or not being able to do well on a test because of a lack of interest attributes the reason for lack of academic success to the student, regardless of the effort the student invests. Ky agreed with Bella, then used a sports analogy to explain that like athletic talent, there is academic talent, and people are not going to be successful academically

unless they have it. Jamie shared a detailed explanation of how she distinguished between good

grades and being a Good Student. I include her full explanation because it captures Jamie's

perspective on why being a Good Student does not guarantee a good grade, and the

consequences of assuming that academic success can only be defined as getting As.

> Like a lot of people relate like being, you have to be academically successful in order to be a good student. Or that's at least something that I always like told myself, which I think is pretty toxic because, like you don't have to be successful academically. Like obviously everyone wants that, well like you should want that, but that doesn't make you a good student. Because, like it's harder for, like sometimes it's just harder for people. Like some people are just like naturally, like you know understand things, and like comprehend things, versus like where – it's like in certain subjects I just easily get, versus like math like I actually have to try. And that like frustrates me because it's like I can't, like I have to pay attention, I have to focus. So, I don't know. I feel like [a] lot of people, just like merge those into one. Like you're successful if like, you're a good student if like you have all As. But that's not really the case. Like you can still be a good student, but like have all Cs. But people don't think that way.

Jamie expressed frustration with the assumption that a Good Student gets all As, which can be

harmful for people's view of academics as well as how they feel about themselves as Good

Students. Similar to other students, Jamie argued that people can be naturally better at some

subjects than others, and that in the subject she thought she was not naturally good at (math), she

had to work very hard. Her hard work in math should be recognized as indication of being a

Good Student, but she would not be recognized as a Good Student if the criterion of being a

Good Student is getting all A. being a Good Student results in high grades. For context, Jamie

defined academic success as knowing that she "tried my best" and was a Good Student by going

to tutoring, office hours, and attending and focusing during class. Calvin shared Jamie's view

that people have different academic strengths:

> Everyone's always like either a math or an English person, is like everyone always has one, but not a lot of people have both. So, I feel like some people just have a knack for certain things and that helps a lot. And then some people, if they're struggling in a class, they probably have something else that they could exceed expectations very well.

Calvin, who described himself as a math person, implies that everyone is academically successful in some subject(s), but most are not successful in all because of intrinsic abilities ("have a knack").

Test Grades Do Not Reflect Good Student Behaviors. Students also argued that being a Good Student does not lead to academic success because high test scores are not reflective of Good Student behaviors. Annette noted that, "I think that you can be a good student and still fail tests due to like test anxiety." Annette identified themselves as a Good Student, which they described as going to class and doing their best to devote time to studying and assignments. For Annette, a student can enact Good Student behaviors, but the anxiety caused by the test makes it impossible for the student to demonstrate their efforts. The reverse is also true:

> I think that a lot of my friends actually are amazing test-takers, and they won't do their homework, they won't study, they don't do anything, and they get perfect grades in class, and they're horrible students. (Jordan)

Similar to the discussion around students being naturally talented at some subjects that are hard for others, Jordan conveyed frustration that this is unfair. From her perspective, her friends are academically successful because they can take tests, not because they are Good Students.

Two students, David and Kenzie, critiqued the education system's privileging of grades based on tests, not effort or learning. This argument was less common than that of intrinsic ability and differs in that the students center the explanation on external factors.

> Because with the American school system, how it's so heavily reliant on grades and testing rather than reflecting a person's individual talents, I feel like even if you meet all of those requirements [being a Good Student], you might not be as successful as deemed by the school system. (David)

David emphasized that the educational system is set up to value grades and tests, not what an individual is capable of in terms of being a Good Student or how hard they work. Her reference to "talents" highlights that people do have talents that might not be captured by the tests, but she

sees this as a systemic problem, not that some people being born to be academically gifted.

Because being a Good Student does not guarantee academic success and vice versa, Kenzie was

also skeptical of the value of grades:

> I think everything's centered around grades. So, I don't think you necessarily have to be a good student if you're getting good grades, because I know a lot of people try really hard in their class and they still struggle. So, I think the idea that we have of maintaining a GPA and having a certain grade in the class is iffy to me, especially because testing, because a lot of people are really bad at testing. (Kenzie)

Kenzie stated that the emphasis on grades needs to be changed, particularly considering that

overreliance on testing places people at a disadvantage. Kenzie defined academic success as

learning the course content and said when a class is "solely based on test-taking or

memorization" she does not feel like she learns the material, and at the end of the class questions

what the point of the class was because she did not retain anything.

The Instructor Influences Academic Success. Some students—Lindsey, Psy, Jenna,

SamM, Elizabeth, and Johnny—identified the instructor as a reason why a person can be a Good

Student and not academically successful. Psy and Jenna discussed how the instructor's teaching

style might not be compatible with the student's learning style.

> There's some instructors that are just like, they don't fit your teaching style or anything like that, like they don't fit like, how you need to learn…But like you could still be a good student and like take as many notes, as you can and like do all your work and whatever in order to like, still try and do well in that class. (Jenna)

Jenna argued that a person should still try to be a Good Student even though learning might be

difficult due to the instructor's pedagogy not aligning with the student's learning needs.

Other students described cases of unhelpful or harsh instructors as why a Good Student

would not be academically successful. Johnny said that sometimes people "are very good

students" but "sometimes they might have bad professors. I don't have bad professors, but I

know there are bad professors out there, they might not be as lenient for certain stuff." SamM shared an anecdote:

> So my friend, she has a professor who he is just really rude, and she puts a lot of work into writing things for him because it's an English class and then he just fails her anyways. And then she tries to get help and ask him why like, "Why are you failing me?" And he doesn't really give good clear answers as to why. So, it's really hard to pass a class when the professor is just not on your side.

For SamM, her friend was doing what a Good Student does: seeking help and working hard on the assignments. Yet the instructor was not helping the student, which prevented her from doing better on assignments. These examples illustrate that not all students attributed a lack of success to their intrinsic abilities; some identify the instructor, an external factor, as why a Good Student is not academically successful. I want to stress that none of the students described the instructors participating in this study as harsh or unhelpful.

Do Your Best Anyway

The majority of students noted that being a Good Student does not guarantee academic success due to factors they cannot do anything about, either intrinsic abilities, tests, or instructors. However, they still argued it is important to try their best to be Good Students, even if the outcome is uncertain. Paige captured this sense of powerlessness to affect outcomes and dedication to being a Good Student regardless of the outcome, saying, "Like put your… put your best effort forward, but if it's not enough it's not enough and there's nothing you can do about it." Skyler, who defined academic success as learning, offered a similar point about success being outside of her control but identified the educational system as the problem: "if I've done everything in my power to do it to figure out the material and still can't figure it out, then there's definitely there's just something wrong with the system." Paige and Skyler are examples of the

perspective that that trying their best is what students should focus on, and not worry about outcomes they do not have power to change.

Recognizing they are not in control of the academic outcome and prioritizing their efforts to being a Good Student could be a strategy students use to reduce stress. Some students argued that knowing they tried their best at being a Good Student is a form of success. Stevo shared that at the beginning of the semester he was "a little too hard on myself" about As and in high school held himself to a standard of getting straight As. However, his peer mentor, friends, and experiences shifted his perspective to the importance of trying his best, even if he does not get an A.

> As long as you did your best. I think the biggest thing that helped me, was just knowing, as long as you do your best and you pass and you feel comfortable with the effort that you put in, it's going to be okay.

Like other students, Stevo discussed struggling with particular subjects and unsupportive instructors as reasons why being a Good Student might not lead to academic success. By shifting his perspective to doing his best to be a Good Student is more important than an A, Stevo could reduce his stress over not meeting the grade expectations he had for himself in high school.

Learning is Academic Success, Not Just the Grade. Fourteen students defined academic success as learning skills or knowledge that they will need in future courses or careers; seven of them also include grades in their definition of academic success. Some students contended that being a Good Student will lead to gaining specific knowledge they will need for their careers. For example, Kara wanted to be an astrophysicist at NASA. She said it is important to be a Good Student because:

> If I'm doing like, a research project, I want to be able to know what I'm doing. I don't want to have to blank out when I'm doing something really important, and then have to go back to years and years of when I was a freshman in college, and I wasn't paying attention. I want to be able to work on my own, like my foundation, and be able to succeed.

Kara viewed the content she was learning in her courses as building her knowledge and skill foundation for her career.

Other students explained that the behaviors listed in their Good Student Discourse, such as seeking help and managing time, were skills that would help them. That argument was more common than being a Good Student to learn specialized content knowledge.

> Like college and being a good student here helps you because you have to build a schedule, you have to hold yourself responsible, you have to do all these things. That helps when you have a job because it's going to be very similar. You're going to have a new schedule you have to make, and you're just going to have to have different things focused and prioritize during your daily life. (Lily)

Lily points out that jobs require a person to be responsible, prioritize tasks, and manage time, which students must do in college. Similarly, Paige said it is important to be a Good Student because "if you don't teach yourself a good like, work ethic, and like mindset to like getting stuff done, you're never going to really succeed because you're going to need a work ethic for your whole life." From this perspective, college served as a place to develop work ethic, which is a skill that transcends specific content knowledge.

Seven of the students who defined learning as academic success did not include grades in their definition of academic success because being a Good Student is important because it results in learning and skills, which are more important than grades. For example, Katie stated:

> I know plenty of people who are academically successful, but they didn't build those good student habits that do help you in life, because then they go and apply for their first job out of college, and no one wants them. And it's like, well, shocker you don't have any skills. So, I think being a good student is arguably more important than being academically successful because you can graduate college with a 4.0 GPA and not get any jobs anywhere and still be flipping burgers at McDonald's.

Being a Good Student is to establish "good student habits" that translate into future careers and the responsibilities of adulthood. Thus, some students rationalized it is important to do their best

to be a Good Student even if it might not guarantee a good grade because it benefits them personally, either by feeling proud that they did their best or by gaining knowledge or skills they will need later.

Do Not Waste. Students viewed college as a significant investment as well as an opportunity. Several students noted that if they do not try to be a Good Student, they are wasting their time, energy, and money attending college.

> I'm a big believer in not wasting time or money…for college, at least, if you're going to pay all this money and spend all this time attending classes, it wouldn't really be - there wouldn't be a point to not trying and not avidly participating and feeling like you're learning something because that's - Colleges is for being educated and actually walking away with knowledge. So without that effort, I don't think there's really a point in attending college. (LillyD)

LillyD's quote illustrates a point other students raised that if they do not try to be Good Students, they are wasting resources by attending college. Even if being a Good Student is not guaranteed to result in high grades, students should still try their best to be Good Students because the point of college is to learn, and being a Good Student can result in learning.

Multiple students included learning skills or knowledge needed for their careers as an outcome of being a Good Student or as part of their definition of academic success. Students wanted to leave the class feeling like they gained something; thus not trying to be a Good Student would be "wasting time or money." The perspective of not wasting time or money and college as preparation for a career could be more prominent at a broad access institution like Lake University, because students from lower-income backgrounds financially need to enter the workforce once they finish their baccalaureate degree and likely do not have parents with social networks that can help them get hired, thus making skills even more important for getting a job. In addition, the cost of attending college is a substantial financial burden. Given that nearly half of the students interviewed reported receiving need-based financial aid, they likely do not have

the economic privilege to waste time or money. Calvin did report receiving financial aid and said that "since we are paying for it...we should be putting our best foot forward." He reiterated in the follow-up survey that "College isn't cheap, so not going to class is just a poor investment" and that helps him hold himself accountable.

Students who did not receive need-based aid also explained that college was a one-time opportunity for them to work towards their goals. For example, Esteban said it is important to be a Good Student because college "is a very special opportunity, I feel. And to just throw it away is just to spit in the faces of people who didn't get this opportunity." Esteban implied that failing to be a Good Student would convey entitlement and a lack of appreciation for his ability to attend college when so many students cannot. Other students had been told by their parents they only have one chance to do well at the university, and therefore they need to do their best to be Good Students. Gage shared that he has personally experienced that being a Good Student does not always result in academic success because he had "never been a good test taker." Still, he tried hard to enact his definition of a Good Student.

> I'll put it this way, I've got one chance and if I screw up this one chance, I'm not going to be here. So I kind of, I'm trying to not screw it up, and that's kind of made me and forced me like, "Hey, you need to do your work, you need to get it done, you need to study hard and you need to do all these things, because if you don't, you're going home, you're not going to have this chance again."…In my mind every time like, I'm like, I get up, I'm like, "I don't want to go to class today," I just tell myself, "No, you don't have a choice, you got to do this, this is why you're here, and if you don't do it, you're out of luck."

Though Gage did not presume being a Good Student will result in academic success, he strived to enact Good Student behaviors of attending class and doing is course assignments because that increases his chances of doing well enough to stay at the university. He later explained that his parents were paying his tuition and told him that "if I screw it up, I can't continue going here." Joanne said she felt guilty when she did not attend class because she thought about her parents

who were "spending a large chunk of their money that they've saved from the workforce." For these students, the cost to themselves or their parents made them feel they had an obligation to be Good Students and the fear of wasting opportunities, time, and money was a motivation to be a Good Student.

Instructors and Students Share Values, Concerns, and Power Limitations

Overall, instructors and students agreed that how hard a student tries to be a Good Student, as described in the behaviors the comprise the dimensions of being a Good Student, should be and is often reflected in their grade. They also agreed that learning content or skills is important, and some instructors and students shared criticisms of grades failing to reflect student learning. Instructors identified course placement as one explanation for why a student can get a high grade without being a Good Student. One instructor, Toby, and several students discussed tests as another explanation because some students struggle with or have anxiety about taking tests, thus grades on tests might not reflect student learning or effort. Students also said that investing effort and being a Good Student might not result in a high grade because of the intrinsic abilities of the student to do well in academics in general or in particular subjects; this argument was not posed by instructors. Some students were committed to doing their best to be Good Students, even if being a Good Student was not guaranteed to result in a high grade, because they thought being a Good Student would lead to valuable learning or pride knowing they did their best.

Power to influence the relationship between being a Good Student and grades was another theme in the instructors' and students' discussions. For example, some instructors talked about using their power and discretion to choose to round up students grades (ElizabethP) or to reward effort in a grade (Kevin, Buster) while other instructors noted factors beyond their

control, such as course placement (May, Alex, Toby) or assessment styles of the course (Toby). Some students argued that the student has control over their decisions and actions to be a Good Student, which results in a good grade, no exceptions. Yet most students identified cases in which a student does everything they can to do well in the course, but for some subjects and approaches to assessment, the outcome is beyond their control because of intrinsic abilities in a subject or taking tests that the student cannot change. Some students discussed the instructor or the systemic reliance on tests as an external explanation for why being a Good Student does not result in academic success, but intrinsic abilities was more prevalent in these students' explanations. Students conveyed powerlessness to change their intrinsic abilities but they did have power to be a Good Student. Perhaps focusing on the importance of being a Good Student was a way for students to focus on what is within their control. Foucault (1976/1990; 1977/1980b) argued that discourse is not *inherently* a tool of power; it can be used to resist power as well. Yet these findings suggest that Good Student Discourse might be a source of *empowerment*, as the students felt it was in their control to be Good Students, but not to be academically successful.

In sum, these students and instructors wanted the same things: for students who work hard at being Good Students to learn and get good grades. The instructors and students held different positions in the academic hierarchy, with instructors having the power to assess students, but these instructors and students had a shared vision of the value of effort, learning, and of the unfairness when efforts are not recognized. That shared vision points to a common Good Student Discourse of effort and hard work matters and its potential to influence students' experiences and academic success.

Interlude III

Here are my theses about Good Students and academic success:
- Millions of Good Students make sacrifices to be Good Students.
- Millions are Good Students and do not get an opportunity to show they are or are never recognized as such.
- Millions of Good Students are made to believe they are not Good Students because of grades, test scores, comments from educators, rejection letters, etc.
- Millions of Good Students want and deserve more from their education than what they have access to.
- Millions of people equate:
  - a Good Student with being self-disciplined and having a high work ethic
  - a Good Student with Good Grades and
  - a Good Grades with being smart and
  - a Good Student with getting in to a Good School
  - a Good Student with a Good Worker, when this is to the advantage of the capitalist structures that want us to value hard work and obedience as virtues because it benefits them.

  ^^I admit these are assumptions I used to have and keep having to remind myself of^^

- Good Student Discourses, other societal discourses about success, intelligence, merit and how those discourses are raced, gendered, and abled, and the institutions that uphold those discourses, bear responsibility for all of those equivalencies above.

Chapter 7

Discussion

In this concluding chapter, I first provide a summary of my study purpose, design, and findings. Then I apply a critical lens to students' and instructors' Good Student Discourse, discuss how the assumptions in Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) concept of discourse compared with my findings, and critique my framework and methods. I also situate my findings within the current literature, offering explanations for why my findings are similar and different from other studies. I end with the study's contributions, suggestions for future research, and implications for practice.

Summary of the Study

In this study, I sought to increase understanding of what is communicated to first-year students about the behaviors and characteristics their math and writing instructors expect and value. Extant research indicates that instructors can influence students' experiences in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Rendón, 1994, 2002) and can be a socializing influence for those who are transitioning to the college environment as they convey messages about what they believe students should do to be academically successful (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2014). Yet, students also bring their own beliefs about behaviors and characteristics should do to succeed college (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Wong & Chiu, 2021; Yee, 2016). If instructors and students have different perspectives on what behaviors are expected or valued, that could negatively influence students' experiences and outcomes in the course (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Yee, 2016).

I focused on the beliefs of instructors of first-year writing and mathematics courses seek to communicate to students because those courses can influence students' trajectories in college as well as convey expectations of what students need to do to succeed in college generally. For example, there is evidence that first-year writing courses serve as an orientation to the writing styles and academic behaviors required in college (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014; Wardle, 2009). Mathematics courses can be gatekeepers to STEM majors (Douglas & Salzman, 2020; National Research Council, 2013), thus potentially communicating what students need to do to succeed in those majors.

I used Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) concept of discourse to conceptualize instructors' and students' beliefs about what a student should do, and for what instructors communicate to students. Discourse is a set of statements that can be used to categorize or influence beliefs about what is (un)desirable. Consideration of power dynamics is central to Foucault's concept of discourse because discourse can be a tool of power to impose beliefs onto others and to maintain or challenge power relationships. Attending to power relationships was important for my study because instructors have power over students because they have the authority to determine grades and implement policies. I defined Good Student Discourse as statements or actions that communicate what student behaviors and characteristics are valued. Thus, Good Student Discourse includes the messages instructors communicate to students verbally in class or written in course announcements as well as their use of course policies and grading practices. I conceptualized a Good Student as a discursive object; a concept created by discourse, not a real person.

I applied a critical lens to examine assumptions of normativity in Good Student Discourse. Consistent with a critical lens stance that research should be humanizing, highlight

agency, and problematize power relationships (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2018), I referred to students' descriptions of a Good Student as discourse, even though their descriptions are not conveyed from an authority figure onto another person.

I selected a broad access institution, Lake University, for the site of my study because I hypothesized that students attending a broad access institution (defined as accepting 80% or more of applicants) may not have attended high schools that prepared them for the academic expectations of college and because broad access institutions are under-researched but common in the higher education landscape (Crisp et al., 2019; Kirst et al., 2010). Thus, I wondered if instructors' messages to students about what they should do to be successful in their courses would be more influential for students at a broad access than for students at more selective institutions. I used a variety of methods to collect data: instructor interviews, student interviews, observations of the first day of class, course learning management system announcements, and student surveys. Eleven instructors (six mathematics, five writing) and 49 students participated during the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. Unexpectedly, most (eight) of the instructor participants were graduate students.

I used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyze my data. I drafted themes, or dimensions of a Good Student, based on the codes identified within instructors' and students' GSD. I used constant comparison to solidify the dimensions and their definitions, and to check if Good Student dimensions were represented across data types (for example, a dimension of a Good Student in instructors' GSD is present in instructors' interviews, observations, and announcements).

Discussion of Key Findings

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that instructors are committed to supporting students and students are committed to being Good Students. Analysis of the students' and instructors' GSD showed that both groups of study participants valued being responsible and investing effort in a course. I also found that instructors' grading practices and policies reflected their GSD, and which has implications for students' outcomes.

Dimensions of Being a Good Student. My analysis found many similarities between instructors' and students' GSD as both described a Good Student as responsible and investing effort in the course. I found multiple dimensions of a Good Student in the GSD of both instructors and students. Instructors defined a Good Student as a person who *engages during class, puts effort and attention towards coursework,* and *communicates with the instructor.* A fourth dimension, *strives to learn (math)*, was evident in the GSD of a subset of six instructors, five of whom taught math. Collectively, the four dimensions support the theme "a Good Student invests effort into the course." Instructors discussed how they communicate their GSD through telling the students in class, email, or course announcements, as well as through their use of course policies and practices. They tended to use encouragement and rewards, such as giving extensions, to communicate and operationalize their GSD rather than punitive measures (e.g., grade deductions). The most common influences on instructors' GSD were their own experiences as students and instructors, and access to pedagogical resources.

I found five dimensions of a Good Student within students' GSD: *attends and focuses during class, pushes self for academic success, seeks academic help, manages time and coursework,* and *takes care of self.* Those dimensions describe a Good Student as academically diligent and responsible. Students shared instances when they felt like they were being Good Students in their first-year writing or mathematics courses, illustrating how Good Student

Discourse can affect students' emotions. The student participants reported that their Good Student Discourse was influenced by family members, experiences, and authority figures, specifically K-12 teachers and parents, rather than by college instructors. Both instructors and students criticized the idea that there is a universal student discourse. The students argued that people have different strengths so individuals should decide on their own Good Student Discourse; that perspective highlights students' agency in deciding what discourses to take up.

      Comparing Instructors' and Students' Good Student Discourse. There were some differences between instructors' and students' GSD regarding how and from whom to seek help. Instructors viewed themselves as the primary source of help for students; they wanted students to reach out to them with questions and concerns and attend office hours. Lake University has a writing center and a math tutoring lab where students can go for assistance and three of the instructors had a teaching assistant who had regular office hours for students. Yet, in GSD statements about seeking help, instructors emphasized that students should contact the instructor. The instructor participants recognized that students might not feel comfortable reaching out to them yet strongly encouraged students to communicate with them about needing help with understanding course content or factors influencing their ability to attend and succeed in class. Some instructors offered their phone number to students to provide a less formal communication method that might appeal to students more than email or office hours. However, students did not limit sources of help to instructors and discussed peers, tutors, and online sources as means to get help. They did not view attending office hours as a criterion of being a Good Student because office hours might not work with the students' schedule and students assumed it was more convenient for all to deal with questions over email. While instructors' willingness to answering questions over email and provide their phone numbers may have removed a barrier for students

to contact the instructor, it may also have reinforced the idea that it is not necessary to attend office hours.

Another difference between the students' GSD and that of the instructors is that all the instructors' GSD focused on academic behaviors whereas students' GSD included some behaviors that are not specific to academics. The dimension of *takes care of self* that I identified in the students' GSD refers to completing household duties, such as laundry and washing dishes, and practicing healthy habits, such as getting enough sleep, eating, and doing activities to reduce stress. None of those are directly academic, though students did argue that being healthy would help them stay awake and concentrate in class and maintain their motivation in college. Taking care of themselves could have resonated with students because college is the first time many of them had to be completely responsible for their households and health. In addition, the increase in teenagers' mental health struggles (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023), particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, could have made students more aware of the importance of mental health. For the students in this study, taking care of themselves was a part of being a Good Student just as managing the academic aspects of college is important for being a Good Student.

Instructors' GSD differed from students' GSD in that it emphasized behaviors they can observe. For example, instructors can see who attends class, is not distracted by electronic devices in class, asks questions in class or email, submits assignments on time, and follows assignment instructions. Students included behaviors in their Good Student dimensions that an instructor would not be able to see, such as investing additional effort on an assignment they find difficult by reviewing material for several hours or writing multiple rough drafts. Similarly, instructors are unlikely to observe students seeking help from tutors or peers.

Nearly all the mathematics instructors emphasized that a Good Student *strives to learn*, a dimension that was absent from the GSD of all but one of the writing instructors in this study. Most math instructors explicitly valued students who took steps to understand the course content, which they did not necessarily see as equivalent to completing assignments. In contrast, the writing instructors emphasized completing writing assignments. I do not have evidence to explain this difference between math and writing GSD, but I will offer some possibilities. One possibility is the influence of the reform movement on mathematics education, prioritizing understanding over computation (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000). Three instructors identified pedagogical resources that focus on conceptual understanding as an influence on their Good Student Discourse. Another possibility is that writing instructors think of first-year writing as a course focused on skills, not knowledge development, and view completing the assignments as a way to practice and develop writing skills. Downs and Wardle (2007) have argued that first-year writing courses have regarded writing as skills that are developed, rather than viewing writing as an intellectual subject or a topic of research. On the first day of class, the writing instructors told students that the class was about improving their writing, communication skills, and information literacy, but did not discuss concepts or ideas students would engage with in the class.

Relationships Between Being a Good Student and Academic Success. Students and instructors thought that being a Good Student should, and often does, result in academic success but both groups noted exceptions of when that relationship is not upheld. Some instructors discussed course placement policies and assessments as contexts that illustrate why being a Good Student does not lead to good grades. For example, students could be placed into a course they took in high school or they already know the content and therefore, they can get a high grade in

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the course without having to invest much effort. One instructor explained that tests might not allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge. Others noted that academic success, which they defined as learning, might not be accurately reflected in a student's grade. For some instructors, the grade they assigned the student was influenced by the effort they perceived a student invested. Most students attributed cases of being a Good Student not resulting in academic success to the student's intrinsic ability in a particular subject or ability with taking tests.

Applying a Critical Lens to the Good Student Discourse

Discussing what is absent from these students' and instructors' Good Student Discourse, as well as what assumptions and values are contained within the GSD aligns with my critical lens. A critical lens questions normativity (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011; Martínez-Alemán, 2015); by looking for what was not included in GSD and by critiquing the dominant perspective, I am drawing attention to other ways to define a Good Student.

Overall, the GSD connotes individualism; collaborating with others was not a dimension in the GSD of these students or instructors. Only one instructor and one student included working with others in their definitions of a Good Student. I think the absence of collaboration from GSD is noteworthy given that every instructor had students work in groups during class. The instructors discussed groupwork as a way to keep students engaged during the class but being a competent team or group member was not included in their definition of a Good Student. Two instructors presented group norms on the first day of class, but I did not see in any further discussion of how a Good Student works in a group in course announcements or interviews. This emphasis on individualism could have implications for students who value collective work and thinking.

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My findings also showed that the meritocratic assumption of working hard pays off is problematic and I would argue, deceptive and oppressive. For example, some instructors rewarded what they perceived to be as effort in their grading practices, even though that was not always disclosed to students. Thus, students who demonstrate those particular behaviors were rewarded in terms of a grade or other course advantage, even though student participants described studying on their own or using other resources when trying hard to complete assignments and understand course content. Furthermore, because grading for effort was not always disclosed to the students, students did not know how effort was assessed. The inconsistencies in who graded effort and how might explain students' conclusions that working hard at being a Good Student likely leads to good grades but when it does not, that is because of the limitations of the student's innate ability. Instructors also noted when the hard work of being a Good Student is not enough for a good grade. Yet even knowing that effort, and being a Good Student, does not always result in good grades, instructors and students still endorsed a discourse of effort. In other words, my findings showed general agreement that effort does not always lead to good grades, but the GSD privileging effort continues to be perpetuated anyway.

I see the perpetuation of a GSD of effort as a form of oppression, because Good Student Discourse continues to exert power over students by convincing them they should be Good Students who invest effort, even though there is not a structure to make good on the meritocratic argument that hard work pays off. Researchers have argued that discourses grounded in meritocratic, working-hard-pays-off, neoliberal, and individualistic perspectives can be harmful for students because these discourses place responsibility for academic outcomes on the student and ignore (or are in service of) inequity and discrimination within educational and social systems (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Carnevale at al., 2020; Rubel, 2017; Taylor & Shallish,

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2019). I am not suggesting that grading for effort should be the dominant practice in order to uphold the meritocratic ideology of working hard pays off, as this could be problematic as well given the values embedded in definitions of effort and how it is recognized (Carillo, 2021; Dirk 2010). However, I am suggesting that if Good Student Discourse insists that Good Students invest effort, it continues to push a meritocratic agenda that places the burden of success on the student even when it is clear that effort is not always rewarded with grades, rather than raising questions about how effort is measured and how it should be rewarded. I think my findings illustrate the need for new theories and practices about assessment and for making critical reflection on assessment practices a norm in instructor training and practice.

Critically examining the instructors' Good Student Discourse and the concept of effort raises further issues. Students and instructors argued that the definition of a Good Student is subjective because of individual strengths and differences. Instructors questioned some dominant Good Student behaviors, such as participating in class and recognized that attendance policies can be inequitable. However, none of the instructors or students discussed social identities or systems that privilege dominant behaviors as normative as reasons why a universal definition of Good Student Discourse could be oppressive. Instructors described effort as engaging in class, communicating with the instructor—including attending office hours—and submitting coursework. Paying attention in class can be more difficult for students with ADHD or other disabilities. Students may not feel comfortable communicating with the instructor when they need help because they do not want to be judged when they ask for help (Jack, 2016). Students who have faced racial or gender discrimination from professors may try to avoid interacting with instructors (Battey et al., 2022). While none of the students in my study discussed facing discrimination, Good Student discourse places value on behaviors that could privilege White

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students who do not have disabilities. Throughout Chapter 5, I noted instances of when students' GSD might be reflecting their race, socioeconomic status, or disability and the experiences they may have had based on those identities. For example, I noticed that Students of Color identified teachers who had high expectations of them as positive influences on their Good Student Discourse, that Annette's perspective that GSD is subjective could be due them having identities considered non-normative (bipolar disorder and nonbinary), and Ky's preference to attend office hours to ask questions in private instead of ask questions in class could be influenced by her identity as a Black woman and first generation college student.

None of the participants discussed structural oppression (racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, inequitable wealth and wages) as reasons why students could work very hard and be Good Students but not do well in a class. Ball (2018) argued that teachers work in "discretionary spaces," meaning that some of their work is subject to institutional and other policies, yet teachers also make myriad decisions on their own, such has how to respond to a student's comment in class, who to call on, and when to round up a grade. Embedded within those decisions could be efforts to disrupt inequity or to perpetuate the normalization of dominant values (Ball, 2018; O'Meara, 2021). Yet, none of the instructors or students expressed that teachers could have bias in their grading, or that instructional and assessment practices could be rooted in other discourses of oppression. None discussed that inequitable preparation for college could be due to inequitable school funding. Instead, students explained that they can work hard but not get a good grade because of their lack of intrinsic ability. My intention is not to critique the instructors or students; rather, my interpretation of those findings is they speak to how systemic oppression could hide behind normalized discourses of individualism and meritocracy.

I identified examples of how GSD was raced, classed, or ableist because I have read literature demonstrating how education systems, assessment practices, and pedagogy privilege Whiteness, neuronormativity, middle class cultural values, being born in the United States, being fluent in English, and other dominant identities. Such research has made the coercive and subtle aspects of power visible. Power is more effective when it is not visible, because being hidden helps maintain discourses that privilege dominant values and behaviors as normative and desired. Thus, it is not surprising that instructors and students did not identify how race, class, ableism, and other identities factor into GSD—GSD was functioning effectively as a tool of power. GSD was so powerful that it manipulated students into feeling guilty for not enacting GSD even when they knew that it is not always a fair, universal standard.

Comparison of Conceptual Framework to Findings

Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) concept of discourse was a useful framework for interpreting my findings. In particular, Foucauldian discourse allowed me to expand the scope of instructors' beliefs and communications about what students should do beyond instructors' expectations to also include messages of encouragement or advice to students. Foucault argued that discourse is more effective when it creates desire. Thus, a discourse that is only punitive would not be as influential—students should be made to want to be a Good Student. This aspect of discourse aligned well with my study, as instructors praised and rewarded (e.g., extensions on assignments, rounded up grades) students for enacting Good Student behaviors. Studies on expectations have used role theory to analyze students' responses to expectations (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2014). Focusing on expectations and using role theory would have been a narrower view of how instructors communicate to students,

and I likely would have missed the positive reinforcement and encouragement that instructors used to communicate their GSD.

In addition, Foucault's concept of discourse was useful for understanding how instructors' course policies and practices supported their Good Student Discourse. Foucault argued that technologies of power operationalize and enforce discourse. I found that instructors used grading practices and course policies to reward students, therefore functioning as technologies of power with consequences for students' outcomes.

I called students' descriptions of a Good Student GSD even though a strict application of Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) definition of discourse would not count it as such because the students were not imposing their own GSD on others. However, the concept of discourse was still useful for interpreting students' GSD because their GSD reflects what discourses those students had heard from authority figures, primarily from K-12 teachers and parents. In addition, because instructors and students had very similar Good Student Discourses, it is possible there is a broader, common societal discourse about being a Good Student at play, which aligns with Foucault's arguments about how discourse is disseminated through social institutions and has the power to influence what an entire culture or social group thinks is true.

A limitation of Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) concept of discourse is that it does not consider the individual authority figures who communicate the discourse and how they might shift their discourse in response to new evidence or compassion. Foucault argued that discourse can be a tool of power because people with authority impose it onto others for the purpose of controlling them and for maintaining the power hierarchy. Based on Foucault's theories of how discourse is used, I anticipated that instructors would view their GSD as dogma. The instructors have power over the students because they assign grades, which could be

influenced by GSD. The broader system of education assumes students need to be categorized, and the instructors are a part of that process. Yet these instructors did not appear to operate as gatekeepers though their position gives them the power to be gatekeepers. They changed their GSD when it did not appear to be true, as with the example of some writing instructors deciding that participating in class is not a defining requirement for being a Good Student. The university placed the instructor in a position of power over the students, but I did not find evidence of the instructors deploying discourse to maintain their personal authority or power. Instructors' power was limited because of the institutional context; in particular, the writing and precalculus instructors could not change the course curriculum because it was set by course coordinators and precalculus instructors were tasked with covering content to prepare students for Calculus I and II. Foucault did not offer a way to understand or interpret individuals who are in an institutionalized position of power that, to some extent, requires them to express and enforce discourse, but who do not do so to maintain their power and at times deviate from dominant discourses. Furthermore, these students did not follow their instructors' GSD because they had their own GSD, influenced by family and teacher authority figures before college. A discourse from an individual with power, such as a first-year writing or math instructor, may not have an effect on the person who is the object of the discourse when the person has heard similar discourses from other authority figures to the point of saturation. My study illustrates that Good Student Discourse is embedded within, distributed and perpetuated by, educational systems, social and familial interactions. In sum, while my findings align with Foucault's theory about discourse being part of systems and institutions of power, but challenge the assumptions about how college instructors, as persons of authority, use discourse, why, and its effects.

Critique of Framework and Methods

My findings, and the claims I make based on them, were influenced by the framework and methods that I used. As discussed in the preceding section, Foucault (1969/2010, 1970/1981, 1977/1980) does not attend to individual authority figures' use of discourse or their reasoning about the content of their discourse. Another framework might have been useful for examining instructors' beliefs about and communications regarding what students should do to succeed. For example, theories from cultural sociology could be used to inform how instructors make sense of their own beliefs and values, as well as the values of the structure within which they are playing a role.

My findings may have been very different if the instructor participants were full-time instructors. Because most of the instructors in my study were graduate students, they may have had less confidence in, or commitment to, maintaining their authority. A study of full-time, more experienced instructors may have shown more meaningful differences between instructors' GSD and students' GSD. The instructors and students in my study had similar definitions of a Good Student. Thus, my claims cannot be extended to instructors in general, yet they do offer insight into the experiences and beliefs of graduate student instructors.

My study design also limited my ability to understand how race, gender, disability, and other identities influence Good Student Discourse and how it affects students. Group interviews may have discouraged students from speaking up about how a GSD marginalized them, or in general made students hesitant to talk about difficult topics such as sexism and racism. In addition, my identity as a White woman and other dominant identities may have prevented Students of Color and other students with identities that are marginalized from raising such issues in interviews.

In addition, if I had used the Jamboard of Good Student terms (see Figure 1) in the interviews for the instructors and the students, I could have made a more direct comparison of their Good Student Discourse because they would have been responding to the same terms. That approach could have led to more differences between students' and instructors' GSD than what I found. However, that may also have limited what instructors shared, which is why I did not use the Jamboard for the interviews with instructors.

Finally, student journaling or another method of collecting data on students' reflections and experiences with GSD throughout the semester could have provided more insight on if and how students' definitions of a Good Student were changing. For example, students might have had more time and opportunity to reflect on what they believe a Good Student does and why. I would have had more data points to compare students' GSD. Yet, as a researcher, I try to consider students' schedules. Multiple students were working and taking a full load of classes, so asking for regular journals would have been a substantial demand on the little discretionary time they have.

Situating Findings Within Current Literature

Findings from this study are similar to findings from research on instructors' beliefs about students and on instructors' grading practices. However, my findings differ from studies of how adjusting to expectations influences the transition to college.

Similarities

My study found that students and instructors placed a high value on the effort a student invests, which is similar to those of Wong and Chiu (2020, 2021) who interviewed and surveyed students and academic (teaching and research), administrative, and support staff in universities in the UK about the definition of an ideal student. Wong and Chiu (2021) used factor analysis of

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the survey responses and the findings from qualitative interviews to determine the dimensions of the ideal student. The most highly rated dimension among instructors and students was *diligence and engagement,* which "broadly captures students' learning attitude and work ethic, such as enthusiasm, dedication, and effort" (p. 32). Similarly, interviews with social science lecturers in the UK showed that several lectures thought that student effort, rather than grades, defined an ideal student (Wong & Chiu, 2020). Wong & Chiu (2021) found that staff at pre-1992 universities placed a higher value on grades and brilliance than staff at post-1992 universities, which were more accessible in terms of admissions policies than pre-1992 universities. Lake University is a broad access institution, which could explain similarities between my findings and those of Wong and Chiu (2021).

In addition, Wong and Chiu (2021) found that STEM staff emphasized curiosity, creativity, academic skills, and intelligence more than social science and Humanities staff, who placed more emphasis on independent, critical thinking and work ethic. Both my study and Wong and Chiu's (2021) study showed differences by discipline in what student behaviors are valued. One could argue that curiosity is similar to *strives to learn*, which I found more prominent in the GSD of mathematics instructors, and that work ethic relates to my findings that writing instructors' emphasis on working hard to meet assignment criteria. However, the degree of similarity should be interpreted with caution, as my study was limited to instructors and Wong and Chiu's (2021) included non-teaching staff.

Another similarity of my findings to that of current literature is that some of the instructors' grading decisions—a manifestation of power—were influenced by their Good Student Discourse. Students who exhibited Good Student behaviors had their grades rounded up and were given leniency or extensions on late work. This echoes findings from literature on K-12

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teachers' grading practices; for example, Kunnath (2017) found that high school teachers graded students' effort because they wanted to reward students for their work. Randall and Engelhard (2010) found that elementary, middle, and high school teachers rounded up grades for students described as trying hard and were well-behaved in class. McMillan (2001) found that middle and high school math teachers were less likely than social studies or English teachers to consider students' effort and improvement in their grading decisions and focused instead on student performance on assignments and assessments. McMillan's finding echoes my finding that it was mostly math instructors who were concerned that grades do not reflect learning. The finding that K-12 teachers and Lake University math and writing instructors similarly consider subjective criteria, such as effort, when determining a student's grade could be indicative of a broader discourse in society about the value of effort. Yet, it is also possible that my findings would have been different if the participants in my study were mostly full-time instructors, not graduate student instructors. Graduate student instructors may have more empathy for students' efforts because they are also in a student role.

Differences

My finding that instructors and students had similar GSD differs from and extends previous studies that found that students and instructors do not have the same understanding of when to communicate with an instructor or how many hours to study (Adams, 2005; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2014). I assumed there would be more differences in instructors' and students' definitions of a Good Student based on the literature about students' challenges adjusting to instructors' expectations. Yet the differences between the findings of this and other studies could be explained by the level of detail with which the studies considered what students were expected to do and know. For example, Collier and Morgan (2008) and Karp and Bork

(2014) focused on ineffective study strategies, lack of knowledge of academic conventions (e.g., MLA), and disagreement over the number of hours students should study as reasons why students struggle to meet instructors' expectations. In comparison, my study was conceptually broader and asked what a Good Student does rather than the specifics of how they do it; for example, completing coursework is a broader topic than how many hours a student should spend on coursework. That difference in conceptualization is one possible explanation for why I found that the students and instructors in my study had very similar ideas about what students should do and what behaviors are valued, though I did find minor differences in details, such as the importance of office hours.

Other reasons my findings differ from other studies are the study purpose, setting, participants, and context. Karp and Bork (2014) studied student success courses in community colleges in Virginia. They interviewed instructors and course administrators of student success courses, staff who served new students, including advisors, as well as students who had taken or were enrolled in a student success course. Student success courses at community colleges often focus on specific skills, such as note-taking and study skills (Hatch & Bohlig, 2016). Karp and Bork indicated that the college success courses at the community colleges in their study focused on college policies and procedures, study skills, and course and career planning. In addition, their interview protocol asked students to discuss what they learned about college from their student success course. Therefore, the student, instructor, and staff participants in Karp and Bork's study could have discussed those detailed aspects of expectations (note-taking, study skills) more than the students and instructors in my study due to differences in course content and interview questions. Collier and Morgan (2008) refer to the instructor participants as "faculty" and "professors" though they did not provide further information about if they were all full-time, if

some are lecturers, etc. Assuming the instructors in Collier and Morgan's study were all full-time faculty that could also explain why their findings differed from mine, in that they found that students and instructors had very different expectations of students whereas I found significant overlap in instructors' and students' GSD. The preponderance of graduate student instructors in my sample may explain why instructors in general expressed more empathy for first-year students' efforts to adjust to academic expectations. Graduate student instructors may have experienced similar challenges to their students, and more recently than more seasoned faculty, including adjusting to the expectations of a graduate program. In addition, my study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic which raised general awareness of mental health issues.

Unlike some other studies, I did not find evidence of students being intimidated by instructors or unaware of how to navigate academic demands. The students in my study reported that enacting Good Student behaviors was a challenge, but they were clear that none of the information they were hearing about how to succeed in college was new. Other studies discussed students' lack of cultural capital as a reason why transitioning to college is challenging (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Jack, 2016; Karp & Bork, 2014; Yee, 2016). The authors of these studies argued that students were unaware of how to have discussions with instructors or that seeking help from instructors was incompatible with students' ideas that students are supposed to be independent (Cameron & Billington, 2017; Jack, 2016; Karp & Bork, 2014; Yee, 2016). None of the students in my study discussed these as reasons to not contact their instructor; rather they justified their decisions based on time restraints and convenience. My findings may be related to student participants' identities. The students who did not seek out faculty assistance for the aforementioned reasons were first-generation (Yee, 2016), low-income (Jack, 2016), or with disabilities (Cameron & Billington, 2017). Though students of all those identities were in my

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study, I did not find a pattern. I did not actively recruit students with those identities or design my study to intentionally compare those students with others. In addition, because most of the instructors in my sample were graduate students relatively close in age to the student participants, they could have seemed less intimidating than a full-time instructor would. Again, another possible explanation is COVID; students may have learned from long periods of virtual learning to ask for help and help- seeking may have become a normal activity, rather than something to be stigmatized or feared. It is also possible that the amount of effort the instructors in my study put into encouraging students to approach them for help made a difference. The instructors who participated in this study gave students their phone numbers and encouraged them to text their questions, met with students outside of office hours, and in their course announcements assured students they could ask their instructors for help.

Contributions to the Literature

My study makes several contributions to the literature on instructor communication to students, instructor beliefs, and instructional practices of graduate student instructors. In addition, all of my findings add to understanding of the educational experiences of students in broad access universities, which receive less attention in research literature than highly-selective universities (Kirst et al., 2010).

These findings provide insight into what instructors, in particular graduate student instructors, believe and say students should do to succeed and the influences on those beliefs. Previous studies have not addressed what influences instructors' beliefs about what students should do to succeed. Though there is some research on influences on postsecondary instructors' beliefs about teaching (Oleson & Hora, 2014) and student learning (Hora, 2014), less is known about how college instructors formulate beliefs about what students should do to succeed. In

addition, there is little research on how graduate student instructors develop teaching

philosophies and practices; for an exception, see the dissertation by J. Kelly (2022).

This study also contributes to research on how discipline influences instructors' beliefs

about teaching and learning because my findings indicate that discipline affects instructors'

messages to students about what is important. For example, the mathematics instructors in my

study emphasized learning in their GSD more than the writing instructors did. Though other

studies have found disciplinary differences in instructors' beliefs about what students should do

to succeed (Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Wong & Chiu, 2021) or how learning happens (Donald,

2002), they did not attend to the specific messages about learning that instructors communicate

to students.

My findings increase understanding of how instructors communicate expectations and

encouragements to students and what instructors expect and encourage students to do. For

example, studies of instructors' expectations, instructors' beliefs about students, and how

students work to meet expectations have relied on student or instructor reports (Collier &

Morgan, 2008; Ferrare & Miller, 2020; Karp & Bork, 2014; Wong & Chiu, 2020, 2021; Yee,

2016). The instructors in my study used course announcements to communicate expectations and

encouraging messages to students, which has not been included as in other studies. Course

announcements are a potential data source for studies investigating instructors' messages to

students.

Possible Future Directions of Research

In light of my findings, I argue that the field of higher education would benefit from more

research on how instructors make sense of the relationship between student behaviors, learning,

and grades. For example, what behaviors do instructors think lead to learning and why? How is

student effort determined? What are the limitations of focusing on student effort, particularly when much of the effort a student invests in a course (e.g., studying at home) is not visible to the instructor? An ethnographic study of a course, including observing students outside of the classroom and interviewing students and instructors about how they define and identify "effort" could address these questions. The findings of such a study could have implications for what is assessed in higher education and how.

Additional studies on the Good Student Discourse in other contexts would be important for determining if what I found is reflective of GSDs in other institutions, courses, and instructors. Given Wong and Chiu's (2021) finding that post-1992 university staff emphasized effort and pre-1992 achievement and brilliance, it is possible that the GSD at a community college or a highly-selective university would differ from what I found. Comparing GSDs at different institutional types could have implications for theories about institutional culture and how institutions socialize and marginalize students. Furthermore, more research is needed to determine how career stage might influence instructors GSD. Full-time faculty, part-time instructors, and tenure-line faculty may express different GSDs than those I found, and might determine whether the disciplinary differences I observed extend beyond my study. Future research could investigate other ways in which Good Student Discourse is related to power, such as writing letters of recommendation, and how GSD is manifested in grading practices.

Research on Good Instructor Discourse could complement this study. In interviews, several instructors shared their concerns about what they wish they could do better and if their GSD and instructional practices were helpful for students. Alex felt guilty she did not provide timely feedback on assignments and worried that delayed feedback discouraged students from doing them. Sam wrestled with changing the homework deadline to Monday nights instead of

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Sundays, per students' request, so students could ask questions about the homework in class Monday morning. Sam made the change even though she thought a Good Student would have started on the homework earlier (it was assigned on Mondays) and could ask questions in class on Fridays. Thus, she wondered if she was encouraging students to start their homework late and if that was justified by a tradeoff for an increase in the GSD behaviors of class participation and investment in assignments. In particular, graduate student instructors were worried they were making mistakes. For example, Flora stated, "Nobody should fail this class because I don't know what I'm doing." I did not report instructors' Good Instructor Discourse in my findings because it was not part of my research questions, but such a project could provide insight into how institutional and disciplinary discourses place pressure on instructors, how instructors make sense of their responsibility to students, the role of institutional resources (or lack thereof), penalties for instructors who do not enact Good Instructor Discourse, and how instructors cope with multiple demands on their time in light of those discourses.

Implications for Practice

My findings offer some implications for instructional practice. First, the finding that most students believed grades were influenced by intrinsic ability and their beliefs that they were not naturally gifted in some subjects or were not good at taking tests illustrates that students could benefit from instructors and academic support staff assuring students that they are all capable of learning and succeeding in the course. Rendón's (1994) validation theory could inform instructors' approach, and academic departments could discuss creating a culture of validation in classrooms. Furthermore, this study shows that the instructors in my study were not always transparent about their grading practices. If decisions about rounding up grades and not applying deductions for late work are made behind the scenes and on a case-by-case basis due to

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perceived student effort, this could lead students to question the fairness in grading practices. Thus, transparency in grading practices could provide clarity for students as well as consistency, potentially reducing inequities. Among the instructors and students who participated in my study, a hidden rubric[17] seemed to be a greater contributor to inequitable grades than a hidden curriculum, as the behaviors in instructors' and students' GSD were very similar. Moreover, I did not find any evidence that the instructor participants' GSD affected students' GSD or behaviors. That was contrary to what I anticipated to find based on literature about first-year students struggling to understand and meet college instructors' expectations. In light of this finding, it is possible that instructors in first year writing and math courses at Lake University, or a similar broad access institution, could reduce the amount of time and energy they spend communicating GSD to students. Instructors could instead use that time for students to share strategies that have worked for them with the instructor or other students in the class, to illustrate the variety of ways that people can be Good Students, and for instructors to learn more about students' GSD. Hearing from students from different backgrounds and identities could expand instructors' toolbox in terms of offering suggestions to future students In addition, this practice could challenge GSDs that students heard in K12 and be an opportunity for students and the instructors to reflect together on the power of institutional discourses and how those discourses have impacted their educational experiences.

My findings suggest a need for more institutional support and pedagogical training for instructors, particularly graduate student instructors. Pedagogical resources were a powerful influence on several instructors' shifts in thinking about what it means to be a Good Student because they presented other ways of thinking about learning and assessment. Training for

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[17] I do not remember who gave me the phrase "hidden rubric" but I am very grateful for it.

graduate student instructors could include some of the recommendations made above, such as how to validate students to ward off concerns about innate ability and being mindful about grading practices. According to their website, the English department at Lake University requires graduate students teaching first-year writing to attend three talks about best practices in teaching, one scholarly lecture, and invites them to participate in a community that discusses scholarship of teaching writing. However, none of the first-year writing instructors discussed those experiences as influencing their teaching or GSD, thus those resources might not be sufficient support. In addition, the lecture series and talks might not afford the opportunity for engaged discussions and questions about pedagogy. Based on the website description, students are not compensated for participating in the learning community—which sounds like the most promising opportunity for graduate students to discuss and learn from scholarship on teaching writing. It is not clear what, if any, professional development resources are specifically provided for graduate student instructors outside of the English department. As noted in Chapter 3, teaching and access to an education are central to Lake University's mission. However, the graduate student instructors did not appear to have adequate institutional resources to aid them as they develop their teaching practices or learn teaching methods.

I contend that it is difficult to expect more institutional support when the institution is underresourced, thus I also argue that there is a need for more resources allocated to broad access institutions. More funding could be directed to give experienced instructors release time or hire experts in instruction to mentor graduate student instructors and offer learning through communities of practice. Such communities could read literature on culturally sustaining pedagogy or critical, race-conscious approaches to assessment to reflect on assumptions about

what defines a Good Student. In addition, resources could be used to compensate the graduate student instructors for the time they spend in those activities.

In addition, the finding that writing instructors placed more emphasis on devoting effort to assignments but little discussion of Good Students striving to learn might be an opportunity for first-year writing course coordinators and departments to consider how learning is incorporated into their curriculum and in their communications to students. Coordinators could provide guidance on how to talk about learning in first-year writing to graduate student instructors, particularly those who may be from a discipline other than rhetoric or writing.

Finally, this study shows the power of Good Student Discourses students heard in K-12 and carried with them in their first year of college. Elementary, middle, and high schools (as well as K-12 district leadership) could consider the GSDs their schools are disseminating and how those discourses are manifested in instructional, disciplinary, and assessment practices. Some of the student participants discussed their K-12 schools having slogans, acronyms, and posters about Good Student Discourse. Schools and districts could consider the extent to which those slogans and GSDs are socializing students to adhere to a set of dominant behaviors and values, who those values and behaviors leave out, and why they focus on that set. If one goal of K-12 GSD is to prepare students to go to and succeed in college, then the wide range of strategies and behaviors that academically successful students of different identities and backgrounds should be included in K-12 GSD. K-12 school leaders and teachers could ask students of different identities to share on bulletin boards or during school assemblies what strategies they use to learn. School statements about what values and behaviors students at their schools have should be examined and approved by counselors, special education instructors, parents, and instructors with marginalized identities.

Conclusion

Though courses are central to the purpose and experience of going to college, classroom experiences are understudied within the field of higher education. There is substantial higher education research effort to understand the challenges of students' transition to college and many types of programs to support students, such as learning communities, mentorships programs, and programs with personal and academic support for students who are minoritized. Yet, students spend a majority of their time in classes or doing work for their courses. Students need to pass their courses to stay in college, and I believe that students will enjoy college if they are learning and feel that their academic efforts are valued. Education research in K-12 and disciplinary contexts (e.g., mathematics education) has made meaningful strides in understanding which, how, and why instructional practices support student learning, how instructors (particularly graduate student instructors) shape their teaching practice, and what academic strategies and behaviors students have learned work for them from their prior educational experiences. Thus, I hope this study draws some higher education researchers' attention to the classroom.

I originally sought to understand what relationship instructors' communications to students about which behaviors are valued have with first-year students' experiences. My own assumptions were challenged; instead of instructors who were dogmatic about their definition of a Good Student, I found flexibility and compassion. The student participants showed agency in following their Good Student Discourse rather than trying to conform to what instructors said. I take that as further evidence that research on instruction and students' classroom experiences is needed, particularly in first-year courses at broad access institutions.

As I finish this dissertation, the United States is caught up in disagreements over what should be taught in schools, what students read, and what our national values are. These are

personal and ideological issues that have ramifications for our individual and collective

identities, and for how this country deals with its continuing legacy of bigotry. Beliefs about

what it means to be a Good Student are part of the conversation about if, which, and how values

are communicated in schools. I hope that readers of this dissertation who are educators in any

capacity reflect on questions such as: Are the ways in which we reward student behaviors

leading to normalization of those behaviors, and furthering the marginalization of students who

do not or cannot enact them? Why do we reward certain behaviors and discipline others? These

are not strictly empirical questions. They are questions for individuals, institutions, and

communities to reckon with. We might not have success in understanding let alone solving these

complex issues, but as with the students who participated in my study, it is important to try our

best anyway.

Reflective Afterword

I think I was a Good Student when writing this dissertation. I kept my data organized. I cited methods and previous research. I followed APA format. I addressed comments, even when I thought and felt they were pointless and nitpicky. I added or subtracted sentences and claims, even when I didn't completely agree. I wrote in a tone and style that is expected in academic writing, even though it in no way reflects my personality. I wrote this dissertation as if it was actually going to be useful for someone (practitioners, researchers), even though I am the main beneficiary. As a graduate student, I pressed on with projects and conjured up Implications sections even after I realized that next to none of this research makes a difference, and after it started to feel like academia is a simultaneously self-indulgent (ooooh, lets learn stuff) and self-harming (why do I continue to be in an environment that thrives on criticism and exploitation?) enterprise. Essentially, I conformed to established conventions and research trends. I was hard-working and responsible. And I got so used to conforming that I didn't even recognize encouragements and semi-sanctioned opportunities to *not* follow rules (wait, is that still following rules?). It was never easy for me to accept help or compliments, and now it is even more difficult. Good Students can do it alone, and there is always something to improve.

I used to think that doing a PhD required a lot of hard work and being smart. Really what I learned is doing a PhD requires emotional stamina. People tell you about late nights analyzing data, reading, or writing papers, but they don't tell you about getting so frustrated with the futility of whatever you are doing that you lay down on the floor, inhaling the scent of a well-used dog bed to remind you that real things exist, even the smelly ones.

Being a Good Student did help me learn. Being a Good Student afforded me the privilege of spending my time and now earning a salary using my brain, and not destroying my body. But the process of be/com/ing a Good Student also made me worry I was becoming someone I did not want to be. Was I so lost in learning how to conform to research conventions that I was failing to do research that might be useful? That I wanted to shard to be recognized as a Good Student I didn't always stand up for myself or others when I should have?

I don't have to be a Good Student anymore, at least not in the hierarchical education system sense (I hope). But I doubt those discourses really ever go away, because they live underneath the mantle of something else (a Good Employee).

Admittedly, this little afterword is for me (I am not under any illusions that at most, 5 people will ever see this page). I know this is not new information. I know that it is hypocritical to even type these words just a handful of pages away from my own Implications section. But it feels nice to put on paper, and even better to put it in a dissertation. A rebellious absurd yelp at the end of a long orchestrated concert.

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Emails for Instructors

Fall 2021 Message

Dear [full instructor name],

I hope you had a fantastic summer! I am emailing you to request your participation in a study for my dissertation because you are teaching [course] this fall. I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at the University of Michigan. Prior to coming to Michigan for the PhD program, I taught Humanities at a community college for nine years and online for a university for one year. My dissertation is about the discourse of what it means to be a "good student" in first-year writing and math courses. I hope the findings increase our understanding of how to help first-year students transition to college.

Your participation in this study would include:
- Two interviews with you, one during the first few weeks of the term and one after grades have been submitted (December or January). The interviews can be in person at [Lake University] or over Zoom.
- Allowing me to recruit students from your class so I can do 1-2 group interviews with some of your students (this can be done by me making an announcement during class or you posting a course announcement on my behalf).
- Sharing course documents (syllabus and course announcements; this could be done with observer access on E-Learning).
- Allowing me to observe your first day of class in person; I will record audio but not video.

Benefits for you:
- You will be compensated $50 per interview.
- You will receive a summary of what the students in your class shared in the group interviews. The instructors who participated in my pilot study said the summary of students' comments was valuable feedback and they enjoyed being part of the study

This study has been approved by the UM Institutional Review Board (IRB). I have been involved in five qualitative studies, including conducting a pilot of this study, and care deeply about treating participants with respect. Your name and contact information will be kept confidential.

I am happy to provide additional details or answer questions you have.

Thank you so much for your time,
Claire

Spring 2022 Message

Dear [ ],

I hope you are having a fantastic fall semester! I am emailing you to request your participation in a study for my dissertation because you are teaching [ ] in the spring. I am a PhD student at the University of Michigan and my dissertation is on the discourse of being a "good student" in first-year writing and mathematics courses. Prior to the PhD program, I taught at a community college for nine years and online for a university for one year. Those experiences showed me how important instructors are to students' transitions to college. I did one round of data collection for my dissertation at [Lake University] this fall and will be doing another round in the spring. Would you please consider participating in my study?

Participation would include:
- Two interviews (One interview early in the semester and one after the semester ends)
- Me observing the first day of class
- Sharing your syllabus and if possible, course announcements
- Forwarding an email to the class, that I compose, to recruit students for interviews

Benefits for you:
- You will be compensated $50 per interview.
- You will receive a summary of what the students in your class shared in the group interviews. The instructors who participated in my pilot study said the summary of students' comments was valuable feedback and they enjoyed being part of the study.

This study has been approved by the UM Institutional Review Board (IRB). I have been involved in five qualitative studies, including conducting a pilot of this study, and care deeply about treating participants with respect. Your name and contact information will be kept confidential.

I am happy to provide additional details or answer questions you have.

Thank you so much for your time,

Appendix B: Recruitment Emails for Students

Recruitment for Interview

Hello [course name] students!

I hope you are having a fantastic semester so far! I am working on my PhD in Higher Education at the University of Michigan and I would love to interview first-year students as part of my dissertation research. You might remember me from when I observed the first day of class. My dissertation is about what it means to be a "good student." The goal is to find ways to improve first-year students' experiences and outcomes in courses. I value your input and it will really help understand how to improve students' experiences!

You will be interviewed over Zoom with a small group of other students from your class. You will receive $15 for participating in an interview, which will be about an hour long. All students who participate will be entered into a drawing for one of two $50 gift cards (so two students can win $50).

I will never share your name with anyone. After your instructor has turned in final grades, I will share a summary of what everyone in the class said with your instructor so they can also learn from your insights and experiences. Your instructor will not know who participated in the interviews or who said what.

I know you are all so busy, but if you are a first-year student, please consider participating in the interview. If you are interested, please fill out this google form by [date]. I will send a reminder email on [date].

Thank you!
Claire
claboeck@umich.edu

Recruitment for Follow-Up Survey

Dear [   ],

I hope [your 2022 is off to a fantastic start/you had a fantastic spring semester]! I am emailing you because [last fall/earlier this semester] you participated in an interview for my dissertation study (to jog your memory: I asked you questions about how you participate in class, what it means to be a "Good Student", how you define academic success). I would like to learn about experiences or new ideas you have had since our interview. Would you please consider filling out this survey?

The survey has open-ended questions and is designed to take 30-45 minutes. You will be paid $15 after completing the survey. The survey has details specific to you based on what you said in the interview. The pseudonym you used in the interview is at the top of the survey.

At the end of the survey, it will ask you how you would like to be paid: a $15 Starbucks gift card or a $15 Amazon gift card. I apologize I am not offering physical Mastercards as an option like I did last fall, but there were some issues with cards getting lost in the mail and I don't want you to lose out.

If you are interested, please fill out the survey by [date]. Email me if you have any questions or concerns. I will send a reminder email [date] and then I promise not to bug you anymore!

Heads up: there are questions asking why you did or did not do things for class. I really want you to know that the purpose of the survey is for me to learn from you, not to judge you. I know that you are brilliant and you will succeed at whatever you decide is important to you.

Thank you for reading this and have a great day,
Claire

Link to the survey again:

Appendix C: Sign Up and Screening Form for Students

Notes: the form was created and distributed in Google Forms. After I made this form, I learned more about more inclusive and appropriate language for asking about gender identity ("man" instead of "male", transgender is not a gender identity, instead of "Other" something like "None of these, I identify as:"). Thus, in the event someone is looking at these questions for ideas for their own survey, please do not follow my example on gender identity question.

Thank you for being interested in participating in a group interview with other students for my dissertation! Please fill out this short questionnaire below by [date]. The questionnaire should take you less than 10 minutes. There are three sections: the first section checks if you are a first-year student, the second is about when you can be interviewed and how you would like to be paid, and the third section is to learn a little bit more about you.

I will email you with a date/time [date]. You will get a $15 gift card for the interview, which should last about an hour, and entered into a drawing to win one of two $50 gift cards. During the interview, I will ask you questions about your engagement in this course and how you define a "good student." I will share a summary of the interview responses with your instructor after final grades have been submitted. YOUR NAME WILL NOT BE SHARED. If you have any questions email me! Thank you! Claire claboeck@umich.edu

1. Is this your first year in college? Do not count being dual-enrolled in high school.
    a. Yes
    b. No

2. [in Spring form only] When was your first semester of college?
    a. Fall 2021 (last semester)
    b. Spring 2022 (this semester)

3. What days and time ranges in [October/early November; February/early March] will you be available for the interview? All are EST. The interview will be one hour long, this is just to get a general idea of time ranges. Please check all that apply:
    a. Mondays 9-12
    b. Mondays 12-4
    c. Mondays 4-7
    d. Tuesdays 9-12
    e. Tuesdays 12-4
    f. Tuesdays 4-7

g. Wednesdays 9-12
h. Wednesdays 12-4
i. Wednesdays 4-7
j. Thursdays 9-12
k. Thursdays 12-4
l. Thursdays 4-7
m. Fridays 9-12
n. Fridays 12-4
o. Fridays s 4-7

Is there anything else I should know about your availability for the interview? For example, you might want to tell me if there is a week in February or March you have a lot of exams or you are going out of town for spring break so I won't pick a date that week. You might also want to tell me something like you picked Mondays 9-12 because you are free 11-12 but you have class 9:30-10:45.

How can I pay you?
Email me a $15 Starbucks gift card
p. Email me a $15 Amazon gift card
q. Mail me a physical Mastercard gift card [*fall only*]
r. Email me a $15 Target gift card [*spring only*]

Some of these questions require a response so I can contact you, but the ones that are about how you identify (race/ethnicity, gender, disability) are not required. If you are not comfortable answering those questions its OK to skip them.

What is your name?

What email address would you like me to use to contact you?

What pseudonym (fake name) would you like me to use for you in my research? This is to protect your confidentiality.

What is your age range?
s. 17-20
t. 21-25
u. 30+

What is your major?

Have you taken classes at a college or university before, through a program such as dual-enrollment or dual-credit? Do not count AP classes.

v. Yes

w. No

Please share what race you identify as:

x. Asian

y. Black

z. Indigenous (Native Alaskan, Native American, Native Hawaiian)

aa. Latinx

bb. White

cc. None of these, I will spell it out for you in the next question

Any additional information about your racial identity you would like to share:

Are you an international student?

Please tell me how you identify in terms of gender:

dd. Male

ee. Female

ff. Nonbinary

gg. Transgender

hh. Agender

ii. Other

What is your preferred pronoun?

jj. Them/their

kk. He/him/his

ll. She/ her/ hers

Please tell me how you identify in terms of having a disability:

Did either of your parents or parental guardians attend college?

Did you receive financial aid based on income (as in, not academic or athletic scholarships)

Appendix D: Student Participants

Table 7

Student Participants

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Pronouns	Disability	Parent or Guardian Attended College	Income-Based Financial Aid	Instructor
Ana	White	Female	She/her/hers		No	No	Ellie
Annette	White	Nonbinary	Them/their	Disabled (mental): Bipolar disorder	No	Yes	Kevin
Ariana	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	May
Bella	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Ellie
Ben	White	Male	He/him/his	ADHD	Yes	Not sure	May
Calvin	White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	Yes	Kevin
Carrie	Asian	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Not sure	Sam
David	White	Female	She/her/hers	ADHD	Yes	Yes	Ellie
Elizabeth	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Clark
Emily	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Ellie
Eren	White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	Yes	Toby
Esteban	White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	No	Flora
Gage	White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	No	Sam
Grace	White	Female	She/her/hers	Mental health issues	Yes	Yes	May
Jacob	White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	Not sure	Clark
Jamie	Black	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Ellie
Jane	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Ellie
Jenna	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Ellie
Jennifer	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Ellie
Jess	White	Female	She/her/hers	I have a working memory disorder. A form of dyslexia.	Yes	Yes	Flora
Jim	White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	No	Kevin

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Pronouns	Disability	Parent or Guardian Attended College	Income-Based Financial Aid	Instructor
Joanne	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Ellie
Johnny	Black, White	Male	He/him/his	Autism	Yes	Yes	Flora
Jordan	White	Female	She/her/hers	I have ADHD	Yes	Not sure	Ellie
Kara	Black	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Toby
Katie	Latinx, White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Ellie
Kenzie	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Ellie
Ky	Black	Female	She/her/hers		No	No	Ellie
Leonard	White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	Yes	Toby
LillyD	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Not sure	Buster
Lily	Latinx	Female	She/her/hers		No	Yes	Kevin
Lindsey	White	Female	She/her/hers		No	Not sure	Ellie
Lucas	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Ellie
Marcus	Latinx, White	Male	He/him/his	I have severe ADHD, a learning disability	Yes	Yes	May
Mariah	Black	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	ElizP
Melvin	Latinx, White	Male	He/him/his		Yes	No	Alex
Nikolai	White	Male			Yes	No	Buster
Oz	Latinx	Male	He/him/his		No	Yes	Clark
Paige	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Ellie
Presley	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Ellie
Prisilla	Latinx	Female	She/her/hers		No	Yes	Kevin
Psy	White	Nonbinary	She/her/hers	ADHD	Yes	Not sure	Irene
Rachel	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Flora
Robin	White	Female, I don't really have a label, but I am AFAB	She/her/hers	I am professionally diagnosed with depression and anxiety but have no physical disabilities	Yes	Not sure	Irene
Sally	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	Yes	Kevin
SamM	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Irene
Skyler	White	Nonbinary	Them/their		Yes	No	Ellie

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Pronouns	Disability	Parent or Guardian Attended College	Income-Based Financial Aid	Instructor
Stevo	Black	Male	He/him/his		No	Yes	Irene
Sunny	White	Female	She/her/hers		Yes	No	Kevin

Table 8

Aggregated Student Participant Information

	Number of Students
Students of Color	13
Women	32
Nonbinary	3
Disability or Mental Health Concerns	10
First-Generation (parents or guardians did not attend college)	8
Income-Based Financial Aid	22
Major	
Business	4
Communication	1
Criminal Justice	3
Arts and Design (interior design, graphic design, film studies)	4
Education (math, music, Spanish, elementary, special)	18
Health (nursing, veterinary)	2
Social Sciences (psychology, economics, sociology, political science)	6
STEM (add here…)	10
Undecided	2
Total	49

Appendix E: Observation Protocol

Focus on things that will not be captured in the transcript. Audio record only. In your notes, describe appearance of students who ask questions or interact with professor so if they decide to participate in the group interviews, you can ask them about those interactions.

Notes about the Classroom Setup (e.g., how many students, composition of class (gender, race/ethnicity), seating arrangements/draw a sketch, is there a projector, is there a podium or place indicating where an instructor is supposed to stand):

Observation Notes about Instructor	Observation Notes about Students *If the instructor responds to a student comment or question or calls on a student, use an asterisk to indicate which students get responded to*
How syllabus as a document and the content is presented (including instructors' body language, facial expressions, does the instructor project the syllabus):	How students respond to presentation of syllabus (who asks questions, who makes comments, facial expressions/body language, paying attention, taking notes, looking at syllabus on their devices):
How much time is spent on the syllabus (in minutes)	

How Good Student behaviors and characteristics are presented (body language, facial expressions, tone):	How students respond to GSD (…):
How discipline or subject is presented (body language, facial expressions, tone, are there slides or visuals):	How students respond to presentation of subject or discipline (…):
How teaching philosophy is presented (body language, facial expressions, tone)	How students respond to presentation of teaching philosophy:

How advice for how to succeed or expectations NOT listed in syllabus is presented (…)	How students respond to presentation of advice and expectations (…):
To which students instructor responds when asking questions about the course:	
How does the instructor move around the classroom:	

Did the class end early? Y/N and if instructor had explanation, why:

Appendix F: Protocol for First Instructor Interview

1. What is the most important thing you want students to leave your course with?

2. Tell me what you think is the function of a syllabus.
    a. What types of content do you think should be in the syllabus?
    b. Does the syllabus have the same function for all courses that you teach?

3. Tell me how you decide what content should be included in the syllabus for your course.
    a. How do you feel about the [template/department master]?

4. How frequently do you stick to the [policies/guidelines/whatever word they use] in your syllabus?
    a. Why?
    b. Is this different for other courses that you teach and if so, why?
    c. Tell me about situations in which you have made or would make an exception. What was the exception? What were the circumstances? Who was involved?

5. I noticed when you discussed [the syllabus] on the first day of class, you emphasized [ ]. Could you explain why?

6. What do you want to make clear to students on the first day of class?
    a. What do you want to make clear about what you want students to do? [unless answered in previous question]
    b. How?
    c. Why is that important on the first day?
    d. Is that more important for first-year students than for others?

7. When you think about a "good student," what comes to mind?
    a. Is that the same way you think about a Good Student in other courses, such as upper division courses?

8. How do you communicate your thinking about a Good Student to students?
    a. How do students respond?

9. How is your thinking about a Good Student reflected in your teaching practices?

        a.   Can you give me an example from a recent semester?

10. Why is it important to be a Good Student?

11. What is the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful?

12. How do you define academic success in this course?
        a.   Is this different from other courses you teach?

13. Where do your ideas of being a Good Student come from?

14. Has your thinking about a Good Student evolved over time? How?
        a.   Tell me what prompted that change.
        b.   Has the way you communicate what it means to be a Good Student to students changed over time?

15. Is there anything else you would like to share about your thinking around what it means to be a Good Student?
        a.   Is there anything else you want to share about yourself that might inform your ideas about a Good Student?

Background Information:

1. How many years have you been teaching?

2. What race and ethnicity do you identify as?

3. What gender do you identify as?

4. Did either of your parents or guardians attend college?

Class Information:

1. How many students are in your class?

2. Can you estimate the percentage of BIPOC students?

3. Can you estimate the percentage of women?

4. Can you estimate the percentage of first-year students?

Appendix G: Protocol for Second Instructor Interview

1. How was your semester?

2. In our last interview, you described a Good Student as […..]. Is there anything you would like to change or add?

3. Can you give me an example from this past semester of how your thinking about a Good Student was reflected in your teaching practices?

4. This past term, was there a situation in which you decided not to enforce the [policies, guidelines, whatever word they use] in your syllabus?

[Last week, I sent you a summary of findings from focus groups conducted with first-year students, some of whom took your course. The next three questions relate to that summary. Please take a couple minutes to review it.]

5. Tell me what you think about what the students shared.
   a. Do the students' descriptions of a Good Student in the summary might explain your experience with students this semester? How?

6. What do you think are important issues to consider when communicating your ideas of a Good Student to first-year students?
   a. What do you think are important issues to consider when communicating policies for the course (e.g., late work, attendance)?

7. Based on this semester, are you planning on making any changes to your teaching practices? Why?
   a. Was there a particular situation from this semester that made you decide on that change?
   b. Based on this semester, are you planning on making any changes to your course policies?
      i. [If yes]: Why? Can you tell me the situation from this semester that made you decide to make that change?
   c. Based on this semester, are you planning on making any changes to your course syllabus?

      i. [If yes]: Why? Can you tell me the situation from this semester that made you decide to make that change?

8. Is there anything else you think I should know?

After I have analyzed the data, I will write a summary of the findings related to your class and send it to you. The summary includes analysis of the interviews you participated in, the interviews with the students in your class, the syllabus and course announcements, and my observation of the first day of class. I would like to hear what you think about my analysis and interpretation, but I understand if you do not want to respond. I may or may not adjust my analysis and claims based on your feedback.

Appendix H: Protocols for Student Interviews

Fall 2021 Protocol

2. What is your favorite memory from high school?

3. How often do you use the syllabus in this course?
    a. What for?
    b. Do you use it more or less for other classes compared to this class and if so, why?

4. How do you prepare for this class?
    a. When do you do your classwork?

5. Do you participate in this class and if so, how?
    a. Why that method? OR Why don't you participate?
    b. Do you participate more or less in your other classes compared to this class and if so, why?

This Jamboard has terms that others have used to describe a Good Student. Feel free to add your own terms or descriptions if you don't see them here. [*share Jamboard on screen and put link in the chat*]

Self-sufficient

Tries hard to understand material

Prepares for class

Responsible

Interested in subject

Respectful

Does not wait until the last minute

Participates in class

Seeks help when needed

Goes to Office Hours

Follows instructions

Focused and engaged during class

6. Have you heard someone use these phrases, or something similar to them, to describe a Good Student?
   a. Who used those descriptions?
   b. Does your [class] instructor emphasize any of these terms?
   c. Do any of those descriptions resonate with you?
   d. Any you want to add?
   e. Can someone be a Good Student without being one or some of these descriptions? If so which ones?
   f. Are any of these more important for college than high school? Which ones and why?
   g. *If you are at the 30 minute mark at this point*: Are there any of these that you want to do but sometimes struggle with?

7. What do you think is the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful?
   a. What does academic success mean to you?
   b. Is that the same for all classes

8. Why is it important to be a Good Student? [if appropriate, ask about metaphor; meaning, if students say something like helps prepare you for the real world, ask them how, and if then being a Good Student is like being a good worker].

9. Has there been a time in this class when you …
   a. felt like a Good Student? If so, tell me about that.
   b. felt you were not a Good Student? If so, tell me about that.

10. Has your thinking about what it means to be a Good Student changed since you started college?
    a. What caused that change?

11. Have you been …
    a. positively affected by the policies in this class? If so, how?
    b. negatively affected by the policies in this class? If so, how?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your thinking around what it means to be a Good Student? *(do last if have time to do the other question)*

   I have one more question for you, but I want to make sure you have enough time to think about your response. In the Jamboard there is a slide with your name on it where you can respond to this question. Lets start with giving 5 minutes to answer the question? Raise your hand in Zoom when you are done.

13. Was there a particular person or experience that influenced your thinking about a Good Student? *[pasted into Jamboard]*

Spring 2022 Protocol

1. What is your favorite memory from high school?

2. How often do you use the syllabus in this course?
   a. What for?
   b. Do you use it more or less for other classes compared to this class and if so, why?

3. How do you prepare for this class?
   a. When do you do your classwork?

4. Do you participate in this class and if so, how?
   a. Why that method? OR Why don't you participate?
   b. Do you participate more or less in your other classes compared to this class and if so, why?

5. This Jamboard has terms that others have used to describe a Good Student. Feel free to add your own terms or descriptions if you don't see them here. [*share Jamboard on screen and put link in the chat*]

[*same Jamboard as Fall*]

   a. Have you heard someone use these phrases, or something similar to them, to describe a Good Student? From who?
   b. Are any of them unfamiliar?
   c. Does your [class] instructor emphasize any of these terms?
   d. Why do you think your instructor emphasizes those?
   e. Is this different from what you heard from fall instructors?
   f. Do any of those descriptions resonate with you?
   g. [if says self-sufficient or responsible] What does being responsible/self-sufficient look like?
   h. Any you want to add?
   i. Can someone be a Good Student without being one or some of these descriptions? If so which ones?
   j. Are any of these more important for college than high school? Which ones and why?
   k. [if says self-sufficient or responsible] Is there anything else about your college life you are responsible/self-sufficient for?
   l. [if did not say responsible/self-sufficient] Some other students talked about having to be responsible/self-sufficient in college. What in your college life are you responsible for?
   m. *If you are at the 35 minute mark at this point*: Are there any of these that you want to do but sometimes struggle with?

6. What do you think is the relationship between being a Good Student and being academically successful?
   a. What does academic success mean to you?
   b. Is that the same for all classes?

7. Why is it important to be a Good Student? [if appropriate, ask about metaphor; meaning, if students say something like helps prepare you for the real world, ask them how, and if then being a Good Student is like being a good worker].

8. Has there been a time in this class when you …
   a. felt like a Good Student? If so, tell me about that.
   b. felt you were not a Good Student? If so, tell me about that.

9. Has your thinking about what it means to be a Good Student changed since you started college?
   a. What caused that change? [OR if student just says "no" ask why do you think it did not change?]

10. Have you been …
    a. positively affected by the policies in this class? If so, how?
    b. negatively affected by the policies in this class? If so, how?

11. Was there a particular person or experience that influenced your thinking about a Good Student?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your thinking around what it means to be a Good Student? *(do last if have time to do the other question)*

Appendix I: Follow-Up Survey for Students

Note: The survey was created and distributed through Google Forms. All questions were open response.

Thank you so much for participating in this research study on the discourse of a Good Student! I wanted to follow up because I interviewed you about halfway through the fall semester, and things may have happened in [months] that confirmed or changed your ideas and experiences regarding being a "Good Student."

This survey is about your experience last semester. The survey is designed to take 30-45 minutes and is organized in three sections. The questions are grouped together based on theme.

This survey was made specifically for you based on what you shared in the interview last semester. As you answer each question, think about all the details and thoughts that could tell your story. Your answers to the questions could be helpful for you as you move forward in your college journey. The point of the survey is to help me to understand your experiences; it is not to judge you in any way.

You have until [date] to take the survey and I will send you a $15 gift card after you complete it. Please enter the email where you want the gift card sent:

1. In our interview, you selected [x, x, x] as important parts of being a Good Student. Please give me an example of when you [x or x or x] in or for [class] and it helped you succeed. Please be as specific as possible in your response (for example, did this happen during class, on an assignment, over email, in office hours, etc.).
    a. What made you decide to do [x]?
    b. Explain how [x] helped you succeed in [class].

2. Please give me an example of when you did not do [x] in class.
    a. Why didn't you do [x]? Please be as specific as possible.
    b. Explain what you think happened as a result of not doing [x].

3. Last semester, did you try doing anything new for [class] not included in the things you listed as important for a Good Student (see the list in the first question)? If so, please give me a specific example of what you tried.
    a. Why did you try doing that?
    b. What happened as a result?

4. Based on your experience in [x] last semester, what do you think your [class] instructor could say to future students that would be helpful?
   a. Please explain why you think that would be helpful.
   b. Did your instructor emphasize that last semester? If so, please explain how they emphasized it.

5. In our interview, you said it is important to be a Good Student because [x]. Has your thinking about why it is important changed?
   a. If it changed, please tell me your new reason for why it is important to be a Good Student.
   b. Could you tell me what prompted this change? Please be as specific as possible (e.g., did something happen in class, did someone say something to you, etc.)

6. Given how you answered the previous questions, would you say your ideas about a Good Student (e.g., what describes a Good Student) have changed?
   a. How have they changed?
   b. Could you tell me what prompted this change? Please be as specific as possible (e.g., did something happen in class, did someone say something to you, etc.)

7. Do you think your [Lake University] instructors, from last Fall and this Spring, would agree with your current ideas of a Good Student? Please explain why or why not and include examples if you can (e.g., did one instructor say something to you, did something happen in class or on an assignment, etc.).

Thank you so, so much for completing the survey! If you finished it in less than half an hour, could you please check that you gave enough detail in your answers so I can understand your experiences and ideas?

I get notifications once people finish the survey. You will get a $15 Amazon, Starbucks, or Target gift card emailed from me within 24 hours. Please indicate which type of gift card you would like to receive.

8. How can I pay you?
   a. Amazon emailed gift card
   b. Starbucks emailed gift card
   c. Target emailed gift card [spring only]

Appendix J: Codebook

Note: I only included codes used in the analysis for this study.

Table 9

Codes for Instructors' Dimensions of a Good Student

Good Student Dimension	Code	Definition
Communicates with the instructor	I-Def GS: Communicates	A Good Student (GS) communicates with instructor (not about seeking help) re: absences, missed work, etc.
	I-Def GS: OH	Participant describes a GS as attending office hours
	I-Def GS: Seeks help	Participant describes a GS as seeking help when they need it from any resources (tutor, internet, peers, instructor, etc.)
	I_A: help/comm/OH	instructor tells students to ask them for help, reach out with questions, go to office hours, etc. [for announcements!] DO NOT USE if just saying when office hours are; that can be How Comm: Email if that is part of Def GS so you can see how they try to communicate GSD, but not really telling them to go to OH so don't use this code if just "Office hours are Thursday at X time" BUT DO USE if the instructor also said in interview part of their definition of a GS is going to office hours and just a post of office hours
	I_A: reads/responds emails	instructor tells students to respond or read emails [announcement data]
	IO-GSD: contacts instructor	instructor tells students to contact them for help, about missing class, etc.

	I-Def GS: Aware	Participant describes a GS as being knowledge and current on what is happening in the course (due dates, instructions, paying attention)
	I-Def GS: does assigned work	Participant describes a GS as someone does the assignments and/or assigned reading
	I-Def GS: Responsible	Participant describes a GS as taking responsibility for their actions; ok to use this code if with taking responsibility to motivate themselves to do course assignment
	I-Def GS: Tries hard	Participant describes a GS as someone who tries their best, invests effort, practices, is working to improve, tries even when they are not sure they are doing it correctly
Puts effort and attention towards coursework	IO-GSD: manages deadlines/organized	tells students to stay organized, look at deadlines in syllabus/knows when assignments are due, schedule their time, pace themselves, submits assignments on time, checks syllabus/course site etc
	IO-GSD: does coursework/reading	instructor tells students to submit assignments, do reading for class; NOT for submitting on time, that is IO-GSD: manages deadlines/organized [observation data]
	I_A: do coursework on time	instructor tells students what assignments are due or general reminders about doing their work for class by a certain date (or telling them they are late); do not use for descriptions of assignments when they don't have due dates/not about reminding students to do them [announcements!]
	I_A: manage time/organize	instructor tells students to plan ahead, get organized, includes signing up for progress meetings [announcements!]
	I_A: use course site	instructor tells students to find something on course site or use it
Engages during class	I-Def GS: Attends class	Participant describes a GS as someone who attends class

	I-Def GS: Participates	Participant describes a GS as participating in class (includes answering and asking questions in class)
	I-A: attend class	instructor tells students to attend class [announcements!]
	I-A: engage/participate in class	instructor tells students to engage/participate in class [announcements]
	IO-GSD: attends class	tells students attendance is required, they have to go [for observation data]
	IO-GSD: engaged and participating in class	instructor tells students pay attention, ask questions, take notes, etc. during class
Strives to learn	I-Def GS: Pursuing learning	Participant describes a GS as someone who wants to understand the material (not just complete assignments or improve grade)
	I-Def GS: Tries hard	Participant describes a GS as someone who tries their best, invests effort, practices, is working to improve, tries even when they are not sure they are doing it correctly
	I_A: resources	instructor tells them about resources to help them with course content (e.g., tutoring, online videos, the LA etc) [for announcements]
	I-A: studies/strives for understanding	Instructor tells students to make sure they understand something, study, offers study tips [for announcements]
	IO-GSD: strives for understanding	tells students to aim for understanding, not just doing problems [observation data]

Notes: Some codes, such as I-Def GS: Tries Hard, appears in two dimensions; I assigned the text associated with that code to the dimension based on the content of the text. I-A indicates the data is from class announcements; IO-GSD indicates the data is from class observations.

Table 10

Codes for Students' Dimensions of a Good Student

Good Student Dimension	Code	Definition
Attends and focuses during class	Valued GS: Focused	Focused and engaged during class GS term resonated with them
	Valued GS: Respectful	Respectful GS term resonated with them
	Valued GS: Other: Attends class	Students offer term not listed on Jamboard as a term to describe a GS: attends class
	Valued GS: Responsible	Responsible GS term resonated with them
	Valued GS: SelfSuff	Self Sufficient GS term resonated with them
	Definition Responsible/Self-Suff: Responsible Attends Class and focused	Student's definition/description of being responsible or self-sufficient: attends class and focuses is an example of being responsible
Manages time and coursework	Valued GS: Not LM	Doesn't wait until the last minute GS term resonated with them
	Valued GS: Prepares	Student indicated prepares for class resonated with them
	Valued GS: Other: Time management	Students offer term not listed on Jamboard as a term to describe a GS: time management
	Valued GS: Other: Study habits	Students offer term not listed on Jamboard as a term to describe a GS: has a study schedule, studies regularly
	Valued GS: Responsible	Responsible GS term resonated with them
	Valued GS: SelfSuff	Self Sufficient GS term resonated with them
	Definition Responsible/Self-Suff: Self Suff organized	Student's definition/description of being responsible or self-sufficient: organizing materials and schedule on own
	Definition Responsible/Self-Suff: Responsible meets due dates	Student's definition/description of being responsible or self-sufficient: meeting due dates is an example fo being responsible
	Definition Responsible/Self-	Student's definition/description of being responsible or self-sufficient: managing

	Suff: Responsible time management	schedule so can meet deadlines is part of being responsible
	Not Needed: Not LM	Student identified not waiting until the last minute as not necessary/less important for being a GS
Pushes self for academic success	Valued GS: SelfSuff	Self Sufficient GS term resonated with them
	Valued GS: Tried Hard Understand	Student said trying hard to understand the material is an important part of being a GS
	Valued GS: Other: Motivated	Students offer term not listed on Jamboard as a term to describe a GS: motivated to succeed
	Valued GS: Other: Extra time and effort	Students offer term not listed on Jamboard as a term to describe a GS: puts extra effort or time into a course assignment
	Definition Responsible/Self-Suff: Self Suff self-motivated	Student's definition/description of being responsible or self-sufficient: motiving yourself to do well is part of being self-sufficient
	GS = Effort	A Good Student tries hard, does their best, invests effort; use this code when students say this explicitly, even though not term on the Jamboard
Seeks academic help	Valued GS: Seeks help	Seeks help when needed GS term resonated with them
	Valued GS: OH	Student indicated attending office hours resonated with them
	Valued GS: Responsible	Responsible GS term resonated with them
	Definition Responsible/Self-Suff: Responsible Asks Questions	Student's definition/description of being responsible or self-sufficient: asking questions because you need help is taking responsibility for learning/being responsible
	Not Needed: OH	Attending office hours deemed not required to be a GS or less important

Takes care of self	Valued GS: Other: Balance	Students offer term not listed on Jamboard as a term to describe a GS: takes time for self, destress, does not take on too much
	Valued GS: SelfSuff	Self Sufficient GS term resonated with them
	Definition Responsible/Self-Suff: Self Suff care of self	Student's definition/description of being responsible or self-sufficient: taking care of health and household duties is being self-sufficient

Table 11

Other Codes Related to GSD Themes Used

Code	Definition
Codes regarding influences on students' definitions of a Good Student and if/how it changed	
Inf U Experience	Personal experience in university courses influenced idea of a Good Student; includes examples of other university students
Inf Coll vs HS	college being different from HS influencing idea (definition, more important in college than high school, etc.) of GS; includes views/theories about college demanding more self-sufficiency as well as experiences so far about college being different. NOT the same as Inf U experience; if students only talk about their experience at U showing them they need to be more self sufficient etc., then do not code as Inf College vs HS. Must be a comparison or abstract notions of college
Inf Family	parents or siblings were an example or verbally emphasized aspects of GS
Inf Friend/partner	a friend or partner influenced the student's idea of a GS; use this only if person does not go to WMU or same HS as the interviewee or if unsure if t hey do/did
GSD Ubiq	Reference to GSD mantras/ideas being "standard" or students have heard it all their lives; ubiquitous because pervasive and repetitive; this code is not necessarily about influencing the student just making a note of how students were exposed to GSD and perceptions that it is

	standard (also used when students say it is standard/obvious for other scenarios)
Inf K-12 Experience	Personal experience in K-12 influenced idea of GS
Inf K-12 Friends/Peers	Friends (or peers) in HS example of GS
Inf K-12 Staff	Teaches, coaches, other K-12 staff influenced idea of a GS
K-12 GSD	Schools pushed their own GSD in very explicit ways; had mottos, acronyms, etc. OR describing pressures at HS about what success expectations were OR when asked if they had heard terms, student goes into detail about what they heard from HS staff; this code is not necessarily about influencing the student just making a note of how students were exposed to very explicit GSD
FUS: GS changed	The student's thinking about a GS or the aspects they think are most important changed [follow-up survey]
No change GS	student did not change ideas of being a GS either since started college or between interview and follow-up survey; also use for when the student tried something new but already in line with what they said is a GS
Own System	Comments indicating student has developed their own system, knows what works for them, confident in own GS definition/system, has always been like that; DO NOT use for students saying they do/do not do something because of experience unless discussion of trial and error, developing a system, learning about themselves or part of their personality; about personal ownership/philosophy
Codes regarding influences on instructors' definitions of a Good Student and if/how it changed	
I-Def Inf: 1st year	if the definition of a GS is specific for first-year students or applies to upper year students as well
I-Def Inf: parents	Participant's parents influenced their definition of a GS
I-Def Inf: ped resources	Pedagogical resources the participant has encountered (not exclusively official PD, also scholarship on teaching) influenced their definition of a GS
I-Def Inf: student	Participant's experience as an undergrad and/or graduate student influenced their definition of a Good Student
I-Def Inf: Teaching	Participant's definition influenced by their teaching experience, either they offer it as a reason or they give an example from teaching

	experience showing when doing a certain behavior (e.g., asking for help) helped students
Previous Def GS	Participant's previous ideas/definition of being a GS that they no longer hold

Codes regarding how instructors communicate their definition of a Good Student to students (Good Student Discourse)	
I-How Comm: Grade	Participant says they use grades to reward or encourage GS behaviors, such as offering extra credit to do something, or rounding up if they know the student tried hard
I-How Comm: Tells them	instructor participant says they communicate ideas of GS by explicitly telling the students (different from email because not specified how the students are being told)
I-How Comm: Email/Announcement	specifically through email and course announcements; can be combined with positive reinforcement
I-How Comm: Makes available	instructor communicates GS by rearranging their schedule, being available, offering phone number, etc.; likely specific for communicating GS asks for help/OH
I-How Comm: Class practices	Participant says they communicate GSD through practices in the classroom, such as how they get students to participate and using group work; about practices, not verbal positive reinforcement. INCLUDES practices observed that support GSD (example, asking students if they have questions)
I-How Comm: Positive	through positive reinforcement, e.g., complimenting students' questions
IO-Practicing Course Routine	Instructor has students to an activity to practice the routine/etiquette/policies they think are important; OBSERVATION DATA ONLY
No Policy for GSD	Instructor removes policy or does not have a policy because that policy would not align with GS
I-Adjusts Policy Not GSD	Instructor adjust policy for reasons besides aligning with their definition of GS
I-Adjusts Policy for GSD	Instructor adjusts policy to make it align with their definition of GS
I-Adjusts Policy: Not GSD: COVID	COVID as explanation for why adjusts policy, whether personal decision or departmental decision that they follow through with

I-Uses GSD Policy	Instructor sticks to policy that does appear to align with their definition of GS
Codes regarding students feeling like a Good Student	
Feeling like GS: Inst	A student felt like a GS when they did something the instructor emphasizes OR did not feel like a GS when did not do what instructor emphasizes OR felt like a GS because of what the instructor did/said
Feeling like GS: Other	a student felt like/did not feel like a GS when they did something/did not do something ASIDE FROM what they said an instructor emphasizes; reference to feeling good/not good because it is important to them personally, to their parents, etc.
Struggle with GS	A student believes this behavior is important but has a difficult time always doing it; also includes example of when they did not do something they think is important in terms of being a GS and the consequences
Other codes related to instructors and students' understanding of a Good Student	
I-GS is Subjective	Instructor says that there are different definitions of a GS, varies between people
GS is Subjective	Comments indicating they think some GS behaviors could work for some students but not everyone has to do them, people are different; - ALSO for situations; maybe a behavior is important for one class more than others; ALSO saying its about trying their best (NOT just saying its about effort, specifically trying their best, because that is relative)
GS Egalitarian	comments indicating anyone can be a GS, not intrinsic talent
GS avoids waste	GS because if you are not it's a waste of time and money, get your investment worth, have a good experience
GS for Future Goals	GS because gets to good grades, degree, career, etc.; other desired outcome
GS for Helping	Being a good student important because can be a resource for others
GS for Other	Good student reason not included above
GS for Respect/Recog	Being a GS is important because others will respect, appreciate, recognize you in positive ways
GS for skills	GS helps learn habits, skills, information will need later

GS for View of Self	Being a GS is important for how you feel about yourself (confident, respecting yourself)
GS for Virtue	GS a good person
GS Social Norms	GS because social pressure to be a GS intrinsically OR because it leads you to socially desirable outcomes

Codes regarding instructors' and students' definitions of academic success	
AS = future goal	defines academic success as graduating or passing the classes needed to reach future goal of graduation/career
AS = balance	academic success as balance, not suffering mentally trying to get a certain grade; includes reference to social aspects in college
AS = grade	defines academic success as a grade or passing the course
AS = relative gains	participant defines academic success as gains relative to the student; mentions of growth, improvement, confidence, reaching goals they set for themselves improvement-wise; if specific mentions of learning code as AS=learning
AS = test scores	participant describes being academically successful as scoring well on a test or placement test
AS = learning	defines academic success as learning material, skills
AS = tried best	Student defined academic success as tried hardest, did everything they could to succeed

Codes regarding instructors' discussion of the relationship between being a Good Student and academically successful	
I-Exceptions GS=AS	Exceptions/explanations why a person can be a GS but not experience academic success
I-GS~AS	being a GS mostly leads to academic success
I-GS=AS Ideal	discussion that in an ideal world, being a GS would lead to being academically successful

Codes regarding students' discussion of the relationship between being a Good Student and academically successful	
GS!=AS: Ability	Being a GS does not always lead to academic success because belief some are better at school in general, some subjects or tests than others

GS!=AS: Cheating	People can be academically successful without being a GS because they cheat
GS!=AS: easy	People don't have to be a GS because the work is easy, don't have to try; attribute of the work/expectations not students' ability
GS!=AS: life context	Being a GS does not always lead to academic success because illness, personal issues, etc.
GS!=AS: likes/dislikes	A GS is not always academically successful because the student does not like the subject, teaching style, etc.
GS!=AS: Other	Comments indicating other reasons why being a GS does not always lead to academic success
GS~AS	Being a GS typically leads to academic success

Table 12 *Critical Discourse and Rhetorical Analysis Codes*

Code	Definition
Please + imperative	A statement commanding a student to do something that also contains "please"
Imperative	A statement commanding a student to do something; no conditional language, about needs and requirements
Contact + !	Statement telling/encouraging the student to contact the instructor that ends in an exclamation point
"need" notification	A statement telling/encouraging students to reach out to the instructor if they need something, if they have questions, without attending to what help the instructor will provide; focus on the student having and reporting the need
Social comparison	Instructor highlights one group of students for positive or negative reasons as a justification for why students should do something; includes noting % of students who have done something
Power in Grading	Instructor reminds students they have grading policies, grading deadlines, and are monitoring grades; includes counting 0s
"should"	A statement telling students what they "should" do or implying what they should do; contrast with imperative but an implied expectation that should be met
"haven't already"	A statement reminding students what they should or need to do while also indicating some expectation it would already be done or started

"be sure" accountability	A statement telling students to make or be sure to do something, thus adding self-monitoring/tracking of the task in addition to completing the task

Appendix K: Tablemos

Note: there are more codes referred to here than used in the codebook in Appendix L.

Template for Tablemo

Instructor:
Course:
Semester:

Student Pseudonyms	Race	Gender	First Gen?	Disabilities?

Understanding of a Good Student		
	Instructor	**Students**
Definition of a GS	I-Def GS: [all] I-GS is Relative	Feeling like GS: Inst Feeling like GS: Other Valued GS: [all] Not Needed: [all] Coll>HS: [all] GS Relative GS Egalitarian GS = Effort Definition Responsible/Self-Suff
Influence on GS Definition	I-Students are Adults I-Def Inf: [all] Previous Def GS	No GS change FUS: GS changed K-12 GSD Inf [all] Own system GSD Ubiq
Definition Academic Success	AS = [all]	AS = [all]
Relationship Academic Success and GS	I-GS=AS Ideal I-Exceptions GS=AS I=GS~AS	GS~AS GS!=AS: [all]
Importance GS	I-GS for [all]	GS for [all] GS avoids waste GS social norms
Notes:		

Good Student Discourse		
	Instructor	**Students**
What GSD Instructor Communicates to Students	I-A: [all except LA Review/Resources] IO-GSD: [all except practicing course routine]	
What GSD is Reported Communicated	I-Emphasizes but not GS Def I-(Not) Disclose Policy Adjust Content of I-How Comm from Interviews	FUS: suggestions for instructor [bc indicates what was not heard] Instructor GSD Heard
How GSD is Communicated	No Policy for GSD I-Adjusts Policy Not GSD I-Adjusts Policy for GSD I-Uses GSD Policy I-How Comm: [all except improvement]	Instructor GSD Heard [if students mention how, which many do not]
Influence on What is Communicated	I-Adjusts Policy: COVID I-Inf Comm: [all] I-Inf How Comm	Guess Why I-Emphasis [all]
Response to What is Communicated	I-How Comm: Improvement I-GS Not Followed	Policy Appraisal Enact Instructor GSD Not Enact Instructor GSD Why Enact Instructor GSD
Notes:		

Additional Course Context		
	Instructor	**Students**
Goal for Course		
FUS: new/different strategies		
Instructor GSD Result		
Syllabus Content	Syll: [all]	*--Note: none of the students said they use the syllabus for anything besides checking the calendar/due dates, grade distribution, or attendance policy. Very few even mentioned the latter. Several said they do not look at the syllabus at all. In addition, the E1050 and two of the M1180 instructors do not have*

		control over their syllabus and the E1050 instructors frequently deviate from the attendance policy, so decided it is not a significant role in what GSD is communicated within the course. Policy deviation is captured elsewhere (see Good Student Discourse Table).
IO-Course Routine IO-Practicing Course Routine		--
I-Expectations but not GS Def		
I-Past Policy Use		
I-Planning New Policy GSD		
Was there an LA who sent announcements?	Y/N based on I-A: LA Review/Resources	
Notes:		

Additional Student Context		
	Instructor	**Students**
Struggle with GS		
FUS: Instructors agree with GS	--	
Notes:		

Overall Takeaways

Codes NOT Included in Memo Table and Rationale:

COVID Influence: not included because how impacts GSD would be captured in the Adjusts Policy: COVID code. Had a code for the influence of COVID on definition of GS but had 0 uses. Will read through after making memos and looking for patterns in case helps understands patterns.

Example from other classes: not included because not about the case. Nothing about other classes having different definitions of GS (mostly about interactions with peers, why don't participate, or other instructors' policies). Will read through after making memos and looking for patterns in case helps understands patterns.

Disconfirming!: Not included because general catch-all, only 4 as of 8/1/22 hits anyway. Will read through after making memos and looking for patterns in case helps understands patterns.

X: Rule Changes/Deviations: not included because quick coding for the ASHE proposal about policies; content captured in the I-Adjusts Policy codes

Completed Tablemo for May

Instructor: May
Course: [first year writing + workshop]
Semester: Fall 2021

Student Pseudonyms	Race	Gender	First Gen?	Disabilities?
Grace	White	Female	No	Mental health issues
Marcus	Latinx, White	Male	No	Severe ADHD
Ben	White	Male	No	ADHD
Ariana Sims	White	Female	No	no
Note: Grace shared in the FUS she left university bc of financial burden.				

Understanding of a Good Student		
	Instructor	**Students**
Definition of a GS	Def GS: Aware ("somebody who pays attention", "paying more attention to like instructions"), including being in sync with the goals of the class ("you can't always just do your own thing"); being self-motivated not always helpful bc does own thing (compares to self) Def GS: Seeks help (can be hard to ask for help, something GS learns; students "sometimes needs to reach [out] first") I-Def GS: Tries hard ("putting time and energy back" into the class), later describes as studying, learning how to study and prepare for class GS is Relative, people will have personal biases so "rather than how to be a good student overall, its more how to be a good student in a way that works for them" and "lots of different things that could make up a good student"	**Grace** Valued GS following instructions, being respectful and not waiting until the last minute. Defined being respectful is not being rude, gave example of student laughing anytime someone asked a question. Coll>HS self-sufficient, no parents or teachers "hovering." Felt like GS when doing Nine Note because could see "the different factors that play into how successful I really am." Felt like Not GS when sleeping in, missing class. Not needed: interested in subject. **Marcus** Valued GS responsible ("taking accountability when you need to" and explaining to instructors why "not on top of things"), participates in class, seeks help when needed, respectful (when students are rude to the instructor its hard for the class to learn). FUS participated in class, likes to contribute and participation helps him get feedback. Coll>HS self-sufficient bc now an adult. Felt like GS when got instructor feedback on Nine Note. Feels like GS when giving constructive criticism/engaging in class and when got instructor feedback on Nine Note. Felt like not GS when turned in pieces of Nine Note late (was having mental health issues). Being a GS in college is "putting actual effort into work you might care about." Not Needed: interested in subject. **Ben** Valued GS respectful, responsible, participants in class, prepares for class. Knows

		being respectful when the instructor likes him; respect is "the most important thing" so you can have a good relationship with instructor and other students. Said for him a GS gets good grades. GS/AS relative, people can be "successful without getting an A" (unclear if he distinguished AS/GS, the question was about GS). Felt like GS when had Nine Note done before others and wrote a lot of words. Felt was Not a GS when accidentally slept through class first week. GS Relative, he wants an A but others may have a different definition. Not Needed: interest in subject, participating, OH (can get A without those).
		Ariana Sims Valued GS Not last minute (often does work early), OH, "get your work done and make sure you show up to class and get good grades." FUS not waiting until the last minute, has always done things asap to reduce stress and bc "makes me feel accomplished and successful." Coll>HS Not last minute bc "lots of things going on", clubs, sports, etc. Felt like GS when had Nine Note done early. GS = Effort. Not Needed: interest in subject and participating in class as long as gets work done.
Influence on GS Definition	I-Def Inf: Student (did not have to put in effort in high school so would not describe herself as a GS but in HS thought she was a GS because had a good GPA, learned to study in college, had nitpicky profs in college in UK, in the UK if students do the reading they didn't go to class but she sees that in her grad courses at university people will "come and just bullshit and fake", shifted valuing grade only to effort invested in college)

I-Def Inf: Teaching (says definition of a GS changed now that she is a teacher but did not say how/why)

(in observation told students they are adults so don't have to ask her to go to the bathroom; not totally relevant here but sticking with systematic way of entering data) | **Grace** Inf College vs HS, HS teachers "unnecessarily hard" but in college can get extensions, "can have a sense of individuality for yourself." Inf Family, parents her whole life told her what to do so she doesn't "fall behind and fail." Inf K-12 Staff, senior forensics teacher tips on "balance school and home life", "strict and lenient at the same time."

Marcus Inf College vs HS in HS a GS just turned in assignments, but in college GS puts "actual effort into work you might care more about" and learning. Inf K-12 Experience that respect is important bc other students were rude to instructor. Inf K-12 experience another HS student "showed me that letting yourself feel and live was essential to being a good student." Inf K-12 Staff band director role model, "often try to get these values in all of us" (values = terms from jamboard). Inf U Experience, has resources to succeed, not what HS said "scare tactics" about how strict college will be; being a GS in HS "completely different" than in college.

Ben GS Ubiq ("just from going to school our whole life"). College and HS require same GS skills but college teaches to work independently and manage schedule (says that is easy). |

		Ariana Sims Inf College vs HS, college more things going on (clubs, sports) so cannot wait until last minute to do homework and have to manage schedule. Inf K-12 Experience, a teacher would compliment her on getting her work done earlier than others. FUS GS changed, will let herself turn something in later than she normally would (but still asap) bc noticed that her classmates do everything last minute. Was nervous that college teachers "wouldn't care about you" because that is what "everyone always talks about" but not true.
Definition Academic Success	AS = grade (passing the class) AS = learning ("take something with them and run with it down the line")	**Grace** AS = balance (academics and fun) **Marcus** AS = balance (not sacrificing health), AS = grade (not failing), AS = tried best **Ben** AS = grade (A, "for me the grade matters a lot" and "I found a way to like not let it affect my mental health") **Ariana Sims** AS = grade (straight As, grade matters a lot bc of scholarships and parents), getting work done; AS = learning
Relationship Academic Success and GS	AS not "necessarily linked" with GS because students can be "really bright and can just sort of glide along" or just do their own thing and miss out on "things we're [instructors] looking for"	**Grace** GS!=AS: cheating, being overconfident, GS!=AS life context (life surprises you) **Marcus** GS!=AS: cheating, GS!=AS life context (mental health or physical health) **Ben** GS~AS but recognized others might not feel the same, could be GS without AS **Ariana Sims** GS~AS but recognized others might not feel the same, could be GS without AS
Importance GS	GS for life skills: said generic answer getting a job but can also learn skills that related to "other areas" "or just like interpersonal relationships and being a decent person"; college is a "really big period in your lives"	**Grace** GS for View of Self ("don't feel bad about yourself") **Marcus** GS for future goals ("what's on the other side of that diploma") **Ben** GS for skills ("do work in real life" but "I feel like it's a lot of like school and not enough teaching like about what the real world really is") **Ariana Sims** GS for future goals (might not get degree)

Notes: With May tension between being a GS in a way that works best for you but also that a GS won't just do their own thing. Maybe that level of independence is an indication of not caring, which she said is part of her definition of a GS? Pulls from her experience in high school getting good grades but not having to try until college. Also indication that she thinks being a GS is connected to morals, but unclear how that works with

E1050. Grace compares GS to self-esteem? All but Ben talked about HS teachers scaring them about how hard and strict college will be but their experience is the opposite. Interesting that Grace and Marcus tie their feedback on Nine Note as example of feeling like a GS; validation from the teacher (similar to what you hard from Oz and Jacob in M1220 Clark)? More validation references from Ariana Sims with the influence on not waiting until last minute bc teachers complimented her and Ben with knowing he is being respectful because the teacher likes him; teacher opinion matters for being a GS with this group. And then Ben and Ariana Sims more about competition; getting it in before others. Grace, Marcus, and Ben discussed mental health, balance; really shows the strains on these students, a Good Student knows how to keep in balance. Grace and Marcus value the being seen as an individual – another connection to validation? Grace and Marcus suggest more opportunities in college to be a GS (per May's definition) because opportunities to invest care, not just going through HS motions.

Good Student Discourse		
	Instructor	**Students**
What GSD Instructor Communicates to Students	Announcements mostly about help/comm/OH (most of them "let me know if you have any questions"), manage time (sign up for PACE meetings, one about thinking of topic for assignment in advance), do coursework on time (reminders of due dates and assignments even past the due date), and bring materials (textbooks and laptops or notebooks; always offers notebook/paper as alternative to laptop). Two announcements about importance of attending class. Observation: contact instructor (if anything she can help with, ask for extension 24 hrs before deadline tells them attending class is important but also that won't do points deduction policy, do coursework (turning in late better than nothing), be engaged in class (not playing video games), gets textbook, treat others respectfully. Most of first day signing up for things that require a laptop (GS has laptop). Gives tips for how to use syllabus and course calendar.	
What GSD is Reported Communicated	Emphasized but not GSD Def: that class can be useful for them even though a Gen Ed, recognizes students don't want to be there and doesn't "want it to be painful for them." GSD checking due dates, asking for extension (which she says "gives some responsibility to the students"), being interested/wanting to learn, seeking help/asking questions, finding what works for them to do well. Said "not sure" that communicates idea of a GS to students.	**Grace** GS Heard office hours, seeking help if needed, and use extensions. FUS May emphasized students could "come to her with anything", she was there to help. **Marcus** GS Heard seeking help when needed. **Ben** GS Heard don't wait until the last minute **Ariana Sims** GS Heard don't wait until the last minute, self-sufficient.

		FUS May emphasized asking for extension "if needed."
How GSD is Communicated	I-Adjusts Policy Not GSD: does not penalize absences I-Adjusts Policy for GSD: students set their extension due date as long as they ask 24 hours before deadline ("so that I know you're thinking about it, so it's not just last minute, it's still pretty last minute, let's be honest"), and late policy deducts fewer points How Comm: Class practices (models looking assignment due dates in syllabus, goes over something multiple times if someone asks a question [as a reward?], multiple writing conferences for more support in writing (including one student who is interested in creative writing which is not part of the course)). How Comm: Tells them (advice about what worked well for her – prefers to phrase as advice than telling them what to do to be a GS, tells them to find out what works for them).	**Ben** GS Heard don't wait until the last minute via email **Ariana Sims** GS Heard don't wait until the last minute in class
Influence on What is Communicated	I-Inf Comm: 1st yr (students transitioning, wants to make it a "softer landing") I-Inf Comm: Disc (course/writing is subjective, heard from author at conference too) I-Inf Comm: KoS (need to provide context and specific examples bc students come from different backgrounds, students have responsibilities outside of school) I-Inf Comm: other profs (dept syllabus, one person's understanding of what a gen ed writing class is) I-Inf Comm: Tone (wants them to know the class can be useful not horrible) I-Inf Comm: Other (went to class when sick as student, shouldn't be that way, pandemic big influence, had panic attacks previous term in class, was not allowed extensions, with policies want to "strike a balance" and "recognize that I'm a person, you're a person", "I think a lot of my teaching philosophy and things have been influenced by the fact that I started during the pandemic.") Thinks GS is Relative to tries to "present some things as…I guess as neutrally as I can"	Guess Why I-Emphasis [all] – not asked in fall **Ariana Sims:** says May gives extensions because she "does like want what's best" [for students?]
Response to What is Communicated	I-How Comm: Improvement; said not sure communicates GS to students [but also seemed ok with that, doesn't want to tell them what to do] I-GS Not Followed: attendance, coming in late, not responding to emails, had to repeat things a lot (suspects students not "mentally present" in class)	**Grace** Enacts GSD of communicating with instructor/asking for help and extensions. **Marcus** Enacts GSD of communicating with

| | | instructor/asking for help and extensions; specifically emailing her for summary of "what we went over in class today" as a reference and for due dates.

Ben Not Enact GSD of last minute bc waiting until day before gives him more motivation.

Ariana Sims Enacts GSD of using classtime to work and completing assignments right after class; does work after class bc bothers her if not done. Liked extension policy (in interview said she does not need it but did use it in FUS), |
| | | |

Notes: May tried to communicate opportunities for students to care, such as exploring interests and she will support them via extra writing conferences, answering questions. Tension between wanting to give them options, says doesn't want to tell them what to do but ended up kind of having to do that in the announcements (attend class, submit assignments) and going over instructions multiple times. Going over the instructions meant to reward them for asking questions but at the same time, might be in conflict with other GS characteristic of paying attention. Marcus specifically appreciated going over things multiple times. The GSD of asking for extensions and help resonated with students; maybe because a surprise they can ask for extensions? ArianaSims does her work right away because of her own preferences, not bc instructor says do not procrastinate.

Additional Course Context		
	Instructor	**Students**
Goal for Course	Confidence in their writing, editing and revising, hopes students recognize skills they have and those skills can be developed. Habit of writing (for workshop). In observation tells them goal is to improve writing (including revision) and her goal is so they all pass and the class is "as tolerable as possible."	**Grace** same AS for all classes **Marcus** same AS for all classes **Ben** same AS for all classes (A) **Ariana Sims** same AS for all classes (A or B)
FUS: new/different strategies		**Ariana Sims** uses a google doc to keep track of assignment due dates; new strategy learned from other student consistent with GS definition
Instructor GSD Result		---
Syllabus Content	*[copied from Irene's Tablemo given [COURSE] syllabi are all the same]* Contact instructor, required materials, late assignments docked points, absences docked, put away electronic devices unless using them for class, respect other students, log into	*--Note: none of the students said they use the syllabus for anything besides checking the calendar/due dates, grade distribution, or attendance policy. Very few even mentioned the latter. Several said they do not look at the syllabus at all. In addition, the [writing instructors] and two of the [precalculus] instructors do not have control over their*

	ELearning, participate in class, COVID policies	*syllabus and the writing instructors frequently deviate from the attendance policy, so decided it is not a significant role in what GSD is communicated within the course. Policy deviation is captured elsewhere (see Good Student Discourse Table).*
IO-Course Routine IO-Practicing Course Routine	Explain during observation that [regular class session] based on assignments and is more work, [additional workshop] based on participation and attendance.	--
I-Expectations but not GS Def	----	
I-Past Policy Use	----	
I-Planning New Policy GSD	----	
Was there an LA who sent announcements?	N	

Notes: May really concerned with it being a Gen Ed no one wants to take but none of the students brought that up; maybe a GS does not differentiate between courses in terms of their effort and behavior???

Additional Student Context		
	Instructor	**Students**
Struggle with GS		**Marcus** Struggles with focusing during class, being responsible, Not LM ("managing my time") and "blowing off homework because it stresses me out" but other times very productive ("laser-focused"). FUS did not seek help when late on Eli Review, "The concept of reaching out about small assignments seemed like a nuisance and I was afraid to bother a teacher over something so menial." Thinks affected his grade.

Ariana Sims FUS had a hard time with an assignment so asked for an extension, said it was stressful and does not want it to happen again. |
| FUS: Instructors agree with GS | -- | **Marcus** Yes "especially about self responsibility but also reaching out"

Ariana Sims Yes, one instructor during spring term emailed her to thank her for not waiting until last minute |

Notes: Students stress out when their work is late or about to be late; concerns of asking instructor for help (shame?).

Overall Takeaways (potential claims for argument are highlighted)

Even knowing that May emphasizes reaching out and observing that is part of her GSD, for Marcus, still hard to ask for help and Ariana Sims to ask for an extension. Wonder if guilt or shame are playing a role here, especially given that for both they valued those behaviors (being responsible/accountable for Marcus and doing work right away for Ariana). Feeling like a GS because of assignment; almost like even though they did not all think that GS = AS, and that a GS is about being responsible, the way they measure that is with meeting deadlines and getting

validation their work is good. May grounds GSD and policies in care for students and awareness they don't want to take that class, which students didn't discuss the latter as much (and same goal of AS for all classes, no indication they care less about first-year writing) but all of them said being interested in the subject is not necessary. Grace and Marcus appreciate the individuality and ability to choose in college; makes them feel individual. Aligns with May's thinking about a GS doing what works for them but not necessarily with definition of GS as putting care back into the course? May's comments of "lets make this not miserable" and GSD of "do it your way" in tension with definition of GS as putting care back into the course. Her GSD may help students feel supported but at the same time not communicate what she thinks a GS does (or at least, though Marcus said college GS cares not just assignments, did not attribute that to May). But then again, May could feel she cannot say that because she thinks being a GS and the nature of writing itself is subjective and relative. Influences on May's definition of a GS and decisions around policies are about negative experiences but for students they are positive experiences/mentors. Real strong concern from May, Grace, Marcus, and Ben about the importance of mental health.

Appendix L: Summary Sent to Instructors

Good Student Discourse in First-Year Writing and Mathematics Courses at a Broad

Access University

Claire Boeck
April 21, 2023

Executive Summary

- Instructors and students had similar definitions of a Good Student
- Learning was more emphasized in math instructors' Good Student Discourse (GSD) than in writing instructors' GSD
- Instructors employed several strategies for communicating their Good Student Discourse
- Students thought that being a Good Student might not lead to high grades because natural ability is an influential factor on academic outcomes
- Some instructors thought that students could get high grades without being Good Students because of course placement issues; others thought that being a Good Student might not result in a high grade because of variety in instructors' grading practices and assessment type
- Some instructors, mostly mathematics instructors, expressed concern that students could get high grades without learning course content
- Students appreciated their instructors; they described them as caring and helpful

Study Purpose

The first year of college period has important implications for students' well-being, sense of belonging, and academic outcomes (e.g., Bowman et al., 2019; Harper & Newman, 2016; Yee, 2016). Instructors can play an important role in students' transitions to college by explaining academic expectations (Collier & Morgan, 2008) or validating students' abilities (Hallett et al., 2020; Rendón, 1994, 2002). What is missing from our current understanding of instructors' roles in first-year students' transition to college is consideration of the instructors' beliefs about *what* students should do and why. In other words, what does a Good Student do? In

addition, students have their own beliefs and experiences regarding what students should do, which may not align with the instructor's (Yee, 2016). Thus, I address the questions:

1. What is the Good Student Discourse of students and instructors in first-year mathematics and writing courses at a broad access university?
   a. What factors do instructors and students perceive as influences on their Good Student Discourse (GSD)?
   b. What role does GSD play in instructors' implementation of course policies, if any?
   c. How do instructors and students relate being a Good Student and being academically successful?

Conceptual Framework

I used Michel Foucault's (1969/2010, 1970/1981) poststructuralist conceptualization of discourse as a set of statements expressing ideas about what is true and judgements about desirable/undesirable values and behaviors. Discourse is a tool of power as it can influence and categorize individuals and can be distributed by and embodied in social institutions, such as schools and prisons. I define Good Student Discourse (GSD) as any statements or actions that describe characteristics or behaviors, both desirable and undesirable, as well as actions that communicate certain behaviors or characteristics are valued (e.g., course policies). I am using a critical theoretical lens (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994/2011; Martínez-Alemán, 2015) to interrogate assumptions of normativity in what defines a Good Student.

Data and Methods

The data sources for the study are classroom observations, interviews with instructors and students, surveys with students, and course announcements. All data come from six mathematics courses and five first-year writing courses, totaling to 11 instructor and 49 student participants. I collected data at a broad access four-year public university. I engaged in several rounds of coding to identify dimensions and themes of GSD and triangulate across data sources.

Findings

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There were similarities between instructors' Good Student Discourse (GSD) and students' GSD, with both groups raising critiques about the universality of some of the criteria for being a Good Student and questioning if being a Good Student results in obtaining a high grade in the course. I identified four dimensions in instructors' definitions of a Good Student: *engages during class, puts effort and attention towards coursework, communicates with the instructor,* and *strives to learn (math)*. The last dimension was predominantly discussed among math instructors. Writing instructors emphasized investing effort to complete assignments compared to mathematics instructors who emphasized a Good Student invests effort to understand course concepts. All instructors discussed their approaches to create conditions that support students' enactment of GSD dimensions, including offering multiple options for students to participate in class and how they use extensions on assignments, verbal praise, or grades on assignments as rewards. They also noted how they wanted to be considerate of students' circumstances (e.g., having to work at a paid job) and did not always implement course policies listed in the syllabus, such as deductions for late work or absences. Instructors identified their experiences as a student, as an instructor, and pedagogical resources as influences on their definitions of a Good Student. They did not want to repeat harmful GSD they experienced when they were students, such as discourses that discouraged seeking help. Some instructors argued that criteria for being a Good Student are subjective and discussed how their previous assumption of participating in class being an indicator of a Good Student had been challenged. Overall, instructors conveyed care and concern for supporting students.

I identified five dimensions of being a Good Student in students' GSD: *attends and focuses during class, pushes self for academic success, seeks academic help, manages time and coursework,* and *takes care of self.* The last dimension attends to the household chores and health

habits a Good Student does outside of the classroom. All the students said the GSD they were hearing in college was not new information but that it was just the first time they had to implement it. Several students described their high school as having low expectations of students, because they could get good grades with minimal effort or attention. These findings highlight that, contrary to other research (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Karp & Bork, 2014), lack of information about what is expected of them in college is not an influence on students' transition to college. Students discussed feeling they were not Good Students when they waited until the last minute to start an assignment, put minimal effort into an assignment, and missed or did not focus during class. Students even discussed feeling guilty when they did not meet their definition of a Good Student, highlighting how important being a Good Student is to them. The students reported parents, siblings, high school peers, and high school teachers who had high expectations and confidence in them were significant influences on their definitions of a Good Student. Students were inspired by peers and family members who worked hard to overcome challenges and viewed siblings' or parents' educational difficulties as cautionary tales.

This study shows how students and instructors are critical of assumptions regarding what it means to be a Good Student and how the educational system, including assessment practices, can prevent a Good Student from being academically successful. Several students said that natural ability at taking tests or in a particular subject might be a reason why Good Students are not academically successful. Students argued that even though a high grade is not a guaranteed outcome of enacting Good Student behaviors, it is important to be a Good Student anyway to learn skills that are important for their academic and career futures and because they do not want to waste time or money. Instructors also discussed how a student can get a high grade in a class without being a Good Student because they were placed in a class below their skill level. Some

instructors explained that being a Good Student might not always result in a good grade for the student because even though they consider effort into students' grades, other instructors might have different grading practices; this was more common among writing instructors. Others—mostly mathematics instructors—defined academic success as learning and expressed concern that students could get high grades without learning the course content because they can "play the game" of school (e.g., turning in assignments on time, attending class).

These findings contribute to our understanding of what is communicated to first-year students about being a Good Student as well as what ideas they bring with them to college. One meaningful difference between the GSD of students and instructors is that instructors viewed themselves as the main resource for students, but students described peers and tutors as options when seeking help. Students also argued that attending office hours should not be a criterion for being a Good Student because questions can be addressed more conveniently through other means, such as emailing the instructor or asking a friend. The finding that so many students believed that natural ability plays a determining role in their academic outcome, even if they enact Good Student behaviors, suggests there is an opportunity for instructors to connect with and support students. For example, instructors could assure students how their class is structured to support and reward Good Student behaviors and learning, not to reward natural ability. Instructors could take a step further to problematize and discuss systemic socioeconomic inequities that have resulted in education achievement gaps (inequitable funding for schools, curriculum that is not appropriate for all student identities, insufficient training and support for teachers, biased standardized tests); doing so might challenge myths of natural ability. In addition, the finding that writing instructors placed more emphasis on devoting effort to assignments but little discussion of Good Students striving to learn might be an opportunity for

first-year writing instructors to consider how learning is incorporated into their communications to students about what they should be doing and why.

Though this was not part of the study, I also want to share that all of the students appreciated their instructors. Students said they felt their instructors cared about them and were understanding of their circumstances. Even when students did not enjoy or have interest in the course material, they still had high regard for their instructors.

Appendix M: Sunny's Dissertation Chapter

Note: My cat Sunny really wanted to contribute to this dissertation. He was very insistent at times; he even got pretty good at locking my touchpad, changing my display settings, and switching my keyboard so each letter was a shortcut to an app on my computer. I think it is only right that what he wanted to share is included, even if we cannot understand his language.

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