

THESIS

RECONSTRUCTING SOCIAL FUTURES: DIGITAL VOICES IN FIRST-YEAR WRITING

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the benefits of bringing students' out-of-school digital literacies into the first-year composition (FYC) classroom, and investigates whether or not this can provide students access to critically analyze their actions on these platforms. I taught a self-designed FYC course focusing on critically producing, and consuming, self-representations on the social networking sites Facebook and Instagram. Through a grounded theory approach, I completed an analysis of 17 students' assigned blog posts and surveys, and selected six students to construct richly descriptive portraits (RDPs). The RDPs are chronological narratives that invite students to act as discussion partners by integrating their voices, and shed light on their differing levels of critical digital literacy skills. I explore how students' use of social networking sites does not always necessitate a critical use, and investigate how students construct and perform digital identities on these platforms. I conclude by explaining why preparing the future citizens of our global economy must entail providing students with the critical digital literacy skills needed to actively participate in modern communicative modes. As composition instructors are also teachers of communication, this is our responsibility.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the energy, intellect, and imagination of my first-year composition students.

TO THE READER

This thesis contains various audio clips featuring students' voices as recorded from their personal vlog assignments. The featured audio is transmitted through SoundCloud, and can be found at the link below.

<https://soundcloud.com/elapadura/sets/reconstructing-social-futures>

While I transcribed their vlog posts, writing exists in multiple modes; listening to, as opposed to simply reading through, their experiences, allows for you and they to become partners in discussing connections between education, technology, and our socially-networked world.

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I. INTRODUCTION

TRACK #1: CACOPHONY OF VOICES

The above clip may confuse readers because this jumble of voices seems to be saying nothing important or worth hearing. But for those to whom this thesis is directed, the instructors teaching first-year composition (FYC) courses, this is our everyday. Those are the voices of students from my FYC class. I blended them together to show that within the cacophony of classroom and culture, these voices are often not heard. While teachers attempt to understand their students, when we stand at the front of the room, we can only see them from the outside. But as one of my personal heroes, Andrea Lunsford, once said, we cannot see *all* of them. We will never know what kind of freight students carry until they choose to allow us to bear it with them. Until then, when we look out into the sea of faces, all we can hear is a cacophony of voices.

Students hold individual talents, passions, and aspirations. They have varying dreams, cultures, and values. We often wonder why our students may not feel the same invigorating excitement for writing that we do. I have heard some teachers say, "Well, if they don't care, then why should I?" This statement holds water if we think students caring about their FYC class is the norm, but is it fair to do this? Is it fair to assume that students are detached and disinterested because they don't care? Bell hooks has a different perspective in *Teaching to Transgress*. hooks believes that "[students] want knowledge that is meaningful. They rightfully expect that my colleagues and I will not offer them information without addressing the connection between what they are learning and their overall life experiences" (19). With hook's claim in mind, I started this thesis, believing that it's not that students don't care about writing and rhetoric; it's that they just want to know how the study of the topic applies to themselves and their future.

Ten years ago, communications and media scholar, Gunther Kress said in "Gains and Losses" that we are moving from a "mono-modal page to a multimodal-screen society" (7). We have moved far beyond Kress's prediction. Every day, as students walk to class, meet their friends, and make decisions about their future, they do so with smart phones, tablets, and laptops thinner than sheets of paper. This isn't new information, but if this is as commonplace as we think, then why is it that in some FYC classrooms the intersection of technology and composition go only as far as a cell phone buzzing while we lecture? Technorhetoricians in our field have found remarkable ways to make that buzz work for both student and teacher, and yet in some classrooms, technology is absent, and the out-of-school digital literacies and practices that most of our students engage in, are asked to remain outside. One major question of this thesis is to determine the benefits of composition instructors bringing out-of-school digital literacies into the classroom, and more specifically, whether or not this can provide students access to critically analyze their actions and behaviors on these platforms.

I designed, developed, and taught a curriculum that connected visual rhetoric, specifically digital photography on the social networking sites (SNS) Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG), with social constructionist ideas of how students produce knowledge, as well as rhetorical writing strategies. This thesis does not give readers neatly packaged progress narratives, nor does it tell you that I proved out-of-school digital literacies are the key to students becoming masters of writing and language. Instead, this thesis is more of a narrative detailing how bringing out-of-school digital literacies into the writing classroom can spur change in how students write and think. Most students who participate in SNS out-of-class do so to showcase their talents, passions, aspirations, dreams, cultures, and values. Digitally, they are writing and communicating in far more complex networks than the paper-based culture that still exists in

many FYC classrooms. I hope most of my students will maintain their rhetorical and critical knowledge of how texts in any medium work, long after they walk out of the university classroom for a last time, and when they begin careers as artists, writers, lawyers, doctors, fashion designers, advertisers, politicians, teachers, and, most important, self-aware citizens.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

SECTION 1: Bringing Critical Digital Literacies into First-Year Writing Classes with Social Networking Sites

Kids today. They have no sense of shame. They have no sense of privacy. They are show-offs, whores, pornographic little loons who post their diaries, their phone numbers, their stupid poetry, for God's sake's their dirty photos!-online. They have virtual friends instead of real ones. They talk in illiterate instant messages. They are interested only in attention—and yet they have zero attention span, flitting like hummingbirds from one virtual stage to another (Nussbaum "End of Privacy").

Emily Nussbaum, a journalist for the *New Yorker*, captures a sentiment in 2007 that reverberated through the years straight into 2015. English professor, Mark Bauerlein, authored a 2008 report echoing Nussbaum's satirical critique; he called millennials "the dumbest generation," and claimed their prolific use of digital communication was "so superficial that the facts of government, foreign and domestic affairs, the historical past, and the fine arts never slip through" (13). Even Sherry Turkle, a long time advocate for the benefits of human-technology relationships, published *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, in 2011. Turkle voiced her fears on youth as "tethered to technology," and "shaken when that world 'unplugged' does not signify, [and] does not satisfy" (11). Nussbaum, Bauerlein, and Turkle are two out of the many SNS scholars who see obsessive behavior, superficiality, and triviality in millennials' online production and consumption of digital media.

Some composition instructors may not see students' SNS activity as worthy of further investigating because of such repeated claims. Bauerlein and Turkle's publications are representative of a body of scholarship (Carr, Sunstein, Lanier) where highly literate technology theorists and scholars debunk current millennial use of these sites. A shadow of the Luddites ,

writers such as these claim the frequency and quality of students' reading and writing is both depleted and hindered by involvement in digital communities. Digital media critics, like Nussbaum and others, tend to see millennials, in Bauerlein's terms, as a "rising generation camped in the desert, passing stories, pictures, tunes and texts back and forth, living off the thrill of peer attention" (10). How many of our students choose to wander Bauerlein's SNS wasteland? According to Pew Internet Project's annual "Social Networking Fact Sheet" 89% of 18-29 year-olds are using SNS ("Fact Sheet"). A 2013 survey, also by the Pew Internet Project, revealed that 70% of FB users, and 49% of IG users, engaged with their account daily ("Social Media Update"). With these numbers, one might rightly wonder if students' writing on these platforms is as fruitless as Bauerlein and others claim.

Bauerlein may be partly correct in saying "too few of [millennials] master the skills needed to negotiate an information-heavy, communication based society and economy" (16). When we take a comprehensive view of a student's life, for example, we see not only are they steadily composing multi-modal texts, but they are also writing daily. Because SNS platforms tend to be image-oriented, much of this daily writing involves students acting as producers and consumers of visual rhetorics, particularly digital photography. In response to Bauerlein and others, established digital media scholars (boyd , Davidson , Jenkins , Shirky, Weinberger), clearly see the need, and potential, in millennials' out-of-school digital literacies. Scholars like Kress, mentioned prior, are joined by others like English professor, Mary Hocks, who have designed curriculum and taught FYC courses concerned with developing visual literacy skills so students better, and more critically, consume digital images .

The first-year writing curriculum I designed and taught last fall, explicitly invited students to bring their out-of-school digital literacies into the classroom for further investigation. For example, students were required to keep an individual blog and choose a profile picture. While many students opted for a professional headshot, one student's photo seemed to embody all the stereotypes of millennials that Bauerlein disproves. Stephanie¹ is smiling, standing behind a red curtain that hides all except her neck and shoulders, and gave off the appearance that nothing else lie underneath. Bauerlein might have labeled Stephanie as a "pornographic little loon," blissfully uploading possibly incriminating photos, and not bothering to consider the consequences (Nussbaum "End of Privacy"). While there may be truth in Bauerlein's, and other digital critics' assertions and concerns regarding millenials' actions on SNS, Stephanie's assigned blog posts in my FYC class demonstrate that her profile picture was the starting point for a sense of audience that slowly matured, and grew more nuanced, all semester long. To begin assessing how SNS changes multiple factors in our life, students were asked watch professor Michael Wesh's "The Machine Is Us/ing Us," choose an element he describes as needing to be rethought due to web 2.0, and apply that same element to SNS. In completing blog Assignment A², Stephanie a first-year student who has indicated an interest in physics, mathematics, and engineering, discussed how SNS may have altered how users can interact with their family:

. . [S]haring one's daily life on Facebook and other social media cites as a positive way to involve family members that are unable to be at events in person. As a kid I remember the hassle it was to share special moments with family by using disposable cameras and large, inconvenient tape recorders. With the technology today, we are able to share these moments with family no matter where or when . . (9/7/201 "Reflections and Gaining a Deeper Knowledge").

¹ In an effort to preserve and protect students' identity, students' names in this thesis have been replaced with pseudonyms.

² Full descriptions of each blog assignment can be found in Appendix A of this thesis.

Digital media advocates might see Stephanie understanding how SNS's interactive "affordances" can be used to her advantage as she easily shares special moments with her family (Kress 7). Scholars like Anna Smith and Glynda Hull, for example, might see a benefit in integrating technology into the classroom; they probably would commend Stephanie for availing herself to the "opportunities for social interaction and communicative exchanges across localities" (63). In contrast, digital media critics might see Stephanie as falling into the obsessive draw of SNS communication; they might read her blog as evidence of her being unable to "put the technology aside" and focus on being fully present in her current context (Turkle *Alone Together* 167). When looking at this situation from the point of view of a composition instructor, however, our goals are no longer to celebrate or blame the student. We don't guess at the student's motivations for posting a particular profile picture, at least not at first. Our job is to improve students' multimodal, communicative practices. Digital literacy scholar, Anne Wysocki, demonstrates such a position: "To be responsible teachers, we need to help our students (as well as ourselves) learn how different choices of visual arrangement...encourage different kinds of meaning making" (Takyoshi and Selfe 2). It is easy to be distracted by listening to debates between digital media advocates and critics. Instead, in keeping to our role as the responsible teachers Wysocki calls us to be, we might bring the conversations between digital advocates and critics about millennials to our classrooms of millennials.

Such pedagogical moves would be in step with the recommendations of scholars in rhetoric and composition who specialize in digital media and its uses in FYC . For example, professors, Pamela Takyoshi and Cindy Selfe, might recommend Stephanie participate in this conversation by using her knowledge of "conventional rhetorical principles such as audience awareness, exigence...and rhetorical appeals" to investigate her digital productions (5). We

might also ask Stephanie if she understands the connotations her photo seemed to emit, to identify the audiences she is composing for, and discuss whether or not her photo effectively addresses their needs, values, and beliefs. Stephanie 's blog and her photo are written products informed by her growing rhetorical knowledge. The many students, like Stephanie, in our classes today demonstrate that we composition instructors should pay more attention not only to students' ability to critically consume digital media, but also their adeptness in critically producing it.

Informing Professional Futures

As SNS participants, students occupy the audience member role when viewing other users' content, and the author role when uploading personal photos to their profiles. Takyoshi and Selfe bring Kress and Hock's rethinking of visual literacy in digital environments to FYC, discussing why composition instructors need to teach students how to "go beyond the consumption of such texts" by also becoming critically aware producers of digital media (3). SNS allows students to produce content for an intended audience, but because of its online location, students may also end up producing photos for audiences beyond their accepted group of friends and followers. To go back to Stephanie 's case, she may have designed her class blog and photo to communicate with a peer audience of her classmates, disregarding all the other possible audiences, from instructor, to audiences far beyond her friends. Stephanie, and other students in my class, did not at first understand how personal photos turn into multi-authored texts as common affordances on SNS (liking, sharing, commenting) allow audience members to interact with students' uploaded content.

Boundaries between authors and audiences, and authorial intent and audience perception, can grow blurry as students produce for both known and "unknown audiences who have the capacity to respond directly, becoming genuine interlocutors" (Smith and Hull 64). Turkle explains how millennials' concept of privacy is akin to a person having a public phone conversation; it is "sustained by the presumption that those around them will treat them not only as anonymous, but as absent" (*Alone Together* 155). In Turkle's opinion, students intend for their voice to reach a specific audience, but they may not be wholly aware of how other audiences are also listening. As instructors of composition, we are tasked with preparing students for their professional future, and in current hiring practices, students' understanding of audience on SNS could inform an employer's decision. First-year college students, like Stephanie, actively produce and consume on SNS; their profiles will follow them throughout their time in the academy, and out into the working world. Despite SNS's permanence, as we have learned from looking at a few digital media critics, students are often made to feel their digital composing practices are frivolous, and do not need to be critically investigated or rhetorically analyzed. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, a 2013 survey revealed 50% of organizations use online search engines to screen potential employees ("Recruiting/Selection"). The default privacy setting for most SNS is public, and requires a user to manually change it. Within these contexts we might wonder how a public SNS profile, easily locatable from an online search engine, could affect whether or not our future students find success, or experience failure, in the professional world.

Digital media critics lament the written products of millennials on SNS, and their supposed obliviousness to public interaction. Digital media advocates celebrate millennials' out-of-school digital literacies as educational assets. Composition instructors can bridge the divide

between these two camps by allowing the out-of-school digital literacy debate to be considered by the millennials in our classrooms. In doing so, we are heeding the call from Wysocki to responsibly guide our students meaning-making process. We already know students are communicating on SNS, and as teachers of effective composition and communication, we can directly encourage our students to voice their opinions on their actions. By implementing out-of-school digital composing, students can develop digital literacies they will need to not only excel in the academy, but also to be active participants in our technologically driven society.

SNS Literacy as a Social Practice

When thinking about the intricate reading and writing practices students engage in while composing on SNS, we might wonder why digital media critics seem to see SNS as trivial, and a barrier to real learning. As explained by danah boyd and Nicole Ellison, both scholars examining connections between technology and society, SNS's purpose is for users to "construct a public or semi-public profile...[and to] articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections" (211). Boyd and Ellison's description of routine SNS activities, and how those activities are tied to learning and implicit notions of audience, connects well to David Barton, Mary Hamilton, and Roz Ivanic's theory of viewing literacy as an everyday "practice" (143). Barton et al., all faculty at Lancaster University, explain that "...any theory of literacy implies a theory of learning. Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making" (148) When students create an SNS profile, choose friends, and establish connections, they participate in such informal literacy practices. Literacy practices, Barton et al.state, "situat[e] reading and writing activities in...broader contexts and motivations for use" (146). Viewing our students' routine

out-of-school SNS activities as a literacy practice, and encouraging those students to view those activities in the same way, may contribute to their understanding of writing as it operates inside, and outside, of the classroom. When we encourage our students to see writing as something they already do daily, we can prompt a wider understanding of where writing can happen. After leaving our classrooms, students' writing abilities will need to "diversify along disciplinary, professional and civic lines" ("WPA Outcomes"). Integrating the routine use and analysis of SNS literacy into FYC may be one way of fostering such diversity.

Boyd and Ellison's description for SNS's purpose included individual activity through constructing a personal profile, and more communal activity through making connections with other users. In our classrooms, we are responsible for teaching students "the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process;" which, as Boyd and Ellison explained, is an everyday practice for SNS users ("WPA Outcomes"). Returning to Barton et al.'s description of literacy, we see that they also believe these practices move beyond the individual. Barton et al. view literacy practices as social, stating that literacy involves "the relations between people, within groups, and communities"(143). The social aspect of literacy practices can be related to routine SNS activity as Boyd and Ellison describe SNS as "emphasizing relationship initiation" as users "articulate, and make visible their social networks" (211). Through Barton et al., we might come to see students' SNS composing as an opportunity to move from viewing writing as an individual activity, to understanding writing as a social practice. Students "type oneself into being," and this digital self is meant to be communicated to a social network of friends and followers (Boyd and Ellison 212). Through SNS, students can begin to see their writing as a collaborative process in which their compositions are affected, formed, and shaped, by a digitally networked community.

Social Practices in a Digital Context

On SNS, the audience for students' written products goes beyond our four-walled, academic context to a much wider network of friends and followers. JuliAnna Ávila and Jessica Zacher Pandaya, editors of *Critical Digital Literacies as Social Praxis Intersections and Challenges*, further articulate the vast reach of digital communication; they explain, "digital literacies have made it possible to travel farther and faster than ever before, and we can communicate virtually with fellow travelers in real-time" (1). Scholars like Turkle, who previously articulated her fear of millennials not understanding how their private lives can become public through sharing in a digital context, might be wary of the instant virtual communication Ávila and Pandaya describe. Students may still require a reminder about how their digitally written products can travel to audiences apart from those they intended.

While composition instructors generally encourage students to see writing as a form of agency inside the classroom, Ávila and Pandaya extend that encouragement to prompt students to have agency in out-of-school, digital contexts like SNS: "[W]e want students to be empowered to travel across both formal and informal learning environments; we also want them to define themselves, and be defined, as proficient and capable" (2). Marc Prensky, an American writer and speaker on education, popularized the term "digital native," as he explained that students in the classrooms of 2001 were "'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games, and the internet" ("Digital Natives") Prensky seems to see millennials as already practicing, and possessing, these skills since childhood. He might respond to Ávila and Pandaya by mentioning how students' involvement in SNS automatically gives them literacies needed to feel proficient and capable in digital contexts. Authors like Prensky assume that all millennial

born students comfortably navigate digital landscapes, but we can refer back to another student's blog post to hear instead how students may voice their opinions on these claims.

Samantha, a first-year student majoring in Biological Sciences, answered a classmate's comment to her completion of Assignment A, in which she stated that she does not participate on SNS, a surprise when we accept the commonplaces of Prensky, and other digital media scholars and advocates, that see SNS as a ubiquitous presence in every student's life. Samantha's classmate responded to her post through asking questions regarding her opinion on how users express identity on SNS. The following post is her response.

...For your first question; to what limit does one express identity over social networks I am honestly not entirely certain yet. For me personally I had Facebook a while ago but never made posts and then got rid of it, because I was not comfortable with sharing things with so many people at once. Now I think that I could be but other than sharing the bare minimum I have not really gotten much into social networking... (9/8/2014 "Response to 'Second Look at Social Networking and Identity'").

Samantha's opinion on SNS serves as one counterexample to Prensky's theory that millennials "function best when networked," as she seems content not using SNS ("Digital Natives"). Samantha does not seem to have an interest in communicating her "human soul...in virtual non-linear worlds," but while SNS participation is voluntary, having the needed skills to "read the world, a world that is increasingly digital" is not (Ávila and Pandaya 1-2). Digital literacies have become Barton et al.'s everyday literacy practices as they are situated in routine activities necessary for the average citizen. Teachers, Anna Smith and Glynda Hull, further explain how common digital composing practices like "clicking on links, adding comments, and reblogging or remixing photographs" are now viewed as "central, rather than peripheral to literacy" (63). Since Prensky's article published 14 years ago, scholars like Smith and Hull and

Ávila and Pandaya have recognized that "simply having technology does not necessarily provide a learning experience" meaning that students being around, possessing, or even using digital technology may not necessitate a critical use (6). As we saw in her post, some students like Samantha claim being uncomfortable with online composing, preferring to avoid it. Yet, we also know, according to desired "WPA Outcomes," "'Composing' refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies." As teachers of communication, we are tasked with helping these students feel more proficient, and capable, when composing digitally; this entails those that compose prolifically, daily, or even not at all.

Defining the Need for Digital Literacies

Ávila and Pandaya define digital literacies as "practices in which people use technological tools to engage with, respond to, and create both text-based and multimodal forms of literacies" (3). While implementing digital composing into FYC is not yet ubiquitous, teaching students forms of multimodal composing has been widely promoted by scholars like Takyoshi and Selfe since 2007; "still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound" are generally included in current FYC curricula (1). The same fervor that Takyoshi and Selfe employed during their discussion of why students need to engage in multimodal composing, is mirrored in current conversations rhetoric and composition scholars have about digital literacies. In rhetoric and composition, scholars long discussed a need for integrating technology, and the digital literacies Ávila and Pandaya illustrate, into the classroom. NCTE past president, and past chair of CCCC, Kathleen Blake Yancey, implored that we "join the future and support all forms of 21st century literacies inside school and outside school" in 2009 (1). In agreement with Yancey, Ávila and Pandaya state that digital literacy education is a "road that educators and

learners should be travelling together" (3). As referenced through Samantha's blog, there are cases where a student and instructor partnership inside the classroom, may be the only way to initiate students into online, digital writing. In other cases, there are students who already enjoy "communicat[ing] virtually with fellow travelers," and as research shows, they are doing so daily (Ávila and Pandaya 3). As we look at the daily writing our students do online, and the daily writing they do in our classrooms, we can refer back to Yancey's explanation concerning the most tangible difference between students in-school, and out-of-school, composing: "[W]riters are everywhere, yes, but so too are audiences, especially in social networking sites" (5). Applying Yancey's statement to Ávila and Pandaya's call for educators to integrate digital literacies, we might consider a reassessment of audience as part of that call.

In a classroom, students compose primarily for the teacher; conversely, on SNS, students broaden their composing scope as their audience widens to include a variety of "networked publics" who can view and respond to their photographs. In *It's Complicated: the social lives of networked teens*, danah boyd defines networked publics as dual spaces: "space constructed through networked technologies" and "the imagined community that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice" (8). Students' out-of-school digital literacies allow them to easily participate in, and navigate, these networked publics, but "publics often intersect and intertwine," and "they get tangled up in one another, challenging any effort to understand the boundaries and shape of any particular public" (boyd 9). The nuanced nature of networked publics makes audience response on SNS almost impossible to predict; this deeply differs from the known, singular, teacher-audience in the classroom. Despite students' authorial intention when uploading photographs, "power constantly shifts in digital worlds" (Ávila and Pandaya 3). Students develop and enhance their digital literacy skills through out-of-school

digital composing, but as students construct lasting, visual self-representations on SNS, they will require stronger methods for critically consuming and producing self-representations akin to how they want their audience to perceive them.

Audience in a Networked Public

In *It's Complicated*, Boyd conducted 166 formal interviews with teens during the time period of 2007-2010, and in one interview, boyd shows how students' ideas of audience can be complicated in these networked publics. In her interview with Matthew a white, seventeen year-old athlete, boyd seems to build on her previous work with Ellison. Earlier, boyd and Ellison explained how a student's networked public involves "primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network" meaning, when students interact with an audience, it is typically with someone they know offline (211). In Matthew's case, boyd explains how his profile "was filled with crass comments and humor," that he saw as acceptable since "he wasn't friends with anyone who didn't know him and wouldn't understand that he was joking around" (49). However, Matthew's privacy settings made his account viewable to friends-of-friends, and he had friends on his soccer team that were connecting with coaches of schools he applied to; this made the crude humor Matthew posted for his friends, also open to audiences apart from those he intended. Deeply differing from the teacher-audience in the classroom, the intricacies of networked publics can complicate students' understanding of who their audience truly includes.

On SNS, personalization and privacy options can cause students to sometimes overlook the relationship between their intent as an author, as we have seen with Matthew, and how audiences will understand, read and use their digital compositions. In their essay, "Dropping

Bread Crumbs in the Intertextual Forest: Critical Literacy in a Postmodern Age or: We Should Have Brought a Compass," Diana George and Diane Shoos, both professors in visual rhetoric and representation, explain why it is important for students like Matthew to not only examine their digital media products, but also to be cognizant of the digital context they produce in.

Just as Ávila and Pandaya explain the importance of educators guiding students down the path to digital literacy, George and Shoos further encourage composition instructors to contribute to students' understanding of the "infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices" inherent in the networked publics boyd describes (118). Boyd might agree with George and Shoo's claims about students needing further education on navigating digital platforms as their participation in the media does not mean that they are equally experienced at doing so, or that they "automatically have the skills to navigate what unfolds" (boyd 13). Boyd further discusses the elements affecting students' digital media products in networked publics by examining four characteristics. Persistence describes how SNS exists outside a temporal context, meaning students' digital media products are not "ephemeral," and will remain long past their upload date (boyd 11).). Kress's "Gains and Losses" precedes boyd's discussion of decontextualized digital products, but can be used to further explain how audiences' access options are modified by boyd's notion of persistence. Kress explains how the order in which people access digital media is "designed (fully and/or definitively) by the viewer" (16). In applying this to SNS, students' posts appear in a non-linear sequence, meaning that audience members can access their photographs from multiple entry points. Permitted audiences can view students' digital media products directly from their profile; however, as we saw with Matthew, there are other audiences that students can be unaware of. In discussing visibility and spreadability, boyd explains how most SNS feature open-sharing as the default setting making a

student's SNS privacy settings "public by default, private through effort" (boyd 12). Even when students believe they have tailored their privacy options, as Matthew chose to using the friends-of-friends option, they would have to also consider who their friend's audiences were to completely privatize their profile to fit only the audience they intend to compose for. This is something that Matthew, and other students, might not always do before sharing their digital media products.

As SNS is designed for interaction, students can easily share among their audience, and audience members can reciprocate that sharing. If the SNS does not have these options, some students' digital literacy skills entail knowing how to "duplicate and download," removing photographs from their original context entirely (boyd 12). Many SNS are searchable, in that they feature search engines offering users opportunities to make all photographs susceptible to access if they feature a keyword, or description, audience members searched for (boyd 12). Boyd's theory on searchability illustrates Kress's "image based logic" where there is "no clearly discernible reading path" for an audience to follow, so they make their own choices (9). Furthering Kress's conversation concerning non-linear access points, we can think about how a "reader finds her or his own way around the matter presented on that page" (17) We may apply Kress's theory to the situation in which individuals without an SNS, can gain entrance into a student's profile depending on the student's privacy settings. Because SNS operate through interactivity and audience participation, all audiences are invited to interact with a student's digital media products. If an audience member finds their way to a student's page, what are the results of this interaction? To answer this question, we may look to another student's blog post.

In Assignment B, students were taught how to analyze and employ ethos, pathos, and logos in visual and alphabetic text based compositions. David's post shows that he chose a photo

from a friend. The following post is an excerpt from David, a first-year Navy veteran, with an undeclared Business interest, who is discussing his friend's photo.

...The author is looking away from the photographer because he is trying to appear too busy to be looking in the general direction of the camera. Wearing a long sleeve shirt with shorts, along with the oscillating fan in the background show that this is a late summer event taking place. From a more pathos outlook on this photo, it comes across as almost a somber emotional feel. This dark room mixed with the presence of alcohol lead me to believe that there is more alcohol containers elsewhere out of the frame. The sunglasses in this picture are the largest emotional connection I receive from the author. These “sunglasses” represent the idea that his soul is intoxicated with alcohol or other drugs, so he is attempting to hide himself behind a pair of shades, to avoid the harsh reality that is life... (9/14/2014 "Ethos, Pathos, Logos of Andy's Facebook").

This post is on a public forum open not only to David's instructor and classmates, but also anyone on the internet, including his friend. Illustrating well the power of networked publics, David's friend, while not a part of our class, responded to his post. The following is an excerpt from his friend's comment.

...At that point, any picture, post, video, etc. is simply another component that shapes the ethos of my own Facebook persona. Why did I make that post? Why did I feel the need to inform people of that factoid? Why did I choose to allow that photo of me to stay on my page? When these things enter the virtual sphere, any intent I actually had becomes trivial. Instead, these components are ‘analyzed’ through a complex symbolic matrix, of which we have both an unconscious and conscious awareness. We are all embedded in this matrix, and it essentially informs our perception of reality — it opens up a network for interaction and understanding and simultaneously traps us inside of this network. Whether I like it or not, the posts and photos on my page have a REAL effect. This is an interesting thing about the time we live in: there is a strange, online world that dictates how people behave towards me, and in turn how I ‘view’ and understand myself, and I have little control over it. Thanks for the insights (9/14/2014 "Response to 'Ethos, Pathos, Logos on Andy's Facebook'").

Because David wrote about a friend he might know offline, it is possible that he told his friend about this assignment, and asked him to read it. Either way, David's friend well illustrates the effect of composing in a networked public like SNS. In returning to boyd's four concepts of how digital media products on SNS are persistent, spreadable, visible, and searchable, David's friend's photo was accessible by David who then viewed, and spread that photo to the context of his blog, a public platform. The public nature of David's blog made his post easily searched for, and located, by audiences apart from our class, who are now able to view and access as they please.

Both David and Matthew had an idea of who they were communicating to, but they might not have understood how far that communication can travel. It may not be enough for students to know how to interact on SNS by creating, engaging, and responding to other user's digital productions. From examples like Matthew's, we can see that for students to produce an SNS self-representation akin to how they want all audiences to perceive them, a more critical component should be added to their digital literacies.

Critical Digital Literacies

SNS's status as a common place in most students' lives might not only cause students to neglect a critical focus on composing, but also cause teachers to not see the academic potential in investigating this medium. Critical digital literacies (CDL) adds a critical component to the digital literacies described by both digital media advocates like Ávila and Pandaya and boyd, as well as critics like Bauerlein and Turkle. Ávila and Pandaya draw from scholars and theorists widely employed by critical pedagogues in rhetoric and composition. Looking at the work of Paulo Freire and Michel Foucault, Ávila and Pandaya explain how fostering a critical

perspective in students entails asking them "to investigate manifestations of power relations in texts, and to design, in some cases redesign, texts in ways that serve other, less powerful interests" (2) Students can of course learn critical literacy skills without the digital accompaniment, but to fulfill our obligations as composition instructors, we adhere to technological changes in students' writing process. "Digital technologies are changing writer's relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways;" if most of our students adapted to evolving writing technologies, than we might contribute to their digital literacy practices by introducing them to a more critical lens ("WPA Outcomes"). Ávila and Pandaya explain how students can use this critical lens to "critique the cultural worlds they inhabit, and expand their understandings of culture" (Ávila and Pandaya 3). While speaking about the potential of CDL may help us understand why these skills are needed pedagogically, we might refer back a student example of how social and cultural critiques are used in a digital landscape.

After being introduced to ideology and social norms, students were asked to complete Assignment E which served as a response to Project 1,³ in which an anonymous partner used photos on their SNS account to write a letter describing their classmate. In the following post, Alex, a first-year student with an undeclared Health and Science interest, responds to his classmate's letter which described him as being outdoorsy, fit, and clean-cut, and simultaneously considered how SNS functions for millennials like himself.

...Looking at the two different points the author has made and finding the ideologies that are being challenged here the view of my online self may be slightly blown out of proportion to who I actually am in the offline world. I think this possibly has limited the view of myself to my classmate that wrote this letter and I think that this brings up an important point. Perhaps we all are falling victim to a certain act in the Social Networking online age. Perhaps all of us fall victim to posting pictures online that will boost our self image up to create a false image of who we really are (10/05/2014 "Post Letter Reflections").

³ Full descriptions of all four major course projects are located in Appendix C of this thesis.

Students can engage in the critical commentary Alex's post makes here about SNS and identity without using out-of-school digital platforms like SNS, but in doing that, we might be losing the critical component of challenging power systems. In this post, Alex chose to use the tags "Facebook," "Instagram," and "Social Networking Sites," meaning that any search for these words on the blogging platform would include Alex's reflection about millennials as victims of these websites; the public nature of the blog post, allows Alex to become an active participant in this conversation.

In the classroom, Alex's musings remain between myself, and classmates, but on a digital platform, his claims can travel across networked publics, critiquing the very platforms he sees millennials like himself using. In this way, we can return to Ávila and Pandaya, as Alex's post seems to reference the second part of their definition for CDL which includes students "revising their own literacy and academic identity using digital tools" (3). As we see with students like Alex, students may be able to more critically examine their digital literacy practices when given the opportunity to critique these routines. In his post, we see that Alex further questioned millennials' SNS participation by investigating the reasons behind it. Alex touches on another important aspect for why students may need to more critically examine their digital literacies on SNS, as their profiles are spaces for constructing a virtual identity.

Critically Managing Digital Identities

Alex's post serves as an example for how students can use digital platforms, like a blog, to begin crafting an academic online presence. While digital media advocates like Ávila and Pandaya may see online identity revision as a possible benefit of bringing students out-of-school digital literacies into the classroom, Turkle explains that the process of creating, and maintaining,

a public, digital self can result in "presentation anxiety" (*Alone Together* 182). To define this term, we can look to the case studies Turkle conducted in writing *Alone Together*. In one conversation, Turkle was told by a college senior to not "be fooled by 'anyone you interview who tells you that his Facebook page is 'the real me.' It's like being in a play. You make a character.'"(*Alone Together* 183). As Alex's post stated, and Turkle's interview with this student seems to echo, SNS profiles are not exact copies of their creators, and the falsified self students create, seem to represent less of who they are, and more of who they wish to be.

In another interview, Turkle gives an example of this fabricated self by introducing us to 16 year-old Audrey, a junior in high school. When describing her SNS self, Audrey tells Turkle, "...you put up things you like about yourself, and you're not going to advertise the bad aspects of you. You're not going to post pictures of how you look every day. You're going to get your makeup on, put on your cute little outfit, you're going to take your picture, and post it up as your default" (*Alone Together* 191). While Audrey's tone is unknown, she seems to speak about these routines as if they are common practices for millennials using SNS; however, Alex's post contradicts Audrey as her process of taking a profile picture could contribute to the false self Alex discusses (Turkle *Alone Together* 191). Similar to Alex's post, Turkle illustrates the negative consequences of students posting personal photos to SNS; "[It] can be a tearful place, [and,] for many, it remains tearful well through college and graduate school" because "someone can see what you say about yourself on your profile, the pictures you post, and your friend's posting," and they all become subject to "misunderstandings and recriminations" (*Alone Together* 181). Turkle's consequences come to light when looking at students like Matthew, who did not realize the self-image he created would be accessed by audiences aside from his friends. Students like Audrey, seem to make conscious decisions when constructing their identity, but,

like Matthew, they might not be critically accessing how their digital media is affected by the context it's produced in.

While Audrey's statements seem to reflect a sentiment of authorial control, when returning to George and Shoos discussion of producing in online environments, we see that it is "equally on the producer, as well as the reader of these texts to understand the sometimes contradictory roles they can play in a larger system" (125). Such contradictions are illustrated by Gina Maranto and Matt Baron, college educators in rhetoric and composition also integrating SNS into their classroom. Maranto and Baron referenced an article from *The Boston Globe* detailing the story of a "shy student," who created a FB profile "too exaggeratedly different from Real-World Dan" (44). Referencing the original article Maranto and Baron quoted, reporter for *Boston Magazine*, Kevin Alexander talks with three high school juniors about SNS personas. One student speaking about the aforementioned student Dan, states that he's "never seen him talk to a girl," but his FB posts give off the impression that girls are all over him ("Fast Times"). While in school, Dan's classmates explain they never really noticed him, but because of the dissonance between his offline and online persona, Dan was "trying *too* hard online," and "accidentally tripped the silent social alarm" (Alexander "Fast Times"). The idea of online representations possibly affecting offline peer perceptions, could allude to the tearful experiences Turkle mentions as a result of students interaction on SNS.

In further explaining Matthew, Audrey, and Dan's actions when constructing their digital identity, boyd references renowned sociologist, Erving Goffman's theory of "impression management" (48). In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman uses a "theatrical performance" metaphor in which life is a stage, individuals are actors, and our actions and

reactions are part of a performance ("Preface"). While Goffman's discussion predates SNS, his theories can be applied to our students' actions in digital contexts:

When we allow that the individual projects a definition of the situation when he appears before others, we must also see that the others, however passive their role may seem to be, will themselves effectively project a definition of the situation by virtue of their response to the individual and by virtue of any lines of action they initiate toward him" (Goffman 3).

What Goffman explains above, is the concept of audience as participatory in an actor's performance of self. In looking at Dan's situation, his online and offline performance contradicted each other. Online audiences may not actively, and immediately, challenge a student's identity performance, so audiences can sometimes be perceived as the passive spectators Goffman describes; however, while Dan might have been "intentionally and consciously express[ing] himself in a particular way," his classmates still actively critiqued his online performance through comparing it to his offline performance (Goffman 3). Goffman describes audiences' actions as either "skeptically examin[ing] aspects" of the actor's performance or being "suitably impressed," by an actor's efforts; in Dan's case, his classmates were the former (3). Published in 1956, while Goffman's theory is applicable to online performance, the performances he describes are in-person, and can be based off of immediate audience reaction. After assessing an audience, the actor can alter his performance based on its acceptance or rejection. In our digital context, this may not always be the case.

A student creating an online profile may not get automatic audience reactions that signify disapproval or approval of their chosen identity performance. As we have seen with Dan, these conversations may occur, but outside the digital context, in a space where the student may not be present to correct any misunderstandings. When we return to Stephanie, both her classmates and

my own perception of her, might have been created by the profile photo on her blog. As we sat in individual spaces making assumptions about who Stephanie could be, Stephanie was not there to alter those assumptions. The same can be said for Matthew whose potential college recruiters may have already seen his online profile, and based on the self-representation Matthew created for his friends, could have decided if Matthew was a good fit for the team. Goffman explains that "in everyday life...first impressions are important" (3) While many would agree with Goffman, in 1956, first impressions were in person, but our 2015 use of SNS and other digital platforms bring first impressions online, a space where the physical actor is an author, and the power they hold in representing themselves is equally shared with the audience viewing their performances.

The networked portion of SNS allows for innumerable audiences to view a student's self-representations. Because audience members can differ from friends, to family, to employers, it can be difficult to predict, or contain, all possible reactions to a student's chosen identity performance. Just as Turkle described, contradictions and differences within networked publics make SNS participation seem stressful and unmanageable, but if we only "warn [students] away from the fragmented, ever-growing information on the internet" we neglect opportunities for helping students develop skills necessary for their participation as informed citizens in our digitized world (George and Shoos 125). Whether a student is aware of the dangers or not, they will most likely still participate on SNS. Continuing to alienate out-of-school digital composing on SNS from composition classrooms, prevents students from both rhetorically analyzing their visual compositions, and developing needed CDL skills to mediate power relationships between author and audience in online spaces. Research on digital composing shows that despite the risks highlighted by digital media critics, on SNS students negotiate conscious decisions concerning identity and representation that could be transferable to a FYC classroom. By looking deeper into

students' participation on SNS, composition instructors gain access to spaces with potential for teaching transferrable lessons in critical analysis and rhetorical awareness.

SECTION 2: Applying A Critical Perspective to Self-Representations on Facebook and Instagram

Defining Critical Digital Literacies

Both FB and IG ask a student to construct a self-representation to share with an audience of friends and followers. Because students are composing daily on these mediums, composition instructors can teach students CDL skills needed to "not only decode, encode, and make meaning from texts, but also to *interrogate* them" as a way of mediating the loss of authorial power when composing in a digital space (Ávila and Pandaya 2). Juliet Hinrichsen and Antony Coombs of the Educational Development Unit at the University of Greenwich, give a succinct, and current, definition for CDL in "The five resources of critical digital literacy: a framework for curricular intervention":

There are two senses of critical dimension at play, and both are implied when we use the term. These meanings can be regarded as internal to and external to the digital. By internal we refer to faculties of analysis and judgment as applied to the content, usage and artefacts of the technology. The external meaning relates to a position regarding the development, effects and social relations bound in technology. This position is more associated with historical and cultural analyses and operates in a wider field of technology than computers. It is concerned particularly with how meaning is constructed, by whom and for what purposes and in this sense representational and communicational modes are central. ("Five resources").

Hinrichsen and Coombs's definition of CDL asks students to investigate using two perspectives; the first is internally understanding how the digital medium is situated in a networked context, therefore affecting the way information can be accessed, distributed and shared among users. As mentioned earlier by authors boyd, Kress, and George and Shoos, this complication is an inherent part of authorship in online worlds. Hinrichsen and Coombs move beyond the medium itself in their second perspective. Students are encouraged to look externally at the existing historical and cultural discourses affecting the power dynamics associated with how meaning is made in digital spaces (Hinrichsen and Coombs "five resources"). Similar to traditional forms of rhetorical analysis, CDL asks students to analyze their actions as consumers and producers on SNS. When applying Hinrichsen and Coombs's definition to meaning-making through self-representations on SNS, we may return to boyd who asks millennials to consider, "what biases are embedded in this [photo]? How did the creator intend for the audience to interpret this [photo,] and what are the consequences of this interpretation?" (181). How might students go about asking these questions when examining their own self-representations? In what ways might they explore, and develop, an understanding of the internal and external aspects of CDL when looking at photos on SNS?

To answer these questions, we can invite a student perspective that further discusses ways in which the identity performed in a self-representation can be received and judged by an audience. In the following post, Monica, a first-year student majoring in Health and Exercise Science, completed Assignment E on her blog and reflected on her partner's assessment of her from Project 1.

...I believe that the analysis was a good representation of my offline self for the most part. I do not like how it did not take into account how serious I take my

scholarly work. Most of my posts are about social events, not school related. The writer talks about how I dressed up to go out to eat- dresses and heels. To attain a higher economic status by looking the part. Dressing up gives the idea that a woman is more attractive when she tries. Young girls try dressing up to look more mature, and have the perception of being older. Since it was a birthday celebration, this was idealized. The classmate must have seen these ideologies as a representation of me. The photos of looking nice or being in CSU gear made it seem like I hold the ideology of wanting to be mature and older. In reality, I am a big nature lover. The ideals of society don't apply to my everyday life. I often go natural, not trying to have people see me as older. Dressing up could have thought that I idolized higher class. My classmate could have stereotyped me as higher class, and prioritizing social life over academic life. As I do enjoy the aspiration for a comfortable lifestyle alongside a social life this is not the main focus of my true self. My true self strives for greatness in non- materialistic ways. Sometimes that is hard to be perceived over the web (12/4/2014 "Letter Personal Reflection").

While Monica's post displays satisfaction with some ways that her partner portrayed her, in other ways, we see how her partner might not have understood who Monica truly is; someone who is not preoccupied with materialism and appearance. Near the end of her post, Monica references the internal elements that Hinrichsen and Coombs mention as being a part of a students' development of CDL skills. Monica also reflects on external factors, calling them ideologies, like social class and expectations for women's appearance, that contributed to her partner's assessment. While familiar with stereotypes as a common knowledge term, Monica and her classmates were given a lecture on the word ideology, and how it affects how individuals and audiences view themselves, others, and the world. While taught in the context of SNS, ideological theory is rooted in critical pedagogy existing prior to the advent of computer mediated communication

James Berlin, a renowned theorist in composition theory and history of rhetoric, developed a theory of viewing texts similar to how current CDL theorists ask students to look at digital media products. Berlin's theory of social-epistemic rhetoric begins with the principle that "a rhetoric is never innocent" meaning it is always embedded in ideological discourses

("Rhetoric and Ideology" 477). Current CDL theorists, like Ávila and Pandaya, who ask their students to adopt a perspective similar to Berlin's social-epistemic theory encourage them to "critique and transform dominant ideologies, cultures and economies, and institutions and political systems" that may affect their digital composing process (3). Composition instructors can return to James Berlin's social-epistemic rhetoric, as well as other founding forms of critical pedagogy, to fully comprehend, apply, and share the critical portion of CDL that seeks to encourage students like Monica to use digital self-representations as a way to challenge, confront, and resist social constructs.

Students as the Oppressed

FB and IG are inherently participatory as users build knowledge through interacting with each other's photographs. Because knowledge construction on FB and IG is dependent on "dialectical collaboration," Berlin's social-epistemic rhetoric can encourage "the interaction of student, teacher, and shared experience" in FYC classrooms ("Rhetoric and Ideology" 492). Like social-epistemic rhetoric, CDL calls for the "disruption of authority, and the fluidity of the relationship between learners and teachers" (Avila and Pandaya 6). As students integrate their out-of-school digital composing practices on FB and IG with classroom activity, they familiarize themselves with digital literacies, and can feel more empowered to "forge their own paths to authority" (Avila and Pandaya 6). This classroom design was inspired by Brazilian educator, and founding father of critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire who emphasizes the importance of teaching students to "deepen their critical awareness of reality," and help them "take possession of that reality" in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (87).

Freire's work in critical pedagogy occurred during the 1970's, in Latin America, where he sought to empower those who were oppressed and disadvantaged by bringing literacy and education as "not a gift, not a self-achievement," but as a "mutual process" (26). Before becoming fully aware of their agency, Freire tells the oppressed that their "behavior is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor" (29). He continues by saying how the oppressed "internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines; therefore, ending up "preferring the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom" (29-30). What Freire explains here is that the oppressed knowingly, or unknowingly, continue to follow and adapt to the rules and norms orchestrated by the oppressor. While Freire is talking about political and social oppression of the poor in Latin America, particularly Brazil, after an economic crisis, we can apply his teachings to how students make decisions when constructing self-representations on SNS.

To illustrate this application, we can return to the situation Monica detailed in her post, and refer back to her comment on appearance. She stated that in one photo her partner chose, she describes herself as wearing "dresses and heels" (12/4/2014 "Letter Personal Reflection"). While Monica explains how her partner may have misinterpreted her decision to dress-up as trying to look older, or attempting to represent a higher social class, we may encourage Monica to ask what caused her to post a picture in which she is dressed-up, especially when she also states in her post that she more often chooses to "go natural" (12/4/2014 "Letter Personal Reflection"). This leads us back to Turkle's conversation with Audrey, whose process of putting on make-up, and a specific outfit to take a profile picture, seems to resemble the kind of photo Monica posted on her SNS. Monica states that "the ideals of society don't apply to my everyday life" (12/4/2014 "Letter Personal Reflection") Returning to Hinrichsen and Coomb's discussion of external

influences, to help foster a more critical perspective in how Monica decides to construct her self-representations, we might ask her to further think about possible cultural and social influences surrounding appearance that contributed to her decision.

Through asking students like Monica to investigate how external factors may affect her decisions in constructing self-representations on SNS, we could be helping students gain the Freirean benefit of "freedom to create and to construct, to wonder and to venture," but this is dependent on them also becoming "active and responsible" (50). Freire explains that we can only attain this kind of freedom by "accept[ing] the struggle for humanization," which also comes with further accepting that, as a member of the oppressed, we are not fully human since the supposed free decisions we make, are unconsciously influenced by the desires, goals, and wants of the oppressor (Freire 32). In terms of how to apply Freire's discussion of freedom and oppression to SNS, we can look at students as the oppressed, and the decisions they make on SNS when constructing self-representations, as influenced by the oppressor. The oppressor would first be the audience, and second, the external factors affecting audience perception of students' online identity. Freire's theory of the oppressed can serve as a base for building on the relationship between student, audience, and self-representations by returning to Berlin's social-epistemic rhetoric.

Audience as the Oppressor

In the chapter, "Social-Epistemic Rhetoric, Ideology, and English Studies" from Berlin's book, *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures : Refiguring College English Studies*, Berlin discusses issues regarding how audiences respond to texts. Despite Berlin's theories on audience referring to offline texts, his descriptions concerning audience's unpredictable responses directly applies

to students' friends and followers on FB and IG. Students often have specific purposes for posting self-representations, but even within their permitted audience of friends and followers, as we saw with Monica, "the responses of an audience are never totally predictable" and "never completely in the control of the sender" (Berlin "Social-Epistemic Rhetoric" 83). Options to personalize your profile and customize privacy settings on FB and IG can make students believe they have complete control over audience perception. We may refer to Matthew who believed that his privacy settings allowed only those who knew him personally to view his FB. The innumerable amount of audience members, will have "a range of possible responses" as each audience member is "appropriating the message in the service of their own interests and desires" (Berlin "Social-Epistemic Rhetoric" 83). While these audience responses are relegated by individual perspectives, they are also defined by the context of the SNS, in the case of this discussion, how individuals are expected to behave on FB and IG.

Berlin's theory of social-epistemic rhetoric encourages us to not simply consider how the individual interacts with others, but also to be aware of how the individual's communication is situated in, and affected by, the context its produced in. The previous section outlined the internal, technological effects of a networked public on a students' digital media products. To expand on the external cultural and social effects, we might refer back to boyd. Boyd states, "the context of a particular site is not determined by the technical features of that site, but rather by the interplay between teens and that site (39). Boyd explains that the way a majority of users choose to communicate, determines what becomes a behavioral norm within the site's context. In returning to Barton et al.'s discussion of literacy as a social practice, boyd is in accordance with Barton et al.'s theory that we understand communication by seeing it as "patterned by social institutions and power relationships" (144). The power relationships boyd may be referring to are

how the individual chooses to, or does not choose to, relate to the site's norms, and what the possible consequences may be from the surrounding community.

When discussing norms, Berlin explains that going against membership standards in certain contexts can garner disapproval as "the audience [has potential to] completely resist the message" ("Social-Epistemic Rhetoric" 83). While this may be true, as we saw in the case of Dan, and the dissonance between his online and offline self, on SNS, even going along with the norm can earn disapproval from audience members. We see an example of this in another student's post.

Hannah, a first-year student with an undeclared major, and her classmates were asked to read Source B and C, and then complete Assignment C through a discussion thread on the class blog. In the following post, Hannah discusses a normal behavior students engage in while on FB and IG.

...going through Instagram or other social networking sites, most of the posts that people post are selfies, or pictures bragging about something they got, or somewhere they went. When these people post their pictures they are not usually doing it with the intention of being self absorbed, it is just something everyone does and is considered normal (9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum").

While many recognize the norm of these types of posts, other students on the discussion thread felt differently about this behavior. In the following posts, we are given some varying perspectives of students regarding the types of photos Hannah mentions.

We are a very self centered generation. I find myself going on sites like Instagram and almost half of my newsfeed is someone posting something they bought recently or something they did last weekend that isn't necessarily significant to me. Furthermore, in Nussbaum's article, something that really stuck out at me was when she asked Gasaway if he's ever taken pictures at parties and if he's

posted them and his reaction was pure bewilderment to the question (Amanda 9/23/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum").

I think most of us would agree that it was the normal and “cool” thing to get a Facebook and participate in other social media sites. In 20 years from now, we will be looking at the next generation thinking how absurd their values and opinions are for the simple reason that we grew up in different time periods with different events and aspects in each. I believe the two authors assertions are valid and agree with most of their arguments relating to the fact that most of these people take it way too far (Stephanie 9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum").

Don't get me wrong, there are definitely benefits to this ability, but it's a hell of a lot different than what our parents were used to. In both of the articles they did great jobs pointing out the pros and cons of today's SNS. One huge benefit is that sites like YouTube and Facebook can expose people to the entire world and they have the opportunity to become something big and live their dreams. One disadvantage is that people are restricted from going out into the world and doing things on their own. Meeting people face to face. Sharing thoughts and feelings through their real life personalities. I think that both points the articles were trying to make are very valid and can be seen in many ways (Joseph 9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum").

What these student responses show us, is that the norms Hannah mentions, while being agreed upon as norms by her fellow classmates, does not generate complete approval. There are rules and norms created by, and enacted by, a majority that influence how students choose to behave in a digital context, but the individual perspectives, beliefs, and ideas can impact even widely understood, and accepted, norms. This inconsistency is why Berlin urges us to also take into consideration how the context is further shaped by individual, ideological positions.

Ideological Discourse and the Oppressed Student

Before students can attain the kind of autonomy Freire describes, they must first know why they don't have it, and we saw with Monica who stated her "true self" is not affected by

social norms, this can be a difficult process (12/4/2014 "Letter Personal Reflection"). Part of asking students to critically investigate their actions, begins with establishing an understanding that "transcendental truth" does not exist as all people, places and things are "engaged in the play of power and politics" (Berlin "Social-Epistemic Rhetoric" 77). On FB and IG, students construct an online identity through digital photographs; they compile a profile displaying valued personality traits, characteristics, likes and dislikes, but they are often unaware these qualities are not intrinsic to the self. What students "take to exist, to have value and to be possible, seems necessary, normal and inevitable" however when applying Berlin's idea to students' choices and decisions on FB and IG, it becomes evident that students' online profiles are as carefully molded by ideological discourses as their offline lives are (Berlin "Rhetoric and Ideology" 479). While other pedagogies can dismiss ideology's role in the writing classroom, critical pedagogy and social-epistemic rhetoric, assert that "rhetoric is situated in ideology;" therefore, if composition instructors teach through rhetoric, they must recognize that "rhetoric is always already serving certain ideological claims" (Berlin "Rhetoric and Ideology" 477).

Berlin chooses to draw from *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology*, by Marxist sociologist, Göran Therborn, who Berlin describes as balancing the "discussion of ideology found in Louis Althusser" and "power in Michel Foucault" ("Rhetoric and Ideology" 478). While Althusser himself explains ideology as "false consciousness," to an unattainable truth, Therborn shares Berlin's claim that "all formulations are historically specific, arising out of the material conditions of a particular time and place;" meaning that ideology's definition can fluctuate depending on who is using it, and why ("Rhetoric and Ideology" 478). In accordance with Therborn and Berlin, students are asked to read the textbook, *Practices of Looking: Image, Power and Politics*, by Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, both professors in visual

communication studies. Sturken and Cartwright define ideology as "the broad but indispensable, shared set of values and beliefs through which individuals live out their complex relations to a range of social structures" (21). With ideology relating to individual and cultural relations, Berlin's definition of it being a "term of great instability" is accurate ("Rhetoric and Ideology" 478). Elements like values and beliefs are contingent on context. The accepted ideologies of the individuals involved, both students and the audiences they compose for, are always fluid, dynamic, and changing. As students are producing and consuming digital self-representations in a networked context of innumerable audiences, teaching students to be rhetorically aware of their actions and decisions in both these roles, must begin with teaching them how ideology influences their actions, and an audience's perception of their actions.

Prior to showing students how ideology operates on SNS, students were asked to choose a situation in their offline life where they felt limited by the effects of a specific "shared set of values and beliefs" (Sturken and Cartwright 21). Returning to Alex, the student whose post stated that SNS seem to perpetuate a false image of the true self, we see how after completing Assignment D, Alex's opinion of intrinsic truths may have changed. Below is Alex's post describing his experience with ideologies surrounding his upbringing and faith.

Growing up, I went to an all-christian school. While yes, it was a great school to establish many different ideas about living the christian lifestyle, I think it really lacked a lot of the necessary ideals for living in the real world. For example, the essential message we were taught was that anyone, other than christians, would go to hell, regardless of how good of a person they are. Because of the fact that we were taught from such a young age (I started going to school there as a kindergartener, but many of my friends were preschoolers when they started), we were essentially raised to believe that anyone not a christian is a horrible person. When I eventually transferred to a public school where no religion was specified or even needed, it was a major culture shock for me. I would meet people who would later become my good friends, and when we reached the point of being comfortable enough to share religious beliefs, I was shocked to find that good people don't have to be Christian necessarily. This blew me away and until I

talked to my mom, I was a little weary around them unfortunately. The predisposed ideal from the social structure of religion and the christian church altered my view on people. My mom had a conversation with me that told me that not all good people are christian and not all christians are good people. Once we had this conversation, my view completely changed and it has brought me to who I am today. Now, not necessarily being completely Christian or even religious at all, I find acceptance is critical and looking past beliefs is the only way to be a genuine good person (9/29/2014 "A Time in my Life Where I Was Affected by Ideology").

In his post, Alex describes his experience as being a member of a school that seemed to enforce an ideology of morals contingent on being Christian. If we were to view Alex's situation from a social-epistemic perspective, we see how ideology gave Alex the language to define himself as the subject, a position that Berlin explains as socially constructed, and based on membership in a specific discourse community" ("Social-Epistemic Rhetoric" 83). Based on Alex's membership in the Christian faith, he identified as Christian, and therefore saw himself as a good person. Other subjects, like his classmates and peers, were not Christian, and therefore not good, and in Alex's post, we see that his material world involved believing that religious membership could dictate an individual's morality (Berlin "Rhetoric and Ideology" 479). Power relationships determine what formations become dominant and normalized, and through social-epistemic rhetoric, Alex began to question who, or what, gets to define what's "real and true" as he came to certain realizations about his faith (Berlin "Rhetoric and Ideology" 479). With social-epistemic rhetoric, composition instructors can help students like Alex gain rhetorical "awareness to the ways in which rhetorics can privilege some at the expense of others" (Berlin "Rhetoric and Ideology" 490). By interrogating why certain individuals, institutions, groups, and structures do have power and privilege to define social norms, students like Alex can further develop an understanding of how external cultural and social forces can be a part of their offline life. They may then be able to transfer these understandings into a digital context; however, as

discussed earlier through Freire, this process is "not a gift" from the teacher, nor a "self-achievement," but a "mutual process" formed through a trusting partnership (26).

Filling Containers in the Non-Critical Classroom

Critical pedagogy requires composition instructors to move away from a teacher-centered classroom by helping students enter dialogue through "open-ended questioning strategies" focused on "invention, re-invention" and "inquiry" (Berlin "Social-Epistemic Rhetoric"; Freire 53). When students compose on FB and IG, they write in spaces inherently designed for dialogic knowledge construction, but in a non-critical classroom, students may not have the chance to form this partnership.

When composition instructors lecture, students' written products are not critically assembled texts, but notes from our instruction. Freire might see this as a form of oppression as, "the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (53) Freedom cannot be achieved if students are still adapting to the teacher, rather than thinking for themselves. As a result, students internalize their apparent ignorance and look solely to the teacher for what is considered right, good, and true (Freire 53). Freire's explanation of how students understanding of what knowledge can be counted as right, and discarded as wrong, though originating in the 1970's, has transcended time, and been reestablished by other pedagogues.

In 1990, Ira Shor published *When Students Have Power: Negotiating Authority in a Critical Pedagogy*. Shor echoed Freire's container filling metaphor by creating his own metaphor

describing how a non-critical classroom can come to affect students. Shor, a leading exponent in critical pedagogy, explained how he looked out at the students in his writing classroom, thinking about how they waited for him to "do education to them;" this process included, "shellacking them with knowledge until their faces shined like maple tabletops" (10). Shor explains, "Students are creative, intelligent beings, so their complex minds and creative desires conflict with architectures of control in curricula" (12). Both Shor and Freire compare teachers to sole dispensers of knowledge, and classrooms, to locations where students are not active participants in their learning. This process of knowledge construction is directly contrary to how students make meaning on digital platforms like FB and IG. To avoid teacher-student alienation, composition instructors can decenter their authority through creating a learning environment reflecting the non-linear, malleable affordances of SNS by exercising an emergent pedagogy.

Empowering Students Through Emergence

In the article, "Emergent pedagogy: learning to enjoy the uncontrollable and make it productive," authors Anne Dalke and her research team, all members of the English faculty at Bryn Mawr College, challenge the supposed "effective and efficient" method of structured classrooms (111). Drawing from Freire's interactive classroom, Dalke et al. introduce "emergent systems," which "evolve effectively on their own," but "produce patterns of coordination and a substantial degree of organization" (112). While science-related, Dalke et al. pedagogically advocate for "both students and their teachers to have space, opportunity and room to explore" as part of their learning environment (113-114). When applying emergence to critical pedagogy, we see how critical pedagogues like Shor exercised emergent pedagogy when implementing classroom "protest rights," that permitted students to stop class activity if they're "uneasy, bored,

angry, confused, or lost in any way;" Following, the protesting student would explain their objection, and the class would "debate alternatives," then "vote on what to do next (112). In giving students power to not only control curriculum, but also classroom discussion and activities, Shor departs from his role as "conductor," and becomes, what Dalke et al. would call, the "synthesizer and reflector," tasked with making "classroom activities visible and meaningful to all participants" (113).

As Shor recognized, a critical, social-epistemic, emergent classroom places greater demands on the teacher, but student input can help teachers "generate new insight," increasing effectiveness of classroom objectives (Dalke et al. 114). Shor created the "after-class group," (AG) in hopes of gaining this insight from his students (126). There were nine students in the AG that discussed how to better their next lesson; one student mentioned that class concepts weren't clear, and students would benefit from more examples, something Shor provided his students with in the following lesson (126). Through Shor's AG, instead of learning from the teacher, students learned with the teacher, and education became a simultaneous process of "perception," and "volition" (Freire 33). Education teaches students how to think, and a critical, social-epistemic, and emergent pedagogy can accomplish this by encouraging students to participate in democratic discussions preparing them for their future as engaged college students, and aware citizens

CDL in FYC

FYC classrooms using Shor, Berlin, and Freire's teachings can yield a thoroughly critical rhetorical analysis defining author intentions and audience perceptions, but the students these theorists originally taught did not yet have computer mediated communication. While

composition instructors are creating critical classrooms, Takyoshi and Selfe explain how the modes students are asked to compose in, are not applicable to current digital composing practices. To make critical literacy techniques contemporary, some composition programs definitions for "composition and text" need to be renegotiated "to reflect literacy practices in new digital communication environments"(Takyoshi and Selfe 3). By leaving students' out-of-school digital composing practices outside of classroom space and discussion, composition instructors simultaneously overlook "the structural conditions in which the current thoughts and languages of [students] are dialectically framed" (Freire 77). Hinrichsen and Coombs attempt to create a framework to begin analyzing these structures by establishing an explanation for what CDL entails. Current CDL theorists like, Ávila and Pandaya, and Smith and Hull, are bringing CDL into primary and secondary education classrooms. While rhetoric and composition instructors are bringing technology into FYC, to contribute to students' development of CDL skills in academic, and non-academic, contexts, conversation about that technology should accompany its adoption.

Despite being free to use, FB, IG and many other SNS are owned and operated companies with commercial agendas, meaning their actions are never without economic and political underlying purpose. Through social-epistemic rhetoric, students can investigate the personal gains and losses that come with constructing self-representations on SNS. As students are encouraged to interrogate the internal factors associated with producing digital media in a networked space, as well as the external ideologies influencing their audience's perception of these products, students may be able to go from "manipulated objects, into active, critical subjects" through asking who, or what, benefits from their posts (Berlin "Rhetoric and Ideology" 491). In transferring students' digital composing practices into an academic setting, students can

bring their daily, digital actions under a critical, rhetorical microscope, to discover how power operates in online environments. With conversations concerning students' out-of-school digital composing being a central component of FYC, students can more confidently become co-constructors of classroom dialogue, as well as informed, conscious, participants in the consumption and production of digital knowledge and creation of self-representations.

SECTION 3: The Role of Self-Representations on SNS

Selfies and Self-Representations

In the previous sections, we discussed students' production and consumption of digital media products as internally affected by being situated in the online, networked public of SNS, and as externally affected by the norms and rules defined by context, community, and individual ideological perspectives. SNS, like FB and IG, are image-oriented spaces, and as Turkle and boyd's case studies predominately address, students upload photographs of themselves as means of building an online identity, and communicating with their audiences of friends and followers. Hannah called these commonly uploaded photographs, selfies.

Self-representations, or shortened to their more commonly known name, "selfies," are defined by the Oxford English dictionary as a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam, and shared via social media" (Oxford English Dictionary). As both Hannah and her classmates mentioned selfies in their posts, we can see that the term, and the action, are a norm to millennials; this could be because, coupled with the rise of the selfie, is the smartphone's ubiquitous presence in students' lives. According to the "Pearson Student Mobile Device Survey 2014," out of 1,228 college students, 83% use a smartphone daily (9). The smartphone's front-facing camera allows for easy selfie taking, and wireless internet capability, for instant selfie sharing. While students in the course were asked to take and

use selfies for class projects and assignments, the type of photos required for assignments might have been limited by students only having the option to take the picture of themselves, by themselves, which is the traditional selfie format. In the context of this thesis, photos of the student, taken by themselves, or by others, will instead be referred to as self-representations.

In Turkle's case studies, she seems to take on Goffman's play metaphor as she, and her interviewees, describe self-representation on SNS as a performance; one college senior went as far as saying, "It's like being in a play. You make a character" (*Alone Together* 183). Returning to the ways students create self-representations, we saw that Audrey chose to put on a specific outfit, and apply make-up, so as not to display "bad aspects" of herself (Turkle *Alone Together* 191). Monica explained that she had a tendency to post photos of herself at social events (12/4/2014 "Letter Personal Reflection"). In her earlier work, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, Turkle echoes the students interviewed in her later projects, explaining how creating an online identity allows us to "project ourselves into our own dramas...in which we are producer, director and star" (26). Goffman provides us with a theoretical basis for discussing students' self-representations as performances where the audience can take an active role as assessor, critic, or commenter, a role that Turkle states can make SNS a stressful, and tearful, experience (*Alone Together* 191). While there are risks to constructing a self-representation, there can also be rewards, and some students are balancing these risks by routinely using self-representations on SNS to explore identity intelligently, and creatively, as individuals, and as a member of an online community.

Power of Performativity

While exploring social performances from a 1950's perspective, Goffman's theory is valuable for understanding relations between actor and audience; we may build on Goffman

with a more current theoretical basis of identity as performance through Judith Butler's work on performativity from the 1990's. While Butler may not have looked at digital identities, her work can be applied to any process in which individuals create self-representations performed in a public context. Butler focuses her work on gender and sexuality, but we can assume a more general understanding of performativity by adding Berlin's theory of "social formations," and how they define the subject, or in this case, the student ("Social-Epistemic Rhetoric" 83). Berlin's examples of social formations are "race, class, gender, ethnic[ity], sexual orientation, and age;" other existing formations might be socioeconomic status, body type, education, employment etc. ("Social-Epistemic Rhetoric" 83). How students behave as a member of these social formations (being a woman, being white, being gay etc.) is regulated by what Butler would call "specific codes of cultural coherence," or the "appropriate limits, postures, and modes of exchange," a student must exhibit to be a part of a specific social formation (2544). Our strict adherence to these codes "conceals...discontinuities," and because discontinuities exist, Butler shows that "such acts...are performative in the sense that the essence or identity they otherwise purport to express are fabrications" (2548). To provide an illustration for how self-representations on SNS might relate to Butler's theory, we can invite a student perspective into our conversation.

In completing Assignment D, Amanda, a first-year student majoring in Health and Exercise Science, and a member of the university's wrestling team, reflects on responses from her choosing to not adhere to codes of cultural coherence expected of her gender.

...Some of you may already know this about me, but I was a high school wrestler and I am currently on the wrestling team now at CSU. Especially in high school, I felt the effects of ideology and the expectations of social norms. It's not 'normal' for a female to participate in wrestling and to many it was sort of a shock. Wrestling has been known to be strictly boys on the team and having me there changed the sport. I've had many people react to it in ways like 'Wrestling? Are you even allowed to do that?' or 'You mean you wrestle boys?'. It's not common

for girls to be on the wrestling team but that doesn't mean we aren't capable of doing it. I think for most people they believe that wrestling is meant for tough men who enjoy rolling around in each other's blood and sweat (makes sense because that's what they actually do). Furthermore, I think female wrestlers aren't common enough simply because we've always grown up with boys wrestling on the team. It's always a very rare occasion when you find a girl out on the mat. Well hopefully that'll change in the upcoming years but for now, hooray for girl power! (9/27/2014 "Ideology").

After her post, Amanda put a picture of her wrestling an opponent, captioning the photo with, "I'm in the blue" (9/27/2014 "Ideology"). This photo of Amanda, this self-representation, is actively challenging the codes of cultural coherence Amanda considers to be a limiting factor for herself, and other women (Butler 2544). By teaching students like Amanda about ideology, we invite students to participate in discovering "the ways in which control over their own lives has been denied," and guide them in developing methods for reclaiming their "self autonomy and self-fulfillment" (Berlin "Rhetoric and Ideology" 490-491). In sharing this self-representation on her blog, like Alex joined the conversation critiquing millennials' use of SNS, Amanda is joining the conversation of challenging gender-based expectations.

Amanda's self-representation is challenging the cultural codes expected of a woman, but using self-representation to do so was prompted by an assignment. In the previous section, Amanda contributed to the discussion concerning students' opinions on posting selfies to SNS. Her post included a comment on the "very self-centered" posts of her generation with selfies being a prime example (9/23/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum"). Amanda seems to equate self-representation to self-centeredness, which could make it difficult for her to see how self-representations can empower students. Her perspective could have originated from how selfies are discussed by popular media sources.

Selfies in the Popular Media

As we have seen digital media critics disregard students' SNS use as trivial and narcissistic, as do many pop-culture descriptions of selfies deny their ability to empower the individual sharing them. Stephen Marche calls selfies "the masturbation of self-image" on his 2013 blog post for *Esquire* claiming, selfies only fulfill vain "desires to photograph and be photographed" ("Your Selfie Isn't Art"). Echoing the vanity expressed by Marche, a 2014 article posted by Carolyn Gregoire of *The Huffington Post*, references a study done by Ohio State University. The study involved asking 800 men between 18 and 40 to fill out a survey regarding their use of photography on SNS, and results reported that "posting more photos [of themselves] was correlated with both narcissism and psychopathy" (Gregoire "Selfies to Narcissism"). With the 2015 popularization of the "selfie-stick," a plastic, elongated device made to hold one's phone allowing for easier selfie-taking, journalists like Maria Billias of *The Daily Telegraph*, wrote that "we are breeding a new generation of selfie-obsessed, mobile phone addicted kids" ("Age of Narcissism"). In the past three years, most popular media seems to be condemning the selfie, so it makes sense that millennials, like Amanda, not wanting to bear the negative connotations associated with selfies, might also gravitate toward this perspective.

While popular media is what our students are most commonly exposed to, as instructors, we often look to scholarly reports and articles to gain a more theoretical perspective. As selfies became a norm across SNS, scholars already studying SNS further investigated the effects of selfies on the selfie taker. As we work with college students, the following articles display the varying perspectives regarding the risk and rewards from college students participating in taking selfies.

Scholarly Discussions of Selfies

In the 2015 article, "#Gettinghealthy: The perceived influence of social media on young adult behaviors," assistant professor, Vaterlaus J. Mitchell, and his team held focus groups compiled of college students between the ages of 18 and 20, and discussed self-representations on SNS having to do with exercise and fitness (156). After talking with the groups, one of the results from the study indicated that viewing students' exercise and fitness related self-representations, led other student viewers to engage in body-shaming (Mitchell et al. 156). In relating Mitchell et al.'s findings to performativity, it is possible that viewing self-representations that seemed to adhere to cultural codes of bodily-image for the male and female sex, might have led student viewers to compare themselves, resulting in seeing a difference, or possible faults, in their own bodies. Because body shaming can lead to dangerous and self-destructive thoughts and behavior, we can see this as a possible risk when asking students to view, take, and share self-representations as part of their work in a FYC course.

While there are studies showing the risks to students viewing, taking, and sharing self-representations on SNS, other studies showcased the possible rewards. In the article, "Consuming the Objectified Self: The Quest for Authentic Self," researchers Yoo Jin Kwon and Kyoung-Nan Kwon interviewed 66 Korean college students from the ages 19-23 that claimed to take frequent selfies (304). Kwon and Kwon reported that participants' statements concerning how they felt after taking selfies correlated with "valued identity benefits" such as "feeling connected, feeling in control," and "feeling virtuous" (309). Because FYC attempts to teach writing as agency, and critical, social-epistemic pedagogies emphasize empowering students to take control over their lives, the feelings Kwon and Kwon report are similar to the goals we have for our students.

While Marche may seem to fall on the side of Mitchell et al. by describing selfies as a part of millennials' narcissistic behavior, his article more neutrally dubs selfie-takers as the new "image-makers," ("Your Selfie Isn't Art"). Whether students share the perspective of Mitchell et al. or Kwon and Kwon, as Marche's title for millennials alludes to, students are image-makers that are taking, and sharing, self-representations on SNS to construct an online identity. Just as students are invited to view both sides of the digital media debate, as should they be encouraged to participate in both sides of the self-representation debate. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, we as composition instructors are not looking to pinpoint reasons for students' behavior, as much as we are looking to better students' communication, and with self-representation as an inherent part of SNS literacy, we need to teach students the possible risks and rewards of participating in this kind of communication. This begins with showing students that self-representations can do more than just individually represent the self.

Cultivating Senses of Belonging

In "Selfiecity: Exploring Photography and Self-Fashioning in Social Media," Alise Tifentale and Lev Manovich explain how selfies can serve as vehicles for finding, joining, and showing allegiance and support to a community through SNS. By compiling and analyzing a group of 656,000 IG selfies, Manovich, professor of Computer Science, Tifentale, PhD candidate in Art History, and a team of other researchers, discovered that selfies allow IG users to "construct their identity, and simultaneously express their belonging to a certain community" (8). Tifentale wrote a separate article furthering this discussion in which she quotes artist, and critical thinker, Paul Chan who states, "in belonging, we actualize ourselves by possessing what we want to possess us, and find fellow feeling from being around others who own the same

properties" ("The Selfie" 11). How does an act of individual self-representation become communally oriented? We can answer this question by seeing how various movements began with users taking advantage of SNS's networked public through their individual self-representations.

#Changes

On both FB and IG, students can use hashtags when captioning their photo; the hashtagged word (for example, #selfie), then becomes searchable, and links the photo to a user's results when searching for that term. On SNS, users can utilize the hashtag in their self-representations to initiate movements that create the sense of belonging Tifentale referred to. *Time* writer, Megan Gibson, compiled a list of the "'Top Ten Hashtags that started a conversation' in 2014;" the number one hashtag was #IfTheyGunnedMeDown. In response to media outlets using uncomplimentary photos of Michael Brown, a black, teenage boy shot, and killed, in August of 2014 by a police officer in Ferguson Missouri, black men and women banded together by posting self-defined uncomplimentary, and complimentary, self-representations with the aforementioned hashtag (Gibson "Top Ten"). One example of these self-representations displayed a young, black man performing a stereotypical "thug" identity by holding up a gang sign, and staring seriously into the camera; next to this photo, there is another photo in which the same man is dressed in army fatigues, and reading to a group of school children. Similar depictions were used by others to protest how the media often depicts young, black males as menacing or felonious (Gibson "Top Ten").

Similar to how the black community came together, and found solace and power through sharing self-representations, and participating in the #IfTheyGunnedMeDown movement, Lucia

Peters, writer for the blog *Bustle*, explained the latest movement brought on by Lily Bolourian, who served as a Women's Outreach Coordinator for the Obama campaign in Washington DC. Bolourian took to her Twitter with the following post: "For women, particularly of color, owning our appearance is a radical act. I'm about any space to celebrate our bodies #FeministsAreUgly" ("#FeministsAreUgly"). Peters describes Bolourian's purpose for this hashtag as wanting to "use a word that not only tells you you're 'not beautiful' but that you've failed to conform to the mainstream beauty ideal that is almost exclusively white" ("#FeministsAreUgly"). Bolourian's movement, similar to #IfTheyGunnedMeDown, was self-reported as wanting to reach people of color, but actually ended up generating support from men and women of all races, genders, and sexualities ("#FeministsAreUgly"). Users participated in the #FeministsAreUgly movement through posting self-representations that featured the hashtag.

Both the #FeministsAreUgly and #IfTheyGunnedMeDown movement reveals the collaborative power of individual self-representations on SNS. As instructors of composition, we encourage students to understand their writing, both alphabetic text and image based, as situated in a communal context that equally affects the creation, and reception, of their written products. From Gibson and Peter's articles, we see how the belonging Tifentale mentions is cultivated through participation on SNS by taking, uploading, and sharing self-representations. As part of developing students' CDL skills, Ávila and Pandaya explain that students should "become designers, instead of only consumers of powerful texts" (Avila and Pandaya 4). With sharing selfies on FB and IG as commonplace, teaching students critical design methods for selfies not only allows them to design selfies that move beyond projecting representations of the self, and evolve into testing out different selves in a digital and communal atmosphere, but also build deeper connections with others in this digital community.

Throughout college, students go through stages of identity performance. They change their hair, clothing, taste in music and groups of friends, and display these actions in public arenas. With SNS, this public identity performance takes the form of digital self-representations. As we have seen, students have the power to turn their individual self-representations into collaborative, and purposeful, engagement. This kind of communal effort directly resembles the collaborative meaning-making process encouraged by Shor, Berlin and Freire in which knowledge is co-constructed. While social-epistemic rhetoric can empower the individual, its true power lies in the collaboration with community, as an individual gains agency from understanding the relations between themselves, their peers, and the material world. As our increasingly digital world brings social justice movements to the internet, for our students to be active and conscious citizens, they will require not just the ability to take a self-representation, but the skill to critically design an empowering identity performance to share in communal spaces like SNS.

SECTION 4: Facilitating Students' CDL Development Through Blogs

Critical Collaboration

In the previous section we discussed the communal, empowering aspects of students individually posting self-representations on SNS. Through viewing the role of SNS users in the #IfTheyGunnedMeDown and the #UglyFeminist movements, the goals of social-epistemic pedagogies are being realized, and recognized. Berlin states that the most important goal of a social-epistemic pedagogy is "maintain[ing] a commitment for preparing students for citizenship in a democratic society" ("English Studies" 80). As our students take part in SNS, and other inherently interactive out-of-school digital literacies, they participate in a space where users "openly and freely" engage in "public discourse" in pursuit of "a central commitment" (Berlin

"English Studies" 80). In building on the pursuits of social-epistemic pedagogies, we can return to Freire who illustrates the importance of collaboration in public discourse in saying, "men *cannot* save themselves...Salvation can be achieved only *with* others" (127). With collaboration being a central component of a critical, social-epistemic classroom, and being an inherent portion of students' experience on SNS, students only co-constructing knowledge with a teacher, defeats the purpose of this pedagogy; they must also construct knowledge with each other.

Why Blogs?

Prior discussed in this chapter, we see how incorporating students' use of FB and IG into composition classes can help facilitate collaborative learning, as well as the development of students' CDL skills needed to communicate during their time in, and departure from, the academy. As students learn to modify their digital self-representations on SNS, their actions are recorded in their decisions about what self-representations to include, who to allow into their audience, and how they interact with friends and followers on the media.

Returning to the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition, in terms of students' writing process, by the end of their FYC course, students should be able to "reflect on the development of composing practices, and how those practices influence their work" (3). While SNS can provide a space for students to exercise action based on what they learned throughout the course, students' blogs can provide a space for exploration, and reflection, on how course concepts may have influenced their actions. When looking at the similarities in structure between blogs and SNS, like SNS, blogs have the potential to "create an individual and collaborative learning community promoting social interaction among and between students" (Kang et al. 227). Most social-epistemically driven classrooms share the goal of fostering

collaborative knowledge building. If students are digitally composing on SNS for one portion of the class, but recording their development through assignments only the instructor sees and evaluates in another portion, this would seem to depart from the objective of classroom meaning-making as wholly collaborative.

When looking at current blogging platforms like Tumblr, Blogger, and Wordpress, we see their collaborative potential, as well as how they are comparable to SNS in both format and function. This may make them a possible companion for composition instructors integrating a form of out-of-school digital literacy into their curriculum. To understand the collaborative nature of blogs, it is essential to trace their history as platforms that encourage a co-construction of knowledge by their users.

History

Before SNS's rise to fame, web logs, or blogs, were one of the more prominent interactive platforms following the advent of web 2.0 (Vee "blogs!"). Annette Vee, a well-known scholar and professor of composition and technology, compiled a brief history of the blog on her site "blogs! tools for teaching." She created this site in an effort to further educate teachers on the history, use, and function of blogs, and how they might be implemented into the classroom ("blogs!"). According to Vee, blogs became popular after September 11th, when news channels were overwhelmed with requests, and questions, from frantic citizens, and people began to rely on individual bloggers to get faster feedback on the events happening in New York and Washington DC (Vee "blogs!"). Vee quotes blog expert, Rebecca Blood's "weblogs: a history and perspective," in which Blood explains how, over time, most blog entries transformed from

secondary news sources to online journals composed of a user's "reflections on life" ("blogs!"). Blood explains that the blog's popularity was spurred by the fact that "people with little or no knowledge of HTML [had] the ability to publish on the web" ("weblogs"). Because creating, editing, and maintaining a blog did not require specific knowledge of computers, the amount of people with ability to enter conversations on the web dramatically expanded.

Vee and Blood's recount on the effects of all inclusive internet publishing in the early 2000's, can be compared to our 21st century context when looking at how SNS also allow anyone to be an author without knowledge of computer code. Just as blogs evolved into personal journals, a student's SNS account is often an open-source diary detailing the student's preferences, relationships, feelings, and aspirations in both alphabetic text, and visual form. Whereas most SNS privilege a visually oriented space, many blogging platforms, while welcoming the user to incorporate visual media, still feature spaces for users to express their thoughts via alphabetic text. As blogs allow for a comfortable balance between alphabetic text and multimodal composing, they have potential to help foster students' CDL skills in the composition classroom.

Similarities Between Blogs and SNS

Current research in using blogs as a pedagogical tool shows their similarities to SNS, as well as their potential as a media for students' reflection, collaboration, and identity construction. In discussing their similarities to SNS, Trena M. Paulus, an expert on computer-mediated communication, Rebecca L. Payne, a professor of Educational Studies, and Lisa Jahns, an Assistant Professor of Public Health Nutrition, conducted a study on the blogging activity of undergraduate students in a nutrition class. In their article, Paulus et. al. analyzed the affordances

of the blogging platform Vox.com determining that, like SNS, blogs are "characterized by frequent updates, which are displayed with most recent posts at the top of the blog page ("Am I Making Sense"). Paulus et. al continue discussing blog's affordances explaining how "bloggers can easily personalize these online spaces and incorporate digital images, video, and links to other web pages" ("Am I Making Sense"). Blogs, like most web pages, have a multimodal friendly structure allowing the user to easily implement media into their alphabetic text based posts, but unlike a web page that usually replaces old content with new material, conversations that take place in asynchronous online environments, such as blogs or SNS, can be observed in 'real-time' as they unfold.

This 'real-time' aspect of blogs makes them persistent, as they enable able users to read, and re-read, entries from any time period. Blog transcripts become "artifacts of the meaning making process" (Paulus et al. "Am I Making Sense"). Like the photos on their SNS accounts, students' blog posts become part of a virtual archive allowing them to look back at their posts to assess their own development, and examine how their writing processes may have changed over time. With blogs serving as a student's personal history, they "make learning visible" (Paulus et al. "Am I Making Sense"). When students begin to notice how their own learning developed, changed, and progressed over time, they gain insight into how they learn. Because blogs are open, public forums, this kind of learning correlates with social-epistemic goals of collaborative knowledge construction, since their meaning-making processes in these online spaces is facilitated by discussion with their classmates.

Blogs as Collaborative

Research has shown, that when facilitated effectively, blogs can serve as spaces for collaborative learning. In their article, "To blog or not to blog: students' perceptions of blog effectiveness for learning in a college level course," authors Olivia Halic, Debra Lee, Trena Paulus, and Marsha Spence, explain that the collaborative nature of blogs is reinforced by their ability to "enable feedback from the audience by means of comments (206). Halic et al., all members of the faculty at The University of Tennessee, conducted a similar study to Paulus's prior study with Payne and Jahns, to see whether students in a large, lecture class would have an enhanced "sense of community" in their classroom by using blogs outside of the classroom (206). Halic et al. discovered that the inherent structure of blog communication "goes beyond simple interaction;" "students are deeply engaged in purposeful discourse to construct meaning, collaboratively share meaning, and validate understanding" (208). Their study revealed that a "majority of students had a positive experience with the blog supported learning environment and acknowledged the learning potential of blogs as a discussion medium" (Halic et al. 211). In Paulus et al.'s study, when students were asked their opinion on how blogs impacted their learning process, one student, Nancy, stated that blogs were "a good means of discussion, like another way of doing study groups" ("Am I Making Sense"). What Nancy's comment indicates is how students seem to see the online, interactive function of a blog, as akin to an in-person discussion with peers

To take advantage of the collaborative prospects Halic et al. discuss, students were typically asked to comment on other students' blog posts. To show how comments created discussion, we can refer to an example of how students facilitated discussion on their personal blogs through the comment function. In the following thread, Alex and Stephanie carry on a brief discussion prompted by Stephanie's post that answered Assignment F. Stephanie chose to write

her second project on the ideologies surrounding individuals suffering from depression. This blog

explained to her audience that depression is not as limiting as they may perceive it to be. Alex was tasked with providing a counterargument for Stephanie 's argument. The following thread features Stephanie 's post, Alex's comment, and Stephanie 's response.

...I am talking about the ideologies I am challenging in project two, and that ideology is that, um, most people think depression limits you from being successful and it's just a person who's lazy, sad for no reason, unmotivated and that it's pretty much all in their minds, and some ways I'm challenging that is with my picture. And, um, If you Google just depression you're going to see the same pose with the same people, and that is, um, someone in like a dark corner, knees to their chest, hands on their face, just a filter of darkness, just being really sad, and the picture I chose to challenge that was me graduating high school with my diploma in my hand right after they said my name, and I'm just, I did that to show that even if you are depressed it doesn't control your life and that you can still be successful and accomplish your goals, and also, another article I used was the article about anxiety⁴ that Ms. LaPadura showed us. And actually, anxiety and depression are very similar and the comments you get are almost exactly the same. Uh, comments such as, "just get over it," you know like, "man up," that's a very common one. And basically what the article is doing is, it's trying to educate people and show them that their words can be more detrimental than they actually think. And even when they're trying to encourage people that can actually make it worse because it's setting this idea in their mind, and it's just eating away at them, pretty much. So, my audience that I'm targeting is people in society who think depression is limited and just pretty much always being sad in a dark room and that it controls your whole life. (Stephanie 10/12/2014)

I think you bring up an awesome point Stephanie. The fact that you compare the article about anxiety and depression is an awesome comparison . Although I personally haven't experienced actual depression in my own life, I have gone through many experiences in my life that have really brought me down and made me really down. Having gone through several experiences in my life that have made me feel sluggish and unmotivated to really do anything, I can say that the point you make about the comments people say can be very frustrating and hard to hear. I remember people asking me why I was so sad or why i was no fun to be around and i can remember thinking to myself; 'if only they actually knew what i

⁴ A full description of the sources used in the curriculum, including the source mentioned here, can be found in Appendix B of this thesis.

was going on in my life, then they would understand why I am acting the way I am.” So the question i have for you is; is depression and anxiety not limiting? From my own personal experiences (although it wasn’t depression, it was still very debilitating), i can remember feeling incredibly unmotivated and a general sense of not wanting to get up in the morning or to do anything at all during the day. Don’t get me wrong I’m not saying people who do suffer from depression should “man up” or “get over it” because it is serious problem. I guess I just am wondering if when someone does have depression, in your opinion, should we overlook it and not act like it is actually happening or should we actively seek help for the person in a way that doesn’t seem too pushy? (Alex 10/13/2014)

"Thank you for your comment! To answer your question, depression can be very limiting if not treated and dealt with in the right way. This includes not wanting to get up in the morning, like you said, and just being so unmotivated in general. If you or anyone you know are having symptoms of depression, my advice is to definitely seek help. Never overlook your feelings or others feelings and just simply being there to listen to someone helps more than you think" (Stephanie 10/13/2014).

Both Alex and Stephanie successfully completed the assignment, but as Halic et al.'s results also indicated, it seemed that students went beyond an instructor prompted interaction. While providing counterargument, we see that Alex also shared a personal story about his own struggle with hard times. Alex also used his comment as an opportunity to ask Stephanie to talk a little bit about how depression should be handled. This might not be a question Alex would ask Stephanie in class in front of their peers, so the blog provided a space in which this discussion could take place.

Facilitating Effective Discussion

Like SNS, it is easy for students to hold discussions on their blogs, as we have seen with Alex and Stephanie, because the platforms are designed with the intention for users to form a community (Kang et al. 227). Inae Kang, and Curtis J. Bonk, both members of their respective university's School of Education, and Myung-Chun Kim, a member of Kyung Hee University's

School of Medicine, discuss how blogging provided a space for "networked individuality" in a graduate class (227). Kang et al. detail how a blog, like a SNS account, "connects or links back easily" to other accounts; this allows users to "append comments to the posting of others, leave their own opinions as comments, link the post to their blogs, and turn the copied post into their own conversation thread" (228). These functions are similar to the options FB and IG offer to share a user's post to either your own account, a friend's account, another SNS, or to individual email addresses and phone numbers; however, students using SNS often realize how those platforms function through interaction with other users, and when sharing personal content, it is usually under the pretense that other users will engage with it. On blogs, despite the research showing its rich potential for collaborative knowledge building, it can be easy for students to use it for individual posting rather than group discussion.

As Paulus et al. state, "knowledge is not transmitted from one person to another, but instead, knowledge is created through conversation with others" ("Am I Making Sense"). Authors, Holly Hungerford-Kresser, Joy Wiggins, and Carlo Amaro-Jiménez reflect on their lack of facilitating collaboration between students using blogs during their preservice teacher education class. Hungerford-Kresser et al., all assistant professors, explain that "incorporating digital pedagogies" cannot be a haphazard decision, but rather "must directly respond to students' interests and needs" (328). The mistake that Hungerford-Kresser et al. made was assuming that, being millennials, their students would automatically adapt to blogging.

Hungerford-Kresser fell under the impression of scholars like Marc Prensky who assume millennials to be digital natives. They believed, that by virtue of being surrounded by technology, millennials were "supposed to love any form of technological intervention," and as a result of this assumption, they "offered little in the way of direct instruction for preparing blog

responses outside of clear criteria for what should be included" (326/329). As we have learned from the digital media debate, millennials are not inherently born with skills to use, or critically navigate digital platforms. Hungerford-Kresser et al.'s students responded with frustration; one student claiming that "there was no discussion...it was just 20 posts of 'here's what I think'...there was no interaction; just comments. There was no flow...so I think it was useless" (Hungerford-Kresser et al. 330). Just as students will feel frustrated when their audience on SNS does not respond to their post through comments or likes, as will they tire from participating in blogging if they only see it as a digital space in which their instructor is solely viewing, evaluating, and responding to their writing

Introducing Blogs Through Instruction

Blogs offer a space of discussion, which differentiates them from students simply handing in an essay or posting their thoughts to a web-page. Like social-epistemic learning, this kind of collaborative discussion can begin with teacher facilitation. Hungerford-Kresser et al. suggest that instructors should provide prompts for students' blog posts to help give them an initial direction (332). While we can assume all students are composing on SNS, this is not always the case, and the same can be said for blogging. Blogging is not yet a ubiquitous pedagogical tool, so it is possible a student may have never blogged before. For students to gain the benefits of a new media, be it blogging or SNS, they will most likely require initial instruction on operating the media, and direction for how the media should be used.

The mistakes that Hungerford-Kresser et al. made concerning a lack of direct instruction, could have been remedied by Paulus et al.'s decision to have a "two-hour in-person orientation" where they "helped participants set up their blogs and outlined expectations" ("Am I Making

Sense"). While we may assume our millennial students have inherent technology skills, this myth can lead to the same need for instruction that Hungerford-Kresser et al. failed to fulfill.

Composition instructors can take time to teach students how to use their blogs to better ensure they take advantage of its potential for collaborative knowledge building through discussion.

Blogging in a Networked Public

Similar to the larger audience they reach through SNS, students can see blogging as a way to reach audiences beyond their instructor. Lorie Jacobs, a doctoral candidate, used blogging in her FYC class, and found that her students began to realize "it is the reader who determines the meaning-which is not necessarily the same as the writer's intended meaning" ("They Blog"). Jacobs chose for her students to keep their blogs open to a public audience under the pretense that students can get a "real-world understanding of how readers interpret their own texts" ("They Blog"). Similar to how students can think that the only audiences they communicate with on SNS are those they intend to talk to, it is possible that students can fall into the same misunderstandings when using blogs; this can be a benefit as it can lead students to become more aware of the real-world consequences inherent in online publishing.

To illustrate how students become exposed to the realities behind online authorship, Jacobs describes a situation in which two of her students get into a debate about a topic wherein one student ends the conversation saying, "Hopefully we can move on. I will not bring it up again" ("They blog"). By students engaging in discussion, as Jacobs illustrates, they begin to see how their words are not written in an isolated bubble apart from the world, but rather joining a public, open network in which what they say online, is attributed to who they are perceived to be offline. This knowledge can be transferable to students' actions on SNS, as well as beyond the

classroom. The reader of a text is no longer "absent and distant;" we are an exclusively screen based society, and understanding the audience's ability to not only make meaning, but also directly respond to an author's composing practice, is a key CDL skill students may need as they continue to, or begin to, publish in online environments (Jacobs "They Blog").

As students publish online, their photos, blog posts, thoughts and feelings become archived in a networked public. Aside from an SNS profile, students looking to continue their education, or embark on professional careers, would benefit from having a body of work displaying their ability to digitally communicate. As previously discussed, potential employers often use online search engines to screen their candidates ("Recruiting/Selection"). If students can use their blog to develop a representation for their ability to communicate effectively with a group via collaborative discussion, they gain a new media with which to represent themselves to audiences impacting their future; they can "shape new media and consciously engage...as emerging public intellectuals" (Jacobs "They blog"). As composition instructors typically look for ways students can make their rhetorical writing strategies transferrable to future contexts, Jacobs and the authors mentioned prior, explain how blogs offer that possibility.

Reflection Through Personalization

As Jacobs examined her class's progress in using blogs over the semester, she asserted that her students "produced greater depth of thought, more genuine acknowledgement and anticipation of audience, and more engaged inter-textual conversation;" while the latter two have been discussed, in thinking about how blogs facilitate critical thought, we can return to a blog's ability to foster student reflection ("They blog"). The social nature of blogs allows students to comment on each other's posts, resulting in a conversation that builds from varying perspectives,

but for this conversation to be initiated, students' posts need to be substantial enough to propel further discussion. According to Kang et al., this process begins with the user's ability to represent their identity through "diverse design elements and structures" showing "the blogger's taste and interest" (231). Like SNS, blogs offer users affordances to personalize and customize their online experience. As users share photos of themselves and their loved ones, as well as inputting their preferences, demographics, and educational or professional affiliations, their online profile becomes a digital second-self. Because students can personalize their blogs, they can see them as spaces reflective of them, so there can be an impetus to continue building their identity through adding more detail. Sharing of too much identifiable information on any public forum should be discouraged, but the more comfortable a student becomes with sharing on their blog, the larger the possibility for a student to engage in the "immense introspection" needed to elicit other students' responses, and develop "shared knowledge" (Kang et al. 233). To showcase how students choose to personalize their blogs, we can refer to a students' "About" section of their blog in which they write a brief biography of who the blog belongs to, and why the blog exists.

The following student post is from David's "About" section in which he incorporates his personal interests into a blog that is meant for his CO150 assignments.

I was raised as a young lad in a small town in Northern Minnesota. Upon the completion of high school I joined the Navy and entered the submarine force. I have lived in almost every region of the United States including the most recent 4 years which were spent in Seattle. As a freshman at CSU I enjoy managing my fantasy football teams, enjoying the outdoors, playing music or putting in many late night hours on Reddit. I have a short video series my buddy and I created called Horse Stories⁵. Feel free to watch a video...or two (David "About Me").

⁵ The hyperlinked address attached to David's blog entry has been removed to protect his identity.

David incorporated many details other students did such as background information concerning his hometown and career, but David also chose to hyperlink his YouTube channel into his biography as a means of sharing a personal activity with his classmates, and further inviting them to watch. As David is inviting others to see his video series, we can assume this is important to him, and by featuring it on his composition blog, he is able to merge his out-of-school interests with his academic responsibilities, building a bridge between his personal life and his life as a student.

Meeting Student Needs

As we have seen with David, blogs give students the chance to engage their academic responsibilities with their personal life, but what composition instructors and professors need to monitor is the possibility of students divulging too much sensitive information. This can be done by constructing prompts initiating reflection on course related topics. As Hungerford-Kresser et al. explained, these topics should relate to a students' needs and interests; one way to do this is to construct prompts that help students apply course concepts to their own lives (328). While Paulus et al. did not give their students blog prompts, in their study they noticed how students often generated topics that "identified and critiqued constraints of social contexts in which they live" ("Am I Making Sense"). SNS accounts are direct reflections of either what a student's life is, or what they would like their life to be; either way, the student's life takes center stage. John Benson and Jessica Reyman, both English department faculty, looked at students' assigned blogging activity for four composition classes. Benson and Reyman found that "connecting students' writing for class with real-life, meaningful interactions" was key to making sure "students met their pedagogical objectives" ("Write Publically"). We see that both Alex and

Stephanie used the assignment to draw connections between course content, and situations going on outside of school. As Alex seemed to go beyond the assignment by engaging Stephanie in discussion, and Stephanie answered without being prompted, we can see that students seem to have an easier time connecting when they see opportunities to relate their own experiences to class discussion.

One complaint that Hungerford-Kresser et al.'s students had was that "the blogs too closely resembled other classroom activities," and while blogging can be a way to further classroom discussion, students might be looking for these out of class discussions to be more in tune with their personal needs (331). Despite our want to make sure each student's needs are met during class time, it is difficult to please every student. We can have students reflect on course concepts taught in class through their blog by creating prompts that, like their SNS, facilitate a connection with their preferences, ambitions, and interests. Students may then be more likely to engage and reflect on course material, thus creating more substantive individual posts to elicit rich discussion between classmates.

III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction of Objectives

When I started teaching *Reconstructing Social Futures*, my objectives were to invite students to participate in broad-ranging, analytical conversations grounded in the study of how their own visual self-representations in online spaces, were connected to their sense of audience and rhetorical context; And more generally, how they themselves functioned as audience for other people's self-representations online. My hope was that such conversations would yield an awareness, would help these students see the rhetorical decisions they had made in creating online self-representations, as well as make more visible the range of rhetorical choices they have when they compose themselves online. I asked, *How might students' CDL skills develop over the course of one semester in an FYC class integrating out-of-school digital literacies, specifically digital photography on FB and IG?*

To get closer to understanding how students thought about issues of composing selves online, especially as their thinking may have changed over the semester, I needed to gain a student perspective on how they engage, interact, and create on SNS. I chose to use students' responses to teacher-generated blog prompts, and surveys, as my primary method of data collection in an effort to respect students' perspectives and self-knowledge. My analysis of the student data generated, was also guided by respect for what students said, and not what I might have thought they would, or should, say. I did not want to assume students would make changes over the course of the semester; instead, I wanted to respectfully listen to their experiences.

In answering my research question, I drew methods for collecting, analyzing, and categorizing data, as well as an understanding of qualitative research methodologies, from

Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation, by professor of adult education, Sharan Merriam, and found her emphasis on an education-based context for qualitative research, useful for furthering my objectives.

Participants

The primary site of this study was a 17-person, first-year composition class held in fall 2014 at a large, land-grant university located in the West. The class was comprised of seventeen students who were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, and predominately in their first year, and first semester, of college. Of the seventeen students, six students were selected for closer analysis. These students were selected based on their CDL skill prior to, and after, taking the course, and their frequency of using SNS prior to, and after, completing the class. Their CDL skills, and frequency of SNS use, were assessed by the researcher, who is also the instructor of the course, who analyzed the data found in students' weekly blog posts, and answers to instructor-designed surveys. The six students' experiences in the course were recorded through richly descriptive portraits (RDPs) as will be described further in this chapter. All of the students' names mentioned in this thesis have been changed to conceal their identity, and preserve confidentiality of their responses.

University Demographics

According the university's Institutional Research Office, as of the fall 2014-spring 2015 academic semester, there were a total of 31,725 students enrolled, with 17% of these students described as ethnic/minority, and 5% as International. Of the total number of students, 4,353 of students were newly enrolled freshmen.

Setting

The class and its teaching were blended in online and offline teaching contexts. Three class sessions were held weekly in a shared classroom space, as well as a significant additional portion of the course being conducted across an online, digital blogging platform. The classroom was a medium-sized, windowless room, with about thirty-five desks, and contained a whiteboard, over-head LCD projector, projector screen, a document camera, and an HDMI, RGB, cable with AV/Audio access.

Online Setting

The digital platform where students created their blogs, posted assignments, and engaged in structured discussion with other classmates was the blogging website, Wordpress.com. According to the website's statistics for user activity, over 409 million people visit Wordpress user blogs each month, and 61.6 million posts are produced a year. A Google trends report, provided by the site's user activity page, indicates that in terms of search popularity, Wordpress has consistently ranked above its competition (Blogger, Drupal, Sharepoint) from 2008 through 2015. Wordpress defines itself as a free, and open-source, blogging tool, and content management system. The main features and functions of the blogging platform are the user's opportunity to choose a theme, options for installing various plugins enabling the user to customize their blogs, mobile access, and use of a personal search engine. Students were instructed to create personal blogs through modeling the content on the instructor-generated class blog. This included a menu bar containing tabs leading to a Welcome page, a page for their assigned posts, and an About section with a photographic representation of themselves, and brief

introduction to the student. In addition, students were asked to add plugins, called widgets, connecting their FB and IG profiles to their blog. Students' blogs were set to a public privacy setting, meaning that anyone with internet access could view, comment, or request to follow their blog.

Data Collection

The study's data was collected through both researcher-generated surveys and student-generated blog posts. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board. A protocol written by the secondary investigator, and reviewed by the primary investigator, was submitted in June of 2014, and the proposal was granted an expedited review process in the same month. The following sections provide both the details for each data collection method, and how this method was facilitated during, and after, students' involvement in the course. The instructor was not present when consent forms were distributed to students by the primary investigator of the study, Dr. Sue Doe. A copy of the consent forms can be found in Appendix E.

Blogs

Prior to engaging with Wordpress, students were given a 50 minute class period in which the instructor taught students how to create their blogs on Wordpress.com. In this period, students were taught how to use basic blog features such as how to make a post, create separate pages for each section of their blog, and add a menu bar to link to said pages. Students were taught how to search, and find, other classmate's blogs, as well as how to use the tagging affordance to search for blogs highlighting their personal interests and hobbies. Students were instructed to follow both the class blog, and their classmates' blogs, as well as three other blogs

by authors they were interested in learning more about. To connect their SNS accounts to their blogs, students were instructed on how to insert widgets leading to their personal FB and IG profiles. Students were lastly taught how to personalize, and customize, their blog's theme by modifying the title, tagline, header image, color scheme, arrangement of content, and location for their most recent posts.

Students completed weekly blog posts on Friday that were due on Sunday at 4:00PM, unless another time was specified by the instructor. In all, students composed twelve blog entries that were collected as data. The word requirement for each post was between 250-500 words, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. All blogs were also asked to have a visual accompaniment to pair with their alphabetic text based post. The visual accompaniment could be any form of image-based media ranging from a photograph to a video clip. Students were instructed that their chosen visual had to reflect a purposeful relationship between image and text.

Blog Types

There were five types of blog posts students were asked to complete; all posts were accompanied by models written by the instructor, and featured on the class blog. The instructor relied on the blog research detailed in Section 4 of the Literature Review to learn about the various types of blogs, and how to integrate blogging into the curriculum. Based on the research, there seemed to be five distinct types of blogs that students could compose.

1. Individual:

- Students complete instructor generated prompt on personal blog.
- Students were asked to follow the above qualifications

2. Whole class discussion thread:

- All students respond to instructor's posted prompt to the class blog
- Students use other students' responses to make a personal claim and assert points of agreement or disagreement
- Students provide outside evidence from the given class readings, or from articles they found themselves through inserting hyperlinks (students received direct instruction on this skill)

3. **Video Log (Vlog):**

- Students recorded a video of themselves speaking an answer to a given prompt
- Students were asked to upload their vlogs to YouTube, and given instructions on how to do so that were provided by the university's learning studio, an interactive space featuring information and advice for teachers and students
- Students were encouraged to improvise their vlogs by using them for brainstorming and reflection

4. **Small-group discussion**

- Students divided into groups of three to four, and given a topic to discuss
- Group leader was selected to begin the discussion on their personal blog with guidance from an instructor prompt
- Group members completed assignment by commenting on the group leader's post

5. **Response comment:**

- Students responded to an assigned, or chosen, classmate's individual blog post.

Of the 12 blogs, seven were individual posts, two were whole class discussion threads, one was a small-group discussion, and the remaining two were vlogs. The response blogs were

not counted within the twelve, but were taken as data when the instructor collected student writing.

Blogs Post-Course

After the course was concluded, students' blogs remained on Wordpress.com, unless they decided to remove it. Students were not required to keep their blogs active after the conclusion of the course. To collect the data, the instructor created separate files for each student's blog posts, and copied their alphabetic text, and accompanying images, into individual word documents. Students' vlogs were downloaded from their YouTube format. They appear in alphabetic text in Chapter V, as they were listened to, and transcribed, by the instructor. Unless a student has made the decision to remove their blog from Wordpress.com, their blogs currently reside on the medium, and can be accessed by the general public, but this thesis does not provide readers with any direct links to a students' blog, as per the claims made on students' consent forms. All of the assigned blog prompts students answered throughout the course of the semester, are located in Appendix A of this thesis.

Surveys

In addition to completing the 12 assigned blog posts that were part of each student's, required course work, students were also asked to complete two surveys answering questions regarding their frequency of use on FB and IG, as well as their rhetorical awareness when operating on both medias.

Frequency of Use

When accessing students' frequency of use, students were asked multiple choice questions. Yes, or no answer choices were given to questions regarding if a student had a FB or

IG account prior to, or after completing the class, or if they accessed the account while with other people. Answer choices regarding reasons for a students' actions on SNS were "employability reasons," "personal reasons," and "family reasons" as professional, familial, personal audiences were discussed as the possibly problematic unknown audiences in the Literature Review.

Types of Uploaded Photos

Answers for how often a student produced or consumed content on the media ranged from "once a month," "once a week," "once a day," "more than once a day," and "more than ten times a day." With 75% of students using SNS on a daily basis, these categories might show diversions from the frequency of use norm. The selected elements on the list of most commonly uploaded photos was compiled by the instructor as per her experience on each media. Students were asked to number each using one as most uploaded, and ten as least. Photo choices included "selfies, photos of you with other people you know (friends, family, acquaintances), photos with your best friend, photos with your significant other, food/beverages, drinks (alcoholic), scenery/locations, photos of other people you know (friends, family, acquaintances), pets, material items, memes, quotes, and photos of people you don't know (celebrities, athletes, musicians, artists)."

Rhetorical Awareness in Production and Consumption

As discussed in the Literature Review, students were aware they were producing for an audience, but not often aware of the other possible audiences existing on their network. Students were asked to check off all members of their audience for each media both prior to, and after attending, our class to determine who it is they are composing for. Choices included, "friends,

acquaintances, family, family-friends, teachers, employers, coworkers, people you know/know of in real life, but never met in person, people you know only from online, people you don't know or know of, famous people (Athletes/Celebrities,) clothing brands, media outlets (magazines, newspapers, blogs, and TV networks), and specialized/themed accounts (fitness humor, fashion, quotes etc.)."

Privacy

Knowing that most media have default public settings, to determine how aware students were when composing for the above listed audiences, students were asked their privacy settings on each media with corresponding choices to the settings offered by FB and IG. Students were asked yes or no questions about whether or not they ever regretting uploading a photo, and reasons for why, mirrored the reasons for certain actions in the frequency of use section. Students were asked their actions after experiencing photo regret, and these actions corresponded to the available options offered by each media.

Tailoring Photographic Presentations

Students were asked yes or no questions pertaining to if the amount of likes their photos receive affect their decision to keep them on their page. As SNS are collaborative spaces, students were asked if they consult others before uploading a photo, and given reasons to respond to which included, "I'm confident in how I appear in this photo," "I don't think they will find it appropriate," and "I don't think it is close enough to how I appear offline." In referring to studies conducted about using photo-effects to tailor self-representations from other digital media scholars, students were asked to assess how often they utilize photo-editing options with the answers, "Never," "Rarely," "Sometimes," and "Always." When given answers for why they edit their photos, students could choose, "it makes me look attractive," "it will make other people

think I look attractive," "it makes certain elements in the picture stand out," "it helps to produce a certain mood or feeling," and, "it adds an element of artistic design."

Personal SNS Profile Analysis

To ascertain the presentation students feel audiences receive from looking at their SNS profiles, students wrote a short-answer response to a prompt asking them to describe how their SNS audience would perceive them offline. Students were asked to provide specific examples from their accounts as evidence for their claims. Surveys were developed by the instructor with information regarding students' use of SNS discussed in the Literature Review, as well as the instructor's personal experience as an active member of both FB and IG.

Distribution of the Survey

While the initial survey was distributed by the primary investigator, and students were given a 50 minute class period to complete it, the final survey was assigned as homework by the instructor, and students were given one weekend to complete it. The final survey was also used by students as a required source for completing their final exam. The data from each survey was collected through a hard copy that students completed and then returned to the instructor. The instructor then transferred students' answers to an electronic copy of the initial and final surveys. Copies of the initial and final surveys students were asked to fill out can be found in Appendix D of this thesis.

Data Analysis

Once the instructor gathered students' surveys and blog posts into separate files, an initial, cold reading of the data was performed, which then turned to a more focused categorization of

the data through delineating how students' CDL skills were enhanced, remained stagnant, or declined throughout the course of the semester. The data analysis of both student surveys and blog posts was supported by an understanding of the CDL elements defined in "The five resources of critical digital literacy: a framework for curriculum integration," by Juliet Hinrichsen and Antony Coombs. This framework offered the most persuasive, current, and popular definition for CDL in a curricular context. Hinrichsen and Coombs provided definitions for the five resources of critical digital literacy, which the researcher re-interpreted, and applied, as a discrete set of behaviors and actions in an SNS context. The instructor's objective was to determine the shift, if any, in students' use and understanding of rhetorical skills on SNS. How did their skills and understanding change over time?

Hinrichsen and Coomb's article offered a set of clearly illustrated actions that need to be taken into account when determining a student's CDL skills. In addition, their terms and discussion align closely with a study designed to find ways to effectively insert students' out-of-school digital literacies into FYC. While other accounts of CDL skills exist, Hinrichsen and Coomb's educational context, and curricular goals, make their account most suitable to fulfill the objectives of the instructor's research. Hinrichsen and Coomb's definitions for the five resources of CDL are defined, and then interpreted, by the instructor who situated them within an SNS context for further application when analyzing students' blogs and surveys.

Five Resources of Critical Digital Literacy

I. Decoding: practical and operational engagement

Develop familiarity with the structures and conventions of digital media such as user practices and norms

Sensitivity to different modes within digital artefacts

Confident use of operational frameworks

Understand navigational mechanisms such as: notions of movement and location of self spatially

Implement and be cognizant of stylistic elements effects on a text's message

As interpreted by the instructor: Decoding involves accessing students ability to comprehend SNS terminology. Examples include understanding "like," and "friend," or the actions of "friending/following," how to "add/search" for another user, how to "chat/direct message" another user, how to access and understand a "newsfeed/timeline," and how "tagging," and "hashtags" allow for attribution and connection to other users' profiles or posted content. Words like "privacy" have different meanings and associations on SNS as they are settings the user must control individually, and "notifications," are how the user is alerted to other users interaction with content on their "profile." Both of these can be controlled by the user typically through accessing the "options," and "account settings," portion of their page.

In terms of stylistics and design, the instructor viewed students' use and understanding of photo-editing effects, as well as photo captions containing tags that link to other users, purposeful construction of image-text relationships, and descriptive hashtags, as a sign that students held, or developed decoding skills before, or after, the course. Students would also have to have an understanding of the signs and symbols on SNS such as the thumbs-up icon on FB for liking someone's content, and the heart icon on IG to utilize the same action. The instructor determined that a prominent sign for students' skill in decoding was not simply whether or not a student could use the functions, but also if they could understand the hidden meaning behind FB and IG terms, signs, and stylistic options. One example being that your "friends" and "followers" are not always associated with you offline despite the meaning carried by the term "friend." Understanding that "friends " and "followers" could also involve people a student does associate

with offline, but did not want associating with their SNS content, was an indicator that the student exhibited a high-level of skill in decoding

II. Meaning Making: narrative complexity in the digital

Recognize agency as participants in text's construction

Understand how text's content, style, and purpose is in dialogue with reader's prior experience, knowledge, and experience

Engage in purposeful and efficient movement around software and platforms

Follow and create narratives by relating/making connections between new and existing knowledge

Express or translate a purpose or intention, feeling or idea, into a digital form, across a range of communicative modes

Comprehend potential readerships in hypertextuality and networked texts

As interpreted by the instructor: As a platform, SNS functions through user interactions, which are further facilitated by users uploading content that other users then view, resulting in their creation of a narrative, or perception, for how the author may be offline. Understanding that the content, in particular, the photos a student uploads, are subjected to this meaning making process by both an audience of intended and unintended viewers, was a sign that students had competence in this CDL skill. The audience's perception of these narratives may not match the author's intent, and whatever the author allows the audience to access, will go into their assessment of the author. Students showed an understanding of meaning making if they were cognizant of how SNS texts are multi-authored; if your friends and followers comment, like, or share your content, to some extent, that indicates how an audience will make meaning from your profile. Also, who you interact with as a friend and follower goes into this assessment. The researcher determined that students showing a higher level of meaning making were thought to have an understanding that the reader's context, and personal perspective, has an impact on this

assessment, and how a student utilizes tone, voice and location of uploaded content can affect, and alter, the intent of their narrative. Students that did not attempt to put themselves into their reader's position by trying to comprehend how various audiences, both intended, and not intended, did not exhibit a high understanding of this skill.

III. Using: producing and consuming digital texts

Deploy digital tools appropriately and effectively for given purposes and audiences
Solve practical problems individually or as a group dynamically using a range of methods
Gather appropriate information, resources and tools for a given purpose by asking, searching, filtering, curation, and sharing
Explore a media by experimenting with innovative and imaginative approaches

As interpreted by the instructor: Students that were able to use SNS for other uses aside from self-promotion, without having to be prompted to think in this way by the instructor, showed a more enhanced ability of use. Other uses included, but were not limited to, obtaining information and news, public advocacy and education, maintaining, creating, or strengthening relationships, and networking and marketing themselves, their interests and talents. If students found ways to use the self-promotional purpose of SNS to solve a problem, be it school-related or personal, they were also seen as being adept in both understanding, and implementing, this CDL element. Other SNS affordances students used were, control of their photographic self-representation, application of photo-editing tools like filters and effects, creating descriptive captions, hashtags, and tags, and exercising control in when, and where, they choose to upload their content on their profile.

Use applies to purposeful communication, and students that used SNS's various affordances to accomplish a purpose, seemed to have a grasp on this concept; however, to the instructor, simply accomplishing these actions with an intended purpose does not also imply a

critical understanding of use. For students to critically use the media, they must also have the ability to decode meaning behind the media's various affordances, and understand how audiences can make meaning from the posts they use to represent themselves. The instructor's interpretation of CDL skills is that they cannot be viewed as separate actions, but rather as understandings, and applications, happening simultaneously when a user interacts on an SNS platform. An enhancement in one skill affects the others, and the same can be said for a decline. For students to adeptly navigate SNS, they require competence in understanding, and applying, the previous skills, as well as the following ones.

IV. Analyzing: becoming a discerning practitioner

Develop the ability to make informed judgments and choices in digital domains
Apply critical, aesthetic, and ethical perspectives to production and consumption of digitised material
Deconstruct elements that contribute to the meanings, uses, and messages in digital products and communications.
Evaluate, choose, recommend or reject digital systems, content, networks
Draw conclusions about digital tools, environments, and artefacts
Interrogate the provenance, purpose, and impact of digital content and interactions

As interpreted by the instructor: One of the many issues that digital critics apply to students' use of SNS is their misunderstanding of privacy settings, and ownership of the content they contribute to their personal profiles. Students that seem to grasp how SNS, like FB and IG, are essentially a business regulated by power relationships between the manufacturer and programmer of the network, and the users that contribute, were seen as having enhanced analysis skills. Adept analysis also involved students having an initial understanding, or developing an awareness of, the underlying systems and processes on SNS. Examples of these underlying processes included commercial accounts utilizing SNS for a consumer-driven purpose, as well

as third party sources obtaining the data users input on their profiles to market products and services to them. Also seen as underlying processes were issues of authorship and copyright in online spaces, specifically the ethical and legal concerns regarding credibility for a user's intellectual property, and ownership of uploaded content. Students that could further apply these concepts to their own shared content, actions, and behaviors on SNS, seemed to have an enhanced knowledge of how to enact analysis on the media.

V. Persona: identity issues and the digital

Show sensitivity to issues of reputation, identity and membership in digital contexts
Purposeful management and calibration of one's online persona
Gain a sense of one's role in digital environments, and comprehension of relationships and alignments within groups and communities
Understand identity as multifaceted operating between digital and other identities
Aware of reputation for self and community as assets to support and develop aspirations
Protect online identity and safeguard against loss of reputation

As interpreted by the instructor: SNS profiles have become more than online identities; they serve as second, digital selves that the user continuously updates through uploading content. Users can have emotional attachments to their online identity further reinforced by their relationships with friends and followers on SNS. Students with an adept understanding of persona, are aware of how a digital context can alter the author's intent for his or her uploaded self-representations; due to the affordances of SNS, users' content can be easily decontextualized, as audience members make meaning from various points, rather than just the context in which the author chose to publish the post. Another indicator that showed competence in enacting persona, was a student's attempt to exercise control over who can view his, or her, constructed identity. Students may have used specific SNS accounts to construct a purposeful

persona that deliberately met the needs of an intended audience. In this case, students utilize their SNS accounts to create separate, digital personas that showcase whatever qualities they want their audience to make meaning from. As students craft their persona, those with enhanced skills in this element will be cognizant of SNS's permanence. They will avoid uploading any content that they might not want certain audience members to view because they are aware more than just their intended audience can view their content. These students also seem to have a strong hold over the persona they want to portray, as they upload and share content purposely contributing to the continued construction of specific traits and characteristics.

As previously mentioned, the above CDL skills work in tandem; they are not separate entities, and for a student to be critically using all five of these skills, they must use them together. Students must have the ability to decode meaning behind the SNS's various affordances, and understand how audiences can make meaning from the posts they use to represent themselves. Students must further be cognizant of how the data they input does not simply allow intended audiences to make meaning, but also is used for consumer-driven purposes by the SNS. Students should be aware that their ownership over their uploaded content, because SNS are often run as a business, is not always clearly stated or ensured. Because of this, students must be aware the content they upload when crafting persona is entered into a digital network and, while posts may very well have a purpose for the author, the online identity the author crafts can be easily decontextualized. Depending on the audience making meaning from the student's content, students could be positively, or negatively, affected in regards to their personal, family, or professional life.

Richly Descriptive Portraits (RDP)

This innovative method for accurately, and fully, reporting on the variety of student responses as represented in the data, consisted of composing “richly descriptive portraits” which rely on students' blog posts and survey results to flesh out the story of a student's shifts in ability, and understanding, over the course of a semester. In choosing this way to represent the data collected, the instructor sought to follow through on her study's objective of including students' voices, of reinventing them almost as discussion partners in her analysis. Through the portraits, students' individual posts are presented in chronological order, preventing the instructor from organizing student responses to fit her needs. The chronology details a narrative of the students' experience from August to December as narrated by the student. Students' blogs were analyzed in their entirety, and CDL skills were assessed through Hinrichsen and Coomb's given elements.

The instructor recognizes there are other methods for analyzing subjects' written self-reports. In terms of qualitative research, a possible option was rhetorical analysis in which students' posts, or profiles, would be analyzed based on rhetorical effectiveness, but the purpose of the study is to determine change over time, not effective or ineffective use of particular features or knowledge. Another option would have been to code the data by looking for emerging patterns and categories. While this method might have also yielded profitable results, breaking down the content of students' blogs to fit into specific categories might lose some of the richness of the students' posts. And given the small sample size—six students out of 17—the coding categories that might emerge from the student posts would not necessarily be representative nor portable. Finally, the instructor is deeply interested in respecting, and honoring, student voices by preserving their comments, and the contexts to those comments.

While the length of this thesis is, perhaps, problematic as a result, the instructor felt it important to preserve students' voices as they appeared on the blog, taking precautions to keep either the whole, or majority, of the students' post under discussion.

Researcher Bias

Because I am conducting research on a class I taught, there is the real potential for bias as I seek to understand an individual student's shifts as writer, and critic, across the semester.

Instructors want their students to do well; my desire for the same could easily conflict with my ability to read the data in a neutral way. Further, the subjects of my study are my own students, and therefore under my authority. The data collected might itself be biased because students might feel coerced into answering questions in a way they think will satisfy their instructor.

There is a possibility that students might have new reservations about divulging personal, or private information, that could possibly affect my opinion of them as ethical and responsible students. As this research is for the completion of my MA thesis, I could also hold a bias in wanting to see critical changes that effectively answer my listed objectives. I fully acknowledge that there is a possibility that despite the objectives for this course, and by virtue of the data being collected through students' self-reporting, it is possible that students' rhetorical awareness and use in social media may not have actually changed over the course of the semester.

To do my best to compensate for the biases listed as possibilities above, I chose to use blogs as a central source of data. As much research on blogs suggest (see Chapter II Section 4,) students tend to be more expressive with their feelings when writing on blogs, as the teacher's presence is not as paramount on an out-of-school platform. And as you will read in my Discussion chapter, students share more personal content on blogs. Such self-revelation might

imply they are focusing less on the evaluative aspect of producing writing for a teacher, that could impede the truthfulness of their self-reports. Surveys were also distributed without my presence in the classroom meaning that when students were writing blogs, or filling out surveys, they did so outside of my physical presence, which might have alleviated the possible coercion felt in writing to satisfy the teacher.

To safeguard against my own bias, I also chose to keep a daily teaching journal reminding me of the interactions that went on in the classroom over the course of the semester, and how these interactions between students and myself, students and the material, and students and their peers, may have changed, altered, or influenced their written accounts.

IV. DISCUSSION

Inviting Students To the Conversation

In Chapter II I have already established a case for composition instructors bringing students' out-of-school digital literacies into the classroom. While many high-profile scholars, and current authors, provide strong support for the importance of fostering such connection, I felt ethically compelled to also allow the students who took part in this study to be my most prominent discussion partners. Through their initial and final course surveys, and their weekly blog posts, these students developed distinct opinions about SNS by writing their beliefs, ideas, fears and hopes into the given prompts; their honesty and effort in completing these assignments are core reasons why my analysis exists.

The majority of scholars in composition studies show a respect for students' voices that I share. In a longitudinal study undertaken by scholars Andrea Lunsford, Jenn Fishman, and Warren M. Liew, they remark how "historically, rhetoric and writing scholars have treated student writing as deeply valuable and worthy of care" (472). In the article, "College Writing, Identification, and Production of Intellectual Property," Lunsford, et al. discuss results from the five-year Stanford Study of Writing in which 189 randomly selected students contributed their opinions, and knowledge, regarding a myriad of topics having to do with their "writerly self-perceptions" (471-473). One prominent conclusion of the study was that students struggled with seeing their writing as something others might "care about" (Lunsford et al. 476).

There is tension between our desire to elevate the value of student work, and our methods in reporting data results collected from student writing. Too often in FYC, instructors can unknowingly exclude students' voices from their analysis, and any subsequent changes made to classroom and curriculum. To fully comply with our discipline's firm belief in the significance

student writing has for both student and teacher, I integrated student participants in a way that changes them from passive evidence or evidential support, to active voices participating in the conversation I started about improving FYC curriculum.

Throughout Lunsford et al.'s study, the authors stress the importance of understanding, and being conscious, of the student voices participating in their conversation. Subscribing to and supporting these interests, I seek to "make sense of [students'] narratives" by moving beyond simply pairing them with my analysis (Lunsford et al. 479). In the following student discussions, I interweave results from each student's initial and final surveys, and excerpts from their class blogs, with my analysis. To differentiate between my students' voices and my own, their words are featured in block quotations. Parts of their blogs are excerpts from instructor-assigned vlogs I transcribed. Any excerpt taken from the vlog is embedded with an audio clip of the student speaking allowing the reader to simultaneously read and listen to their thoughts.

Richly Descriptive Portraits

As described in Chapter III, I have chosen six students to represent the various stages of CDL development, including rhetorical awareness of SNS, over the semester. Each richly descriptive portrait, is one that details a student's journey through the course by integrating their assigned blog posts, and personal blog content; also included are students' "About" section, blog title, blog tagline, as well as any personal visual, or alphabetic text posts they may have written, and their initial and final surveys. I wrote my analysis of student content by expanding the CDL skills outlined in Chapter III to students' thoughts about, and actions taken, on SNS. To write the narratives, I was influenced by Lillian Bridwell-Bowle's, Parker Johnson's, and Steven Brehe's "Composing and Computers: Case Studies of Experienced Writers" in which the authors

discussed their results by writing their case studies in a portraiture style that provided background information on the subject, and quotes from their work and interviews.

While student narratives are not case studies, I plan to construct richly descriptive portraits in an effort to incorporate student voices as discussion partners. To protect students' identities, their names have been changed, and the images and accompanying text excerpts do not feature traceable links to the students' individual class blogs.

V. RDPS

Students as Prosumers

Students coming into writing classrooms informed by contemporary theories of rhetoric and composition, may already have an idea of how rhetorical elements operate when authoring and analyzing texts. Their out-of-school use of SNS implicitly requires rhetorical knowledge. Daniel Anderson's theory of "prosumerism" explains how "new media literacies" such as ones needed to participate on SNS, "typically thrive on the convergence of production and consumption systems" (Lunsford, et al. 475). Anderson's theory describes a basic function of SNS operation as users' continued interaction with other users' shared content involves "consum[ing]...to 'produce' ideas and insights that others might in turn prosume" (Lunsford et al. 475). When building an SNS profile, students upload, share, and produce images forming a self-representation for their audience of friends and followers to consume. While some content can be created by the student, other content can be consumed, taken from an outside context, and redistributed on the student's profile. As intended and unintended audiences view students' profiles, they make meaning from the featured content, and relate those impressions and judgments back to the student.

In the following student discussion, I introduce the subject of my first RDP, Chloe, a student whose surveys and blog posts reference the issues regarding online authorship and prosumer behavior on SNS. Throughout the semester, Chloe's blogs and surveys, highlight the sometimes problematic relationship between a student's intended purpose when prosuming on SNS, and an audience's interpretation of the more static content posted by students.

Chloe⁶

"An introvert that has no idea what she's doing." ("Who am I?")⁷

Chloe, a white, first-year student majoring in zoology, began our class by self-reporting that she checked her FB account more than once a day, posted photos to FB once a week. From the start, Chloe was not daily managing her photographic presentation on FB like some of her classmates were. Despite little innovation in her own online self-representation on FB, Chloe showed initial awareness in monitoring audience perception. Behaving in ways echoing her self-definition as an introvert, Chloe rarely raised her hand, and spoke only if called on to read or answer a question. On the other hand, her claim in her blog's tagline that she has "no idea what she's doing," did not match her academic work which showcased a knowledge of rhetorical terms that she seamlessly referenced and implemented: she spoke easily and appropriately about purpose, audience, text, and context.

Prior to our class, Chloe's FB audience included friends, family, acquaintances, family-friends, teachers, and co-workers. Whereas most of her classmates opted to be friends with people they knew of offline, but had never actually met in person, Chloe's accepted FB audience included only those with whom she had first interacted with offline. Because of this, Chloe's audience viewed her photos with prior knowledge of who she was offline. By keeping a limited audience, Chloe's audience is less likely to interpret her FB persona in a way that can drastically differ from her original intent. She explored the consequences of the latter in her first blog post.

⁶ A reminder to the reader: All the student names used in this thesis have been invented. Each student was given a pseudonym to protect their identity. I have received written permission from all student participants to include the comments and photos on their personal blogs.

⁷ As explained in the Methods chapter, students were expected to have a tagline that served as a slogan for their blogs. The phrase here is the tagline that Chloe chose to use. Taglines can always change, so it is possible that prior to my collecting the data, that Chloe had a different tagline.

Digital Authorship

In completing Assignment A, Chloe chose to discuss authorship in her paper, and after it was graded and returned to her, she was asked to take a survey that assessed both her rhetorical awareness, and frequency of use, on FB and IG. Following the survey, Chloe was asked to return to her paper, and discuss how taking the survey may have altered her beliefs. Her further analysis of authorship in the following blog post expressed a concern for online writing and author attribution on SNS.



I choose to write about the effects SNS has on authorship. SNS has made it almost impossible to determine who the original author of a post, article, or picture truly is. Often times, the real 'author' gets lost in all the reposts and sharing. Other times, people will copy and paste an entire post and pretend that it is their own, like they came up with the ideas and the set up of each and every word themselves. However, there are ways to give original “posters” credit to their work. For example, retweeting someone else’s tweet gives you the chance to share the same ideas to your followers without plagiarizing. Yet, in order to do this, the person needs to have integrity. So it doesn’t just become a question of who originally wrote this piece, but is there honesty within it? (9/8/14: "Who's the Author now?").

Chloe's post demonstrates a skill in analyzing the underlying processes regarding privacy in SNS's systems. It further reflects her understanding of SNS as a place where the author's credibility is stolen. Chloe remarked also on the ease of writing and sharing through web 2.0. She discussed how she could imagine the negative consequences for online authorship and credibility, which again demonstrate her enhanced skills in understanding digital authorship. FB

and IG exist because users continue to prosume, but SNS's privacy policies do not outright warn users of the inherent dangers that Chloe's post describes; however, Chloe's post about the issue indicates her awareness that images can be taken out of context and redistributed by anyone with ability to view them. Her initial survey indicates that she chose to limit the audiences viewing her FB profile to people who knew her offline.

By the end of the semester, Chloe was writing about the copy-and-paste culture that emerges from digital patchwork writing, something she connects to Twitter's retweet affordance. Like Twitter, FB and IG offer hashtags, or options for users to connect their posted content to other users' content, and to share other user's content on their personal profile. Chloe writes that sometimes "the real 'author' gets lost in all the reposts and sharing" (9/8/2014 "Who's the author now?").

Chloe's FB and IG Audiences

Earlier in the semester, students were asked to choose an alphabetic text post, and a visual post, from one of their friends or followers on FB or IG, and describe the ethos, pathos, and logos appeals the author used to communicate purpose with an audience. To complete Assignment B, Chloe chose a post from her Aunt's FB page, and her friend's IG account.

RA #1 – ABC Text post

A couple months ago, my aunt created a text post on Facebook saying, 'Sometimes the hardest thing and the right thing are the same' ... Helping our sweet Dublin find peace tomorrow.' For those that know my aunt, they know that Dublin was her dog and he was suffering a really bad skin disease. Understanding the context of this post helps her accomplish the purpose of this post, to inform family and friends that knew Dublin that he is passing (showing ethos). This in turn, lets audience members (intended or not) that know what it is like to lose a loved one can relate to how she is feeling and send their condolences...

RA #2 – Instagram Photo



As seen in the photo above, a friend of mine is crowd surfing during a We Came as Romans concert. Her overall purpose is to show off her once-in-a-lifetime experience to her Instagram followers, however, her more intended purpose might have something to do with making her friends jealous. If you knew my friend, you would know that she is a concert junky! Therefore, her crowd surfing appeals to ethos because it symbolizes her becoming a so-called 'master' of concerts...(9/15/14:"Pain and Allusions").

Chloe's blog post indicates a difference in the types of posts and status updates appearing on her IG and FB newsfeeds. When looking back to her surveys, we see that her initial survey indicated that she checked her IG more than once a day to see the posts from profiles she follows. Her initial survey also indicates that her IG audience included friends, acquaintances, people she knows in real life, but has not met in person, famous people (athletes and celebrities), clothing brands, media outlets and specialized/themed accounts. Her initial survey results exclude family, family-friends, teachers, employers, and coworkers. On IG, Chloe set her privacy settings to public, meaning that anyone who goes to her profile can view her photos, allowing anyone with the link to her account, even those not in her accepted IG audience, to view her profile; this differs from her FB privacy settings, which she reported setting to "friends," meaning only those who are accepted into her FB audience can view her profile content.

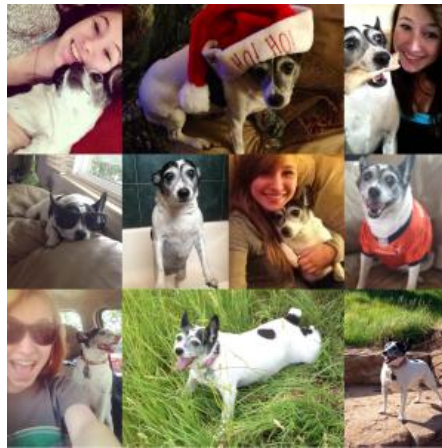
When comparing the two medias displayed in Chloe's post, we see that Chloe's privacy settings, and accepted audience members, on IG are much more open, and liberal, than on FB; an example of this being that she accepts people she has never met in person into her IG audience. Through viewing these posts from Chloe's FB and IG audiences, we can see that Chloe makes certain privacy related decisions that keep the area of her life depicting how she recognizes a family member's suffering from a lost pet, from the one that can appreciate, and perhaps envy, her friend's experience crowd-surfing at a concert. It is possible to fuse these two worlds, and there are students that choose to do so through allowing both friends and family into their SNS audiences, but it would seem that Chloe separates her audiences on these medias by relegating FB to family-oriented audiences, and IG to a more open audience selection beyond people she knows offline. In separating who views her FB and IG profiles, Chloe seems to be making the conscious decision to create two separate digital personas.

Prosumption in a College Context

To teach audience perception, Chloe and her classmates were asked to complete an anonymous rhetorical analysis of another classmate's FB and IG profile for Project 1. After reading her classmate's project, Chloe completed Assignment E by reporting her feelings on her classmates ability to describe her using only her online persona.

...Overall, I think my partner made very accurate assumptions based off of these two photos (of course, it doesn't take an expert to know that I love my dog). I am content with what s/he wrote about me and I believe that everything s/he said really does have some truth to it. It also makes me feel good to know that my partner was able to make these assumptions but they aren't detailed enough to know exactly who I am. Although SNS help those that don't know you get to know you better, I feel that in order to truly know someone, you need to really know them on a personal level. So the fact that s/he was able to get a broad sense

of who I am but not truthfully know me is good ... (10/06/14: "Reflection and Reaction to Letter").



Chloe's post displays her understanding that students' SNS profiles can help those that don't know you, make surface based assumptions. From her final survey, we see that Chloe kept the same FB audience members she reported having in her initial survey, indicating that Chloe's intended FB audience still only includes people who know her offline. These audiences would know Chloe, as she remarks, on a "personal level," and could therefore take their relationship with her into account when viewing her posts (10/06/14 "Reflection and Reaction to Letter"). In citing a reason for these audience settings in her initial survey, Chloe reported they were "personal," but in her final survey, she added that her decisions to keep these audience members also included "family reasons."

Chloe seems to gear her FB persona toward a family-oriented audience that most likely already have a sense of who she is, and are therefore more likely to mirror her purpose in posting certain content. This prevents situations of misinterpretation based on not knowing Chloe offline. When looking at the kinds of posts that Chloe shares with her FB audience, on her initial survey, Chloe reported that her most frequent FB posts were of her pet, her best friend and her

significant other, but on her final survey, she chose to remove posts with her significant other. In removing posts about her significant other from her FB, Chloe is no longer choosing to share these details with her family-oriented audience. Based on her moving from high school to college, like most freshmen, Chloe may be encountering new experiences and relationships that change what she chooses to prosume on SNS. Her family-oriented FB audience may know Chloe offline, but the Chloe they are familiar with is Chloe pre-college, and in looking at what Chloe chooses to share and not share with this audience, can further indicate her decision to maintain her pre-college persona.

IG Life and FB Death

At the end of each survey, students are asked to complete a "Personal SNS Profile Analysis" asking them to give a brief description of who they think their SNS profiles portray by writing an analysis through the viewpoint of an audience member. The directions for the prompt did not ask students for separate accounts of her FB and IG, but Chloe's analysis, indicates a clear differentiation between these two medias.

Looking at instagram, see someone who is very outgoing and enjoys the college life. I see a lot of pictures with friends, more specifically one friend, and the things they do together.

Looking at facebook, I see a dying profile. Maybe has a post every once a week or so. It look like the amount of posting has dwindled and the profile is only alive to probably keep her mom happy ☺ (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Final).

In comparing Chloe's self-report of the two medias, Chloe sees her FB as a "dying profile," where her posts have "dwindled," whereas on her final survey, she indicates that she posts to her IG 2-3 times a week (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Final). Also on her final

survey, are the kinds of posts Chloe uploads to IG. Whereas her FB audience sees photos of her best friend and her pets, Chloe reports on her final survey that her IG audience can see photos of Chloe with other people, and selfies. While on her initial survey, when asked if she ever regretted uploading a photo to IG, Chloe answered no, on her final survey when asked if she ever regretted uploading a photo to her IG, Chloe answered yes and reported that her regret came from "family reasons."

As Chloe states above, her FB persona is made for an audience of her mom, and in comparing this to her IG analysis, we see that her FB persona is not reflective of her changing offline context, as much as it is a persona for her mom, and other members of her family-oriented audience to look at. Chloe is both aware of audience perception, and conscious of a personal purpose, when constructing an online self-representation to meet the needs of her different audiences. The posts Chloe prosumes on FB differ from IG. In reporting feeling regret from an IG post as a result of "family reasons" in her final survey, it is possible this regret may have been the result of a member of Chloe's FB audience seeing her IG profile; instead of viewing Chloe's mom-friendly posts, they saw the "very outgoing" young woman who "enjoys the college life" (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Final). The dissonance between Chloe's choice to exclude family-oriented audiences on IG, and her public privacy settings, can lead us to believe that Chloe's conscious decisions are not always critical. This is where composition instructors can help students realize how SNS prosumption has direct connections to their offline lives.

Final Self-Reports vs. SNS Actions

The prompt for the final asked students to record a vlog explaining how they feel their experience in the course changed the way they use SNS, their biggest take away from it, and how they plan on using what they learned in the future. In Chloe's final vlog comment, she completed Assignment L by discussing how learning more about SNS has changed her actions when consuming images online, and also offline. Below is the transcription of Chloe's final vlog post.

TRACK #2: CHLOE FINAL VLOG

So, this is my final video, or vlog, for CO150, and I think that before this class, I didn't- I didn't really use Facebook or Instagram all that often. I actually deleted my Instagram, and then reactivated it for this class. Uh, and then I just, I just didn't use Facebook. I really only used it to stay in touch with family and stuff, but I think, now that it's the end, I feel like I used my social media more now, than I did before. I still don't really use Facebook that much, but I have been using Instagram a lot. And, um, but I don't post things for like no reason. I always have some sort of a purpose. In my mind I have a purpose. Sometimes it's a very humorous and stupid purpose, but it's still a purpose. Um, so yeah, I think that's how my act of using social media has changed. Um, I think my biggest OMG moment of the semester was when we did P2, and we were talking about ideologies, and when Ms. LaPadura showed us that powerpoint about the "Men-ups,"⁸ like when the guys did the girl poses, and it was weird *laughs*. Um, tho- I think that was my biggest OMG moment because it made me realize that like, there a lot of things that we live by that we think are normal, or we no- we never second guess it, and we're just like, oh, that's just life, but I mean, when we talked about it in class, we were like oh my god, like, I can't believe we're doing- like the little girl toys, how they get like the- they get the kitchens, and how there's always that stereotype that like women belong in the kitchen, and then how the men, or the boys always get like the tools, like the little hammers, and the screwdrivers and whatever. Men are the working kind of- like, I don't know. I just, I never really thought of it that way, but after, after P2, I thought about, I always thought about that, and every time I walk down the kids' aisle at Target or Wal-Mart, I'm always thinking about, like, I'm always thinking about that day that we learned about that. So, and then, um, I guess that kind of transitions to my next, to the next question, which is what you take out of this course, and I kind of just answered it. That, like, now every time I walk down the aisles at stores, I always like, I look at stuff and I analyze it, and I never, I never used to do that. Uh, and same with pictures, like I went to Starbucks the other day, and totally analyzed one of the pictures on their wall, and my mom's like, "what are you doing?"

⁸ A full description of the sources used in the curriculum, including the source mentioned here, can be found in Appendix B of this thesis.

Laughs. So, like, I, uh, I analyze everything now, and sometimes I don't even realize that I'm doing it, and I think that that's because of this class, or I'd like to think it is. Um, but I don't think it's a bad thing. And, um, I really enjoyed taking this class. I really liked this social media theme. I think that it should stay, with as a , it should stay as a course because it's really interesting. And I mean we live, we pretty much live in a world full of social media, and so, um, yeah I, uh, I really think this course should stay because we all use it, it's kind of our life now, it's what the generation after us is gonna live with, and the generation after that. It's all just gonna be technology, so, might as well just learn about it. And, yeah, that's it (12/7/2014: 0:00-3:52: "Final Vlog").

Through her vlog, Chloe states that, after this class, she is more active in prosuming on IG than FB, and her FB is mainly kept alive to keep in contact with her family. She discusses how she learned to analyze images in ways she did not before, and she also talks about how she finds herself focusing on ideologies that "we live by that we think are normal, or we no-never second guess it, and we're just like, oh, that's just life" (12/2/2014 "Final Vlog"). Chloe demonstrates that she is beginning to process how norms affect production, and consumption, of images. Her vlog also states that in prosuming on SNS, Chloe always has a purpose "in her mind," demonstrating her ability to assign a reason for why she chooses to post certain content (12/7/2014 "Final Vlog"). Through this statement, Chloe displays an understanding, and use, of this rhetorical term when operating on SNS.

Chloe's vlog discussion is evidence of her adopting, what is hopefully, a more critical mode of prosumption in online environments; however her lack in understanding how her public IG privacy settings can make her profile open to unwanted audiences, like her family, can conflict with her self-reported analytic abilities. This dissonance between Chloe's personal analysis of her learning process, and her prosumption on SNS, can serve as further evidence for why composition instructors need to incorporate teaching critical methods of communication through out-of-school digital literacies into their curriculum. Students like Chloe, who display a

clear ability to utilize CDL by rhetorically constructing online profiles to meet specific purposes for a particular audience, but who sometimes lack a critical consciousness when engaging in these processes, require assistance from experts in communication. Composition instructors can foster the development of a more critical decision making process while their students are writing themselves into existence through self-representation on digital platforms like SNS.

Dispelling the Digital Native Myth

As we saw with Chloe, students seem to be making conscious decisions prosuming on SNS; however, Chloe's self-reported, critically-enhanced consumption, conflicts with her lack in understanding relationships between privacy settings and audience viewership. Students in our classrooms grew-up surrounded by technology, but this does not mean they are fully versed in decoding the purposes, and underlying processes, of SNS. This problematic association derives from the myth of educators believing that millennial born students are "digital natives," something we saw in Chapter II Section 4 with Hungerford-Kresser et al. during their experience with bringing blogs into the classroom, and something that digital media advocates, like danah boyd, are trying to dispel.

Boyd explains how students "make their own media, or share content online, but this does not mean that they inherently have the knowledge or perspective to critically examine what they consume" (177). In the following student discussion, we can see how coining students digital natives can both "obscure the uneven distribution of technological skills and media literacy across the youth population," and allow composition instructors and professors to dismiss a need for integrating digital literacy into the classroom (boyd 179). Students should be reminded their audiences on SNS include people they know, and people they don't; however one

prominent audience prosuming, and benefiting from the immense personal detail going into a student's profile, are media and consumer-based outlets, or commercial accounts.

The subject for my second RDP is Maddie, a student whose blogs and surveys indicated that she is not fully aware of all the ways she can communicate, and be communicated with, on SNS, and therefore of the agency she holds when prosuming.

Maddie

**Maddie (Novice Blogger) ~ Following me through my Freshman year of college
(Blog title and tagline).**

In the tagline for her blog, Maddie, a white, first-year student majoring in Biological Sciences, called herself a "novice blogger." In calling herself a novice, Maddie indicated that blogging is not something she is proficient at, displaying a break from the digital native myth. Maddie came into our class with a FB account, and without an IG account. In terms of her prosumption on FB, Maddie checked her FB once a day, and updated it by posting content once a week. On her initial survey, Maddie was asked to identify the type of photos she uploaded most often. In the margin, Maddie wrote a note saying she could not provide a number for all the choices since she "did not ever post some of the topics listed." On many of her classmate's surveys, it was common to have uploaded photos of food and beverages, memes, or photos of celebrities, athletes and musicians, all of which Maddie has never done. Maddie never posting types of photos her classmates have routinely posted before, indicates that she does not use her SNS as much as other students.

While out-of-school digital platforms can help students establish agency by sharing their opinions and identities with a public audience, it's important to recognize that not every student

has an innate understanding, or even frequently uses, websites like SNS and blogs. On SNS, users create a personalized profile to communicate to other users. This can give off the illusion that the user is in total control of who they are communicating with, and who communicates with them. For students to take hold of their agency on blogs and SNS, they first must be able to identify, and analyze, the often hidden communication channels opened by a networked public.

A Good and Nice SNS Persona

In Maddie's Initial Personal SNS Profile Analysis, she was asked to give a description of who she believed her SNS profile portrayed from an audience member's perspective. In Maddie's analysis, she discussed the appropriateness of her actions and behaviors on SNS, and how the photos she chose to upload, can lead an audience to believe that she is content with her life.

This profile reveals a good nice person. There are no inappropriate photos. The photos document important events in her life, such as vacation, Prom and High school graduation. In majority of the photos she is smiling which would cause a viewer to think she leads a happy life. There are several photo of her skiing, so one would come to believe that she is an avid Colorado skier (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Initial).

Maddie's initial survey indicated that she only posts photos to her FB once a month, and as we see from her remarks above, these photos display "important" life moments (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Initial). In looking at Maddie's FB friends, her initial survey also stated that the audiences viewing these moments are composed of friends, acquaintances, family, and teachers, meaning that Maddie chose to only allow people she most likely has met in person to make meaning from her constructed FB persona. Looking at the audiences Maddie excludes, her initial survey indicated that clothing brands, specialized/themed accounts, or media outlets are not permitted to interact with, or view, her FB posts.

Maddie's presumption on SNS indicated a process of building, what she sees as, an appropriate, online persona. While creating an online identity is certainly a core purpose of SNS, the process of constructing a persona, and communicating it to audiences, does not also account for how unknown, or unintended, audiences might communicate back. Maddie's self-analysis of presenting a profile reflective of a "good, nice" person, and her statement that her small audience of individuals knowing her offline will see her as living a "happy life," can possibly obscure her to the existence of unknown audiences, and communication backchannels, existing on SNS (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Initial). As students put personal data into FB and IG, that data is delivered to third party sources that respond with advertisements, news articles, and other outside information. Maddie's restricted FB audience, and her lack of posting to FB in general, could indicate a lack of awareness that her interaction on FB, no matter how appropriate, still makes her susceptible to being reached out to by outside parties.

Insolent Posting; It's Just Stupid

Maddie and her classmates were asked to read Emily Nussbaum's "Kid's, the Internet, and the End of Privacy" (Source B) and Lakshmi Chaudhry's "Mirror, Mirror On the Web" (Source C), two periodical articles discussing Generation X's opinions discussing millennials' use of SNS. Students were then asked to discuss why the authors hold these opinions, and if these opinions are valid (Assignment C). Students responded to the prompt via a discussion thread, and were asked to use each other's posts to further conversation. In Maddie's comment, she discussed the differences between her use of SNS, and other millennials' use of the platform.

... Somehow I wish that our generation was known for more than just being addicted to our smartphones and social media. After looking at the link Heather

posted I wonder how soon Facebook will phase out just like Myspace and Friendster, (which I had never heard about before now). I can completely understand why generation "X" is confounded by what we as teenagers post. I am very careful of what I post online and have never posted a compromising photo. I think that people are stupid when they do, and don't really see the long term effects of these insolent posts. Often I believe these posts are cries for attention, of any kind, negative or positive. Generation X is probably thinking about how they rebelled when they were young and how now we as a generation are being rather careless in what we share online. I think these worries are valid, they fear that we as youths will post something online that may seriously damage our lives, and because they are our parents this really resonates with their protective parenting instincts (9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum").

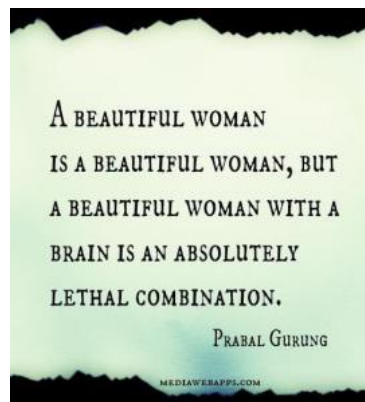
Both Maddie's initial and final surveys stated that she has never regretted posting a photo to FB; this is demonstrated by her above post as she remarked that posting a "compromising" photo is not something she has ever done (9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum"). Maddie's post demonstrated that she is meticulous when choosing what posts can make-up her online persona; this is unlike that of other members of her generation who seem to be unaware of the future consequences of their "insolent posts" (9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum"). Similar to the digital media critics who see millennials' SNS use as narcissistic, Maddie's post indicates an agreement with authors like Bauerlein, as she describes these types of posts as attention seeking.

SNS provides its users options to limit how much they share with their audience, and this may have caused Maddie to think that, as long as she avoids posting images directly disparaging her reputation, she is safely prosuming on SNS. Without any tangible reasons for further investigating the underlying processes of SNS, students like Maddie may not be inclined to critically analyze their actions on SNS, or further change how they use them. It seems that Maddie's decoding process on SNS goes as far as her awareness of how intended audiences can make meaning, and form judgments from her photos. Through her post we see that Maddie's potential to further her CDL skills in terms of who can, and may be, communicating with her on

SNS is affected by her understanding SNS's main purpose as a positive or negative form of self-promotion.

Incomplete Assessments

Following Project 1, Maddie was asked to complete Assignment E. Her classmate chose two photos from Maddie's SNS profile to use as evidence for claims about who Maddie is offline. In her response, Maddie was asked to think about how commonly held ideologies may have influenced her partner's claims, and limited their ability to fully see her as she sees herself. Her post displays a reconsidering of how effective the photos she uses to construct her FB persona are in portraying all aspects of herself.



...I read the letter based on myself today, I must say that I am pleased, I like knowing that this is how I portray myself online, very clean cut, and nice, you will never find any compromising photographs of myself on my Facebook page. Also the claims made about my personality are, slightly alarmingly, spot on. Perhaps I leave myself open like a book on social media. I found it interesting reading about myself from a stranger's perspective, seeing how I portray myself on social media. As I said above, the description of myself was very accurate. I am shy until I know you, I do believe in inner beauty and the proudest day of my life was probably when I graduated high school. This is how I want myself portrayed online. Our internally-held ideologies influence our general perceptions of things, event and people in our lives. In the letter, the author, who I'm going to call "she" from now on for the sake of simplicity, spoke of my lack of makeup as meaning that I am prompting people to look at my inner beauty by not overselling

my outer beauty. I think it is a common in our society to look at a female and instantly assess her beauty. Women are after all supposed to be beautiful all of the time. She also wrote about my senior graduation picture, how I was holding my diploma and how it meant that I was proud of myself (which I was). In this day and age all young people are expected to get a primary education, and to then move on to college. This is the ideology that to be successful in life one needs a college education. There are those few anomalies of genius entrepreneurs that don't need a college education, but in general people without a college education are frowned upon, they are seen as lazy or almost lesser human beings. The ideologies, held so strongly in our society, can hind and mask other traits that can be found in photos. Of all of the photos I had up on Facebook she chose 2 posed photos, photos where I was dressed up and wearing makeup. These photos say nothing of my hobbies, and my educational abilities, for all anyone knows I barely passed high school (10/5/2014 "Self Reflections").

As seen in prior posts, Maddie mentioned how her FB page reflected a "clean-cut" and "nice" person, and did not feature any photos that could embarrass her or disparage her reputation (10/5/2014 "Self-Reflections"). From her above post, Maddie displayed contentment with her partner's assessment of her personality based on the photos from her FB page, and remarked that this portrayal correlated well with how she might describe herself. Her response also indicated a developed skepticism in whether or not photos on SNS could provide a truthful depiction of a person. In considering the photos her partner chose, while Maddie remarked that her partner's assessment of her photos was accurate, she also stated that, just by looking at photos, certain elements of her personality are eclipsed and unmentioned. Maddie's post describes how her partner chose her senior graduation picture, but a photo of her holding a diploma cannot show the extent of her success; "for all anyone knows," Maddie stated, "I barely passed high school (10/5/2014 "Self Reflections").

When students become conscious of the fact that their communicative intent in sharing photos on SNS does not always match what an audience may perceive, they can start to critically design more self-aware personas. Maddie demonstrated an enhanced audience awareness, and

realization of the limited agency she holds when making a self-representation. Her above post also displayed an ability to further investigate relationships between her uploaded photos, and the responses she might receive from audiences who view them; however this realization does not indicate a recognition of commercial accounts as a part of those audiences. For her to become more aware of commercial accounts on SNS, Maddie might require instructor prompting.

Effects of Commercial Accounts

Maddie received this type of prompting when she and her classmates were assigned Project 3, a research paper in which they had to investigate the impact a specific piece of visual rhetoric found on a SNS has on an audience. She chose to look at how political-satire memes can allow Americans to develop humanized, or demonized, representations of Middle Eastern people. Maddie's research paper explained how a user's interactions with commercial SNS accounts trigger offline feelings, ideas, beliefs and actions; these actions can be positive or negative depending on the audience affected.

This assignment prompted Maddie to move away from viewing SNS solely in terms of personal self-representations. By investigating how commercial accounts producing political memes through their SNS profiles, Maddie became exposed to the reality that commercial accounts not only have a place on SNS, but also have the ability to communicate with users like herself, and have lasting effects on how we view other people.

Final Thoughts

In completing Assignment L, Maddie's vlog discussed her experience in using new SNS's like IG, her future use of SNS's she currently participates in, like FB, as well as how she might use her knowledge of commercial accounts existing on these sites to her advantage.

TRACK #3: MADDIE FINAL VLOG

Hi everyone! So this will probably be my last blog post for awhile. I'm still deciding whether I want to continue to keep up this blog, or whether I would just let it die. I really don't want to let it just fade away, but I'm trying to figure out what I will post after the class is over. Um, maybe some of my poetry, or, I don't really know, or just-talk sometimes. I'm really not sure, but um, I do like the idea of having a blog. It's a good way to share stuff, information, experiences. Um, but anyways, so this is a reflection on my co150 class, so, um, and my co150 class was based on social media. Facebook, Instagram, and photos posted to these sites, and how they affect people, so, um, I think my Facebook ac-account I had before the class, so I will definitely keep that. I think it's a good way to keep in touch with people. I actually got it in order to keep in touch with people that I otherwise probably would not have stayed in touch with, and we have stayed in touch, so, um, Instagram, I didn't have before the class, and I probably won't keep it up afterwards. I rarely used it during the class, I'm more of a Facebook person. I like the, like the, how Instagram is pictures, I think that's cool, but I just don't, I just don't do it, ever. Um, I should probably get someone to introduce me to it better, because, it could be cool. Anyways, but I probably won't post on Instagram after the class, but, um, definitely my favorite part of the semester was the humans of CSU project, um, I really enjoyed it. It made me go outside of my comfort zone, and, so, which usually I wouldn't just stop someone on the street and say, "hey, can I talk to you, and take your picture?" It was a good way to sort of get to know the average CSU student, um, I learned some things I probably wouldn't of like it kind of changes your, like you look at someone and you kind of get an impression on them, but doing that you, you see what you miss when you just judge people like that which I thought was really cool. Um, so, I guess what I'll take away from this course, is, definitely how social media can affect how we, like how we view things. I think for our generation it's definitely, it's a better way to communicate with us, because we're so addicted to it. I mean, we really are. Um, and so, it's just a better way to get messages to support, to get just information on causes and different issues, social issues, political issues, I think it's just, it's just a really good way to get information out and messages, and it's just a better way to communicate with us than with say older generations, where, like, news and stuff is mainly, and with social media, you can get all kinds of views on topics as opposed to maybe just one if you only watch one news channel and usually even though they say they're not biased, they really are. Sometimes. It depends. Um, so I think that's great, and I really learned that how social media can affect people. Like, how depending on what you post, how it's laid out, how what words are used can really change the meaning of what you're trying to say. So, I guess, that's that's it. Um, so thank you, I really enjoyed Co150. Um, it was definitely an experience. I really, I really liked it. It was interesting. I've never taken a class that was based on social media before, and I think that's really cool because it's really, it's like, it's it's risen up to be, like it's kind of at the top and it's still rising, as like a method of communication. So, I think it'll be really important in the future, so thank you, bye bye!" (12/14/2014 0:00-4:53: "Final Blog Post").

On her final survey, Maddie explained how throughout the course she never did upload a photo to her IG account, and that after our class, she would not be keeping her IG because of "personal reasons." As indicated in her final vlog post, these reasons include not understanding how to use IG. Her final vlog post displayed Maddie's comprehension of IG as used for posting pictures, and a desire for someone to teach her how to properly use it. In terms of using FB, Maddie's final vlog indicated that she would keep her FB to fulfill her original purpose of continuing to communicate with people she "otherwise might not have stayed in touch with" (12/14/2014: "Final Blog Post").

When looking at other communication channels aside from non-commercial accounts, Maddie's final vlog demonstrated an awareness that not only do commercial accounts exist on SNS, but also they can communicate with her. Her comment on her final vlog regarding news outlets' inherent biases, and how that can impact the messages they send to users, indicated an enhanced consciousness, and critical awareness, concerning the effect commercial accounts can have on the SNS user. Maddie also demonstrated an enhanced understanding of SNS's purpose in her final vlog, as she moved beyond seeing them exclusively for self-promotion. Instead of separating herself from the over-sharing millennials she described earlier, her final vlog displayed Maddie aligning herself with them, claiming that SNS is a better way to communicate with "us" (12/14/2014 "Final Blog Post"). Instead of just seeing SNS as a place where she can build, and communicate, an appropriate persona, Maddie's final vlog demonstrated that SNS is a place where both commercial, and non-commercial accounts, can communicate with her.

Maddie's journey to enhanced understanding may seem like a progress narrative, but like Chloe, when comparing a student's self-report to their actions, there is often noticeable

dissonance. Despite seeing all the benefits in SNS regarding commercial accounts, Maddie has still chosen to keep these accounts out of her intended FB audience, as well as delete her IG account. While many of her classmates opt to follow media-outlets, clothing brands and specialized-themed accounts on IG, Maddie's choice to abandon the media all together could be due to the lack of in-class instruction on how to use IG. While she is aware that SNS has a purpose beyond self-presentation and promotion, without proper instruction on how to do so, she, and other students, may be less likely to attempt using the media in different ways.

We must remember that the myth of students as able to "just absorb all things digital through exposure" is, in fact, a myth (boyd 180). If not first prompted to further analyze online network's other connective possibilities, it is likely that students like Maddie, who demonstrate an original perspective of SNS as solely for self-promotion, might not independently seek ways to use the media differently, and therefore the underlying communication channels from outside parties, might remain underlying to these students.

To Share or Not to Share

Both Chloe and Maddie seem to be aware of intended audiences, as they tailor personal content to meet both their viewers', and their own expectations; however, not all students may be aware of relationships between author, audience, and identifiable information when constructing their SNS persona. Even when students are exposed to, and understand, the consequences of over-sharing, their knowledge of privacy settings can sometimes become obscured by how SNS encourages users to share personal information, and welcomes identity affirming self-expression.

In their article, "Facebook privacy settings: Who cares?" danah boyd and Eszter Hargittai, a sociologist at Northwestern University, quote FB founder Mark Zuckerberg's opinion on FB users' behavior. "People have gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and

different kinds, but more openly and with more people. That social norm is just something that evolved over time" (boyd and Hargittai "Who Cares?"). Sharing personal information on SNS is normal, but this is partially because it is also required to participate. Both FB and IG ask users for their name, educational or professional affiliations, biography, contact information, gender, and birthday. In addition, users are encouraged to upload a profile picture for other users to identify them by.

In my third RDP, I introduce Sam whose blogs and surveys indicated that a major part of his experience on digital platforms, is establishing his identity with an intended audience; however, this is at the possible expense of sharing too much identifiable information in a networked public. For students like Sam to enhance their sense of awareness in deciding what information is acceptable to share online, and what may be more hazardous to their safety, they may need prompting in decoding how, and why, SNS encourages users to share in the first place.

Sam

"Let's take a dive into the adventurous life of Sam !" ("About Me!").

Deep Dive

Sam, a black, third-year student majoring in Ethnic Studies, displayed an "adventurous" persona on his blog that did not mirror the more quiet persona he displayed in the classroom. Sam's blog posts, particularly the information he chose to contribute to his "About Me!" section, displayed much of his personal life, and often this information was identifiable. On his Wordpress blog, Sam featured two separate "About"⁹ sections. Sam's first "About" section

⁹ Readers can refer to the Methods chapter for a detailed explanation of what students were required to have on their personal Wordpress blogs, and what these sections entailed students writing about.

displayed a replica of the model one I posted on our class blog. His second section, entitled "Deep Dive," displayed an in-depth autobiography that discussed family, cultural heritage, motivations, fears, and excitement for starting a blog. The following post features the "Deep Dive" ¹⁰section from Sam's blog.

Born on April 14th, 1994 my time in Hoboken, Nj was short lived as my family moved to Colorado where I spent most of my childhood. I don't really remember much about NJ but we make it a point to travel back every year to see family and more. Since in Colorado, I've been living in Denver until my time here at CSU. I attended George Washington HS all four years. Seeing that I don't know many people in this class or my followers, here's a little more background information about me. When I was just 12 years old, I lost my best friend and my father due to an accident at work. As this was a tough time in my life, this is one point in my life where I feel I became stronger; not only for me but for my family as I had to step up and be there for my family. A year after this instance is when I decided to start growing my locks in my fathers honor. In his youth, he had locks and was forced to cut them after 7 years by his new hiring job. When he passed away, he was just beginning to start growing them again. I've currently been growing mine for 6 years and it will be 7 years on Feb 2, 2015. The passing of my father also accounts for my lone tattoo so far (on my left arm) and my drive and passion to become successful at everything I put my mind to. As sports have been previously mentioned; I've been playing football since 6 years old and currently I am a Redshirt Walk-on here at CSU. I love the program and hope to contribute to our teams success here within the next few years. Being in college I'm sure its known that I'm the occasional party goer and loving every moment here at CSU. So far in my two years here at CSU I've made countless memories and I'm hoping this semester will offer much of the same! I'm really stoked to get started on blogging as this is something that I've never really done before. I'm sure this is a new experience for many of us so lets make it count!



¹⁰ Because the information Sam chose to include in "Deep Dive" is identifiable, dates, places, and names have been changed to protect his identity.

And here's both parents!



Well that's a little background information about me! I can sometimes be an open book so if there's ever anything anyone else would like to know about me, feel free to ask! ("About Me!: Deep Dive").

In "Deep Dive," Sam stated that he chose to provide back story for his "classmates and followers" because he doesn't know them ("Deep Dive"). "Deep Dive" displayed Sam's birthday, his previous and current hometown, his past and current school, and his status as a college student and student-athlete. "Deep Dive," also displayed a profoundly, personal story concerning his father's death, along with a picture of his father's tombstone (not shown here,) and the two family photos above.

When students are writing an "About" section, on blogs, and a majority of SNS, there are typically no limits to what they can share, and how much they choose to share. While some of Sam's classmates wrote as much as he did on the "About" sections of their blogs, their self-descriptions included hobbies and interests rather than detailed personal histories. The elements Sam shared in "Deep Dive," are similar to what SNS users are invited, and encouraged, to contribute to their profiles. On FB's "About" page, users can edit their biographical information, and they are given the option to enter "Life events" ranging from major happenings like loss of a loved one, and moving into a new house, to more minor events of getting a new tattoo, getting

glasses, or picking up a new hobby ("About"). Students were informed that their Wordpress blogs were open to a public audience, meaning that anyone with internet connection had access to their page. Because Sam was informed about the public nature of his blog, his choice to share the contents of "Deep Dive" might indicate a lack of awareness concerning possible consequences of making identifiable information open to the public.

Self-Autonomy Through Self-Disclosure

Each students' blog was required to have a "Welcome" page that greeted their visitors and discussed the purpose of their blog. Sam's "Welcome!" page modeled the class blog by providing a menu that described what audience members can find in each section of his blog. When looking specifically at how Sam's "Welcome!" page describes the content in his "About Me!" section, we see a possible reason for Sam's choice in sharing so much of himself in "Deep Dive."

About me: This page will give you some background information about me, the author of this page. You can use this page to learn more about me so that there's a more personal connection between the audience, myself, and my posts. This section will also help you to understand my viewpoints on various subject matter that will be discussed throughout my blog as well as some past experiences" ("Welcome!").

Sam's "Welcome!" page stated that his "About Me" section would provide details that could create a more "personal connection" between his viewers, the content in his posts, as well as himself as an author ("Welcome!"). We also see that Sam's "Welcome!" page indicated that one reason his audience might view his "About Me!," would be to gain a better understanding of the topics featured. Sam's "Welcome!" page indicates an effort to explain to audiences how they can navigate his blog in a way that might allow them to best understand him. Sam's choice to include both the content audiences can find in each section of his blog, and suggestions for what

they might do with the information as they read, demonstrates an enhanced awareness of online audiences' ability to draw conclusions, and navigate a page, without an author to indicate intended direction, or alter audience perceptions.

An audience member's personal beliefs, and commonly held ideologies, can affect the way they view an author's uploaded content; Sam's "Welcome!" page may be taking measures to prevent audiences from misinterpreting his posts by providing them with directions to access background information about Sam. In this way, the audience will not be making meaning from Sam's posts solely through their personal lens; they can use the lens that Sam provides them as they peruse through his thoughts, feelings and opinions showcased on his blog. From Sam's "Welcome!" page, we can see that Sam displays both a purpose for sharing as much as he does through "Deep Dive," as well as a conscious analysis of how his audience's meaning making process could be affected by their individual perspectives, and lack of knowledge about Sam as an author.

For More Information...

In addition to Sam's "Welcome!" page, though it was not assigned, the first post on Sam's blog was a welcome post that also greeted his audience, specifically his first-year classmates. In the following post, Sam indicated to his audience that they can find out more information about him through accessing his other SNS.

Welcome again to my blog. For my first post I'd like to thank everyone for taking the time to show my page some love... (Although some of us had to) Ha. Although I know it's not a requirement through the course but since I don't use Facebook very often, I just want everyone to feel free to access my Twitter account on my page. I'm sure I'll check my Facebook from time to time since I'm sure it's required but using Twitter is where you'll be able to get a glance in the life

of Sam. And to the freshman... Welcome to CSU! Best 4 years of your life!
(9/3/2014 "As I Enter The World Of Blogging...").

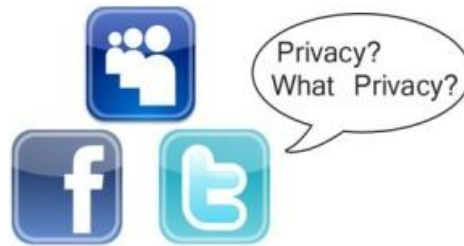
Sam's post invited his classmates to visit his Twitter since that is the SNS he used most often. Sam's post displayed statements containing the school he and his classmates attend, discussion of course requirements, and a comment directed "to the freshmen" that this will be "the Best 4 years of your life!," indicating that his primary audience for this post was his classmates (9/23/2014 "As I Enter the World of Blogging..."). While this invitation was intended for Sam's classmate audience, because his Wordpress blog is public, Sam's post also displayed an invite to anyone who comes across his page to access to his Twitter account. In looking at Sam's privacy settings for his SNS, on Sam's initial survey, he reported having a public IG profile. Like his Wordpress blog, this privacy setting allows anyone with internet access to see his uploaded photos.

In addition to the required links to his FB and IG profile, Sam's blog featured a link to his Twitter profile. While I do not have access to his Twitter's privacy settings, or to what he chooses to post on there, if Sam's tweets contain as much identifiable information as "Deep Dive," and he maintains the same privacy settings as he does on IG, than Sam would be running the risk of making a large amount of personal information available for public viewing.

Privacy Conflicts

After watching Source A, Sam and his classmates were asked to complete Assignment A. In doing so, Sam chose to write about privacy, and its effects and changes in the context of SNS. Through the following post, Sam discusses how SNS users would benefit from keeping their

professional, and personal, lives separate when using SNS, and the dangers behind posting haphazardly.



... Social media is a very efficient outlet of communication for the entire world, so with that, I believe we should “rethink privacy” to protect ourselves, family and friends from potential dangers on social networks. For example, in many cases we like to use our social media accounts to project what’s going on in various moments of our life to others. Posts including memorable experiences and attended events are a huge trend on social media accounts. These posts and pictures, as much of other social media, become public allowing nearly anyone at any given moment to access your information. I’m not in any way against social networks and the ease of access to information but I feel it’s our own individual duty to protect our privacy on these social networks. One huge concern when thinking privacy over social networks is blissful posting. Posting statuses pertaining to leaving on vacations, specific phone numbers, and even addresses can lead to potential dangers using social media; which is why blissful posting is a major issue I Believe we should rethink when it comes to the privacy of our social networks. Personally, I love to communicate my interests and what’s currently going on in my life through my social media account but there are aspects of ourselves that I believe we should keep private through social media. To maintain a good level of security in social media, we should protect our identities and be able to separate our social life from our professional life. Also, income can be a main focus of privacy that I believe we should rethink when it comes to posting on social media. A great way to help maintain privacy is to send personal messages when there is a post that contains these aspects instead of making the posts public. Another great way to protect your privacy is to make your page accessible to approved friends only making it much more difficult for potential dangers to make their way on your social media account..9/7/2014 "Class Post 1: Rethinking Privacy").

Sam's post indicated an enhanced knowledge of how users' SNS presumption often involves careless, or "blissful," posts, as well as a mention of the inherent dangers of sharing identifiable information on a public network (9/7/2014 "Rethinking Privacy"). In conjunction

with the claims in Sam's post, Sam's initial survey reported that his FB audience was composed of friends, acquaintances, family, family-friends, teachers, co-workers, and people he knows, but never met in person. Also on his initial survey, Sam stated that his FB privacy settings only allowed those named above to view his posted content. Sam's post also demonstrated a knowledge of the importance behind creating separate personal, and professional, digital personas as another way of maintaining privacy; however Sam's initial survey indicated an experience of when he uploaded a photo that he reported regretting due to employability reasons. Instead of removing the photo from his page, Sam's initial survey stated that he chose to keep the photo, altering his privacy settings so that only he could see it. Sam's choice to keep the photo displays a contradiction between his blog's statement that personal and professional digital personas should not intersect, and his self-reported action on his initial survey of keeping a photo that might have affected his employability.

Sam's self-reported actions on FB, and his post on privacy, seem to indicate a high level of CDL skills, but when looking at the information he chose to share in "Deep Dive," and his claims that personal and professional digital personas should be kept separate, the dissonance between words and actions is clear. By comparing his self-report in his initial survey detailing his maintained FB privacy settings and his public IG, to his claims in "Rethinking Privacy," and the amount of information he contributed through "Deep Dive," Sam demonstrates a nuanced understanding of privacy, and maintaining authorial control. While Sam might be giving specific audiences, like his classmates, personal information to better understand his blog posts, as he states in the above post, "there are aspects of ourselves that I believe we should keep private;" yet, Sam leaves little left unsaid, or unable to be searched, on these digitally networked publics (9/7/2014 "Rethinking Privacy"). When composition instructors read self-reports like Sam's, that

indicate a sophisticated understanding of CDL skills, unless they also have access to their students' actions when operating on blogs or SNS, a student's self-report does not necessitate their critical use of out-of-school literacy websites like SNS.

Establishing Authorial Control

After students completed Assignment A, they were asked to comment on the post of another student. Sam chose to comment on Samantha's post discussing identity formation on SNS, and the multiple affordances users have when constructing an online persona. Sam's response mentioned the power an author holds when creating an online identity.

With so much freedom to shape and form our identity to how we want to appear on SNS, I agree to the point that the author has more power in the realm of controlling how they are perceived on social networks. As each post is a form of expression and communication I believe this adds to our identity, giving us the ability to show aspects of us that people may not normally see in person or in daily life (9/8/2014 "Response Comment").

In Sam's response post to Samantha, he mentioned how SNS posts allow a user to showcase attributes that aren't always displayed offline. Sam's post further stated that because of this, the author can establish an identity that serves to control how audiences perceive them. The statements Sam made in this response post to Samantha were demonstrated in his actions on his blog, specifically in "Deep Dive," in which Sam chose to share personal information about his life that did not get discussed during our time in the classroom. Again, Sam's post indicates an enhanced awareness of the tenuous relationship between audience perception and authorial power, as Sam described methods for authors to balance this relationship; his being to share personal information.

While the possibility of Sam's deliberate oversharing serving as an attempt to shift the power balance over to the SNS author appears promising, the reality of Sam sharing a plethora of identifiable information, no matter the purpose, should be addressed. Sam seems to lean toward seeing, and using, SNS as a place to scaffold identity traits, and qualities, that he may not always carry over into face-to-face interactions; an example of this could be the comparison between the in-class, more reserved Sam, and the digital, "open-book" Sam he displays on his blog ("Deep Dive"). This is not an uncommon occurrence as we see that multiple elements contribute to why a student might elect to be more quiet in the classroom, but share more in an out-of-school digital context.

Final Thoughts

After the semester ended, Sam completed Assignment L by recording his final thoughts on the class in an assigned vlog post. In his vlog post, Sam reflected on his future use of SNS, the most significant aspects of the course for him, and how his ideas about SNS have changed over time.

TRACK #4: SAM FINAL VLOG

Overall throughout the duration of this course I felt that this CO150 course has really changed my views on the perceptions of social media and the perceptions that social media can cause. Um, with my p3 project focusing mainly on the effects of memes and the effect they have on social media and society, I was able to research and explore these factors, that, uh, social media has and these effects memes have on social media. It really opened my eyes to the effects that social media can have on society as a whole, like, in general. Um, social media is really impactful to society as it's pretty much a microcosm of pop-culture. Um, through my experience in this course, I have been able to be more careful about what I post, what I repost, and who I follow. Um, over the course of the semester, I'd have to say my biggest OMG moment was included in my p3 project doing the research. As I researched the effects that memes can have, and their effect, on uh, society, I mean, I found a bunch of stuff that I could of included in my paper, um, stereotypes to the connections of politics, pop-culture, um, pretty much

everything social media influences society just...I mean ridiculously. Um, I stumbled across the various effects that social media has on society throughout my P3 project, and throughout the c-course of the semester, with, uh, the p2 and the p1 project. um, from this course, I plan on better protecting my privacy on social media, and perceptions I give for myself, uh, throughout, just, throughout social media, and throughout society, and, um, I'll most likely continue to blog in the future as I felt that has increased my social media experience, and it's added to it, and its been a great asset to the social media experience for me. Um, all in all, I hope you can continue to teach this class, as I had a great time learning CO150 through technology rather than just studying a book. I mean, I felt I was more engaged in the course that way, and I definitely enjoyed it, um, I'd have to say my biggest take away from this course was definitely the workshops. Those helped me increase my knowledge of understanding of writing, I mean, substantially, and, um, yeah so thanks, and I really enjoyed the course (12/14/2014: 0:00-2:30: "Class Blog 9").

Sam's vlog stated that this course helped him change several of his decisions on SNS. In looking at Sam's final survey, under Sam's reasons for altering his privacy settings on FB to make his uploaded content only available to those in his accepted group of FB friends, he added employability and family reasons. Sam's choice to add these two reasons indicates his enhanced awareness that audiences aside from his intended ones may view his SNS. In addition, on Sam's final survey, when experiencing an instance of photo-regret on FB, he chose to remove the photo entirely instead of simply making it visible to only him. In contrast to his maintained FB privacy settings, when looking at Sam's self-report from his final survey concerning his IG, we see that he decided to keep his profile public, meaning that Sam chose, after this class, to continue making IG posts accessible to anyone.

Like many of his classmates, Sam might benefit from instruction on how his posts to one audience, can be made accessible to multiple unintended audiences, especially if the digital paths he invites the former to follow are equally available to the latter. Use does not necessitate understanding, and in Sam's case, written, self-reported understanding does not necessitate critical application to actions. In addition, based on the detailed, personal information Sam

shared on his blog, proper explanation concerning why SNS might ask Sam for this information, and why users like Sam, are encouraged to provide it, might help Sam better understand, and decode, how his personal information could be used in ways he did not intend it to be used.

Death of the Individual

In constructing an SNS persona, students like Chloe make rhetorically conscious decisions, but they are not always critically interpreting relationships between self-representation creation, audience perception, and in Maddie's case, underlying communication channels. Whether a student's SNS use is consistent or not, if they have a SNS profile, they engage in performing, modifying, and sharing a digital self. Sam's digital persona on his blog established his values and beliefs by tying them back to culture and personal background. Students like Sam demonstrate a perception of out-of-school digital websites, like SNS, as a space for an author's online persona to enhance their offline qualities. Some students, however, see the almost ubiquitous use of SNS by millennials as a detriment to originality, as users opt to please an audience, instead of expressing their true selves.

In my third RDP, these thoughts are voiced by Heather, an apparel and merchandising major, whose blogs frequently discussed how she used fashion to express her individuality. In class, Heather was always first to contribute, and never one to back down from a classmate's challenge. With class starting at 9:00AM, many students opted for casual comfort, and while she always looked comfortable, Heather's outfits went beyond casual. Similar to Heather's interest in self-representation, Katie Warfield, lead researcher for the *Making Selfies/Marking Selves* project, explores young women's thought processes between planning, taking, and posting self-representations (2). Through surveys, Warfield discovered that most young women "sought an image that they felt was 'authentic,' 'real,' 'not fake' and 'not forced'" (5). While Warfield's

participants strived for uniqueness and individuality when choosing images to construct their digital self-representations, through Heather's blog posts, she often cites that SNS leads to the death of the individual.

Heather



("About").¹¹

Heather, a white, third-year student, featured multiple self-representations on her blog. Like the photo shown above, Heather's self-representations reflected photo-editing, and attention to pose. Throughout the semester, Heather's academic work displayed an interest in women's self-representations, and possible reasons for their process of creating, and presenting, a specific appearance both online and offline. Heather's blogs discussed SNS, and the lack of uniqueness in users' self-representations she reported seeing on these platforms. Throughout the semester, Heather's blogs indicate a reconsidering of why women's self-representations seem to lack the originality her blogs stated that she possessed.

Under the Influence

¹¹ This was the photo featured in Heather's blog "About" section.

In her first assigned blog post, Heather discusses SNS and the death of the individual. Heather's completion of Assignment A discusses the visual, online personas we build on SNS, and how they are affected by other users' accounts that we may friend and follow on FB and IG.

My thoughts on social media are basically that our lives are being formed by the pictures of the people that we follow. We are not able to form our own originality or unique personalities or individual profiles. We are pulling what we know about ourselves from others. But my main thought here is where did this start? Who was the original source? With our ability to reference apps and smartphones we are negotiating what talents we naturally have. My ideas have not changed since taking the survey, I feel that I am just as much a part of this as every other user in social media. I let users with thousands of followers influence what I post on social media such as Instagram and Facebook everyday. If anything the survey made me realize this even more. I may not post things for 'likes' but I do post them for myself, which I have been influenced by others or have been inspired by their posts (9/7/2014 "SNS and the world").

Heather's post echoes statements from some of her classmates concerning the fabrication of self-representations on SNS. Her post states that "we are not able to form our own originality" on SNS, like FB and IG, because posts from other users "with thousands of followers" influence what we then choose to post (9/7/2014 "SNS and the world"). Heather's post indicated a personal separation from users that are posting for audience feedback in the form of "likes," as she stated that, while also influenced by other users, she posts for an audience of herself (9/7/2014 "SNS and the world"). Through her post, Heather demonstrated an enhanced awareness of the possible impacts users' SNS activity, and the ease of accessing these platforms through mobile applications, can have on the choices users make when building their digital persona.

The same process that occurs online when SNS users' prosumption choices are influenced by viewing other users' self-representations, also occurs offline when individuals' choices concerning in-person self-representation are influenced by others, and the media. As an

apparel and merchandising major, Heather's academic work entails studying consumerism, which involves designing ways to influence a buyer into purchasing a product. This constructed influence has the intent of creating a desire in the consumer to like the product. In response to her post, I brought up these ideas.

A Form of Conform

I responded to Heather's post by asking her to explain relations between how influence operates in consumerism, and through users' self-representation choices on SNS. As ideology and self-representations would be the theme for our second unit, I asked Heather questions regarding how our self-representation's conformity to a certain aesthetic, can come from social pressures ingrained by dominant ideologies of socioeconomic status, beauty, and gender often reinforced by fashion.

Heather, you ask some pertinent questions, and I would love to hear your answers for them. Being that your major is apparel and merchandising, your studies involve investigating consumer goods and behavior. What draws people into emulating certain styles, and buying certain clothes over others are the same influences that cause people to project certain images on SNS. How big of a push do you think fashion has on this idea of us not being able to form an original identity, or even know what our original identities are? Could mainstream consumerism be part of the reason we don't really know ourselves? We don't all post for likes, though this could be argued since many feel the main purpose of posting is for self-validation via likes. When you say you post for yourself, what exactly is the purpose for your audience of yourself? What do you gain from doing this and how does it contribute to your NVBs (needs, values, and beliefs)? (9/8/2014 "My Response to 'SNS and the world'").

Heather's response post indicated a marked difference between in-person and online self-representation that she further elaborated on by discussing her personal SNS use. In answering my above questions, Heather's post also displayed a resistance toward the social-constructivist views I alluded to, as she discussed originality as an internally residing personality trait.

Ms. L, I believe that fashion and the way that we dress is more of an art form or a verb. I feel that the way one presents their social media profiles is more of a conform. Yes, some certainly do dress to conform and fit in, that is very true and we are most definitely influenced by others in fashion. I believe that this lies deep within our personalities, if we are an 'original' person than we will not conform to dress, or perhaps have Facebooks, because we are not looking to keep up with the joneses, but instead go against the grain. I truly believe that mainstream anything is pertinent in not knowing ourselves. I believe that the reasons that I feel so strongly about posting for myself, is that it does not cross my mind the number of likes or the amount of people who will even see my posts. For me, Facebook and Instagram are more of my personal history. When I look back to see what I did 2 weeks ago and how much I've grown as a person, I will choose to look at my Facebook or Instagram. My NVB's surrounding this include knowing more about myself and continuing to grow as a person, as well as holding myself to a higher standard of originality (9/8/2014 "Response to 'SNS and the world'").

In Heather's response post, she demonstrates an enhanced level of CDL skill as she displayed an analysis of SNS's permanence and persistence, and how she uses these affordances to construct a "personal history" to adhere to her values of holding herself to "a higher standard of originality" (9/8/2014 "Response to 'SNS and the world'"). Heather's response post also indicated a partial agreement to my claims about fashion, as she stated that there are individuals that do "dress to conform" (9/8/2014 "Response to 'SNS and the world'"). As mentioned in Heather's original post, "SNS and the world," she reported that she can also be influenced by other SNS users that she friends and follows. On both her initial and final surveys, Heather indicated that her FB and IG audience was composed of her friends, acquaintances, family, family-friends, co-workers, people she does not know or know of, as well as clothing brands, media outlets, and specialized themed accounts.

Heather's latter three SNS audiences might include consumer and lifestyle related accounts; therefore the images they post, and that she sees, are most likely reflective of what's trending. This is not so much for these audiences to make meaning from her posts, but rather for

the purpose of prosumption; users willingly consume images that may unknowingly affect how, and what, they produce for non-commercial audiences to consume, and possibly assume, as the user's original thoughts or ideas. According to Heather's posts, this prosumption process is causing SNS users to lose sight of their identity, and although she too engages in it, she claims that she has other uses for her SNS; one being an archive for her self-representations. With SNS serving as her memory, she can be consistent in crafting self-representations that depart from the unoriginal, and monotonous images she seems to see in other users' profiles. In terms of her resistance to social-construction, students may often be uncomfortable with learning the limitations of their individuality; this might be especially difficult for students like Heather whose blogs indicate a value for her self-identified uniqueness. It is possible that Heather's desire to retain her individuality and originality could be the reason for her resistance

Mainstream Effects

In her post, "SNS and the world" Heather stated that SNS users viewing other SNS users posts is harming originality. In Heather's response to my comments on "SNS and the world" she stated that "mainstream anything is pertinent in not knowing ourselves" (9/8/2014 "Response to 'SNS and the word'"). The claims in Heather's original post, and response post, indicated that the display of mainstream media, fashion, etc. on SNS could be why "our lives are being formed by the pictures of people that we follow" (9/7/2014 "SNS and the world").

The influence of mainstream culture on SNS self-representations that Heather's posts discussed is brought up by Warfield as her survey data examines common themes, and practices, young women enact when taking a self-representation for their SNS accounts. Warfield's research supports Heather's claim about "mainstream anything," affecting originality

as survey participants cited imitation of media icons as a common theme in their self-representation composing process (9/8/2014 "Response to 'SNS and the word'"). Participants explained that they "borrowed conventions and poses from magazines and celebrity photos;" one woman was quoted saying, "I imitate models, and try out 'artsy' poses," (Warfield 4). While Heather seems to see SNS as the source of repetitive personas, Warfield's research delves deeper into photographic conventions that pre-existed SNS, and the internet all together. A woman's appearance assessment, prior to taking a self-representation, involves experimenting with "photographic conventions of the female form," that are based off of "aesthetic standards of that medium [focusing] on physical details such as hair and make-up" (Warfield 4). In her second project, Heather examined the aesthetic conventions Warfield's participants adhere to when using cosmetic products.

Natural Beauty

Project two was a persuasive paper where Heather and her classmates were asked to choose an audience that they feel wrongly propagated an ideology. For a brainstorming activity, Heather and her classmates recorded a vlog about why their chosen audience should change their habits, actions, or beliefs (Assignment F). As support for her claims, Heather referenced using sources D, E, and F in her paper as these author's deal with issues regarding how their personal appearance does not adhere to societal conventions. Because Heather chose to look specifically at cosmetics, her vlog discussed why she selected Nordstrom, a popular make-up and fashion retailer, as her audience, and how they are propelling an ideology that women's "natural" self is not accepted, or seen as, beautiful.

TRACK #5: HEATHER ON IDEOLOGY

OK, so first I'm going to talk about my intended audience, which is Nordstrom and, um, the reason that I picked them, is because in their store they have beauty products, cosmetics, fashion stuff, clothes, everything that you could possibly use to transform yourself into a completely different person when just leaving the store after spending some money. Um, I was gonna use the articles about the baseball player, and then I was having a hard time deciding between using either 'My Life as a Cyborg' or the one about the woman in her bikini. My selfies are of me, one is without any make-up, my hair up in a bun, it's wet. Um, there's no clothes in the pictures. There's no other outside props, and then the other one is my hair done, and dry and, um, make-up on to try to show the difference between natural beauty and beauty behind cosmetics, and how much different you can appear to someone based on using just these products. Um, I'm using--my main argument I guess is basically that by using these products, and by these products being sold to us, they're creating a beauty standard that natural beauty isn't really beautiful, and that you have to have these products, and these clothes, and these shoes, and props in your pictures, and just in general in your appearance to make yourself look better, and make yourself look [uses air quotes] 'beautiful,' which I don't really agree with, and so that's definitely my main argument. From that I was gonna kind of break it down into the fact that clothes can completely transform how you look, and what you weigh, and they can hide your areas where you're not confident about, and then also like, with, like, cosmetics that you're able to hide scars and beauty marks, and whatever you want from the outside world, and you can make it so that no one actually knows what you actually look like naturally. Which I think is our most beautiful selves and I think that it should be brought out more in the world. That's about it (10/12/2014: 0:00-2:18: "Beauty Standards; No Longer Natural") .

Heather's initial survey reports that she edits her photos differently depending on the medium. On FB, Heather's initial survey indicated that she always edited her photos prior to posting, and on IG she stated that she always added a filter to her photo prior to uploading. Heather's initial survey also indicated that on both FB and IG, she edited her photos to make certain elements stand out, produce a certain mood or feeling, and add an element of artistic design; Heather's survey left out the reasons, "it makes me look more attractive," and "it will make other people think I look attractive." These statements are echoed in "SNS and the world," in which Heather's post discusses posting for an audience of herself, rather than for audience approval.

When looking at the elements Heather describes as being able to transform a woman's appearance by hiding her "natural" beauty, if placed in a digital context, fashion and beauty products could be akin to photo-editing applications, as they are how SNS users alter their appearance digitally. Heather's initial survey indicated that she frequently chose to edit her photos, which mirrors the claims of Warfield's participants who stated that they would alter the photos in a effort to "correct qualities that weren't--according to them, 'right'"(4). When thinking about the "rightness" factor, that Warfield's participants are trying to achieve, we can refer to the ideologies of beauty from Heather's vlog. These ideologies surrounding what a woman should look like to be considered beautiful, might have influenced the errors that Warfield's participants saw in their self-representations. As Heather's surveys also reported editing her photos, she too might be affected by these ideologies. In teaching students how social norms limit, and affect, their self-representations, we contribute to their ability to craft more self-aware self-representations, such as the ones Heather's vlog discussed, that attempt to challenge, and circumvent the effects of these ideologies.

Lasting Self-Representations

In her final vlog post, Heather completes Assignment L by mirroring her focus throughout the course through choosing to focus on self-representations, and what changes she may make to how she uses her SNS.

TRACK #6: HEATHER FINAL VLOG

When I think back to the way that I used social networking sites before taking this class, I think some of the stuff that I had posted was not necessarily the best, and that I should of used more of a filter on what I decided to post and didn't. Um, now after taking that class, I think that by learning to analyze other people's facebook's, and like the information you gather from people you don't know in their profiles, that I'm more conscious about what I post, and the way that I allow

myself to be represented, I guess, on social media. Um, I would say my biggest OMG moment over the semester is probably, I guess how much I use social networking sites. Um, I'm on it all the time, and I constantly use Instagram and Facebook throughout the day. I check it multiple times on my phone, and I think that I didn't really know I did it that much, and now that I'm, like, aware of it, that's really interesting, and it made me realize how much of a role it plays in my life. Um, I guess, from this course for the future I plan on taking information on how media is, like, displayed on social networking sites, and, like if I ever have a company page or I need to talk about an issue on a social networking site, that I'm able to do it effectively, and, um, have strong ethos, pathos, and logos, and I guess like take everything that we like analyzed and make it into my post. Probably be the one thing I'm taking from the course to apply later (12/14/2014: 0:00-2:04: "Vlog").

Heather's final vlog demonstrated an understanding that her previous use of SNS was "not the best", and that after this course, she reported an elevated consciousness of what content she should, and should not, allow on her profile (12/14/2014 "Vlog"). In referencing her future use of SNS, Heather's final vlog indicated an enhanced sense of how SNS can be used as a form of professional communication, and be transferred to contexts outside the classroom. Heather's vlog reported that her most prevalent realization was the frequency of which she used SNS, and how it is a larger part of her life than she initially perceived.

Heather, whose field is deeply saturated with ideologies concerning standards of beauty, and economic status, might benefit from learning about how representation operates in both online and offline worlds; specifically how what is considered "unique," and "fashionable" is deeply influenced by ideological factors. Heather came to some important realizations about what content is appropriate to post, and reported an expanded sense of how SNS can be used in her future. Her final vlog also indicated that SNS is a large part of her life, and we are further reminded how much of our students' writing processes are happening in digital, and image-based, spaces outside the classroom. With students like Heather, that are actively constructing,

and sharing, self-representations on more than a daily basis, composition instructors can contribute a more critical lens as students continue creating visual, digital bodies in the very permanent world of SNS.

The Socially Un-networked Student

Integrating SNS into the classroom can provide students like Heather, that frequently use these platforms, with a familiar space to enter into conversations about challenging subject matter, and to collaborate with peers; however for students, that do not frequently use SNS, how do they benefit from integrating out-of-school digital literacies into the curriculum?

In *The App Generation*, authors Howard Gardner, a renowned cognitive theorist, and Katie Davis, an assistant professor, explore how millennials engage with, and are affected by digital media. Mostly siding with the digital media critics, Gardner and Davis see apps as contributing to millennials' instant gratification obsession, but they also discuss reasons for the tentative ways in which some students approach their writing. Gardner and Davis explain how our "Anglo-American intoxication with objective measurement" leads students to rely on apps; but I feel this reliance is not so much on technology, as it is on teacher knowledge (177). Students are fully aware their work will be evaluated, and instead of experimenting, they look for their instructor or professor's "correct" answers. When interviewing veteran art teachers on their students' "imaginative processes," teachers explained how students "used to jump in and see where the materials would take them," but "now they ask what to do" (Gardner and Davis 140).

In my fifth RDP, I introduce William, a student whose blogs and surveys often indicated reasons for his infrequent SNS use. Using a familiar media like SNS, can help students enter comfortably into academic, rhetorical composing, but if students like William choose to not use

SNS, or are uncomfortable with possibly putting their grades at risk by having to integrate an unfamiliar media into their schooling, what is the point of composition instructors providing students like William with opportunities to compose in these digital writing spaces?

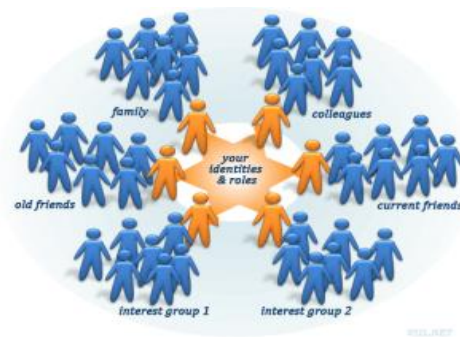
William

"This is a blog created for the use of my Comp. 150 class. Welcome to my page"(Welcome).

When we refer back to Chloe, "an introvert who has no idea what she's doing," Maddie, "the novice blogger," Sam's "adventurous life" or Heather's colorful self-representations, there is a distinct difference between how students personalized their blogs in the past four RDPs, and the introduction from William's blog above. William, a white, first-year student majoring in Biological Science, often indicated in his blogs his contentment with not being overly connected to SNS, and displayed a preference for physical communication over digital portrayals of relationships, interests, and ideas. William's initial surveys indicated that his presumption process on SNS involved more consuming than producing. His initial survey reported that, on FB, he checked for others' posted content, and posted his own content, once a month. While William's initial survey indicated that he checked his IG account once a day, similar to his FB, he only posted to his IG account once a month; this indicated that William's SNS profiles did not feature a lot of personal content.

Multiple Representations of Different Living Spaces

In his first assigned blog post William completed Assignment A, and demonstrated an understanding of SNS as distorting an author's self-perception. In his post, based on my feedback, we see how William's perception changed when he considered his own SNS use.



...After having taken the survey and reading Ms. LaPadura's notes, my opinion on identity still remains the same for the most part but is now slightly more open minded, One of Ms. LaPadura's notes presented the idea of multiple representations of different living spaces. Apart from just different representations of different living spaces, I began to think of it as different representations of self, which ultimately make up a Identity. This new idea was supported further when I took the survey, I started to think about how I use social networking to represent myself. Even different social networking sites were used to present different representations of myself. For example, I used Facebook to better connect with family and the representation on my Facebook was far different than my Instagram, which I use to show pictures to my close friends. Each of these representations alone, if presented as my identity are definitely distorted, but when they are looked at as multiple representations of myself in different spaces, and put together as a whole, my identity becomes more apparent. That is the insight that I had into how identity is changing with the use of social networking (9/7/2014 "Blog 1 Wesh's 'The Machine'").

In his post, William demonstrated a changed perspective on identity; while he originally stated SNS distorts identity, his post indicated a reconsidering of this distortion. Prior to this realization, William also demonstrated an enhanced understanding of SNS persona, as he described user profiles as a "projection," rather than "reflection" meaning what a student saw on a user's profile, was not always akin to user's offline self (9/7/2014 "Blog 1 Wesh's 'The Machine'"). While William's post originally displayed this as a detriment to the user, in referring to his own SNS use, he remarked how "different social networking sites were used to present

different representations" of himself (9/7/2014 "Blog 1 Wesh's 'The Machine']"). William's post now indicated that having more than one type of self-representation was not so negative, and allowed him to take his varying audiences on each media into account.

William's sense of how identity operated on SNS was akin to Gardner and Davis's explanation of "personal identity in the age of the app;" for millennials, "there is a push toward an overall packaged sense of self," where displaying your whole self has become impossible (61). While William's statement about the "multiple representations in different living spaces," was brought on by my comments, the visual paired with his blog demonstrated his understanding of how these multiple representations of him, when taken together, can form a whole. While William's post indicated an understanding of identity as multifaceted on SNS, his final survey indicated his decision to not keep his FB account after our class concluded for the cited reason of not needing it since he already had another SNS. A student may indicate an enhanced awareness of how a CDL skill like persona operates on SNS, but this does not also necessitate their agreement with, or use, of it.

Manipulating Identity

After completing Assignment A, students were asked to respond to a classmate, and Heather chose to respond to William's post. William's response to Heather indicated his views concerning the ethicalness of online identity existing through multiple representations in different living spaces.

I agree with your main statements in the beginning of your writing, I have mentioned things in my post that are very similar views. Although we all use social networking sites for different things, our ideas of ourselves and our profiles remain very similar. We all want ourselves to look flawless through our facebook's and insta's. However by doing this we loose pieces of who we actually

are as human beings and individuals... Which like you said distorts us. As well as agreeing with you on this matter, I also agree with you on the survey. I felt strongly about my thoughts on social networking, and the survey didn't necessarily change my views, it did however make it easier for me to see a few things, which are that some of us do post statuses and pictures strictly for likes or attention, we don't always post for our family and close friends like you mention that you do. Also that our identities are solely based on what we put on our profiles. We can manipulate anything we want on there (9/7/2014 "Response to 'Blog 1 Wesh's 'The Machine'").

Right on, thank you for sharing. It's interesting how we can manipulate a representation of our identity on social networking to fit into whichever category (friends, family, etc.) we want, when Identity shouldn't be something so easily manipulated (William's Response to 'Blog 1 Wesh's 'The Machine'").

William's response post indicated an understanding of the multiple representations in multiple living spaces as a manipulation of identity. William's response post also displayed a perspective of an author appealing to varying audiences, or adapting "to fit into whichever category" as another manipulation of the author's identity (William's Response to 'Blog 1 Wesh's 'The Machine'"). His post further reconsidered the claims made in his original post as he returned to the "negative" effect SNS has on identity as discussed in "Blog 1 'Wesh's 'The Machine'"

When William responded to Heather, he returned to his original view points on SNS as distorting, and now manipulating, a user's identity. In "Blog 1 Wesh's 'The Machine,'" William displayed a review of my comments, and a changed perspective, but this change could have easily been an attempt to appeal to the instructor by explicitly stating that my comments helped open his mind to new ideas. The dissonance between William's original comment, which was written with the knowledge I would be grading it, and his comment to Heather, which did not require my review, is reflective of the behavior that Gardner and Davis attribute to millennials' academic work as being "more conservative" (140). In terms of conservative, William's blog post indicates an effort to avoid going against what he may perceive to be my opinion on online

identity. By conserving his claims about identity and manipulation in his original post, he demonstrated a more open-mind, something every instructor looks to inspire in their students. Much like students are asked to think outside of their comfort zone when critically examining complex subjects like identity, this course asked William, and other students not comfortable, or willing, to use SNS, to try and broaden their understandings. Getting students to do so may actually be possible by asking students to further investigate and explore its uses, but this does not eliminate the tenuous relationship between students' self-report of enhanced thinking being influenced by the goals of American education Gardner and Davis describe.

A Non-Linear Education

After learning about the existence of ideologies, William and his classmates were asked to complete Assignment D. In William's blog post, he displayed how his educational background affected the way he perceived schooling, and ideologies of education and students' futures.

Although many aspects of my life have been affected by ideology, one of the biggest forms is in the education system and the way kids are taught to learn. As a child I grew up in Las Vegas, Nevada. I attended a magnet school for the arts and sciences. In this magnet school, the 'norm' was quite different than most other grade schools. An emphasis was put on creativity and the arts in almost every aspect. For example, performing in school plays was mandatory as well as daily music and art classes. Because of this emphasis in the performing arts, the way I was taught to learn was different than most other children. When I moved to Pueblo, Colorado, I quickly realized that the way I learned was not the 'norm.' The style of teaching always seemed linear to me, when really children should be taught to connect ideas in an open ended process. The way children are taught to learn plays into an ideology and a way of thinking that they will carry over as adults into the real world (9/28/2014 "Ideology").

In his blog, William demonstrated his disagreement with the "linear" education he received after leaving his magnet school (9/28/2014 "Ideology"). His blog also indicated that William's background in schooling was situated in art, and creative forms of learning, which differed from the education he received after moving.

In composition, and the humanities in general, students are asked to move beyond linear, and formulaic responses. Writing and critical thinking do not offer a direct equation to correctness, and this can be frustrating to most students. Gardner conducted research that involved interviewing young people on how they were "responding to the changing world in school, at home, [and] in social environments" in regards to technology ("About Us" The Good Project). During one interview, Gardner asked college freshmen their personal goals, and one student responded, "I don't want to work on issues where there are no answers" (177-178). Gardner asked why, and the student responded, "I don't like sessions where people just talk around in circles;"(178) William, who uses SNS much less than his classmates, and as indicated by his blog posts, can often perceive the media in a negative light. This may display the same thoughts as the student in Gardner's interview: confusion and general dislike of the given subject. These possible thoughts may have led William to attempt to appeal to my interests in his first blog, as opposed to being forthright about his own unchanged perception of SNS.

A Plea to Young Artists

In Chapter II, the importance of aligning integrated technology with students' needs and interests was emphasized by Hungerford-Kresser et al., as they explained what they might have done differently when bringing blogging into the classroom. In his second project, William and his classmates were able to move away from conversations exclusively covering aspects of SNS.

In completing Assignment F, William focused his blog on discussing ideologies of prestige in terms of modern and classic art, and targeted contemporary young artists.

TRACK #7: WILLIAM ON IDEOLOGY

“...and I’m addressing contemporary young artists in today’s society. So, um, I’m just kind of encouraging young artists to continue making contemporary art, particularly, visual art. So, uh, in today’s society, there’s this ideology that contemporary art lacks the meaning and value that classical art has because it’s not as eloquent and stylish as classical art. Um, but I’m challenging this ideology believing that contemporary art is just as valuable, if not more important, because it is more relatable to today’s society. So, some-the first point that I was gonna make was, uh, that it’s relatable to current society, so people living in this era-era can actually relate to the issues that are being expressed through the artwork, so they actually understand what’s happening through the art rather than something that’s classic and they nec-necessarily, like, don’t relate to. Um, it addresses current issues that are relative to today, so these issues can be something like sexism, education, politics. Anything can be addressed through visual art. Um, I believe that young people can understand it better through seeing a sculpture or painting of an issue, rather than being lectured through it, and trying to understand it that way. So, it can really make a current issue more available, and more easily to attack, and, uh, lastly, you have the potential to make a change in today’s society through your-through your art, uh, by addressing the issue and raising awareness, your art can make people want to make a change, and can inspire others to rise up to the challenge. So, uh, I just encourage contemporary artists to challenge the ideology that contemporary, visual art lacks as much meaning, and is not as important as classical art. Thank you” (10/12/2014: 0:00-2:00: “Challenging Ideologies”).

In William's vlog, he demonstrated a perspective aligning himself with other millennials, or "young people," as he made a pitch for young artists in his generation to take advantage of their creative potential (10/12/2014 "Challenging Ideologies"). William's vlog also indicated an awareness of the audience he is addressing, as he appeals to them by mentioning the varying ways that his audience can benefit from listening to his argument. Instead of maintaining a conservative, and wavering stance, as William displayed in his discussion thread with Heather,

William's vlog demonstrates a stagnant stance on the value of contemporary art, and the need for young artists to continue creating work.

William has used a SNS, YouTube, in a way that differs from the identity manipulation he described as inherent in SNS on his other blog posts. With his views on SNS, William most likely would have only done this if prompted. The same topics that digital media critics claim millennials are not engaged in, like politics, sexism, and their education, are the same issues, William pushes his audience of contemporary artists to raise. I, and any other composition instructor, could have asked William to brainstorm for his second project by drawing spider-webs to align his topics, or doing a free-write on the computer. By asking William to engage in a brainstorm activity through a SNS, he not only made a pitch for things he cared about, but his pitch was made public, allowing his voice to enter into a conversation about millennials, that critiques millennials, for not engaging in the exact kinds of conversations that William engaged in here.

The Take Away

For William's final blog, he completed Assignment L as he restated the information indicated in his surveys regarding the frequency of his SNS use, and elaborated on ways he can possibly make what he learned from studying SNS composing work in the future.

TRACK #8: WILLIAM FINAL VLOG

Hello. This is a reflection video for my comp 150 class. Um, let's just start off with the point, um, I don't think that taking the course has changed the way I act or use social networking sites. Um, I usually, I'm pretty conscious of what I post, and, um, I don't really post that frequently, so doesn't really affect me too much, um, it has changed the way I view other people's, uh, profiles. I guess I just view it more analytically, and see everything they do as, like, more of

a choice, and more of a reflection of them. Um, the biggest OMG moment of the course was when I realized, like, how powerful social networking sites have become. Um, they have many effects, like in dif-, many different fields, like in, uh, P3, um, the diversity of the topics affected by social networking sites was apparent, like through the diversity of the topics that us, the students chose, like there were many different topics such as, like, fashion and, uh, just many different topics. Um, I probably won't take too much from this course just because I'm not huge on using social networking sites in the first place. Um, I will be more analytical of other people's profiles and how they use those. I guess I'll probably be more aware of, just like, my representation online outside of social networking sites as well, like, through blogs, and just anything that I am out there, like anything where my name is being represented on any online material. So I guess, the biggest thing I learned from this class would probably be representation, how social network-networking sites can affect that" (12/14/2014: 0:00-1:51: "Final Vlog").

William's vlog indicates the lack of change in his frequency of using SNS, though it demonstrated an enhanced understanding of SNS's use, as he stated all the varied project topics his classmates wrote about in Project 3. William's vlog displayed his most prevalent realization regarding representation, and how it functions in online worlds.

Asking students to use SNS to academically present themselves is asking them to do so in a public arena. It is asking them to make their thoughts, ideas, and feelings open to a wider context than just the instructor. Some students are used to their public portrayals on SNS, so blogging and vlogging in an open network poses no threat or further thought; but for students like William, who willingly choose to not make so much of themselves known on SNS, they have the capacity to learn the importance, and significance, of a public representation. Even if students don't become avid SNS users, they gain practice in operating an unfamiliar media, critically analyzing how it works, and hopefully, adopting new ways of thinking about writing in general.

The open composing processes that SNS platforms offer its users has potential to challenge, and eradicate, the algorithmic thinking composition instructors consistently must

unteach. We are tasked with helping students prepare themselves for continued schooling, or the job market. Each of these applications require a resume, or a CV, documents made for private viewing from a committee or employer. What students like William, who lack an active, and maintained online persona, need to know, is that their online representation is something the latter two parties are going to look at. When William looks at how “his name is being presented on any online material,” he might see online personas as necessary (12/14/2014 "Final Vlog"). While staying away from these platforms is one way to handle the situation, having an adept, maintained, and critical online presence is now a key part of participating in our global economy. While SNS does not have to be in William’s future, an online presence does, and students might not be open to those possibilities unless first prompted to consider them by teachers of communication.

A Self-Affirming Space

Students like William and Maddie sided with digital media critics in seeing little use for SNS apart from self-promotion. Only until being prompted did they further investigate, and discover SNS's other uses. While looking beyond self-promotion helped William and Maddie discover alternate purposes, it is possible for students to find benefits in analyzing, and utilizing, SNS's original purpose of self-promotion.

SNS were originally developed for users to create, construct, and share a profile with friends and followers. While digital media critics, and some students, often see this as a trivial, other students, like Sam and Heather, actively construct, and update, their SNS persona. In a study conducted by Catalina Toma, an assistant professor, Toma reported participants having "increased positive affect both directed at oneself (i.e., feeling loved, content, proud, supported, connected) and at others (i.e., feeling loving, giving) after constructing and viewing their FB

profiles ("Self-Affirmation"). These findings are consistent with my last student's RDP, Amber, a Spanish and Native American first-year student, with an undeclared Business interest, whose blogs and surveys indicated that out-of-school digital platforms were a space for self-affirmation.

Composition teachers can adopt bell hooks's "engaged pedagogy," in which a classroom community is created with an "ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic" (8). Allowing students to bring self-affirming spaces like SNS into the classroom can "enhance the likelihood of collective effort in creating and sustaining a learning community" (hooks 8). If we introduce out-of-school digital platforms with self-affirming capabilities, students can see their teachers care about their students' self-confidence; this can help build the trusting relationship needed to make a collaborative knowledge partnership possible.

Amber

In Every Ruin There Is Hope To Find Treasure (Blog Title and Tagline).

The romanticism demonstrated in the tagline of Amber's blog mirrors the attitude she displayed in our classroom, and during our office hour interactions. Amber was a frequent visitor to my office hours, and while a majority of our conversation included talking about her academic work, Amber often redirected the conversation to talking about other things like her family and friends, and her experience being away from them while she was at school.

Treasured Relationships

In addition to office hour conversations, Amber's blog displayed details about her life, interests, hobbies, and personality traits. In the "About" section of her blog, titled "About Me,"

shown below, Amber bolded a few words. In an effort to preserve her emphasis, I kept her original formatting.

...Let's get started, my name is **Amber**, and I am from **Denver Colorado**, and I am attending **Colorado State University** and I am majoring in **Political Science**. I share a dorm with my 21 year old sister, she is my other half and my **best friend**, no one understands my nonsense like her. Every single member of my **family** are like a piece of my heart, no one can replace them. I am **Spanish** and I also descend from two **Native American** tribes **Apache** and **Cherokee**. Ironically, I look like I can pass to be Caucasian! Lol I am pretty much obsessed with the football team the **Denver Broncos** and virtually any colorado sports related team. I also love all genres of **music** except Bollywood music. **The 1975** is my favorite band! The **instruments** I can play are the clarinet, marimba, piano, all kinds of drums, and I am learning how to play the guitar; sadly I can not get passed tuning it. I am a huge **movie buff**! Essentially almost everything I say will be a quote from a movie or television show. I love horror, suspense, romance, humorous and virtually any kind of movie genre. My favorite comedians are Kevin Hart and Melissa McCarthy. My sister and my relationship is almost equivalent to the **bond** between Melissa McCarthy and Sandra Bullock from the movie The Heat! It is amazingly **unexplainable**. **Without my family, pets, few selected friends, sports, movies, or music I would be either dead or lost ("About Me")**.

In her "About Me" Amber displayed many descriptive details such as her interests in music and movies, and her heritage. Amber's "About Me" also displays descriptions of significant relationships with her sister, and her family, calling them "a piece of her heart" ("About Me"). In Amber's initial surveys, she indicated that the most commonly uploaded type of photo on her SNS are photos of her with other people, with this choice including friends, family and acquaintances. As displayed in her "About Me," Amber places significance on her relationships with friends and family; she stated that without them, she "would be either dead or lost" ("About Me").

Through her study, Toma explains how SNS accounts allow the user to build on, and view, "close personal relationships with friends and family" ("Self-Affirmation"). Users may

begin by constructing their persona with photos of themselves, but because SNS thrive on interaction, many users also post photos with others. Their communication with friends and followers through posted content, become "signals of connectivity" that provide the user with "powerful indicators of belongingness;" this makes their treasured offline bonds easily accessible, and viewable, from their online profile (Toma "Self-Affirmations"). Just like SNS, blogs offer students the personalization options to display their treasured relationships. The same feelings of belonging and connectivity that SNS users feel when viewing their profiles, can be transferred into how students feel when viewing their blogs. We can encourage students to personalize their blogs in ways that display their treasured relationships through modeling. If students come to build the same positive associations when writing on their blogs, they may be able to transfer those skills to writing with confidence in other digital spaces.

Self-Affirming Selfies

In Amber's Personal SNS Profile Analysis on her initial survey, she discussed how an audience member might describe her offline self from looking at her SNS profiles. Amber's analysis displayed certain photos her audience would see, and what that might indicate about her as a person.

This profile describes a person who is very musically affiliated and always posts interesting things that relate to her in some way. She always talks about her family, friends, current events, childhood, and music. Her favorite band is the 1975. She is outgoing in the recent photo she uploaded because it shows her artistic side to editing photos and making herself look and feel better about herself (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Initial).

In Amber's last sentence, she states that she edits her photos as a way of "making herself look and feel better about herself" (Personal SNS Profile Analysis: Initial). As reported in

Amber's initial and final surveys, her top three images on both medias feature selfies as her second most commonly uploaded photo, indicating that self-representations on SNS occupy a majority of Amber's uploaded photos. Also on her initial surveys, Amber reported that prior to uploading a photo to either her FB or IG profile, she always chose to edit the image for the cited reason that "it makes me look attractive."

A founding principle of psychology is "that people need to view themselves in a positive way," and while SNS profiles can act as mirrors, these self-images are not a reflection of all a user's traits; typically, they are, "flattering versions" that emphasize specific qualities (Toma "Self-Affirmation"). Most of Amber's classmates stigmatized the selfie, but Amber placed it second on her list of most commonly uploaded photos, meaning this is an activity she frequently takes part in, and from her analysis above, results in producing a positive emotional reaction.

Agreeing With Everyone

Amber's survey indicated that she took, and posted, frequent selfies, and her survey analysis demonstrated positive results from this process; however in completing Assignment C, her post displayed support for the validity of the author's claims regarding millennials and SNS use as trivial and narcissistic.

As a millennial, I believe that generation x has strong beliefs on how teenagers are using social media sites. For example, relating back to what David said, today's generation posts pictures that they would not want their children to see on the internet. Therefore, since teenagers have the free choice to post what they want, it will eventually lead to the sharing of self-centered posts. Referring back to Amanda, I agree when she said how the younger generation does not care what they post and how they are also self-centered. Nussbaum explained statistics in her article about the percentage that teenagers scored on the Narcissism Personality Inventory Test; and I agree with everyone's comments above relating to the Narcissism Personality Inventory Test. For example, following up on Rachael's comment by saying today's generation is more vocal with their opinions. However, I could not help but notice that gen x was also granted opportunities to speak their own opinions. For example, through out the 1960s-

1980s, they had various political movements that gave generation x the chance to express their beliefs. Do you think that gen x and today's generation have the same opportunity to voice their opinions like they did back then? Personally, my thoughts are that even though both generations have some similarities, both generations are also completely different. Both were granted the freedom to voice their opinions, however, today's generation abused it by freely posting self-centered and irrelevant posts... (9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum").

Amber's above post stated that the posts millennials share on SNS are "self-centered," and "irrelevant," which is how many of her classmates categorized selfies, a type of photo Amber reported on her survey as sharing often (9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum"). In her post, Amber also does not indicate taking a specific side in the digital media debate; she stated that both generation X and millennials have similarities, and differences, to each other. What was most prevalently demonstrated in Amber's post was her agreement with "everyone" (9/24/2014 "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum")

As this was a blog post from earlier on in the semester, before classmates began to interact more, students may not have felt comfortable disagreeing with the beliefs of the majority. Hooks makes it clear that for "engaged pedagogy" to prosper in the classroom, each student needs to be "an active participant, not a passive consumer" (14). Amber, and other students like her, may want to participate, but not swim upstream against a mass of students with a shared opinion. While teacher intervention may help to bring those students' thoughts into the conversation, this request could also be something a student is unwilling to fulfill. One way to help bring students with outlier opinions into the open, could be to increase their options to share them. Out-of-school digital literacies, like SNS, provide, and encourage, students to practice doing this as many are inherently interactive, and ask for users to share their opinions.

The Most Radical Place

In completing Assignment E, Amber's partner wrote about how Amber might, or might not, make a good roommate. As support for her claims, her partner chose two pictures from Amber's SNS accounts. Amber's post, displays points of disagreement both with her partner's comments, and with social ideologies that may have limited her partner's view of her.

... The person who wrote the reflection about who they think I am was mostly accurate. I am very motivated and determined, however I do not always like to take charge of every situation nor am I too noisy. Haha, but those two examples were the only misunderstanding. On the bright side, I am glad I have some hidden qualities that are not exposed on my social media sites that not many people know about. Part Two: Like I said in my reflection, everything that was written about me was accurate, however, the only two things that were inaccurate was I am not always head strong and I am not too noisy. Luckily, my roommate is my older sister so if I do end up being noisy or head strong, she will not have a problem putting me in my place. I really like the fact that the person who wrote about me understood how determined I am, the example they used was how I received a scholarship for my band program. They really had a spot on representation of when they said that I have had weight problems and that when I am motivated that basically I can do whatever I put my mind to. The ideology of my body image was that even though I do have a big exterior, I still have a stronger mind set to do what I believe can be done. The stereotype that might not come across many fit peoples' minds is that bigger people can actually be very athletic and hard working to the goals that they have in mind. Some people are just unfortunate to get big results on the scales (10/5/2014 "Project One Reflection").



Amber's post displays agreement with of her partner's analysis, but she also indicated errors in her partner's judgment; this differs from Amber's "Response to Chaudhry and Nussbaum" post where she displayed complete agreement with her classmates. In addition to Amber's demonstrated disagreement with her partner's claims of her being "headstrong," and "noisy," Amber also discussed her opinion on her partner's discussion about her body image (10/5/2014 "Project One Reflection"). While Amber displayed agreement with her partner's statement about Amber experiencing "weight problems," she followed her agreement with a detailed explanation of why her physical appearance would cause her partner, or anyone, to have that initial perception (10/5/2014 "Project One Reflection").

While Amber was unsure of who her partner was, she was given the knowledge that her partner would be able to read her reflection. Issues with weight is a quality that, in our body-conscious society, most young women are likely to have. There are various methods for coping with the emotional impact of body image, and Amber's method is demonstrated in the photos she pairs with her above post. Her photos depict a young woman who "can do whatever she puts her mind to" (10/5/2014 "Project One Reflection"). Here, we see Amber not only resisting the qualities her partner labeled her with, but also discussing an ideology she feels limits not only how her partner views her, but how society views anyone with a similar body type. To effectively enact bell hooks's "engaged pedagogy," hooks reminds us that our teaching must be "an act of resistance," where instructors should be "countering the overwhelming boredom, uninterest, and apathy that so often characterize the way professors, and students, feel about teaching and learning"(10). Amber displayed an active resistance toward the ideologies surrounding body-image by using her self-representations on SNS to redefine what it means to be fit. The classroom is, "the most radical space in the academy," where students are taught to

move "against and beyond boundaries" (hooks 12). Integrating a media into the classroom that encourages students to use their self-affirming self-representations as a starting point, may be a way to raise their confidence when entering controversial, discouraging, and challenging conversations.

Counter Arguing

In completing Assignment F, Amber was asked to record a vlog discussing her topic for project two, in which she chose to discuss the ideologies surrounding immigration into the US by targeting the federal government as an audience. Her partner, Amanda, was tasked with providing Amber with a possible counter argument. The exchange below between Amanda and Amber displayed how Amber responded to Amanda challenging her claims.

Hi Amber! You had some really good points about your argument and how you're going to challenge those ideologies. Some things that your audience could counter is that America can't accept all immigrants. Reason one, is because there's only so much space and land that the US has that it'll start to get crowded and since urbanization is rapidly growing we'll eventually run out of resources. Reason two, is that there may be some issues with criminals and drug cartel that come over the border into the US. I'm not saying that ALL people with ethnic background coming into the US are these types of people, but it could potentially become a problem. I do, however, understand where you're coming from when talking about how people should have a choice at a new life and a chance to thrive (10/13/2014 "Response to 'CO150 P2 Vlog'").

These were great examples of CA! Although I do realize not all people can be accepted into the United States. Based off of the crime that could be presented and also the over growing population, I do understand the withholds that the country is preventing to happen with immigrants. However, because I am in a government/politics class, we have discussed the possible threats and positives in which having immigrants and or people with different ethnic backgrounds. With that background knowledge, I will have more facts and statistics in my project two final paper that gives a stronger rebuttal and weakens the devils advocates opinions and arguments that they might have. Thank you for all of the examples

of CA's, it really helped me create more ideas so that my argument would not be one sided (12/13/2014 "Amber's Response to 'CO150 P2 Vlog'").

In her response post Amber displayed her prior knowledge from taking her government/politics class. Despite her not being required to respond to her classmate's post, Amber chose to. Amber demonstrated support for her claims with background knowledge from her class. In doing this, Amber also demonstrated an enhanced awareness in how to maintain ethos when making an argument with an audience.

As we are members of a field hoping to break the stigma of the solo-author, we often hold peer-workshops to facilitate co-construction of knowledge inside the classroom, but when students see each other for less than three hours a week, this time limit can inhibit the possible building of strong, trusting bonds needed for students to feel confident investing their energy into participation. Asking students to participate in out-of-school digital contexts, as Amber and Amanda demonstrate here, may be an entry way for students who would benefit from further peer discussion that our classroom time doesn't always allow for. Students can use their digital, academic writing spaces, like a blog, to practice discussion, which might allow for these conversations to be carried into the classroom.

Hook's "engaged pedagogy," emphasizes "well-being," and while hooks seems to attribute this discussion to teachers being conscious of their own emotional and physical health, the same concept can be applied to students (15). Composition instructors do more than teach writing; we teach students how to communicate with others, with the world, and with themselves. Our goal is typically to provide a safe classroom space, but students will leave our classroom, and that feeling may leave with it. If we provide students a digital space, and encourage the use of self-affirming representations in that space, students are practicing writing,

discussion, and communication outside of our classroom safe haven, but still in a location where they might feel as comfortable. Because these spaces are located outside of the classroom, this confidence may be transferrable, to beyond the classroom, beyond the university, and into their future role as self-aware citizens.

VI. CONCLUSION

This thesis is not intended to present progress narratives, which my six, richly descriptive portraits neatly complete. It is also not meant to "prove" that adding analyses and participation in SNS in this, or any FYC curriculum, will help our students excel. And while I do provide the syllabus for my curriculum in the Appendix¹² for future consideration by other composition instructors and professors, this thesis was not meant to test a particular curriculum's effectiveness. Instead, I conducted this research study to explore how integrating students' out-of-school, digital literacies, with specific affordances for making and sharing self-representations, can affect the way students understand themselves when critically constructing and performing an online identity.

From my reflection on students' experiences, it is essential we understand that just as students enter our classrooms with differing lives and back stories, they come in with varying levels of CDL skills. From this realization, we can draw out several points about our students' out-of-school digital activity: First, not all of them participate in it. Second, if they do, use does not necessitate critical use. Third, in recognizing that our technological world is a networked public in which our internet self is a second-self that employers, peers, teachers, family, friends, companies, corporations and strangers can, and will, interact with, leads me to answer the question of whether or not out-of-school digital literacies belong in the classroom with a statement; we should stop asking whether they do, and start considering how to do it.

The out-of-school digital literacy that I chose to bring into the classroom was SNS, but this is not the only technological form of communication that young adults need to be further educated on. Those looking to also study out-of-school digital literacies, might move beyond

¹² Featured in Appendix C is my syllabus for this class, a description of the four major projects, and a list of the blog prompts. Those wishing for more information on specific lesson plans and readings, can contact me directly at elapadura1@gmail.com. I will be more than happy to provide them.

SNS into other websites our students are using daily. Students may routinely socialize, but they also routinely ask automated search engines for answers. They utilize applications for directions, games, and information. They use their smartphones in general as they operate daily on mini-computers that are connected to more than just social networks. Digital literacy does not, and cannot stop at SNS. Researchers might look into other routine digital literacies students engage in, and bring those everyday activities under a critical microscope. Depending on the time period, the SNS's I asked my students to participate in might be long gone. My students frequently tell me how FB is dead, and that I should have chosen SnapChat or YikYak, and even then, the next SNS application will continue to affect, and transform, what's trending, and what students are primarily interacting on, will change with it. If we are choosing a platform students know, we should be sure that students actually know, and use, this platform. When repeating this study, it is also important to understand that the small sample size does not make the gathered data transferrable, so a larger scale study is another option, or widening the scope to include more classes or universities.

Future researchers need to understand that there might not be a curriculum that currently exists for your research interest. If you are choosing the newest SNS, than our field might not have caught up with that yet. Your only option may be building a curriculum yourself. As that was my experience, having to build a curriculum from scratch if I wanted to integrate newer SNS like IG, I frequently wondered, why is it that our field consistently teaches, and updates new forms of rhetorical literacy, but not technological literacy? Why is it that we pride ourselves on teaching communication, but often leave out a primary mode of communication our students are daily engaging in? Rhetorical literacy pervades every form of communication, whether online or offline, but it is not just our students engaging in online interactions; networked publics are a

prominent part of our global economy, so why are they not a ubiquitous classroom presence?

Self-representation is how our students will be identified, tested, judged, and assessed by future schools and employers, so why is it that we teach self-representation solely within a classroom that students will eventually leave? Do we spend so much time trying to teach students topics to have a voice in, rather than integrating topics most already have a voice in? Are we trying to silence them? Of course that answer is no, but if we aren't silencing them, then we must ask ourselves if we are encouraging them to speak. If we are, then are they speaking in their voice, or are they trying to emulate ours?

Just like the ideologies inherent in our thoughts, behaviors, actions, goals, intellectual products and personal decisions, there are ideologies inherent in the networked communication channels running both ours, and our students', personal and professional worlds. Systems of power exist, sometimes overt, more often covert, and our theoretical background, and educational experience, give us vocabulary to analyze, and identify, possibly limiting factors. With that, we can modify our actions to challenge these ideologies. Students just entering the academy most likely haven't studied Berlin's theories on ideology, and while they may have their own media and information based literacies, we can provide them with the needed vocabulary to move beyond being passive consumers in these academic discussions. With the knowledge and vocabulary needed to enter these conversations, students can become active participants that investigate, and interrogate, the web platforms all of us will need to critically navigate.

Ten years ago, Gunther Kress wrote about the change our society was experiencing as we transferred into a screen-based world. Knowledge is no longer bestowed by an author, but co-constructed with an audience. The carefully, crafted linear pathways were replaced by innumerable, self-directed entry ways. The content we publish can be decontextualized and

redistributed through a socially networked arena in which audience possibilities are infinite. The intent behind our work, alphabetic text and visual, is consistently challenged as we make appeals easily associated with appeals we didn't even know we were making. These qualities are not exclusive to SNS; they are inherent affordances of the world wide web, the internet, the digital database we consistently connect to for personal and professional needs.

While this thesis focused on discussing the SNS habits, behaviors and digital literacies of our students with our students, it is important to know that millennials are not the sole inhabitants of the web; however some of the language and discussion concerning integrating students' out-of-school digital literacies in the classroom, creates a generation divide. Conversations surrounding digital literacy sometimes separate our technologically literate students from the struggling instructors trying to make what they see on their laptop duplicate on the projector screen. I have been privileged to meet the most brilliantly minded rhetoric and composition scholars, professors, and instructors from all ages who have technologically focused classrooms. Does this make them progressive? No, it makes them proactive and practical. While there may be instructors out there using the technology of the future, what I have done here, and what I am encouraging all of my colleagues to do, is avail yourself to the technology of the present. This technology is not just present in our students' lives, but in our own.

Throughout this thesis, I have consciously tried to privilege the voices of students that were in my classroom. You might be wondering why almost every chapter had an audio file except for this one. The reason is simple. They are no longer my students. They are still students, but in someone else's classroom. Even as I write this, I have a new group of students, and even as I read their blogs, and vlogs, and hear their voices in class, like the ever evolving, always networked web, there are students filling out who their teachers for next year will be, and those

students will become my students. We are not teachers that have the privilege of working with the same group of people for a year. In a few short months, the faces we see in our class change. The tune of the cacophony of voices mellows and softens, or sometimes amplifies. As we listen to them, recognize their individual talents, passions, aspirations, dreams, cultures, and values, we must remember that their work does not end with an audience of us. In a digitized society, the audiences are innumerable, and if we are to satisfactorily fulfill the role of instructor of composition, then we must teach writing, critical thinking, and self-aware communication that will benefit students as they become ever more active participants in a socially networked world.

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APPENDIX A: ASSIGNED BLOG PROMPTS

Assignment A: Students completed the initial survey, and saw if their ideas about SNS have changed since completing their first essay, which asked them to watch Source A and write about an element the author mentioned that needs to be rethought in relation to SNS. In reading instructor feedback, students explain in their blog if their original perspective has, or has not, changed based on the survey. Students were asked to respond to one classmate's blog post.

Sources Used:

A: Michael Wesch's YouTube Video "The Machine is Us/ing Us"

Assignment B: After learning ethos, pathos, and logos, students chose one alphabetic text based, and image-based post from their FB friends', or IG followers', profile. Students conducted a rhetorical analysis on each photo to determine how ethos, pathos and logos were used by the author to accomplish a specific purpose with an intended audience.

Assignment C: After reading Source B and C, students contributed a response to a discussion question posted on the instructor's blog regarding the reading. Students were asked that their discussion post response resemble a discussion thread. They were asked to read their classmate's post prior to writing their own, and write a post to further discussion with their classmates by answering or asking a question, or reference other classmates' points through agreement, disagreement, or challenging their opinions. Students were asked to support their claims with specific evidence from the articles, and were encouraged, but not required, to hyperlink other sources as a form of outside evidence. Students were given direct, in-class instruction on how to hyperlink.

Sources Used

B: Emily Nussbaum's "Kids, the Internet, and the End of Privacy: The Greatest Generation Gap Since Rock and Roll

C: Lakshmi Chaudhry's "Mirror, Mirror On the Web"

Assignment D: Students were asked to write about a time in their life where they felt the effects of an ideology. They were then asked to identify the ideology, the social structure they think produced it, and any conventions they, or others, enacted because of it. This topic could branch out of the SNS discussion. Students were asked to respond to one other classmate's post.

Assignment E: Students were given back Project 1 and asked to write a response to how their classmate framed them based on the two pictures chosen from the student's SNS profile. Students were first asked to provide a reflection via free-write on the response. Second, students were asked to answer whether or not their partner's analysis was an accurate portrayal of the student's offline self, and if/how it might have been limited by commonly held ideologies. In describing these limitations, students were asked how their classmate's analysis differed from their true self. Students were asked to post the pictures their partner used to analyze them as the visual accompaniment to their blog.

Assignment F: Students were asked to record a vlog speaking to their chosen audience for Project 2. The vlog did not have direct content requirements aside from telling their audience why they should change their beliefs or habits. Students were encouraged to not read from a script, but to speak extemporaneously. After recording their vlog, students were asked to post it to YouTube, which they received direct instruction on how to do. Students were then asked to listen to their vlog, transcribe it verbatim, and post the transcription underneath their vlog post. Students were partnered with a classmate by the instructor, and tasked with providing a possible counterargument their classmate's audience may pose to them.

Assignment G: Students swapped examples with a partner of a visual rhetoric ad or PSA used by a multinational corporation in class. They were then instructed to perform a rhetorical analysis of their partner's ad by determining the visual's intended audience, their needs, values and beliefs, ideologies the ad manufacturer is trying to get their audience to believe or buy in to, and if buying into these ideologies will be a benefit, or detriment, to their audience.

Assignment H: Students created small-groups of three or four in class. One student was asked to be the group leader, and posted three possible topics for Project 3 on their blog. The other group members were asked to do the same by posting three topics they may be interested in writing about. In addition, each student was asked to choose one of their group member's topics and provide a response entailing a sample piece of visual rhetoric their classmate could use as inspiration for their third paper, and a possible impact of that rhetoric. Students were asked to complete this task for each member of their group.

Assignment I: Students were asked to post a draft of their Inquiry Question (IQ) that guided their research for Project 3. As this is a discussion thread, students were asked to first respond to the student before them with feedback on their IQ based on the requirements of it being clearly-stated, debatable, and open-ended.

Assignment J: Students were asked to browse the website, blog, or SNS profile of Humans of New York (HONY), choose a picture and then identify the photo's statement of purpose, the audience it is trying to communicate to, and the possible appeals of ethos, pathos and logos. Following, students were asked to provide a personal impression of the photo, and describe why they chose this photo to analyze.

Assignment K: Students were put into groups of four or five, and asked to analyze a photo essay provided by the instructor. The blog was an individual analysis that students then discussed with assigned groups during the next class period. The blog questions included what the author's statement of purpose was in constructing the photo essay, how the images and text work together to fulfill this purpose, and the ethos, pathos, and logos appeals the author used throughout the essay. Students then followed with how viewing this photo essay affected their decisions for their own photo essay as completion for Project 4. Students were asked to talk about inspirations or ideas they garnered in terms of design, and arrangement, from viewing the photo essay.

Assignment L: Students were asked to record a vlog as their final blog post. The vlog was a reflective assessment of their experience in the course as they were asked to answer how they felt the course changed their perception of SNS, if they would change their use of SNS, and why or why not, their biggest OMG moment of the semester (also known as an "a-ha" moment), and what they planned on taking from this course to their futures in, and out of, the academy. Students were encouraged, but not required, to reference specific projects, assignments, or readings as evidence for their explanations.

APPENDIX B: SOURCES

<p>A: "The Machine is Us/ing US:" Michael Wesch : Recorded in 2007, Wesch's video explores web 2.0, and past changes in information circulation. He breaks down physical characteristics of web pages, and how users can manipulate and change code more easily. The overarching message is the mass amount of data we put into the web, and how it's categorized. With search engines, information is effortlessly located, and any information we seek is accessible. With changes in data creation and circulation, Wesch implores people to rethink commonly held ideals about identity, ethics, governance, copy right, privacy, and our selves.</p>
<p>B: Excerpts from "Mirror Mirror On the Web:" Lakshmi Chaudhry: Published on January 29th, 2007, Chaudhry, a writer for <i>The Nation</i>, wrote this article explaining how the advent of Web 2.0 and Social Networking Sites brought the millennial generation, or "GenMe's," insatiable desire to be important, and feel affirmed by a public audience. This has crippled the American idea for what it means to gain, and retain, fame. Chaudhry shows a clear distaste for how anyone with a webcam can become a "micro-celebrity," and while not totally lacking a social consciousness, we are now a society that "puts the self at the center."</p>
<p>C : Excerpts from "Kids, the Internet, and the End of Privacy: The Greatest Generation Gap Since Rock and Roll" Emily Nussbaum: Published on February 12th, 2007, Nussbaum, a writer for <i>New York Magazine</i>, explains that the millennial generation's proclivity for sharing on Social Networking Sites is driven by a new definition of privacy. By surveying some internet-famous SNS users, she learns how their decisions to share and create online identities are inspired by the thought that if people are going to constantly look at them, they would rather be proud of what is being seen. In speaking to older generations, she finds many are confused with millennial behavior; for example, the act of taking a camera to a party never crossed their mind. Nussbaum highlights the main differences between Generation X and the millenials, and instead of condemning their oversharing, she tries to understand how their actions apply to current contexts of privacy.</p>
<p>D: "Why the Internet is Applauding this Baseball Player's NSFW Stand Against Male Beauty Standards:" Derrick Clifton: Published on July 9th, 2014, Clifton is a blogger for the website <i>Identities.Mic</i>, a site dedicated to providing young people with quality news that challenges the traditional narratives reproduced by mainstream outlets. His article details the story of Prince Fielder, a professional baseball player for the Texas Rangers, who appeared nude on <i>ESPN the Magazine's</i> Body 2014 Issue; this is a trend started by the magazine for any cover model. Fielder's body type did not resemble the typical athlete, and he suffered immense criticism for his physique. The Twitter community responded with the hashtag, #HuskyTwitter, praising Fielder's cover page as a body-positive movement for men, particularly those identifying as husky. Fielder' states that just because he does not look like the traditional athlete archetype, does not mean he cannot do his job.</p>
<p>E: "I Wore a Bikini and Nothing Happened" Jenny Trout: Published on <i>HuffPost Women, The Blog</i>, on July 3rd, 2014, Jenny Trout, a writer and blogger, wrote a piece about her decision to wear a bikini. Trout, who identifies as a plus-size woman, explained that when she told her friends of her decision, they immediately asked her what diet she was going on, and she said she was not, she was just wearing a bikini. Trout challenged the social ideology that women who are not meeting standards of beauty in body image, should not wear revealing clothing. To prove that this ideology was just a fabricated norm we all follow, Trout wore a bikini, and, as she stated, nothing happened. She posted photos of her bikini clad self on her personal blog, and gained immense public support from other women of all sizes.</p>
<p>F: Excerpts "What's wrong with you, then" and "Travelling" from "My Not-So-Secret Life as a Cyborg:" Ju Gosling: Gosling, artist, journalist, PhD, and activist, wrote a web-text detailing her life with a disability. Once a dancer, Gosling developed a spinal curvature, and recorded her experience dealing with needing a back brace, and also how she was emotionally, and physically affected by multiple social, political and economic institutions. Gosling explains the discrimination she faced from uncompassionate doctors, to unequipped building structures. She worked to use her experience as a way to shed light on experiences all physically disabled individuals go through, that able-bodied individuals do not often realize. In particular, Gosling detailed her struggle with her body, and its many changes from becoming stripped of femininity, to becoming overly feminine. She recounted how she grew into her brace, and began to embrace change by becoming an activist for it.</p>
<p>G: "29 Phrases People With Anxiety Are Tired of Hearing:" Robyn Wilder: Wilder, a writer for the popular blogging platform, Buzzfeed UK, reported on a project conducted by The Priory Group, a leading provider of behavioral care in the UK. The Priory Group asked individuals suffering with anxiety to write the worst comments they've received about their disorder. The project was a photo-series in which those involved held a white-board over their face. On the board, they wrote the hurtful comments which included: "you are pathetic," "stop being so negative all the time," and "at least it's not cancer" among others. Published in May 2014, the article sought to debunk commonly held ideas about anxiety, and those who suffer from it.</p>
<p>H: "Men-Ups": Rion Sabean: Sabean, a photographer graduating from the University of South Florida, developed a photo-series in which male models were made to pose in the style of a traditional, female pin-up model, while wearing "masculine" clothing. Published in 2013, Sabean's purpose was to challenge age-old stereotypes placed on the male and female sex since birth by asking viewers to question why a commonly heldsexual pose for a female is deemed, comical, or unsettling, when carried out by a male.</p>

APPENDIX C:SYLLABUS

College Composition: Reconstructing Social Futures¹³

Course Description: In this course, we will be investigating the hidden rhetorical choices behind our actions on social media sites. Through utilizing Facebook and Instagram, we will work to discover the different decisions that involve constructing an online identity, and how those decisions are influenced by our audience of friends and followers, as well as our own conscious, and unconscious thought processes. As both of these sites are predominately visual, our focus will be on exploring the digital photography that users upload onto these sites. This course is an in-depth study of social media culture, where meaning is generated, and how social realities are constructed, experienced, and interpreted. We will explore how individuals both support and subvert the social, political, and economic conventions of this media, and how these ideological elements affect the way that we produce and consume messages in these online spaces. To address these core curriculum requirements as well as the CSU composition program's goals for first-year writing, CO150 focuses on initiating students into academic discourse and developing composing practices that will prepare students for success as university students and citizens. Therefore, the course focuses on critical reading and inquiry, writing for a variety of rhetorical situations, and enabling effective writing processes. Its key course and learning objectives include the following:

Course Goals:

- Students will learn ways to interrogate their rhetorical choices regarding the images and photographs they post to their Facebook and Instagram profiles.
- Students will explore basic, visual literacy skills to navigate image production and consumption, and how to recognize the ideological structures playing a role in their rhetorical choices.
- Students will establish a critical awareness of how they portray themselves through social networks
- Students will utilize digital photography to create their version of an online self that works to challenge, or destabilize, prevailing ideological constructions.

Materials:

A NB or another device to take notes in class lectures or for homework assignments

CO 150 class page at <http://reconstructingsocialfutures.wordpress.com/>

Access to a reliable printer and/or a copy card for printing readings, research, and drafts

All texts for this class will be located on our CO150 class page- you do NOT have to purchase texts from the bookstore to complete any of these assignments.

Course Requirements/Policies:

1. **Social Media Disclosure:** As this course is an investigation into our practices of using visual rhetoric on social media, your primary source for a majority of our projects will be your own social media profiles. These profiles include Facebook and Instagram. You are **not required** to share your profiles with me, but in order to fulfill the requirements of our class assignments and projects, you are **required** to share these profiles with your classmates. If you do not have these accounts, you will need to create them. If a social media emphasis is not the focus you wish to take for CO150, than please note that there are many other sections of CO150 that might be better suited to your interests.

¹³ The following featured elements of this curriculum are specific to Reconstructing Social Futures as other portions on the syllabus are traditional aspects of CSU's College Composition curriculum. This ensures that an instructor can simply adapt their university, or college, FYC curriculum standards to the projects presented here.

Description of Major Course Projects

Project 1: The Rhetorical Analysis Letter: This two part assignment involves pairing students with a partner, and instructing that they remain anonymous to that classmate. Students are tasked with writing a rhetorical analysis, in the form of a letter, to an audience of their choice. The audience must be an individual, or group, that would use SNS to look up more information on the student's partner. For example, a prospective roommate, an interested romantic prospect, a fraternity/sorority/scholastic society, or a potential employer. The purpose of the assignment is to provide a balanced analysis for the audience by explaining why their classmate might be a good, or not so good, fit for the position the audience inquired about. Students are asked to access their partner's SNS accounts to find two photos to use as textual evidence for their claims. They create claims through denotative observations, and connotative analysis, and identifying their partner's ethos, pathos, and logos appeals, as well as rhetorically analyzing their partner's photos via purpose, audience, text, and context. The assignment is two pages, and the photos chosen are featured on a separate document from the essay.

Project 2: #Selfie: After learning about ideology and the social constructions inherent in visual representations of sex, gender, sexuality, age, race, etc., students are asked to choose an ideology that they feel limits them in some way. The purpose of the assignment is to write an argumentative/persuasive essay to a system of power that the student sees as propagating this ideology. Students are given a set of pre-selected sources to use as alphabetic text based evidence, and are instructed to take two visual self-representations to use as image-based evidenced. Students must persuade their audience that the ideology they chose exists, how their self-representations challenge the ideology they're discussing, and why their audience should stop any practices, procedures, or behaviors that reproduce this ideology. Students are instructed to use written, and visual, rhetorical appeals in their claims, as well synthesize their sources to construct a well-rounded argument. Students are also asked to have a counterargument as a way of creating an ethical, author ethos. The assignment is four to six pages, and students' self-representations are featured on a document that is separate from their essay.

Project 3: Global Impact Analysis: This two part assignment entails students first learning how to begin researching a topic through writing a debatable, clearly stated, and open-ended inquiry question. Students choose a piece of visual rhetoric found on a SNS, and investigate the positive and negative impacts it may have on a specific audience. Students write an Annotated Bibliography (AB) composed of five sources (three must be scholarly) reflective of a well-rounded discussion surrounding their researched area. In part two, students are asked to write a researched analysis that answers their inquiry question. Students are asked to supplement the alphabetic text sources from their AB with four images supporting their claims. In writing to their audience, students must cater to their audience's needs, values, and beliefs by specifically mentioning how this audience is positively and negatively affected by the impact being described. As a culmination of all the projects, students are asked to synthesize their sources in creating claims, as well as utilize rhetorical appeals. The research analysis is eight to ten pages.

Project 4: Humans of CSU: The final project of this course entails the instructor creating a Humans of CSU page on an SNS account. This project emulates Brandon Stanton's worldwide phenomenon, Humans of New York, in which Stanton travels NYC interviewing and photographing individuals, and posting to his blog. Students are enlisted as administrators of each SNS account, and asked to upload content to the Humans of CSU page by taking photos, and holding interviews, with one classmate, four friends, and five strangers. After taking , captioning , and uploading photos to the SNS page, students are asked to use Microsoft PowerPoint to create a photo essay with five, or more of the ten photos they took that is at least four slides. The purpose of the photo essay is to create a microcosm of the college experience. It should contain a clear statement of purpose illustrated in their choice of photos, arrangement of content, as well as relationships between image and text. Students are asked to utilize PowerPoint's audio and visual effects to construct their narrative. The audience for this project is the student's classmates, instructor, as well as the members of their campus their photo essay represents.

APPENDIX D: INITIAL AND FINAL SURVEYS

INITIAL

FREQUENCY OF USE: FACEBOOK

1) Before attending our class, did you have a **Facebook** account?

YES NO

2) If you **did not have a Facebook** account before attending our class, please check off all reasons below that apply to this decision.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons I didn't think I needed it because I already had other social media

3) If you **DID have a Facebook** account before attending our class, how often would you say that you check your account for **what others have posted (statuses, links, wall posts, and check-ins)**?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

4) If you **DID have a Facebook** account before attending our class, how often would you say that you **update your account by posting content** (statuses, links, wall posts, and check-ins) yourself?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

5) If you **DID have a Facebook** account before attending our class, how often do you post photos?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

6) If you **DID have a Facebook** account before attending our class, what are the types of photos you upload most often? (Please number your choices with **1 being the most commonly uploaded**, and **13 being the least common**).

Selfies Photos of you with other people you know (friends, family, acquaintances) photos with your best friend Photos with significant other food/beverages drinks (alcoholic) scenery/locations Photos of other people you know (friends, family, acquaintances) Pets Material items memes quotes Photos of people you didn't know (celebrities, athletes, musicians, artists).

7) If you **DID have a Facebook** account before attending our class, did you ever go on your Facebook while you are with other people? (This question applies to any online device- computer, phone, tablet etc.)

YES NO

FREQUENCY OF USE: INSTAGRAM

1) Before attending our class, did you have an **Instagram** account?

YES NO

2) If you **DID NOT** have an **Instagram** account before attending our class, please check off all reasons below that apply to this decision.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons I didn't think I needed it because I already had other social media

3) If you **DID have an Instagram** account before attending our class, how often would you say that you check your account for **what others have posted**?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

4) If you **DID have an Instagram** account before attending our class, how often would you say that you **update your account by posting photos**?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

5) If you **DID have an Instagram** account before attending our class, what are the types of photos you upload most often? (Please number your choices with **1 being the most commonly uploaded**, and **13 being the least common**).

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6) If you **DID have an Instagram** account before attending our class, did you ever go on your Instagram while you were with other people? (This question applies to any online device- computer, phone, tablet etc.)

YES NO

RHETORICAL AWARENESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE:

1) Before attending our class who were you friends with on Facebook? Check all that apply.

Friends Acquaintances Family Family-friends Teachers Employers Co-workers People you know/know of in real life, but haven't met in person People you know only from online People you didn't know, or know of Famous People (Athletes/Celebrities) Clothing Brands Media Outlets (magazines, newspapers, blogs, and TV networks) specialized/themed accounts (fitness, humor, fashion, quotes etc.)

2) Before attending our class what were your privacy settings for your photos on **Facebook**?

Public Friends Only me Custom Settings

3) What are your reasons for making your **Facebook** privacy setting as such?

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

4) After uploading a photo to **Facebook**, have you ever regretted that decision?

YES NO

5) For what reasons did you regret uploading this photo? Check all that apply.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

6) What DID you do after realizing that you regretted uploading this photo to **Facebook**?

Removed photo Left the photo on my page Left the photo, but made it only visible to a few people Left the photo, but made it visible to only me

7) Does the amount of LIKES affect whether or not you keep the photo on your **Facebook**?

YES NO

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PERTAIN TO ONLY PHOTOS ON FACEBOOK WITH YOU IN IT (EITHER ALONE, OR WITH OTHER PEOPLE).

1) **Do** you consult others (friends/family) before uploading a photo to **Facebook**?

YES NO

2) If you **Do** consult others, what is your reason for seeking another's opinion? Check all that apply.

to see if I look attractive to see if other people in the picture look attractive to see if the photo is appropriate for family To see if the photo is appropriate for employers To see if the photo is a good representation of me To see if the photo is inappropriate

3) If you **Don't** consult others, what is your reason for choosing not to (Check all that apply)?

I'm confident in how I appear in this photo I **DIDN'T** think they will find it appropriate I **DIDN'T** think its close enough to how I appear offline

4) Does the amount of LIKES affect whether or not you keep the image on your **Facebook**?

YES NO

5) Before you upload a photo to **Facebook**, how often do you edit the image?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

6) Why do you choose to edit the photo before uploading it to **Facebook**? (check all that apply)

It makes me look more attractive It will make other people think I look attractive It makes certain elements in the picture stand out It helps to produce a certain mood/feeling It adds an element of artistic design

RHETORICAL AWARENESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE: INSTAGRAM:

1) Is your **Instagram** profile set to private or public?

Private Public

2) On **Instagram**, who do you follow? (Check all that apply).

Friends Acquaintances Family Family-friends Teachers Employers Co-workers People you know/know of in real life, but haven't met in person People you know only from online People you didn't know, or know of Famous People (Athletes/Celebrities) Clothing Brands Media Outlets (magazines, newspapers, blogs, and TV networks) specialized/themed accounts (fitness, humor, fashion, quotes etc.)

3) What are your reasons for making your **Instagram** privacy settings as such?

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

4) After uploading an image to **Instagram**, have you ever regretted that decision?

YES NO

5) For what reasons did you regret uploading this photo? Check all that apply.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

6) What did you do after realizing that you regretted uploading this photo to **Instagram**?

Removed the photo from my page Left the photo on my page

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PERTAIN TO ONLY PHOTOS ON INSTAGRAM WITH YOU IN IT (EITHER ALONE, OR WITH OTHER PEOPLE).

1) Do you consult others (friends/family) before uploading a photo to **Instagram**?

YES NO

2) If you **do consult others**, what is your reason for seeking another's opinion? Check all that apply.

to see if I look attractive to see if other people in the picture look attractive to see if the photo is appropriate for family To see if the photo is appropriate for employers To see if the photo is a good representation of me To see if the photo is inappropriate

3) If you **don't** consult others, what is your reason for choosing not to (Check all that apply)?

I'm confident in how I appear in this photo I **don't** think they will find it appropriate I **don't** think it's close enough to how I appear offline

4) Before you upload a photo to **Instagram**, how often do you add a filter to the image?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

5) Why do you choose to add a filter before uploading it **Instagram**? (Check all that apply)

It makes me look more attractive It will make other people think I look attractive It makes certain elements in the picture stand out It helps to produce a certain mood/feeling It adds an element of artistic design

6) Before you upload a photo to **Instagram**, did you ever edit the image **before adding a filter**?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

7) Does the amount of LIKES affect whether or not you keep the photo on your **Instagram**?

YES NO

PERSONAL SNS PROFILE ANALYSIS

Take a minute to look through your **Facebook and/or Instagram account**. By looking at the photos you uploaded, give brief description of who you think this profile portrays. Write it as an audience member would -> (This profile describes a person who is....).Remember to be thorough and describe yourself as if you were trying to explain this person to a stranger. In your description, **give examples that prove why this person is the way you describe them to be**. (EX: She is outgoing because in this photo she _____)

FINAL

FREQUENCY OF USE: FACEBOOK

1) After attending our class, will you keep your **Facebook** account?

YES NO

2) If you **will not keep your Facebook** account after attending our class, please check off all reasons below that apply to this decision.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons I don't think I needed it because I already had other social media

3) If you **DO have a Facebook** account after attending our class, how often would you say that you check your account for **what others have posted (statuses, links, wall posts, and check-ins)**?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

4) If you **DO have a Facebook** account after attending our class, how often would you say that you **update your account by posting content** (statuses, links, wall posts, and check-ins) yourself?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

5) If you **DO have a Facebook** account after attending our class, how often do you post photos?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

6) If you **DO have a Facebook** account after attending our class, what are the types of photos you upload most often? (Please number your choices with **1 being the most commonly uploaded**, and **13 being the least common**).

Selfies Photos of you with other people you know (friends, family, acquaintances) photos with your best friend Photos with significant other food/beverages drinks (alcoholic) scenery/locations Photos of other people you know (friends, family, acquaintances) Pets Material items memes quotes Photos of people you don't know (celebrities, athletes, musicians, artists).

7) If you **DO have a Facebook** account after attending our class, do you ever go on your Facebook while you are with other people? (This question applies to any online device- computer, phone, tablet etc.)

YES NO

FREQUENCY OF USE: INSTAGRAM

1) After attending our class, will you keep your **Instagram** account?

YES NO

2) If you **DO NOT** have an **Instagram** account after attending our class, please check off all reasons below that apply to this decision.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons I don't think I needed it because I already had other social media

3) If you **DO have an Instagram** account after attending our class, how often would you say that you check your account for **what others have posted**?

Once a month Once a week Once a day More than once a day More than ten times a day

4) If you **DO have an Instagram** account after attending our class, how often would you say that you **update your account by posting photos**?

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6) If you **DO have an Instagram** account after attending our class, do you ever go on your Instagram while you were with other people? (This question applies to any online device- computer, phone, tablet etc.)

YES NO

RHETORICAL AWARENESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE:

1) After attending our class who are you friends with on Facebook? Check all that apply.

Friends Acquaintances Family Family-friends Teachers Employers Co-workers People you know/know of in real life, but haven't met in person People you know only from online People you don't know, or know of Famous People (Athletes/Celebrities) Clothing Brands Media Outlets (magazines, newspapers, blogs, and TV networks) specialized/themed accounts (fitness, humor, fashion, quotes etc.)

2) After attending our class what do are your privacy settings for your photos on **Facebook**?

Public Friends Only me Custom Settings

3) What are your reasons for making your **Facebook** privacy setting as such?

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

4) After uploading a photo to **Facebook**, have you ever regretted that decision?

YES NO

5) For what reasons do you regret uploading this photo? Check all that apply.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

6) What do you **DO** after realizing that you regretted uploading this photo to **Facebook**?

Removed photo Left the photo on my page Left the photo, but made it only visible to a few people Left the photo, but made it visible to only me

7) Do the amount of **LIKES** affect whether or not you keep the photo on your **Facebook**?

YES NO

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1) **DO** you consult others (friends/family) before uploading a photo to **Facebook**?

YES NO

2) If you **DO** consult others, what is your reason for seeking another's opinion? Check all that apply.

to see if I look attractive to see if other people in the picture look attractive to see if the photo is appropriate for family To see if the photo is appropriate for employers To see if the photo is a good representation of me To see if the photo is inappropriate

3) If you **DON'T** consult others, what if your reason for choosing not to (Check all that apply)?

I'm confident in how I appear in this photo I **DON'T** think they will find it appropriate I **DON'T** think it's close enough to how I appear offline

4) Does the amount of **LIKES** affect whether or not you keep the image on your **Facebook**?

YES NO

5) Before you upload a photo to **Facebook**, how often do you edit the image?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

6) Why do you choose to edit the photo before uploading it to **Facebook**? (check all that apply)

It makes me look more attractive It will make other people think I look attractive It makes certain elements in the picture stand out It helps to produce a certain mood/feeling It adds an element of artistic design

RHETORICAL AWARENESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE: INSTAGRAM:

1) Is your **Instagram** profile set to private or public?

Private Public

2) On **Instagram**, who do you follow? (Check all that apply).

Friends Acquaintances Family Family-friends Teachers Employers Co-workers People you know/know of in real life, but haven't met in person People you know only from online People you don't know, or know of Famous People (Athletes/Celebrities) Clothing Brands Media Outlets (magazines, newspapers, blogs, and TV networks) specialized/themed accounts (fitness, humor, fashion, quotes etc.)

3) What are your reasons for making your **Instagram** privacy settings as such?

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

4) After uploading an image to **Instagram**, have you ever regretted that decision?

YES NO

5) For what reasons do you regret uploading this photo? Check all that apply.

Employability reasons Family reasons Personal reasons

6) What do you **DO** after realizing that you regretted uploading this photo to **Instagram**?

Removed the photo from my page Left the photo on my page

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PERTAIN TO ONLY PHOTOS ON INSTAGRAM WITH YOU IN IT (EITHER ALONE, OR WITH OTHER PEOPLE).

1) **DO** you consult others (friends/family) before uploading a photo to **Instagram**?

YES NO

2) If you **DO consult others**, what is your reason for seeking another's opinion? Check all that apply.

to see if I look attractive to see if other people in the picture look attractive to see if the photo is appropriate for family To see if the photo is appropriate for employers To see if the photo is a good representation of me To see if the photo is inappropriate

3) If you **DON'T** consult others, what is your reason for choosing not to (Check all that apply)?

I'm confident in how I appear in this photo I **DON'T** think they will find it appropriate I **DON'T** think it's close enough to how I appear offline

4) Before you upload a photo to **Instagram**, how often do you add a filter to the image?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

5) Why do you choose to add a filter before uploading it **Instagram**? (Check all that apply)

It makes me look more attractive It will make other people think I look attractive It makes certain elements in the picture stand out It helps to produce a certain mood/feeling It adds an element of artistic design

6) Before you upload a photo to **Instagram**, do ever edit the image **After adding a filter**?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

7) Do the amount of **LIKES** affect whether or not you keep the photo on your **Instagram**?

YES NO

PERSONAL SNS PROFILE ANALYSIS

Take a minute to look through your **Facebook and/or Instagram account**. By looking at the photos you uploaded, give brief description of who you think this profile portrays. Write it as an audience member would -> (This profile describes a person who is....).Remember to be thorough and describe yourself as if you were trying to explain this person to a stranger. In your description, **give examples that prove why this person is the way you describe them to be**. (EX: She is outgoing because in this photo she _____)

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Reconstructing Social Futures: Digital Voices in the First-Year Writing Classroom

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sue Doe, PhD, English Rhetoric and Composition, Email: Sue.Doe@ColoState.EDU Phone: (970) 491-6839

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Emily LaPadura, MA, English Rhetoric and Composition, Email:emilylapadura@gmail.com Phone: (347)393-1135

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? You are being chosen to take part in this research because you are currently a member of my first-year composition class. As a member of my class, you will be taking part in this course which looks at various aspects of social media and digital photography. My research is focusing on seeing how first-year writers gain critical understanding of using digital photography on Facebook and Instagram. Since you are in this class, you have the ability to be a part of my research.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? I am the conductor of this research, and will be collecting all of the data involved in this study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of the study is to discover how college students' use of digital photography on Facebook and Instagram changes over time.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? The study will last for the entire fall semester at Colorado State University. The semester is five months long and will go from August 2014-December 2014.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? All of the following activities are a part of your normal course curriculum. You will not be asked to complete any work that you would not already be required to do. I am asking you for permission to use parts of your class work as research. The first part is an initial survey at the beginning of the semester. The survey asks about how you use digital photography on Facebook and Instagram, and how much you use Facebook and Instagram. There will also be another survey administered at the end of the semester that asks similar questions to see how your use of digital photography on Facebook and Instagram changed over time. Lastly, I will need your permission to analyze the weekly blogs you write for this class.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? A possible reason is if you are uncomfortable with having your class work used as research.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

- There are possible psychological risks, or discomfort, that accompany any form of self analysis, but these are minimum. Keep in mind that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but I have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, and unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There is no direct benefit to the participants, but the researchers will gain a better understanding of how first-year writers enhance their critical thinking skills through utilizing social media.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Participation in the study will have no association with your grade in

this class, nor on any class work, projects or assignments. Participation will not give you any grade related advantages, extra credit, or privileges, neither will it lower your grade. Not participating has absolutely no ramifications on our student-teacher relationship. If you choose to not participate, it will not affect how you are treated by me as a teacher.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? I will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. This study is anonymous. For this study, we are not obtaining your name or other identifiable data from you, so nobody (not even the research team) will be able to identify you or your data. We may be asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary. In addition, for funded studies, the CSU financial management team may also request an audit of research expenditures. For financial audits, only the fact that you participated would be shared, not any research data. When we write about the study to share with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. For this study, we will assign you with a pseudonym so that the only place your name will appear in our records is on the consent and in our data spreadsheet which links you to your pseudonym. Only the research team will have access to the link between you, your code, and your data. The only exceptions to this are if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary. In addition, for funded studies, the CSU financial management team may also request an audit of research expenditures. For financial audits, only the fact that you participated would be shared, not any research data. When we write about the study to share with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. The results of this study may also be presented at an academic conference to other researchers. If these results are presented at a conference, you will not be identified in these written materials, or verbal presentations. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court OR to tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child, or you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Your identity/record of receiving compensation (NOT your data) may be made available to CSU officials for financial audits.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS? Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Emily LaPadura at emilylapadura@gmail.com. For information about your rights as a participant you can contact the Colorado State University Institutional Review Board Coordinator at RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu or [970-491-1553](tel:970-491-1553). We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW? If you consent to being a part of this study, and to having your class work used in research, there will be measures taken to protect your identity. Another person will not be able to identify who you are based on the research. Your name will be protected with an ID number making your participation completely anonymous. Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of person providing information to participant

Date

Signature of Research Staff