Composing Facebook:

Digital Literacy and Incoming Writing Transfer in First-Year Composition

by

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ABSTRACT

Most new first-year composition (FYC) students already have a great deal of writing experience. Much of this experience comes from writing in digital spaces, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. This type of writing is often invisible to students: they may not consider it to be *writing* at all. This dissertation seeks to better understand the actual connections between writing in online spaces and writing in FYC, to see the connections students see between these types of writing, and to work toward a theory for making use of those connections in the FYC classroom. The following interconnected articles focus specifically on Facebook—the largest and most ubiquitous social network site (SNS)— as a means to better understand students' digital literacy practices.

Initial data was gathered through a large-scale survey of FYC students about their Facebook use and how they saw that use as connected to composition and writing. Chapter 1 uses the data to suggest that FYC students are not likely to see a connection between Facebook and FYC but that such a connection exists. The second chapter uses the same data to demonstrate that men and women are approaching Facebook slightly differently and to explore what that may mean for FYC teachers. The third chapter uses 10 one-on-one interviews with FYC students to further explore Facebook literacies. The interviews suggest that the literacy of Facebook is actually quite complex and includes many modes of communication in addition to writing, such as pictures, links, and "likes." The final chapter explores the issue of transfer. While transfer is popular in composition literature, studies tend to focus on forward-reading and not backward-reaching transfer.

This final chapter stresses the importance of this type of transfer, especially when looking back at digital literacy knowledge that students have gained through writing online.

While these articles are intended as stand-alone pieces, together they demonstrate the complex nature of literacies on Facebook, how they connection to FYC, and how FYC teachers may use them in their classrooms. They serve as a starting off point for discussions of effective integration of digital literacies into composition pedagogies.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital writing is a nearly ubiquitous part of everyday life. In fact, digital writing is so ingrained into the writing process that it is now hard to imagine a type of public writing that is not digital for *at least* part of the process. As scholars, we are continually touched by the digital in the editing and publishing process. Our students are no different. Digital writing is a major part of their lives—both formally and informally. Many students have been writing for years before entering their first college writing classes. They write emails, send text messages, and post on social media on a nearly daily basis.

This digital writing is important, and this has been acknowledged by the field. For example, the CCCC Position Statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments states that the "focus of writing instruction is expanding: the curriculum of composition is widening to include not one but two literacies: a literacy of print and a literacy of the screen." The authors state that "work in one medium is used to enhance learning in the other" and that composition scholars "can expect the variety of digital compositions to continue proliferating" (CCCC, 2004). As Yancey (2004) points out, "Never before have the technologies of writing contributed so quickly to the creation of new genres" (p. 298). She makes it very clear that writing both inside and outside of the academy is important to student learning: "This is composition—*and* this is the *content* of composition" (p. 308; emphasis in original). Yancey makes it very clear when she states that "We have a moment" (p. 297), by which she means that we now have an

opportunity to take ownership of these types of writing and to create a new type of composition—one broader and more relevant to our students.

Scholars have taken up this "moment" and shown an interest in digital writing that can be seen in the field's interest in blogs over the past decade. Journals such as *Computers & Composition*, *Pedagogy*, *Journal of Basic Writing*, *Technical Communication*, and many others have published dozens of articles about the importance of digital writing on blogs—often the scholars are directly connecting blogs to writing in first-year composition. Far less attention has been paid to the other types of digital writing that students do: writing for social network sites (SNSs) and other social media. This writing is far more ubiquitous among college students than blogs but may receive less attention because the connections to academic writing are often less immediately clear.

Many people may not see writing done in social media contexts *as writing*, and therefore, they may overlook what can be learned from writing in digital contexts. Both composition faculty and composition students alike may see this writing as something else: "conversation," "communication," or "networking" to name a few things. Too often, this writing is not acknowledged as an important part of students' writing lives. Composition scholars must make an effort to incorporate this type of digital writing into what we do in composition studies. It is an important part of the "literacy of the screen," an equally important part of literacy learning to the more traditional "literacy of print" (CCCC, 2004).

Learning to write is a process—one that begins long before students enter FYC and one that continues long after they've completed the course. It is important for composition faculty to understand what students already know about writing—and help students to access that knowledge—as they enter FYC. Accessing this knowledge may prove to be difficult, but as students learn to access this knowledge, they can also learn from the practices they have taken part in as part of their digital writing and may even be able to learn to encounter future writing challenges with more mindfulness and preparation. Digital writing can serve as an example of how to engage in writing across various contexts—both inside and outside of the academy.

This is why the writing on SNSs is particularly important: it is common, simple, and important to our students. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and many other SNS platforms have become part of our students' everyday lives—and a great deal of writing takes place in these spaces. Facebook, in particular, is an especially strong force in the lives of our students. Facebook has nearly "a billion monthly active users" (Facebook, 2013), and some scholars have estimates that nearly 99% of college students use the social network (Junco, 2012).

Research on Facebook and other SNSs has become increasingly common in recent years. Many scholars in composition studies have explored the social network from both theoretical and pedagogical perspectives (Vie, 2008; Fife, 2010; Maranto & Barton, 2010; DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; Balzhiser, 2011; DePew, 2011; Reid, 2011; Shih, 2011; Buck, 2012; Briggs, 2013; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013; Alberti, 2013).

No scholars, however, have looked at data on how students are writing on Facebook or on how students perceive that writing and its connections to FYC.

While the chapters of this dissertation are intended to be separate and stand-alone articles, all of the chapters are connected by the question of how digital literacies fit into the larger process of learning to write. The first three chapters specifically explore the literacies of Facebook and their connection to first-year composition. Those chapters seek to answer the following research questions:

- Do FYC students see a connection between their SNS use and writing done in the composition classroom?
- In what ways do students enact ideas taught in the FYC classroom in their SNS use?
- What are the actual literacy practices that composition students engage in when using Facebook in their daily lives?
- How do these students see these literacy practices in relation to their work in the composition classroom?

The final chapter of this manuscript was intended to approach digital writing and the questions above from a different perspective: to look at student writing from the perspective of knowledge transfer and learn how students may apply what they had learned about writing in SNSs to FYC. However, as research for that chapter continued, it became clear that very little research had dealt with knowledge transfer *into* FYC. The chapter was refocused to explore "incoming writing transfer" more broadly—with the plan that incoming *digital* writing transfer would be explored in more depth in future articles.

It is important to understand the types of writing that students are doing, but it is equally important to understand how what students already know about writing may be used in FYC classes. The concept of knowledge transfer is useful in understanding how writing-related knowledge may be used across more than one writing context. Like digital writing and SNSs, knowledge transfer has also become a topic of considerable importance in composition studies in the last several years. Hints of the importance of knowledge transfer to composition studies can be seen as far back as McCarthy (1987) and Russell (1995), but the concept did not receive wide-spread attention until more recently with the work of Smit (2004), Wardle (2007), and Beaufort (2007).

Many other scholars have followed and made knowledge transfer a common topic in composition literature (Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Rounsaville, Goldberg, & Bawarshi, 2008; Wardle, 2009; Driscoll, 2011; Nowacek, 2011; Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011; Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Robertson, Taczak, & Yancey, 2012). Many of these scholars focus on what transfers *out of* FYC into future writing contexts. In other words, they focus on forward-reaching, high road transfer (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). But few of these scholars focus on what knowledge might be usefully transferred *into* FYC. They neglect the other side of the coin of high-road transfer: backward-reaching, high-road transfer (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). This oversight is truly unfortunate, as backward-reaching transfer may actually help to facilitate forward-reaching transfer—and may help students to more easily transfer writing-related knowledge out of FYC into future writing contexts.

By first understanding what students know about writing and better understanding how they engage in writing in various contexts, composition faculty and writing program administrators can work toward assisting students in the use of this writing-related knowledge both in FYC and in future writing contexts.

Overview of Chapters

The remainder of this manuscript is divided into four separate and stand-alone articles, but there are many connections between the chapters that lead to an exploration of the main question at stake in this text: How can digital writing be effectively incorporated into FYC to facilitate deeper writing knowledge and application of that knowledge?

The first chapter of this manuscript is titled "FB in FYC: Facebook Use Among First-Year Composition Students." Data collection for this chapter began in the fall semester of 2011. A survey with over 80 items was sent to FYC students at Arizona State University and other institutions across the United States. A total of 474 FYC students completed the survey. Survey questions asked students about their experiences with Facebook, how they were using the SNS, and how they perceived writing on Facebook as being related to writing in FYC.

The chapter begins with a broad overview of the survey data. These data suggest that students tend not to see the connections between Facebook and composition. However, based on other answers given in the survey, many connections seem to exist between writing in the two contexts. In particular, FYC students are very aware of audience and purpose when posting on Facebook. Many students are engaging in

invention practices as they wrote on Facebook as well. And a small but significant number of students are actually engaging in process writing strategies as they post on Facebook. Making students aware of the connections between their writing on Facebook and their writing in FYC classes may help students to more easily use what they have learned writing in digital spaces in their FYC classes.

Chapter 2 is titled " Gender Difference in Digital Composition: Facebook Use across Gender Among FYC Students." The chapter draws on the same survey data as Chapter 1, but in this chapter, the results of the survey are analyzed across gender. Gender proved to be the most statistically significant factor in predicting survey responses. This suggests that not only is gender an important factor in the study of digital writing, but it also suggests that composition faculty need to be mindful of individual differences when encouraging students to learn about digital writing.

Chapter 3 is titled "The Literacy of Facebook." The chapter looks much more specifically at the literacy practices of FYC students on Facebook. The data for this chapter comes from one-on-one interviews with FYC students about their Facebook use. The interviews were followed by observations of the participants engaging in a "typical" Facebook session as they talked aloud about what they were doing and why. The results demonstrate that writing is actually only a small part of the literacies on Facebook—with images and other modes of communication taking a more central role in Facebook literacy. This suggests that Facebook is a useful example of a multimodal composition and may help students to contextualize multimodal compositions into a productive writing context.

But these data also have a larger implication. “The literacy of the screen” has often been treated as something separate from “the literacy of print” (CCCC, 2004). This has often meant that the literacy of the screen gets neglected or “grafted” onto projects meant to focus on print literacies (Froehlich & Froehlich, 2013). The data in this chapter are used to suggest the importance of digital literacies—not as something *in addition to* the main curriculum of FYC, but as something that is an integral part of composition studies. “The literacy of the screen” should not be separated out from “the literacy of print.” Both should be understood as part of the same “literacies” that are always complex and situationally dependent.

The final chapter is titled " Incoming Writing Transfer: Using Prior Writing Knowledge in FYC.” This chapter does not focus on Facebook or other digital writing specifically but on prior writing knowledge more broadly. In the chapter, the concept of knowledge transfer is explored in detail with a particular focus on the concept of "backward-reaching, high-road transfer." While high-road transfer is a common subject of composition articles, the vast majority of articles overlook backward-reaching transfer in favor of forward-reaching transfer. But both types of transfer are important to student learning and retention of writing-related knowledge. Students must engage in incoming writing transfer in order productively learn how what they have learned from writing experiences before FYC, such as writing in digital spaces, may be applied to current and future writing situations. This engagement with prior writing knowledge can also serve as an example of how students can engage in backward-reaching, high-road transfer when they encounter unfamiliar writing situations after they have left FYC.

Engaging in backward-reaching, high-road transfer can also help to demonstrate a larger truth about learning to write. Learning to write is an ongoing process. It begins before students enter FYC classes and continues long after those students have left FYC. Facilitating backward-reaching transfer may help students to see the importance of drawing on prior writing knowledge when entering new writing situations. It make help students to see composition classes as a step in the ongoing process of learning about writing—and not as a separate writing context, divorced from writing contexts that came before and after.

While these four chapters are separate and stand-alone articles, research from each chapter connects to and reinforms research in others. The survey data used in Chapters 1 and 2 helped to inform the interview questions asked of students as data was gathered for Chapter 3. The data gathered from the interviews, in turn, helped to recontextualize and clarify some of the answers given in the survey data. And both the survey data and the interview data helped to draw out questions of application that led to the exploration of knowledge transfer in Chapter 4. As a whole, this manuscript begins to answer how digital writing can be used effectively in FYC classes to encourage students to gain a deeper sense of their own writing knowledge and how they might apply that knowledge in FYC classes and future writing contexts.

FACEBOOK USE AMONG FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION STUDENTS

Many instructors in composition have expressed interest in Facebook and other social network sites (SNSs) in both journals related to composition and conferences devoted to the subject (Vie, 2008; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Balzhiser et al., 2011; Reid, 2011; Buck, 2012). However, there has not been a study systematically exploring how students perceive composing practices on SNSs. In order to have a more grounded approach to the use of SNSs in the composition classroom, it is necessary to look more practically and realistically at how SNSs are used by composition students and how this intersects with the work being done in FYC. We as composition instructors need to take a hard look at where we are before we begin to look at where we can go.

To this end, it is necessary to explore the following questions: Do FYC students see a connection between their SNS use and writing done in the composition classroom? What literacy practices are FYC students actually taking part in on SNSs? In what ways do students enact ideas taught in the FYC classroom in their SNS use?

In order to answer these questions, I have developed a survey of first-year composition students about their use of the most widely used SNS today: Facebook. Facebook had more than "a billion monthly active users as of December 2012" (Facebook, 2013), making it by far the largest SNS in use today. According to Duggan and Brenner (2013), 67% of internet users use Facebook and 86% of internet users aged

18-29 have a profile. Facebook is particularly popular among college students, with some estimates that as high as 99% have a profile (Junco, 2012).

The survey, which was completed by 474 students from various institutions across the United States, explores students' attitudes toward writing, their activities on Facebook, and the intersections that students see between Facebook and FYC. The survey results suggest that students are not likely to see Facebook as related to FYC, but they are enacting several skills commonly associated with composition classes in their Facebook use, such as audience awareness, awareness of the rhetorical situation, invention, and process writing. Facebook may prove to be a very useful tool in demonstrating applications of skills typically learned in first-year composition classes to other writing contexts.

Review of Literature

There has been a great deal of research exploring Facebook usage among university students, including several studies specifically aimed at linking Facebook and education. A small number of studies have even linked Facebook or SNS use to composition, although these studies tended to approach the subject from a pedagogical and often somewhat anecdotal standpoint, exploring composition classroom practices using SNS but not really gathering data about how SNSs are used (Fife, 2010; Balzhiser et al., 2011). These studies help to show the value of Facebook as a demonstration of a composing space.

Facebook and Education

There is a wealth of literature outside of composition studies that proves relevant to this study. These studies primarily focus on answering questions about how and why university students tend to use SNSs. This research is largely situated in the fields of either communication or education. Most of the current literature related to SNSs begins with boyd and Ellison's (2007) study, in which social network sites were defined. The definitions provided in this study serve as a starting point for all research to come after. The discussion of SNSs continues into Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe's (2007) discussion of social capital on Facebook. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2011) continued this exploration of social capital. In both of their studies, Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe explored university students' SNS practices but focused on the social aspects and not the writing taking place on the sites. These studies demonstrate the social benefit of Facebook to university students. Such a benefit may help to explain why students engage in certain literacy practices on Facebook. Many other studies also have dealt with university students but have tended to focus on identity and/or privacy. For example, Boon and Sinclair (2009) explored identity in relation to engagement in the classroom and potential pitfalls that come with Facebook use, such as "difficulties in engagement, the effects on identity, an emphasis on superficial issues, lack of coherence, and problems with authenticity and trust" (p. 99). Peluchette and Karl (2010) explored identity in a very different way. They explored students' intended images on Facebook and methods students use to project identity. Peluchette and Karl's study informed many of the questions used to produce this study. Kolek and Saunders (2008) primarily looked at

what students choose to disclose on Facebook and the implications this information may have. Read (2006) similarly looked at online disclosure and privacy, and his study was one of the earliest scholarly articles to explicitly mention Facebook use in relation to college students. Identity and privacy are popular themes in relation to SNSs and, certainly, those themes have influenced this study. None of these articles, however, mentions writing or composition directly—instead focusing on Facebook use more generally—nor do any of them explore student perceptions of Facebook.

Hew (2011) gave a useful overview of research done on Facebook as it connects to education. He explored several studies dealing with university students, education, and Facebook. He found that the studies generally deal with friending, privacy, and disclosure, and found that "Facebook thus far has very little educational use" (p. 662). None of the studies mentioned in Hew's overview related directly to composition.

Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, and Witty (2010) also looked into uses of Facebook by university students and faculty. Their study, however, focused mostly on differences between faculty and student use and preferred modes of communication. Junco (2012) looked at student use as well and related it to engagement with classroom and university activities. His study has some overlap with the data presented below. The most notable connection is in relation to student Facebook use as it relates to engagement in the classroom. However, the primary focus of the article was on student outcomes in general and no mention was made of composition (or any other specific class or class activity) in particular.

Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, and Macgill (2008) had the clearest connection to the results of this research. In their study, they found that their subjects did not think of Facebook as connected to academic writing. The survey below clarifies that this is also the case for university students and FYC in particular and offers considerably more detail on both what these connections are and why students may not be seeing them.

While the data above provide useful information about Facebook, SNSs, and writing, none provide clear assessment of student attitudes toward Facebook and composition, nor do they address possible connections between student activity on Facebook and activities common in the composition classroom. Instead, they provide a strong backing of issues related to Facebook use, such as definitions for SNSs, the importance of social capital, and the expression of identity and privacy concerns.

Facebook and Composition

There are also several studies that connect SNSs and composition directly. Vie (2008) took a critical look at SNS use, encouraging composition instructors not to ignore SNSs. Maranto and Barton (2010) discussed the implications of instructors attempting to use Facebook in the writing classroom and possible privacy concerns this may cause. Fife (2010) explored Facebook as a possible means of teaching rhetorical analysis. Shih (2011) provided a great deal of useful data about using Facebook for writing instruction and peer review with second-language writers. And Reid (2011) explored pedagogical practices that Facebook facilitates in the composition classroom. Balzhiser et al. (2011) provided possibly the most extensive study of Facebook in the composition classroom.

Their study followed students from 2006-2009 as they took part in a Facebook-focused curriculum. Like Fife (2010) Shih (2011), Balzhiser et al. (2011) provided a look at how the literacy practices of Facebook may be used as an instructional tool to teach skills inside the writing classroom. These studies each focus on a single assignment or closely-related series of assignments using Facebook. The purpose of this study is not only to justify classroom practices such as these but also to provide a framework for even more in-depth use of Facebook in composition classes. The use of Facebook as a demonstration of writing practices in use may help to connect writing practices learned in composition classes to writing practices in other contexts.

One study that provides a connection between the out-of-class practices on SNSs to those in composition is Buck's (2012) exploration of literacy practices on Facebook. Buck explored the literacy practices of one specific student named Ronnie. She did not tie these practices directly to FYC, per se, but instead called for a greater exploration of SNS literacy practices. She stated that "Viewing this rich literate activity as part of students' everyday lives will give us a greater understanding of the literacy experiences they bring with them to the classroom" (p. 35). That is something that this study seeks to do more directly.

Methods

Development of the survey questionnaire began in the fall of 2010 and the instrument was piloted in a two phase process. During phase one, initial questionnaire items were designed based on my early research questions and perceived gaps in the

scholarly literature. These questionnaire items were reviewed by three prominent scholars in composition studies, including a scholar with expertise in social network sites and the writing programs administrator of my institution. These scholars reviewed the items to confirm content and face validity. After IRB approval, this first set of questionnaire items was piloted with 30 students. This pilot questionnaire was piloted in the spring of 2011 and was designed with 28 closed-ended, mostly Likert-scale items and 12 open-ended questions. This set of items was designed to help gather information for the design of the full-scale survey. Many of the answers from the open-ended questions in particular were used to develop later closed-ended, Likert-scale items for the full-scale questionnaire.

After the data from the first phase of the pilot was analyzed, the second phase of the pilot began. A revised set of questionnaire items was developed based on answers given in phase one. These items were again reviewed by practicing scholars with expertise in composition and social network sites. This new set of questions was then presented to a small group of first-year composition students. I sat beside the students as they completed the questionnaire and asked them questions about what they thought that the items meant and what their answers indicated. Based on these interviews, questions were further adjusted for clarity and to better meet the goals of the questionnaire.

The full-scale questionnaire administration ran from September 14 to October 23 of 2011 after a second IRB review. This revised questionnaire (see Appendix A) contained 83 items, the majority of which were closed-ended items with responses on a Likert scale, but there were also seven open-ended questions in which students were

encouraged to expand upon answers to the other items.[1] The questionnaire data were collected through a popular online survey tool (SurveyGizmo.com). Links to the survey were sent to first-year composition students both within my own institution through the composition teachers' email list and outside of my institution through national listservs and contacts that I have at other institutions. Students who participated in the survey were anonymously entered into a raffle in which 3 $25 Amazon gift cards and 1 Amazon Kindle were given out as prizes. In the end, 474 students responded. The vast majority of respondents were from large, doctoral-granting institutions (75.05%) and nearly all of the respondents attended public institutions (92.54%).

Of the total respondents, 64.35% were 18 years old. All of them were currently enrolled in a first-year composition course, and most of the students (75.3%) were in their first semester at university and their first composition course (75.9%). The majority of the students were taking the first part of a two-part composition sequence or a stand-alone composition class (55.84%), but there were also substantial numbers from the second part of a two-part sequence (22.29%) or an accelerated or honors composition course (14.07%). An additional 4.93% were seeking honors credit for a non-honors version of the course. 93.2% of the students considered English to be their only language or one of their primary languages.

[1] Not all of items from the questionnaire will be addressed in this paper, as some items do not relate directly to the research questions explored here. Forthcoming results will only explore those questionnaire items that have a direct bearing on those research questions. Future research will address other items from the questionnaire.

Simple descriptive statistics were derived using SurveyGizmo.com. Additional statistics were derived using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 20. All group comparisons were made using chi-squared tests except where noted otherwise.

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore if students see a connection between Facebook and composition, find out how they are using Facebook, and see how their usage of Facebook ties in to practices commonly taught in the composition class. Results suggest that Facebook may be a useful tool in demonstrating applications of skills learned in the first-year composition classroom.

Connection between Facebook and Composition

I began the analysis of the data by considering the first and most pressing of my research questions: Do first-year composition students see a connection between their Facebook use and writing done in the composition classroom? To answer this question, I looked at the answers to two items from the survey. The first (item 46 in the Appendix A) was "Which of the following activities do you consider to be a type of 'composition'?" (see Table 1). Students were encouraged to "check all that apply." Three results are of particular interest to this research question: "Writing a comment online (on Facebook, YouTube, or a different website)," "Making status updates and wall posts on Facebook," and "Making a profile on Facebook." Of the total, 24.9%, 22.4%, and 21.9% of students, respectively, considered each of these activities to be a type of composition. These three choices were the bottom 3 among the options, falling well below the next lowest options,

"Manipulating a photograph" (36.8%), "Making a PowerPoint presentation" (54.3%), and "Creating an artistic work" (57.8%).

The other item from the survey (item 48 in the Appendix A) that could illuminate this research question was: "I consider my activity (wall posts, comments, links, etc.) on Facebook to be a kind of" (see Table 2). Students were again encouraged to select all answers that applied. The answer "Composition" was selected by 16.4% of respondents. The only response that fell below "Composition" was "Formal writing" at 13%. The responses that received the highest percentages for this question were "Informal writing" (81.7%) and "Conversation" (72.5%).

Table 1

Which of the following activities do you consider to be a type of 'composition'?"

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Writing an essay for class	430	98.2%
Making a PowerPoint presentation	238	54.3%
Writing privately (in a journal, diary, or elsewhere)	334	76.3%
Writing publicly (in a newspaper, magazine, or elsewhere	392	89.5%
Writing on your own website (my blog or personal webpage)	308	70.3%
Making a comment online (on Facebook, YouTube, or a different website)	109	24.9%
Making status updates or wall posts on Facebook	98	22.4%
Making a profile on Facebook	96	21.9%
Creating an artistic work	253	57.8%
Taking a photograph	184	42%
Manipulating a photograph (making a photo collage, adding text to a photo, etc.)	161	36.8%
Total respondents	438	100%

Table 2

I consider my activity (wall posts, comments, links, etc.) on Facebook to be a kind of:

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Informal writing	353	81.7%
Formal writing	56	13%
Persuasive writing	101	23.4%
Composition	71	16.4%
Conversation	313	72.5%
Argument	132	30.6%
Total respondents	432	100%

While most demographic and background data did not have a significant relationship to the answers to items 46 and 48, two factors did: students' attitudes toward writing and students' perceived writing ability. Item 10 asked students to "Describe your general attitude toward writing" (see Table 3). A chi-square comparison of students who stated that they did like writing versus those who did not showed that students were significantly more likely, $\chi^2(1, N=438)=5.24$, $p=.022$, to select "Composition" as something that they considered their Facebook activity to be if they said that they liked writing than if they said that they did not like writing. A total of 17.76% of students who liked writing selected "Composition," whereas only 6.94% of students who did not like writing did so. As shown in Table 4, students were significantly more likely, $\chi^2(1, N=441)=10.57$, $p=.001$, to select "Composition" in item 48 if they considered themselves to be good writers (20% of whom selected "Composition") than if they considered themselves mediocre or poor writers (7.8%).

There was also a significant difference $\chi^2(1, N=439)=4.14$, $p=.042$, in the responses to item 48 based on students' perception of their time on Facebook. About

Table 3

Describe your general attitude toward writing

	Number of students	Number who considered Facebook to be composition	Percentage who considered Facebook to be composition
Students who liked writing	366	65	17.76%
Students who did not like writing	72	5	6.94%

Table 4

Describe your perception of your writing ability

	Number of students	Number who considered Facebook to be composition	Percentage who considered Facebook to be composition
Students who considered themselves good writers	300	60	20%
Students who considered themselves mediocre or poor writers	141	11	7.8%

one-fifth (20.44%) of students who believed they spent an appropriate amount of time or too little time on Facebook saw Facebook as composition, whereas only 13.18% of students who believed they spent too much time on Facebook saw Facebook as composition.

Additionally, there are two significant findings between variables that came up in other areas. The 217 Students who stated they changed their profile to appear more marketable professionally were less likely to say that creating Facebook profiles was a kind of composition, $\chi^2(4, N=437)=9.86, p=.043$. And the 62 students who said they

always wrote status updates in their heads before posting were much more likely to say that Facebook and other online comments were a kind of composition, $\chi^2(4, N=440)=12.22, p=.016$.

How Students are Using Facebook

Instructors must understand how students are using Facebook if they hope to encourage the students to see a connection between writing practices on Facebook and writing practices win other contexts. With this in mind, I crafted a series of questions that allowed students to select which activities they participated in regularly on Facebook. The most common activities that students stated they participated in "about half the time" or more when they used Facebook were "Posting responses to friends' comments or links" (72.2%), "Chat" (66.2%), and "Reading friends' pages" (60%), while the least common activities were "Using non-game Facebook applications" (6.8%), "Playing Facebook Games" (12%), and "Reading fan pages" (16.1%). The remaining activities ("Making status updates," "Posting media content on your own wall," "Posting media content on friends' walls," and "Posting self-made media content") all fell within the range of 22% to 34% of students doing those activities about half the time or more when they used Facebook. I also allowed students to write in additional activities that they often did on Facebook. Among the write-in activities, the most common were private messaging and looking at photos (19.35% and 16.13% of write-ins, respectively).

How Students Enact Composition Skills on Facebook

Despite students being hesitant to classify activity on Facebook as being related to composition, students often enacted skills that are commonly taught in the composition classroom. For example, students were very aware of audience on Facebook. A total of 84.6% of respondents said that they at least agreed somewhat with the statement "I consider how people reading my profile will react when putting information in the 'info' tab in my profile," and 70.2% said that at least agreed somewhat with the statement that they "intentionally chose not to include certain information" in the info tab due to "how others might perceive it." There was a less strong reaction to the item asking whether or not they considered "other people's reactions before choosing to 'like' something" (53.4% agreed at least somewhat).

Additionally, 87.6% of students said that they adjusted their privacy settings. This goes quite contrary to some previous research[2] and may be due to heightened publicity about issues related to privacy on Facebook. Furthermore, 36.2% of students said that they even adjusted their privacy settings to exclude people whom they have friended on Facebook. By far the most common reason given for this in the write-in follow-up question was that they did not want their families to see certain things on that they had posted on Facebook (22.95% of the write-in responses, nearly double the next highest response).

As the questionnaire relates to audience awareness on Facebook, however, the most interesting result comes in the form of bivariate correlations between perceived and

[2] In Kolek and Saunders (2008), for example, they found that three-quarters of students had no privacy restrictions on their Facebook profiles.

imagined audiences. There were two questions on the questionnaire that related to audience. One asked students to guess how often they believed certain groups viewed their content. A later question asked students how often they had a certain group in mind when actually posting content. When these two groups of audiences were compared, each group showed a significant correlation ($p<.001$). If a student perceived a group as viewing their content often, they were more likely to have that same group in mind when posting content. That is to say that the audience addressed was often the same as the audience invoked (Ede & Lunsford, 1984). The strength of those correlations ranged from moderate to high based on the scale provided by Cohen (1988). The strength of the correlation was moderate for "Close friends," "Other Facebook 'friends'," "Recent acquaintances," and people who the students knew but who were not their Facebook 'friends" ($r=.335$, .347, .407, and .434, respectively). The correlation was strong for "Family," "Potential romantic partners," "Potential employers," and "Strangers" ($r=.569$, .692, .508, and .531, respectively).

There was also evidence suggesting that students were enacting invention practices on Facebook. When students could not post on Facebook immediately, 48.1% of students thought to themselves that they should post something later at least sometimes, and 56.4% of students thought about posting something on Facebook later but then decided not to actually post at least sometimes.

Many students engaged in drafting practices on Facebook as well. Nearly two-thirds of students said that they wrote Facebook posts in their heads before posting at least sometimes and 21.9% of students actually write Facebook posts down in a place

other than Facebook (albeit a bit more than half of those students, 56.1%, do this rarely). This coupled with the fact that 60% of students spend at least 30 seconds thinking about their posts before posting them (with 7.7% spending more than 3 minutes thinking about them) may suggest some awareness of writing process in Facebook posts.

Many students are also aware of the rhetorical situation in Facebook posts. A total of 55.7% of students at least somewhat agree that they "intentionally craft a certain image" of themselves in their profiles, with 64% of students saying they intentionally craft an image with the images they choose and 60.3% saying that they do so in written activity on Facebook.

Discussion

The primary implications of this survey seem to be that students do not see the activity that they do on Facebook as being related to activities in the composition classroom. However, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that there is, in fact, a connection. This leaves the door open for using Facebook as a tool to help teach students the connection and, therefore, bring an example of these skills into the classroom. Students seem to be very aware of their audience and the rhetorical situation, which has been suggested, but not specifically addressed, in previous research (Fife, 2010; Reid, 2011; Balzhiser et al., 2011; Peluchette & Karl, 2010). At least some students actively engage in invention practices when crafting Facebook posts, with a small but significant number going through the steps associated with the writing process when they post. I find it promising that students who always write their statuses in their heads before posting were much more likely to think of Facebook as composition. This implies an

association between critically thinking about public writing situations and a more broad definition of what composition may be. The knowledge gained from enacting these practices on Facebook may be seen as "preparation for future learning" (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999). Making students *aware* of that connection may help to facilitate knowledge transfer (James, 2008). A greater awareness of the kind of "incomes" (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011) to FYC presented above could be influential in student learning. A simple way to do so may be to offer students an assignment or short series of assignments that calls for them to analyze their Facebook activity or the Facebook activity of a friend rhetorically (as in Fife, 2010, or Balzhiser et al., 2012, for example). In my experience, students initially resist such an assignment but greatly enjoy it once they have overcome their initial aversion to thinking about Facebook as a rhetorical space.

Students who stated that they liked writing or considered themselves to be good writers were more likely to see Facebook as a kind of composition. I attribute this to a number of factors. I think it is likely that students who like writing or are good at writing probably are more likely to write informally outside of the classroom than those who do not like writing or consider themselves poor writers. This means that the students are less likely to associate writing with a school activity, and thus might be more open to other interpretations of what "writing" and "composition" outside of the classroom may be. These students could be what Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) refer to as "boundary crossers." These are students who are more likely to break down genre knowledge and apply it to other genres—applying genre knowledge from Facebook to FYC, for example.

I find it a bit puzzling that students were more likely to consider "Manipulating a photograph," "Making a PowerPoint presentation," or "Creating an artistic work" to be composition yet not consider Facebook comments, profiles, or wall posts to be composition. Perhaps the fact that many students considered Facebook to be "conversation" suggests that they associate Facebook more strongly with oral than written language, and thus do not consider it in the realm of "composition." But the high number of students that consider Facebook to be "Informal writing" further muddies this point. I believe that this suggests that students have two definitions of "composition": one is a very specific, school-based definition in which "composition" is only formal writing. The other is a very broad, non-school-based definition that includes art and design. Facebook seems to fall into neither of these categories very well for this group of students.

An alternate explanation for the high numbers for photographs, PowerPoints, and artistic works may be that composition teachers have done a better job of integrating visual rhetoric instruction into their classrooms than they have integrating rhetorics of digital media. Multimodal composition has become increasingly common in composition classes in recent years (see, for example, Selfe, 2007). Perhaps an integration of various modes aside from alphabetic text has encouraged students to see things such as photographs and PowerPoints as composition. But the rhetorics of online digital spaces are less commonly integrated into composition classrooms, which may account for students being less likely to see them as composition.

It is hard to tell if either (or both) of the above explanations has influenced student answers. It is clear, however, that many students define composition as something more than alphabetic texts but not including Facebook. Where this line falls and why students are making this distinction may be hard to discern without additional research.

Limitations

As with any study, this research has several limitations. The largest limitation is the representativeness of the sample. While these results may apply to students at large, public research universities, there is not enough data to suggest whether or not these results would also apply to students enrolled at institutions such as community colleges or smaller private schools. While there is no evidence to suggest these data *would not* apply to those groups, additional data may confirm or refute the conclusions for students at these types of institutions. The sample also seemingly over-represents honors students (15%)[3] while under-representing non-native English speakers (only 6.8% of respondents did not consider English their primary language).[4]

This study also does not address issues of race, class, or income as associated with Facebook and composition. The digital divide discussed in many other scholarly works (Selfe & Hawisher, 2004; Baym, 2010; Zickuhr & Smith, 2013) may certainly affect answers to these questions and illuminate how various groups approach the connection between Facebook and composition differently. I suspect that an exploration of how the

[3] Honors students make up approximately 5% of the students at my institution according to the Honors College.

[4] Approximately 8.6% of the students at my institution sign up for first-year composition sections designed for non-native English speakers. This percentage does not take into account non-native speakers who sign up for mainstream sections of first-year composition.

digital divide affects students' perceptions of Facebook and composition would be a fruitful area of study.

Finally, there is the question of the self-reporting of data within the questionnaire. Answers to several of the items require some interpretation (although this has been minimized during phase two of the pilot questionnaire) and even very direct questions require students to think about activities to which they may not give much thought. Studies that use "think aloud" data gathering or screen-capture technology to more accurately represent actual Facebook usage may demonstrate whether or not students' self-reported data represents their actual usage. This type of study would likely offer great insights into students' Facebook composition processes.

Conclusions

Facebook can serve as a useful space in which students can visualize skills related to first-year composition. Further research can illuminate this connection and possible implications that this may have for composition pedagogy. In particular, studies developing knowledge transfer between digital spaces and the composition classroom could provide useful data on how skills students learn on SNSs might help them in first-year composition classes. Making students *aware* of the connection between Facebook and FYC may be a very positive step in helping to achieve this kind of transfer (James, 2008).

Despite the fact that students did not appear to see Facebook and first-year composition as being related, I find the results of this study very promising. Studies such as Depew's (2011) demonstrate the complex rhetorical moves that writing students make

in crafting and maintaining a Facebook profile. While the students might not be aware of the connection between Facebook and first-year composition, this study demonstrates that many student are, indeed, very aware of ideas such as audience awareness and awareness of rhetorical situation and may be enacting skills related to invention and process writing. Making students aware of how these skills relate to the first-year composition classroom may prove to be something very helpful for composition teachers.

MEN, WOMEN, AND WEB 2.0 WRITING:
GENDER DIFFERENCE IN FACEBOOK COMPOSING

Gender studies is an important part of the field of composition. Studies that deal with gender and writing have been very influential to the field (see Stenberg, 2013, for an overview). Gender and other aspects of identity are frequently mentioned in scholarship in computers and writing journals, and collections relevant to computers and writing often include several chapters related to gender (see, for example, Arola & Wysocki, 2012). In recent years, however, explorations of gender difference have tended to be integrated into larger arguments instead of being a separate subject of discussion. One consequence of this is that gender differences have not been explored in detail in computers and writing literature since the advent of Web 2.0. Multiple recent studies outside of composition studies have been able to show that there are several differences in the ways men and women use the internet (Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, & Schmitt, 2001; Carstensen, 2009; Hargittai, 2010; Hoy & Milne, 2010; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010), but few recent studies in composition studies take up this subject. A more detailed look at Web 2.0 technologies—such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Pinterest—may demonstrate that men and women are *composing* in different ways on these platforms and may serve to join the conversations of gender difference and composing in digital spaces.

Past work in composition studies and computers and writing scholarship has shown such a difference. Flynn (1988) pointed to the differences in composing practices between men and women 25 years ago in her article "Composing as a Woman." While

this article has occasionally been "criticized for being too essentialist, for suggesting that all women share a common essence" (Massey, 2003, p. 239), Flynn does point out ways in which gender might be a significant factor in how women and men approach composition, potentially contributing to patterns of difference in composing practices, even if individual women or men might not conform to a single gender stereotype. There may be reason to believe that differences in composing practices between men and women are common in online composing as well. This is supported by Hawisher and Selfe (2003) as they explore writing in distance learning classes. They found that men and women wrote differently as they approached the online composition assignments. Selfe and Hawisher (2004) again reiterated this point when they found that the women in their study tended to use computers for work-related activities whereas men more often used computers as "toys" (p. 219-220). Baym (2010) puts it very succinctly when she writes, "gender differences persist online" (p. 67). A return to questions of gender difference in how men and women are composing online may show that how such differences continue to persist and join these previous conversations. Such a return may also demonstrate how differences in identity construction more broadly affect the ways in which users compose in newer digital technologies.

This study looks at one particular online space to explore these potential differences across gender in composing practices online. The study draws on data from a 2011 survey of first-year composition (FYC) students about their Facebook use. This survey showed that male and female FYC students do not use Facebook in the same ways. This finding demonstrates the importance of gender when composing on Facebook, but it

also has two larger implications. The first is that research about Facebook and FYC may not be fully exploring aspects of identity and how these aspects shape composing practices when integrating social network sites (SNSs) into FYC classes. The second implication is that gender continues to be an important consideration when exploring composing done online. Future research may find it useful to consider gender specifically when looking at composing practices in Web 2.0 technologies.[5]

Composition scholars should draw on past scholarship to acknowledge the importance of composing practices in Web 2.0. In the data that follows, Facebook is used as an example of how gender may affect composing practices online.

The Importance of Facebook in FYC

Facebook is a ubiquitous communication medium for modern American students, much like telephones, email, chat, and cell phones have been in the past. Facebook has more than "a billion monthly active users" (Facebook, 2013), and some studies have suggested that as many as 99% of college students use Facebook (Junco, 2012). Considering the potential for Facebook as a rhetorical space, to overlook instructional possibilities for Facebook in FYC classes would be truly unfortunate (Vie, 2008; Buck, 2012; Patrick, 2013).

There is substantial reason to believe that Facebook can be an important tool in FYC classes. Facebook usage involves a number of literacy practices. These literacy

[5] It is important to note here that the results of this study are not meant to represent all men or all women or to suggest that men or women "are" a certain way on Facebook. The results that follow are how a group of people are "doing" being a man or a woman on Facebook. That is to say, this is how first-year composition students are engaging in a specific kind of gender performance in a specific online space (Judith Butler, 1999). These results suggest a part of these students' identity construction online—a construction that would also include race, age, nationality, economic status, sexual preference, and so on—and what follows should be read in that context.

practices are part of a complex constellation of skills called the "literacy of the screen" (CCCC, 2004). Together the "literacy of the screen" and the more traditional "literacy of print" work together to "enhance learning" (CCCC, 2004). That is to say that students must learn to write both in print and digital environments to be fully literate. There is clear support for the importance of digital literacy in the CCCC statement and support for the use of Facebook in particular across many publications related to composition (Vie, 2008; Fife, 2010; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Balzhiser et al., 2011; DePew, 2011; Reid, 2011; Shih, 2011; Buck, 2012; Briggs, 2013; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013; Alberti, 2013). The main argument for using Facebook in composition classes is that Facebook serves as a good example when developing critical (Vie, 2008; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Buck, 2012; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013) and rhetorical (DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; DePew, 2011) literacies.

Even if this support did not exist, there is one point that the teachers of writing should not overlook: our students are using Facebook to compose. As noted above, Facebook use is nearly ubiquitous among college students. Facebook is, at least partially, a space of composition: students are composing profiles, status updates, comments, and various multimodal texts that include pictures and links in addition to alphabetic text. While the written products may look very different than the texts traditionally produced in composition classes, previous research has shown that students do engage in a form of process writing on Facebook and that students are very aware of things like audience and rhetorical purpose on Facebook (Shepherd, in press). This connection between Facebook and composition may serve as an entryway into discussions about process, audience, or

purpose and, in turn, exploring these concepts in class may help students engage more critically with digital literacies on sites such as Facebook (Patrick, 2013; Coad, 2013). Drawing on students' various uses of Facebook may enable students to think more broadly about what they write, how, and for what purposes.

With this information in mind, Facebook was chosen as an example of the "literacy of the screen" for use in this study. It is ubiquitous among FYC students, has been previously studied in the literature, and offers several different types of digital literacy practices.

Review of Literature

There is a wealth of research on both Facebook and composition and Facebook and gender. While there is not yet any overlap between these two topics, both bodies of literature offer useful background for this study.

Facebook and Composition

In the past five years, Facebook has become a relatively popular topic of discussion in scholarly publications related to composition. The authors of these publications generally take three approaches (with a great deal of overlap) when looking at Facebook: the authors look at Facebook from a theoretical perspective, exploring constructs or processes such as identity construction; they look at Facebook as a tool to build assignments in composition classes; or they look in depth at literacy practices on Facebook.

One of the earliest articles connecting Facebook and composition was Vie (2008). Vie puts forth the idea of a new digital divide in composition: one between teachers and students. She suggests that teachers may not be as tech savvy as their students in certain areas, but that teachers can use platforms that students are using as a means to teach important critical literacy skills. She focuses on SNSs generally, but Facebook is one of her primary examples. Maranto and Barton (2010), Coad (2013), and Patrick (2013) follow closely in Vie's (2008) footsteps, calling for Facebook as a site to explore critical literacies. Patrick (2013) ends her article with a suggestion for classroom activities related to Facebook: analyzing profiles and friends lists, exploring posting processes, and looking at how audience plays into posting. Several other articles also explore similar activities as they play out in the composition or writing classrooms. Fife (2010) takes an early look at using Facebook to teach rhetorical analysis, Ried (2011) looks at using Facebook as an informal space for writing in a writing class, Shih (2011) explores the use of Facebook as a space for peer review with second-language writers, Balzhiser et al. (2011) give an in-depth account of a multi-year study of an assignment to study Facebook pages in composition classes, and Coad (2013) details using Facebook in composition classes to teach critical literacy.

DePew and Miller-Cochran (2010), DePew (2011), and Buck (2012) all explore literacy practices on SNSs and all three touch on Facebook in particular. DePew and Miller-Cochran (2010) interview several high-level college students who are second language writers about their literacy practices on SNSs and find that they engage in a great deal of complex rhetorical choices as they engage with others on SNSs. DePew

(2011) extends the previous study by conducting similar interviews with "developmental" second-language writers and finds that these students are engaging in similar complex rhetorical movies. Buck (2012) documents a single student's literacy practices, noting that "Viewing this rich literate activity as part of students' everyday lives will give us a greater understanding of the literacy experiences they bring with them to the classroom" (p. 35).

Facebook and Gender

The significance of gender in Facebook use has not been touched on in composition journals, but it is a question about which a wealth of research has been published in other fields such as psychology (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013), education (Koles & Nagy, 2012), gender studies (Carstensen, 2009), sociology (Hargittai, 2010), and advertising (Hoy & Milne, 2010). There are also several articles that deal with gender and SNS use or internet use more broadly that are relevant to this study (Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, & Schmitt, 2001; Thelwall, 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010; Rose, Mackey-Kallis, Shyles, Barry, Biagini, Hart, & Jack, 2012). This research both informs and reinforces the wide range of uses Facebook has.

Jackson et al. (2001) state that men and women have had differences in general internet use since the inception of the Web. Their study of college-aged men and women found that both genders tended to spend the same amount of time online, but women tended to email and men tended to surf. The authors attribute this to women tending to be

more “interpersonally oriented” and men tending to be more “information/task oriented” (p. 368). While this generality may not hold true for all men and women, of course, this tendency may be reflected in differences in Facebook use.

Carstensen (2009) found that the significance of gender has changed in the era of Web 2.0, but there are still clear differences. Hargittai (2010) comes to a similar conclusion. She notes that originally, differences online could be attributed to access: men had more access to internet use through their jobs early on. This is no longer the case, but generally, men still spend more time online than women do. Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010) find that this is the case even among children and adolescents. Generally, men start spending more time online in their teen years. However, the researchers also found that generally teenage women spend more time on SNSs than teenage men, despite the fact that both go to the sites regularly.

Other studies have found that women spend more time on Facebook than men (Hoy & Milne, 2010; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). There are also several studies that show other differences in usage. Hoy and Milne (2010) found that women disclosed more personal information in the “about me” section of Facebook and were a bit more concerned than men about privacy on the site. McAndrew and Jeong (2012) found that women were “more likely to use profile pictures for impression management” and “engaged in more online family activity” (p. 2359). Rose et al. (2012) found that men and women approach Facebook profile pictures very differently. They found that men tended to show active, dominant, independent, and sentimental styles in their photos while women tended to show more attractive and dependent styles.

Junco (2013) presents research that is probably the most relevant to the purpose of the current study. He found that women were "more likely to post photos, tag photos, view photos, comment on content, and post status updates" on Facebook (p. 2333), but he uses gender differences to argue that in general, faculty need to proceed carefully when using SNSs, as some students may struggle and may be at a disadvantage. He encourages teachers who use SNSs in the classroom to take time to explain them, make profiles in class, discuss social mores on the sites used, and discuss class expectations for use.

Facebook has been studied extensively in composition journals, and Facebook and gender have been touched on in several disciplines outside of composition. However, the importance of gender in influencing composing practices on Facebook has not been addressed in composition studies.

Methods

The development of the survey of FYC students about their Facebook use began in the fall of 2010. The purpose of the survey was to learn about FYC students' composing practices on Facebook, what activities they were engaged in most often on Facebook, and whether or not they saw a connection between Facebook and FYC. The initial questionnaire was based on scholarly research into Facebook and was reviewed by three prominent composition scholars. A pilot of the survey was conducted in the spring of 2011 with 30 FYC students. The survey was revised based on student responses and was piloted again in the summer of 2011. This second pilot was slightly different than the

first. In this pilot, the survey was only given to three FYC students, but the researcher sat beside the students as they took the survey and asked the students questions about what they thought the questions meant, where they were confused, and how they interpreted the answers to the questions. The survey was again revised based on these student responses. Before the survey was distributed online for full-scale data collection, it was again reviewed by three prominent scholars.

The full-scale survey (see Appendix A) was sent out in September 2011 to FYC students at the researcher's institution. Additionally, the survey was circulated at other institutions through contacts at those institutions and through the national listserv for writing program administrators (WPA-L). When the survey was closed at the end of October 2011, 474 completed responses had been collected. Most of the respondents were from large, doctoral-granting institutions (75.05%). All of the respondents were currently enrolled in an FYC class. The students were largely freshmen in their first semester (75.3%), and many of them had not taken a composition course before the one in which they were currently enrolled (75.9%).

FYC may mean many things at different institutions. While it would be impossible to clarify which type of FYC each of the respondents was taking, the survey did collect data about their classes, so some general information is known. Slightly more than half of the students were either in the first part of a two-part composition sequence or a single stand-alone composition course (55.84%). In addition, many of the students were in the second part of a two-part composition sequence (22.29%) or an accelerated or honors composition class (14.07%).

To allow for simple chi-square analysis, questions with more than two responses had the responses divided into two response groups. Each of these response groups was analyzed against the survey question regarding gender, and the number of responses for each gender was compared to determine if there was a statistically significant difference.

Findings

Gender was shown to have a statistically significant effect on more questions and often with more significant differences than any other independent variable. Students who self-identified as men and those who self-identified as women differed in a statistically significant way on 28 of the 78 items dealing with Facebook use from the survey[6]—more than any other demographic question. In the tables that follow, only items with statistically significant *p* values are reported.

Table 5 shows that general Facebook usage tended to be different for men and women. There is a slight but statistically significant difference in how long students have had their Facebook profiles. Women (94.4%) in the study were more likely than men (89.3%) to have had their profile for more than one year. Women (58.6%) were also much more likely to use Facebook for more than one hour per day on average currently than men are (43.9%). The third question shows that women (68.3%) were also much more likely than men (47.7%) to believe that they spend too much time on Facebook, although both groups have a high percentage of people who believed that they use Facebook too much. Far less than a majority of both men and women posted to Facebook

[6] All measures of significance were calculated using a Pearson Chi-Square test in SPSS version 20. There were 474 respondents total to the survey, but individual questions varied from a high of 468 responses to a low of 437 responses. All of the questions from the survey are included in Appendix A.

Table 5

General Facebook Use

Question	Response		% of group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Had a Facebook profile	Women	More than 1 year	94.4%	4.142	.042	0.187
	Men	More than 1 year	89.3%			
Facebook use per day	Women	More than 1 hour	58.6%	9.868	.002	0.298
	Men	More than 1 hour	43.9%			
Feeling about time spent on Facebook	Women	Too much time	68.3%	20.010	.000	0.425
	Men	Too much time	47.7%			
Posts per day on Facebook	Women	Twice per day or more	28.8%	8.158	.004	0.273
	Men	Twice per day or more	17.3%			

twice a day or more, but women (28.8%) were more likely to do so than men (17.3%).

Table 6 shows general posting practices on Facebook. While both men and women in the study were fairly likely to post immediately after an event has occurred, women (55.5%) were statistically more likely to do so than men (42.3%). Women (54.9%) were also more likely than men (39.2%) to think about posting later if they cannot post to Facebook immediately after an event and to think about posting to Facebook more often per day. While exactly half of the men said that they thought about posting at least once per day, 61.3% of women said that they did so. Women were also much more likely to write status updates in their heads than men. Well over half of both groups stated that they wrote status updates in their heads before posting at least sometimes, but a much higher percentage of women (72.2%) stated that they did so than did men (57.8%).

Table 6

Posting on Facebook

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Post immediately after an event has occurred	Women	At least sometimes	55.5%	7.901	.005	0.265
	Men	At least sometimes	42.3%			
Think to post later when I cannot post immediately	Women	At least sometimes	54.9%	11.074	.001	0.317
	Men	At least sometimes	39.2%			
Think about posting on Facebook	Women	Once per day or more	61.3%	5.863	.015	0.227
	Men	Once per day or more	50.0%			
Write status updates in head before posting	Women	At least sometimes	72.2%	10.121	.001	0.306
	Men	At least sometimes	57.8%			

When asked about the frequency at which they did certain activities on Facebook (see Table 7), women in the study were more likely than men to make status updates, read friends' pages, and post self-made media content to their profile. Women stated that they made status updates half of the time they were on Facebook or more (37.3%) in higher numbers than did men (28.2%). Women (79.9%) were also much more likely than men (59.2%) to read friends' pages. Women (28.6%) were more likely to post self-made media content, such as videos or photos, than were men (14.4%), but both groups had relatively low percentages of people who engaged in this activity at least half of the time they logged into Facebook.

Table 7

Frequency of Activities on Facebook

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Making status updates	Women	Half the time or more	37.3%	4.124	.042	0.195
	Men	Half the time or more	28.2%			
Reading friends' pages	Women	Half the time or more	79.9%	6.644	.010	0.247
	Men	Half the time or more	59.2%			
Posting self-made media content to your profile	Women	Half the time or more	28.6%	12.680	.000	0.351
	Men	Half the time or more	14.4%			

Women and men in the study had different attitudes toward choosing and changing profile pictures on Facebook (see Table 8). Women (93.1%) were more likely than men (78.2%) to say that they considered various options for their profile pictures when selecting which one to use on Facebook, although it should be noted that both

Table 8

Profile pictures

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Consider various options for profile picture	Women	Agree	93.1%	21.123	.000	0.434
	Men	Agree	78.2%			
Frequency of changing profile picture	Women	At least monthly	52.7%	20.434	.000	0.445
	Men	At least monthly	31.2%			

groups agreed that they did this at a very high rate. Slightly more than half of women (52.7%) of women stated that they changed their profile picture at least once a month, while less than one-third of men (31.2%) stated that they did so.

Table 9

Importance of photo features

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
How flattering or attractive the picture is	Women	Very important or Important	81.4%	33.300	.000	0.569
	Men	Very important or Important	56.0%			
How well the picture represents personality	Women	Very important or Important	80.6%	14.346	.000	0.367
	Men	Very important or Important	64.5%			

Men and women in the study also had different reactions to the features of pictures (see Table 9). Women (81.4%) were more likely than men (56.0%) to consider "how flattering or attractive" a picture was to be "important" or "very important" to whether or not they chose to upload the picture. Women (80.6%) were also more likely than men (64.5%) to consider how well a pictured represented their personality to be "important" or "very important" to their decision to upload the picture.

There were statistically significant differences in the ways that men and women in the study handled privacy settings as well (see Table 10). Both men and women were very likely to state that they adjusted their privacy settings, but the percentage was much higher for women (93.5%) than men (79.0%). Women (41.1%) were also more likely

than men (29.6%) to state that they adjusted their privacy settings to exclude some of their Facebook friends from seeing certain content as well.

Table 10

Privacy settings

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Adjust privacy settings to limit who can see profile	Women	Yes	93.5%	20.994	.000	0.430
	Men	Yes	79.0%			
Adjust privacy settings to exclude Facebook friends from seeing certain material	Women	Yes	41.1%	6.225	.013	0.242
	Men	Yes	29.6%			

Question 40 in the survey asked students to rank the importance of various concerns when "deciding whether or not to include something" on their Facebook pages (see Appendix A). Many of the possible responses did not have statistically significant differences for men and women, but two did (see Table 11). Women (82.6%) were more likely than men (66.8%) to consider how personal information was to be "important" or "very important." However, men (78.8%) were more likely than women (66.9%) to consider how funny or interesting something was to be "important" or "very important."

There were two main differences across gender with regards to Facebook audience (see Table 12). The first was that women (70.1%) were more likely than men (58.2%) to believe that how potential employers would react to their content on Facebook was an "important" or "very important" factor in deciding whether or not to post content. The second difference was small but statistically significant. Women (98.4%) were more

Table 11

Importance of post content when deciding whether or not to post

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
How personal the information is	Women	Very important or Important	82.6%	14.496	.000	0.368
	Men	Very important or Important	66.8%			
How funny/ interesting the information is	Women	Very important or Important	66.9%	7.451	.006	0.269
	Men	Very important or Important	78.8%			

Table 12

Audience

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Importance of potential employers as an audience	Women	Very important or Important	70.1%	6.678	.010	0.250
	Men	Very important or Important	58.2%			
How often close friends view content	Women	At least sometimes	98.4%	4.150	.042	0.189
	Men	At least sometimes	95.1%			

likely than men (95.1%) to believe that their close friends viewed their Facebook content at least sometimes.

While women were more likely to do or believe certain things about Facebook in much of the above content, the percentages shifted when questions began comparing Facebook to composition. Men were more likely to see connections between Facebook and composition generally. Table 13 looks at question 46 from the survey (see Appendix

A): “Which of the following activities do you consider to be a type of ‘composition’?” The question asked students to select each category that corresponded with their definition of composition. Men were more likely than women to see writing an online comment (33.7% vs. 18.4%, respectively), making a status update or wall post on Facebook (30.4% vs. 16.4%), making a Facebook profile (29.3% vs. 16.4%), and manipulating a photograph (42.9% vs. 32%) as being a type of composition.

Table 13

Types of composition

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen’s *d*
Writing a comment online	Women	Is type of composition	18.4%	13.511	.000	0.354
	Men	Is type of composition	33.7%			
Making status updates and wall posts on Facebook	Women	Is type of composition	16.4%	12.170	.000	0.335
	Men	Is type of composition	30.4%			
Making a profile on Facebook	Women	Is type of composition	16.4%	10.511	.001	0.311
	Men	Is type of composition	29.3%			
Manipulating a photograph	Women	Is type of composition	32.0%	5.485	.019	0.226
	Men	Is type of composition	42.9%			

When the question was flipped (see Table 14), the results were similar. Men were more likely than women to categorize Facebook as a type of formal writing (16.8% vs. 9.8% respectively), composition (22.3% vs. 11.7%), and argument (38% vs. 24.2%).

Table 14

Categorization of Facebook

Question	Response		% of Group	χ^2 value	*p* value	Cohen's *d*
Formal writing	Women	Is a type of	9.8%	4.834	.028	0.209
	Men	Is a type of	16.8%			
Composition	Women	Is a type of	11.7%	8.828	.003	0.283
	Men	Is a type of	22.3%			
Argument	Women	Is a type of	24.2%	9.743	.002	0.301
	Men	Is a type of	38.0%			

Discussion

The fact that men and women in this study used Facebook differently is something that should not have been surprising. This has been shown directly in relation to Facebook in several articles in the past (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Hoy & Milne, 2010; Koles & Nagy, 2012; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013). However, this difference has not been explored in articles in composition studies. The results from the tables above offer several interesting suggestions about gender and Facebook use that may be relevant to compositionists. In particular, men and women seem to be approaching Facebook with different rhetorical purposes, a different view of audience, and with a different rhetorical stance.

Rhetorical Purpose

Speaking broadly, women have had Facebook accounts for longer and use their accounts more often (see Table 5). These findings echo previous research on Facebook and SNS use (Hoy & Milne, 2010; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013). But this alone does not suggest much about how men and women

are using Facebook for different rhetorical purposes. The data in Table 6 begin to offer a clearer view of the difference: women in the study were more likely to think about (and possibly reflect on) their Facebook activity. Women may think about posting more often than men and consider what they post more carefully. This point is of particular use to composition teachers who may be interested in reflective writing or writing about writing models. Facebook may serve as a useful example of past writing for both women and men in first-year composition classes—although it appears that it will be more likely to resonate with female students than male simply because women tend to spend more time on Facebook. But the data in Table 6 also has a deeper suggestion. The fact that women appear to think about their Facebook use more often implies that they are likely to take their use more seriously than men. There seems to be a deeper need to consider their activity before posting among many women using Facebook than among many men. These data offer a suggestion of a different rhetorical purpose, but they do not suggest what that difference may be.

According to the survey results, women also appear to engage in a wider array of activities on Facebook more often than men. Again, this echoes previous findings about Facebook (Pempek, 2009; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013).The survey results show that women post status updates, read friends' pages, and upload self-made media (such as videos and pictures) more often than men. It's important to note here that there were no activities that men engaged in more often than women at a statistically significant rate in the survey. Obviously, this furthers the point above about women spending more time on Facebook and being more active when they are on, but I believe

that some other conclusions can be drawn here. The three main forms of written communication on Facebook are status updates, comments, and chat. Men and women did not differ at a statistically significant rate when it came to the frequency of posting comments or engaging in chats. Perhaps this is due to the nature of the *kind* of writing. A status update is more akin to traditional forms of writing: it is an announcement, sending out information to a large group of people at one time. A comment is more akin to a conversation: the writer is replying to one person (or a small group who have also replied). A chat is even more intimate: it is a *private* one-on-one conversation with another person. Women in the study posted status updates but did not post comments or chat more often than men. These data may suggest that a higher percentage of women are using Facebook as a platform to communicate broadly with many people (more akin to a blog). This is, of course, in addition to the more intimate conversations one would get with comments and chatting. These data offer a clearer picture of how the rhetorical purposes of men and women differ on Facebook. They suggest that women tend to use Facebook as a means of communicating with a broad audience in addition to more personal communication, whereas men tend to use Facebook primarily for the personal communication.

The importance of broad social connection on Facebook to the women in this study is further demonstrated in Table 7. These data show that the women surveyed read one another's Facebook pages more frequently than men, which suggests a higher engagement with friends on Facebook for a higher number of women. Men may not see a

need to read friends' Facebook pages if they see direct, personal communication as the primary purpose of Facebook.

The final activity that women in the study engaged in more frequently than men is posting self-made media content, such as pictures and video. This is particularly interesting when considering Facebook as a site of multi-modal composition. More pictures and videos suggests that women may be using Facebook as a more visual medium than men may be, and perhaps this may allow some students to connect with ideas of multi-modal composing more easily. Tables 8 and 9 reiterate this point by showing that women in the study were more mindful about posting pictures on Facebook than men were. The women surveyed were considering more options for pictures, changing pictures more frequently, and considering both the visual appeal and the representation of the photos more than the men were when posting. Similar findings were also reported in McAndrew and Jeong's (2012) study. These data seem to suggest that many women may be making visual arguments with their photos. This could be an effort at "controlling their own images online" because of "experiences with web sites designed to objectify rather than personify the female image" (Tulley & Blair, 2003, p. 58). Hawisher and Sullivan (1999) also explore gender construction complexities that women face when crafting a visual identity online. Almjeld and Blair (2012) further demonstrate the complexity of visual gender construction in SNSs. These complexities could be explored in the context of Facebook and similar sites by first-year composition students as a means of exploring how images are used rhetorically.

Table 11 suggests an additional difference in rhetorical purpose on Facebook: women in the study were trying to be more personal and men were trying to be funnier. A look at the actual posts themselves may show a different perception than what the students perceive they are doing when posting content. It could be that these are simply two ways of connecting with friends through Facebook.

One possible reason for the differences in rhetorical purpose may be partially explained by Jackson et al. (2001). The authors state that women tend to be generally more "interpersonally oriented" online while men tend to be more "information/task oriented" (p. 368). This may help to explain why it appears that women in the study attempted to appeal to a wide social network in addition to personal interactions, while men tended to focus more on personal interactions alone.

Audience

It appears that women in the study were much more aware of audience on Facebook. Table 10 demonstrates differences between men and women in regards to privacy settings on Facebook. Women were more likely to adjust their privacy settings and were more likely to do so to exclude some of their Facebook friends. This is in line with Hoy and Milne's (2010) study that found women were more concerned with privacy on Facebook. A greater awareness of audience may encourage a greater awareness of how, why, and when shared information may be viewed. This may also tie into Jackson et al.'s (2001) view that women are more "interpersonally oriented" online. If this is the case, it would make sense that women would be more guarded about their more personal information. Interpersonal interactions are more likely to be sensitive than information

distributing or task-focused activities. As noted above, women are posting more text and media content on Facebook. Perhaps posting a larger amount of information may also make them more guarded about that information. It may also be that because women spend more time on Facebook, they are simply more familiar with the settings.

A more direct representation of the differences between men and women in regards to audience is shown in Table 12. Women in the study stated that they are more concerned with potential employers as an audience for their Facebook content than men were. This seems to show that women tend to have a greater awareness of people beyond the immediate audience of Facebook friends than men do. This may also help to account for adjustments to privacy settings above in Table 10. This difference in audience could also simply be due to the fact that women post more often on Facebook: posting more often (and posting more personal information) may put women at a higher risk of posting something inappropriate.

Rhetorical Stance

Men and women in the study appeared to approach Facebook with different rhetorical purposes, but they also appeared to view Facebook through the lens of a different rhetorical stance. Tables 13 and 14 show a very interesting and drastic reversal in responses from previous data. The majority of responses above show that women in the study were more likely to engage in certain activities or to think about Facebook activity. But when it comes to directly tying Facebook to composition, men in the study were more likely to see the connection. Men were more likely than women to see an online comment, a Facebook status update, a Facebook profile, and manipulating a photo

as types of composition. They were also more likely to see Facebook as a type of formal writing, composition, and argument. Among the options for these two questions, the options in which men were more likely to see the connection are those which are most closely related to Facebook and composition: Men were more likely to see a Facebook status or a Facebook profile as a type of composition and were more likely to say that Facebook falls into the category of composition generally. This is particularly interesting when considering that women in the study wrote more often on Facebook and thought about what they were writing more often. This difference may be related to what women actually *do* on Facebook. As noted above, women in the study were more likely to spend more time posting and thinking about photos and other non-textual media content. While many see a connection between this type of content and composition, this may be a larger stretch than seeing a connection between only written content on Facebook and written content in composition classes. It appears that men and women in the study were viewing Facebook from a different rhetorical stance—one that results in fewer women connecting Facebook with composition.

As noted above, women in the study tended to spend more time on Facebook than men did. Because women generally spent more time on Facebook than men, some people may conclude that spending more time on Facebook might make a user less likely to see Facebook and composition as connected. The results in the survey do not suggest that this explanation is the case. A comparison of those who spend more than one hour on Facebook per day and those who spend less than one hour shows that there was no statistically significant difference in their responses to the above questions with one

exception. Students who spent more time on Facebook were less likely to see Facebook activity as a type of argument. The reasons why gender affects perceptions of Facebook as composition are not entirely clear. Future research may be able to clarify the reasons that this is the case.

Conclusion

Men and women in this study tended to use Facebook differently. This is not surprising and has been shown to be the case in several places outside of composition (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Hoy & Milne, 2010; Koles & Nagy, 2012; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Junco, 2013). Gender has been an important part of composition studies for several decades and has been a fixture in computers and writing journals since the early age of the internet. Scholars should draw on this scholarship as they approach Web 2.0 technologies and explore how gender affects composing practices in social networking environments.

This article has implications beyond the expanded study of gender and composing in Web 2.0. There are likely to be differences in other demographics and identity markers as well when it comes to composing on Facebook and other SNSs. As composition teachers, it is essential for us to keep differences in usage in mind—even differences across individuals—when attempting to bring Facebook into the composition classroom. While the focus here is on the diversity of usage across gender, there are also differences in usage across age, year in university, language, and attitude toward writing within the survey data. Certainly, other factors also affect usage—many of these factors may be very individualistic and not tied to a certain group. Students may not have been aware

that not everyone uses Facebook in the same way that they do. Exploring these differences can facilitate an entry point into discussion of critical literacies as discussed in Vie (2008), Maranto and Barton (2010), Coad (2013) and Patrick (2013). This discussion of critical literacies is crucial to implementation, not only to further illuminate differences in Facebook usage but also to begin a conversation about rhetorical purposes, attention to audience, and rhetorical stance. Students may not be aware of the rhetorical choices they are making in their Facebook use and how these choices relate to the audience that they have crafted. Exploring these choices is absolutely paramount to understanding Facebook use in the context of composition.

Junco (2013) provides a good general overview of recommendations for Facebook use in college classes, and several authors have provided examples of how Facebook might be used in composition classes in particular (Fife, 2010; Shih, 2011; Ried, 2011; Balzhiser et al., 2011; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013). These are good starting points when considering how to use Facebook in a composition class. As teachers move forward when considering using Facebook in their classes, they should keep in mind potential differences across gender and consider that there may be many other differences in usage as well.

First-year composition teachers should take into account how gender is constructed and how gender may influence a writer's rhetorical purpose, perception of audience, or rhetorical stance when considering how to include new or different types of writing in the classroom. Facebook is an important part of the "literacy of the screen" (CCCC, 2004) and can serve as a useful starting point to conversations about critical

computer literacies (Vie, 2008; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013). Including gender as an explicit part of the critical computer literacy discussion is important to ensure that the needs of first-year composition students are being met.

THE LITERACY OF FACEBOOK:
SNS LITERACY PRACTICES AND MULTIMODAL COMPOSING

Computers and digital literacies have been a part of composition scholarship for over three decades. The journal *Computers and Composition* began publication in 1983 and the annual *Computers and Writing* conference was first held that same year. Over the last decade, digital literacies and, in particular, multimodal composing have enjoyed increased interest and have established a more central role in the field of composition studies. For example, the NCTE (2008) helped to establish the importance of multimodal texts in "The NCTE Definition of 21st Century Literacies," in which the authors state that "Active, successful participants in the 21st century global society must be able to […] create, critique, analyze , and evaluate multimedia texts." CCCC (2004) has also recognized the importance of "'mixed media' writing practice" in the CCCC Position Statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments. In the position statement, the authors state that "the curriculum of composition is widening to include not one but two literacies: a literacy of print and a literacy of the screen." The authors present the literacy of the screen as equally important to the literacy of print.

Several other well-established authors in composition studies have further emphasized the importance of digital and multimodal literacies. For example, Fraiberg (2010) calls a multimodal (and multilingual) framework "a key for moving our research and teaching into the twenty-first century" (p. 101). Selfe (2009) states that "depriving students of valuable semiotic resources for meaning making" through multimodality

leads to a "narrow understanding of language and literacy" (p. 617). Haas et al. (2011) state that "multimodal communication is increasingly the standard practice" (p. 399). Yancey (2004) also notes the importance of multimodal composing in her 2004 CCCC keynote address titled, "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key" in which she points to the importance of modes beyond print in composition and calls for a change in how we look at composition to include these modes. She states that "we have a moment" to incorporate these modes into our practice and be something more as a field. But are we really taking advantage of that "moment?" Are we really incorporating digital literacies into our composition classes in meaningful ways or are we "grafting" the digital onto previously established syllabi (Froehlich and Froehlich, 2013, p. 291)?

By conceiving of multimodal digital literacies as being separate or qualitatively different than "print literacies," we are holding the field back from our "moment." Multimodal composing should not be viewed as a separate "literacy of the screen" to be juxtaposed against a "literacy of print." Literacy is complex, embedded in practice, and highly situationally dependent (Street, 1984; Gee, 2008; Brandt, 2011). There is no *one* "literacy of print" or *one* "literacy of the screen," and in an age where virtually all writing is created, edited, and/or published on computers, the two are deeply intertwined (Gee & Hayes, 2011; Selfe & Hawisher, 2004; Kress, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2008). Stating that we need to value "both" literacies ignores the multiple literacy practices available both digitally and in print and sets up a false dichotomy between two closely related types of composing—forcing a separation that is not useful in our research. Presenting "print" and "screen" literacies as different or separate sometimes may even lead to the

subordination of digital literacies as less important. Froehlich and Froehlich (2013) note this problem when they state that composition teachers have "grafted digital media projects onto well-established and successful" syllabi—syllabi that have been designed with print literacies in mind (p. 291). By viewing the "literacy of the screen" as separate and attempting to simply "graft" digital elements onto traditional writing projects, we do our students a disservice. The view that "print" and "screen" literacies are separate may even help to perpetuate the myth that "screen literacies" are less complex—even less important—than "print literacies." In fact, all literacy practices are socially constructed, contextually dependent, and very complex. They are all equally important to teaching and learning about writing.

This is not to say that digital literacies have not been ignored in composition studies. Journals such as *Computers and Composition* and *Kairos* demonstrate the importance of multiple literacies to the field. However, separating these topics out into important and well-read—but separate—journals may mean that digital literacies do not receive the scholarly attention that they deserve from the mainstream composition audience. While it is true that digital literacies are often discussed in mainstream journals such as *CCC* (see, for example, Alexander, 2009; Selfe, 2009; and Williams, 2010**)**, no one would be so bold as to say that digital literacies are given equal attention to more traditional print literacies. Print still takes primacy—even in a world where nearly all writing is touched by the digital. I believe this is not due to a lack of interest from mainstream composition journal readers but is instead due to a lack of demonstration for how these literacies actually play out in meaningful ways outside of the classroom—and

how they may be incorporated successfully into classroom practice. Alexander (2009) presents a model for how complex literacies practices can play out in digital spaces and how these practices may be useful to composition scholars. This article seeks to continue this exploration.

In what follows, I present one way to approach digital literacy practices to help make them accessible to mainstream composition teachers. I suggest that scholars in composition studies look at specific literacy practices in their specific literacy contexts. We need to make an effort to explore the *actual* literacies that our students are engaged in to better understand the ways that they write, what they need to know about writing, and what they may need to know about writing in the future. We need to look at the individual literacy practices— text messages, instant messages, online memes, video games, social network sites, and on and on—and we need to analyze what it means engage in these literacy practices. Using our understanding of these literacy practices, we can re-develop the curriculum of composition to better reflect *all* literacy practices our students are engaged in, and we can help students understand how they can use the methods they are using to compose across other various composing contexts both inside and outside of the academy. For example, the array of literacy practices that go into writing a simple text message may be invisible to students who send text messages every day. By analyzing the text messages and making these literacy practices visible to the students, we can engage in larger discussions about how similar literacy practices may be used in other contexts: writing on a message board, writing a homework assignment, or even writing an academic essay.

It is with this in mind that I look to Facebook, the largest social network site (SNS) in the United States. The intersections of SNSs and composition have become an important topic of discussion in composition studies (Vie, 2008; Fife, 2010; Maranto & Barton, 2010; DePew and Miller-Cochran, 2010; Balzhiser et al., 2011; DePew, 2011; Reid, 2011; Shih, 2011; Buck, 2012; Briggs, 2013; Coad, 2013; Patrick, 2013; Alberti, 2013). Facebook, in particular, has been an important focus of many of these articles. This should not be surprising considering the size of Facebook—more than "a billion monthly active users" (Facebook, 2013)—and ubiquity among college students—as recently as 2012, 99% of college students using Facebook (Junco, 2012). Facebook is a space of many important literacy practices, particularly for college students.

The previous literature in composition studies about Facebook is an important starting point when considering how SNSs may be used in composition classes. However, this literature takes an approach to Facebook research that is limited when attempting to better understand the literacy practices in their specific context. Many of the articles begin with classroom practice and move into Facebook literacies—instead of the other way around (Fife, 2010; Balzhiser et al. 2011; Reid, 2011; Coad, 2013)—and other article focus on SNSs or Facebook generally without delving into specific literacy practices (Vie, 2008; Shih, 2011; Patrick, 2013; Alberti, 2013). An alternative approach may be more effective in identifying the literacy practices used by composition students on Facebook: Researchers need to explore how Facebook is actually being used by composition students and then use this knowledge to inform composition courses and instructional strategies. Such an approach has been used in a few articles with success

(DePew and Miller-Cochran, 2010; DePew, 2011; Buck, 2012), and this article builds on those studies to create a more robust picture of the literacy practices that take place on Facebook—particularly those among FYC students, something not explored in previous research. This article also explores students' perceived connections between Facebook and FYC, something also not explored in previous research.

What follows focuses on two research questions important to the better understanding of literacy practices among FYC students on Facebook: What are the actual literacy practices that composition students engage in when using Facebook in their daily lives, and how do these students see these literacy practices in relation to their work in the composition classroom? I interviewed ten students currently enrolled in FYC classes about their Facebook use. Interview questions focused on literacy practices and perceived connections between Facebook and composition. Through the interviews, I found that the literacy practices on Facebook are decidedly multimodal and have clear connections to composition.

Literacy and Social Network Sites

Literacy

This article treats literacy as a social act: the act of making meaning together as reader and writer (Brandt, 2011). This means that literacy is highly context-dependent and requires reader and writer to make intersubjective meaning. Literacy practices—any literacy practices—require a metacognitive awareness of meaning-making on the part of both reader and writer. They must be aware of intention and interpretation, context and

content. Gee (2008) notes that "Literacy has no effects—indeed, no meaning—apart from particular cultural contexts in which it is use" (p. 82). Selfe and Hawisher (2004) put forth a similar assertion when they say that "Literacy exists within a complex cultural ecology" (p. 212). The view of literacy as socially constructed is a view pioneered by Brian Street (1984), who states simply that "literacy" is "a shorthand for social practices and conceptions of reading and writing" (p. 1). What this means is that literacy is not something people *have* but is something people *do* to make meaning. For example, anyone who is a regular user of Facebook has seen someone *do* Facebook wrong. Perhaps the person wrote a post that was too long, signed their name to a comment, or used a status update to convey seemingly private information. None of these things is *wrong* exactly from a grammatical or linguistic point of view, and yet they go against social norms associated with the context of literacy on Facebook. They have *done* Facebook wrong in a sense. Meaning is made in a certain way in the context of Facebook in the same way that meaning is made in a certain way in *any* certain context. These social expectations—knowing not only how to communicate meaning but being aware of the social nature of making meaning—is what makes literacy a social practice.

In this article, "literacy" is also used to include a number of practices beyond simple reading and writing. Both digital media and traditional print media are "a delivery system for language" (Gee and Hayes, 2011, p. 2), but digital media simply offer more avenues through which language—and meaning—can be delivered (Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2008; and Selber, 2004)

Literacies—*all* literacies—are highly complex, social, and dependent on context. They do not make sense and are not useful when divorced from that context. By exploring literacies critically and rhetorically, we can better understand how meaning is made. Literacies in digital environments are no less context-dependent or less complex than literacies in other environments.

Social Network Sites (SNSs)

SNSs broadly and Facebook in particular have been an important subject of discussion in composition studies for more than five years. Vie (2008) was among the first researchers to theorize about the importance of SNSs to composition teachers. She notes the importance of taking a critical look at the composing on SNSs with composition students: "Compositionists should focus on incorporating into their pedagogy technologies that students are familiar with but do not think critically about," (p. 9) such as SNSs. Several other researchers draw on Vie's article when noting the importance of critical literacy in SNSs. Maranto and Barton (2010), Coad (2013), and Patrick (2013) all deal directly with critical literacy in SNSs. Maranto and Barton (2010) echo Vie (2008) in stating that " we cannot afford to ignore the opportunities for learning, for social and political engagement, that online networking affords" (p. 44). Coad (2013) details a project in which he builds "students' critical literacy and encourage[s] them to question the design of technology" by looking at Facebook through a critical lens. Patrick (2013) takes a similar approach, analyzing Facebook profiles to foster critical thinking skills.

Several researchers have approached Facebook from the angle of rhetorical literacy as opposed to critical literacy. Fife (2010) uses Facebook as means to teach composition students about rhetorical analysis. Alberti (2013) approaches Facebook as a kind of "rhetorical game." Depew and Miller-Cochran (2010) and Depew (2011) focus on the complex rhetorical moves that writers make in SNS environments. Depew (2011) concludes that even students labeled as developmental "respond to communicative situations in rhetorically complex ways" (p. 54) on SNSs. Interestingly, both of these articles explore actual literacy practices taking place on Facebook and other SNSs among their student populations.

Balzhiser et al. (2011) offer the most in-depth use of Facebook in the composition classroom. The authors detail several years of data from using Facebook as the focus of an assignment in a first-year writing class. The students were asked to analyze the discourse of Facebook and compare it to scholarly discourses. The authors conclude that engaging in this assignment made them both more aware of research practices and more aware of their Facebook personas.

Buck (2012) focuses on the importance of SNSs to digital literacy as opposed to critical or rhetorical literacy. Buck (2012) follows the literacy practices of one student and states that through exploring literacy practices on SNSs, "writing researchers and educators can better understand the literacy practices that students engage in outside of the classroom and the experiences they bring to their academic writing" (p. 9). This article seeks to do exactly that. By looking at Facebook literacy practices in detail, composition teachers can better understand what literacy experiences first-year

composition students are bringing to their writing. By better understanding the literacy practices that students are already engaged in, composition teachers can better analyze and build on these practices in order to make students better aware of their literacy practices and allow them to become more proficient at using these practices in their writing.

Depew and Miller-Cochran (2010), Depew (2011), and Buck (2012) look at students' particular literacy practices on Facebook and other SNSs to draw conclusions about Facebook and writing. These studies in particular have informed the research here. None of the authors above have presented an answer to the questions explored in this study: What are the actual literacy practices that FYC students engage in when using Facebook in their daily lives, and how do these students see these literacy practices in relation to their work in the composition classroom? However, the studies do provide insight into what types of literacies might most readily connect Facebook and first-year composition, namely critical and rhetorical literacies.

Methods and Participants

Interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of first-year composition students at a large urban university from March 28, 2013, to April 4, 2013. Participants were recruited by emailing composition teachers at the university and asking them to pass along the call. Fifteen students responded. Among this pool, ten students were selected in order to get the maximum diversity among the students who volunteered. Students who took part in the interview were given $20 to compensate them for their time.

With IRB approval, I met with the interviewees in my office on campus. The 10 interview participants were asked a series of 22 questions (see Appendix B) about themselves, their Facebook activity, and connections between Facebook and composition. These questions were designed to specifically detail Facebook literacy practices and explore how students perceived connections between these practices and their composition classes. Some of the participants were asked additional follow-up questions based on their answers to the prepared questions to further illuminate their literacy practices on Facebook. Then, interviewees were asked to take part in a regular Facebook session, talking aloud about what they were doing as they did it. This was to both confirm what they were saying about their literacy practices on Facebook and to explore literacy practices that may have been invisible to the students. Again, follow-up questions were asked when clarification of what they were doing was necessary.

Table 15 shows the basic demographic information for the interviewees. All of the names of the participants have been changed to ensure anonymity. All of the interviewees were in their first year of university and were currently enrolled in a first-year composition course (this was a stipulation of the interview selection process). Four of the interviewees were female and six were male. Four interviewees were 18 years old, five interviewees were 19, and a single interviewee was 20. Only one interviewee did not identify as a resident of the United States. That interviewee was from China. Three interviewees identified as Caucasian or White, three interviewees identified as Hispanic or Latina/o, and three interviewees identified as Asian or Asian-American. One interviewee identified as biracial: Asian-American and Caucasian. Unfortunately, no

African-American students volunteered to take part in the interviews. Eight of the interviewees identified English as their first language, one interviewee identified Mandarin Chinese as her first language, and one interviewee identified Spanish as her first language. The interviewee who identified Spanish as her first language also noted that she spoke primarily English now, even when at home.

The majority of interviewees (eight of the ten) were in the second semester of a two-part first-year composition sequence. Two interviewees were enrolled in an accelerated one-semester honors version of the two-part sequence. One interviewee stated that she was currently enrolled in a special section of first-year composition for non-native English speakers. She was in the first semester of the two-part first-year composition sequence but had taken a section of composition for students who needed additional writing help the previous semester.

The sample is not a perfect representation of the student body—notably over-representing honors students and under-representing certain racial groups—but it does offer a diverse sample of students at a large, research institution.

Table 16 shows the interviewees' basic Facebook usage habits. Five interviewees had had Facebook profiles for a minimum of four years. An additional three interviewees had had their profile for three years or more. One interviewee thought he had had his profile for about a year and a half, and only one interviewee had created her profile within the last year. Both the number of logins per day and the time spent on Facebook during each login varied greatly. Only one interviewee reported logging in less than one

Table 15

Interviewee Basic Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Race/Ethnicity	First Language	Semesters of Composition
Baozhai	Female	20	Chinese	Mandarin	2[7]
Carrie	Female	19	Asian-American	English	2
Chelsea	Female	18	Hispanic	Spanish[8]	2
Connor	Male	19	Asian-American/ Caucasian	English	1[9]
Gabriel	Male	19	Caucasian	English	2
Jason	Male	18	Asian-American	English	1[9]
Matthew	Male	19	Caucasian	English	2
Melanie	Female	19	Hispanic	English	2
Ray	Male	18	Caucasian	English	2
Scott	Male	18	Hispanic	English	2

time per day (she logged in only once a week). Other interviewees reported logging in as many as 30 times per day. The average reported logins among the ten interviewees was about 10 per day. Time spent on Facebook per login also varied from interviewee to interviewee. Generally, interviewees who reported logging in more often spent less time on Facebook per visit. One interviewee stated that she spent as little as 20 seconds on Facebook each time she logged in, but some interviewees reported staying on Facebook for as long as 30 minutes. The interviewees reported spending an average of about 10 minutes on Facebook each time they logged in. However, the actual duration of the interviewees Facebook sessions when observed ranged from 1 minute and 21 seconds to 8 minutes and 49 seconds. The average observed session was 4 minutes and 23 seconds—much shorter than the average reported time. While some interviewees were

[7] Baozhai was the only student who took first-year composition for non-native English speakers.
[8] Chelsea identified her first language as Spanish but stated that she primarily uses English now, even at home.
[9] Connor and Jason were enrolled in a special accelerated honors section of first-year composition.

very close to their reported time (such as Chelsea, Gabriel, and Matthew), others fell well short of the time that they had reported (such as Connor, Jason, and Scott).

Table 16

Interviewee Basic Facebook Usage

Pseudonym	Duration of Facebook Profile	Number of Facebook Logins	Reported Duration of Each Login	Actual Duration of Observed Session
Baozhai	1 year	1 per week	Less than 30 minutes	8:49
Carrie	5 years	4-5 per day	5 minutes	7:23
Chelsea	3 years	20 per day	3 minutes	3:22
Connor	4 years	15-20 per day	10-15 minutes	2:27
Gabriel	3 years	2 per day	5-15 minutes	6:25
Jason	6 years	6 per day	5-10 minutes	2:09
Matthew	1.5 years	1 per day	1-20 minutes	3:04
Melanie	5 years	30 per day	20 seconds	1:21
Ray	3 years	5-6 per day	10 minutes	2:13
Scott	5 years	1 per day	20-30 minutes	6:40

Literacy Practices and Perception

Several interesting findings about the literacy practices of composition students on Facebook came to light from these interviews. These findings below are grouped into two sections: The Literacy Practices of Facebook and How Students See Their Literacy Practices. The first section seeks to answer the first research question: What are the actual literacy practices that composition students engage in when using Facebook in their daily lives? The second section serves as a starting point to begin to answer the second research question: How do these students see these literacy practices in relation to their work in the composition classroom?

The Literacy Practices of Facebook

When asked about their Facebook use, the most common activity that the interviewees mentioned was viewing content. In particular, eight of the ten interviewees mentioned viewing their friends' activities and looking at photos as a regular Facebook activity. Photos in particular came up often throughout the interviews with all of the interviewees and seemed to be a focal point for a set of literacy practices on Facebook. Out of the ten interviewees, four interviewees mentioned posting photos regularly in addition to simply viewing others' photos. While no interviewees actually posted any photos while I observed them accessing Facebook, several interviewees stopped and talked about photos they were viewing. Eight of the ten interviewees discussed photos during our session and several interviewees "liked" photos as part of their Facebook session.

Chelsea identified posting and viewing photos as her main way of interacting on Facebook. She noted the importance of Instagram (a photo sharing SNS) to her Facebook use, stating that nearly all of her content on Facebook came through Instagram. She had her Instagram account linked through Facebook so whatever she posted on Instagram posted on Facebook as well. She also noted that this was the type of content she looking for most often when browsing Facebook: she looked specifically for content that was cross-posted either from Instagram or from Pinterest (another SNS).

While Chelsea was a special case, she was not alone. A few other interviewees focused primarily on photos when discussing Facebook. When I asked interviewees to

describe their posting process on Facebook (see question 15 in Appendix B), three of the ten interviewees talked specifically about posting photos with no prompting from me. Chelsea discussed the process of finding a photo, posting it with a caption on Instragram, and cross-posting it over to Facebook. But additionally, Baozhai and Scott also discussed the process for posting a photo in particular. Baozhai found a visual to use that could make "others happy," and then used the captioning feature to explain how she felt about that visual. Then she waited for friends to give her feedback. Scott tried to find a picture that his friends would like but that wouldn't offend his parents. Then he would caption the photo, tag specific friends, and post it. While these three interviewees focused specifically on posting photos, all ten interviewees mentioned the importance of photos to their Facebook use.

Interviewees posted and viewed photos far more often than they posted or viewed written content. In fact, posting public written content was rarely mentioned by the group of interviewees. This is not to say that written content on Facebook was not important, but the ways that interviewees are writing on Facebook may be different than what might be expected. For example, interviewees were far more likely to send private messages or engage in chat on Facebook than they were to post status updates or comments. Private messages in particular were mentioned by four interviewees as an activity that they engage in on Facebook regularly, and chat was mentioned by an additional two interviewees. It should be noted here that private messages and chat are part of the same feature in the current version of Facebook: if your Facebook friend is currently online, the message is sent in a chat window. If he or she is not online, the message is sent as a

private message. Private messages may turn into chats if the friend is online later or chats may turn into private messages as your friend signs off.

Connor used private messages as a type of synchronous text messaging, noting the ability to easily engage in group messaging through Facebook. Others, such as Gabriel, noted the similarity to text messaging as well. He used private messaging as a way to communicate with friends directly. Melanie is the only interviewee to mention using the chat feature to talk to whoever happens to be online. All of the other interviewees that mentioned it targeted specific people when sending a message.

Several interviewees also noted the importance of adding written content to images, videos, or links when these things were posted to Facebook—a literacy practice that demonstrates the multimodal nature of composing on Facebook. All ten interviewees mentioned at least one of these kinds of posts at some time during the interview. Six of the ten interviewees mentioned captioning these posts as part of their discussion. As noted above in the section about photos, some interviewees went into great detail about captioning media. Based on this discussion, it seems that captions may be the most popular type of written public content on Facebook—more so than status updates or comments—for this population.

Several interviewees noted very practical reasons for posting written content on Facebook. Carrie noted that she never gets on Facebook because she has "something to say," but instead uses Facebook as a means of assistance. She notes a particular recent experience in which she was sitting in an economics class and did not understand what was going on. She used Facebook as a backchannel to ask other students in the class what

the teacher meant by her lecture. Other interviewees also used Facebook in a similar way to get assistance with college schoolwork. Matthew was a member of about 30 groups on Facebook. He noted that the only posts he made that were only writing were when he asked these groups for help. Specifically, he noted an engineering group he would go onto and ask for assistance with his engineering classes. He said that this sometimes "branch[ed] to messages" in which members of the group would offer more assistance. He described his process as first deciding what he needed help with and then deciding which of the groups he belonged to would offer the best assistance. He said he occasionally decided that messages were more appropriate if he thought one person in particular would offer the best help. He said that when composing his message, he thought about what he needed to do, what he was trying to get from the group, and who he might need to target. He said he always tried to be clear about what he needed and when he needed it by. He mentioned trying to be "really specific" in his posts.

Commenting was not mentioned as a regular activity of most of the interviewees, but it was mentioned on a few occasions. Carrie mentioned feeling "obligated" to comment on a post when she had been tagged in it and also mentioned that she would use commenting as a form of connection. She commented on her friends' posts if she hadn't "talked to them in a while." Nearly all of the interviewees noted that they rarely commented on posts when I asked about this directly. Ray even noted having a question about one of his Facebook friend's posts, but chose not to ask it in a comment.

Gabriel was the interviewee most invested in posting written status updates. He noted starting out by putting "some good thought into" what he intended to post about—

avoiding such topics as politics and religion (something Melanie and Connor also mentioned). He then put it in the status box, read over the post to check for errors, and reworded the post to make it "sound witty and eloquent." He noted that he tried to word status updates in a way that made it seem like he was "actually telling it face-to-face." He noted that he would re-read and reword the post a few times before actually posting. Gabriel is the only interviewee to detail writing a status update as his main posting process.

Jason was the only interviewee that focused primarily on posting links and videos on Facebook. He explained his process for posting a video as putting a link to the video in the status update box and then asking himself "how am I going to present this in a way that'll make people want to watch it?" He said that he generally used humor or referenced something in the video to entice people to watch what he's posted. Ray briefly mentioned posting videos as well, but he noted that he usually posted them without written text and just let each video "speak for itself," a very different practice than Jason.

Many interviewees mentioned looking at and responding to events as a common activity on Facebook. In particular, Baozhai, Matthew, and Scott talked in depth about their experience with Facebook events. Group events through a group called "Chinese English Language Bridge" were the primary reason that Baozhai used Facebook. She noted the practice of always selecting that she was "maybe" going to an event. She does this despite the fact that she intends to go and stated that it was just in case she "forgot" about the event later on. Scott took this the opposite direction and replied with "maybe" even when he was certain that he could not go—for example, when the event was in

another state. He did this as a show of support for the event and stated that "other people will go just because of me—me going."

Most of what interviewees said about their activity was verified when I observed a Facebook session for each interviewee. This was important because self-reported data can sometimes be unreliable. For example, there was one notable difference in reported behavior and actual behavior. Only two interviewees mentioned "liking" content as part of their regular activities on Facebook, but six of the interviewees "liked" at least one thing during their session. The interviewees saw "liking" as a complex rhetorical activity. They often felt pressured to "like" certain content (especially if they were tagged). Gabriel noted that it was "weird" to "like" content that was not posted by one of his own Facebook friends (but was posted by a friend of a friend) even if he enjoyed what was posted. Ray mentioned a similar practice, stating that his likelihood of "liking" content depends on "how close" he is with the poster. He stated that he won't "like" content if he didn't consider the poster close. In his interview, Connor noted that "liking" something didn't necessarily mean that you support or agree with it. He stated that he viewed "liking" as a demonstration that the content was "worth [his] time" or "meaningful." This meant that he may "like" something he actually disagreed with. Also notably, every interviewee spent at least a little time scanning over their Facebook newsfeed. No interviewees mentioned this as a regular activity, but they all took part in it. These two discrepancies may be due to the invisibility of these practices: they are so normal and commonplace that interviewees do not even think about them as they do them.

How Students See Their Literacy Practices

Writing vs. conversation. In order to better understand if students saw their Facebook activity as more related to literacy or orality, students were asked if they saw Facebook as related to writing, related to conversation, and/or related to some other activity. Seven interviewees said it was related to writing, and eight said it was related to conversation. All of the interviewees said it was related to at least one of the two. In addition to the two options presented, interviewees also said it was related to networking, coordination, artistic viewing, and meeting new people.

Among the interviewees who said that Facebook was related to writing, Carrie saw the only connection to writing on Facebook was grammatical correctness or posting writing from elsewhere (in particular, she mentioned posting poems or raps to "test out" with friends). Matthew only hesitantly stated that Facebook was connected to writing. He stated that it was only connected to writing when he was asking for help with writing for school on his Facebook groups. Scott was also hesitant, stating that Facebook was writing, but it was "not related to the skill of writing." When asked to clarify, he said "you are not trying to make poetry in your posts" and went on to identify posts as a simple relaying of facts.

A few of the interviewees were more confident in their assertion that Facebook had a connection to writing. Gabriel stated that Facebook was connected to writing because Facebook focused on conveying a message. Connor connected Facebook usage to storytelling and made a direct connection to between Facebook and his first-year composition class before any questions about such a connection were asked.

More interviewees identified Facebook as a kind of conversation than as a kind of writing (seven versus eight out of ten), and only one interviewee made this connection with hesitancy. Chelsea noted that Facebook *could* be conversation because status updates often resulted in a back and forth between users. She was hesitant in this assertion, however, and could not decide what she would call Facebook activity if asked. The other interviewees who asserted that Facebook was a kind of conversation did so without hesitation. Jason stated that Facebook was primarily conversation and couldn't be writing because it didn't have a "formal format." Ray said that it was related to conversation because it was similar to "small talk" that people engage in when meeting in person. Scott stated that it was related to conversation because of the social aspects of Facebook—something he associated with conversation more than writing.

Carrie's response was particularly interesting. She noted that interactions on Facebook were "conversation pace," but that they were a kind of "raw conversation" because people "are not open to talking about what they really feel or what their ideas really are" when there are people "staring back at them" in person.

Composition. After asking interviewees what categories Facebook activity might fall into, interviewees were then asked if they saw a relationship between Facebook and composition. Six interviewees stated that they thought there was a connection, two interviewees said there was not, and one interviewee said there might be. The final interviewee did not offer an answer either way. The interviewees' most common connections between Facebook activity and composition were "writing" (three interviewees) and "thought" (three interviewees). Additionally, interviewees saw a

connection because of debate, audience, and expression. As part of this line of questioning, I asked interviewees to define the word "composition" in their own words. Two of the three interviewees who said that Facebook was not related to composition or were unsure if there was a connection mentioned length as being part of the definition of composition. Scott stated that composition was "a large piece of writing," and Chelsea said composition had to be "something long, not just three words." The third interviewee, Melanie, said that composition was "written work." None of the other interviewees mentioned length or work in their definitions of composition.

Most of the interviewees who stated that there was a connection between Facebook and composition mentioned some kind of expression when asked why they saw a connection. Baozhai stated that Facebook was able to "express [her] feelings," and Carrie also noted the importance of "expression." Connor noted that he could "freely share thoughts" on Facebook. Gabriel said that Facebook was "saying something about" him and was a "reflection of [his] character." This connection with expression may also be what Carrie was referring to when she referenced the "raw conversation" of Facebook. Carrie's later comments support this when she defines composition as "a mix of your own style of writing and conversation." Carrie's comments seem to suggest that writing and conversation might not be two separate things to her but instead are parts of the same activity.

Audience. Audience on Facebook was quite important to the interviewees. The most common perceived audiences for their Facebook content were close friends (six interviewees) and family (five interviewees). All of the interviewees thought about their

perceived audiences before posting content: nine of the interviewees gave a definite "yes" when asked if they thought about these audiences before posting and one interviewee said that she did think about her audience sometimes.

Most of the interviewees reacted to their audience in positive ways. For example, Ray mentioned checking to make sure that the content he was posting would be funny to his audience or would be something they would "like to see." Jason and Scott also mentioned trying to tailor content to the senses of humor of their audience members. Three interviewees, Baozhai, Ray, and Scott, mentioned tagging specific people in posts if they thought that the content was relevant to that person.

Three interviewees mentioned complications with audience on Facebook. Melanie mentioned both her grandmother and her ex-boyfriend as part of her Facebook audience (among several other people and groups). She stated that she wouldn't post certain things for fear of making her grandmother upset. She also mentioned excluding both her grandmother and her ex-boyfriend from certain posts on Facebook because she did not want them to see what she was posting. Carrie worried about posting content to Facebook because she feared certain members of her audience would misinterpret what she had posted. She noted that she often dealt with her boyfriend overanalyzing what she had posted. Chelsea was a particularly special case in regards to audience complications. She was worried enough about who would see her Facebook content that she pared down her Facebook friends list to make herself more comfortable when she posted.

Several students also noted that they avoided posting political content on Facebook for fear of starting arguments. Jason, Melanie, and Connor mentioned this

specifically. Connor went into the most detail on the topic. After Connor mentioned that he did not post political content on Facebook, I pointed out that he was wearing a political shirt during our discussion. I asked him to clarify what made one kind of political speech different than the other. He said that "people on Facebook gain a false sense of courage, and they feel like they can be more aggressive." But off of Facebook, people were more likely to "take [his] perspective into account without just dismissing it." He stated that political speech on Facebook was more likely to start arguments whereas political speech in person was more likely to start discussion.

Composition Pedagogy and Facebook Literacy

There were numerous literacy practices that composition students were engaged in on Facebook. One of the most important findings from the interviews was the importance of photos to these literacy practices. They demonstrate that Facebook is more than simply written text but is far more useful as an example of a multimodal text. Photos were viewed most often, "liked" most often during the Facebook observations, and posted more often than text-only content. If Facebook were to be used as part of a composition class, this would need to be taken into account. Approaching Facebook as a text-only or even text-heavy medium would be a disservice to students and would likely not portray Facebook as how the students are actually using it. Some of the articles cited in composition studies (Alberti, 2013; Balzhiser et al, 2011; Coad, 2013; Reid, 2011) fall into this trap and focus on Facebook as a text-only medium with very little exploration of other literacy practices taking place. Other articles use a more expansive view of literacy

practices (Buck, 2012; DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; DePew, 2011; Fife, 2010; Maranto & Barton, 2010), but still treat Facebook as a text-heavy medium. Alexander (2009) notes the importance of demonstrating to students the shifting definition of literacy in today's world. This requires demonstrating to students the importance of multiple modes of literate communication. He states that "[d]oing so requires that we acknowledge the literacies that students are already developing outside the classroom and demonstrate how they can be complemented and augmented with more "traditional" academic literacies" (p. 53). These multiple literacies can be demonstrated through their Facebook use in a similar way that Alexander (2009) suggests doing so through video games.

Status updates and comments were relatively rare according to both what the interviewees' statements and what I observed as they used Facebook. Captions, chat, and private messages were far more common forms of written content. The practice of writing effective captions may be of particular interest to composition teachers who want to discuss multimodality. Captioning offers a simple demonstration of the incorporation of text and other media to make for a greater meaning in both. It can serve as an entryway into discussions of why multimodality is important to making meaning in compositions. The important take-away from the finding about captioning is that writing is not absent from Facebook, but it is a single piece in a much more complex constellation of literacy practices that include incorporations of photos, videos, links, and non-text-based media. Fraiberg (2010) calls this interaction of various modes in making meaning "knotworking" (p. 105) and states that "[r]emixing composition for the twenty-first century requires a

shift toward conceptualizing writers as "knotworkers" negotiating complex arrays of languages, texts, tools, objects, symbols, and tropes" (p. 107). He and others (such as Selfe, 2009; Alexander, 2009; and Yancey, 2004) note he importance of demonstrating these complex rhetorical interactions to composition students.

Alexander (2009) offers a framework for discussing such literacy practices in composition classes. He presents five literacy skills from gaming that may serve as useful in composition classes. These literacy skills also apply to using Facebook in composition classes. He points to literacy reflectivity, trans-literacies, collaborative writing, multicultural literacies, and critical literacies (p. 55). While all of these are demonstrated in the Facebook use of the interviewees in this study, trans-literacies and critical literacies have the clearest application from this data to the composition classroom. Alexander (2009) connects trans-literacies by stating that "Communication, specifically writing, varies from environment to environment; knowing how to make connections across different writing environments suggests increased rhetorical savvy" (p. 55). Interviewees in this study showed a strong ability to connect writing across different contexts. For example, all of the students were able to make clear connections between Facebook and composition classes when asked directly. Students did not initially make this connection, however, so making students more metacognitively aware of how they make connections may help to improve their writing awareness and may help to facilitate knowledge transfer. Alexander (2009) connects critical literacies to composition by stating "Pushing beyond surface level interpretations and analyses, in writing, demonstrates not only rhetorical awareness but also a critical engagement with the topic at hand" (p. 55).

Interviewees also seemed to be critically savvy about their Facebook use. Pushing this critical engagement with texts such as Facebook has been suggested in other research (Vie, 2008; Maranto & Barton, 2010; Coad, 2013; and Patrick, 2013). Exploring this in the classroom may also help to expand students' literacy knowledge and writing awareness. Alexander (2009) states "their reflective understanding of their literacy practices in one mode is to prompt them to make connections across modes" (p. 59). Not only will students be prompted to make these connections between various modes, they may also be made more aware of the semiotic affordances of each mode. Selfe (2010) states that "literate citizens, increasingly, need to make use of all semiotic channels to communicate effectively among different groups and for different purposes" (p. 606). Working with these various modes directly may be one way to help them make use of "all semiotic channels" as they compose.

Even simple literacy practices, such as "liking" content or responding to event invitations, are actually quite complex and could be explored. "Liking" requires a lot of thought and means more to the interviewees than that they simply like the content. Some interviewees felt pressured to "like" content, were hesitant to "like" content of those not close to them, and some understood "liking" as a means of approval for quality content more than actually liking the content. This demonstrates the complex rhetorical nature of something as simple as a "like" on Facebook. It also serves as an example of how interaction—no matter how simple—may be rhetorically complex and layered with meaning. Responding to events was equally complex: replying maybe could mean that the interviewee would definitely go or would definitely not go depending on the context.

But in either case, "maybe" appeared to mean that the interviewee was supporting the event in some way.

"Liking" and viewing content seemed to be invisible activities to the interviewees. They did not mention them as part of what they do on Facebook, but they were very common during the observed Facebook sessions. These activities are probably so commonplace to the interviewees that they don't consider that they are "doing" them exactly. Instead, they may be seen as the passive practice between the "real" activities of Facebook: posting and commenting.

There was also a great deal to learn about how students saw their literacy practices on Facebook in relation to composition. The interviewees were more likely to see Facebook as related to conversation than as related to writing. This may tie Facebook to Ong's (1982) idea of secondary orality. With secondary orality, spoken communication is affected by literacy to somewhat resemble written communication. Perhaps on Facebook, the reverse is true: written communication has been affected to resemble spoken communication to the students. This is the conclusion made by Haas et al. (2011) when discussing IMing, and they state directly that "in initial studies we have conducted on the language features of Facebook and texting, we have discovered many of these same features in writing in those contexts, as well" (p. 398). Brandt (2011) argues that literate and oral communications are not as separate as most theorists suggest and that both pose "the same basic interpretive puzzles […] to bring meaning to each other" (p. 6). She argues that the most important difference between literacy and orality is in

social involvement. Perhaps students see Facebook as tied to both literacy and orality (but more closely to orality) because the social involvement is higher than in a normal, more decontextualized writing context such as a composition class.

When asked about the connection to composition in particular, six of the students immediately saw the connection, but all of the students were able to make specific connections to composition when asked for them. The most common connection was through "expression" in some form. The interviewees often used this word to mean expressing their thoughts to their audience or expressing something about their individual personalities. The interviewees who did not see a connection between Facebook and composition initially most often pointed to the length of writing or "work" in their definitions of composition. This has a number of implications for composition teachers who may want to use Facebook in their composition classes. Expression may be a good place to start to make the connection between Facebook and composition. No students pointed to areas such as composing process, rhetoric, audience, or genre, using those explicit terms, but there are hints throughout the interviews that these were very important to these students. Previous research also points to the fact that students do engage with these concepts on Facebook regularly (Shepherd, in press). Building on the complex nature of the shorter compositions on Facebook may also be important. Demonstrating to students that even short or "easy" compositions are still complex and meaningful might be a good place to begin discussing the complex rhetorical nature of Facebook posts.

The interviewees were very aware of audience on Facebook. This seems like the most fruitful area of discussion for composition teachers. Audience is a complex but very important concept in composition classes. But it is also a concept that composition students often struggle with. The interviewees demonstrated that they have a very mature sense of audience when it comes to Facebook: they are aware who may be viewing their content and tailor the content appropriately. Discussing the complex nature of audience on Facebook may lead students to discussions of audience in other composing contexts. This could help students to apply these same principles to their own writing for composition classes and elsewhere in more formal writing.

Conclusion

Digital literacies—such as those on Facebook—are complex and meaningful to composition students. They involve a number of literacy practices that include more traditional written content but also a number of other modes of communication: photos, videos, links, and "liking," for example. By looking at these specific literacy practices in the specific context in which they are practiced, composition teachers can learn a great deal about the actual literacy practices that our students are engaged in. As can be seen here, these literacy practices are far from simple and should not be subordinated to or even separated from traditional print literacies. Understanding the literacy of the screen—or more aptly, the *literacies* of the screen—should not be separated out as niche or special knowledge. These literacies are part of a larger constellation of semiotic affordances that are part of a larger series of literacies. As Selfe (2009) puts it,

"Composition classrooms can provide a context not only for talking about different literacies, but also for practicing different literacies, learning to create texts that combine a range of modalities as communicative resources: exploring their affordances, the special capabilities they offer to authors; identifying what audiences expect of texts that deploy different modalities and how they respond to such texts" (p. 643).

Digital literacies are part of the literacies of everyday life, and they are increasingly important to composition studies. And as they become more important, researchers must endeavor to understand these literacy practices better and adapt composition classes to include what we have learned. This does not mean simply "grafting" digital literacies onto our assignments (Froehlich & Froehlich, 2013, p. 291). Researchers must observe and attempt to understand literacy practices as they take place in real writing situations and help students to better understand these practices and how they can be used to prepare for other composing contexts. Here, we have looked at the literacy practices of Facebook, which are wide-spread and especially common among college students. The interviewees have helped to showcase what is important about the literacy practices on Facebook: visual literacies, written literacies, and various other literacy practices in which they take part. Many of the interviewees saw a connection between these literacy practices on Facebook and composition, but this connection was limited. Composition teachers can take this opportunity to engage students with literacy practices that are important and meaningful to them, but beyond this, we are also introducing students to a shifting definition of literacy in the 21st century (Alexander, 2009).

By engaging with Facebook literacy practices critically with composition students, composition teachers can help students to better understand the literacy practices of Facebook and literacy practices more broadly. This can help students to become better users of Facebook and may help students to see ways that their Facebook literacy may help them in other composing contexts as well. Students can focus on "'mixed media' writing practice" (CCCC, 2004) to engage with the literacy of the screen in conjunction with the literacy of print. They can learn to "create, critique, analyze , and evaluate multimedia texts" (NCTE, 2008) by engaging with multimedia texts from their everyday lives. The world of composing involves myriad literacy practices. By engaging with students' literacy practices in the ways that they use them, composition teachers can help to make these complexities easier for students to access and understand. As Selfe (2010) puts it, "the inclusion of multiple modes of rhetorical expression represents a simple acknowledgment that a literacy education focused solely on writing will produce citizens with an overly narrow and exclusionary understanding of the world and the variety of audiences who will read and respond to their work" (p. 606).

INCOMING WRITING TRANSFER:

USING PRIOR WRITING KNOWLEDGE IN FYC

First-year composition (FYC) students know a lot about writing before they begin their first writing project in their first college-level composition course. Most of the students have been writing—and writing regularly—for over a decade. Students have been writing in their high school classes, of course, but they have also been writing outside of academia: for part-time jobs, to communicate with friends and family via text message, and on social media online. Much of this informal writing is done voluntarily—and often without much conscious reflection about connections to other types of writing (Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011). Students may not even see many of the types of writing that they do *as writing*. But FYC teachers and writing program administrators would be remiss to ignore lessons students may have learned about writing before they have entered FYC classes.

Composition faculty have a responsibility to understand this writing and to learn what it can bring to the composition classroom. But there is a common sentiment in composition studies that previous writing knowledge is simple, is incomplete, or may even have a negative impact on writing in college. For example, many of those both inside and outside of academia seem to believe that the effect that digital writing has on composition is negative—that students learn poor writing habits by writing in digital settings. While some students may learn a few poor writing habits by writing for digital environments, the complex rhetorical practices (DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; DePew,

2011) that they learn in these writing environments are overwhelmingly positive. What FYC students learn about writing before entering FYC classes can be a valuable resource to help impart important writing knowledge about rhetoric, genre, audience, and discourse communities. Their prior writing knowledge can serve as an example of how complex writing contexts play out in situations outside of the classroom. Students may learn about rhetorical purpose from writing for part-time jobs, learn about audience from posting on Facebook or Twitter, or learn to understand rhetorical appeals from text messaging with friends and family. But these students may not be aware of what they already know and may need support in developing a metacognitive awareness of their rhetorical strategies. These students need guidance to see how prior writing knowledge may be applied to writing in composition classes and in future writing contexts beyond FYC.

In order to access the prior writing knowledge that students have, composition faculty must attempt to *transfer* that writing knowledge into their composition classes. As most knowledge transfer research has shown, this type of transfer is what is referred to as "far" transfer—meaning similarities between the two learning situations may not be immediately obvious to the learner (Salomon & Perkins, 1989; Haskell, 2001; Perkins & Salomon, 1992). Encouraging transfer in these types of situations is difficult. Far transfer does not happen automatically or by chance. In order to encourage students to actively transfer from one writing context to dissimilar writing context, composition faculty must actively teach for transfer (Smit, 2004; Beaufort, 2007; Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Wardle, 2007; Driscoll, 2011; Nowacek, 2011). To help students

access what they have already learned about writing, composition teachers must set up classroom activities that demonstrate to students the connection between classroom writing and their prior writing knowledge, persuade students that there is value in this connection, and show students directly how their prior writing knowledge can be applied to current and future writing contexts. Others in composition studies have noted the importance of looking at these "incomes": "part of studying transfer (especially what transfers out from FYW courses) involves gaining a better understanding of the meta-cognitive skills students bring with them into FYW courses—a better understanding, that is, of how outcomes are related to incomes" (Rounsaville, Goldberg, & Bawarshi, 2008, p. 99).

In this article, I will refer to the process of trying to access prior writing knowledge gained both inside and outside of the classroom as *incoming writing transfer*—or simply *incoming transfer* for brevity. The remainder of this article will detail why this is important, what composition faculty should know about knowledge transfer, and how we can use what we know about knowledge transfer to encourage incoming transfer in FYC. Roberson, Taczak, and Yancey (2012) state clearly that writing is "a highly complex and diversified activity" that "requires theories of transfer to be re-contextualized within and through the long history of writing studies to adequately address transfer as it relates to literate activity and how students develop as writers." It is important to look backwards to students' prior writing knowledge to learn how these students "develop as writers" to put their writing knowledge into context. Learning to write is an ongoing process that starts long before FYC and continues long after FYC has

been completed. By looking at incoming transfer, composition faculty can put writing learning into this larger context.

Backward-reaching, high-road transfer and "transferring in"

To understand how to access students' prior writing knowledge through incoming transfer, we first must understand the kind of transfer that is being discussed. Here, I borrow heavily from Salomon and Perkins (1989) and Schwartz, Bransford, & Sears (2005). In their article, Salomon and Perkins identified two major kinds of transfer: low-road transfer and high-road transfer. Low-road transfer results from repeated practice and involves little reflection. It is most useful when one encounters a very similar experience in the future. Salomon and Perkins (1989) give the commonly-cited example of repeated practice driving a car being useful when one learns to drive a truck. The activity will seem similar and familiar. There may be differences, but they are minor. One does not need a great deal of conscious reflection in order to "transfer" what one has learned from driving a car to be able to drive a truck successfully.

High-road transfer is considerably more complex. This results from "mindful abstraction" of learning (Salomon & Perkins, 1989, p. 126). Mindful abstraction is "the deliberate, usually metacognitively guided and effortful, decontextualization of a principle, main idea, strategy, or procedure" (Salomon & Perkins, 1989, p. 126). Where low-road transfer is useful for similar situations in which one can transfer without reflection, high-road transfer is more useful for situations with a bit more "distance" as the authors put it. These are situations in which one cannot automatically make

connections between learning situations. Learning to write across various contexts would require high-road transfer. Writing is a complex activity that requires "mindful abstraction" to successfully take what one has learned in one writing situation and apply that knowledge into a new writing situation (Beaufort, 2007; Driscoll, 2011). That application will not happen automatically or even easily. Without this type of abstraction, students approach every new writing situation that they encounter as "entirely new and foreign" (Driscoll, 2011). Students may be entirely unaware, for example, that any prior writing knowledge may help them succeed in FYC—and by the same token, they may be entirely unaware of how what they've learned in FYC may help them in future writing contexts.

Composition teachers have historically approached writing with activities that would seem to encourage low-road transfer: locally-focused and non-reflective practice that is intended to lead to general writing improvement. This approach to writing as general writing skills instructions (GWSI) has been shown to be ineffective (Russell, 1995; Smit, 2004; Downs & Wardle, 2007). As Russell (1995) puts it, this is tantamount to teaching a "generalizable skill called ball using" in order to teach students how to play golf, basketball, and soccer (p. 57). Various "ball" sports might have a few things in common, but it's not possible to generalize skills that will result in improvement for all (or even several) of them.

Transferring the complex writing practices necessary for successful writing in various situations requires high-road transfer. Writing in FYC is often quite different than writing outside of FYC, both for academic and non-academic purposes (see, for example,

Wardle, 2009). What we are asking students to do when we ask them to learn about writing and use it outside of FYC is quite difficult. It requires the conscious reflection and "mindful abstraction" of high-road transfer in order for the students to understand how they can use what they have learned when they encounter unfamiliar writing situations.

Salomon & Perkins (1989) further divide high-road transfer into two types: forward-reaching transfer and backward-reaching transfer (pp. 118-119). Discussions about transfer in composition studies have typically focused on forward-reaching transfer. This kind of high-road transfer results from attempting to create a general principle to apply in future situations. Trying to impart on students the necessity of reflecting on audience before beginning to write in a new writing situation is an example of attempting to teach for forward-reaching transfer: the hope is that students will then also think about audience when encountering *new* writing situations outside of composition. Forward-reaching transfer is extremely important to composition studies. This kind of transfer is necessary to help students prepare for future writing situations they might encounter. In fact, this type of transfer is the basis for important movements in composition studies currently taking place—most notably the writing-about-writing movement (Downs & Wardle, 2007)—and is even a central part of the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (CWPA, NCTE, & NWP, 2011) in which one of the central focuses is metacognition.

However, studies about learning transfer in the field of composition studies have mostly ignored the other side of high-road transfer: backward-reaching transfer. This is

where one encounters a problem and then looks back at their prior learning and experience for a possible solution to that problem. This type of learning transfer also requires the mindful abstraction and reflection of forward-reaching transfer but looks to the past for a source of knowledge to use in the present and future instead of abstracting knowledge in the present for future use. Backward-reaching transfer, in fact, may help facilitate forward-reaching transfer by teaching students how to engage in conscious reflection about what they already know when an unfamiliar situation is encountered (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). Backward-reaching transfer is an important and overlooked side of high-road transfer in composition studies.

Schwartz, Bransford, and Sears (2005) explore a similar concept when they discuss "transferring in." While not exactly the same as backward-reaching transfer, the two concepts share a lot in common. "Transferring in" refers to how previous knowledge affects one's ability to learn. This is not the "mindful abstraction" of Salomon and Perkins (1989) but instead refers to a "preparation for future learning" (Schwartz, Bransford, & Sears, 2005, p. 32). That is to say that the authors suggest that learning in certain cases prepares one to better learn in future cases. The example given in the article is related to the reintroduction of eagles to areas in which their numbers have dwindled. Fifth grade students, college students, and high school principals are all given this problem. All of them fail to come up with an adequate solution for how to reintroduce eagles successfully. *However*, the college students and high school principals were able to ask more relevant questions and come up with more workable solutions given time. They were not ready to solve the problem initially, but they were better prepared to learn

about the problem because of their previous knowledge. Using this knowledge was "transferring in" to the new situation: they did not apply the previous knowledge directly but instead used it to better learn what they needed to know. Coupled with the concept of "mindful abstraction" from Salomon and Perkins (1989), "transferring in" further suggests the importance of making use of previous writing knowledge for students in FYC. By engaging in backward-reaching transfer with students, they can learn not only to create the "mindful abstraction" necessary for high-road transfer, but they also may be able to help themselves prepare for future learning. They may make it easier to "transfer in" when they encounter a new or difficult writing situation in the future.

There are multiple reasons why backward-reaching transfer and transferring in are particularly important. Students do not enter our classes as blank slates. They already have a great deal of experience with writing and rhetoric both inside and outside of academia. This experience may not have been learned with forward-reaching transfer in mind, and that makes it much more difficult for students to apply what they have learned in FYC and in future writing situations. Attempting to facilitate backward-reaching transfer also gives students an example of how to actively enact this type of transfer and the vocabulary to discuss it once they do. While FYC can help greatly by facilitating forward-reaching transfer, composition teachers cannot possibly help students to create mindful abstractions for every writing challenge they may encounter. Students will need to engage with the writing situations on their own and draw on what they learned to solve future writing challenges. Students will need to engage in backward-reaching transfer to overcome these challenges. They will need to access prior knowledge and consider

through mindful abstraction how what they know about writing may be applied to the task at hand. Demonstrating how students may do this in FYC will help them to do this again in a mindful and reflective way when challenges occur. Getting students comfortable with the concept of "transferring in" will further help them to overcome these challenges.

There are multiple sources from which students may draw for backward-reaching transfer and "transfer in": high school writing experience, informal personal writing, writing for volunteer or part-time jobs, and digital writing. Very little has been written in composition studies reseearch about backward-reaching transfer, but what has been written has tended to focus on prior writing knowledge from high school (Robertson, Taczak, & Yancey, 2012) or high school and work (Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011). While these are certainly important sources of knowledge for backward-reaching transfer, so are the informal types of writing that students do. One particularly important and overlooked area is in their digital writing. Students engage in writing in digital spaces often, but this type of writing has not been explored for backward-reaching transfer.

Incoming writing transfer is a type of backward-reaching transfer in which students can attempt to access what they know about writing and rhetoric from their prior writing knowledge gained in various types of writing situations—both formal and informal. While some work on backward-reaching transfer has been done in composition studies (Robertson, Taczak, & Yancey, 2012; Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011), these studies have focused on high school writing or general writing knowledge and have not explored

all of the types of prior writing knowledge that students may draw from when entering new writing situations.

The train analogy

To clarify what is suggested by the concept of incoming writing transfer, I would like to present an analogy that helps to explain how composition classes have traditionally dealt with knowledge transfer and how a model that includes incoming transfer is different. In this analogy, the students are conductors of trains. Their trains have a number of cars and in these cars, they have knowledge. The teachers in this analogy run train stations. Not all train stations are run by teachers, however, and many of them simply require the loading or unloading of knowledge by the students themselves.

In the traditional model of writing-related knowledge transfer, a student pulls up to the composition train station in her train, and the teacher comes out and helps her load up some knowledge. There is one car on her train for "writing knowledge" and all of the knowledge from the composition class is loaded into that car. Up until this point, the car was mostly empty: there may have been a bit of writing knowledge in there from high school English classes, but there wasn't a lot else. The composition knowledge is placed into the writing car, and the student continues on down the track. When she gets to the next station and finds that the composition knowledge can be used there, she simply unloads it and continues on. The student gets the knowledge preformed, and she uses the knowledge in the same form.

This is a very inaccurate model of knowledge transfer. Transfer does not work by simply placing knowledge into students' heads and then expecting them to access the

knowledge as needed. This model of transfer relies heavily on ideas of writing knowledge as simple bundles and is the basis for such ideas as autonomous literacy models (Street, 1984; Brandt, 2011) and general writing skills instruction (GWSI) models of writing instruction in first-year composition (Russell, 1995). These models are generally rejected in current scholarship in composition studies because they "attempt to teach writing without teaching the activities that give writing meaning and motive" (Russell, 1995, p. 65). But these models still form the basis for how much of the discipline views incoming transfer. As Downs and Wardle (2007) put it, "Even when FYC courses do attempt to directly address the complexity of 'academic discourse,' they tend to operate on the assumption that writing instruction easily transfers to other writing situations—a deeply ingrained assumption with little empirical verification" (p. 556).

This is why many scholars both inside and outside of composition have suggested that the analogy of "transfer" is inadequate (King, 1999; Wardle, 2007). The term "transfer" suggests that knowledge is simply moved from one place to another. This is not at all how knowledge transfer really takes place.

A more accurate model of how writing-related knowledge transfer works is this: The student pulls her train into the station. In her train, she has a mix of writing-related knowledge: Some of the knowledge may be in the car marked "writing knowledge," and some of it may be in various other cars all throughout the train. Some of the knowledge may already be formed into clear and conscious ideas, but some of it may also be "raw"—meaning not fully formed into conscious ideas about writing. Some of the knowledge may be constructed into ideas very well—with careful thought and skilled

guidance—and some may be put together with pieces missing or with inappropriate pieces attached—put together absentmindedly or with other (non-writing-related) goals in mind. It is even possible that students may hold ideas about writing that contradict one another in different parts of the train. For example, a student may believe that the most important thing about writing is attention to audience when accessing writing knowledge from the "social media" car but ignore audience entirely when accessing writing knowledge from the "school" car.

When the train stops at the station, the teacher does not get to enter the train at all. She cannot put anything in, she can't rearrange pieces, and she can't disassemble any ideas that are already there. What the teacher can do is this: she can introduce new knowledge to the student, and she can make suggestions on how that knowledge might be put together into new ideas about writing. She might suggest assembling ideas from the new knowledge or suggest adding knowledge to pre-existing ideas already on the train. But ultimately, it is the student who chooses whether or not to put any of the knowledge on the train and whether or not to rearrange what they have. The student may pull away from the station and decide to take nothing or decide to use the knowledge in a very different way than suggested. But students will probably leave the station with something: it may be some knowledge, some partial idea, some new versions of old ideas, or some entirely newly constructed ideas. When she leaves, she may have composition knowledge in the "writing knowledge" car, but she also will likely have some of the knowledge in other cars as well. If she doesn't learn the writing knowledge in composition with the "mindful abstraction" of high-road transfer in mind, she may even make a separate

"composition" car and think that the knowledge gained in FYC is only applicable there. Many students in the study by Driscoll (2011) demonstrate that this may be taking place. The student will also likely have kept some of the ideas that she had previous to pulling into the "FYC" station, and these ideas will be interspersed with the ideas that she got from the composition class.

Now, the student moves on and she does not simply unload her knowledge at the next station when writing-related knowledge is needed. Instead, she goes through that same process again: she may use some of the ideas she has formed, but she also may take on some more knowledge or rearrange some of the ideas in her train. There may be a station manager to help her or not. But certainly, she does not simply unload what was loaded up at the last station.

Teaching for incoming writing transfer is one small part of the journey of the student. By teaching for incoming transfer, when students pull into the station, teachers help the students take an inventory of what writing-related knowledge they already have in their trains—not only looking at what is already in the "writing knowledge" car but checking around to see what else in the train might also be useful. The teachers can help them find ways to arrange the knowledge that they have, taking pieces from this car and that, and attempting to turn that knowledge into something that is more useful for what they might encounter both at the current station and those further down the tracks when writing-related knowledge is needed. This will not only help students in those new situations, but it will also give them a model for how to do this rearranging mindfully on their own.

Teaching for incoming transfer treats first-year composition classes as a single event along the life-long endeavor that is learning to write. Teachers are not there to give students knowledge; they are there to encourage students to think about writing in useful ways so that they can learn about writing on their own more efficiently and effectively.

What we already know about incoming writing transfer

To date, little has been written about backward-reaching, high-road transfer or "transferring in" prior writing knowledge that students have gained before entering FYC. However, there are two articles in composition studies that relate to this topic and provide useful insight. The most obvious connection to incoming transfer research is the article by Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey (2012). The authors look at "prior knowledge" and how it relates to transfer in FYC. The authors focus on writing knowledge gained in high school, but they do mention other types of writing knowledge—such as knowledge gained from digital writing—briefly. They state that students actually use writing most often outside of school contexts via email and texts but do not go into great detail about how this prior knowledge may affect student writing.

Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey (2012) state that students deal with previous writing knowledge in three ways: They draw "on both knowledge and practice" and use "it in ways almost identical to the ways they have used it in the past" in a process they call "assemblage." They may also rework previous "knowledge and practice as they address new tasks" in a process they call "remixing." And finally, students may create "new knowledge and practices for themselves when [they] encounter what we call a setback or critical incident." A "critical incident" is when a student fails to apply their

prior knowledge in an effective way and is forced to rethink how they think about writing. To put it another way, "assemblage" is when a student resists changing their ideas about writing and simply "grafts" new writing knowledge onto their already held beliefs. "Remixing" is when students keep older ideas that they find useful but also use new ideas that they find more appropriate or useful. And the "critical incident" is when students find that their old ideas simply aren't holding up, and they must replace them entirely with new ideas about writing.

The authors suggest that their views offer useful insight for dealing with prior knowledge in FYC. They suggest that teachers get students to identify absent prior knowledge and explore how to fill it in, explain remixing as a way to integrated their new and old knowledge, and let students know about critical incidents and what might be learned from them. What they suggest seems to tie in nicely with Saloman and Perkins's (1989) idea of backward-reaching transfer: identify what you know and how it might apply to the present. But Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey (2012) take this one step further. After identifying what might be useful to the present, they suggest filling in new knowledge to supplement and replace past models that may have been inadequate. While the authors focus on high school writing knowledge, their theories about "remixing" and "critical incidents" may apply to other kinds of prior writing knowledge as well. However, because these types of writing will come from different "domains"—high school writing is still "school"—encouraging transfer through "remixing" or identifying "critical incidents" may be more difficult for writing knowledge gained in work or informal writing situations.

Rieff and Bawarshi (2011) look at stumbling blocks when attempting to transfer writing knowledge between these different "domains" of writing. The authors' study looks specifically at genre knowledge and how students transfer this knowledge between writing contexts in school, work, and "other" contexts. Rieff and Bawarshi (2011) break down their data by dividing their students into two groups: "boundary crossers" and "boundary guarders" (p. 325). Boundary crossers are those students who engage in high-road transfer by taking their previous genre knowledge and applying it to new writing contexts. They are likely to take pieces of previous genres and apply them to new and different situations. Boundary guarders are only likely to engage in low-road transfer. They will only apply a genre whole cloth to a similar situation.

Rieff and Bawarshi (2011) found that generally, students were unlikely to apply writing knowledge gained in one domain to writing in another. For example, if a student gained writing knowledge in a high-school English class (the domain of "school"), he or she would be unlikely to apply that knowledge to writing in a part-time job (the domain of "work") or online (the domain of "other"). This would suggest that writing knowledge gained from non-academic sources would be unlikely to be applied writing in FYC classes and beyond. Rieff and Bawarshi state that writers tended to draw only from "school" genres when writing for school.

As the authors apply the information in their study to FYC, they make a number of suggestions. One of these is encouraging student to gain "comfort with reformulating and transforming existing resources may serve students well in accessing and adapting to future writing contexts" (Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011, p. 330). The authors also suggest

discussing genres and genre conventions explicitly as part of the FYC curriculum to "facilitate students' metacognitive reflection" on genre and writing (Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011, p. 333). The connection to backward-reaching transfer is clear: "metacognitive reflection" about past writing genres may lead to the "mindful abstraction" necessary for backward-reaching, high-road transfer. Rieff and Bawarshi are suggesting something very similar to the "mindful abstraction" suggested by Salomon and Perkins (1989). Students need to work to transfer across domains of writing knowledge.

While not drawing directly on backward-reaching transfer or transferring in, the current trend in composition studies toward reflection also connects directly to the ideas of incoming transfer. In particular, writing-about-writing (WAW) pedagogy—such as that put forth by Downs and Wardle (2007)—often includes a great deal of reflection, including reflection about past writing. For example, the popular textbook *Writing About Writing: A College Reader* (Wardle & Downs, 2011) includes a project in which students reflect on their own previous writing experiences to mine them for ideas about writing "constructs" such as what it means to be a good writer (p. 167-169). Reflection is a common part of the FYC curriculum, but no studies have suggested looking at various kinds of prior writing knowledge that students have with an eye toward backward-reaching transfer or transferring in. Incoming writing transfer is often muted or overlooked in favor of reflecting on current writing situations or in favor of forward-reaching transfer.

Teaching for incoming writing transfer

The studies above serve as a good starting point when composition faculty and writing program administrators consider how to best facilitate incoming writing transfer. Reflection is a key component to any curriculum that seeks to incorporate anything but the simplest of low-road transfer. As Salomon and Perkins (1989) point out, high-road transfer requires a "mindful abstraction" of knowledge to be able to effectively use that knowledge in new contexts. Both forward-reaching and backward-reaching high-road transfer require this mindful abstraction.

In the case of incoming writing transfer, mindful abstraction would require that students reflect on writing that they have done in the past in a broad range of writing contexts to mine those experiences for knowledge that may be useful in current or future writing contexts. This will require a great deal of guidance from composition faculty. Because this knowledge was not learned with forward-reaching transfer in mind, students are not likely to immediately see connections between writing on Facebook, Twitter, or SnapChat and writing in FYC, for example. And as Rieff and Bawarshi (2011) point out, they may overlook connections between writing done for work or volunteering and writing done for school. While it is possible that students will be able to "transfer in" knowledge to help them through the preparation for future learning model (Schwartz, Bransford, & Sears, 2005), a more reflective and meta-aware approach is more likely to yield long-term transfer to other writing situations. This will likely involve looking at specific ways that prior writing knowledge may provide useful connections to current or future writing situations. Students may look at how specific writing is crafted to specific

audiences, how specific writing is meeting a specific rhetorical purpose, or how specific writing is using rhetorical appeals to connect with the audience more effectively. For example, one effective assignment may be to explore a Facebook profile for how the author has used writing and images to convey a certain "argument" for the type of person he or she is. While students are initially resistant to the idea that an argument is being made, pointing out specific ways that the profile could make an argument or specific ways that the profile might be different if the author was attempting to appeal to a different audience usually helps students see connections to FYC and facilitates moving into a "boundary crossing" (Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011) role.

Following the advice of Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey (2012), students must also be made aware of "remixing" prior writing knowledge and the importance of "critical incidents." In the case of incoming writing transfer, this is likely to mean encouraging students to open up their ideas of what "writing" and "composition" are. For example, Shepherd (in press) found that students were not likely to see Facebook as a type of composition, but further research by the same author (forthcoming) shows that students can make several connections between composition and Facebook if prompted. Making those connections may mean that students would be more likely to see Facebook as writing or composition and would be more likely to draw on prior writing knowledge gained in those contexts. In fact, Driscoll (2011) found that first-year composition students had a very limited definition of the word "writing." Students did not see things such as memos or lab reports as being types of writing. Driscoll suggests that if students do not see the activity that they are engaged in as a type of writing, it is unlikely that the

necessary "mindful abstraction" will take place to facilitate high-road transfer between the two contexts. The same is likely to be true when attempting to facilitate backward-reaching transfer from other writing contexts as well. If students do not see the previous writing *as writing*, knowledge transfer is not likely to occur. Composition faculty who are interested in assisting students with accessing prior writing knowledge must first work toward assisting students in recognizing their prior writing experience as related to current experiences or experiences that they may have in the future. This will likely involve demonstrating how writing done in more formal contexts, such as composition, shares features in common with writing done in more informal contexts, such as text messages and social network sites.

Because writing done in first-year composition is often a different "domain" (Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011) than prior writing knowledge students may have, composition faculty will have an additional hurdle to incoming transfer. Students are likely to recognize writing done in first-year composition as a "school" domain and are therefore likely to only draw on "school" genres when they encounter new writing contexts within the class. Again, this will require demonstrating to students the connections between "school," "work," and "other" writing domains. If composition faculty wish to assist students in engaging in more "boundary crossing" behavior, they will need to follow the advice of Rieff and Bawarshi (2011) when they state that students must gain "comfort with reformulating and transforming existing resources" in order to adapt them "to future writing contexts" (p. 330).

Additional knowledge transfer research in composition studies also offers insight into how composition faculty may help to assist FYC students with incoming transfer. For example, Depalma and Ringer (2011) suggest the importance of "the conscious and intuitive process of applying or reshaping learned writing knowledge" (p. 135) through a process that they call adaptive transfer. Driscoll and Wells (2012) note the importance of student disposition in transfer, stating that students must be *willing* to engage in transfer for it to occur. And Adler-Kassner, Majewski, & Koshnick (2012) note the importance of "threshold concepts" and working across several courses (not just FYC alone) in order to "foster transfer between contexts." Other scholars have noted the importance of a sustained connection across several writing-intensive courses as being important to writing related transfer (Russell, 1995; Nowacek, 2011). Perhaps working toward connections with domains other than school writing will help to create such a sustained connection.

While it is important to work toward backward-reaching transfer from prior writing knowledge, working toward this type of transfer has other goals. Teaching students how to transfer writing-related knowledge from one context or one domain to another will help them to overcome future writing challenges more easily. Smit (2004) puts it succinctly when he says "if we want to help students to transfer what they have learned, we must teach them how to do so" (p. 134). One of the primary goals of working with incoming transfer is not only to teach students how to use prior writing knowledge but how to transfer writing knowledge into new situations when they encounter them. We

must help students through the process of how to learn about writing instead of simply attempting to impart knowledge.

Conclusion

Learning to write takes a lifetime. Students begin to learn to write when they are very young and take part in activities that help them learn to be more effective writers—whether they do so consciously or unconsciously—for years before they enter FYC. Students will continue the process of learning to write as they enter future classes and as they enter the workplace. By encouraging students to engage in backward-reaching high-road transfer to access their prior writing knowledge, we demonstrate to them the complicated and interconnected nature of learning to write. Composition faculty can demonstrate to students what they already know about writing and how that knowledge connects to writing in FYC and to writing that they may encounter in future writing contexts.

While many composition studies scholars have recognized the importance of transfer to the teaching of FYC, few have looked at backward-reaching, high-road transfer. Those who have, have tended to focus on formal writing contexts—mostly high school but also work—and have tended to overlook informal writing contexts that students may learn from. This is a serious oversight with implications for composition instruction and administration. In future research, composition studies must take into account the knowledge that students already have about writing and consider how that affects the ways in which they learn. Curricula need to be developed to take into account incoming writing transfer.

In this article, the importance of backward-reaching transfer—when coupled with forward-reaching transfer—has been shown. It has also been demonstrated how what we as a field know about transfer is important to ideas related to incoming transfer. For incoming transfer to take place, students will need to engage in mindful abstraction of their prior writing knowledge; discuss transfer explicitly as part of the curriculum; learn the ways in which informal writing is an important type of writing; learn to connect writing across different domains; and talk about how they can take knowledge they have, remix it as needed, and confront "critical incidents."

Composition faculty and writing program administrators must be aware of the importance of understanding that learning to write is an ongoing process that began before FYC and will continue after. Incoming writing transfer is a part of that process.

CONCLUSION

Digital literacies are an important part of composition education. Most writing done in 21st century is born digital. This affects both how and why students write. The curriculum of the composition classroom needs to acknowledge the ubiquity of digital literacies, both as a means of engaging with writing critically and also as a means of demonstrating the interconnectedness of writing in various contexts. Specific digital literacy practices are common among composition students. Many engage in writing text messages, tweeting, and posting on SNSs such as Facebook. Understanding the literacy practices in these contexts is an important part of understanding literacy practices in a variety of both digital and non-digital spaces. Digital literacies serve to demonstrate the interconnectedness of literacy to students and serve as familiar examples of practices that students are likely to encounter in daily writing contexts. In particular, SNSs demonstrate how to use multiple modes to convey meaning and how to engage reflectively with an audience.

Unfortunately, students do not always easily make connections between the literacies of a space such as Facebook and those of the composition classroom. Making students aware of these connections may help to foster more mindful writing practices in both contexts and beyond. By demonstrating the complex rhetorical nature of Facebook and other digital spaces, students may become more aware of how purpose, audience, stance, and genre affect how one conveys his or her meaning. It may also make students aware of the various affordances they have in digital spaces to make meaning: using likes,

pictures, links, and audio in addition to text to created meaning for their various audiences.

As Yancey (2004) points out, we have a "moment" to reshape what we are doing as a field. Incorporating digital literacies is crucial to the continued centrality of composition in university education. We are at an important juncture where we are clearly defining (and redefining) what it means to be part of composition studies. We are limiting ourselves as a field—even running the risk of making ourselves irrelevant—if we only focus on only the "literacy of print" and dismiss the "literacy of the screen" (CCCC, 2004). In a world that is increasingly digital, it makes little sense to not only acknowledge the importance of digital literacies in our daily lives but to embrace them, learn from them, and teach to them.

Effectively incorporating digital literacies into our classes requires a rethinking how we approach writing pedagogy. New directions in composition studies, such as the writing-about-writing movement (Downs & Wardle, 2007), have shown us the importance of conscious reflection on writing. This may help to encourage students to make connections between their literacy practices in digital spaces and those in composition classes. Writing-about-writing borrows heavily from literature related to knowledge transfer—another popular topic in composition. Exploring how we approach writing transfer is crucial to moving forward as a field and is important to the incorporation of digital literacies into mainstream composition pedagogy.

Literature in composition studies about writing transfer has generally focused on transfer from composition classes to future writing contexts. With few exceptions

(Robertson, Taczak, & Yancey, 2012; Rieff & Bawarshi, 2011), studies have overlooked what can be transferred into composition classes. This is a great oversight for two reasons. The first is that it treats students as though they come into composition classes with no knowledge of writing. This is not the case: their previous writing knowledge will affect how they write regardless of whether or not we acknowledge it. By taking this knowledge into account, we can help students shape how they see writing moving forward, ideally giving them more viable models for how writing is done and what tools are available to write effectively.

But overlooking incoming writing transfer is also a great oversight for another reason: looking back on past writing experiences allows students to validate their previous writing knowledge, really see it as writing, and understand how various writing contexts may be interconnected. While the connection between previous writing knowledge they acquired from school settings may be easier for them to transfer (Rieff and Bawarshi, 2011), writing knowledge gained in digital spaces may be harder to connect—but equally important to how students view writing. These writing experiences have dramatized things such as audience and rhetorical purpose for the students, and they have also demonstrated how they can make selections about mode to make their rhetorical choices. Demonstrating this to students offers a path to greater understanding of a broader view of literacy.

Future Research

To build on the research presented in this manuscript, I suggest several directions for future of research into SNSs and transfer. The first and most obvious is to continue

research into how composition students are engaging in digital composing. Facebook is only one small piece of the composing that students do in digital spaces—and frankly, it is a platform that is losing cachet among college students. Future research should explore the various digital literacy practices that students are engaged in: this means looking at literacy practices in various places, such as Twitter, Instagram, Pintertest, and so on. It also means exploring the various connections in literacy practices across these and other platforms and means looking in detail at how students are making meaning in these spaces. It is important to note that the students themselves should be deeply involved in the process, telling the researchers what their literacy practices are and where these practices take place instead of researchers deciding where and what to study based on assumptions about how literacy is done online.

But to make this research truly effective, researchers must also explore how to make meaning in these spaces effectively. There are many assumptions about how to do this, but rarely are those assumptions tested in real world digital spaces. Students may learn a great deal from practicing how to be a digital composer—and furthermore, researchers can learn a great deal about how to effectively compose in digital spaces by talking to users, taking part ourselves, and testing theories of effective digital communication. Research on digital writing often looks back at what has been done, but it rarely looks forward to how to do it better. This seems like an important area to develop as a field.

With knowledge of both what literacy practices students are engaged in and how we can effectively compose these and other forms of digital media, researchers can and

should return to the idea of transfer. A more in-depth look at how to effectively facilitate transfer of knowledge from writing in digital spaces to writing in composition classrooms must be undertaken. It is one thing to speculate how incoming writing transfer may assist in writing education and another thing entirely to look at how (or if) this previous writing knowledge can actually help students to become better writers. As we develop an effective understanding of how to look backward through incoming writing transfer, we can use this knowledge to return to the ideas of forward-reaching transfer. Having a clearer picture of what students are bringing into the classroom, how it may help them become better writers, and how it may broaden their ideas of literacy may also help us to understand what they take out of the classroom and how we can encourage students to continue to use what they have learned about writing and literacy in future writing contexts.

I believe that digital writing and transfer are the future of our field. As we move forward, doing research carefully and mindfully will help us demonstrate both the importance of these concepts, and also who and what we are as a field.

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APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTED SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2011

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Certification

1) I certify that I am currently enrolled in a first-year composition class.*

( ) By checking this box, you affirm that you are currently enrolled in a first-year composition class at a 2- or 4-year university.

2) I am at least 18 years of age.*

( ) By checking this box, you affirm that you are 18 years of age or older.

General Background 1

3) Age

4) Gender

( ) Male ( ) Female

5) Is your section of first-year composition an honors section, or are you seeking honors credit for your class?

( ) Yes ( ) No

6) How many semesters (including this one) have you been attending college?

( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) 6 ( ) 7 ( ) 8 or more

7) Is this your first time taking a composition class at the university level?

( ) Yes

( ) No, I have taken a lower-level first-year composition class than the one I am currently taking

( ) No, I have taken first-year composition before but failed

( ) No, I have taken first-year composition before but had to drop the class for reasons other than failure

8) Is English your primary language?

( ) Yes. I speak mostly or only English.

( ) Yes. I am bilingual, but I consider English one of my primary languages.

( ) No. I am bilingual, but I consider another language my primary language.

( ) No. English is not my primary language. I am most comfortable in a language other than English.

9) Which of the following institutions are you currently attending?

( ) Arizona State University ( ) University of North Carolina Wilmington

( ) Old Dominion University ( ) Ball State University

( ) Jamestown Community College ( ) Other

ASU

(ASU Students) Which first-year composition class are you currently taking?

( ) ENG 101 ( ) ENG 102 ( ) ENG 105 ( ) ENG 107 ( ) ENG 108 ( ) WAC 101

( ) WAC 107

UNCW

(UNCW Students) Which first-year composition class are you currently taking?

( ) ENG 100 ( ) ENG 101 ( ) ENG 103 ( ) ENG 200

ODU

(ODU Students) Which first-year composition class are you currently taking?

( ) ENG 110C ( ) ENG 126C ( ) ENG 211C ( ) ENG 221C ( ) ENG 231C

Ball State

(Ball State Students) Which first-year composition class are you currently taking?

( ) ENG 101 ( ) ENG 102 ( ) ENG 103 ( ) ENG 104 ( ) ENG 114

Jamestown

(Jamestown Students) Which first-year composition class are you currently taking?

( ) ENG 0430 ( ) ENG 1510 ( ) ENG 1530

Other

Please provide the full name of the university that you are currently attending (do not write initials).

_____

(Other Students) What type of first-year composition class are you currently taking (if your school only requires a single semester of first-year composition, please select "First-Year Composition Part 1" or "First-Year Composition Part 1 for Non-Native Speakers")?

( ) First-Year Composition Part 1: The first part of a two-part first-year composition sequence.

( ) First-Year Composition Part 2: The second part of a two-part first-year composition sequence.

( ) First-Year Composition Part 1 for Non-Native Speakers: The first part of a two-part first-year composition sequence designated specifically for non-native speakers of English.

( ) First-Year Composition Part 2 for Non-Native Speakers: The second part of a two-part first-year composition sequence designated specifically for non-native speakers of English.

( ) Accelerated First-Year Composition: An accelerated one-semester version of the two-part first-year composition sequence.

( ) "Stretched" First-Year Composition: A "stretched" two-semester version of the first part of a two-part first-year composition

( ) Non-Credit First-Year Composition: A non-credit class taken prior to First-Year Composition Part 1 that is intended to prepare you for that class.

( ) Other (please explain): _____

Writing Information

10) Describe your general attitude toward writing.

( ) I like to write very much. ( ) I like to write. ( ) I like to write somewhat.
( ) I do not like to write. ( ) I hate to write.

11) Describe your perception of your writing ability.

( ) I consider myself a very good writer. ( ) I consider myself a good writer.
( ) I consider myself a mediocre writer. ( ) I consider myself a poor writer.
( ) I consider myself a very poor writer.

12) How well do you think you are currently doing in your first-year composition class?

( ) I think I am doing very well: my grade is approximately an A.
( ) I think I am doing well: my grade is approximately a B.
( ) I think I am doing average: my grade is approximately a C.
( ) I think I am doing poorly: my grade is approximately a D.
( ) I think that I am failing this class.

Facebook Background

13) Approximately how long have you had your Facebook profile?

( ) 1 to 6 months ( ) 6 months to 1 year ( ) 1 to 2 years ( ) 2 to 3 years
( ) 3 to 4 years ( ) 5 years or more

14) On average, approximately how long do you spend actively using Facebook per day?

( ) Less than 30 minutes ( ) 30 minutes to 1 hour ( ) 1-2 hours
( ) 2-3 hours ( ) 3-4 hours ( ) More than 4 hours

15) How do you feel about the amount of time that you spend using Facebook?

( ) I feel that I spend too much time on Facebook.

( ) I feel that I spend a little too much time on Facebook.

( ) I feel that I spend an appropriate amount of time on Facebook.

( ) I feel that I spend too little time on Facebook.

Facebook Use: General

16) When I have computer or cell phone access, I post on Facebook immediately after an event has occurred.

( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never

17) When I <u>do not</u> have computer or cell phone access and an event occurs, I think to myself that I need to post this on Facebook later.

( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never

18) How many times per day do you post something on Facebook?

( ) More than 6 times a day ( ) About 4-6 times a day ( ) About 2-3 times a day

( ) About once a day ( ) Less than once a day

19) How many times per day do you think of posting something on Facebook but do <u>not</u> actually post?

( ) Very often: 6 times per day or more. ( ) Often: 3-5 times per day.

( ) Sometimes: 1-2 times per day. ( ) Rarely: less than once per day. ( ) Never.

20) On average how much time do you spend thinking about the information (be it wall post, link, or picture) before posting it on your Facebook page?

( ) Less than 15 seconds ( ) 15 to 30 seconds ( ) 30 seconds to 1 minute

( ) 1-2 minutes ( ) 2-3 minutes ( ) More than 3 minutes

Facebook Use: Activities

21) Please mark the frequency with which you do the following activities on Facebook.

	Very often: Nearly every time I use Facebook	**Often: Usually when I use Facebook**	**Frequently: About half the time that I use Facebook**	**Sometimes: Less than half the time that I use Facebook**	**Rarely: I do this once in a while**	**Never**
Posting responses to friends' comments or links						
Making status updates						
Reading friends pages						
Reading fan pages						
Posting media content (videos, news stories, photos, surveys, etc.) on your own wall						
Posting media content (videos, news stories, photos, surveys, etc.) on friends' walls						
Posting self-made						

media content (videos, photos, etc.) in your profile						
Chat						
Playing Facebook games (such as Farmville, Texas Hold 'Em, or Mafia Wars)						
Using non-game Facebook applications (such as surveys, quizzes, and so forth)						

22) Are there any other activities that you regularly engage in on Facebook? If not, please leave this question blank.

Facebook Use: Likert 1

23) I consider various different photos when choosing my main picture for my Facebook profile.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

24) How often do you change your Facebook profile picture?

( ) Weekly ( ) Every other week ( ) Monthly ( ) Every other month ( ) 3-4 times per year

( ) 1-2 times per year or less ( ) I do not have a Facebook profile picture

25) I consider how people reading my profile will react when putting information into the "info" tab in my profile (such as relationship status, religion, politics, and so forth).

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

26) I intentionally choose <u>not to include</u> certain information in my "info" tab due to how others may perceive it.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

27) I consider other people's reactions before choosing to "like" something (such as a celebrity's fan page or a friend's status update) that will show up in my feed and/or the "interests" section of my profile.

( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never

28) I adjust my privacy settings to limit who can see my profile.

( ) Yes ( ) No

29) I adjust my privacy settings in order to exclude some of my Facebook "friends" from seeing parts of my profile.

( ) Yes ( ) No

30) If you answered "yes" to the question above, please explain why you've done so.

Facebook Use: Likert 2

31) I intentionally craft a certain image of myself with my profile.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

32) I change my profile to appear more appealing romantically.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

33) I change my profile to appear more marketable professionally.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

34) I intentionally craft a certain image of myself through pictures that I choose to include in my profile.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

35) I intentionally craft a certain image of myself through my written activity on Facebook.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) Agree ( ) Somewhat Agree ( ) Disagree ( ) Strongly Disagree

36) I add a friend in order to associate myself with that person even if I do not like him or her.

( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never

37) I add friends in order to boost my total number of friends and appear more popular.

( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never

38) I write status updates and wall posts in my head before posting them to Facebook.

( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never

39) I write down status updates and wall posts in a place other than Facebook to save them for use on Facebook later.

( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never

Facebook Use: Ranking

40) Please rank the importance of the following considerations when you are deciding whether or not to include something on your Facebook page.

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Unimportant
How your "friends" on Facebook will react				
How potential employers will react				
How potential romantic partners will react				
How personal the information is				
How funny/interesting the information is				
How truthful the information is				

41) Are there other considerations you have when choosing to include something on your Facebook page? If so, please explain them here. If not, please leave this question blank.

42) Please rank the importance of the following considerations when selecting a profile picture for your Facebook page.

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Unimportant
How flattering or attractive the picture is				
How well				

the picture represents your personality				
How recently the photo was taken				
How well the picture conveys your mood at the time of posting				
How timely the picture is (i.e. does it represent a current trend in Facebook pictures or show a current event?)				

43) Are there other considerations you have when selecting a profile picture for Facebook? If so, please explain them here. If not, please leave this question blank.

44) How often do you think that an individual from the following categories views content that you have posted to Facebook?

	Very often: This category includes the people who view my	**Regularly: People from this category view my content on a regular basis.**	**Sometimes: People from this category may view my content if it appears in their feed,**	**Rarely: People from this category generally do not read my content.**	**Never: This category cannot see my content.**

	content the most often.		**but they do not seek it out.**		
Close friends					
Family members					
Other Facebook "friends."					
Recent acquaintances					
People who you know who are not your "friends" on Facebook					
Potential employers					
Potential romantic partners					
Strangers					

45) When posting a picture, wall post, or other content, how often do you have a member or members of this categories in mind as the readers/viewers of that content? In other words, how often do you think to yourself "my family will see this" or "potential employers might see this" when posting content?

	Very often	**Regularly**	**Sometimes**	**Rarely**	**Never**
Close friends					
Family members					
Other Facebook "friends."					
Recent acquaintances					
People who you know who are not					

your "friends" on Facebook					
Potential employers					
Potential romantic partners					
Strangers					

Facebook and Composition

46) Which of the following activities do you consider to be a type of "composition"? (please check all that apply).

[ ] Writing an essay for class

[ ] Making a PowerPoint presentation

[ ] Writing privately (in a journal, diary, or elsewhere)

[ ] Writing publicly (in a newspaper, magazine, or elsewhere)

[ ] Writing on your own website (my blog or personal webpage)

[ ] Writing a comment online (on Facebook, Youtube, or a different website)

[ ] Making status updates and wall posts on Facebook

[ ] Making a profile on Facebook

[ ] Creating an artistic work (painting, sculpture, etc.)

[ ] Taking a photograph

[ ] Manipulating a photograph (making a photo collage, adding text to a photo, etc.)

47) Are there any other activities that you regularly engage in that you would consider "composition"? If not, please leave this question blank.

48) I consider my activity (wall posts, comments, links, etc.) on Facebook to be a kind of (please check all that apply):

[ ] Informal writing [ ] Formal writing [ ] Persuasive writing [ ] Composition

[ ] Conversation [ ] Argument

49) Are there any additional ways that you might define these activities? If not, please leave this question blank.

50) In what ways are writing that you do in the composition classroom and writing that you do on Facebook related?

APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTED MARCH-APRIL 2013

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are the 22 initial questions asked to all 10 interview participants.

1. How old are you?
2. How would you describe your gender?
3. How would you describe your race?
4. Which first-year composition class(es) have you attended or are you attending?
5. How many semesters have you been enrolled in ASU?
6. Have you been enrolled in another university before ASU?
7. Do you consider English to be your first or primary language? If not, what do you consider to be your first or primary language?
8. How long have you had your Facebook profile?
9. How active are you on Facebook?
10. Please describe the type of activities you generally engage in on Facebook. Try to be as detailed as possible.
11. Do you see each of these activities as being related to writing, conversation, or something else? Please explain your answer.
12. How would you define "composition"?
13. Do you think that your activity on Facebook is a type of composition? Please explain why or why not.
14. What features might Facebook use and composition have in common?
15. Please explain your posting process on Facebook. Consider how you think about posts before posting, how you make a post, and how you gauge whether it was a good or bad post.
16. How does your posting process differ for different kinds of media: a status update, a comment, posting a link, posting an image, and so on?
17. Who do you think views your Facebook activity most often?
18. Do you consider those people when deciding whether or not to post information?
19. What are your purposes in posting information on Facebook?
20. How do you try to achieve these purposes?
21. What device(s) do you normally use to access Facebook?
22. Why do you prefer this device (these devices)?

APPENDIX C

CHAPTER PUBLICATION INFORMATION

CHAPTER PUBLICATION

The chapter entitled "FB in FYC: Facebook Use among First-Year Composition Students" has been accepted to *Computers & Composition: An International Journal* for publication in late 2014.

The chapter entitled "Men, Women, and Web 2.0 Writing: Gender Difference in Facebook Composing" has been accepted to *Computers & Composition: An International Journal* for publication in early 2016.