ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: The Role of Interest in First-Year Composition

STUDENT: Elizabeth Imafuji

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This dissertation focuses on how interest matters to students in first-year composition. Generally, students are required to take first-year composition and are not in such a course by choice. Thus, understanding what interests them, and understanding how interest matters to them, are major concerns. The data in this study comes from semester-long case studies of eleven first-year composition students and their instructor, and this data includes surveys, interviews, class observation field notes, and course documents. Ultimately, the findings from this study are developed into a model of student interest in first-year composition, with enjoyment, engagement, inquiry, interactions, and helpfulness as defining factors for interest; and choice, motivation, attitude toward grades, and desire to advocate as effects of interest.