Theses and Dissertations (All)

1-12-2011

Examining the Influence of Multimodal New Media Texts and Technologies On First-Year Writing Pedagogies: A Cross Sectional Case Study

Daniel Lee Ruefman
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd

EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF MULTIMODAL NEW MEDIA TEXTS AND

TECHNOLOGIES ON FIRST-YEAR WRITNG PEDAGOGIES:

A CROSS SECTIONAL CASE STUDY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Daniel Lee Ruefman

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2010

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
The School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Daniel Lee Ruefman

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

_____   _____
                                           Patrick Bizzaro, Ph.D.
                                           Professor of English, Advisor

_____   _____
                                           Nancy Hayward, Ph.D.
                                           Professor of English

_____   _____
                                           Resa Crane Bizzaro, Ph.D.
                                           Assistant Professor of English

ACCEPTED

_____   _____
Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.
Dean
The School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: Examining the Influence of Multimodal New Media Texts and Technologies
On First-Year Writing Pedagogies: A Cross Sectional Case Study

Author: Daniel Lee Ruefman

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Patrick Bizzaro

Dissertation Committee Members:　　　Dr. Nancy Hayward
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Dr. Resa Crane Bizzaro

In recent years, composition teachers and scholars have noted that

multimodal technologies have changed the landscape of the first-year college writing

classroom, causing many to consider the relevance of integrating these tools into the

writing curriculum. While some suggest that it is important to teach students to write

with a variety of technologies, others argue that a writing instructor's primary

objective is limited to teaching students to use the language effectively, emphasizing

grammar, spelling, punctuation, and organization. As a graduate student and

college writing instructor, I have been asked to align myself within this debate

several times. After careful consideration, it seemed that this discussion lacked a

general understanding of how these technologies were currently being used to

support classroom instruction, without which it is difficult to establish whether or not

these tools improve writing instruction. To provide insight into the current

pedagogical practices of college writing instructors, this dissertation utilized a

constructivist paradigm to investigate three first-year college writing classrooms,

examining how multimodal texts and technologies changed the landscape of

traditional, computer-mediated, and online writing classrooms at three public

universities in Pennsylvania. By triangulating data through naturalistic observations,

artifact analysis, and culminating interviews, this dissertation provided insight into how multimodal texts and technologies were recently used to support classroom instruction, providing a foundation on which scholars can begin to more effectively assess the relevance of multimodal texts and technologies in the first-year college writing curriculum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have guided me through this dissertation process, as well as those individuals who have offered their unconditional support. Without them I would not have been able to accomplish all that I have over the past several years.

First and foremost, I want to thank my devoted wife who worked tirelessly to support our family, granting me the opportunity to study and write. She often worked the night shift and put in overtime to ensure that we had the means to live comfortably. What's more is that she even placed her education on hold, enabling me to pursue my academic and professional goals. Amelia, you are one of a kind. I love you.

Great mentors are difficult to find and Dr. Pat Bizzaro is among the best. Throughout this process, he was always willing to read multiple drafts and pointed out resources that he felt would strengthen this investigation. Under his guidance, I developed as a teacher-scholar, establishing a solid foundation on which I can continue to build my career. Thank you for your continued dedication and support even after this dissertation was done.

In the classroom and as a reader on this dissertation committee, Dr. Nancy Hayward provided critical insight that allowed me to organize my thoughts. Her suggestions and feedback were invaluable during my time at IUP. Thank you for all of your contributions.

Dr. Resa Bizzaro provided a great deal of support for this dissertation. Her assistance with networking allowed me to make contact with leading scholars, like Cindy Selfe, who were very helpful in connecting this research project with the larger academic discussion. She was always willing to offer her insights and opinions and proved to be a terrific asset both in the classroom and on this committee. Thank you for your work.

Finally, I would like to offer my sincere appreciation for several members of my cohort at IUP—John Reilly, Mindee Lieske, Astrid Parrish, and Bee Chamcharatsri. Your friendship and support have encouraged me to press on whenever anything threatened to drag me down. I am honored to have had the privilege to work with you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDY TWO: THE COMPUTER-MEDIATED CLASSROOM

CHAPTER SIX

CASE STUDY THREE: THE ONLINE CLASSROOM

CHAPTER SEVEN

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

LIST OF TABLES

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When I began teaching at a small community college in western

Pennsylvania, I was approached by the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.

He began to ask me how I intended to use technology in my classroom during the

upcoming semester. I was told that I would be in a semi-smart classroom, equipped

with an LCD projector and computer console at the front of the room. As I began to

discuss how I would make use of web resources in my college writing class, he

began to suggest a program called *My Writing Lab*. He explained that this program

had great applications and was linked to materials in the course textbook that I, as

an adjunct faculty member, was required to use in my writing classroom. I was then

informed that the use of this program would be mandatory for my intermediate

writing and college writing courses. According to the instructions offered to me by

the Dean, I signed on to a ready-made account at www.mywritinglab.com (powered

by Pearson, the publisher of the required textbook) and perused some of the

functions that I could use to supplement classroom instruction. Short grammar

quizzes and discussion boards were two of the functions that I selected to

incorporate into my writing classroom.

For my first semester, I was sent to teach at a small satellite campus in a

neighboring county. Later I learned that this particular county was the second

poorest in the state of Pennsylvania. The steel industry had left the community and

left in its wake a rural population with very few resources. Record highs in

unemployment drove many students back to school and into my classroom.

At the beginning of my first class I explained that the college was going to require us to use *My Writing Lab* to supplement classroom learning during the semester. As I explained how we would use this program, several students began shifting anxiously in their seats. Finally one student raised her hand and posed a question that I had not considered fully—what if we don't have a computer?

I paused for a moment and examined my class and asked "who doesn't have access to a computer at home?" Of the 25 students in the room, 12 raised their hands, indicating that they had no computer access whatsoever. I then asked "who doesn't have access to the internet at home?" Of the 25 students enrolled in that class, 17 now raised their hands. I took this information to the campus' Educational Coordinator to discuss the possibility of accessing a computer lab once a week and was told, simply, that the college did not have those resources available. The one computer lab at this location was constantly booked with other courses who had priority—mainly computer science, and nursing. This left four public access terminals in the lobby that my students could share. When I mentioned my findings to the Dean the next time I saw him, I was informed that I was still required to use *My Writing Lab* in my classroom, and to do the best that I could with the resources I was given.

The following investigation was fueled by this experience. I wanted to know how other instructors were using technology to support instruction and reasons behind their choice to use specific programs or technological devices in their classrooms. Were other instructors being coerced into using technology in ways with which they were unfamiliar, or did some choose to do so freely? This

2

investigation examined how and why instructors of first-year college writing courses used technology to support learning.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, as multimodal new media technologies have become increasingly accessible to the mainstream population, they have revolutionized the way we teach, learn, and communicate with those around us. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the year 2003, 54.7% of American households had internet access, compared to 61.7% in 2007 (US Census Bureau, 2007). A report released in October, 2009, reflected another significant increase in internet access, claiming that now 76.7% of American households have access to the internet at home (US Census Bureau, 2009). The increasing presence of these technologies has forced us to redefine what it means to be literate. As these technologies have become increasingly important in the professional and academic worlds, students (as well as professionals) have relied increasingly on videos, audio recordings, and even videogames to gain information; such behavior has forced many scholars to redefine the term texts to include those newer forms of communication and expand the definition of literacy to include the skills that allow individuals to communicate through those means (Gee, 1991; Gee 2007; Kress, 2003). Many students enrolled in college today already have a profile posted on social network sites, like Facebook or My Space. According to Danah Boyd (2008), in 2006, 64% of teens, age fifteen to seventeen, regardless of socioeconomic status, have already created profiles on social network sites (p. 121). In response to increased student activity online, teachers have adopted the use of online learning tools like WebCT, Moodle, and

Blackboard to facilitate class discussions and to post relevant course materials so that they can be accessible to students with internet access at home. Furthermore, some teachers have seen their classrooms, in the physical sense, vanish altogether, replaced by online classrooms that exist solely in the digital realm. Electronic magazines and e-journals have found a place in a publishing industry that, until now, existed solely in the form of print media that communicated through an alphabetic system of letters and symbols. Books are being replaced by digital readers like Nook and the Kindel, and the texts being published today communicate as much through images and sounds as they do through written words.

Though few can argue that electronic media have greatly impacted the way that we read, write, learn, and communicate, recent innovations have sparked an intense debate regarding its role in the context of the writing classroom. Some scholars, like Charles Moran and James Strickland, argue that introducing these technologies into the writing classroom may distract from course objectives. They suggest that the integration of certain technologies in the writing classroom will often force instructors to teach the technology rather than writing skills and that there is little to no evidence that these technologies actually improve the quality of classroom learning (Moran, 2001). Strickland also goes a step further, arguing that students from lower socioeconomic classes are often unable to afford the most advanced technologies, while students from wealthier families tend to have more access and will then have a considerable advantage over students with more limited access to computers, programs, and software (Strickland, 1997). Still others, like Cynthia Selfe, Mary E. Hocks, and Michelle Kendrick, argue that these technologies are

relevant to the personal, professional, and academic lives of our students. They suggest that our students are often expected to write for a digital audience utilizing a variety of new media technologies and, if they are expected to do so to communicate in both professional and casual contexts, we should teach writing skills that will help them to do so effectively (Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007; Kress, 2003; Hocks & Kendrick, 2003). While this logic seems reasonable at first glance, this argument is complicated further when teachers are uncomfortable with these technologies or are unprepared to teach students to apply these technologies in the writing context (Moran, 2001; Hocks & Kendrick, 2003).

 As a graduate student and teacher of first-year writing courses, I have been asked by many colleagues to align myself within this debate—can we teach writing more effectively with multimodal new media technologies or with the traditional methods of instruction? After careful consideration, it seemed to me that we were asking the wrong question. While scholars continue to argue that the integration of more technology in the writing classroom may benefit our students, it seems that few have really examined how these technologies are currently being used. How can you argue that integrating technology into the writing classroom will improve writing instruction if we do not have sufficient knowledge of what instructors are actually doing in the classroom and what caused them to make these instructional decisions? Until we understand what the pedagogical practices of instructors in the classroom are, currently, it is impossible to assess the advantages or disadvantages of increasing or decreasing the degree to which certain technologies are used to facilitate their teaching objectives.

The influx of digitally-based, multimodal technologies has, in recent history, changed the landscape of the writing classroom. While it is true that many college writing courses are conducted in traditional classrooms in which students work with pencils, pens, and notebooks, an increasing number of classrooms offer students an opportunity to work with computers. Still, as stated previously, some colleges have instituted distance education classrooms on the World Wide Web, creating virtual classrooms that do not exist at all in the physical sense and that are accessible only through the use of personal computers. Therefore, to understand precisely how technologies are currently being used in the writing classroom, this dissertation will take the form of three case studies conducted in three different college writing (ENGL101) classrooms at three public universities in western Pennsylvania— identified in this investigation as Red Raptor University (RRU), Allegheny Highland University (AHU), and Slick Pebble University (SPU). This exploration provides vital insight into the pedagogical practices of instructors and how they choose to integrate multimodal texts or technologies into their college writing classroom. By examining a class conducted online, in a computer lab, and in a traditional classroom, this dissertation will provide a well rounded overview of how the sampled instructors are teaching now, how their pedagogical approaches vary from one context to the next, and how they have prepared to integrate these technologies into their pedagogical practices. While this project does not assess the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategies employed by the participating instructors, it is impossible to argue for or against the integration of multimodal new media technologies if we are unaware of how those technologies are currently being used.

This first chapter defines the purpose of this study, examines the research assumptions that have been taken into account, expresses the rationale for the research that follows, and states its significance to the discipline. It will identify the research questions that will be addressed in the following pages and draw from prominent scholars to situate this dissertation in the larger academic discussion.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) to identify which new media technologies are currently being used to support instruction in each of the sampled first-year college writing classrooms, 2) to examine why instructors have decided to use certain technologies, and 3) to describe the instructional practices that are utilized in each of the sampled classrooms. This study provides the insight into current pedagogical practices that is necessary to understand what we need to know about new media before we bring it into the classroom. Though it does not evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogical applications for new media technologies, it will allow us to assess the extent of new media's influence on writing instruction in these three "typical" classroom settings.

Research Assumptions

In the development of this project, three research assumptions have created a foundation on which this study can be built. These assumptions are as follows:

- Limited accessibility still influences which technologies are available and how these technologies can be used to facilitate classroom instruction.
- Decisions made by administrators are likely to impact how instructors integrate multimodal texts and technologies in their classrooms.

7

- Multimodal new media technologies impact every classroom.

I have referred to these assumptions periodically to identify the research questions that would drive this investigation and to develop a rubric to govern data collection and analysis. It should also be noted that these assumptions are based largely on my own personal experience teaching at a community college in western Pennsylvania.

Accessibility of Technology is Limited

Even in what we call the digital age, access to technology is not limitless. This assumption is driven by my own experiences as an instructor of first-year writing courses at a community college in western Pennsylvania, and serves as a "feeder" school for two of the universities sampled in this investigation. Moran explains,

"technology has made this wealth gap, always present in our writing classes, more dramatically visible . . . Today [1997] an up-to-date PC and printer cost $1,500 at the least. Web and e-mail access are additional costs, as are backup hardware, surge suppressors, software, [and] maintenance" (p. 218).

In other words, when technology is integrated into the writing classroom, students from higher socioeconomic status have a distinct advantage over those with more limited means. Wealthy students can pay for the new computer system, printers, the Microsoft Office software package, and DSL internet, while students with more limited means rely on dial-up internet access, outdated software packages, and substandard computers. This concept is further reinforced by James Strickland (1997) who explains that the "'haves' in our society will always have the latest

8

hardware and software, and our only hope is to ensure the 'have nots' have access at school" (p. 8). He argues that students who have insufficient computer access at home must rely on the computer access at school and, though this access is in the very least uneven, it is the best option we currently have available to manage the accessibility issue.

Some of my colleagues, like Strickland, have argued that the best solution to inequality of access is to install more public access terminals on campus, but what they fail to recognize is that all access is not equal access. Moran argues that "home access is when you have your computer . . . On this computer is your software, with your settings, a Web browser with your bookmarks" (p. 218). Students who lack personal "home" computers lack the ability to customize the settings in a way that will allow them to be most efficient. Furthermore, because of their lack of access at home, many of these students do not know enough about public computers to change settings, even temporarily, in ways that will allow them to accomplish the most in their limited amount of time. Many computer labs on college campuses also have restrictions regarding food, beverages, and hours; students who rely on public points of access may often have to leave during breaks if they are hungry or thirsty and are unable to continue working when the lab closes at the end of the day. Their access may be completely eliminated until the lab opens the next morning.

As an instructor whose students often experience issues regarding accessibility of computers, printers, and internet access, I have been forced to reevaluate and modify my own pedagogical strategies. This experience has led me

assume that many instructors must consider student accessibility (or perceived accessibility) prior to making the decision to integrate or not to integrate technology into the writing classroom. As a result, many of the questions I posed to participating instructors during post-observation interviews have been selected in the hopes of identifying the impact of these accessibility issues on their pedagogical strategies for the writing classroom.

Administrators Influence on Instructor Pedagogies

As with the accessibility issues, college administrators have an impact on the classroom, based on my personal experience. Prior to the Fall 2009 semester, the chair of my department presented me with the list of goals and objectives for first-year writing courses at our college. I was advised that we would be using an online writing lab that was provided by the publisher of the textbook, which was also mandated by the administration. Similar observations have been made by other scholars that indicate that this is not an unusual phenomenon. Moran explains that there is a great deal of pressure on administrators to keep up with new technological developments from one semester to the next, one academic year to the next, and that failure to do so results in the school becoming "roadkill on the information highway" (p. 203). Because technology is so important to our contemporary lifestyle, Moran argues that some students may choose not to attend a college that has substandard access to technologies. What's worse, students who attend schools without access to current technologies will graduate without skills that students at other colleges have developed. The incentive of administrators to make students marketable exists because it stands to reason that students who become gainfully

employed are more able to produce alumni dollars down the line. If students are not

marketable, it not only impacts the institution financially through money generated

through tuition and budgets based on enrollment and retention, but it can reduce the

amount of money that these students will offer the university through post-graduate

donations.

In addition to the money that is generated by the students or budget

increases that are related to enrollment, many administrators are encouraged to

influence classroom practices by incentives offered through grants. Fred Kemp

(2000) explains that "often several levels of college administrators are bypassed by

grant money that establishes a computer-based classroom" (p. 270). This concept

is again reinforced by Moran's experience at the University of Massachusetts, where

"we cheerfully spend money on computer-equipped classrooms, money that if it

were spent instead on direct instruction (teachers), would reduce our average class

size significantly" (p. 203-204). In either Kemp's or Moran's experience, we can

observe precisely how much influence an administrator can have on classroom

practices. If the technologies are present, instructors are encouraged, if not

required, to integrate them into their instructional methods. Furthermore, investment

choices made by administrators can also impact class sizes which may, in turn,

affect how the instructor teaches. With more students, it is increasingly difficult to

employ teaching practices that require teachers to facilitate small group activities or

to directly engage each student during scheduled classes. Therefore, administrators

can influence the instructional methods of teachers in the classroom regardless of

whether it improves learning.

Mission and vision statements from each of the sampled universities also provided a great deal of insight into how administrative goals influenced the way technology was used in the classroom. The SPU mission statement declared that the university placed "emphasis on technology and information literacy across the curriculum." Likewise, the vision statement from AHU stated that the university strived to be recognized for its technological "innovation, leadership, and commitment to excellence." These two statements offered some insight that administrators might influence the instructors' decision to integrate certain technologies into their classrooms.

In addition to the mission statements offered by the sampled institutions, the assumption that administrators have some impact on classroom practices also arose from my personal experiences, as well as from observations stated by other scholars in the field, like Moran and Kemp This assumption has also guided some of the interview questions that I have posed to the participating instructors and has influenced the research questions I have examined in this project.

Technology Effects Every Class

The assumption that has been formed is based on a pilot study conducted in January 2009 (Ruefman, 2009). This study examined course artifacts from college writing classes at the same three public colleges in western Pennsylvania. Through a discourse analysis of course artifacts, this project identified the pedagogical implications suggested by the course artifacts. For example, through course websites, syllabuses, and handouts, this project identified the requirements of course assignments, the technologies students would be expected to work with to

complete those assignments, and how instructors preferred to communicate with their students. In this project, instructors required their students to utilize word processing programs to complete course assignments and preferred to communicate with their students outside of the classroom through email. Regardless of how instructors choose to integrate technologies during scheduled classes, the expectation that students will use certain technologies to complete assignments outside of the classroom makes technology a factor in their pedagogical practices.

Many scholars reinforce the assumption that what students do outside of the classroom effects classroom instruction. For instance, many first-year writing students enrolled in college writing courses are experienced writers. Many scholars have recognized this, suggesting that students have been writing blogs, emails, and text messages long before they reach the college writing classroom; students then bring these experiences with them into the writing classroom (Gee, 2007; Lindemann, 2001; Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007). Following the logic that students bring their writing experiences from outside the classroom into the classroom, we can assume that the writing projects and activities completed outside the classroom will influence their learning during scheduled course meetings. Assuming that instructors have a rationale for including each assignment in their classroom, it can then be concluded that these assignments characterize instructor pedagogies.

Based on the findings of the pilot study—all nine of the sampled professors required students to complete assignments by using desktop publishing and word processing programs—the research assumption is that most of the instructors

13

participating in this dissertation will require students to utilize multimodal new media technologies to complete assignments outside of class meetings. Following the logic of Takayoshi, Selfe, and Lindemann, it can then be concluded that these technologies impact every classroom, even if these technologies are not used to facilitate lectures or in-class activities. As a result, this assumption has caused me to consider course artifacts that offer some insight into the nature of out-of-class assignments instructors in each context require.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

My primary research question is: how have multimodal new media texts and technologies influenced the pedagogical practices of instructors teaching first-year college writing courses? To answer this primary question, it will be necessary to address the following secondary questions:

1. Which technologies do instructors use to support instruction and how were they implemented? Even pens and pencils are technologies, though they are not new media technologies. The answer to question is vital to answering this study's primary question. By identifying which technologies are present in the classroom and how instructors are utilizing those technologies during class time, the term "new media" is examined and defined. Answering this question will offer a detailed account of the influence of new media technologies on the sampled classrooms and how that influence has evolved over time.

2. Which technologies do instructors expect their students to use to complete course assignments either inside or outside scheduled class time? This

secondary question operates on the assumption that most instructors prefer students to use word processing programs, like Microsoft Word or Word Perfect, to complete writing assignments. Because computer ownership continues to rise among students and because computers are increasingly accessible through public libraries and college campuses, some instructors require students to produce texts using certain new media technologies (Warren-Austin, 2001). Requiring students to use certain new media technologies to complete course assignments allows instructors to introduce these technologies to students. Therefore this question will address how the expectations imposed on instructors influence their instructional practices.

3. To what extent does the accessibility of certain technologies influence the way instructors choose to integrate new media into their first-year college writing courses? While colleges certainly have wider access to computers today than at any other point in history, no campus has unlimited access; in fact not every classroom on every campus has a computer for every student. As demands for computer-equipped classrooms are on the rise, it becomes clear that not every instructor may be able to use a computer equipped classroom for every course. Addressing this question will offer insight into how prevalent accessibility issues are and what types of accessibility issues concern participating instructors.

4. How do the instructors promote awareness of multimodal texts? While instructors can certainly promote awareness by using multimodal

technologies in the classroom, it is also important to understand

awareness can also be promoted through discussion topics (Gee, 2007).

Taking into account that there are some limitations on accessibility which

may influence the use of these technologies, it is important to consider

whether the instructor refers to other means to promote awareness of

these concepts.

Prior to answering these questions, it will be necessary to define new media by

examining new media theory, visual rhetoric, and composition theory in chapter two.

Once new media is defined and connected with the writing classroom, this

dissertation will bridge theory and practice by examining current pedagogical

practices of instructors in first-year college writing classrooms.

Significance of the Study

Many scholars, including Kress (2003) and Selfe (2007), have acknowledged

the increasing importance of new media technologies in education. Takayoshi and

Selfe suggest that, with the advent of digital writing environments, students require

the skills to read, write, and engage texts in "multiple modalities" (p. 3). That is to

say, the world of the text has moved beyond the concrete boundaries of printed

language and now can be engaged aurally and visually as well. For example, while

a printed text is generally accessed exclusively by reading the words on the page, a

text published on the World Wide Web introduces aspects of visual and aural design

that affect how the author and reader will engage with and interpret the meaning of

the text.   Should the author choose to imbed streaming videos or audio recordings,

a digital text can then be consumed by reading the written words, observing the

organization of materials on the computer screen, and watching and listening to the uploaded materials; therefore, multimodal texts require readers and authors to develop a variety of visual, oral, and aural literacies in addition to the ability to read and interpret written language.

Multimodal writing is a means of communication that is utilized by a growing number of students every day in their lives outside of the classroom. Whether by blogging, texting, instant messaging, or tweeting, many students from junior high through graduate school communicate daily through some means of written correspondence. This means that many students who are coming into first-year college writing classrooms are often experienced in composing multimodal texts. Despite this fact, some students continue to express a deep seeded hatred for writing. Takayoshi and Selfe (2007) argue that this phenomenon is largely due to the fact that, while multimodal writing has become a valuable means of communicating, "the formal assignments that many English composition teachers give to students remain alphabetic and primarily produced via some form of print media" (p. 1). In other words, the types of writing students are expected to complete for class have become irrelevant to their lives. Instructors largely expect students to submit texts that conform to an antiquated format (1-inch-margins, typed in a 12pt. font, and printed on white paper) despite the fact that in their own lives, students are largely "exchanging texts composed of still and moving images, animations, sounds, graphics, words, and colors" (Takayoshi and Selfe, 2007, p. 2). According to Takayoshi and Selfe, instructors must make an effort to update the definition of

"texts" in college classrooms to once again make writing relevant to their students' lives in the current age.

While Selfe claims that new media technologies and multimodal writing should be integrated into the college writing curriculum, others, like Moran, caution their colleagues to do so conscientiously. In some cases, scholars feel that the goal of college writing courses is to teach students to utilize the language effectively. These scholars largely feel that the integration of certain technologies will distract from this goal, forcing instructors to teach the technology rather than writing and language skills, and distracting from the rhetorical principles on which the composition discipline was founded. Moran is one such scholar who advises college writing instructors to proceed with caution. He argues that there is a great deal of pressure on educators at colleges and universities to integrate educational technologies into their classroom pedagogies, "despite the fact that there is no proof yet that technology improves students' learning" (p. 203). Therefore, before any decisions are made, Moran advises writing instructors to evaluate their goals for each class and consider carefully whether the integration of certain technologies is compatible with those objectives.

In this polarized debate— to integrate or not to integrate multimodal technologies into writing classrooms—it seems that both sides are arguing their point without understanding precisely how certain technologies have already been utilized by writing instructors and how efficiently the practices that are currently in place accomplish the instructional goals and objectives. Until we have a better understanding of how multimodal new media technologies are being integrated into

writing classrooms, it is difficult to assess whether they improve the quality of the

students' education or cause students to become more invested in the subject

matter. This dissertation fills that gap by providing detailed accounts of how real

instructors choose to integrate multimodal technologies into first-year college writing

classrooms. It presents its findings in the form of three case studies that offer

detailed accounts of the instructional practices of professors teaching in three

specific classroom contexts: (1) a traditional classroom without computer access, (2)

a computer-mediated classroom where each student has access to a personal

computer (PC) during scheduled class times, and (3) an online writing classroom

that exists entirely in the virtual world of new media.

CHAPTER TWO

NEW MEDIA, MULTIMODALITIES, AND THE WRITING CLASSROOM

In the previous chapter, I have presented the rationale for this study, discussed its objectives, and communicated its significance in the field. As new media technologies become increasingly available to the mainstream population, they have revolutionized the way that our students communicate, write, and learn. New media technologies have forced scholars to continually redefine what we consider "texts" to include compositions that communicate in multiple modes, particularly in the case of those technologies that are continuing to shape communication contemporarily (Kress, 2003; Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007; Selfe, Fleischer, & Wright, 2007). As writing scholars have moved to redefine texts, they also force instructors to reconsider their goals for college writing courses. However, the first chapter alone is not enough to adequately define new media, multimodal texts, or the pedagogical implications they bring into the writing classroom.   As a result, this chapter reviews the literature related to new media theory, composition, and writing pedagogies, defining the important terminology and expressing how these concepts were treated throughout this dissertation.

Defining New Media

New media, today, remains difficult to define because this terminology has been used for generations to refer to the technologies that have changed the way that we think, act and communicate. Over time, the technologies have continually evolved as well. In fact, while new media theory was established relatively recently, new media technologies have revolutionized western culture for centuries.

20

Throughout history, the term new media has referred to the contemporary

technologies that have altered the way that humans interact with one another.

Some devices spring immediately to mind, like the printing press, typewriter,

telephone, radio, television, and personal computer. However, more subtle

technologies, like the pencil, fountain pen, ballpoint pen, and even our present

alphabet, were considered, at one point, to be new media technologies as well.

Because the term "new media" has been used to refer to so many different

technologies, it is important to better understand its etymology. By examining the

history of the term and its evolution, we will better understand what it means today

and what it may refer to tomorrow.

New Media: A History

Before examining the larger concepts that are associated with new media,

perhaps it is wise to first examine the words themselves. What do these words

literally mean? According to Selfe, media refers to "the technology on which—and

the technological systems through which—information is delivered or stored" (Selfe,

2007, p. 195). This definition suggests that media can be anything from DVDs and

computer hard drives to papyrus scrolls and paper. In the history of written

language, Egyptian hieroglyphs were carved into the stone walls of temples and

tombs, while knowledge in ancient Greece was preserved by tracing ink onto

papyrus scrolls. In these cases, the stone tablets and papyrus scrolls become forms

of media that allowed knowledge to be stored and accessed thousands of years

later. However, as noted by Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (2006),

this is not to say that the papyrus or stone materials are media:

the term "media" (as opposed to mediums or medium) is linked to mass

media: in the eighteenth century, paper was a medium of circulation, as was

money; in the nineteenth century, electricity was a medium; in the late

nineteenth and twentieth centuries, media emerged as the term to describe

inexpensive news papers and magazines and, in an affront to English and

Latin, became a singular noun. (p. 3)

In this passage, Chun and Keenan explain the difference between two terms,

"medium" and "media." They explain that the term "medium" refers to the material

through which information is stored or transmitted, while "media" is a term that refers

to what they become after the information is recorded in the medium. For example,

a newspaper operates through a paper medium. It is not until after words and

images are printed on the paper that "media" is created. In the examples of the

stone tablets and papyrus scrolls, offered previously in this chapter, papyrus and

stone are the mediums through which the created media (scrolls and tablets)

operate. Today papyrus scrolls and stone tablets are still considered to be media

because they continue to store and transmit the information that was originally

recorded on them. However, most scholars would agree that these "media" are not

"new media," despite the fact that, at one time, they were new. So when does "new

media" become simply media?

Some scholars, like Selfe, interpret the meaning literally, stating that "new

media" refers to a form of media that has developed and implemented within the last

five years. According to this position, digital media is no longer "new media" because

it has been around for several years (Selfe, 2009). Therefore the internet, which

was invented over 20 years ago and has been relatively accessible since, is not considered to be a new media technology. The electronic medium, through which the internet and computer programs as well as television and radio broadcasts operate, has been in place since the late nineteenth century. Therefore, according to these scholars, there is no "new" media currently.

While the literal interpretation of "new media" that is offered by Selfe seems valid, I believe that we should consider the position of Chun and Keenan, that "new media" exists when it continues to develop, perpetually evolving into something different. Referring to the Internet, Chun and Keenan explain that the "newness" of new media had relatively little to do with the time it was invented. Instead they argue that "we accepted the Internet or new media as new because of a concerted effort to make it new" (p. 3). Chun and Keenan refer to the promotion of the Internet through more traditional forms of media as a way to convince the public that it was a strange new technology that would revolutionize the world, despite the fact that it had been around for several years. Furthermore, the Internet that we navigate today has changed drastically from the Internet that existed in 1995. Although the internet of today functions in a way very similar to the internet of 1995 (through binary coding), more recent innovations allow the mainstream population to utilize the internet in different ways. For example, it was possible to upload streaming videos to the Internet in 1995 but only if the individual had the knowledge to convert videos into the appropriate digital format. The development of YouTube drastically changed the way videos can be uploaded and viewed online. Now anyone with an internet

connection and camera can upload videos, while any file conversions or coding is processed automatically by the program that is in place.

While Selfe (2007) might argue that the term "new media" cannot be applied to technologies that have existed for more many years, I would argue that new developments are constantly changing the way new media technologies are used. In the case of the Internet, despite the fact that it has existed for more than two decades, I would still consider this to be included in the category of "new media" due to the fact that there is a continued effort to develop new components that regularly change how this technology is used today and how it will be used in the future.

While there is still some ambiguity that must be acknowledged when defining "new media" and "new media technologies," the main focus since 1967 has been on those technologies that operate through an electronic medium. The first reference to a connection between the term "new media technology" and the electronic medium occurs in an article by John McHale (1967). In this article, McHale likens the influence of electronic-based technology to that of a "Second Industrial Revolution" (p. 120-122). He explains that the first Industrial Revolution "spurred the development in high-strength alloys; energy conversion; air, surface and undersea transport; and radio communications," while the second industrial revolution "marked a new relationship between basic scientific research, technical development, and social usage" (p. 122). In other words, the first industrial revolution developed a wealth of technologies, while the second changed the way we use them.

McHale is among the first scholars to link "new media" explicitly with electronic technologies. He argued that:

24

the major tools and change agents, of our present period – electronics,

automatic control systems and computers—emerge from this relation [to the

second industrial revolution], plus the new 'software' media tools of

operations research—decision theory and systems analysis . . . From the

fusion of these 'tools' and the more direct application of scientific procedures

to human affairs come automation, and, as some have phrased its latest

development, cybernation. (p. 122)

According to McHale, the human experience since the second industrial revolution

has become inseparable from the electronic and computer-based technologies that

were used every day, resulting in hybrid society. While several scholars around this

time were aware of this phenomenon, McHale was the first to explicitly use the

phrase "new software media tools," and becomes the earliest reference that realigns

the term "new media" specifically with electronic and computer-based technologies.

Since McHale's article was published in 1967, the definition of the term "new

media" has continued to evolve, but, for the last fifty years, it has largely been used

to define the technologies that operate through an electric medium. This definition

was refined further to apply to the electronic and computer-based technologies that

were used to facilitate social actions; later this definition was refined further to refer

to the digital technologies, those that transmit, store, and translate language,

images, and sounds into binary code (Lunenfeld, 1999; Selfe, 2007; Kress, 2003).

Binary code is the language through which digital devices (e.g. personal

computer, cellular telephones, etc.) operate and is the defining characteristic of

anything that is identified as "digital" technology. Digital devices rely on binary code

to transfer all "representational systems" into a common system so that "all [information] can be stored, accessed, and controlled by the same equipment" (Lunenfeld, 1999, p. xvi). For example, digital photographs have undergone a digital coding and are actually stored on a memory card or hard drive as a series of "0" and "1". The computer reads this series of 0s and 1s and translates them into the image that can then be viewed by the human eye. Audio and video recordings that we listen to or view on MP3 players or YouTube, and the texts that we read on the internet are processed through this same binary coding system. To many contemporary scholars, "new media" is synonymous with "digital media," those technologies that function through binary coding.

Given the history of the term, a certain degree of ambiguity must remain. As assuredly as the term has evolved into what it is today, it will continue to act as a place holder, referring to something different later. That being said, this dissertation refers to "new media" in two ways. First, "new media" are the technologies that operate through an electronic medium (McHale; Chun and Keenan), to create, store, transmit, and display information and correspondence (Selfe, 2007) in a digital form (Lunenfeld, 1999). Second, "new media" is a term that is used to define the "products" or "texts" that are created or accessed through the use of these technologies (Kress, 2003). This two-part definition was necessary because the texts observed in these case studies are often intertwined with the technologies themselves. Without the new media technologies, many new media texts cease to function, while without the texts, the technologies cannot function.

New Media, Writing, and this Investigation

As observed previously in this chapter, technology has had a great deal of influence over the way that people write currently and how they have written throughout history. While some inventions have been more complex than others, it is safe to say that all inventions have made significant contributions that ultimately led us to where we are today. Prior to the printing press, for example, many books and pamphlets were hand written. This meant that creating a single book required the individual to dedicate a great deal of time and effort, often taking years to complete a single copy. However, the rise of the printing press made it possible to mass produce legible texts with far less effort than before. In the past century, we have seen the fountain pen succeeded by the ballpoint, the typewriter evolve into a word processor, and the printing press make way for personal computers, printers, and the World Wide Web. While there is no denying that the development of new technologies has changed the way we write, the influence of these technologies cannot be limited to simply the composition process. We must consider how new media technologies have altered the way that we distribute and consume writing as well (Kress, 2003, p. 6-7; Lunenfeld, 1999, p. xvi; Selfe, 2007, p. 195) and the extent of this influence varies as widely as the technologies themselves.

For the purposes of this investigation, it is important to understand precisely how I defined new media texts and technologies. Though many scholars have treated these terms similarly throughout history, there are subtle differences between their treatment of the term that must be resolved before moving forward. While it is important to acknowledge the historical ambiguity of the term "new

media," it is vital to establish the more concrete parameters that have governed its use in the case studies offered in chapters 4-6 of this dissertation.

In the current digital age, new media texts are often difficult to differentiate from other mediums. Therefore, to better identify multimodal or new media texts and technologies that were observed throughout this investigation, I identified four characteristics that help identify multimodal or new media texts or technologies: 1. production, 2. distribution, 3. consumption, and 4. function.   In addition to these four characteristics, the identified technologies are, to some extent, computer-based programs, digital documents, and electronic storage devices. Though I may refer periodically to non-electronic media, it is important to understand that the "new media" that is discussed in this dissertation refers largely to the electronic media that represents the most recent developments to date (Lunenfeld, 1999, p. xiv-xvi).

Production

Production refers to how texts are created throughout writing and publishing processes. It addresses aspects of authorship and how authors draft and revise their texts. Production must also be concerned with the media through which documents and texts are published (Kress, 2003; Kress and von Leeuwen, 2006; Lunenfeld, 1999; Selfe, 2009). These electronic-based, new media digital technologies may include everything from the software programs that are used by authors when typing, revising, and editing their texts to the laser or inkjet printers that record the final product on paper and the online databases used to compile electronic documents and texts in a complex filing system.

The technologies observed in this investigation have redefined authorship in recent years. Kress argues that new media technologies "allow me to 'write back.' In the era of the book . . . the flow of communication was largely in one direction. The new technologies have changed unidirectionality into bidirectionality"(p. 6). Kress argues that new media technologies are the electronic devices that allow us to write, revise, and republish texts. Electronic media, like blogs, allow us to author, comment on, and publish texts that are able then to be consumed by an audience. Kress argues that the flow of knowledge for books is one-way, not allowing the reader to change the text or engage with the original author. In short, new media technologies allow the reader to transcend the writer/reader boundaries and actively participate in the creation and distribution of a text, as well as act as a consumer (or reader) of texts. Kress states that, in the age of new media, "authorship is no longer rare" (p. 6), suggesting that any member of the mainstream population with access to these technologies has the means to authorship.

Consumption

Consumption refers to the decoding or interpretation of a text, simply known as "reading." By reading this text, for example, you are a consumer of it. You are reading the words to extrapolate meaning from them, in some form. Because digital technologies have an impact on how texts are produced, it stands to reason that they also govern how we use or interact with these texts once they are published.

Throughout much of human history, books have been considered permanent fixtures of culture, much like ancient architecture, sculptures, or paintings. Books were timeless and permanent. However, in recent years, the influence of electronic

technologies, like the Nook and Kindle, has forced us to reevaluate precisely what the book is, how we read it, and how it has changed. Kress explains, "the books that are published now are in very many cases books which are already influenced by the new logic of the screen, and in many cases they are not 'books' as that word would have been understood thirty or forty years ago" (p. 7). He goes on to argue that, like this dissertation, traditional texts were constructed from multiple chapters, each focused on communicating a very specific message through alphabetic words. The flow of knowledge was generally one-way; a reader simply read the words, thought about the message, and moved on. Today, according to Kress, books can be much more interactive. For example, "the contemporary textbook is often a collection of 'worksheets', organized around the issues of the curriculum, and put between more or less solid covers . There is a sense that the issue now is to involve students in action around topics, of learning by doing" (Kress, 2003, p. 7). Kress suggests that, though we still call them "books," those texts that we produce now are somehow incomplete without the participation of the student, unlike the texts that were published in the past. Through that participation, the meaning of the text is finalized. When Kress argues that these texts are influenced and shaped by the logic of the screen, he is referring to the interactivity of the text. For instance, as you type on the personal computer, you can watch as you manipulate what is projected onto the screen. Similarly, with what Kress calls "contemporary books," readers manipulate the text on the page in front of them.

Perhaps the most notable change regarding the consumption of texts, however, is the fact that this interaction is no longer limited to the documents

appearing on a printed page. In fact, newspapers, academic articles, essays, and other forms of literature can now be largely viewed digitally, on a computer screen, transmitted electronically through the internet. This means of accessing published texts is not limited to contemporary texts, but to texts published throughout history. For example, while searching JSTOR, an electronic database of academic articles, I found that I had access to texts that were published in prominent academic journals from the early 20th century, approximately 100 years before the creation of an electronic JSTOR database. These texts predate the digital media tools that I used to access them. Still, digitally-based new media technologies allowed these historical texts to be converted into a digital format and transmitted through the internet. This allows for two points of access: 1) an original printed volume in a library, and 2) a personal computer with an internet connection.

In addition to offering additional points of access, new media technologies have also changed the way we read, interact, and interpret texts. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of hypertexts. Many scholars are examining different aspects of hypertexts, many of whom have unique insights that allow us not only to define what hyperlinks or hypertexts are, but to examine how they function in written texts today. For example, Landow explains:

> hypertext is properly described as multisequential or multilinear rather than as nonlinear writing . . . hypertext is an information technology in which a new element, the link, plays the defining role, for all the chief practical, cultural, and educational characteristics of this medium derive from the fact that linking creates new kinds of connectivity and reader choice. (p. 154)

The reader has a great deal of power when reading the hypertexts. The information that is presented to the reader is directly contingent upon the links that he or she selects, and the order in which they are selected. Unlike more traditional texts that are intended to be read straight through from the first to the final page, hypertexts provide many electronic connections, each of which leads the reader to another body of information. This body then offers links which may lead the reader to a completely different body of information (and so on and so forth). When the reader reaches the "end," he or she may start from the beginning again, selecting different links and charting a different course through the text.

Although there are some printed texts, like the children's stories that allow readers to determine the ending of the story based on the decisions they made as they read, the possibilities for these texts are finite. That is to say, there are only a limited number of potential journeys, with two or three possible endings, that the reader can experience. With hypertexts, on the other hand, the links are more numerous and can lead, not only to other places within the particular text that is being read, but to other texts in cyberspace. Hocks (2003) argues that hypertexts are "internetworked writing—writing that involves the intertwining of production, interaction, and publication" (p. 631). To elaborate, hypertexts are intricately designed, consisting of several threads of thought that are woven into a complex web. The author and the reader, then, co-construct meaning—the author by placing links within different portions of the text which will lead readers to different places in cyberspace, and readers by choosing which links they will follow. These threads, as Hocks explains in her article, can lead to different places within the single

publication, but can also lead the reader to other relevant publications (i.e. webpages, other academic articles, etc.). In short, hypertexts have a unique capability of creating an intertextual reading experience that grants the reader access to other texts that the author feels are relevant to the subject matter and that will shape the reader's understanding of ideas that are presented throughout the original text, whether it is a story, an article, an essay, a webpage, a videogame, or an electronic book.

Distribution

The distribution of new media texts, as observed in the case studies, refers primarily to the manner by which information is stored for later access, while the consumption of the information concerns how the information is accessed and engaged by readers.

Traditionally, the distribution of a text occurred by physically printing a text onto paper, binding it, and then placing the volume in a library or bookstore where it could then be accessed by potential consumers. However, many texts can now be accessed digitally through library databases that are largely available online. All forms of literature, from e-zines (electronic magazines), local newspapers, academic journals, and even full-length books can now be accessed online, without ever touching a physical copy of the text on paper.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the ability to store these texts digitally is a result of binary code. Though much of this encoding currently occurs automatically, often unbeknownst to the author of a text, this system is the foundation on which our wealth of knowledge is digitally stored. Lunenfeld explains that this process is

capable of indicating two possible states or conditions—'0' or '1' or 'off' or 'on'—the binary mode of cybernetic calculation might appear to resemble this duality which is, in essence, the dualism of thesis and antithesis . . . On the digital frontier, the endless alternation of off/on, a system of closed and open switches, never generates a true synthesis; it simply impels the regeneration of the system. (p. xviii)

According to Lunenfeld, this binary system is the key to the storing of all information digitally, despite the fact that many people do not realize that it is occurring. Any information stored on a personal computer—images, sounds, or words—are converted by computer software into lines of binary code. When stored on a mass storage device, like a computer hard drive or USB flash drive, the computer saves the series of 0s and 1s. When opened, the computer program reads the line of code and then translates it into the image, sound, or text that can be recognized by the reader. This method of translating and storing information is the foundation of digitally-based new media technologies and is the key to storing and accessing information electronically.

With that very basic understanding of binary code, we can then more adequately identify new media technologies that allow us to store and access these bodies of information. As stated previously, these technologies include hard drives and USB flash drives, as well as any software package or computer program that provides access to these documents (Selfe, 2007; Kress, 2003; Alexander, 2006).

Function

   For the purposes of this investigation, function is concerned with how the texts themselves communicate with the reader. For example, texts may communicate aurally, textually, or visually, depending on the format in which it is published. Webtexts may include streaming video feeds, or textbooks may be accompanied by a CD-Rom or DVD that allows the reader to experience the text in a different way. Kress explains that the information that is expressed through a written text today "is presented through image more than through writing—and writing and image are given different representational and communicational functions" (p. 7). In short, the use of electronic-based new media technologies has led to the creation of multimodal texts. That is to say, these texts communicate using images and sounds in addition to written words. Hocks argues, that "new media requires a complex relationship between verbal and visual meanings . . . We need to recognize that these new media and the literacies they require are hybrid forms" (p. 630). Until recently, adding images into books was expensive and difficult, and therefore most texts communicated in only one mode—written alphabetic language. This concept is explained further by Kress, who suggests that "given that the communicational world around us is moving to a preference for image in many domains, the new technology facilitates, supports and intensifies that preference . . . Multimodality is made easy, usual, 'natural' by these technologies" (p. 5). New media allows us, for the first time, to incorporate images and sounds into texts easily and at a relatively low cost. Now instead of simply reading a text, new media allows us to watch and listen to a text as well.

The term "multimodal" refers to the ability to communicate in multiple ways, often by appealing to two or more of the reader's senses. If we consider the traditional essays that have been written by students in the classroom for generations, we can observe that the text communicates primarily by spelling out words in an alphabetic language. This type of text would be considered mono-modal, presenting its message to the reader in only one form. However, when these texts are published online, the author may integrate streaming audio recordings to support the text's argument. In this event, the text becomes multimodal because it is now communicating through the written words as well as the audio. This is the case in Selfe's article, "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing" (2009). In this article, Selfe references websites where her audience can access voice recordings that are mentioned throughout the article, allowing the reader to engage the text by listening to the examples she refers to.

Generally, multimodal texts and technologies can operate through the use of three different modes: textual, visual, and aural (Selfe, Fleischer, & Wright, 2007, p. 13-16). The textual mode refers to the ability to communicate through the components of an alphabetic language that readers decode or interpret based on their knowledge of the language in which it is written. The visual mode communicates through a semiotic system of still and moving images that readers can interpret based upon what they see (e.g. photographs, videos, charts, graphs, etc.). Finally, the aural mode communicates through auditory stimuli that readers can interpret based upon what they can hear (e.g. audiobooks, tape recordings, video soundtracks, etc.). Though this discussion will most often refer to these three

modes, modes of communication are not limited to textual, visual, or aural. Spoken discourse, for example, requires the author to present information in an oral mode; texture can become a mode of communication when discussing braille texts, where a document must be interpreted by feeling a series of raised marks on the page. Texture can also play a role in the type of parchment on which a document is printed when the type of parchment is selected by the author to communicate something to his audience (as is the case for documents with a glossy finish). As new technologies emerge, new texts can be created, and new modalities are brought to our attention. I have selected to discuss textual, visual, and oral more specifically because they are the most popular modes of communication that concern the college writing classroom, which is the context in which this investigation was conducted.

The Rhetoric of Multimodal Composition

James Kinneavy (1980) was one of the first scholars to express the desire to use rhetoric to legitimize composition as a field of academic study. He writes, "Composition is so clearly the stepchild of the English department that it is not a legitimate area of concern in graduate studies . . . It does suggest one clear hypothesis: there is no definite concept of what the basic foundations of composition are" (p. 1-2). To be recognized by other academic disciplines, composition must be informed by some type of theory that establishes foundation on which scholarship could be built. As a result of this requirement, scholars began to draw from the western rhetorical tradition to establish a foundation that would legitimize composition. For this reason it is important to understand the influence that

rhetorical theory has had on composition in the past and how that influence continues in the 21st century with the growing awareness of visual rhetoric, new media theory, and the nature of multimodal texts.

Composition, as an academic field of study, has been traditionally restricted by the boundaries of what writing was perceived to be. For many years writing referred to the creation of a document utilizing a complex alphabetic system that communicated primarily through written language (Selfe, Fleischer & Wright, 2007, p. 13). However, in recent years, new media technologies have made it increasingly possible to create documents that communicate not only through an alphabetic system of letters and words, but also through images and sounds. For that reason, this dissertation must examine the rhetoric of written words, visuals, and sounds to understand how we have come to redefine writing, the writing classroom, and the realm of composition as a whole.

According to Erika Lindemann (2001), language allows humans to explore, reflect, and share experiences which create knowledge of themselves and of society as a whole (p. 6). After creating that knowledge, language then offers a means to transfer that knowledge from one individual to another and, in the case of written language, across great spans of time. Lindemann writes that language "can also separate us, especially when our use of language creates misunderstanding or deceives. Writing teachers must place themselves at the center of this paradox, encouraging their students to use language effectively and for a variety of purposes" (p. 7). She suggests that writing instructors must teach their students how to communicate effectively in a variety of rhetorical situations, one of which is writing in

new media contexts (e.g. webpages, blogs, and word processing programs on personal computers) where multimodal communication becomes increasingly important. New media technologies offer writers an unprecedented opportunity to manipulate the visual appearance of a text as a whole as well as the characteristics of the words themselves. However, texts written for various rhetorical situations require different types of visualizations. For this reason it is important to teach writers of the importance of the term kairos.

Kairos is a term that explains that different rhetorical situations call for different styles of communication. Isocrates argues that "oratory is good only if it has the qualities of fitness for the occasion, propriety of style, and originality of treatment" (p. 73). In other words, a single use of language is not suited for all occasions. However, as Isocrates explains, orators rely on different styles of speech to communicate effectively with their audiences. Currently in the field of composition, writers, too, must learn to use different words, styles, visuals, and audio components to reinforce their message. However, while different uses of language are appropriate for different situations, it can also be argued that different styles of instruction are required for writing in different modes—business letters, personal correspondence, persuasive essays, etc. It can also be argued, in the realm of education, that no two writing courses are the same even when dealing with the same focus or type of writing. In other words, no two college writing courses are identical because they are composed of different groups of students, with different experiences, and with different needs. Therefore, before we examine writing in the

classroom contexts, it is important to first delve into the term kairos to understand how it facilitates the message of a text in textual, visual, and aural modes.

Textual Writing

Textual writing is what Selfe, Fleischer and Wright (2007) refer to as "writing with words" (p.13) and is the type of writing that is most often taught in the composition classroom. Because this form of writing operates through language presented in an alphabetic form, it must conform to certain rules to ensure that the reader can access the author's message. Kostelnick and Roberts (1998) write that "using conventions helps you satisfy your readers' expectation and also helps readers understand the message . . . readers rely on conventional practices for punctuation, grammar, and spelling to follow from one idea to the next" (p. 34). Failure to abide by grammar rules and punctuation can lead to a miscommunication and undermine the credibility of the author. Consider the following sentences:

1. I like pizza, pickles and ice cream.

2. I like pizza, pickles, and ice cream.

In the first sentence, the audience may interpret the meaning to be that the author likes to eat pizza and pickles in his or her ice cream. The second sentence states that the author likes pizza, pickles, and ice cream, but not mixed together. While the words themselves are the same, the punctuation between these two sentences differs by the placement of one comma, and this comma alters meaning that is perceived by the reader. Furthermore, texts that communicate solely through written words rely on authors' ability to abide by the rules that govern the use of language to ensure that the text communicates effectively with their reader.

The conventional practices that Kostelnick and Roberts discuss are a representation of kairos operating in a text composed of words. In the example mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the punctuation must be appropriate in the message authors are attempting to convey in their text. In addition to the punctuation, multiple meanings can be attributed to a single word. For example, the word "bear" functions as a noun, meaning a specific carnivorous or omnivorous animal. However, the word "bear" can also function as a verb, meaning to hold, possess or carry. The meaning can change depending on the context in which the word is used. Furthermore other rhetoricians suggest that, whether speaking or writing, authors should choose their words carefully to ensure that the message is received by their audience.

Visual Writing

Visual composing, or writing with "moving and still images" (Selfe, Fleischer, & Wright, 2007, p. 15), is another modality through which texts can communicate their messages. Though many scholars argue that new media technologies have increased emphasis on visual modes in written communication recently, the visual/verbal relationship has been long standing and historically complex. Thomas Sheridan and Gilbert Austin are two rhetoricians whose work from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflect a consciousness of the visual that predates the multimodal technologies of today.

Austin is the rhetorician who suggested that in spoken discourse, gestures are instrumental to effective communication with a speaker's audience. He also introduces a list of symbols that can be placed in the margins of a speech to remind

the speaker which gestures can be presented at different times for maximum impact. Through his work, "Chironomia," Austin draws the attention of his audience to the positions of the speaker's hands and feet, noting the nature of movement in between (Austin, 2001, p. 891-897). Though his primary goal is to express the importance of visuals in oratory, he also indirectly acknowledges the importance of the visual in a written text and the apparent weakness of language when it is the sole mode of communication. He writes, "For the greater convenience and precision, each figure is numbered in the Plate, and referred to accordingly in the following notation" (p. 891). Here Austin is referring his readers to an engraving which depicts each of the gestures he discusses in his text. In so doing, this written text then becomes multimodal because it is designed to be read and interpreted in conjunction with the images that he provides, offering both a verbal explanation of the gestures and a visual depiction as well. This is important to note because, while one could argue that the creation of electronic multimodal new media technologies allows us to more readily create multimodal texts, there are multimodal texts that predate the electronic media.

While Austin certainly emphasizes the importance of visuals in communication, Sheridan is arguably the first rhetorician to theorize the significance of visual rhetoric in written language. He argues that that language is a means "by which all that passes in the mind of one man, may be manifested to another . . . everyone who can read knows that our thoughts may be communicated by visible marks, as well as by articulate sounds" (p. 881). According to Sheridan, letters are visual representations of the spoken sounds of a language. The combinations of

42

letters are visual representations of spoken words of the language, which bear some sort of meaning. Assuming that we accept Sheridan's logic, even written alphabetic language crosses the boundary into the realm of the visual. Today the word processing programs on personal computers validate Sheridan's views. These programs allow authors to manipulate font styles in ways that can drastically impact the message of a text.

Much like the verbal conventions that govern the use of words, visual conventions influence how readers interpret or perceive texts. Kostelnick and Roberts argue that "many visual conventions you've undoubtedly learned already; others you've probably observed in documents you've received" (p. 35). These visual conventions govern every aspect of visual design from the overall layout of the information on the page to the minute visual cues, like superscripts, bold print, and bullets. As Sheridan points out, all written alphabetic language is inherently visual; the "sensible marks," or letters, represent sounds and utterances associated with a spoken language (Sheridan, 2001, p. 883). Every impression of every mark carries meaning that must be observed and interpreted by the reader.

Aural Writing

While some instructors have begun to integrate visual writing into their composition classrooms, few address the growing importance of sound in multimodal writing. Audio texts, according to Selfe, Fleischer, and Wright, "use the modality of sound as the primary semiotic channel. Compositing these texts involves a series of broadly recursive production processes that—in some ways— resemble those involved in more conventional alphabetic composing" (p. 14). Much

like visuals, which can serve a variety of rhetorical functions, sounds can also communicate many of the same concepts as written language and making audio texts is a recursive process. When composing an audio text, many of the writing processes are nearly identical to those used in writing a traditional essay using alphabetic language. For instance, when outlining, brainstorming, and scripting audio essays, the writer uses alphabetic language to plan, organize, and express its message. This can be observed in the case of audio books, when authors or actors record a reading of a book that may then be consumed aurally. However, as we can observe, the audio book itself could not exist until the author penned the story. The audio book utilizes sound to communicate its message to the audience, but the writing process that leads to the creation of the text is relatively unchanged; the author still has to write the book. Such is the case for screen plays and radio shows as well, where the scenes must be scripted before they can be performed or recorded.

Aural, or audio, texts refer to any communication that is accessed by listening. While many visual texts, like streaming videos or movies, do contain an aural component, audio texts communicate primarily through sound. Audio books, songs, and speeches are all forms in which these texts can present themselves.

New Media Pedagogies

New media pedagogies are difficult to define without first examining the pedagogies, identified by scholars like Britton, Berlin, Kent, McCommiskey, and Flowers, from which they have grown. Despite their new feel and progressive nature, new media pedagogies are largely an extension of other more traditional

instructional theories, strategies, and practices. With that in mind, it is important to

examine the other pedagogies that have inspired the shift into what I call new media

pedagogies.

Expressive Pedagogy

Expressivist pedagogy is generally understood as the approach that allows

individual authors to position themselves within their own writing. This approach to

writing instruction "employs free writing, journal keeping, reflective writing, and small

group dialogic collaborative response to foster a writer's aesthetic, cognitive, and

moral development" (Burnham, 2001, p. 19). Expressive writing values the voice of

individual writers, requiring them to write about a topic by drawing from their

personal perspectives, experiences, and beliefs (Elbow, 1998). Often related to

what Butler calls the poetic mode, the use of personal journals and reflections to

generate ideas for writing are highly individualized. As a result, every topic that the

authors' write about is inseparable from their own unique identity.   Furthermore, the

expressive approach to writing demands that there is some sense of the writer

present in the composition, even in writing that is associated with academic or

research purposes.

For many scholars, expressivist pedagogy involves the teaching of what

Paley describes as "I writing" or writing about personal experiences (e.g. personal

narratives). Often expressive pedagogy is related to the teaching of poetic or

creative writing, requiring writers to use artful language and thick description to

express themselves (Burnham, 2001, p. 26-27; McComiskey, 2000, p.1-4). This

aspect of expressivist pedagogy informs how new media pedagogies have been

45

used in the writing classroom to "elevate the importance of ordinary human experience" (Paley, 2001, p. 10) and to express it through multimodal technologies.

New media writing pedagogies are predominantly focused on teaching multimodal writing, or texts that communicate information through two or more modes—most often through words and elements of visual design (Takayoshi and Selfe, 2007). These instructional approaches seek to utilize new media technologies to teach students that writing is not just about words and grammar anymore, but that sounds, visuals, and hypertexts are increasingly important as well. Evidence of this is offered in the sample writing assignments presented by Selfe, Fleischer, and Wright. The directions for their first assignment, the audio autobiography, is as follows:

> Compose an audio essay that explores the role of sound in your own personal literacy history and that will help class members gain a broader understanding of your own literacy practices and values. This project should not simply record and reproduce sounds. Rather it should use sound to tell a story, make meaning about, create some commentary on, offer some insight into your literacy practices and values. Most importantly, it should help listeners reflect on what they are hearing. . . the assignment is wide open— and purposefully so! I want you to exercise your own creativity in the service of teaching us all something about literacy. (Selfe, Fleischer, and Wright, 2007, p. 19)

Here we see a description of an actual writing assignment used in a first-year college writing course. In this sample assignment, the instructor embraces new

media pedagogy by establishing an assignment that encourages students to communicate through a mode other than words. This assignment also requires students to use digitally-based new media technologies to "record some sound on digital sound recording equipment" and to edit their recorded sounds with Audacity, a sound editing computer software (Selfe, Fleischer, and Wright, 2007, p. 20). Expressivist pedagogy presents itself in the subject matter of the assignment—autobiography. For this assignment, students are still asked to incorporate their own independent experiences into their classroom assignments, similar to the goals of more traditional narratives.

<div align="center">*Collaborative Pedagogy*</div>

Collaborative pedagogy is another instructional approach that has influenced the way that we teach writing, particularly when we consider the importance of peer editing in the writing process. Many scholars, like McComiskey and Howard, have argued that all writing is a social activity that is greatly influenced by the culture of the group (Howard, 2001, p. 54; McComiskey, 2000, p. 20-23). Furthermore, each writing classroom consists of a different group of individuals who then create a different classroom culture that wields some influence over the type of writing that occurs.

Advocated by many scholars from many disciplines, collaborative pedagogy is not limited to the writing classroom. This instructional strategy is student-centered, allowing students, to some extent, to manage their own educations (Howard, 2001, p. 56-59). It is founded on the principle that knowledge is socially constructed and that conversations and collaborative projects allow students to

"learn more and retain more" of the information than other pedagogical strategies. While group discussions play a role in the composition classroom, much as in other disciplines, the most common collaborative activity that takes place in this specific context is peer response to writing. In this activity, students may be required to draft an essay, seek constructive feedback from other students in the class, and then utilize that feedback to improve the original. (Howard, 2001, p. 54)

Collaborative pedagogy has also contributed a great deal to how new media writing pedagogies have begun to use technology to support collaborative learning online. Recently some scholars have begun to note the similarities and differences associated with face-to-face discussions in the conventional classroom context with those that occur online. Gay (2000) explains,

in the conventional classroom, we had a lively whole-class discussion as students worked toward positioning themselves on [certain] issues . . . After our face-to-face discussion, we returned to the networked classroom to try to clarify and support various positions. . . [Computer-mediated communication] makes it possible for all students to voice themselves and hear difference in ways not possible in a conventional classroom setting. (p. 151&157)

In Gay's case, computer-mediated discussion boards and chats were conducted in a computer lab where each student gained access to discussions through network internet connections. However, these discussion boards and chats have also been utilized in online distance education courses to facilitate conversations between students in different cities, states, and countries.

48

New media writing pedagogies, as can be observed through this specific case, are less concerned with creating a new way of teaching and seem to be more focused on using multimodal digital media and new media technologies to support traditional pedagogical methods. As we can observe through this case of online discussion boards, the technology is intended to integrate communication into the classroom in a different way. While Gay does suggest that the technology allows an element of honesty and consideration to emerge in online discussions, the basic principles of collaboration remain the same.

Process and Post-Process Pedagogy

Teaching the writing process remains, even today, as one of the most common instructional methods adopted by composition instructors in both secondary and post-secondary curricula. It embraces the concept that writing is a process of evolution in which drafting and revising meet to improve the overall quality of the text. Elbow, who embraces a prototypical process view, explains that writers should "think of writing as an organic developmental process in which you start writing at the very beginning—before you know your meaning at all—and encourage your words to gradually change and evolve" (p. 15). Teaching the writing process involves the introduction of a variety of prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas, followed by drafting a text. Once the draft is complete, the text then must go through stages of revision, at which time the author revisits the text, corrects the grammatical errors, and improves on the original draft.

Though process pedagogy still has a great deal of influence in current writing classrooms, some scholars have noted a sharp shift from process into a post-

process approach to writing (McComiskey, 2000, p. 49; Matsuda, 2003, p. 74). According to Thomas Kent (1999), "Most post-process theorists hold three assumptions about the act of writing: 1.) writing is public; 2.) writing is interpretive; and 3.) writing is situated" (Kent 1). Here Kent claims that writing is an act of communication between the writer and potential readers (public) that requires consideration to "make sense" of what is communicated (interpretive) from a specific perspective or within a particular context (situated). To some extent Kent's focus shifts from writing as a generative act to the larger concept of what the language is communicating.

In addition to focusing on the communicative function of writing, post process pedagogy also seems to blend the concepts of earlier product pedagogy and the process pedagogy. For example, Matsuda argues that writing "constitutes a process of some sort and that this process is generalizable, at least to the extent that we know when to intervene in someone's writing process or to the extent that we know the process that experienced or 'expert' writers employ as they write" (p. 74). Here Matsuda embraces the importance of process pedagogy in writing instruction. However, he continues to explain that writing is more than process. Matsuda explains that writing instructors should assist their students with the development of a writing process that works well for them, but that students will not always have the time to employ process writing and will not use the same process for different tasks. In this sense, product pedagogy comes into play, where instructors teach students to produce a clean, well-written text (p. 69). After observing that product pedagogy and process pedagogy are still relevant, Matsuda suggests that there are elements of

each that remain in post-process methods. When this is blended with the position of

Kent, we come to understand post-process writing pedagogies as the methods that

allow us to teach students to produce texts, by employing different elements of

writing and revision processes, for specific situations and in specific contexts.

Given this general definition of post-process pedagogies, I argue new media

methods to writing instruction are examples of post-process pedagogies, particularly

as instructors apply these technologies to specific writing contexts. Takayoshi and

Selfe, for example, argue that we should teach our students to write for digital

environments that use multiple modalities to convey meaning. By the very nature of

this argument, Takayoshi and Selfe are advocating a post-process approach to

writing, teaching students how to produce communicative texts intended to be

produced for and consumed in a specific "digital" context. It is important, therefore,

to make note of this connection as we work carefully to define "new media writing

pedagogies."

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Constructivist Research Paradigm

This investigation is composed of three descriptive case studies, each of which is grounded in a constructivist research paradigm (Cresswell, 1998; Hatch, 2002). Constructivism, according to Berger and Luckmann (1967), is how human beings can come to understand the world in which they exist. Berger and Luckmann argue that "the reality of everyday life further presents itself as an intersubjective world, a world that is shared with others" (p. 23). They go on to explain that we come to understand the world through individual experience, with the knowledge that others are doing the same elsewhere. Although our realities do not always overlap, the individual experiences of others do have an impact on our own simply because we are aware of their existence. This concept is later echoed by Cresswell (1998), who argues that meanings "are not simply imprinted on individuals, but are formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives" (p. 21).

By including multiple case studies, this investigation is demonstrating an awareness of multiple realities. Although each case study will focus on a different classroom setting, the common subject matter (first-year college writing) will provoke some discussion between each of the completed case studies. According to Cresswell, as well as Berger and Luckmann, this interaction between each of the studies serves to "co-construct" the findings of this study (Hatch, 2002), providing a

better understanding of the current instructional methods favored by instructors of first-year college writing courses than was available prior to the investigation.

The social constructivist paradigm has informed the methodology of this study in several ways. First, it determined that this dissertation would include multiple case studies (Hatch, 2002). This approach is employed so the study can replicate the meaning-making process that is observed by social constructivists in the real world. Multiple case studies reflect multiple realities and, when these case studies are tied together by a common subject, as in this project, they engage the multiple realities with one another. In the case of this investigation, it is necessary to acknowledge that no two writing classrooms are identical. Instructors may embrace different instructional philosophies that inform their pedagogical decisions (expressionists, cognitivists, etc.), classes are conducted in different physical environments, and instructors at different institutions are members of different communities which may influence how college writing courses are taught. Therefore, to more effectively define the role of new media in first-year college writing classrooms, this investigation examined multiple cases, from three different instructors teaching in three very different classroom contexts at three universities. Like most qualitative studies, this research produced detailed accounts of each of the three sampled cases. Though these findings do communicate something about the current state of college writing pedagogies, it is important to note that these findings are not generalizable to all college writing courses taught at postsecondary colleges and universities.

Second, the social constructivist paradigm led me to adopt the primary data collection procedure for this investigation—naturalistic observations—because it allowed me to document all classroom practices and procedures. This form of observation is important to ensure that the researcher has as little impact on the classroom as possible. Hatch (2002) explains that "while it is true that the very presence of a researcher makes any natural context unnatural to some degree, researchers who take on the role of the teacher, teacher assistant, or student in school-based studies will influence the way that life plays out in those settings more than the observer who acts as a fly on the wall" (p. 73). To ensure that my presence did not impact the findings of these case studies, I assumed the role of a non-participant observer, watching but not contributing to the classroom activities in any way. Doing so ensured that the findings of this investigation accurately reflected the instructors' regular classroom procedures and that the classroom activities and lectures that I observed were in no way influenced by my presence, unlike participant observers who wield some control over the activities and events that occur around them.

Third, the instructional practice of participating instructors during scheduled classes offers a great deal of insight. However, to fully understand the pedagogical practices of instructors, it is important to also examine how instructors engage students outside of the scheduled class time. For this reason, I have also collected and analyzed course artifacts, like syllabi and handouts, to examine how the participating instructors communicate with their students outside of the classroom. Although students produced artifacts in each of the cases, the artifacts analyzed for

54

this dissertation were only the artifacts that the instructor introduced to the classroom to facilitate instruction. I originally thought that this would allow me to limit the investigation to those materials that would best reflect the instructors' pedagogies.

Part of the data analysis of course artifacts involved identifying the medium in which the documents were presented. Some instructors included both an electronic syllabus, intended to be accessed on the computer, and a print syllabus intended to be viewed on paper. As Barbara Johnstone (2002) explains, the social relationships created through online correspondence are often different from those established through printed correspondence and face-to-face conversation (p. 168). Essentially, course syllabi, handouts, blogs, and webpages all serve as a line of communication between instructors and their students. Therefore this correspondence serves as an extension of the classroom, providing additional insight into the pedagogical practices of instructors beyond that which is observable during scheduled classes and conferences with students.

Finally, interviews with the participating instructors serve as the final method of data collection for this investigation, and also reflect the importance of the social constructivist paradigm. The interviews serve a dual purpose. First, interviews will provide an opportunity for member checking, allowing the participants of the study to "confirm the credibility of the information" (Cresswell and Miller, 2000, p. 127). As with any study, the findings of this dissertation must be valid. By verifying the findings of this study, I can avoid making assumptions that misrepresent the actual positions of my participants. Second, these interviews reflect a balance between

structured and unstructured questions. While the unstructured questions allow the

participants to clarify issues within their own classroom context, the structured

interview questions allow this dissertation to engage the responses of each

participant with one another, forming a discussion that will co-construct its findings.

Furthermore, to ensure accuracy, all interviews have been recorded and transcribed

to ensure that all instructor responses are accurately represented in this dissertation

Context of the Investigation

As stated previously, this dissertation consists of three case studies,

examining first-year college writing courses conducted in three very different

classroom settings. Each case study has been conducted on a different college

campus. However, to ensure that there is a degree of cohesion among the studies,

this investigation has limited its scope to that of three public universities located in

western Pennsylvania, all of which are affiliated with the Pennsylvania State System

of Higher Education (PASSHE). For the purposes of this project, the institutions are

identifiable only through the following pseudonyms: Red Raptor University (RRU),

Slick Pebble University (SPU), and Allegheny Highland University (AHU). Each

institution hosts an academically, socioeconomically, and culturally diverse student

population, drawing a large number of students from the three largest cities in

Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Erie), as well as students from the rural

communities in between. The diverse student body at each institution, derived from

a variety of socioeconomic and cultural environments, consists of individuals who

are products of different experiences. Although these experiences often overlap and

engage with occurrences in the lives of others, many formative experiences are

uniquely theirs (Berger & Luckamnn, 1967; Hatch, 2002). Because these students

often have different needs, a diverse classroom is key to understanding whether

instructors make decisions to use multimodal new media technologies based on the

perceived need of their students (Tate, Rupiper, & Schick, 2001, p. vii). Though the

students did not participate in this dissertation, it is important to understand how the

instructors' perceptions of their students influenced the instructors' decisions to use

multimodal texts or technologies in the classroom.

    In addition to diverse student populations, the overall size of the institutions

must be comparable to ensure cohesiveness between each case. For example, an

Ivy League, Research I institution cannot be accurately compared with a small state-

funded university with a quarter of the population and with fewer resources. With

these factors in mind, this research project sampled universities with an

undergraduate population between 8,000 and 14,000 students. All three universities

are affiliated with PASSHE, are comparable in size, and service a similar student

population, allowing for easier cross-case analysis. Furthermore, after consulting

the PASSHE website (www.passhe.edu), each of the 14 universities that are

included in the PASSHE system are united by similar goals, all instituted by a

common Board of Governors. This means that, although each of the observations

has been conducted at different, independent universities, there will be adequate

similarities between each institution to allow some cross-case analysis.

    While it is important to acknowledge the institutional context for this study, it is

perhaps even more important to define the classroom contexts from which these

case studies have evolved. The pilot study, "Digital Media in First-Year

Composition" (Ruefman, 2009), discussed briefly in Chapter One, indicated that instructors at the three sampled colleges adapted their pedagogies to suit three different classroom settings. These settings included traditional classrooms, computer mediated classrooms, and digital/online classrooms. Though different technologies are employed by instructors in each of these classroom contexts, the pilot study demonstrated that students engaged multimodal texts and technologies in each. The findings of this study were based solely on the analysis of course artifacts and provided insight necessary to identify the three classroom contexts that were examined in this investigation. Nine instructors volunteered syllabuses, handouts, and other materials for analysis. The nature of the assignments and the description of classroom goals provided clues as to the context in which each instructor's first-year college writing course was conducted. Based on the discourse analysis of these course materials, I concluded that most first-year writing courses were taught in one of three settings: (1) a traditional classroom with limited or no computer access, (2) a computer lab in which every student had access to a personal computer, and (3) an online, digital classroom that could be accessed only by use of a personal computer.

The Traditional Classroom Context

The first classroom examined for this project was a traditional classroom. These classrooms, in their purest sense, would offer no access to multimodal new media technologies and would offer little more than desks, chairs, and a chalkboard. However, in recent years, administrators at many colleges have added media stations that grant instructors access to certain digitally-based, new media

technologies (i.e. overhead projectors, desktop publishing programs, audio/video equipment, internet access, PowerPoint presentations, etc.) in most traditional classrooms (Kemp, 2000; Moran, 2001). Despite these updates, I refer to these classrooms as "traditional" because not every student has access to the same technologies during scheduled classes and most must rely on the traditional writing tools that have been in use for generations (pens, pencils, paper, etc.).

The Computer Mediated Classroom Context

In recent years, as the number of computer labs available on college campuses has increased, some instructors have been able to move the writing classroom into the computer-mediated classroom. This classroom context is best defined as the space in which every student, as well as the instructor, has access to a personal computer during scheduled class time. While the technologies present in each classroom are not universal, computer mediated classrooms generally offer each student access to the internet and word processing programs.

The Online/Digital Classroom Context

Unlike traditional and computer mediated classrooms, online classrooms that exist only in digital form are a bit more difficult to define. With a variety of online programs available, classrooms in the digital world often utilize programs like Blackboard, WebCT, Moodle, and *Second Life*. While many online writing classrooms are composed of similar functions, schools making the move to institute classrooms on *Second Life* offer very different experiences. For the purposes of this investigation, I have defined the digital classroom online as any classroom that exists wholly in the virtual world. That is to say, there is no designated meeting

place, in a physical sense. Students can participate in the online classroom by logging onto computers in the library, at home, or in local web cafés. This classroom exists solely because of the new media technologies that the students must use to access it, allowing instruction to transcend geographical and political boundaries that limit student enrollment on the physical classroom.

Subject Selection

This project examines the influence of multimodal new media technologies on the pedagogical practices of three instructors of first-year college writing courses. Three instructors volunteered to participate in this project, each of whom was teaching a first-year college writing course in one of the three classroom contexts identified in the previous section, at one of three public universities affiliated with the PASSHE . Each of the participants also participated in the pilot study. As I began developing this dissertation, I contacted participants through email to request their continued cooperation. After a preliminary interview, each participant completed an informed consent form, as per the requirement of the IRB protocol approved by Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

To protect the privacy of each of the participants, this study identifies them only by the following pseudonyms: Aurora (traditional classroom at RRU), Scott (computer classroom at SPU), and Tyra (online classroom at AHU).

Instructors who agreed to participate in this study have all participated in the pilot study. Their continued cooperation was requested through an email that provided a basic overview of this project's goals, a link to the IRB Protocol, and the informed consent form posted on this dissertation's companion blog

(http://mediapedagogy.wordpress.com). When participants responded to this email, they were presented two printed copies of the informed consent form, one copy for my records and one for their reference. At no point was any instructor coerced to participate in this investigation and all were informed of their right to withdraw from this study at any time during or after data collection. The primary participants of this study are the instructors of the sampled college writing courses. Though students will be present during certain portions of data collection, I have not analyzed any student work or responses during classroom discussions. Instead, the focus was on how the instructors communicated with students, the rationale that led to the implementation of classroom activities, and the role of digitally-based new media technologies in writing instruction. All of the data that has been collected and analyzed in this dissertation focused on the instructors' perspective. Because the goal of this investigation was to learn more about college writing pedagogies, data were not assessed to determine the effectiveness of any participating instructor or of their instructional methods or philosophies.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

These case studies consisted of three data sources: document analysis of course artifacts, naturalistic observations, and individual interviews with participants. These multiple data sources provided adequate triangulation to ensure that this study was systematic and robust (Cresswell and Miller, 2000). Triangulating this investigation with multiple data sources was vital to validating the research, ensuring that the pedagogical implications and conclusions drawn from this study are credible. To further guarantee that this study's findings are indeed credible, the

multiple data sources that have been employed offer opportunities for triangulation, member checking, and allow for thick description of events to offer a more complete understanding of this investigation.

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources to "provide corroborating evidence" (Cresswell and Miller, 2000, p. 127). In other words, while one data source certainly provides a great deal of information, other sources must also be used to ensure that the information gathered is not misinterpreted and to ensure that all the relevant questions or concerns have been addressed. Observations, for example, have provided a wealth of information regarding the pedagogical practices of writing instructors for this investigation. However, the observations alone only provide a limited amount of information. If I observe that small group assignments play a role in the classroom lectures, I might conclude that this instructor favors collaborative learning. However, this conclusion would be based on my perception and would not necessarily reflect the goals of the instructor. When observations are complimented by individual interviews, however, instructors are offered an opportunity to explain their pedagogical practices and clarify any misconceptions that I, as the researcher, may have developed. Multiple data sources provide overlapping data that can effectively verify the findings, enhancing the accuracy and credibility of the study.

Artifact Analysis

Course documents—course syllabuses, handouts, webpages, online discussion boards, and other documents distributed to the students during scheduled class times—were the first data sources examined for this study. This

analysis offered important insight into how technologies support instructor

pedagogies both inside and outside the classroom. Because learning is not limited

to the classroom itself, it was necessary to examine any correspondence materials

that may have offered insight into the assignments completed outside scheduled

classes. This data source was vital to answering how instructors use multimodal

texts and technologies to support their instructional practices. Therefore, the

analysis of these course artifacts was conducted according to a rubric informed by

Barbara Johnstone's *Discourse Analysis*. She explains that social relationships

created through online correspondence are often different from those established

through printed correspondence and face-to-face conversation (Johnstone, 2002, p.

168). Therefore, the discourse medium selected by instructors can offer a great deal

of insight into how instructors communicate with their students (or conduct what they

consider communication), implications for how these communications reflect the

instructors' pedagogies, and the technologies with which the instructors are familiar.

These artifacts were approached as artifacts of correspondence and the rubric for

this analysis identifies the technologies used to create the text, the medium through

which the text was transmitted to class participants, as well as technologies that the

assignments themselves required students to utilize to fulfill the course objectives.

Following this initial review, the texts were then examined to determine textual,

graphic, and spatial elements of design (Kostelnick & Roberts, 1998), to determine

precisely to what extent instructors utilized multimodal texts to communicate with

their students. These findings provided information regarding the importance of

multimodal, new media texts and technologies in writing instruction, but also attested

to different manners that the sampled instructors, both directly and indirectly, used to teach students awareness of multimodal texts.

Naturalistic Observations

The largest body of data for these descriptive case studies involved observations of how instructors use multimodal texts or technologies during scheduled class time. These uses included classroom lectures or the presentation of course projects, as well as other uses that presented themselves through the data collection process. While these observations did not address how students meet or fail to meet their instructors' expectations, I observed what the instructors' expectations were of their students. These observations focused on how visual rhetoric and new media technologies had been integrated into the pedagogical practices of first-year college writing courses. I was a non-participant observer (Hatch & Stake, 2003, p. 445), documenting and reporting on the practices. To ensure the validity of this study, classes were observed on at least four occasions throughout the semester (Cresswell and Miller, 2000, p.127-128). Due to IRB protocols, recordings have not been made of any classroom observations because they would involve students in a way that is not intended for this investigation. However, these observations have been carefully documented through a rubric that observes the topics of course lectures, the technologies utilized to present information to students during class. The field notes were analyzed, similarly to the ethnographic methods observed in Shirley Brice Heath's *Ways With Words*. Much like her observations, these field notes have been transformed into descriptive

narratives that provide a very detailed account of my experiences in each of the classrooms.

Each course examined in this dissertation was observed on four separate occasions during the 2009-2010 academic year. These observations account for the technologies that are available in the classroom, technologies that are used by the instructor during scheduled class meetings, topics addressed in classroom lectures, and classroom activities that are assigned and observed during class time. A portion of the rubric then allowed for me to document the pedagogical implications as they became apparent and note any questions or comments as they presented themselves, allowing me to address these during the culminating interview at the end of this investigation.

Individual Interviews

Semi-structured individual interviews provided another data source for this study and served multiple purposes. First, interviews provided an opportunity for member checking, allowing the participants from each case study to "confirm the credibility of the information" that was accumulated (Cresswell and Miller, 2000, p. 127). Member checking through these interviews verified the pedagogical implications that I noted throughout this investigation, and provided me an opportunity to correct potential misconceptions or errors that might have been made during other portions of the data collection. Structured interview questions allowed me to compile similar information from all participants that facilitated the cross case analysis that occurs in Chapter 7. While these structured questions ensured that there was some cohesion between each of the classroom contexts, unstructured

interview questions were necessary to gain a more complete understanding of each

specific cases in Chapter 4, 5, and 6 (Lavelle and Zuecher, 2001, p. 381). A list of

questions may be observed in the appendix.

Interviews have been conducted in two phases. Phase one interviews took

place prior to any of the classroom observations and featured structured interview

questions intended to gain insight into the participants' instructional philosophies.

This phase ensured that similar information was compiled to allow for some cross-

case analysis, invoking a discussion that allows all cases to co-construct the findings

of this investigation, and allowing me to gain a better understanding of each of the

contexts that I was about to enter. Phase two interviews were conducted when each

observation was concluded. While some structured questions were included in this

conversation, the majority of the questions were unstructured, relating directly to

each participant's case. These interviews allowed me to understand how certain

experiences have influenced the development of each participant's pedagogical

decisions and offer an opportunity for the instructors to communicate what they feel

is important and relevant to this study. Interviews, for the purposes of this study,

have been selectively transcribed and important passages were woven into

Chapters 4-7.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

As with any qualitative inquiry, this investigation does not begin with a

hypothesis that must be refuted or confirmed. Instead, this study compiles data from

multiple sources and identifies "patterns of relationship" that present themselves as

the data is processed (Hatch, 2002, p. 10). This was accomplished by examining

the data through both inductive and deductive analytical processes and procedures.

Qualitative studies, like this one, are generally rooted in the data, meaning that the

findings arise from the data and are not artificially imposed by the researcher. As

this investigation progressed, each of the data sources was analyzed separately by

case—observations of the classroom contexts, interviews, and the course artifacts—

each providing significant preliminary conclusions. The findings of each data source

were then deductively compared to the findings of the other data sources, to

determine if the findings were supported by the data compiled from other sources

(Hatch, 2002). Despite the importance of deductive analysis, however, it was also

important to acknowledge that inductive analysis was vital to this investigation. In

other words, the data compiled was context specific. To facilitate the cross-case

analysis of this project, I acknowledged the specifics of each case and, through

some generalizations, compare and contrast the findings of each case with the

others (Hatch, 2002, p. 10). That is not to say that the findings of this investigation

are generalizable for all writing classrooms. Each case is specific to the particular

classroom in which a specific instructor teaches college writing. Inductive analysis

simply required me, as the researcher, to draw from the specifics the findings that

were generally stated.

Analysis was completed utilizing a three-part process advocated by Denzin &

Lincoln (1998): "data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification" (p.

180). As with any qualitative study, an immeasurable amount of data was compiled

from a single data source. Therefore, data reduction was a necessary first step that

allowed me to identify the most significant information that was relevant to this study.

67

For instance, the focus of this dissertation was on the influence of multimodal new media texts and technologies on the pedagogical decisions of college writing instructors. The data that was discussed in this dissertation must then be relevant to that purpose. Data reduction was the process that ensured that all the data presented was compatible with this study's focus. This has been accomplished by establishing a rubric that categorizes and codes the important information that has been compiled through each of the data collection processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Once this reduction procedure was applied, I was left with a much more manageable body of information.

The next step was data display. This refers to the decisions made to present the information gathered in a way that facilitates the analytical process. For example, the decision to create a table or graph that reflects which technologies were most commonly observed in each context displays the information in a different format that may make it easier to identify what is actually going on (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Data displays allowed me to examine the information in a way that makes the data more accessible. These data displays can then be presented to the audience to demonstrate the findings of the investigation. After creating these data displays, it was much easier to examine data and form conclusions in both case and cross-case analyses.

Finally, the conclusions that I drew must be verified. This is the final step in the analytical process. Based on the data that was analyzed, both inductively and deductively, this investigation evaluated the data to arrive at some conclusions. These conclusions were developed for each data set (inductively), and verified by

the findings of other data sources (deductively) to ensure that this investigation contributes to the broader academic discussion (Hatch 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Case Analysis

In the case analysis, each data source was addressed first through an inductive process that examines the data that was collected solely through that source. To accomplish this, data displays, like tables, were created using word processing and spreadsheet programs available on most personal computers. By creating a rubric, data compiled from classroom observations were reduced, while data displays presented the information in a manner that was more easily evaluated. Similarly, a rubric and table was generated to evaluate the data collected through artifact analysis of each case. A third data display was created by transcribing the interviews to allow the responses of each participant to be easily compared with one another. While each case was inductively analyzed, general preliminary findings were attributed to each data set. These findings were then evaluated deductively, confirming or refuting the findings of each data set, resulting in findings that are considerably more valid.

Cross-Case Analysis

In the cross-case analysis, the findings of each context were compared and contrasted with one another to arrive at a more complete understanding of how multimodal texts and technologies have influenced the pedagogies of instructors of first-year college writing courses. This was accomplished by implementing a deductive analysis of the information. For example, the structured interview

questions that were presented to each instructor offer an opportunity to easily

compare participant responses with one another, providing information about

specialized training and other experiences that have shaped instructor pedagogies.

It was also worth noting when significant similarities and differences occurred

between each of the classroom contexts examined in this investigation. To

accomplish this, the data compiled from each study was reduced further, including

only that information that was easily compared for the cross-case analysis.

Additional data displays were then created to present the findings of each case in a

way that could be more effectively compared, leading to the development of new

findings that have arisen from the final analysis.

<center>*The Importance of Triangulation*</center>

As data sets were analyzed, the importance of triangulation, discussed

previously by Hatch, Cresswell, and Miller (2000), becomes increasingly apparent.

As defined by Cresswell and Miller, "triangulation is a validity procedure where

researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of

information to form themes or categories in a study" (p. 126). This is observable in

this research project when the deductive analysis creates a dialogue between

multiple data sources to confirm the findings of each body of information and to

formulate the conclusions attributed to each case. The multiple data sources

(observations, interviews, and artifacts) were necessary to ensure that the findings

of this study were not overly dependent on one data source. For example, instructor

pedagogies often require students to do a great deal of work outside of class.

Though these activities were not observable during classroom observations,

<center>70</center>

assignments outside of class are still products of instructor pedagogies in each case. Had I based my findings solely on classroom observations, I would have neglected to note the importance of these assignments and what they communicated about each instructor's pedagogy. When the findings of the classroom observations are compared with the analysis of the course artifacts, a more complete understanding of the each instructor's pedagogy can be extrapolated from the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY ONE: THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

This case study examined the classroom of Aurora, a tenured Associate Professor at Red Raptor University (RRU). The course was conducted in a traditional classroom with limited access to digitally-based new media technologies.

Defining the Space

When I first entered the classroom at Red Raptor University, I observed immediately that *limited accessibility* to technology was very different than *no accessibility*. A media center, nestled in the front corner of the classroom, housed a desktop computer, combined DVD/VCR player, surround sound system, CD player, overhead projector, and document camera. In the corner opposite the media station, two color televisions, each with a combined VCR and DVD player, rested on dust covered carts. On the adjacent wall, a dry-erase board bridged the two with red, black, blue, and green markers scattered about the thin, silver tray that ran below. Above the board, a large projector screen was rolled up and anchored into the ceiling, as was a projector at the center of the room. Prior to the arrival of the instructor and students, the large classroom contained 45 desks arranged in a semicircle that remained open to the media station and marker board.

Following my initial review, this classroom exhibited access to more technologies than originally anticipated, but access was still limited. In short, with only one computer station in the classroom, the instructor was the only person who had regular access to technology during scheduled class time. Therefore, because

the students would not have access to these technologies during the class, I was comfortable in identifying this classroom generally as a traditional classroom.

Artifact Analysis

Over the course of this investigation, the instructor referred her students to three artifacts of correspondence which were volunteered for analysis—the course syllabus, course schedule, and sample magazine assignments. Each artifact was then evaluated in a two-step process that identified the visual elements of design— textual, spatial, and graphic—that were observed in each of the documents, followed by an analysis of the content found therein (Kostelnick & Roberts, 1998).

As discussed previously in Chapter Two, Kostelnick and Roberts argued that the three major elements of visual design—textual, spatial, and graphic—function in four different levels—intra, inter, extra, and supra—to communicate the message of a text (Kostelnick & Roberts, 1998). However, for the purposes of this dissertation, this visual analysis conducted for each artifact was limited to the textual, spatial, and graphic elements and did not extend into the four levels of design. Streamlining Kostelnick and Roberts' rubric was necessary to ensure that the data gathered was more manageable.

Course Syllabus

The course syllabus from the sampled classroom was presented in a form with relatively few variations in the textual, spatial, and graphic format. It was composed entirely in Calibri (a sans serif typeface) and the font size varied from 11-18 pt. Components of the text also were manipulated further by bolding headings and subheadings, and italicizing important information, keywords, and statements

offered by the instructor's interns. Spatially this text was arranged in a double-spaced, block paragraph form, with 1.25" margins (left and right) and 1" margins (top and bottom). There were no indentations, headings and subheadings were left aligned, as was the body text. The one exception was the intern (undergraduate teaching assistants) introductory statements that were italicized and centered beneath a brief description of the interns' duties. Outside of the necessary punctuation, bullets were the only graphic element observable in the syllabus design. Without images, logos, tables, textboxes, word art, gray scale, shading, or borders, the communicative function the course syllabus is restricted to the message conveyed solely through the words written in alphabetic language.

The course syllabus was presented by the instructor in two forms. First, it was distributed in a printed packet on the first day of class. Later, the instructor made an electronic copy of her syllabus available online. Although the format is identical in both contexts, the one notable difference between them was the presence of functional hypertexts. In the printed course packet, the syllabus displayed web addresses that directed students to other web-based resources (e.g. the instructor's email address, RRU's student handbook, RRU's library, and the Docutek electronic reading reserves). While the web addresses (URLs) are offered in the printed document, they appeared as hyperlinks in the electronic syllabus. Though this may not seem to be a significant difference in design, live hyperlinks greatly impacted the functionality of the text as a whole. For example, the electronic copy of this syllabus included live hyperlinks to the university's student handbook. As stated previously in Chapter Two, hyperlinks are defined as access points that

are used to connect multiple texts together (Landow, 2006). When those connections were used, the secondary text that was accessed (the student handbook in this case) wielded significant influence over the interpretation and understanding of the primary text (the syllabus). Although the printed text still provides information that allowed the reader to access those secondary documents, I must acknowledge that not every reader was guaranteed equal access to those materials due to limitations with computer and internet access. However, if readers have the capability to access the electronic syllabus (i.e. internet access and web browser), they are also able to access the secondary resources through the active hyperlinks.

The necessity to compare the subtle difference between the functionality of both an electronic and printed copy of the syllabus was not apparent until I found myself clicking on one of the live hyperlinks while reading through the electronic syllabus, despite the fact that I had already reviewed this material in printed form. After referring back to the printed course packet, I observed that the web address for this particular link was printed in that form as well. Why, then, did I not log onto the internet to examine the secondary text while reading the printed document, but felt the need to do so when the same web address appeared as a link in the electronic format? Furthermore, how would this subtle change influence the way that I interpreted the content of the two nearly identical syllabi?

Printed Syllabus

As with any syllabus, this course packet was divided into several sections that offered the contact information of the instructor, a course description, a list of

objectives, an explanation of the class dynamics, the theme for the section, the

qualifications of the instructor, an explanation of the role the interns (instructional

associates) assumed in class, a list of required readings, a list of suggested course

materials, explanation of required assignments, the grading scale, classroom

policies (regarding absences/late assignments/cell phones/ participation/etc.).

According to the printed syllabus, the emphasis of this college writing course

was on non-fiction prose. Students were expected to develop their ability to write,

according to the conventions of Standard Edited American English, and were

required to develop independent drafting, editing, and revision strategies. Students

were expected to (1) generate, develop and support a thesis or argument, (2)

integrate the ideas and words of other writers into their own texts, (3) organize their

texts in a logical manner, (4) include their own voice or ideas in their writing, (5) draw

reasonable conclusions, 6) use writing to think critically about a variety of topics, (7)

become more open-minded, and (8) become reflective writers and students. In

addition to setting these goals for her students, the syllabus also suggested that this

course was intended to be a preparatory class that allowed students be more

successful in other academic courses.

The syllabus also provides a list of required and suggested readings,

including the required text, *How to Hunt Ghosts*, by Joshua Warren. Much like the

syllabus, many of the readings were monomodal, relying almost exclusively on

written language to communicate with the reader. However, Warren's text was

decidedly multimodal because the written message was reinforced and enhanced by

the strategic placement of still images and photographs throughout his text, which

was required for this course. Along with the required readings, the instructor also listed several articles that students were expected to read throughout the semester, all of which were posted on the electronic reserve program powered by Docutek. Here, the instructor included the web address for the university's electronic reserve system, where students could access all readings relevant to the completion of this college writing course.

After offering the required and suggested course readings, the instructor then explained that the theme of this class was "the world of the paranormal." All writing assignments that students would be expected to complete, therefore, must have something to do with the paranormal. Here the instructor provides a list of examples that includes Bigfoot and other cryptids (unusual/unexplained animals), ghosts, strange earthly phenomena, lost civilizations, and psychics. The instructor also took the time in this section of the syllabus to explain what this class is not. She explained that her class was not about Satanism, any form of religious worship, black magic, or any other aspect that is affiliated with the "dark side of the paranormal," and stated that she did not wish to force any student to conduct research on those areas as they may be offensive to the sensibilities of others.

Given that this was a first-year writing course, this instructor recruited the assistance of two instructional associates (also referred to as interns) and explained the role that they were expected to play throughout the semester. She explained that these interns were juniors or seniors, with a declared major or minor in English, who would be receiving internship credit by assisting English professors with several aspects of the writing course. She explained in the syllabus that these interns would

provide one-to-one tutoring and feedback on writing, but would not assign or have access to student grades at any point. Here the instructor provides an internet address that refers her students to a website that discusses the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Students were expected to complete a variety of writing assignments over the course of the semester. The first assignment discussed in this packet was the group magazine project, in which students were divided into small groups and required to create a magazine about a paranormal topic of their choice. Each student was expected to write 2-3 articles, design a cover, and format the pages to create a magazine of professional quality. Students were also expected to create fictional advertisements (e.g. SPF 2,000 sunscreen for vampires). Next, students were required to complete a personal narrative about a supernatural experience with an analysis of the event that was described. In lieu of this assignment, students also were presented with an option to write an analytical essay about a television show, movie, or piece of fact-based fiction. Finally, students were expected to write and submit memos accounting for their writing and revision strategies for each assignment, three critiques of peer papers, and responses to required readings and discussions. Most assignments were required to conform to the MLA format and citation style, with the notable exception of the multimodal magazine assignment, where students were encouraged to design and format pages in a functional and creative manner.

Finally, this syllabus includes a great deal of insight into the classroom and administrative policies that this instructor implements in her college writing

classroom. She explained that her students had the choice to withdraw from the course within the first week and that this syllabus should be considered a contract. The decision to not withdraw from the course is an indication that every student agrees to the policies spelled out in syllabus. This means that every student must respond to one another's work critically but "without excessive negativity and without dismissing someone's ideas," cell phones had to be turned off and students were not permitted to use them in class for any reason, and that parents play no direct role in this classroom. Furthermore, this section of the syllabus also spelled out a strict attendance policy where students are not permitted any more than three absences for the semester. Again, this section of the syllabus included web addresses to the university's undergraduate student handbook.

Electronic Syllabus

The format and content of the electronic syllabus was nearly identical to printed copy, despite the fact that each one was designed to be consumed in different contexts (computer screen vs. printed on paper). However, the presence of hyperlinks suggests that the electronic syllabus had the potential of being more of a multimodal text than the printed copy. While the printed web addresses increase student awareness of additional resources that may promote a better understanding of the syllabus, active hyperlinks made those resources a part of the electronic syllabus (Landow, 2006).

When discussing the role of the student interns, the instructor cited the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, providing a link to the United States Department of Education webpage. In the syllabus, the instructor did not paraphrase or quote

any passage of the Act, but by providing a link to a government webpage, the instructor invited her students to explore their own rights under the law. This website explained that "The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education" (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2009). In addition to information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, this website also included links to information regarding educational grants, research opportunities, school accreditations, and PDF files of the FERPA regulations (updated 2008), a section-by-section analysis that explained precisely what each section meant. Those who chose to explore this hyperlink then experienced the website as an extended portion of the syllabus and the exposure to this information offered a more complete understanding of why the responsibilities of the interns were so limited.

Similar to the previous example, the instructor also included several links with a webpage, entitled *2009-2010 Undergraduate Catalog*. This text was, essentially, a student handbook that included any and all information relevant to undergraduate studies at RRU, including the University's attendance policy, academic integrity policy (particularly on plagiarism), and descriptions of all undergraduate courses. The links provided directed students to specific sections of the University's *Undergraduate Catalog*. By following these links, I was promptly redirected to the attendance policy which began, "The university expects all students to attend class. Individual faculty members may define attendance standards appropriate to each course and the consequences of not meeting those standards." The link, which led

me to this page, followed the strict attendance policy set forth on the syllabus, "students may miss three classes for any reason without any formal penalty. For every absence over three, I will reduce your final course grade by one full letter grade" (Appendix A). After reading this attendance policy and following the link to RRU's *Undergraduate Handbook,* the link reinforces the concept that the instructor's policy is supported by the university's administration.

Course Schedule

Much like the syllabus, the course schedule was presented to the students in both a printed course packet on the first day of class and as an electronic document online. However, unlike the syllabus, neither the content of the text nor its function was altered in any way when viewed in either format. For that reason, only one analysis was necessary to identify how textual, spatial, and graphic elements were implemented.

Textually, the course schedule closely resembled the design of the course syllabus. The sans serif typeface, Calibri, was the only font style that was used throughout this document and the entire text was composed in an 11pt. font size, with the sole exception of the title, which was 14pt. The document's title also appeared in boldface, as did the dates of scheduled classes and the due dates for all assignments.

The tile of the document, "Schedule of Work: ENGL 101-040, Fall 2009" was left aligned, as were the dates of scheduled class meetings. The remainder of the text consisted of numeric lists and blocks of text which were indented at two different levels. Due date notifications and numbered lists were indented ½ inch (.5"), while

the numeric lists were indented further to 1 ¾ inches (1.75"). All text was single spaced and the text was framed by 1 inch (1") margins on all sides.

Much like the syllabus for this class, graphic elements of design were not present in this text. Outside of the standard punctuation in sentences, there were no images, no colors, no tables, and no data displays. Instead of bullets, the instructor included numbered lists at several places throughout the course schedule. These numbers functioned as the only graphic element that was observable, in both the printed and the electronic format.

Sample Magazine Assignment

Unlike the course syllabus and course calendar (which were created by the instructor), the sample magazine assignments the instructor utilized during her class were created by former students. Although it was the intent of this dissertation to focus solely on instructor pedagogies, the sample magazine assignments presented in the current classroom seemed to transcend the student boundary and became instructional artifacts that influenced classroom as much as the syllabus. After it was confirmed that these magazines were offered to Aurora by former students, knowing that they would serve as a pedagogical tool, it seemed necessary to take a closer look at one of them to assess how they brought multimodal texts and technologies into the college writing classroom.

The sample magazine assignment that was presented for analysis addressed the topic of paranormal creatures and was entitled *The Nature Freak*. This 30 page magazine was composed utilizing two discernible typefaces in the essays, and WordArt functions to create text in the advertisements. The essay titles, as well as

82

the title page of the publication and table of contents, appeared as an 18pt. Papyrus (ℙ𝕒𝕡𝕪𝕣𝕦𝕤) typeface positioned in a textbox centered at the top of the page. The body text was composed of an 11pt. Candara (Candara) typeface, with words occasionally boldfaced or italicized for emphasis.

Unlike the course syllabus and schedule, this artifact was filled with a variety of graphic elements. Each article included multiple photographs or sketches of the subjects that were featured (e.g. Bigfoot, Chupacabra, Dover Demon, and Mothman), portions of the text were printed in different colors, as were the borders of text boxes and background of the page. Lines separated the headers from the bodies of the text, dotted lines appeared around advertisements, and data displays showed where the highest concentration of sightings were throughout the world for each of the showcased creatures. Many graphic elements helped to organize the information (e.g. thin lines separating the columns of text, borderlines around the data displays, images, and textboxes), while colors made portions of the document (particularly the advertisements) more visually appealing. Finally, the photographs, images, and data displays (e.g. charts/tables/graphs) helped to clarify the message of the text. For example, instead of relying solely on written words to describe what each creature looked like, the photographs and sketches allowed readers to actually see each of the featured cryptids for themselves.

Articles were organized into two even columns, approximately three inches wide 10 inches tall, and were framed by ½ inch margins on all four sides. The body text of each article exhibited normal kerning, with just over single line spacing (1.15).

83

Placement of the photographs and text boxes varied, depending on how many appeared on a specific page. Some of these graphic elements were large photographs placed across the line boundaries that intersected the columns of the article, while smaller objects were placed wholly within the boundaries of a column.

Observations

Observations for this classroom took place during the fall 2009 semester. This course was examined on four different occasions throughout the months of October and November. This time period was selected to allow the instructor to establish a routine for her class and get to know her students prior to my arrival. Because of the many distractions that occur in the beginning and end of each semester, I felt that the observations conducted in the middle of the semester would best reflect the instructor's pedagogical strategies.

First Observation

Once the instructor, Aurora, and students filed through the classroom door, I withdrew a chair from the semicircle and assumed a place beneath the windows where my presence remained largely unnoticed. Aurora methodically unpacked her canvas bag, placing student-made magazines on the small table at the front of the room, and began to pass back the reading responses from the previous week. She then asked her students to pass in the assignments that were due on that particular day.

Aurora began with a short lecture, lasting for approximately five minutes, which reviewed the concepts of structure and content that were addressed in the readings assigned for October 13, 2009. However, once the basics were covered,

she divided her students into five small groups to connect the importance of these topics to their own writing projects. On the marker board, she proceeded to draw three columns with the headings *structure*, *content*, and *would be nice*. Aurora then instructed the students to describe "components of each" that demonstrated an understanding of the assigned readings.

For the next 30 minutes, Aurora moved from one group to the next, listening to the discussions that unfolded, chiming in to clarify specific points. In the first two groups, her contribution was limited primarily to issues involving structure (e.g. organization of ideas, layout of the text on a printed page, etc.). When consulting with groups three and four, Aurora assisted the students with listing concepts associated with content (e.g. facts, statistics, definitions, etc.). Finally, when she directed her attention to the final group, Aurora explained what she meant by the heading "would be nice," explaining that not all writing will provide an opportunity to include these things, but whenever possible, students should include these things in their own writing. Examples that she provided of "would be nice" included images (still or moving), sounds, colors, and graphics, to name a few. Then, referring to the sample magazine projects that were completed by students the previous semester, Aurora proceeded to point out examples of *content*, *structure*, and *would be nice* to provide group five with a clearer understanding of each of the concepts.

As group discussions began to meander off the topic of writing, Aurora instructed the class members to reconvene and share their findings with the other groups. A representative from each was elected to write bulleted lists of words and phrases categorized under each of the three headings on the marker board at the

front of the room. When all of the representatives returned to their respective groups, the class discussed the topics, shifting some of the bulleted concepts from one column to the next, until the class was able to agree on a universal list.

The final classroom activity returned Aurora to the front of the room for one last culminating lecture that related the concepts listed on the board with the magazine assignment on which each group was currently working. Importance was stressed particularly on the *would be nice category*, requiring students to utilize a variety of design elements including a variety of images, colors, management of white space, and graphics.

Following the final class summary and brief lecture, Aurora dismissed her students, though many lingered for a while to ask individual questions which she addressed before filling her canvas bag again with all of her course materials and returning to her office down the hall.

<center>*Second Observation*</center>

Much like the beginning of the first observation, Aurora entered the classroom, her canvas book bags weighed down by the materials that were needed for the next hour and fifteen minutes. She methodically unpacked the contents of each bag and organized the materials into four piles on a small table at the front of the classroom. One stack contained only graded materials, stuffed into manila envelopes with each student's name embossed on the front. Though some names were written plainly in black pen or marker, others were cut from brightly colored papers and pasted into place. The second and third stacks of materials consisted of

<center>86</center>

samples of the current class project, and the fourth pile consisted of professional magazines, focused on paranormal themes.

At the beginning of scheduled class time, Aurora instructed her students to gather into their assigned groups and begin responding to the articles, essays, and advertisements that each of them had written and designed for their paranormal magazine. She then moved between groups and examined specific texts and documents and discussed the observations made by each student. She then offered her own perspective, identifying characteristics that she suggested the groups consider more closely.

Suggestions from the instructor seemed to focus initially on the elements of visual design and layout. After retrieving a professional magazine from the stack at the front of the room, she began to draw attention to elements of design that made the text more functional. First she pointed out that the text in the magazine was arranged on each page in two or three columns and noted how much easier it was for the eye to peruse the lines. Next she focused attention on photographs and images, noting specifically how they supported or enhanced the message of the written words. Finally, she explained how color and texture of the page on which the magazine is printed communicates a great deal to the readers, as well. She referred to the glossy, dog-eared pages and argued that the paper's finish reflected a level of professionalism, much like a heavier stock of paper utilized in resume writing.

Aurora continued to move between groups, offering the same insights to each by drawing specific comparisons between the professional magazine articles and advertisements with those created by the group. In this process, I noted that the

instructor addressed all textual, spatial, and graphic elements of design (Kostelnick & Roberts, 1998) without using the specific terminology.

After meeting with each group, Aurora directed her students' attention to the stacked materials at the front of the room. She then instructed each group to send one representative up to collect one sample assignment, produced by students in the previous semester, and one professional magazine. The instructor then stated that representatives were to examine those materials with their group, drawing specific comparisons with their own work. Approximately after ten minutes, Aurora then instructed group representatives to visit their neighbors and offer feedback on their work, drawing attention to unique details that were observable in each of the sampled materials.

Until the class period ended, Aurora continued to circulate among the groups, passively observing the activities that unfolded. She wandered from one clustered group of desks to another, speaking only when she believed that conversations veered off the topic of the current activity.

When she was certain that the representatives had visited every group, Aurora called for class attention before dismissal. She took a moment to recap the information she had addressed regarding the visual design of each group's text. She encouraged her students to experiment with font styles, textboxes, columns, images, watermarks, borders, and then asked students to consider how these components influence their message. Referring specifically to the elements that she observed in professional publications, Aurora argued that these design elements make writing appealing and functional to readers.

Third Observation

At the beginning of the next classroom observation, Aurora reminded students that this was the day that their magazine projects were due. She initially asked her students to gather in their small groups and then to share their magazines with the other groups. For the first half hour of class, Aurora then migrated from group to group, examining the end product that each had created. Focusing on the positive, Aurora then asked each group to note the visual components of each publication that they liked or felt were particularly effective. The instructor then emphasized these points, explaining how each of those visual components made the text more functional or bolstered the text's message.

When the small groups had finished their feedback, the class was instructed to hand in their final projects, all of which were either tape or spiral bound, and to reform the large classroom circle. As the commotion of moving bodies settled, Aurora then shifted the class discussion from a student centered activity to a more transactional/lecture style. She began by asking the students to consider a few critical thinking questions regarding the paranormal course theme. Each question was documented on the board.

The first question raised was "why hunt ghosts?" As her students considered the question, she began to talk about pop culture television programs, like *Paranormal Cops*, *Ghost Hunters*, *Ghost Whisperer*, and the old children's television show *Ghost Writer*. In each of these shows, Aurora explained that there was a paranormal element present where ghosts assumed a key role in the plot. What then does the presence of the paranormal contribute to the television programs as a

whole? Then, over the next several minutes, Aurora and her students co-authored a

list of reasons, taking time to explain the importance of each reason. That process

determined that the primary reasons for hunting ghosts was to determine if they truly

exist, the purpose for their existence, and to understand the balance between life

and death and the fine line that divides the two states of being. The secondary

reason that Aurora offered stood simply as "it's a fun, enjoyable experience."

The second critical thinking question that Aurora asked the class to consider

was "what might change if we proved that ghosts exist?" A similar procedure

continued where the instructor worked with her students to compile a short list,

pausing at times to dismiss the concerns of certain groups as a product of their fear.

Aurora argued that religious organizations would be forced to change their doctrines,

humans would be required to reevaluate their conceptions of life and death, and

entire cultural, as well as personal, histories might be changed as well.

Furthermore, the role of these themes, as presented by the news media, could

possibly change as well.

The fourth question was "What can we learn by talking to people who have

ghostly experiences?" Again a list was generated by the class and, once more,

Aurora took the time to offer her own perspective on the matters. She explained that

the nature of personal accounts (narratives) that document paranormal activities can

go a long way to verifying the existence of ghosts and other elements of the

supernatural. In recent years, she explains that narratives have risen to a level of

importance that rivals research writing. By listening and documenting personal

experiences, Aurora argued that humans may be able to one day verify the

existence of the supernatural and, in the end, learn something more about the fate of all human beings.

Finally, Aurora turned her attention specifically to the role that the media (e.g. movies, television, newspapers, etc.) could play in proving the existence of the paranormal.   She revisited the television show *Ghost Hunters*, mentioned previously in class, and explained how they showcased actual ghost hunting procedures. She said that students could compare the practices observed on that documentary style show with those in movies, like *Ghost Busters*. After describing a few of the events that occur in the respective show and movie, Aurora asked students to consider how each of those "video texts" (Selfe, Fleischer, & Wright, 2007) presents a similar subject matter in a way that invokes a different response from the viewer. Over the course of this portion of the lecture, Aurora argued that the form by which the media embraces or denies the paranormal can control how humans view the subject—in terms of morality, spirituality, or reality; therefore, the media determines precisely what an audience can believe and on what foundation of knowledge the audiences' conclusions are built.

When the critical thinking portion of the lecture concluded, the instructor then introduced the next assignment, an analysis of a visual text. She set the parameters, referring often to the description of the assignment on the course schedule:

Watch a television program that has to do with ghost hunting or haunting.
Many of these are also available on-line, so you can watch repeated times.
Write a brief summary of the "plot" of the show and pick out key elements of

haunting or investigation that you can analyze. List these in a response

format along with the summary, and critique them, using Warren as well as

good critical thinking.

In this project, students were asked to treat a television broadcast as they would any

written text and to conduct a visual analysis that explored how the text's message

was influenced by certain elements of design and presentation. Aurora's goals for

this assignment were spelled out specifically in the course schedule, emphasizing

the importance of critical thinking skills and focusing on the student's ability to

compose a text that moves beyond a basic summary and internalizes more complex

elements of the primary text. In the explanation of the assignment that she offered

during scheduled class time, Aurora elaborated on the initial instructions, stating that

students should identify segments of the show through which viewers learned

something about the characters through both their actions and the visual cues

conveyed in the production.

When lecture was concluded and the students were dismissed, Aurora had

her interns redistribute the graded materials. She lingered for several minutes after

class to address questions or concerns that her students raised about their

assignments, past and present, and their progress throughout the course. Out of

respect for the students' privacy, I did not observe precisely how Aurora dealt with

these issues as they presented themselves; however, it is important to note that she

did engage the students regularly after class to discuss any issues of concern. This

indicated that her classroom pedagogy was supplemented often by additional

contact outside of the class and that most of this contact was face-to-face,

contrasting the way the instructors in chapters five and six interact with their students outside of class.

Fourth Observation

Aurora arrived to class a few minutes earlier than usual for my fourth and final observation. Without a word, she placed her canvas bags on the table in the front of the room and began scribbling on the white marker board on the wall. She drew a diagram that represented the structure of a story—rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. That diagram was then accompanied with key words and phrases intended to facilitate the lecture that opened the class.

The opening lecture addressed the concept of fact-based fiction. Aurora began by defining the term, stating that fact-based fiction were "untrue" stories that were inspired by actual events, in whole or in part. That is to say that when writing fact-based fiction, the events must reflect someone's real-life experience while those accounts have been altered in such a way that the entire story may not accurately reflect the events entirely.

After briefly introducing fact-based fiction, she draws attention to the diagram drawn on the marker board. The bell shaped curve has a series of Xs along right and left perimeters, with a large one placed at the graph's peak. Aurora explained that the Xs placed along the diagram each represent a specific "scene" of the story. On the left, the diagram is labeled as "rising action," and she explained that each of the marks represent a scene that added a layer to the story, eventually leading to the "climax," when all of those previous activities come to a head. Finally the falling

93

action includes scenes that move the story from the peak of action to a sorted conclusion any lingering questions are answered.

After addressing her diagram, Aurora then directed her students' attention to the phrase "show don't tell." She then explained the best writing allows the reader to observe the actions that are conveyed through the details of the story. For example, instead of writing the words "he was sad," an author might write, "his salt stained cheeks flushed and his shoulders heaved with every sob." By observing the details in the latter statement, the reader gains an image of the subject in the story and can judge the emotional state of the character for themselves. Aurora then bridges this concept with the idea of dialogue, arguing that letting the characters speak for themselves yields results similar to showing.

Her students were required to choose one of two potential assignments. For the first option students conducted interviews with individuals who had paranormal experiences and were then asked to analyze the data gathered. The alternative assignment required students to compose a piece of fact-based fiction, inspired by an actual account of someone's paranormal experience. The students were then divided into two groups, depending on the project on which they were currently working and each group was asked to discuss potential topics that they could write about. The instructor then spent time with each group, listening to what they were talking about and questioning students on their personal experiences that led them to select their topic. The instructor then collected student responses and dismissed the class.

Individual Interview

Following the observations and analysis of course artifacts, it appeared that multimodal texts and technologies played a significant role in this traditional writing classroom. However, as stated previously in Chapter 3, interviews allowed me an opportunity to confirm many of my findings with Aurora. This ensures the integrity of the study and also provides additional insight into the rationale behind the observed methods of instruction.

I began the interview by discussing the instructor's credentials and then moved into a line of questioning that allowed Aurora to explain the role that multimodal new media texts and technologies played in her classroom. Aurora explained,

> Computers are important to almost every writing classroom, aren't they?
> When I started teaching I had to read a lot of hand-written papers because
> many of my students didn't have access to computers or typewriters even.
> That was really tough to do because I had to decipher really bad handwriting,
> I couldn't set page limits because everybody wrote in different sizes, it was
> horrible. But when colleges began to invest in computer labs on campus, I
> could now state that I wanted all papers to be typed. Because they were all
> much more neatly written, it was easier to identify errors in spelling and
> punctuation, and I was able to read much faster. When I started
> experimenting with different functions, I realized that we had so much control
> over how things appeared on the page and that allowed me to develop

different writing assignments, like the magazine assignment. I'd say the word

processing software packages have played a huge role in my class.

In this response, Aurora explained how the role of technology has changed over her

years of teaching experience. While it is clear that multimodal technologies and

multimodal writing was not always prevalent in her course, she explains that as

accessibility to certain media increased, she found that integrating them into the

classroom made her job more manageable. Still, she does acknowledge that

increased accessibility does not extend, necessarily, to all students. Aurora then

explained, "I try my best not to require my students to use any technology that is not

readily available on campus. I can't expect them all to buy the latest version of

Office . . . some just can't afford it." In short, she acknowledged that, although

overall computer access is up, not every student can afford to keep up with new

developments and she expected that some of her students relied heavily on

outdated technologies, such as *M.S. Word 97-2003* and dial up internet. While she

required her students to utilize some computer-based technology, she was also

careful to limit her choices to those devices she knew her students could access on

RRU's campus.

Although word processing programs were utilized in her classroom, Aurora

explained that other technologies were used as well, for many different reasons. As

stated previously, word processing programs were used by students to complete

every assignment, given that it was Aurora's requirement that all assignments must

be typed. In addition to this, students were expected to use a variety of web-based

databases to complete research for certain projects, view video online and offline for

the visual analysis project, and communicate with classmates and the instructor online via email.

Despite Aurora's explanation of why certain multimodal texts and technologies have a place in the writing classroom, she also argued that college administrators did have an influence on how she used certain technologies:

Administrators here at [RRU] started charging students for printing on campus a few years back. When that started, I noticed that a lot of students would come unprepared for class because they either didn't want to pay for printing or they couldn't afford it. That's when I started printing a course packet with a lot of classroom related materials, but then I ran into some copyright issues. Then the department wouldn't allow me to print as much in the office. The only choice I had was to post readings on the library's e-reserve.

In this brief statement, Aurora explained that the printing policies set by college administration influenced her choice to use a specific technology to deliver course readings.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

The observations, course artifacts, and culminating interview offered a great deal of insight into how the instructor used technology to support instruction in the traditional writing classroom.

<div align="center">*Data Reduction and Visualization*</div>

Given the large body of data that this research produced, it was necessary to develop a rubric to narrow the field. This rubric focused on how certain technologies were utilized during a variety of course related activities, noting both the type of

computer software that was used and the hardware. By adding the types of

software with the hardware, I was able to quantify the influence of digitally-based

multimodal technologies during specific classroom activities (see Figure 1).

Table 1: *Technologies integrated into the traditional writing classroom*

Technologies Used			
	Software Used	**Hardware Used**	**Total # of Technologies Used**
Lectures	MS Word	Personal Computer LCD Projector	3
Course Artifacts	Internet Explorer MS Word	Personal Computer Printer	4
Writing Assignments	Internet Explorer MS Word YouTube	Personal Computer Printer (Machine Binding)	6
Course Readings	Docutek EReserve Internet Explorer	Personal Computer	3
Communication outside of Class time	Email Internet Explorer	Personal Computer	3

Preliminary Findings

The primary objective for this traditional classroom was the development of

critical thinking skills, while secondary objectives included learning to write

grammatically, raising awareness of multimodal texts, and professional preparation.

These goals were identified through the classroom observations, artifact analysis, and were later confirmed during the culminating interview.

Reflecting initially on the course observations, it was determined that the instructor raised awareness of multimodal texts and technologies primarily through classroom discussions, lectures, and by the nature of the required textbook. Though the instructor had internet access, a desktop computer, projector, document camera, and audio/video capabilities, these technologies were almost never used during the observed classroom meetings. This was because much Aurora's scheduled class time involved collaboration among students. Because the technologies that were present were contained only in one location, it would have been very difficult for all of the students to make use of these devices during small group activities. During each class, the instructor adopted a student-centered pedagogy where she instructed her students to collaborate to complete small group exercises, peer review workshops, and projects, which generally consumed 70-80 minutes of each observed class. On several occasions, the instructor supplemented this teaching style with a more transactional approach through short lectures, lasting from 10-20 minutes. Furthermore, the in class activities observed were centered on the writing and editing process, while the focus of the magazine assignment required students to consider writing as a product. Based on these findings, the instructor overwhelmingly favored a student-centered, collaborative approach to instruction for her first-year college writing classroom, consistent with a post-process philosophy on writing.

Another conclusion drawn from Aurora's classroom was that the concept of writing was expanded beyond the written words. With the group magazine project, she expected her students to produce texts that communicated visually as well as textually; the words had to communicate something but the document design had to be conducive to the texts ultimate rhetorical purpose. In another assignment she asked her students to analyze a video clip, movie, or television show in the same way a literary scholar might analyze a classic novel, expanding the concept of what writing actually is. Therefore, because students were encouraged to break down the boundaries of the writing classroom and tap into their creativity, Aurora's classroom seemed to also embody some elements of expressivism.

The final conclusion drawn specifically from this classroom was the influence that college administrators had on the design of Aurora's first-year writing course. This issue was first raised during the individual interview when she explained that the printing policies set forth by college administration forced her to use the library's e-reserve to share assigned readings with students. After a second glance at some of the artifacts, the presence of college administration was emphasized further by hyperlinks on her syllabus, directing students to the *Undergraduate Handbook*, and the section of the syllabus that states explicitly that students will need a copying/printing budget throughout the semester (Appendix A). The presence of these brief statements on the syllabus offered a great deal of insight into how certain decisions served as a motivating factor.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDY TWO: THE COMPUTER-MEDIATED CLASSROOM

This case study examined the classroom of Scott, a tenured Assistant

Professor at Slick Pebble University (SPU). Here, Scott engaged students with a

variety of technologies in two classroom settings—the computer lab and a virtual

classroom in *Second Life.*

Defining the Space

Entering the classroom at SPU, I observed a room with long tables bearing

the weight of twenty nine computers. Two long tables, pressed together at the

center of the room, held ten computers, seven on each of the long tables. Along the

perimeter of the classroom were two more long tables with five more computers on

each of them. At the front of the classroom, another computer was set aside for the

instructor's use and was wired to an LCD projector that was anchored in the ceiling

at the center of the classroom. A large projection screen was at the front of the

room, as was a long white marker board. In the front corner of the room, a laser

printer, wired into all of the classroom computers, was positioned on a small table.

After examining a few of the computers, I was able to determine that all

students had access to the internet, professional packages of Microsoft Office Suite

(including FrontPage), Roxio CD and DVD Creator, Skype, *Second Life*, Power

Cinema, QuickTime Player, and Windows Media Center. Also, each computer had

desktop shortcuts to the campus email system, the library's internet resources, and

SPU's English Department website.

Artifact Analysis

A variety of materials were designed and distributed by the instructor over the course of the semester. These materials included a course syllabus, webpage, and sample texts to guide a variety of projects that students were asked to complete over the course of the semester. As mentioned previously, the analysis of these documents were two fold, first examining the elements of design, then evaluating the content of the text.

Syllabus

The syllabus was provided to the class in two formats, in print during the first class meeting and electronically via the course website. In both events, the syllabus was composed in the serif typeface, Times New Roman. The title of the document, "Signs of Life: Readings on Popular Culture," appeared in two different font sizes (36 pt. and 24 pt.), subheadings throughout the document appeared in 13.5 pt. font size, and the body text appeared in a 12 pt. font size. Spatially, the entire document was left aligned, single spaced, with double spaces between subheadings and body text.

In both the print and electronic syllabi, the instructor incorporated several graphic elements that served organizational and communicative functions throughout the text. On the top of the first printed page, seven text boxes spread under the title contained still images representing several aspects of popular culture. However, viewing the syllabus in the electronic form revealed that those still images were actually animated GIFs of dancers twirling, music notes waving, and a series of DVD and album covers flashing from one to the next.

Although the presence of many graphic elements suggested that the instructor was familiar with elements of visual design and with the functions of word processing programs, like Microsoft Word, content of the text offered several clues as to how multimodal texts and technology had shaped this instructor's pedagogy. On the first page of the syllabus, under "Working Materials," the instructor informed students that they required a 1GB USB data storage device (i.e. memory stick, flash/thumb drive, etc.) on which they could save their work for the semester. Furthermore the assignments that were introduced on the syllabus indicated that students were required to use a variety of digitally-based multimodal technologies, like YouTube, *Second Life*, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft FrontPage to complete coursework.

While students were expected to engage a variety of technologies throughout the semester, evidence suggests that they were also expected to engage multimodal texts as well. This implication was gleaned from the organization of the course readings into four units – "Images in Advertising," "Images in American film," "Street Gangs, Militias, and Hackers in American Culture," and "Virtual Culture"). These unit titles suggested that students were asked to consider the communicative function of images in a variety of media.

Course Webpage

The course webpage was linked to the instructor's personal webpage and was composed in the sans serif typeface, Verdana, between 10 pt. and 12 pt. font size. Columns organized hyperlinks spatially. Links to other SPU sites appeared on the left and the right of the course webpage, while the body text was left aligned

within a center column. Graphic elements that were present in the document design included one animated GIF, appearing at the bottom of the page, and a photograph of the instructor centered as header in the center column.

Generally, the body text consisted primarily of a list of hyperlinks. These links led to a variety of places on the World Wide Web, as well as to some relevant course materials, like the syllabus and a webpage project template – both of which have been analyzed independently. Because this webpage served as a distribution hub for course related materials, it was understood that students would likely be asked to use computers for course related projects, both inside and outside the classroom.

Examining the content of the course webpage also revealed an interesting way that digitally-based multimodal technologies had altered the way this instructor communicated with his students. Noted under contact information were two sets of office hours—physical office hours and virtual office hours. In addition to scheduling time to meet with students on campus, this instructor also communicated with his students through the online chat function on Facebook.

Webpage Project Template

A webpage project template was presented to the students as a multimodal text, online, and implemented several aspects of textual, spatial, and graphic elements of design. This template was composed in the serif typeface, Times New Roman, and all text was between a 14 pt. and 18 pt. size. Spatially, the information was organized with the title of the template (Our Home Page) appearing centered at the top of the text, while the body of the template was left aligned. Lines were

inserted, dividing the template into three very clear sections (Title, Body, and Footer), and graphics were used to indicate where students were expected to insert graphics of their own (e.g. photographs, animated GIFs, clipart, etc.). The template concluded with a collection of several hyperlinks posted in the footer at the bottom of the page, leading back to the course webpage, to the university's webpage, and to English Department's homepage.

Much like a handout, the content of the webpage template provided students with detailed information regarding how the instructor wanted his students to format their group webpage projects. The instructor communicated through the template that each group would consist of four students, whose names, academic and extracurricular interests, and goals would be displayed in the body of their webpages. Furthermore, it suggested that students were encouraged to present something unique about each of them that defined their group and from the others. The placement of graphics next to each of the items listed in the body of the webpage also indicated that students were encouraged to support their statements by integrating appropriate images. It also appeared that the hyperlinks presented in the footer of the template must also be present on all group web pages as well (see Figure 1).
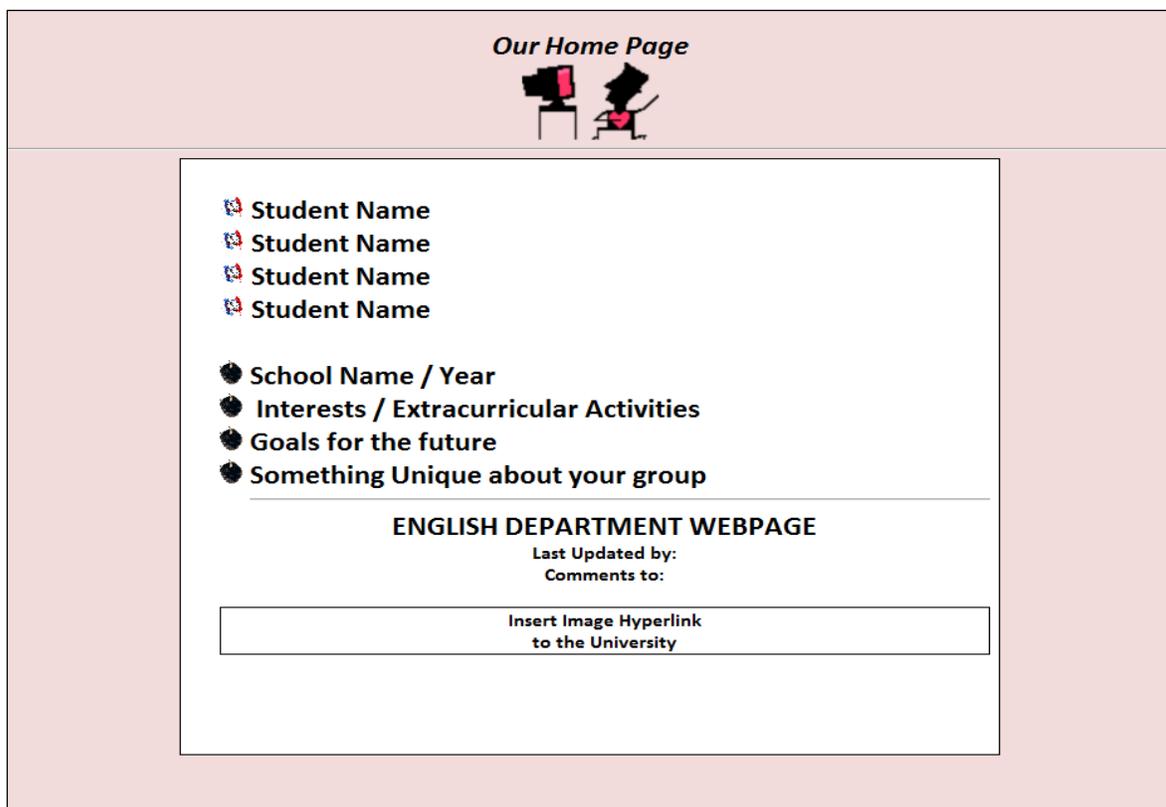
Figure 1: Group webpage template.

Observations

  This classroom was observed on four separate occasions. Three observations were conducted during class meetings in a computer lab managed by the English Department while one observation was conducted in Scott's office when the class met in a virtual classroom in *Second Life*.

First Observation

  Scott breezed through the classroom door five minutes before the scheduled start of class, carrying only a tattered textbook (*Signs of Life in the USA: Readings on Popular Culture for Writers*) and a flash drive. As the students began to file in, Scott logged onto the computer at the front of the room, turned on the LCD projector

anchored into the ceiling, and began sifting through the files saved to his flash drive. He opened two documents in Microsoft Word, muted the image on the screen, and then turned to students seated at the computers in front of him.

Before the students logged onto their computers, the instructor asked them to first gather into their groups and take a few minutes to wrap up their project proposals, print out a copy and pass it to him at the front of the class. According to the syllabus, these proposals were assigned approximately a week before when the groups were first organized. As he patrolled the classroom in response to the raised hands that popped up from the clusters of chairs, the laser printer at the front of the room whirred with activity. Within minutes the proposals were piled on the table at the front of the room and Scott reassumed his post at his computer in the front of the room..

Approximately ten minutes after the start of class, Scott raised the topic of "visual trends" in advertising and the role of the internet in promoting those trends. He referred to first to fashion advertisements, comparing the airbrushed photos of the 80s and 90s with department store ads from the 50s. Students responded with their own independent observations and Scott recorded their ideas on the dry erase board at the front of the room. Eventually the instructor posed questions specifically on how the internet changes the way that the consumer receives this media and the impact that this new forum has on the message.

Approximately 50 minutes into class, the discussion stalled and Scott took that opportunity to turn the projector on again, revealing a digital copy of the course calendar in Microsoft Word. He highlighted Thursday, January 28 which had

"*Second Life*" in bold face printed directly under the date. He explained that he wanted to help students consider how digital technologies can change perspectives for both writers and audiences who are forced to contend with these issues in recent years. Attempting to bridge the discussion with the ideas of advertising on the internet versus the print media of the 50s, Scott referred to *Second Life* as a "21st century trend" that has already redefined business offices and college campuses across the United States.

After explaining that the agenda for Thursday was to meet in a classroom in *Second Life*, Scott restored the second document that was already open on his desktop. This document included instructions for creating an avatar—a digital representation of an individual—and logging onto the network in the established *Second Life* community. The final 25-30 minutes of class were designated to the development of student avatars to ensure that all students were able to access the campus in *Second Life*.

<center>*Second Observation*</center>

The classroom environment for the second observation was drastically different from the first. Instead of requiring all participants to meet in the physical classroom on campus, Scott asked his students to log into *Second Life* and have their avatars convene in the "Ben Wiley Room" on the *Second Life* campus (see Figure 2). Scott accessed *Second Life* from his office on the SPU campus and, prior to the arrival of his students, set up an internet webcam, external computer speakers, and a microphone. As he did so, I accessed *Second Life* on my laptop so that I could observe Scott's actions in both the real and virtual worlds.

Figure 2: Digital classroom in *Second Life.*

Avatars began to materialize on the computer screen before me; some meandered through the classroom door while others simply dropped in from the ceiling. Some avatars extended their hands in front of their torsos, strummed the air with their fingers as though they were typing on a keyboard, until texts of the conversation began to appear at the bottom of the page. Though many avatars began interacting with one another in this way, voices too began to emanate through my own computer speakers. Scott observed the students for several moments before his avatar arose from one of the chairs in the room and took his place behind the lectern.

As his avatar did so, Scott's real voice boomed through the classroom, instructing his students to settle down and take their seats. As he gave these instructions verbally, he then typed the instructions so that they appeared on the computer screen, watched, and waited for the avatars to comply. Once all avatars were seated in their chairs, Scott began taking attendance by typing each student's name and speaking it into the microphone and the corresponding avatars would either respond by typing, speaking, or clapping their hands. Taking the time to ensure that each avatar had responded to roll in some way, Scott began to broadcast through his webcam.

The black screen to the left of Scott's avatar glowed with his real face as he took the time to address some of the basic rules of this classroom, advising students to raise their hands and wait to be recognized before they respond by either speaking or typing. Students with microphones were asked to shut them off until they were recognized to minimize any disruptions caused by background noise at their locations.

When the avatars were settled and procedures were in place, Scott opened the class with a brief lecture on his observations of how digital media has changed the landscape of the world. He drew primarily on how he has come to use technology in ways that he would not have used previously to accomplish specific tasks. He explained that online databases allowed him to research topics and find articles that he would have normally found only in the campus library and that YouTube videos and Podcasts provide quick information in a format that can often be much more "fun" than sifting through written pages. "Who would rather watch a

video than read a book?" he asked. The avatars in the classroom responded by clapping and blowing kisses. He then concluded his lecture by stating his predictions of how we will read, write, and interact with one another in the future.

Following the brief webcam lecture, Scott played a YouTube video through the portal at the front of the classroom, explaining how *Second Life* has begun to revolutionize certain aspects of the post-secondary classroom, citing the virtual classrooms available at Case Western Reserve University, Harvard Law's Extension School, Penn State University, and the University Pennsylvania. He explained that these schools often set benchmarks for education in several academic fields and that the application of *Second Life* had already begun spreading to other smaller colleges and universities around the world. Scott was able to stream videos from YouTube through an embedded link that allowed the video to play on the screen at the front of the *Second Life* Classroom. Then, without much interruption, Scott played another few short clips from a DVD of the PBS documentary *Declining by Degrees*. The clips offered from the PBS Documentary began with a lecturer at the University of Arizona who was utilizing computer technology to poll students in his class during lectures to see how effectively they were grasping the material. The second clip dealt with a professor asking the question "why should I?" when the narrator asked her if she was focused on helping her students to become better writers. Finally, Scott showed a short clip about how *Second Life* had already revolutionized the way IBM executives conduct business, meeting often in *Second Life* and leaving corporate buildings deserted.

Following the viewing of the video clips (lasting approximately 12-15 minutes total), the instructor then opened up the class to discussion. Several students began to respond verbally and referred to their own experiences with technology in the academic environment. Scott began mediating the discussion, reading the text typed by students who lacked the ability to speak in the *Second Life* classroom, while others could speak for themselves.

With approximately 15 minutes to go in the scheduled class time, an unknown avatar, wearing only a pair of underwear streaked through the door and to the front of the room next to Scott's avatar at the lectern. This avatar danced around, gyrating his hips and blowing kisses to the classroom. In the real world, Scott responded with "what the hell," which was then inadvertently broadcasted to classroom. As Scott's avatar began to intervene, the unidentified man began running back and forth across the front of the classroom.

Noticeably flustered, Scott then concluded class, instructing the students to gather in *Second Life* in their groups and explore the world. Each group was then required to write a collaborative response on how interacting in this environment is different or similar to their "First Lives." After the students were dismissed, Scott logged off and the naked avatar remained in the room.

Third Observation

For the third observation, I once again found myself in the computer lab on the real world campus of SPU. On this day, Scott logged into the campus network via the media center at the front of the room and then signed in to his YouTube

112

account. Saved in his favorites were the links to several videos with which he would open the class.

When the students arrived, Scott instructed them all to log into the computers and open a new Microsoft Word Document. He then mentioned some of the assigned readings from the course textbook relating to advertisements (from Unit One) and movies (from Unit Two). Once the brief review of recurring themes was presented, Scott asked his students to consider the messages conveyed by the images in each of the following clips.

The first clip was a National Guard commercial. By depicting soldiers conducting war maneuvers and providing disaster relief alongside the images of civilian firefighters rushing through burning buildings, the video attempts to make a persuasive argument that the "citizen soldier" has many other objectives besides going to war. The images were accompanied by a highly instrumental music composition and the video was entitled "At this Moment" and was part of the 2009 Army National Guard marketing campaign (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbfPj00pTNY). Following the video, students were given an opportunity to write two brief responses to the video. For the first response, students were asked to respond to their first impressions of the video. Then Scott replayed the video and asked the students to respond to specific images that stood out to them and argue for or against the efficacy of the video.

A short clip from Mel Gibson's movie, *The Patriot*, was the next to be shown. The brief scene depicted is entitled "Hold the Line" and displays Gibson grabbing an American flag and rushing the front of the line in a battle during the American

113

Revolution (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9DqfURLC70). Once again students were asked to respond to the video twice. First, students were instructed to respond with their first impressions regarding the images on the screen. The instructor then replayed the footage asking his students to respond with a critical eye, comparing and contrasting the images from a movie about a war to the images from the 21st century army recruiting commercial.

A Virgin Atlantic commercial from Great Britain was the third video selected for this classroom exercise. In this commercial flight attendants (all beautiful women) are depicted in red uniforms drawing attention from everyone as they wander through the airport, while the flight attendants from competing companies appear overweight and in dark, plain looking uniforms (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL1uud6Fy6M). Students were again given several minutes after this short clip to compose two short responses before responding to a music video, entitled "Stupid Girls." This music video, mocks many of the things that girls do in response to societal pressures. The pop singer, Pink, is depicted on the operating table preparing for reconstructive surgery, standing in a spray tanning booth, and washing a car in bikini top (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BR4yQFZK9YM). After their initial responses were completed, Scott once again replayed the video and asked students to respond with common themes regarding gender and humor depicted in the two videos.

Following this exercise, the instructor asked several students to share their responses with the rest of the class. As a result, Scott seemed to direct the conversation to themes regarding gender in American popular culture, particularly as

114

it applies to patriotism and military issues. The instructor explained the sexual objectification of the female form in American pop culture, and then asked the students to consider that issue when addressing the National Guard video. He explained that although women wear the same uniform, the tasks that they are depicted in vary greatly from the images of men. Men dominate the military maneuvers and are the "citizen soldiers" depicted saving women and children from disastrous situations. At the same time, the longest scene displayed in the video is of a woman picking a photo album from the rubble of the burning building and returning it to another woman. Following this explanation, Scott then asked his students to consider the subliminal hints that images offer about the role gender plays in the American military. Following a few moments of continued reflection, the classroom discussion ensued and Scott recorded his students' ideas on the dry erase board at the front of the room.

With approximately ten minutes left in class, the discussion wandered back to YouTube to a video entitled "Killing Us Softly 3: Advertising's Image of Women." After watching this short lecture by Jean Kilbourne, students were then given the task of writing an analytical response to the video, intended to expand their intertextual understanding of the topics noted in the assigned readings and in the media.

Fourth Observation

For the final observation, the course calendar was adjusted to meet in the physical classroom instead of the *Second Life* classroom. As stated by Scott at the beginning of class, what he called "the *Second Life* experiment" was abandoned due

to the numerous accessibility and administrative issues that arose during the *Second Life* meetings.

Prior to the arrival of the students, Scott once again logged onto the campus network and opened the internet web browser. After typing in the desired URL, Scott's faculty webpage was displayed on the screen for his students. He selected a tab entitled "sample webpage projects," and opened a list of links.

As always, the students trailed into the classroom and logged onto the desktop computers until Scott called their attention to the screen at the front of the classroom. He took a moment to summarize the material that they would cover in this class, and promised to give groups ample time to work on their ongoing group webpage projects.

Class began with Scott walking through the web page projects created by students in the preceding semester. He walked through the checklist of requirements and pointed out the way that students often exceeded the requirements to create an aesthetically pleasing and functional web page. His previous students were required to create hyperlinks that would bridge their group webpage with other sites in cyberspace. Students were also required to include flash images and graphic art to draw their audiences' interest. He often used multiple links in several different windows and projected them in a way that would allow students to compare and contrast the elements of design employed by different students. Some created tabs along the top of the page that allowed the user to easily jump to the information that they desired while others wove hyperlinks

into the body text, which forced their audience to read through several paragraphs to determine which links were of interest.

After approximately fifteen minutes of discussion, Scott granted the rest of the class to their group projects. During that time, the groups who had been working on this project for much of the semester already, gathered around one computer and tweaked their projects to make them more appealing or navigable. Scott moved casually from one group to the next, offering observations and referring students to the elements of web design that were discussed on previous occasions. Concepts that he focused on dealt primarily with using user-friendly typefaces or the use of charts and textboxes to organize information. To several groups, he also advised editing color schemes to be easier on the eyes and to make some webpages appear more professional.

<div align="center">Individual Interview</div>

Following the classroom observations, Scott was reluctant to continue with his scheduled interview. He explained that he was embarrassed, that his class "fell way short of his expectations." I referred him to the IRB protocol that I had posted on my dissertation's companion blog (http://mediapedagogy.wordpress.com) and reminded him that he did have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. However, I also mentioned that the goal of this dissertation was not to judge his competency as an instructor, but to simply find out how certain multimodal technologies had shaped instructor pedagogies. I stated plainly that I learned a great deal from his classroom but if he withdrew I would understand. So he would not feel coerced, I excused myself from his office and took a walk to the coffee shop on campus.

<div align="center">117</div>

When I returned to his office twenty minutes later, Scott smiled from behind

his desk, gesturing at the chair across from him. As I took my seat, he stated, "My

great concern is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with your

failure. Abraham Lincoln." Unsure of how to respond to this, I waited passively for

Scott to elaborate. He obliged, explaining that although he failed to accomplish one

of his key goals throughout the semester, he was content in knowing that the

semester had not been a "waste of time" and that he had accomplished a great deal.

With that, he agreed to continue with the study.

As I switched on the recorder, I noticed that Scott was less apprehensive than

he was thirty minutes prior. Still I was surprised at how quickly he returned to the

topic of his perceived "failure." I asked him to describe what his objectives were for

this course. He responded,

> At first I wanted to teach communication skills. I know I'm supposed to teach
>
> writing, but it's so hard to figure out what writing is nowadays, especially with
>
> all the technology. So I guess my goal was to teach students to use that
>
> technology to communicate effectively and how to think critically about the
>
> world that they live in. But in the end it became more of a mission to use their
>
> writing and grammar skills to communicate with their intended audience.

This shift from a goal of teaching broad-based communication skills was in response

to the failure of *Second Life* to achieve its stated intent. Because many of his

students enjoy video games and are fluent in "digital literacies," he believed that

integrating *Second Life* would cause his students to become more engaged in the

classroom discussions. However, he abandoned the *Second Life* classroom after only two of the scheduled class meetings, despite the fact that he had hoped to conduct nearly half of the class meetings in the online environment.

Much of the interview focused on the goals for *Second Life* in Scott's writing course. He cited computer games like *World of Warcraft* that allow users to create complex storylines and lived experiences that are becoming, in some ways, more real than their existence in the physical world. He argued, "these games have changed how our students interact with one another," and therefore it seemed reasonable to use this to break down some of the social barriers that are raised when interacting in the classroom. Scott believed that by applying what is often perceived as a fun "leisure activity" to the classroom setting that his students would find the class more enjoyable and cause them to open up more when they did meet in the real-world classroom as well. Furthermore, Scott had hoped that some students would be able to think more analytically when asked to compare this online experience with that of the real-world.

Scott explained that there were three major flaws in the way that he applied *Second Life* to the classroom. First, the classroom that he was using did not impose any active security measures, meaning that any person with a *Second Life* avatar could access this particular classroom at any time, even while it was in use. This was a notable flaw that Scott observed during the first classroom meeting when an unidentified avatar streaked across the front of the classroom and began to dance in the corner. Though he could not prove the identity of the individual, Scott suspects that it was a prank instituted by one of the members of his class.

The second issue that Scott had with his *Second Life* classroom was the difficulty in gauging his students' participation during class activities. For example, students were permitted to log on from any computer of their choice, meaning that once their avatars were seated in the classroom and roll was taken, the students could have abandoned the keyboard to participate in other activities. Though some avatars responded regularly to the videos he played or questions he asked, several avatars remained motionless for much of the class. During the second class meeting, several avatars remained seated in the *Second Life* Classroom for a full fifteen minutes after Scott had dismissed class, only adding to his suspicions.

Finally, the third major concern Scott had with his *Second Life* classroom dealt with accessibility concerns. He explained that "students with microphones were much more active in classroom discussions than students who had to type their responses." He suspected that this was largely due to the fact that spoken communication was the most efficient means of communicating. To type their thoughts, students would have to take several seconds, or even minutes, longer to express themselves than a student who could express similar thoughts orally. He continued,

> That was mainly my failure to plan ahead. Because the university had secured a large grant to update computer systems on campus, I figured that students who didn't have personal access could make due with the campus network. Maybe I was naïve, but I honestly didn't realize how much of an advantage a simple thing like a microphone could make. Like, the students on campus had access to a fast internet connection; they had the same

Second Life software. They had access to everything, except a $20

microphone, and that might be what made the difference.

Through this statement, the instructor explains that accessibility issues did cause

him to readjust his course plan. When combined with the other two reasons, Scott

deemed it prudent to abandon the use of *Second Life* for this first-year writing

course.

While the use of *Second Life* indicated that multimodal technologies played

some role in this writing classroom, the concept of multimodal texts was presented

through group webpage activity. I asked Scott to elaborate on why he selected this

activity as group writing assignment. He responded,

Like I said earlier, it's really tough to explain what writing is and that makes it

hard to teach. But I think that for students to be able to communicate

effectively anymore, they need to be able to express themselves online, so it

made sense to me to design a writing assignment that would allow them to

understand how to express ideas with words, support those ideas with

images, and how to design a legible, functional webpage . . . I made it a

group project because some of my students have done this before, others

have not. Logically it seemed like a good idea to let them work on this project

together so that those who have a bit more experience can help teach their

peers.

Here, Scott essentially argued that it was important to expose students in his first-

year writing course because they may be expected to work with these texts in the

future, but he also expressed how difficult it is to teach this in a diverse classroom where some students have more experience with the technology than others. In the end, he felt that this group project successfully introduced the topic without overwhelming any of his students.

Once the discussion moved away from specific classroom activities, Scott expressed that pressure from college administrators influenced how he applied technology to his writing classroom. Because of the funds allocated to improving the technology on SPU's campus, Scott was encouraged by his department chair to utilize that technology in his classroom however he could. He explained that "the university invested a lot of money into upgrading the technology in our department. All of the faculty got new computers; labs were upgraded . . . the fear our chair had was that if faculty did not use the technology, funds would be reallocated to other departments." In summary, Scott felt it was his responsibility to find new uses for the technology that was made available to him. The administration suggested that the more he used the technology, the better off the entire department would be.

Data Analysis

Data Reduction and Visualization

As stated in Chapter Three, a rubric was created to categorize information relevant to the case analysis. The purpose of this rubric was to narrow the body of data gathered to make data more easily accessible. Given the focus on digitally-based multimodal texts and technologies, this rubric was intended to find out how those technologies were used to support classroom lectures, which technologies

were used by the instructor to create course artifacts, and which technologies

students were expected to use to complete course assignments.

Table 2: *Technologies integrated into the computer-mediated classroom*

Technologies Used			
	Software Used	**Hardware Used**	**Total # of Technologies Used**
Lectures	MS Word Internet Explorer Second Life Facebook YouTube FrontPage	LCD Projector Personal Computer (Desktop) Microphone Webcam Surround Sound System Laser Printer	12
Course Artifacts	MS Word FrontPage	Personal Computer Laser Printer	4
Writing Assignments	MS Word Internet Explorer YouTube FrontPage PowerPoint Second Life	Personal Computer Personal Printers (laser/inkjet)	8
Course Readings	Internet Explorer	Personal Computer	2
Communication outside of Class time	Facebook Internet Explorer	Personal Computer Webcam Microphone	5

Preliminary Conclusions

While the focus of this classroom was mainly on the development of effective

communication skills, it did appear that this particular instructor was very interested

in teaching students to apply their communication skills to a variety of digital contexts. This objective was emphasized by two of the writing assignments presented by the instructor: designing, maintaining, and publishing group web pages, and meeting in an online classroom in the virtual world of *Second Life*. This observation was confirmed during the culminating interview as Scott continued to emphasize the importance of digitally-based, new media technologies in both the personal and professional lives of his students.

During the scheduled observations, it also seemed that Scott often required students to expand the definition of the word "text" to include all means of recording and storing communications. This meant that students were often required to watch and listen to streaming videos or audio feeds online, responding to them as they would any required classroom readings. One example of this behavior was observed during the third day of observations when students were asked to visually analyze videos uploaded to YouTube. Scott requested that students identify common themes between the videos and consider the influence that those themes have on American popular culture. On several occasions during the first three observations, students were asked to consider how technology has revolutionized every aspect of their personal and academic lives.

Despite the abundance of technology present in this classroom, several traditional writing pedagogies are still observable. For example, Scott utilizes process pedagogy, allowing students to adopt a variety of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing strategies throughout the semester. Although assignments were handed in for credit several times throughout the semester, Scott allowed his

students to continue to revise that work until the final week of the semester. Then the most recent grades for each assignment were finalized and calculated for the students' final grades. In addition to process pedagogy, the group web-page assignments reflect the inclusion of collaborative pedagogy. Indeed, several times during the classroom observations and when reviewing the course syllabus and calendar, it appeared that students were often required to meet in groups to complete course assignments. These group activities established a writing community, similar to communities writing instructors have been trying to establish for many years. This class simply moved much of the group interaction from the real-world classroom to a digital context.

The way that Scott chose to interact with his students was also very interesting. During some class meetings, students interacted with Scott only in the *Second Life* classroom. Granted, for a portion of this class, Scott used a webcam to communicate with his students in the form of a "traditional" classroom lecture. However, unlike the lectures in the real world where Scott adjusted his speech to invoke a particular response from his students, his online lecture seemed much more scripted. Although Scott could view the avatars in the virtual classroom, as stated during his interview, it was very difficult to judge whether students viewing the lecture in the online forum were "engaged."

In addition to holding some class meetings online, Scott also made himself available online for office hours. For one hour every evening, Monday-Friday, Scott logged onto Facebook and, if his students chose to, they could speak with him about any projects, questions, or concerns that were related to this class. These hours

125

were in addition to his regular office hours on campus and, as stated during the interview, "significantly more students" communicated with him during office hours on Facebook that semester than sought out a face-to-face meeting in his physical office. During his interview, he defined his classroom as a "hybrid space" that allows for a degree of flexibility for writing instructors.   Over recent years, he has found that his students respond well to the hybrid classroom that affords them the option of several different modes of communication and, due to this observation, he "hybridized" his office hours as well. Because he felt that most students would be more familiar with navigating Facebook, he selected it as the delivery system for his virtual office hours instead of the virtual world of *Second Life.*

Overall, the influence of digitally-based multimodal texts and technologies remained high throughout the semester. A variety of technologies were used by the instructor to communicate with his students both inside and outside of scheduled class time. Whether holding virtual office hours on Facebook or teaching a class in *Second Life*, it remained clear that this instructor intended to engage his students through a variety of multimodal media. Although most of these technologies were used by the instructor during classroom lectures, the writing assignments he designed for this class required students to use a variety of software packages and computer hardware to complete tasks. His objective to engage students with multimodal texts and technologies continued further through course readings and discussions where students were asked to consider the communicative function served by images in a variety of contexts. Therefore, I have concluded that

126

multimodal texts and technologies had a significant impact on this instructor's

pedagogy.

CHAPTER SIX

CASE STUDY THREE: THE ONLINE CLASSROOM

This case study examined the classroom of Tyra, a tenured Associate

Professor at Allegheny Highlands University (AHU). In this class, Trya engaged

students online, utilizing Moodle, a web-based delivery system for courses taking

place solely in cyberspace.

Defining the Space

This case posed the most challenges of the three case studies, largely due to

the fact that there was no physical classroom involved, at least of the sort used in

the other two case studies. These observations were also the most time consuming

because students accessed the class at different times throughout the week, making

it difficult to observe the instructor's interactions with them as they happened. As a

result, the days dedicated to observing consisted of my logging onto the AHU

Moodle system once every hour to note the changes that occurred throughout each

day when an assignment came due. Because the modules posted regularly

consisted of multiple assignments with different due dates throughout each week,

these observations also required me to make time to observe changes several times

a day for two or three days each week in addition to the time that I had already

planned on dedicating to this research.

Many of the challenges that arose throughout this case study stemmed from

the use of asynchronous activities in the online classroom. Unlike synchronous

activities which require students to log on simultaneously to interact with the

instructor and one another (much like the chat rooms of the late 90s), asynchronous

activities allowed students to log on at a variety of different times to complete

required coursework. As stated during the observations, as students participated,

they redefined the classroom space, changing the way the Moodle appeared to me.

Because of this, it was particularly difficult to gauge how the instructor engaged her

students during all classroom activities, particularly when there was no scheduled

meeting time online.

The classroom space for this online course varied greatly from the physical

environment of the traditional classroom and computer lab. In the most generalized

sense, there was no shared physical environment in which the instructor interacts

with all classroom members. This space existed only in cyberspace, in a database

linked to the Moodle program that was used as the delivery system. Therefore, for

the unique purposes of this investigation, and so that there might be some cohesion

between the observations in all three case studies, this investigation treated the

webpage on which all discussion boards, assignments, instructions, and responses

were displayed as the physical classroom environment. The accounts that I offered

in this chapter explain how my own screen changed during each observation as the

instructor interacted with her students.

Though a physical classroom did not exist in this case as we usually think of

it, there is no doubt that the instructor and each of her students existed somewhere

in the physical world. Because I was granted access to the online classroom, I can

make some assumptions as to the technologies that the instructor and each of her

students must have used to access the course and to fulfill course requirements.

Similar to the computer lab, every student clearly had access to a personal computer

129

and the internet at home, at work, or in a public space (e.g. library or web café). The instructor required that all assignments be submitted utilizing various applications of Microsoft Office Suite, but advised those who did not have access to these programs to use Open Office as a free alternative. Documents created using Open Office programs were saved in a format that is compatible with Microsoft Office so that all work could be accessed by users of either program. Finally, all students had access either Microsoft Internet Explorer or Firefox web browser to access the college's Moodle page. Because my observations of this class could not have taken place without access to these technologies on my own computer, it stands to reason that the instructor of this course, at the very least, required access to these same devices to build the course curriculum and to review assignments completed by her students. Likewise, because the instructor offered explicit instructions that all assignments be completed utilizing certain programs, I concluded that, despite the different physical environments in which each student might be working, all of those physical settings were linked by the use of those technologies. While some students may have used different types of internet connections (e.g. dial up, DSL, etc.), all students were in a setting that offered internet access in some form. Furthermore, while some computers may have other programs downloaded (e.g. Windows Vista/XP operating system, Dreamweaver, Adobe Acrobat, etc.), all computers, at the very least, offered access to Microsoft or Open Office, Internet Explorer or Firefox, and access to an individual web-based Moodle account that was provided by the university.

Artifact Analysis

Unlike the traditional classroom discussed in Chapter Four and the computer-mediated classroom that was examined in Chapter Five, the online writing classroom observations were also analyzed through artifact analysis in addition to examining the events that transpired later in this investigation. While all three classrooms generated artifacts, the online writing classroom was an artifact. Because all classroom interaction between the students and the instructor took place through the webpage itself, the nature of the class created a written document, not unlike the handouts the instructors provided in the other cases. Therefore, the online writing classroom Moodle was subjected to a similar analysis. Though the students and instructor often co-constructed portions of this web-based artifact, it is important to acknowledge that this analysis focused primarily on the components that were put into place by the instructor and not on the specific elements that her students contributed. This allowed the case study to remain focused on the instructor's pedagogy.

All artifacts for this online classroom were presented as electronic texts and web pages that could only be accessed through the use of personal computers and internet browsing software (e.g. internet explorer, Firefox, Netscape, etc.). However, each artifact had unique characteristics that suggested how each were used in the classroom. Based on this observation, I identified two types of artifacts: the course schedule and syllabus.

Course Schedule

The course schedule was the first webpage viewed after logging into the Moodle system. This document was composed entirely in the sans serif typeface, Arial, and varied in size from 10-20 pt. Both the title of the document (20 pt.) and the headings in each of the modules (12 pt.) appeared in bold typeface. The body text appeared as a 10 pt. typeface.

Several graphics, like hypertexts, photographs, and icon bullets, were woven into the document's design, adding to the functionality of the text as a whole. A photograph of the instructor accompanied the contact information displayed at the top of the page, along with the university's logo. Scrolling down, the typed words were organized into textboxes, referred to as "modules" by the instructor. The text within each of those boxes, or modules, included a bulleted list of hyperlinks. Each bullet corresponded with the type of text that the corresponding link led to. For example, the small image of a web browser indicated that the link led to another website, outside of the Moodle system, a clipboard indicated that the link led to another Moodle page that was designed by the instructor (where handouts and other course materials were posted), a clipboard with a checkmark icon led to graded tasks, like exams, and the silhouette of the person led do discussion boards.

As a whole, the page was very attractive. Each of the bulleted icons were full-color images (including orange, green, blue, and red elements), the hypertexts appeared in a dark blue, headings and title text were in black, and the logo text was red. Textboxes that organized all of these elements were composed of gray lines.

132

Spatially, the page was divided into three columns, although the center column was the only one that contained the artifact. To the left and right were announcements from the university, links that led to the courses taught by the same instructor during the current term, and all the administrative tools the instructor or students would use to add or modify their posts. The headings of each module were left aligned while the bulleted lists of links were indented ¼ inch.

Syllabus

As with every the course schedule, the syllabus was presented in the form of a Moodle webpage that could only be accessed by using an internet web browser (e.g. Firefox, Internet Explorer, etc.). Without images, sounds, or hyperlinks, this text was largely monomodal, communicating only through written alphabetic language.

The visual analysis of the course syllabus demonstrated that very little attention was paid to textual, spatial, and graphic elements of design. Textually, the entire document was composed in the sans serif typeface, Arial (11 pt.), and no words appeared italicized or boldfaced. This design decision reduces "visual noise" created by busy texts composed of artistic serifs and textual modifications which cause online documents to often appear cluttered (Kostelnick and Roberts, 1997). Spatially, the text was arranged in a block format—single spaced paragraphs, double spaced between paragraphs, with no indentations. Outside of the conventional punctuation, no graphic elements were integrated into the syllabus, leading me to conclude that, despite its being presented as an electronic document online, this document communicated its message entirely through alphabetic

133

languge. This observation was only confirmed further when a secondary analysis of the artifact revealed that it included no hyperlinks bridging this text with any other electronic documents.

The content analysis of this artifact also offered some additional information regarding the role that multimodal new media technologies would play in this specific writing course. Although detailed descriptions of assignments were not explicitly discussed in the syllabus, the instructor included an overview of the coursework that students needed to complete throughout the semester. In addition to reading excerpts from the required text, *Mirror on America*, students also were required to "do some library and internet research for their papers" (Appendix F). The overview of writing assignments offered some additional insight:

> students will be completing online Modules. Students will engage in reader responses to essays in *Mirror on America*, write a short paper about their involvement in a popular culture activity, develop a proposal for a longer project, create a longer paper about how popular culture reflects their chosen profession, and explore their professions by developing a Power Point presentation (Appendix D).

While this brief passage did not provide detailed requirements for the assignments that were completed throughout the course, it did offer clues as to some of the technologies students would be expected to use to complete those assignments. For example, this passage explicitly states that students will be expected to create a PowerPoint presentation. When combined with several reminders that this is an online course, this syllabus implied that every student was required to use a

personal computer equipped with basic Microsoft Office applications and with web-browsing software. However, the true indication of the significance of multimodal new media technologies in this class is raised by the presence of an "Online Professional Courtesy" clause. Here Tyra explained that "the instructor will treat students with professional courtesy at all times. Students are also expected to act professional and be tactful as they communicate with fellow students online" (Appendix D).   The fact that the instructor feels such a clause is necessary is a clear indication that she intended web-based technologies to contribute significantly to this particular writing class.

Observations

The observations for this case study took place during the fall 2009 semester from October – December. Unlike the set class schedule that was adopted in the other two classrooms, the asynchronous activities were organized in modules that students had a week to complete. As a result, each observation in this classroom was completed over the course of several days. Please also note that screen shots of several Moodle components are interwoven with the explanations accompanying each observation. I elected to do so for two reasons: 1) to clarify any descriptions that are unclear, and 2) to simply provide a first-hand visual of the classroom components as they presented themselves.

First Observation

Because this investigation is focused on the instructor's pedagogical process, I contacted her to identify how I might observe this class primarily from her perspective. After establishing her trust, processing the IRB informed consent form,

and establishing the parameters that would govern my use of the account, Tyra granted me access to her own Moodle account. This allowed me to observe the website from both the instructor's and student's perspective. However, while utilizing this, it was understood that (for ethical reasons) I would not be permitted to access any student identification numbers, grades, or other materials deemed sensitive. I obliged her request and avoided all sensitive areas that were deemed explicitly "off limits." However, these restrictions were reasonable and did not corrupt any of the data that were gathered for this study given that the focus of this investigation was restricted to the instructor's pedagogical practices and not the student outcomes.

Upon logging in to AHU's Moodle for the first time, I was greeted by a webpage that was constructed of three columns (Figure 3). To the left, in text boxes, were hyperlinks that provided the contact information for students participating in the course, quick links to assignments, forums, quizzes, and helpful resources, as well as a box that listed all of the courses that Tyra was teaching online during this current term. All of this information was present in both the instructor and student views of the Moodle; the only difference between the two views was that the instructor also had a text box in the left column that offered her access to the administrative tools that allowed her to edit the web pages and to attach student grades to any documents uploaded to the system.
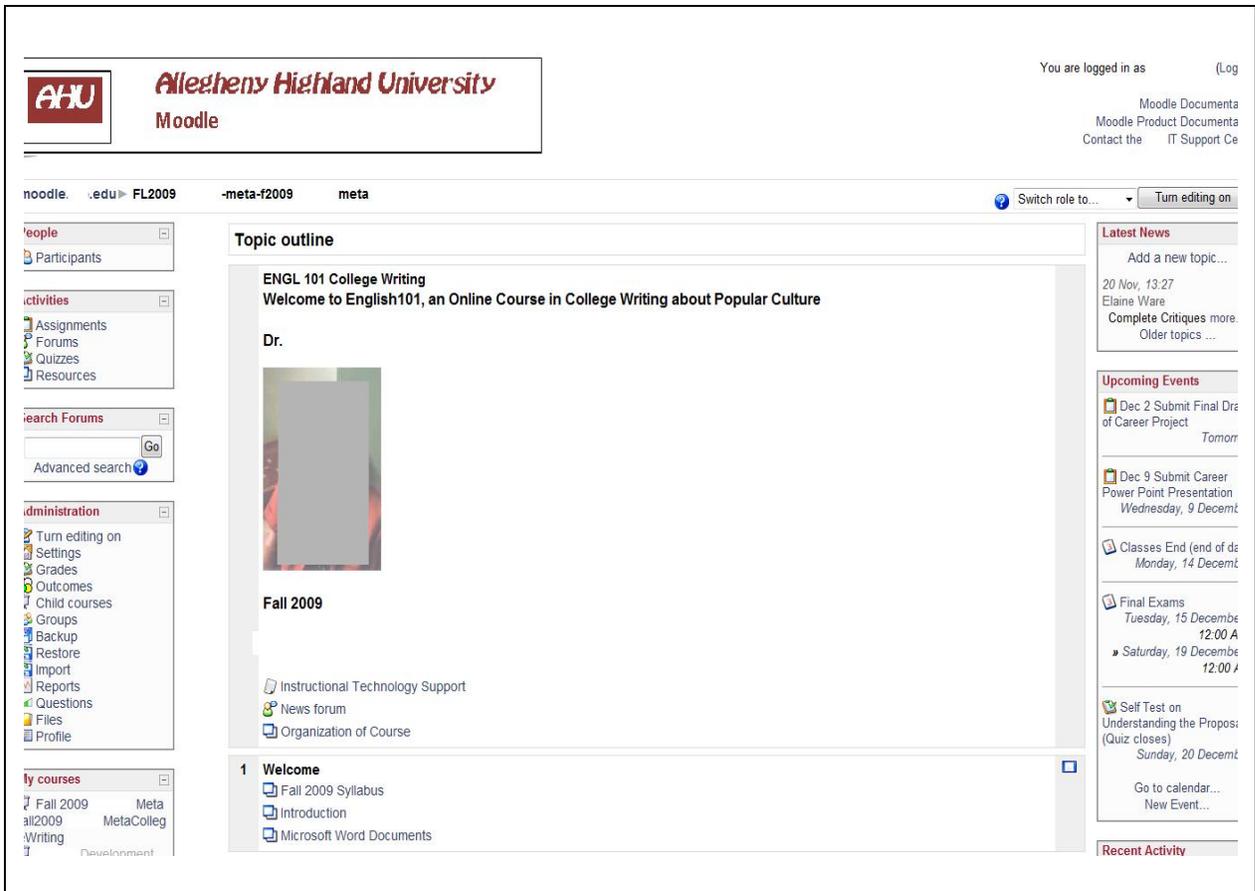
Figure 3: Opening *Moodle* page.

To the far right of the screen, a column of text boxes communicated recent news, reminders of when the next assignments were due, and boxes that allowed me to observe recent actions made by the instructor. Framed by these two columns, a center column, considerably wider, provided large text boxes, referred to as "modules." Each module appeared as a text box with hyperlinks. The text in each box offered a brief description of the information or documents that would be viewed by clicking on the corresponding link. For example, the "Welcome Module" consisted of three hyperlinks (Figure 4):

- Fall 2009 Syllabus

137

- Introduction

- Microsoft Word Documents

1	Welcome
	Fall 2009 Syllabus
	Introduction
	Microsoft Word Documents

Figure 4: Module 1.

By clicking on the first link, students were offered access to a syllabus that offered a detailed course description, explanation of required coursework, and class expectations (regarding plagiarism, late projects, participation, extra credit, final exam, online professional courtesy, contact grading, and the utilization of the writing center on AHU campuses.

Like many other first-year writing courses, this online course had a theme that students were expected to explore in the majority of the writing assignments completed throughout the semester. The link labeled "Introduction" provided information regarding this theme—writing about popular culture. By clicking that link, students were directed to an internet window that described, in paragraph form, how students would be encouraged to write about any aspect of popular culture, from fashion and film to cars and toys.

The third and final link offered in the welcome module (also referred to as "module 1"), was labeled as Microsoft Word. After opening this link, the instructor explains how she expects every assignment to be completed in Microsoft Word, with the notable exception of assignments in which students were required to use

PowerPoint. However, Tyra also added the stipulation that if students do not have access to Microsoft Word, or if the word processing program that they are currently using cannot save files in a .doc or .docx compatible file, that these students can download Open Office Writer for free at http://openoffice.org. This link then provides detailed instructions that inform students, step-by-step how to save their files so that they can be accessed in both Open Office and Microsoft Word programs.

Once finished reviewing the welcome module, I went to the module that listed the work for the current week – October 12 -16, 2009 (Figure 5). This module consisted of thirteen links that provided an overview of the week's assignments, a sample of what a student critique should look like, an article that provided insight on how to critique essays, instructions that describe precisely the aspects that the instructor wanted the students to focus on, instructions on how to access the critique forums, the reflection requirement, instructions on how to submit the first major project of the term, and six critique forums (one for each group).

Figure 5: Module 11.

The Overview link directed my web browser to a summary of the tasks that Tyra required each student to complete in the coming week. For this module, students were expected to submit assignments on Monday (October 12), Wednesday (October 14), and Friday (October 16). On Monday, students who submitted an essay draft were divided into small groups and were asked to post drafts onto a critique forum and to critique the essays offered by each group member. The comments generated by each critique forum would be visible to all students in that group, as well as to the author of each draft. Submissions and peer critique forms were generated using the appropriate word processing programs before being uploaded to the critique forum to which each student was assigned (Figure 6). Comments were inserted into a message board while the original documents were uploaded utilizing the browse function that appeared at the bottom of the screen. By Wednesday, students were expected to finish critiquing all essays

posted in their forum and to compose a reflection on the peer review process and on

how this constructive feedback could be utilized to improve upon the previous draft

that was submitted. Finally, the module was completed on Friday when all students

submitted a revised final draft, including a works cited page and the writers

reflection, by uploading it to Moodle. Once submitted, Tyra proceeded to grade

each essay and reviewed the writer reflections, offering feedback via the "track

changes" function in Microsoft Word. This function allowed Tyra to edit student

drafts in a different color that made changes more recognizable to her students and

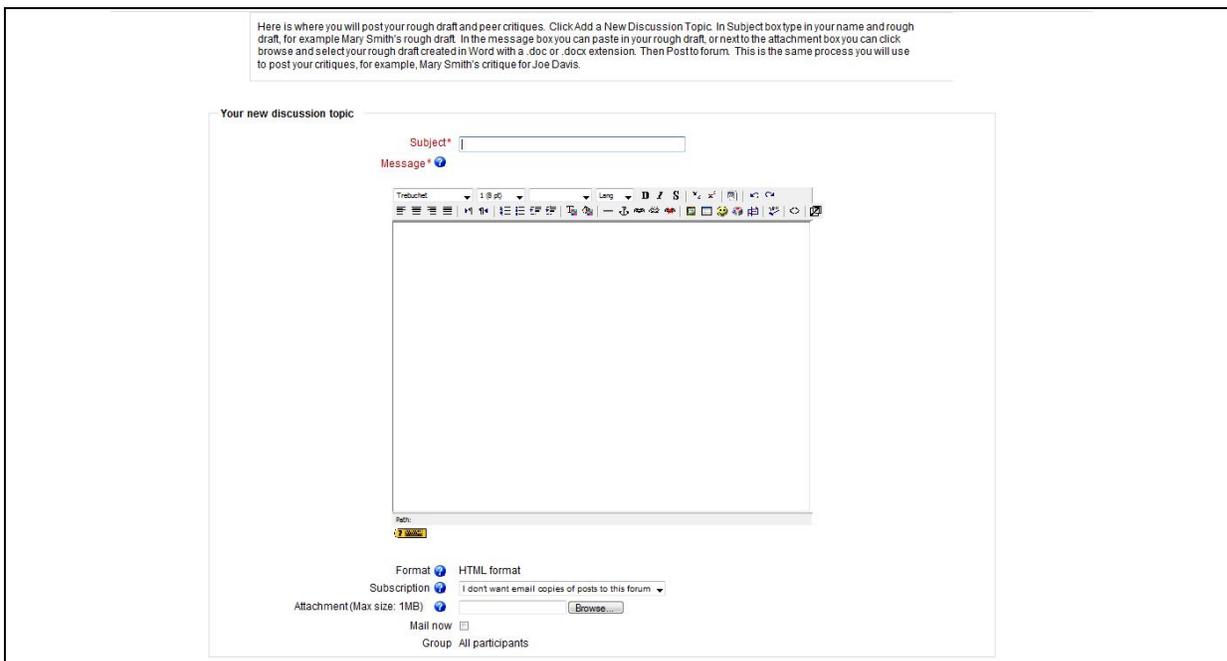to insert comments in the right hand margin.

Figure 6: Critique forum.

Second Observation

After logging in for the second observation, I immediately scrolled to the

current week's assignments—Module 15, November 2-6, 2009 (Figure 7). This

module was composed of six hyperlinks that offered an overview of the week's

assignments, provided a sample research proposal, gave directions for a working

annotated bibliography, provided access to a discussion board utilized to submit

drafts of research proposals, offered instructions to guide library research, and

presented a list of issues that should be addressed during reader responses for the

week.

Figure 7: Module 15.

In the overview, much like the first observation, was a list of objectives and

due dates for the week. Students were instructed to continue drafting their research

proposals on Monday (November 2) and to submit them in the appropriate

discussion board by the end of the day on Wednesday (November 4). Then, for

Friday, students were instructed to read the link entitled "Module 10" and submit a

response to a research source of their choosing for the Career Project.

In the sample research proposal, the instructor advised students to divide

their proposals into six sections. First, students were advised to provide an overview

that identifies a gap in the research or emphasizes the importance of the research

project in society. Next, Tyra explained the importance of a brief literature review

142

that identifies key sources that will guide the research. Students were instructed to then create a research question that engages key concepts that arise through the research proposal. The fourth section required by Tyra was a tentative thesis statement that explains the goal of the study and a blueprint for how this study will accomplish its goal. Once a thesis statement was completed, the instructor then advised students to discuss the methods that they would use to collect data for this investigation. Finally, all students were required to create a working annotated bibliography that examines sources related to their topic that they deem to be significant. Aside from submitting research proposals in a form, similar to the critique forum in figure 6, this observation noted very little activity on the course Moodle. The instructor, however, did use the announcements function to remind students that November 4, the Wednesday of that week, was the final day to withdraw from courses for the current semester.

Third Observation

When I logged in for the third observation, I noticed that the instructor once again utilized the announcements function to offer additional resources for the student career projects. These announcements appear in the "Latest News" textbox at the top of the right hand column of the course Moodle. After observing the updated news, I proceeded to the module for November 16-20, 2009 (Figure 8). Just like two previous observations, this module contains several links to guide students through the week. The overview link advises students that on Monday (November 16), students are required to submit a rough draft of the career project to the instructor, at which time the students will be divided into groups of three for the

143

peer critique process, identical to the process observed in the first observation one

month earlier. The students are advised to submit copies of their draft to the

members of their group on Wednesday (November 18) and that all completed

critiques, utilizing the critique form, should be submitted for their group members by

Friday (November 20). Students are then directed to use peer feedback to analyze

and improve upon their draft and prepare a final copy for the December deadline.

Figure 8: Module 17.

Throughout the day on Monday, student essays were uploaded to the course

Moodle for the peer review process, utilizing the same critique forum displayed

previously in Figure 6. Completed forums generated tables that listed the group

names and the peer responses from each of the group members. When all

responses were posted, the instructor posted a comment for all group members.

Though I was permitted to access the instructor's comments to the students, I was

required to block out the last names of the students and offer an example of what a

completed forum looks like on the computer screen (Figure 9). In the following

figure, each student name appeared as a hyperlink that directed students to the

uploaded Microsoft Word files. The students were then asked to critique one

another's work utilizing the review functions in Microsoft Word, then uploading the

student drafts with the peer reviewer's comments.

Here is where you will post your Career Paper rough draft and peer critiques. Click Add a New Discussion Topic. In Subject box type in your name and Career rough draft, for example Mary Smith's Career rough draft. In the message box you can paste in your rough draft, or next to the attachment box you can click browse and select your rough draft created in Word with a .doc or .docx extension. Then Post to forum. This is the same process you will use to post your critiques, for example, Mary Smith's career critique for Joe Davis.

Add a new discussion topic

	Discussion	Started by	Group	Replies	Last
Bree	Critique for Jennifer	Bree	FL2009ENGL101	0	Bree Sun, 29 Nov 2009, 09:
Bree	Critique for Brandon	Bree	FL2009ENGL101	0	Bree Sun, 29 Nov 2009, 02:
Brandon	Critique for Bree	Brandon	FL2009ENGL101	0	Brandon Tue, 24 Nov 2009, 09:
Brandon	Critique for Jennifer	Brandon	FL2009ENGL101	0	Brandon Tue, 24 Nov 2009, 09:
Jennifer	Critique for Brandon	Jennifer	FL2009ENGL101	0	Jennifer Fri, 20 Nov 2009, 03:
Jennifer	Critique for Bree	Jennifer	FL2009ENGL101	0	Jennifer Fri, 20 Nov 2009, 02:
Bree	Career Rough Draft	Bree	FL2009ENGL101	0	Bree Thu, 19 Nov 2009, 08:
Brandon	Career project rough draft	Brandon	FL2009ENGL101	0	Brandon Thu, 19 Nov 2009, 09:
Jennifer	Rough Draft Career Project	Jennifer	FL2009ENGL101	0	Jennifer Tue, 17 Nov 2009, 09:
Jennifer	, Bree, Brandon			0	Tue, 17 Nov 2009, 07:

Figure 9: Discussion board.

In addition to utilizing the review functions of Microsoft Word, students were

also required to compose a paragraph following the guidelines from the "Critique

Module" provided by the larger module of the week, which was previously presented

in Figure 6.6. The directions provided by the instructor required each reviewer to

state the impact that the essay had on them as they read and make

recommendations regarding the organization of ideas, any questions that remain

after reading it, what was and was not enjoyable about the essay, and correct any

errors in MLA citation style for the Works Cited page and in text citations.

Furthermore, students were asked to state explicitly what the greatest strength and

weakness was of their peers' essay. Of all observations, this one noted the greatest

activity by the instructor to interact with her students through discussion boards and

the announcements function.

Fourth Observation

After logging on for the fourth and final observation, I noticed that the

instructor, Tyra, had posted two modules to guide students through that week.

Module 19 contained the usual overview, discussion board, and example; however,

the instructor also posted Module 20, which contained a variety of information

regarding the use of PowerPoint (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Modules 19 and 20.

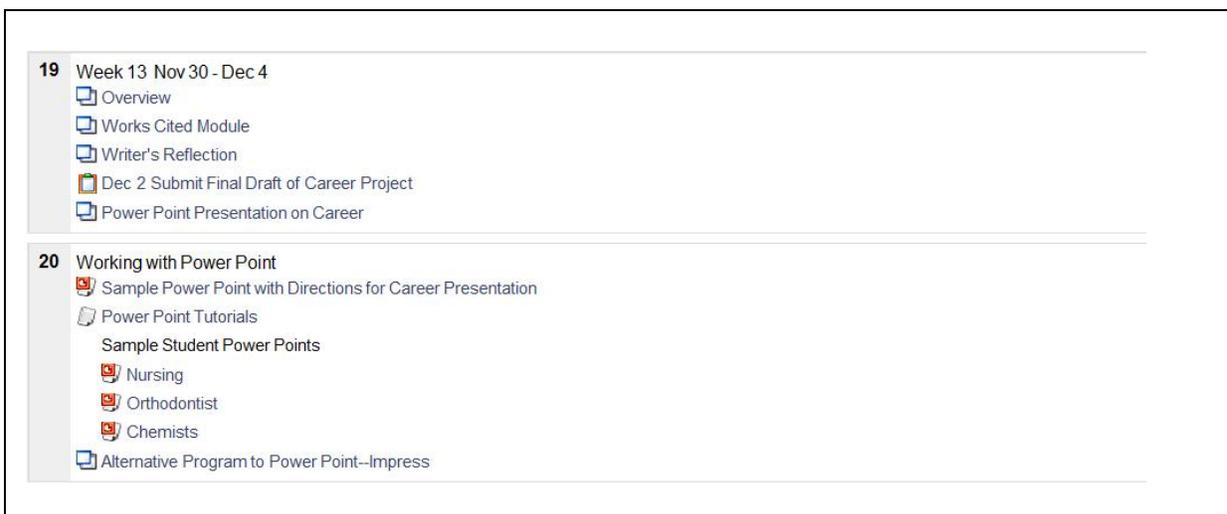In the overview, Tyra stated that students were to continue working on the

career project for Monday (November 30) and make sure that a final draft of the

project was completed for Wednesday (December 2). Furthermore students were

directed to begin work on their Career PowerPoint presentations that examines the

profession that they wrote about in their final Career Project Essay. Like the related

paper, this PowerPoint presentation required students to create a Works Cited page in MLA style. At this point, students were also referred to the resources posted in Module 20 to address any questions regarding the use of PowerPoint and the alternative program, Impress, which is one of the programs provided by Open Office. In addition to directions and tutorials that were posted to get students started, Tyra also posted several example presentations that were created by students from previous semesters.

<center>Individual Interview</center>

Unlike the interviews conducted in the other classroom contexts, Tyra requested that I submit my questions to her electronically in a form that resembled the discussion boards of her online classroom Moodle. She explained that conducting an interview in this context seemed "more appropriate to the online classroom" and was "much easier, given our geographical constraints." Although Tyra was currently teaching online classes for a university within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, she was currently commuting between her current home in Pennsylvania and her hometown in Maryland, dedicating a great deal of time to an ailing family member on the weekends. This online context provided Tyra the flexibility to deal with certain familial obligations and, as a result, it was necessary to utilize similar technologies to ensure that the culminating interview could be conducted in a reasonable timeframe following the classroom observations.

Several concepts were raised during the culminating interview that provided a clearer understanding of the pedagogical practices implemented by Tyra in her online writing classroom. Because of this interview, I was able to identify several

ways that the instructor's pedagogical approaches were influenced by certain

administrative mandates as well as by her own personal experiences. While a

complete transcript of this interview will not be provided in this dissertation, a

complete list of questions are included Appendix F.

After observing this online classroom for several weeks, I noted that a few

different technologies were used by the instructor throughout the semester. To gain

insight into why certain technologies were adopted over others, I asked Tyra to

identify certain factors that contributed to her use of certain technologies in the

online classroom. To this question, Tyra responded,

> My classroom can only be accessed through Moodle and that program was
>
> mandated by our administration. Before we used Moodle, the university
>
> mandated that online instructors use Blackboard. There's even talk about
>
> adopting the eCollege delivery system in the next year or two because they're
>
> finding that Moodle is not quite up to par.

In this statement, Tyra explained that college administration wields a great deal of

influence over the design of her online classroom, requiring online instructors to

build their courses with specific computer programs. Therefore, it appears that

some pedagogical decisions were not made by the instructor, but were actually

predetermined by the selection of the Moodle delivery system by the university.

Although school administrators offered workshops and handbooks to help

Tyra navigate the technologies she was required to use in the Moodle system, she

explains that she did not actively participate in any of the activities designed to prep

her to use these technologies. She explained that "the university has offered

workshops on several of the classroom technologies, including Moodle, but I have

not attended them. I probably should have, though, but the administration, while

requiring us to use the technology, did not require faculty to participate in any

training."   Although it seems that university administrators, at least in this classroom,

have some influence over the technologies that this instructor uses to conduct her

class, it seems noteworthy to mention that this instructor was given the option to

attend training that would allow her to utilize these technologies to their full potential,

but that she did not participate in these activities.

In addition to the administration, it also appeared that the personal

experiences of the instructor also influenced the design of this online writing

classroom. When asked to describe any accessibility issues that influenced how

multimodal texts or technologies have been integrated into her classroom pedagogy,

Tyra responded,

I do think some students will only have a dial-up internet connection or may

have other limitations on the computer they use to access this class. These

issues popped up three years ago and, until I receive new information, I must

assume that they still apply. So I do not require students to view webpages

outside of the class Moodle or to upload images or videos on the internet,

although a few may have the means to do so. It would not be fair to include

these types of things unless all students could use them to their benefit.

Though I expected Tyra to address the limitations of the classroom technologies and

computer programs specifically, I was surprised that she instead chose to discuss

the limited accessibility of some of her previous students. She elaborated briefly,

discussing that several students in the past had been enlisted in branches of the United States military and were stationed on bases overseas. She explained that the communication restrictions on military installations did not allow personnel to access certain web-based resources that she had included in previous online classes, like streaming videos and databases. Furthermore, some students had previously explained that their technological limitations, like dial-up internet connection, made it difficult or impossible to upload streaming videos and large electronic files. Based on these prior experiences, Tyra designed this course to be "all inclusive," making all required course materials accessible on the class Moodle, thus mitigating the accessibility issues faced by military personnel and students with limited computer access at home.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

As with the other case studies, the body of data for this case study was examined to identify the technologies that were used by the instructor to support instruction. In this case, the instructor required the use of a personal computer every time she engaged her students. Most communication occurred via email, while course lectures, artifacts, and assignments came in the form of Microsoft Word and PowerPoint documents. Those documents were posted to the courses' Moodle page. The table below offers a breakdown of the types of technology used by the instructor to support different aspects of instruction as well as the total # of technologies that were used during course related tasks.

Data Reduction and Visualization

While examining the data gathered during this investigation, it was very difficult to determine what technologies should be included in the online writing classroom. As a result of this confusion, I decided that the technologies included would be limited to the lowest common denominator—that is to say that I would only include those technologies that were required by me to access the virtual classroom and that were required to participate fully in all classroom activities. As a result, it became clear that the same technologies were used to complete a variety of tasks including lectures, assignments, and communication with the instructor outside of class. For example, because the Moodle was the program through which most materials were accessed, the Moodle interface was used to facilitate nearly all class related activities. Through this program students could contact one another and the instructor. However the number of technologies required to complete this course were very few in number. This was partially due to the instructor's desire to simplify the class, thereby eliminating common accessibility issues that arose previously. However, the lack of certain technologies stemmed also from the fact that the instructor was unfamiliar with the program and was unable to put some activities and applications into practice due to certain proficiency issues.

Table 3: *Technologies integrated into the online classroom*

Technologies Used			
	Software Used	**Hardware Used**	**Total # of Technologies Used**
Lectures	MS Word / Open Office Writer Moddle Internet Explorer PowerPoint / Open Office Impress	Personal Computer	7
Course Artifacts	Moodle MS Word / OO Writer PowerPoint / Impress Internet Explorer	Personal Computer	5
Writing Assignments	MS Word / OO Writer PowerPoint / Impress Moodle Internet Explorer	Personal Computer	5
Course Readings	Internet Explorer MS Word / OO Writer PowerPoint / Impress	Personal Computer	4
Communication outside of Class time	Email Moodle Internet Explorer	Personal Computer	4

Preliminary Findings

Following this investigation, I determined that digitally-based, multimodal texts and technologies have greatly influenced the pedagogical approaches of this instructor's online writing classroom. Although most correspondence between the instructor and students communicated almost exclusively through written alphabetic language, this classroom lacked a physical setting that was observed in the other two classrooms. All documents, artifacts, and communication occurred through the electronic "delivery system," Moodle. All handouts, discussions, and completed assignments were presented in the form of a series of web pages that do not exist in the physical world, outside the lines of the electronic computer system. As designed, any interaction that the instructor wished to establish between participants was also facilitated by the use of multimodal technologies and created multimodal intertextual documents that often included hyperlinks to other Moodle pages. Often these links directed students to assigned course readings, which would ultimately impact the message of any artifact of correspondence between the instructor and students.

While this classroom could not exist without the use of computer-based multimodal technologies, it is also important to acknowledge that communication was presented almost entirely in written alphabetic language. Due to her concerns of her students' accessibility, Tyra did not employ the full spectrum of multimodal texts (e.g. streaming videos and audio recordings). However, several of her assignments addressing popular culture allowed students to analyze Hollywood movies, if any students wished to do so. In this way, Tyra was able to promote the

awareness of multimodal texts through course assignments, without fully tapping the benefits of multimodal texts in the design of her classroom.

During this observation, it became apparent that this instructor had adopted a student-centered/collaborative learning pedagogy. Despite the fact that the students did not interact with the instructor outside of Moodle, let alone with one another, discussion boards generated by the critique forums provided a key opportunity for the students to read and comment on one another's work. The instructor then required the students to utilize peer feedback to complete revisions.

In addition to the student-centered collaborative learning pedagogy, I also suspect that this instructor often compliments collaborative learning with the transactional approach of classroom lectures. While many modules taught students genre awareness by providing examples of course assignments, many also contained specific instructions that offered students little to no opportunity to deviate from the stipulations set forth the instructor. For example, peer responses were expected to conform to a particular format and answer very specific questions posed by the instructor. Students were discouraged by the nature of the instructions to deviate from the prescribed format. Given the number of modules dedicated to directions, I concluded that, if this instructor was conducting class in a physical classroom, that a significant portion of each class meeting would be dedicated to a classroom lecture. Though students would clearly have an opportunity to conduct peer responses, it seems that the majority of these activities would take place independently outside of scheduled class time.

Given the complex design of the modules created by the instructor for this course Moodle, it seems that she is either very comfortable with the use of certain computer-based, digital media technologies, or has been working with them for an extended period of time.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

As with other qualitative inquiries, the findings of these case studies are not generalizable. This means that the findings from this investigation do not necessarily transfer to all other first-year writing classrooms taught in these contexts. However, cross-case analysis offers an opportunity to compare the findings from each case to gain a more complete understanding of the influence multimodal texts and technologies have had on overall instructor pedagogies in these classrooms. Given this process, it is much easier to address the questions that were raised during the investigation.

This dissertation stemmed from a concern I had as a graduate student when asked by several colleagues to argue for or against new technologies in the writing classroom. But how can we argue that integrating technology into the writing classroom will improve writing instruction if we do not have sufficient knowledge of what instructors are actually doing in the classroom. Furthermore, what caused them to adopt those instructional strategies in the first place? Ultimately, we cannot. Still, this investigation took a step in the direction, providing a foundation of knowledge of three typical writing classrooms and reporting findings that begin to fill in this gap.

Addressing the Research Questions

To begin the cross-case analysis, I first compared the data visualizations from all three cases and combined that information into a series of charts and graphs that allow data from each case study to be compared more easily. I then began to answer each of the research questions that I initially offered in Chapter One:

- Which technologies were used by the instructors to support instruction?

- Which technologies were students expected to use to complete coursework?

- To what extent do accessibility issues influence the decisions of instructors to use certain technologies?

- How did instructors promote an understanding of multimodal texts and technologies in each of the classrooms?

After directly addressing these four questions, I examined the findings that arose from the data that were of particular interest to me.

Technologies in the Classrooms

Technologies observed in each of the classrooms were categorized in one of two classifications—hardware and software. The term hardware referred to physical devices instructors used to support classroom instruction, like microphones, webcams, and LCD projectors. Software, on the other hand, referred to digitally-based computer programs used to format and present information to students during classtime, like Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and YouTube. Prior to each observation, I made note of the technologies that were present in each classroom and then made a second list of the technologies that each instructor actually used.

Several technologies appeared in more than one of the classroom settings (the most overlay occurring between the traditional classroom and the computer lab. As observed in table 4, all three classrooms used similar software, including the use of Microsoft Word and Internet Explorer. In the case of the online classroom, the instructor also offered students the option of using free software alternatives, like

Open Office Writer and Fire Fox web browser, in the event that the student did not

have access to the expensive Microsoft packages.

Table 4: *List of software and hardware in each case study*

Classroom Context	Software Utilized	Hardware Utilized
Traditional Classroom	MS Word Internet Explorer YouTube Docutek E-Reserve Email	Personal Computer Printer Machine Binding (at Print Center) LCD Projector
Computer Lab	MS Word Internet Explorer Second Life Facebook YouTube FrontPage PowerPoint Email	LCD Projector Personal Computer (Desktop) Microphone Webcam Surround Sound System Laser Printer
Online Classroom	MS Word /Open Office Writer Moodle Internet Explorer PowerPoint/Open Office Impress Email	Personal Computer

       Instructors in each of the sampled classrooms used these technologies to

support nearly every aspect of instruction—lectures, assignments, and facilitate

communication outside of class. Classroom lectures in both the traditional

classroom and computer lab were supported periodically with YouTube videos, while

all instructors used web-based resources to reinforce lessons. Students were

required to use some form of word processing program to complete assignments for

each of the classroom contexts. Then lessons and assignments were supported by

instructors outside of class using some form of digital communication. In the online

and traditional classroom, much of this correspondence took place via email, while the computer lab instructor used the chat function on Facebook. In all cases, students and the instructor communicated outside of the classroom using some form of web-based technology.

The graph below illustrates the total use of technology in the sampled classrooms. As discussed previously, each classroom utilized technology in different ways to support their classroom activities. This graph (figure 11) reveals that although the computer lab used a wider variety of technology to support instruction than did the other two classrooms, all three contexts integrated the use of technologies to support course activities.
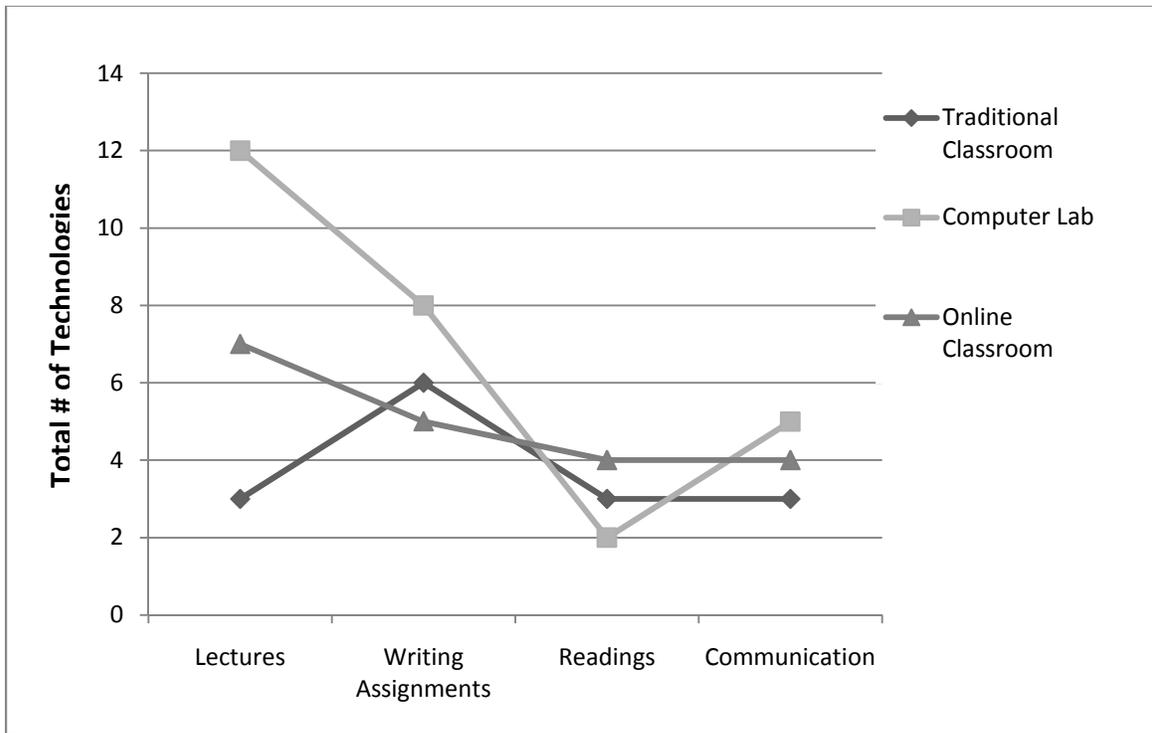

Figure 11: Total technologies used to support instruction.

Instructors' Expectations for Their Students

Despite the fact that there was some overlap, instructors in these three contexts required their students to use technology in a variety of different ways. Multiple instructors expected their students to use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Internet Explorer, and YouTube to complete their projects. Still programs, like *Second Life* and FrontPage, were used exclusively in the computer lab, and the online classroom defined itself through the use of Moodle.

Issues of Accessibility

There were two areas of accessibility that were observed during this investigation—the accessibility of technologies in the classroom and the perceived accessibility of students outside of the classroom. It seemed that the more technologies that were available in the classroom caused instructors to use certain technologies more often to support instruction. However, multiple instructors expressed a reluctance to use some technologies because it was determined that students would not have access to those technologies outside of the classroom.

Accessibility in the classroom was the most observable of the two accessibility during this investigation, as demonstrated through the bar graph below (Figure 12). This figure illustrates the relationship between the technologies made available to instructors in each of the sampled classrooms and the use of those technologies to support instruction. The most technologies available to an instructor occurred in the computer lab. In the end that instructor used a wider variety of technologies than other two. Likewise, the classroom that used the fewest

technologies over the course of this investigation (the online classroom) was the context in which the instructor had access to the fewest technologies through the Moodle interface.
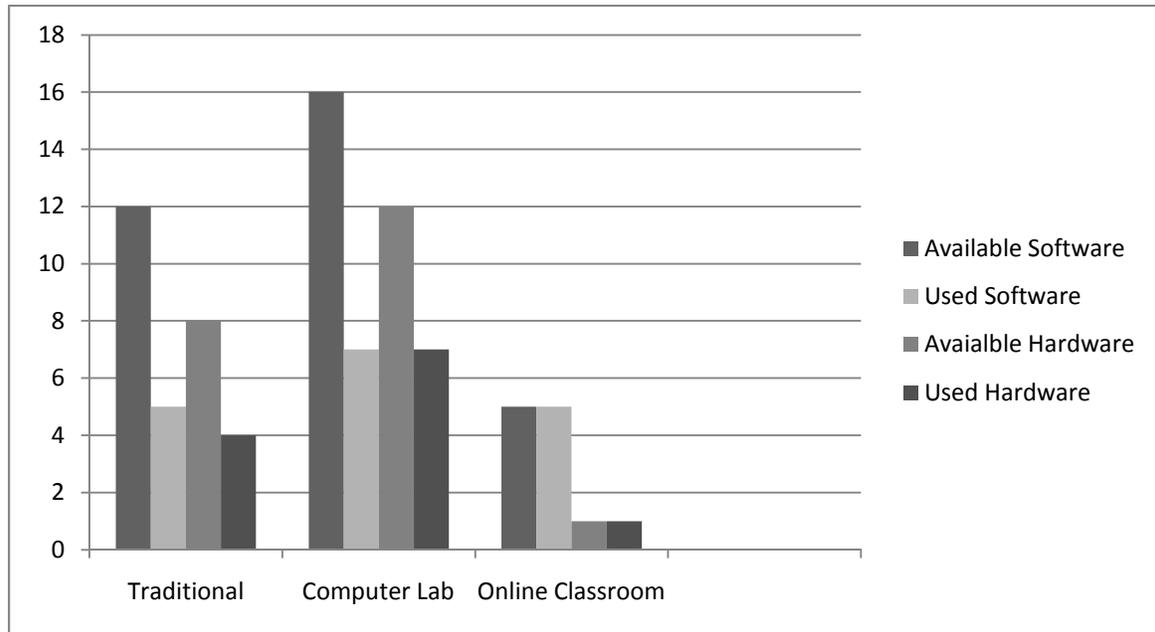

*Figure 12***:** Available technology vs. technology used.

The perception of student accessibility also influenced the way technology was used in each of the classroom contexts. In each of the interviews, all three instructors discussed issues of student accessibility. For Tyra, the focus was on accessibility issues experienced by her students in the past, Aurora explained that sometimes students had limited accessibility outside of class (even to certain technologies were available in other locations on campus), and Scott explained that not having access to a microphone for some students contributed to his choice to abandon the *Second Life* classroom. Indeed, not all students had access to the same technologies outside of the classroom. In every case study, these

accessibility issues contributed in some way to the instructors' choice to use specific technologies.

Overall, instructors appeared to be sensitive to potential accessibility issues of their students, but it did seem odd that none of the sampled instructors surveyed students to find out what the actual accessibility issues were. Most made decisions regarding the use of technology in their classroom based on past experiences. Tyra had once had military personnel in her online class, and therefore does not integrate a lot of external internet documents from other websites, like YouTube and blogs, that the United States military deems "off limits" to soldiers overseas. Likewise, because some online students might be accessing the course Moodle via a dial-up connection, she does not upload large PDFs or videos to the system because this type of connection lacks the bandwidth necessary to access those materials. Scott, on the other hand, discovered an accessibility issue during his course regarding the way students interacted in *Second Life*. This experience caused him to abandon the program in mid-semester and may have dissuaded him from integrating the program in future courses. Although all three instructors appear to be sensitive to their students' technological needs, upon further review we observe that none actually surveyed their students to find out what those needs were.

Despite issues regarding limited accessibility to certain technologies by faculty and students, all three instructors recognized a need to integrate technologies into the writing classroom, citing the growing presence of technologies in the lives of their students. Scott, for example, observed that his students were more likely to request help during his online office hours on Facebook than to seek

face time with him in his physical office on campus. In fact, all three participating

instructors suggested that they believed a significant number of their students were

writing in online environments. These assertions were supported by a recent study

from Ohio State University that found 85% of all undergraduate students in the

United States maintain active Facebook profiles, which are classified as a form of

multimodal text (Grabmeier, 2009). The participants in this investigation stated that

the large number of students using multimodal technologies to write outside of the

classroom was partially responsible for their decisions to adopt certain activities in

the classroom. In the traditional and online classrooms, this observation guided the

development of assignments that engaged students with the concepts of visual

design, like the magazine and PowerPoint slide activities. This same reasoning also

extended into the computer lab, guiding Scott to design assignments but also

influencing his choice to adopt the use of specific programs with which he expected

his students to be familiar, like Facebook and *Second Life*.   Therefore, it I have also

concluded that instructors not only attempted to be sensitive to the issues related to

their students limited accessibility, but that these instructors also modified their

pedagogies to purposefully adopt those technologies with which their students were

likely to be familiar. In so doing, they avoided dedicating too much time to teach the

technology so that more attention was devoted to the subject matter.

Promoting Awareness of Multimodal Texts

As stated previously, all three classrooms instructors discussed aspects of

visual design in writing. In the online context, Tyra designed a PowerPoint

assignment that required students to consider all aspects of slide design, including

spatial organization, images, and effective use of text; the magazine assignment implemented by Aurora accomplished similar objectives as students designed the page layouts for their groups' publications; Scott accomplished the same objective by requiring his students to design simple webpages. The presence of these assignments revealed that all three instructors, to some extent, felt that it was important to introduce aspects of visual design or visual rhetoric to their writing classrooms, promoting awareness of the multiple modes of communication.

Awareness of multimodal texts were taken to the next level in Scott's computer lab. Here students also read a textbook, *Signs of Life,* which explored the visual nature of popular American culture. While all instructors included handouts or short articles that discussed visual design, Scott's class read an entire textbook that explored everything from visuals in movies to print advertising. In this course, students were asked to constantly consider the impact that visuals had on written language. What resulted was a class that resembled that of a visual rhetoric or technical writing course.

Additional Findings

College Administration

Though the influence of administration was not initially a focus of this investigation, it quickly became apparent that college administrators had a great deal of influence over the instructional practices observed in each of the sampled classrooms. While the influence may have been subtle in the traditional classroom, the landscape of the online classroom and the computer lab were shaped largely due to the influence of the administration. In the computer lab, Scott was—for lack

of a better term—coerced by his department chair to incorporate more technologies in his writing classroom. Although the chair did not threaten Scott directly, it may have been implied that the failure to use more technology in his classroom might adversely impact his upcoming reviews. As stated in earlier in Chapter Five, his department chair was nervous about losing the grant funding that had recently been allocated to update the computer labs used by the English Department. In short, the more the resources were used to support instruction, the more the department would be able to demonstrate a need, which would in turn ensure the funding remained allocated to the department. Although Scott had already expected to use the computers in the lab to support his writing instruction, he did report that this pressure encouraged him to attempt to use new technologies, like *Second Life*.

The administrative influence over the online classroom was perhaps the most drastic. Prior to adopting the Moodle delivery system for online classes, Tyra had used Blackboard and WebCT to teach online. She stated during her interview that these two programs were particularly easy to use and that she felt the "most comfortable" with those systems. However, due to a change by the administration, the campus discontinued its agreement with Blackboard, forcing instructors to use Moodle exclusively for all class related activities online. Because of the different delivery systems, Tyra had to redesign her entire course because certain functions, like group chat rooms, were not available in the new program. Therefore, much of her class was reformatted in a way that she felt was substandard to previous courses.

While Scott and Tyra reported significant influence of administration over their classrooms, Aurora explained that the administrative influence over her classroom was far less intrusive. In fact, most of the administrative activities that influenced her class did so indirectly. The most notable that Aurora reported dealt with printing costs by faculty and students across the campus. By cutting the budgets allotted to faculty and charging students a printing fee, Aurora explained that students were reluctant to print assigned readings and that she lacked the necessary allocation to print enough copies of all readings and handouts for her students. As a result, she was forced to use the Docutek electronic reserve database, available through the library, to distribute many of the assigned readings in her class. Although this case did exhibit a mild instance where administration influenced how the participant used technology to support instruction, the overall observation of this investigation was that the administration, for better or worse, is currently forcing instructors to find new ways to incorporate technology, whether they trying to secure more funding or cut costs.

Faculty Training

The pressure from administration forces instructors to use new technologies in their writing classrooms, but that causes some concern over the support that faculty receive that allows them to do so most effectively. Only in the case of the Moodle software had any of the three instructors had an opportunity to become more comfortable with the technologies that they would be expected to use. Even then, Tyra did not participate in the training that was made available to her. Upon further investigation, it appeared that most faculty training offered by Tyra's institution was

optional; instructors were at no time required to participate in any training that they deemed unnecessary.

While Tyra passed on training opportunities, the other two instructors simply did not have any formal training opportunities available to them. Scott was pressured to use more technology in the computer lab, but no specific technologies were suggested to him. The University had recently made a campus available in *Second Life* where classroom space was created and made available to instructors, but at no time did the university sponsor a faculty orientation that allowed instructors to observe the possibilities the program had to offer. Instead Scott determined which technologies were most relevant to his classroom by exploring the environment himself. A brief training session where a *Second Life* expert could provide faculty with a brief walkthrough could have provided Scott with the foundation of information necessary to using this technology more effectively in his writing classroom. In the very least it may have allowed Scott to foresee the simple accessibility issues that ultimately caused him to abandon the use of the program during his class. Simple insights, such as these, could have allowed Scott to make better use of the program.

Emergence of Gaming Pedagogy

Two instructors also identified a new writing pedagogy that is currently developing in the field—gaming pedagogy. While Aurora mentioned during her interview that she had an interest in exploring video game literacy in her first year writing courses, Scott had actually used *Second Life* in his classroom. He stated that videogames allow the user to create complex storylines that change the virtual

167

world based on the actions taken by the user, in a way that resembles the writing process. Like Gee (2007), who argued that "Video gaming is a new literacy . . . a technology that allows people to 'decode' meanings and produce meanings by using symbols" (p. 135), Scott expressed that the way videogames operate now, an entire virtual world evolves as the gamer makes decisions. The cause and effect relationship between the gamer and the game itself then becomes a form of writing, given that each time players enter the world, they experience something different.

Scott cited the growing popularity of games like *World of Warcraft* as a reason why gaming is relevant to education today. He implied that whatever technologies students are using to write have a place in first-year writing classes. To him, writing is defined as a means of effective communication (a definition that includes words, colors, textures, images, sounds, scents, etc). Because videogames, like *Second Life* are immersive experiences, he felt that teaching students to write through those experiences were conducive to his understanding of what writing is.

Recommended Skills and Knowledge for College Writing Instructors

The three case studies that made up this investigation offered some insight into the skills that college writing instructors need to be successful in the classroom. While it is true that each of the three contexts required instructors to acquire different skills sets to teach effectively, there were two main areas where the classrooms overlapped one another—the use of word processing/desktop publishing programs and the presence of visual rhetoric in the classroom. In short, this overlap suggests that all three college writing instructors required sufficient knowledge of the applications of computer software packages, like Microsoft Office and Open Office.

168

The fact that these are the only two word processing programs that that were present in each of the three classrooms certainly emphasized their importance; however, the presence of such a limited number of desktop publishing and word processing documents caused me to consider the limitations that they both presented. Because all software programs certainly have their limitations, by expanding student options to include other programs, like GoogleDocs and Buzzword, might allow students to gain a more complete understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of programs. As experts in the writing field, instructors might be expected to be familiar enough with multiple programs and software packages to present students with options, allowing them to determine for themselves the program or programs best suited for the writing that they are doing.

Perhaps even more important than the technologies themselves, this investigation suggested that in the current age instructors must expand the theoretical foundations on which they base instruction. While knowledge of traditional composition pedagogies remained important for each of these instructors, knowledge of visual rhetoric seems equally important, due to the lessons and assignments offered in each context that required students to consider aspects of document design. This was emphasized further by the treatment of multimodal texts in the classroom.

Although the findings of this investigation do not necessarily transfer to all other writing courses conducted in each of the contexts, the overlap suggested a few areas that could assist instructors who are interested increasing presence of multimodal texts and technologies in their college writing courses. Workshops could

provide writing instructors with an introduction to new technologies. A word processing workshop might be established, for example, allowing instructors to experiment with the functions of underused resources—Google Docs, Buzzword, iNetWord, and/or ZohoWriter. While most of these programs are relatively unfamiliar to most, these web-based technologies each come packaged with their particular strengths that are well suited for collaborative writing online, creating webtexts, and converting files from other programs to PDFs, which can be more easily accessed by others on the web.

In addition to learning more about some of the technologies themselves, many college writing instructors might also benefit from workshops intended to expand theoretical knowledge as well. While traditional composition theories still provide an important foundation upon which instructors can design writing courses, the growing importance of visual rhetoric and multimedia presented itself repeatedly during this investigation. A brief introduction could be provided through a workshop, introducing visual rhetoric to instructors who wish to increase its presence in their college writing classrooms. This session would ideally provide a variety of sample lessons intended to introduce many of the topics that instructors might present to their students.

Reevaluating Writing Instruction in the Three Case Studies

One observation that was made during this investigation is that there is clearly a push to integrate more technologies in the writing classroom. However, much like in the movie *Jurassic Park* (1993), the move toward technology in education is often driven by educators and administrators asking *could* we teach

with these technologies instead of *should* we teach with technologies. It is true that no scientific study has found that using technology in the classroom improves education. Still, as seen in all three case studies, administrators consistently pressure instructors to use digitally-based technologies to support their individual pedagogies. Instead of improved learning, overuse of some technologies distracted students from what they were supposed to be learning. Furthermore, the underuse of certain technologies that are integrated into the classroom might be equally detrimental if the instructor is unaware of how to use certain functions of the technology to create context conducive to learning.

Traditional Classroom

In Aurora's classroom, the decision to utilize the library's electronic reading reserves program was influenced indirectly by the decisions made by college administrators, but do electronic readings increase student understanding? The accessibility concerns raised by Moran (2001) indicate that, if anything, the increased reliance on web-based programs to deliver course readings might actually prevent some students from accessing readings at all, while a printed copy of readings would at least ensure that all students had equal access to the same materials. If a student, with limited financial means, is limited by a dial-up internet connection (or is unable to afford home internet access all together), this student would be unable to maintain full access to e-reserve materials. In this even the student may be forced to attend class unprepared to participate, thereby actually reducing their ability to learn (Moran, 2001; Strickland, 1997).

171

Computer-Mediated Classroom

Scott's classroom is perhaps the richest of the case studies, particularly if we examine the overall failure of the *Second Life* classroom. Some scholars, like Gee (2007) suggested that video games are a form of literacy and as students become more engaged with videogames in their personal lives, there is a growing need to examine the potential of videogames as a learning tool in the classroom. Scott's adaptation of *Second Life* in his writing classroom was in response this argument. While I do not dispute that videogames certainly involve forms of literacy, I do believe that they also have their limitations. For example, Gee (2007) explains that while playing certain games, the gamer is creating the storyline. However there are only a finite number of story lines that can be created because the ability for gamers to create is limited by the parameters of the architect that wrote the program to begin with. As gamers explore and interact with the virtual world, the actions they take can influence the story line, but ultimately the game will have only two or three potential endings. Unlike writing where the ability of authors to create is limited only by their own imagination, gamers are incapable of creating storylines or endings that are completely original.

In addition to the limited capacity of gamers to create, videogames are hardly universal. Gamers play games on XBOXs, PlayStations, Nintendos, PCs, and even cell phones. Even in the event that the same game is available for multiple systems, the games are rarely the same. This means that when gamers utilize different systems, they are largely developing different literacy skills that may or may not transfer to other contexts. How then can instructors select one context over

172

another? Scott's decision to implement *Second Life* was based largely on his

perception that most students had access to computers on campus. Also, he based

his choice on his own personal experiences with *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life*

and not on the experiences of his students. Overall, the failure in Scott's use of

Second Life stems largely from a lack of training combined with coercion from

college administrators to integrate additional technologies into his writing classes. In

this case, the use of technology undermined the goals of the writing classroom,

decreasing the overall quality of the learning environment.

<div align="center">

Online Classroom

</div>

Although fewer technologies were used in the delivery of the online class, the

choice of college administrators to switch the delivery system to Moodle without any

required training significantly impacted the learning environment. While organizing

her class, Tyra noted that she had to trade synchronous chats for asynchronous

discussion boards. When asked during her interview, she explained that the Moodle

system that she was using was very difficult to manage and that she was having

difficulty setting up some of those activities. Upon examining the Moodle system

myself, I did acknowledge that the program did require significantly more technical

skills than setting up a traditional blackboard system. Had Tyra been required to

attend a formal training session or participate in a virtual workshop, many of these

set up issues may have improved her ability to navigate the program. By sacrificing

certain activities, Tyra may have compromised the integrity of the online learning

environment. Experiential learning theory has long determined that diverse activities

improve the learning environment by allowing students to immerse themselves with

course materials in a variety of different contexts (Kolb, 2005). Synchronous

conversations are very different from asynchronous discussions. This often requires

students to think and react differently, often forcing students to experience the

information differently. When Tyra eliminated the live chats from her course, she

effectively eliminated a dimension of the experience and, in so doing, may have

detracted from the educational experience. In this case study, the overuse of

technology was not the issue, it was Tyra's level of proficiency with the technology

that limited her ability to utilize the program appropriately.

<p style="text-align:center">Implications for Future Research</p>

The purpose of this dissertation was not to resolve issues that these

instructors encountered while attempting to integrate technologies into their

classrooms; however, the findings of this investigation provide a starting point from

which we can launch future research intended to assess the viability of certain

methods of instruction in the current digital age. Suggested areas of future research

might include the use of video games to support writing instruction, the application of

new technologies to the online writing classroom, and—perhaps most important—to

assess whether or not additional technologies improve the comprehension and

retention of information presented in the writing classroom.

The presence of *Second Life* in the one case study suggested that video

games might have a place in future college writing classrooms. While the instructor

also taught writing in a computer lab, I found myself fixating on his decision to use a

supplemental classroom in *Second Life*. While he mainly used the technology to

teach students how to adjust their presentation to suit the context of the virtual world,

I found myself asking what else could video games offer the college writing

classroom? In that way, this dissertation demonstrates the potential for a series of

future studies intended to assess the long-term viability of video games in college

writing courses and to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching writing with a video

gaming component.

Over the course of the 2009-2010 academic year, the three case studies

provided necessary insight into the technologies that have redefined the writing

classroom. As stated previously in Chapter One, it is impossible to discuss the

effectiveness of certain technologies in the writing classroom until we are fully aware

of the technologies have been used recently. This dissertation identified several

technologies that have been used recently to support instruction in college writing

classrooms (e.g. YouTube videos, *Second Life*, and a variety of web-based texts).

Building on the findings of this investigation, a follow-up study is necessary to now

evaluate the effectiveness of these technologies in the classroom—do they truly help

students learn or do they serve as a distraction? This dissertation provided a

foundation on which those future studies can be built.

A final question that was raised by this investigation concerned the online

course—is online learning as effective as real-world instruction? Given the current

state of education, it seems that online courses may be a necessary component of

the universities, both public and private, for many years to come. Even in the real-

world classrooms in this study there seemed to be a general push to incorporate

web-based technologies to supplement teaching, at least occasionally. As I

examined the data from each of the case studies, particularly with Chapter Six, I

found myself asking how effective online learning was. If students were presented with the same lessons in both an online classroom and a physical classroom, would they benefit equally from the instruction? This question emerged from the data and is worth exploring. While this investigation did not allow me to pursue an answer, the knowledge of what was going on in each of the writing classrooms provided a direction for another follow-up study.

Final Comments

While this dissertation confirmed my suspicions that multimodal new media texts and technologies have drastically altered the landscape of the three sampled college writing classrooms, this study offered new and significant insights into how the presence of these media ultimately influenced instruction. In regards to the number of technologies available in each case, there appeared to be a significant correlation between the number of technologies present and the number of technologies used. Higher access in the classroom resulted in an increase in the number of technologies used, while decreased access resulted in fewer technologies being used. While some researchers might find this correlation fairly predictable, many might be surprised to learn that the online classroom offered access to the fewest number of technologies. Ironically, the instructor who depended completely on technologies for her classroom to even exist used relatively few technologies to support learning.

Access to technology in the traditional classroom and computer lab were, to some extent, concrete; I counted the different hardware devices and software programs that were available in those two classroom contexts, something that was

difficult to do in the online classroom. While access to technology in the physical

classrooms at RRU and SPU were largely outside the control of the instructors, the

online classroom at AHU allowed the instructor to design her classroom with only the

technologies that she desired to use. With that in mind, accessibility for this

instructor may have been influenced more by her preferences than by true

availability.

In addition to the actual accessibility, instructors also made judgments to use

or not to use certain technologies based on past perceptions of their students.

Ironically none of the three instructors actually surveyed their students to determine

what their actual levels of accessibility were. While many of their judgments may

certainly still be valid, the perceptions drawn previously by these instructors might

also be outdated. While one instructor stumbled upon an accessibility issue during

his class (while using *Second Life*), the other two instructors cited courses ranging

from the year 2004 to 2007, indicating that some of their perceptions are between 3-

6 years old. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the year 2003, 54.7% of

American households had internet access, compared to 61.7% in 2007 (US Census

Bureau, 2007). A report released in October, 2009, reflected another significant

increase in internet access, claiming that now 76.7% of American households have

access to the internet at home (US Census Bureau, 2009). These statistics

suggested that however accurate the observations instructors made in previous

years regarding student access to technologies do not necessarily reflect the current

students entering the college classroom today. Surveying students prior to the each

semester might offer instructors current information that, allowing them to adjust their pedagogies to accommodate their students.

   While this dissertation provided significant information that fills a very noticeable gap in the field, the analysis of the case studies revealed how little we actually know about the impact that technology has had on college writing pedagogies. Often college instructors and administrators seek out ways that new technologies may be integrated into the writing curriculum, but few consciously ask whether or not this move toward technology is truly beneficial to students. Now that certain technologies have been associated with writing instruction a new study is necessary to determine whether their use improves education.

References

Alexander, J. (2006). *Digital youth: emerging literacies on the world wide web.* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Bangert-Drowns, R.L., Hurley, M.M., & Wilkinson, B. (2004). The effects of school-based writing-to-learn interventions on academic achievement: a meta-analysis. *Review of educational research*, 74(1), 29-58.

Bartholomae, D. (2007). Composition. In D. Nicholls (Ed.), *Introduction to scholarship in modern languages and literatures* (3rd Edition). New York: Modern Language Association.

Berlin, J.A. (1996). *Rhetorics, poetics, and cultures: reconfiguring college English studies.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Berger, P.L. & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: a treatise in sociology of knowledge.* New York: Anchor Books.

Bolter, J.D. (2003). Critical theory and the challenge of new media. In M.E. Hocks and M.R. Kendrick (Eds.), *Eloquent images: word and image in the age of new media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Boyd, D. (2008). Why youth ♥ social network sites: the role of networked publics in teenage social life. *Youth, identity, and digital media.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Budden, H., Nicolini, M.B., Fox, S.L., & Greene, S. (2002). What we talk about when we talk about college writing. In T.C. Thompson (Ed.), *Teaching writing in high school and college, conversations and collaborations*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Burnham, C. (2001). Expressive pedagogy: practice/theory, theory/practice. In

G. Tate, A. Rupiper, & K. Schick (Eds.), *A guide to composition*

pedagogies. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chun, W.H.K., & Keenan, T. (2006). Introduction. *New media, old media: a history*

and theory reader. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.

Cresswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among*

five traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, Publications, Inc.

Cresswell, J.W., & Miller, D.L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry.

theory into practice, 39(3), 124-130.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1998). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials.*

Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

DeVoss, D.N., Cushman, E., & Grabill, J.T. (2005). Infrastructure and composing:

the when of new media writing. *College composition and communication,*

57(1), 14-44.

Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without teachers* (2nd Edition). New York: Oxford

University Press.

Fishman, J., Lunsford, A., McGregor, B. & Otuteye M. (2005). Performing writing,

performing literacy. *College composition and communication*, 57(2), 224-252.

Gee, J.P. (2007). *Good video games + good learning: collected essays on*

video games, learning and literacy. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

George, D. (2002). From analysis to design: visual communication in the teaching of

writing. *College composition and communication*, 54(1), 11-39.

Goldfarb, B. (2002). *Visual pedagogy: media cultures in and beyond the classroom.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Grabmeier, Jeff. (2009) Study shows finds link between Facebook use and lower grades in college. *Ohio State Research News.* Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.

Hatch, A.J. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Heath, S.B. (2008). *Ways with words: language, life, and work in communities and classrooms.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hocks, M.E. (2003). Understanding visual rhetoric in digital writing environments. *College composition and communication*, 54(4), 629-656.

Hocks, M.E. & Kendrick, M. (2003). Introduction: eloquent images. *Eloquent images: words and image in the age of new media*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Johnstone, B. (2002). *Discourse analysis: introducing analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Kemp, F. (2000). Surviving in English departments: the stealth computer-based Writing program. In S. Harrington, R. Rickly, and M. Day (Eds.), *The online writing classroom*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Kent, T. (1999). Introduction. *Post-process theory: beyond the writing-process paradigm.*Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Kinneavy, J. (1969). The basic aims of discourse. *College composition and communication*, 20(5), 297-304.

Kinneavy, J. (1980). *A theory of discourse: the aims of discourse.* New York: Norton.
181

Kolb, K.Y. & Kolb, D.A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: enhancing

    experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of management learning*

    and education, 4(2), 193-212.

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. New York: Routledge.

Landow, G.P. (2006). *Hypertext 3.0: critical theory and new media in an*

    era of globalization. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lavelle, E., & Zuercher, N. (2001). The writing approaches of university students.

    Higher education 42(3), 373-391.

Lindemann, E. (2001). *A rhetoric for writing teachers* (4th Edition). New York:

    Oxford University Press.

Matsuda, P.K. (2003). Process and post-process: a discursive history. *Journal of*

    second language writing 12(1), 65-83.

McComiskey, B. (2000). *Teaching composition as a social process*. Logan UT: Utah

    State University Press.

McHale, J. (1967). Science, technology, and change. *Annals of the American*

    academy of political and social science 373, 120-140.

Moran, C. (2001). Technology and the teaching of writing. In G. Tate, A. Rupiper, &

    K. Schick (Eds.), *A guide to composition pedagogies*. New York: Oxford

    University Press.

Paley, K.S. (2001). *I-writing: the politics of teaching first-person writing*.

    Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Pressman, J.B. (2007). Digital modernism: making it new in new media. Doctoral

    dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles. *ProQuest Digital*

    Dissertations. Web. 15 July 2009.

Purdy, J.P. (2006). Digital archives and the turn to design. Doctoral dissertation,

    University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. *ProQuest Digital Dissertations.*

    Web. 14 July 2009.

Selfe, C.L. (2009). The movement of air, the breath of meaning: aurality and

    multimodal composing. *College composition and communication*, 60(4), 616-

    663.

Selfe, C.L., Fleischer, S.O., & Wright, S. (2007). Words, audio, and video:

    Composing and the processes of production. In C. Selfe & G. Hawisher

    (Eds.), *Multimodal composition resources for teachers: new dimensions in*

    computers and composition. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Sheridan, T. (2001). A course of lectures on elocution. In P. Bizzell & B. Herzberg

    (Eds.),*The rhetorical tradition: readings from classical times to the present.*

    New York: Bedford/St. Martins.

Stake, R.E. (2000). Case Studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook*

    of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Strickland, J. (1997). *From desk to hard copy.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Takayoshi, P., & Selfe, C. (2007). Thinking about multimodality. In C. Selfe & G.

    Hawisher (Eds.), *Multimodal composition resources for teachers: new*

    dimensions in computers and composition. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Tate, G. Rupiper, A., & Schick, K. (2001). Preface. *A guide to composition*

    pedagogies. New York.

Syllabus: English 101-040
College Writing
Fall, 2009

Get ready to read—this is long, but FULL of all the information you need to do well!

Contact Information:

Professor:
Offices:
Mailbox:
Phone: Office:
          Dept.:
          Home:
Email: .edu
Office Hours: 116

                    TR 11-12
                    W 9:05-12:05
                    Also by appointment: I am often in during the morning; rarely in the afternoon.

HOW TO FIND MY OFFICE:
          116: Across from   107 is a set of double doors. Go through those and down one flight of stairs. You will be looking at another set of double doors. Go through those into a tiny lobby area. My office is the first one on your left.

Course Description:

ENGL 101 focuses on writing non-fiction prose. Students will gain additional skills in the conventions of standard edited written American English, will be asked to complete writing tasks that provide a basis for future academic writing, and will work with each other in ways that foster stronger invention, drafting, revising, and editing skills so that they can apply these skills to a wide range of writing tasks. Students are placed into ENGL 101 on the basis of a portfolio or a timed writing sample, or enter having completed ENGL 100. There are no other prerequisites.

In This Section:

We will complete a variety of writing exercises and papers, will read and discuss non-fiction prose, and work both individually and collaboratively so that students will be better able to

1

- generate and develop a thesis or point
- support their ideas, that is, to make an argument, not just express an opinion
- begin to successfully integrate the ideas and words of other writers into their own texts
- organize their texts in ways that help foster a reader's understanding and enjoyment
- include their own ideas and "voice" in their writing
- make reasonable inferences and draw reasonable conclusions
- use writing as a way to think critically about various topics
- work efficiently and with civility with each other in large and small groups
- become more open to considering the views and experiences of others in a diverse community
- improve their use of standard written American English
- enjoy writing
- develop strategies and processes that help them approach and successfully complete a wide range of writing tasks
- become reflective writers and students.

How the Above Will Happen

Writing is a performance, like music, dance, art or athletics. You can read all the rules and watch games or go to recitals and other people's performances, but if you don't do it yourself, you will never learn how to do it yourself. Furthermore, though it can be broken down into smaller part and you can do exercises to strengthen your skills at accomplishing these small tasks, each piece of "real" writing will require you to demonstrate a whole range of skills. Think about driving a car: you need to understand the rules, keep track of what's happening around you, and make sudden decisions as well as more predictable decisions. You get a learner's permit first, and practice all kinds of smaller skills, like parallel parking. Even after passing the test for your license, you are still not an experienced driver and you continue to learn and improve.

No one can take your driver's test for you. And I can't simply "give" you the skills you need to write well! I can expose you to college level writing, I can ask you to practice certain skills, I can ask you to meet and talk with me, I can point you in the direction of the Writing Center for additional advice, I can make comments and suggestions on your writing, and I can provide you with interesting texts to read and helpful textbooks. But improving as a writer requires that you work hard, you follow good advice from multiple sources, you take advantage of all the help that's available to you, and you do a lot of whatever it is you want to be good at.

Quite simply, writing well is not just knowing the "grammar rules" from a handbook, though those are important. It is about understanding the task before you and setting goals, anticipating the needs of your readers, and being able to engage them and yourself in the texts you produce. Students with poor writing skills often struggle in many of their other courses. Starting here, at ENGL 101, you have the opportunity to develop the kinds of skills that support your learning and goals in other classes and contexts. Don't make the mistake of thinking, "If I can just get through this class, I'll be okay." Beyond ENGL 101, you will take, under the current curriculum requirements, ENGL 121, ENGL 202, and two additional writing intensive courses,

2

one in your major and one outside your major. You will be writing in many of your other courses. Beyond college, just about any employer or graduate school will pay careful attention to the writing skills you bring with you.

So...come to the conferences I schedule with you; in fact, schedule more! Meet with the Instructional Associate for the course! Go to the Writing Center. Come prepared with writing, even if it's not up to your standards and you fear it isn't up to mine, and let your classmates give you feedback. Take seriously their constructive comments. Take advantage of revising opportunities!

I understand that the skills of the students in this course will vary enormously. When I started college, I could write with relatively few errors, but I couldn't analyze or think critically and really I knew only one genre—the "five paragraph theme." I could summarize what I read, even if I couldn't' understand it. So, in many ways, I wasn't a good writer. It took me more than a year to get my first "A" in a writing class, and I was an English major! If your skills are poor when you start, that means you will have to do that much more work to improve them. But if you want something enough, and you understand what role a skill or a kind of knowledge will play in your future, you do what it takes to get it. I'll work with you as much as you want and sometimes more than you want. I set high standards, because students try to meet them and usually do. Why set low ones? Then everyone loses. If you have strong skills, expect me to continue to challenge you to improve and use your skills to help your classmates!

Being Part of a Cohort

This class is a cohort group, part of the Crimson Connections program. After advising during Orientation, you have chosen to enter ▮ and be linked to other students who share enrollment in the same College and also feel they will benefit from structured activities and more engagement with a small group of peers. You will take this course and ADVT 070 together. As part of this class, I will often ask you to think about your major or possible major, your career and educational goals, and to apply some of what we read to those areas. I also have designed some writing assignments that will allow you to explore a bit more about your possible major fields. It's the hope of those involved with Crimson Connections that such close contact with peers, advisors, and faculty over your first year will help you choose your field, be successful academically and socially, and help you continue to make strong academic progress. While sometimes the requirements of the program may seem like "extra work," ask yourself whether you are gaining experience or knowledge that many other first-year students aren't, and then ask yourself how you'll use it to further your education. Most people get ONE CHANCE at a Bachelor's degree, and so any work you can do to be successful over the next few years is, quite simply, just plain good thinking!

Theme for This Section

Because this course is organized around performance and goals, the content is largely up to the instructor. I've chosen to explore the world of the paranormal: ghosts, UFOs, Bigfoot and other unusual animals (cryptids), lost civilizations, psychic abilities, strange earthly phenomena. I hope this works for you—your feedback all along the way will help me continue to develop this course so that students get the most from it! The interest level about this topic among the

3

general public is quite high: note the number of currently available television shows, movies, and books about the paranormal! From major networks to cable shows—on respected cable channels like Discovery and The History Channel as well as "less reputable" channels—the public is fed a range of information, theory, speculation, and outright fantasy about the paranormal. Of course, studying the paranormal raises big questions: what other kind of "life" is "out there," and what does happen to us after death? What possible abilities do humans have? Such study, when done seriously, involves researchers in overlapping domains of science, religion, sociology, and psychology, to name a few. It's truly multidisciplinary—exactly what the liberal arts are supposed to be! Did I mention that it's great fun to discuss and share? Wow, the stuff I've learned from listening to my students' experiences and beliefs!

Our conversations and discussions may be very odd, certainly not what you may have had in previous writing classes. I expect you to be civil, to listen carefully to each other's views and experiences, to ask questions that are respectful even when challenging, and that help us all move toward better understanding or improved critical thinking. I hope this helps you feel comfortable with each other and develop a strong community. I expect you will form bonds that will make the discussion in this class lively and honest! I've designed the course so that you can apply what you are learning in your other (probably all Liberal Studies core) classes as well as your personal interests in much of the writing you'll do.

There is not one "right" position to take on the paranormal in this class. I am a non-believer in some paranormal areas, skeptical of other beliefs, and a believer of some elements of the paranormal. I find it to be a challenging field, and I hope that you will enter with an open mind and enthusiasm to learn more about it and share that knowledge and the speculation it raises in a series of written texts. I have included for this course (on electronic reserve) an extensive selection of appropriate texts which range in approach from unqualified and uncritical belief in a paranormal topic to highly skeptical and belief-busting articles from magazines like *Skeptical Enquirer* and *Scientific American* . I enjoy them all, because they make me think hard. You will consult them as you are preparing your papers and projects. While the paranormal isn't usually given lots of academic attention, there ARE credible pieces we can use, which will lead us to skill in accessing the library databases; the internet and Wikipedia are not terribly high on the credibility scale.

We'll also go on a ghost investigation during the semester. It's not required and you get no extra credit—it's for fun and to practice what you will read about in a required text. People learn in very different ways, and hands-on learning will help make what you read "stick" with you.

Some things this course is NOT about: Satanism, worship of any kind, black magic, or the "dark side" of the paranormal. I feel that, as the instructor and initial shaper of this course, I do not want to "force" anyone to read/research in those areas. You may have an interest in these topics, and certainly you could explore them more in your papers and research. No one, however, is required to deal with these topics. If a classmate has written a paper exploring such an issue and you find yourself utterly incapable of reading and responding fairly, you are not required to offer a critique (of that paper; you'll still have to critique someone else's). However, it is important to be able to read about ideas and concepts critically, whether they are distasteful or you don't share the writer's beliefs. That's one way to grow as a person, and certainly you will learn a great deal about yourself and a topic. Learning and challenging our

4

own beliefs is part of the change that happens in college (and elsewhere). I hope you want to be different in some way for having invested so much of your time and "self" in college.

My Qualifications:

I assume you have met admission requirements and are qualified to be in this course. Most professors don't tell you why **they** are qualified, but it seems fair for me to do so. I am in my 13ᵗʰ year at ▮▮ and have taught at two other colleges before this for a total teaching time now of 18 years. My specialty is writing: I have a Master of Fine Arts in Poetry, a Ph.D. in composition, and I earned a B.A. in English, with a minor in ancient history. I have some areas of specialization: sociolinguistics, writing assessment, and creative writing. I have published two books, many articles, done lots of national presentations to other teachers, and have won four teaching awards, one of which was for ENGL 101. I really love teaching—if I didn't, I'd quit, because it's really hard to do it well, and I don't like to do a job poorly. I love how I can't predict what students will write about, so it's always interesting; I love how we talk about all kinds of things that I may not expect; I love how first-year students are excited about college and willing to tackle just about any assignment I give them. I teach the same material only for a little while—until I get it down really well and feel it's time for me to learn something new. I've been teaching about the paranormal for about four years now, and I add new readings and alter assignments to keep it fresh. I like to keep adding to my teaching skills and my knowledge, and I learn a lot from students. I participate in workshops offered through ▮▮ Center for Teaching Excellence, which I have directed in the recent past, and I like reading about research and findings in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. From my colleagues in these endeavors, I get a lot of help enhancing my skills. I also ask students for feedback—I'm interested in how I am doing and want to make my courses important to students by paying attention to their needs and abilities. I consider myself lucky to be paid to do what I love, and I hope all of you find yourselves in such a position some day!

I am also a ghost investigator myself. As I began to get involved in the field of ghost investigation and shared some of my experiences and photos with students, they were excited and had a lot of stories to tell and questions to ask. I thought, "Why not organize a course around this? If it's interesting, and maybe people will read and write more! I am also the faculty advisor for the new Paranormal Society of ▮▮ (PS▮▮), a recognized student organization. One of our projects is to investigate buildings on campus—▮▮ Hall, where we'll be meeting, is one of our favorites!

Instructional Associates

In this section of ENGL 101 I am privileged to have two Instructional Associates. IAs are junior or senior English majors or minors who are receiving internship credit by assisting the professor with many aspects of the course. The IAs in this section are ▮▮▮▮ and ▮▮▮▮. Here's what they have to say about themselves.

> *I am a senior Marketing major working on minors in Economics and English and I am excited to work with Dr. ▮▮ this fall. By no means am I the best teacher or best Instructional Assistant (you can be the judge of that), but I have had*

experience in the past. I've helped teach business plans to local high school kids with the ▇ Excel Program. I have also volunteered by mentoring young kids in urban centers.

This summer I interned with the United Nations Refugee Agency in the fundraising office. This experience allowed me to meet and talk to people all over the world. I am excited to share my past experiences in the class and learn from everyone else also. I enjoy working with other people because I feel it can make us all better. During this fall I want everyone to get the most out of the class, including Dr. ▇, ▇ and I. I am very approachable and I will do my best to make this first English class go smoothly. I am no longer involved with athletics at ▇ so my schedule is flexible also. ─▇

▇ (▇) says this as part of introducing herself:
I am a senior English major at ▇, with a minor in communications media. I used to be an art minor for a year as well. I am very involved on campus, including leadership roles in the ▇ Ambassadors and Walt Disney World Campus Rep Team, but my schedule can be flexible to help with any concerns you may have! This past summer I assisted Dr. ▇ in teaching a liberal studies class. My passion is writing (especially in the creative sense) and I hope to allow you to see writing as a valuable skill that can actually be fun, not something to be feared! Above all I hope that this class will be enjoyable and will allow you the opportunity to develop your writing into the college level!

▇ and ▇ will be helping with class discussion; will read and respond to your responses, drafts and papers; will meet and work with you one-to-one if you like; will move from group to group when we are workshopping; will do some presentations and exercises; and will create materials to help us become better writers and readers. At no time will they give you grades, nor will they see the grades I give you—your privacy is protected by law (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA)—and I will always be in the classroom supervising their involvement. I'll ask you to evaluate them twice during the year, because evaluation helps us improve when it's done well.

Students in other classes where IAs have been present have said that they're GREAT! You have someone who is closer in age and experiences to you—I'm a full generation ahead of you, and creeping up fast on two generations. You have someone who is accessible when I'm not (I'm old, I go to bed early, I check my email less frequently since I wasn't texting in the womb like most of you), and sometimes, if students are unhappy about something, they are afraid to tell the professor. They may tell the IA, who can relay information back without revealing anything personal. I meet with ▇ and ▇ every week to talk about the class, to plan out what we'll be doing, and to look at any materials they are creating. They'll have read all the same materials you have, so they can ask you really pertinent questions about your drafts, not just work on "errors" with you. So if you can't fit into your schedule a conference with me, please be sure to fit one in with either ▇ or ▇.

And if you think you, too, might want to do an internship like this, talk to me. PACT: Professors and Associates Collaborating on Teaching, is the organization that coordinates these internships,

6

and we can begin to prepare you for one very early on, with resources, faculty who love to work with you, and other students preparing or doing such internships. I hope that soon all other departments will offer junior and senior students the same opportunity as English has.

REQUIRED Course Texts:
I've tried to use as few texts as possible to keep costs down for you. The TWObulleted texts are required.

- Joshua Warren, *How to Hunt Ghosts*. New York: Fireside, 2003.
- Course Packet: Available at Copies Plus, across from the Oak Grove on Oakland Ave.

The first text is available at the Coop Bookstore in the HUB. You may also purchase it on-line, sometimes for a lower price, but you need to get it ASAP! The course packet is crucial—pick it up immediately.

Rationale for these texts:

The book by Josh Warren is one of the best regarding "ghost hunting." Warren spends half of his book addressing questions that are crucial: how could ghosts exist? What do we know scientifically that could help us understand ghosts and ghostly phenomena? He approaches ghost hunting as a believer but also a skeptic firmly rooted in science. He doesn't dismiss the experiences of so many people, but he asks, "How can these be explained, not 'explained away?'" The second half of the book provides practical information on how to actually "hunt" ghosts, and students who want to continue to be involved in such activities have found it very useful! Plus it's full of personal anecdotes about his experiences, which are quite interesting.

The course packet includes sample writing, guidelines, rubrics, assignments, and all the stuff that is usually handed out to students. This is thick, but please don't be intimidated by it! Look through it, and you'll see that there are sample papers from previous classes, sample responses to assignments, rubrics to show you how I'll grade assignments, and resources that I've designed because I'm not happy with what I've found in textbooks—or because those books just cost too much!

There's nothing to stop you from reading ahead in the Warren book—if you purchase it early, start reading immediately! It'll help you in two ways: you will find yourself jammed up with assignments (since college teachers don't check with each other and create syllabi that are tailored to your schedule!), and if you have already read the material, you will find it comes back quickly to you on a second, much quicker read. Also, reading material TWICE gets it into your head and puts you in a position to think more deeply about it—and who doesn't want to be a deep thinker?!

7

191

I use the packet because it keeps students from losing material and because my own access to institutional copying is sometimes limited, meaning that I can't make lots of handouts and give them to you. I wish I could, and I do use Electronic Reserve, but there are still times when you need hard copy, you need it right now, and you aren't near a computer. **YOU MUST PURCHASE THIS TEXT ASAP!**

I understand that sometimes, financial aid has not caught up with the semester—you may well be starting with no money. Please note that the Coop store in the HUB will permit you to purchase books before your financial aid has come in. Quite a bit of Warren is on e-reserve. The whole course packet will be on reserve in hard copy. If you want to use my course packet, you may come to my office during office hours to read material there. The syllabus and schedule of work is on electronic reserve. DO NOT SIMPLY NOT DO THE REQUIRED RESPONSES AND READINGS JUST BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE THE TEXT. Your grade will surely suffer. I will do my best to work with you.

STRONGLY SUGGESTED class materials:

Copying/printing budget—you will be making copies of your work many times over the semester for classmates or me. You will also be creating a magazine, a hard copy of which I require you to turn in (one group will turn in a SINGLE hard copy, so you split costs: typically, it will run you about $5.00). If you are working from a computer lab on campus, you will need to be sure you have money on your I-card for printing; if you have your own computer and printer, you will need to be sure to have paper and ink cartridges. I don't take email attachments and print them for you, and I won't print your papers, responses, or critiques for you in my office. I have to purchase my own ink cartridges after I go over the few I am allotted each year, and I have often gotten viruses from student CDs, flash/jump drives, and attachments. I was a poor college student, so I know that this kind of expense can seem to be "incidental" to books. But I have kept the course book budget very low so that you CAN be sure to keep money on your I-card or pay for a cartridge to print your drafts and final papers. Note that I mark you absent if you don't have enough copies when copies are required, and that if you come in late because you ran around looking for a printer (THERE ARE NONE IN ███ HALL!), that will hurt your attendance. This should provide a lot of incentive to keep a copying and printing budget!

Stapler—I'm not an office supply store! You will need to staple your materials together. I don't want to mix up materials. Also, I hand back materials in alphabetical order in a pile, and if someone gets a page from your draft or response because you didn't staple or at the least paper-clip it, it may be gone forever and my grade and comments and ███'s or ███'s with it.

One Large (9x12) Envelope—you will turn in your major papers in this envelope and supporting materials for your magazine. Please don't use a long, standard letter

8

envelope. Again, I carry your papers around with me, I work at home and my office, and I don't want to lose your stuff or mix it up with anyone else's. If you are artistic, you can decorate your envelope so you can find it quickly in the bag of them that I bring in to return. (Just don't use glitter glue—it gets all over everything!) The envelope can be previously gently used—you don't need a new one.

Course planner/organizer—I permanently reduce the grades on late papers. This is a course with lots of writing and assignments, so if you can, I suggest writing down the important dates in your planner or calendar and working backwards from there. Students with good time management skills do far better than those with poor management skills.

Folder or Three-Ring Binder—you should save ALL your stuff. If there is any question about a course grade, I'll go by my own record book if you don't have the paper with my grade and comments on it to show me I made a mistake. I'm human and fallible, and sometimes I put the wrong mark in my own little book. And though I keep two sets of records in case I lose one, still, accidents happen. I'm happy to correct any error on my part, but you need to show me the proof. Also, most of my students tell me they are proud of what they write, they often find they can use it in some way as they develop papers or projects in other classes, and they wish to keep their material as a record of their growth.

CD: I recommend backing up all your files on a CD in case your computer crashes. Also, you can save materials on the █████'s student drives, which are backed up every night. Your first project is a group project, and one of you will need to turn in the project on a CD, which will be returned to the owner.

Required Writing and Assignments:

- A magazine about the paranormal (written as a group project; 2-3 articles from each writer), a personal narrative with analysis or an analysis of a television/movie OR a piece of fact-based fiction. (200 total points for articles, additional points for magazine layout and editing along with participation; 100 points for final paper.)
- Writer's memos to accompany each paper. (15 points)
- Three extensive written critiques of classmates' papers. (50 points each)
- Responses to readings/discussion/interviews. (10 points each)
- Classroom participation: large class discussion, small group work (75 points)
- Other exercises as assigned (usually in class, ungraded).

9

193

There's a lot of writing in this class! You conference with me, you write, revise, write more…you get the picture! But it's a four-credit course to acknowledge that. You need to keep up with the work and reading. I promise to give you lots of feedback as quickly as I can, and I'll meet with you as often as you wish to help you produce and revise your work.

Grading Scale:
A= 90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=below 60. At the end of the semester, if you have earned an 89.5, I round it up to 90 and you get an A. (Yay!) If you earn an 89.4, you get the B. (Sorry!) ▮ doesn't offer plus/minus grading, which I personally think is a shame, since there's a big difference between a 70 and a 79.4. One way in which teachers deal with that is to make the grade range smaller (like an A is 93-100), but that doesn't address the whole problem. To break it down a bit more for paper grades: A+= 100; A=95; A-=92, and do the same for the other grades.

You'll find a rubric for each paper or project in your packet. Please read it before you turn in your paper to me. While you can revise some of your work for a better grade after getting my feedback, it helps to keep in mind beforehand what characteristics I'm looking for. Because of the group structure for the magazine project and the fact that the final paper comes in at the very end of the semester, the former offers limited revision and the latter can't be revised. You CAN revise some of your responses, however, so that's another way to improve your writing and grade. There is no "extra credit" in the course.

One thing to consider: Many students come from schools where technical correctness was valued above all else, and if the paper was boring, vacant, and lacked substance but didn't have any technical errors, they still got an A. "Correctness" *is* important, but it's still just one aspect of writing to consider when evaluating and giving a grade. Students who have not been rewarded for using their own voice and creativity may find they do better in this class than in high school, and students who have strong "grammar" skills but haven't really developed other skills may find they don't do as well initially, until they gain those skills. Really good papers do lots of things well, and that's what we'll work toward.

If you ever have a question about a grade, please make a conference to talk with me. By law, I cannot discuss grades in public (nor would I), and *I cannot give grades or personal information over email*. That means I can't talk about your grade after class or before class with students milling around, but privately, I'll be happy to explain in more detail why I graded your work as I did. Given sufficient reason, I'll change a grade. However, at the end of the semester, asking me to change that 79.4 to a 79.5 and thus jumping to a B simply because you don't *want* a C is NOT sufficient reason! And asking me what you can do to improve your grade when we are at the end of the semester is also pretty futile. So take advantage of opportunities while you can and pay attention to revising deadlines.

10

Late Papers/Assignments/Grading:

Papers are due on the day and during the class period indicated in the syllabus. A paper turned in late will be reduced by ½ a letter grade for each day it is late, including weekends and days when we don't have class. Late papers should be turned into my mailbox in the English department office, and the administrative assistant must initial and put the date/time on the envelope. They should not be turned in at my office in ███, because I may not be there and thus may not get it for a while.

Imagine this scenario: a paper is due on Thursday and you don't turn it in until Friday and then you do so by putting it in the envelope on my door in ███ Hall. I don't come in on Friday because I'm researching something in Pittsburgh, and I don't get the paper until the following Monday. I can't say when it was turned in, so now it's four days late, is reduced by two letter grades, and will ALWAYS be two letter grades lower, even if you revise it. So a paper that would have received, if it was on-time, a B (85) will receive a D (65). You can revise it up to A (95), but it will stay two grades lower (75).

My advice: even if you don't feel like the paper is done, turn it in anyway. If there are some special circumstances, *please* talk with me about it (not by email), and I will consider providing more time if possible and fair. My decisions on extensions for work are always made by trying to balance what's fair for the individual writer and for the rest of the class.

Written critiques are due the day the syllabus says they are. Critiques turned in late receive a 0. This is because they are usually due just before your classmate has to revise and turn in his/her paper, and if you give it to your classmate late, it does no good whatsoever. These are not "busy work," but a valuable response to a peer's paper. These are to teach you how to really help another writer as part of a writing community.

What about when you're sick or absent?

If you are ill and don't make it to class to give your critique to your classmate, send it with someone else. If you are absent on a day when we exchange papers in order to write a critique, you can make up that missed critique (unless we have run out of workshop days); if you are present for a workshop and take a classmate's paper to critique and either don't write a critique or don't turn it in or turn it in late, you may not make it up. Again, speak to me with any questions.

Other work that was due on a day you were sick may be turned in at the next class meeting without any penalty. If something is due on Tuesday and something else on Thursday, and you are sick on Tuesday, you must turn in both required pieces of writing on Thursday, unless you contact me to make other arrangements.

11

However…when you are working on a group project like your magazine and there's a deadline for the magazine to be put together and printed, you cannot turn in your material late. If you do so, it won't be in the magazine and it will mess up others' work. One value of group projects is that you are responsible to many people, and usually that makes you meet deadlines you might just ignore otherwise.

If you are absent on the day your final paper is due, it is due the following day in my mailbox in 110 ██████ by the end of our usual class time.

Late Pass
Note that you have a late pass in your course packet. That will give you one more day for a response and your final paper, even if you are not absent. It may not be used for a draft being read in a workshop setting. The late pass can be used only once. It must be attached to the late paper/response and turned in to my mailbox in 110 ████.
Please be sure the secretary puts the date and time on it as well as her initials.

Plagiarism:
Of course I expect you to document all sources you use and to provide me with hard copy of material that is not part of the course materials or in our electronic reserve files. This helps me make sure you can document correctly. Plagiarism happens unintentionally as well as intentionally. Sometimes you use someone's words and you put quotes around them but forget to tell the reader where it came from. Sometimes you paraphrase someone's words or ideas and forget to document it, though you may have discussed it with me or in class. In such cases, I mark the paper with an "F" and explain that this appears to be an error, not intentional, and you can revise the paper with no penalty. (But if you don't revise, the F stays! Take advantage of your chances!)

Intentional plagiarism happens very rarely in my sections. There are several reasons for this. You will draft materials and hand in drafts, and *I don't accept papers for a grade if I haven't had a chance to read and respond to the drafts first*. Also, most students are truly interested in learning new skills and realize they won't gain those if they plagiarize. Most are interested in the material and WANT to read and write about it, a knowledge-gaining process which gets short-circuited through plagiarism. Finally, most realize that I care about them as people. I write lots of letters of recommendation, I get to know many of my students, and it's really pretty tough for most people to engage in plagiarism purposefully if they feel mutual respect.

If, however, I have reason to believe that you have intentionally plagiarized, I will pursue whatever penalty seems most appropriate for your lack of academic integrity. Your handbook and the university catalog lay out the process that must be followed in cases involving a lack of academic integrity. Through that process, I can fail the paper, fail you

12

in the course, or, in extreme cases, ask for a harsher penalty, which can include being suspended from ▮ and having a permanent notation in your record.

It is relatively easy now for faculty to find the source of materials that are plagiarized, but it's not putting in that work alone that makes me and other teachers mad. It's that you lied. You disrespected me and your peers. You lied to classmates as you passed your paper through their hands and they worked on it to help you improve it and your skills; you lied in your relationship to them and to me. You sold yourself short and didn't learn anything of use when you plagiarized, and you involved us all in your cheating.

If you plagiarize and it is discovered, and you and I (or the committee which deals with such cases) agree that you have failed the paper, your participation grade is also severely affected. At most, you can receive only a "D" from me for participation for the semester. The average student does not cheat, "C" is an average grade, and you are below average if you have plagiarized.

The usual reasons I've been given for the few cases I've had to deal with are that time was running out and the student "needed" to do it; that the student "had to have an A" to pass the semester, or that the student was afraid of not doing well. Manage your time well and you don't need to rush. If you need an A in my class, you are likely doing poorly in many of your other classes and need to reassess your behaviors, skills, and reasons for being in college at this time. If you are afraid of not doing well, think how afraid you'll be to face me and a pool of faculty and students when the plagiarism is discovered, not to mention the possibility of parents and future employers and graduate programs finding out! Not doing well academically isn't great, of course, but not doing well in terms of integrity is far worse.

Attendance Policy:

Here's the bottom line. I have never failed a student for lack of writing skill. I can work with any student who is willing to work hard, and if you follow my advice, go to the Writing Center, and come see me before and after every paper, you will improve. *However, I have failed quite a few students because of lack of attendance and preparation!*

The university attendance policy is that you are expected to be in class and be prepared, but we need to make some allowance for the way life works. So my policy is this: you may miss three classes for ANY REASON without any formal penalty. (That's a week and a half of my class.) I don't need to see a doctor's letter, a note from a parent or employer or advisor, an obituary, anything. If you oversleep, you oversleep. If you go to a wedding, enjoy! If you have to take a mental health day and go shopping, hang out, whatever, go do it. If you are sick, I'm sorry—get better! Showing me an "excuse" or documentation that you were sick or a bill for fixing your car doesn't "excuse" the

absence. You don't get another absence because you had a doctor's note. You get a total of three absences for any reason.

If you miss a fourth class, you can make it up by either writing an additional response assigned by me and earning at least a B on it or by writing an additional critique for a classmate and earning at least a B on it. So you could potentially miss two weeks of my class for any reason whatsoever, yet, if you follow the above, have no penalty.

For every absence over three (unless you make up that fourth one), I will REDUCE your FINAL COURSE GRADE by ONE FULL LETTER GRADE. So if you were absent five times, you made up the fourth one, and you earned a B in the class, you will get a C on your final course grade. If you were absent six times, you have a D, and seven times will fail you in the class, even if you got Bs on your writing.

It's crucial you understand this. Attendance is important to me and in almost all other "worlds" you are likely to inhabit. This is a small class. We talk a lot, and that conversation cannot be reconstructed for you because you were absent. We do exercises, some of which are not always on the syllabus but which I create the night before after reading papers or responses and seeing what needs to be done from that work. I don't hand out notes for you. I often break you into small groups, particularly on workshop days, and I count on all of you being there. When you come prepared to work hard with a small group of people and some of them are not there or not prepared, you will also understand why it's so important.

If you are an athlete, musician, or otherwise involved in university activities, I am not required to excuse you from class work or attendance. I understand, however, that you are juggling multiple demands. The first four absences will count like anyone else's; after that, we will need to discuss what can be done. However, such discussion means in advance, face-to-face. It doesn't mean that you can email me at 1:00 a.m. and say you have a concert the next day and can't make it to class. And it does not guarantee that you will be granted any additional absences without penalty.

What sometimes happens is that students believe that they SHOULD use those absences, even if they aren't ill, too tired to work, or have some pressing business to attend to. Sometimes, they use them all at once, near the end of the semester. If you miss your four classes and then have an emergency, you are absent and it will count against you. As the semester comes to a close, it becomes much more difficult for you to make up missed work. So, please: make every effort to attend class and to come prepared.

Coming in Late: it happens. But it shouldn't happen a lot. If you are more than 15 minutes late, I'll mark you absent. (I use my watch, by the way, not yours.) If you are late three times, I'll count it as adding up to an absence. If you leave early, the same rule applies.

14

Coming in Unprepared: I can't always catch this, honestly. But if a written response is required for the day and you don't have it, you won't be able to participate when we hand them around for commentary. That's about ½ an hour of class time. I'll let this pass once. After that, I mark you absent if you come in without a typed response. If you don't have enough copies of your paper (or any draft at all) to hand around to your group on workshop days (unless I've had to shift groups because of absences and there's no way you could prepare for that), then not only do you not get good feedback, but your peer group doesn't get the chance to learn how to workshop. In those two instances—no written response and not enough copies or no draft at all—I'll mark you absent.

I put emphasis on the absence policy in my syllabus because it's what really trips people up. Mostly, it's about commitment to the course and to learning. You don't have to be a great writer to show up on time and prepared. You just have to be dedicated to improving your writing and helping your classmates improve theirs. I come to class on time and prepared because I'm dedicated to helping you. I'd be embarrassed to be unprepared or underprepared, frequently late, or frequently not there at all. So while you've got some wiggle room here because all kinds of stuff just happens (like traffic, no parking spot, slow printer, power failure, etc.), you don't have carte blanche to wander in and out when you wish in whatever state of preparation you wish, any more than I do.

Cell Phone Policy

Please keep your phone turned off during class. Please don't set it to vibrate and stick it in the pocket of your hoodie and pull it out and check it regularly. For an hour and fifteen minutes, please be fully in the class, giving your peers and me the benefit of your thinking and attention. If you have an emergency call you are waiting for, let me know before class. I expect that might happen once a semester. If I see you using your phone, I will ask you to put it away the first time. After that, I will simply mark you as "late," and the third time, it will count as an absence. If I kept checking my phone for messages, answering calls, and otherwise diverting my attention, you would think I was not so great a teacher. Please remember that teachers can form the same judgment about students. One student, each class meeting, will be allowed to keep his/her phone on so we can get any "reverse 911" calls.

Participation and Classroom Civility:

All of you are coming from different educational and cultural contexts. In addition to what you are used to, each of you individually has different comfort levels of participation. Notice that you get points for participation in this course. I *encourage* students to speak, to share, and to learn from each other. However, I *require* civility in

15

discussion, in comments you may write to each other on papers, and in your interactions generally. It's important to learn how to critically approach what someone says without excessive negativity, without dismissing someone's ideas out-of-hand. If you sit and listen quietly, you will learn. But if everyone sits quietly, all you'll hear is each other's breathing or what I say, and that gives you only one perspective. Side conversations will spring up when people are interested, but try to keep them to a minimum and instead speak to the class—if the person next to you is interested and you feel compelled to speak, chances are, the rest of us want to hear it, too! Not everyone needs or wants to speak every day. But I will call on people sometimes to hear their voice (to compel them to speak, using my teacherly power!). You can also participate by writing thoughtful comments on classmates' responses; you can talk comfortably in small groups even if you don't want to be group leader when we go back to large group discussion, and you can participate by being ready with whatever is assigned. Humor is encouraged, questions are encouraged, and sharing speaking time (sharing the floor) is encouraged. So if you have spoken a great deal, I may ask you to be a listener for a little bit and encourage others to speak.

If you engage in behavior that I feel is disruptive or disrespectful, I will privately speak with you or email you to ask that you stop. If you continue, I will have to ask you publicly to stop. The civility code permits me to ask students to leave a classroom if their behavior is disruptive. I have never had to do that, because I've never had a student who didn't understand, after a discussion or email, that his/her behavior was making it difficult for learning to take place. If you are talking to others or ignoring others because you are bored, come speak with me about the material and we'll see what we can do.

Plan on staying in class for the whole class period. Unless you are visibly ill, there are very few good reasons to leave the classroom. Use the restroom before class. I see students all the time wandering the hallway, texting or talking on their phones. Imagine this is a business meeting or a committee meeting: if you leave, you may get assigned a rotten job or miss out on being part of a great team that gets set up. Clients and coworkers would want you there the whole time, and so do your classmates and teacher!

I typically hand back graded material at the end of class; if you disagree with a comment or a grade, please approach me after class and ask to set up an appointment. (Remember, I can't discuss your grade in public.) Sometimes, students are disappointed and angry—they feel they've put in a lot of time and effort and should get a higher grade—and they don't give themselves time to calm down, to read and think over the paper and the commentary on it. Your classmates aren't part of this personal conflict, and the two of us can discuss it privately with the maturity I've come to expect in students at the college level.

16

So what it comes down to is to avoid activities that are likely to be disruptive: leaving class repeatedly to use the bathroom or leaving to wander the halls and answer a phone call; speaking out repeatedly in class in a way that interrupts other speakers; ridiculing ideas or readings or theories instead of questioning them and provoking thought, not anger. Some ways of responding are learned skills, and we'll work on those in class. In the right atmosphere, learning blossoms!

Parental Involvement

This is a new section in my syllabus, but increasingly, parents are just as involved in their children's college lives as they have been in their high school lives. As a parent, I understand that connection, but as a teacher at the college level, I have to tell parents that, by law, I cannot discuss their adult (18 or older) child's progress in my classroom, nor can I discuss grades. Only with express permission—a formal written note presented to me by the student and signed by the student in my presence—can I discuss anything, and then not by phone or email, as I don't know to whom I'm actually speaking. For many parents, it feels as if I am shutting them out of their child's life. So I encourage you to share the assignments, readings, and your writing with your family members if you are comfortable doing so. If you choose to share graded material with them, that's fine! My mother was very interested in what I was learning in college and wished she'd had the chance to attend. I brought her home my books and papers and involved her in my learning. I was surprised (like many teens who feel parents don't really KNOW anything!) that she made really good comments and asked great questions about what I was learning or writing. If you parents or siblings visit you, they are welcome in the classroom. Advance notice would be helpful, if I have handouts and need to make extra copies.

Anything Else?

I know this syllabus is REALLY LONG! That's because some of you in this class will be new to college. I have no way of knowing what you know before meeting and talking with you. I came to college as the first person in my family to attend, and I came from a high school where not all that many students went on to four-year schools. So I was really clueless when I started, and I wished someone would explain "stuff" to me. I didn't even know enough to be able to frame a proper question! I wasn't sure how to interact with others in college, as opposed to high school. So don't worry about sounding stupid or lame if you ask me about something. Call me at home if you need to (I don't usually check my email at home, so use the phone, please!) but try to call before 9:30, since by many of your standards, I am as old as dirt, and so I get up early and go to bed early. Or ask questions after or before class or schedule a conference. Give me a note, if you are too shy to ask me personally! I can't anticipate all questions from students I haven't yet met, so help me out after you've read this syllabus by writing down or speaking up about what I've missed and what you want to know. And ask all semester, whenever you need to.

Welcome to the class! I hope you enjoy it as much as I always do!

Schedule of Work: ENGL 101-███, Fall, 2009

The schedule below is subject to change. It makes sense at the moment, before the semester starts. But if student skills vary greatly from what I expect, or the weather is awful, or I have to miss a class for some reason, I'll revise the schedule. A copy of this schedule is posted in the P drive (Project Directories, see http://www.███.edu/itsupportcenter/howto.aspx?id=27473) in the information folder for this class and section, and any updates will be posted there as well. A copy is also on electronic reserve under ENGL 101-040, Fall 2009: "Schedule of Work." To access E-reserve, go to the ███ Library home page. Click on services, e-reserve, and at the prompts, include the course password: BLAENGL101. Click "accept" and then a list of reserve documents will come up. Usually, I will take a few minutes of each class to go over what is due for the next class. I may make a change at that point in time, so if you are absent, it is your responsibility to check with classmates or me to determine if there are any changes in the schedule. Please remember that I don't usually check my email in the late afternoon or evening. If you have questions, you may call me at home (the number is on your syllabus, also posted in the information folder of the P drive for this course) until 9:30 pm, or you may email me and expect an answer the following morning.

This is a four-credit writing class. You will have some kind of writing due every week. Please don't wait to prepare what's due, only to discover that your printer is out of ink or you have no money on your I-Card, or that you underestimated how long the assignment will take you. There is NO computer lab in ███ Hall; the nearest is on the first floor of ███ Hall. All materials are due on the day listed. If you are unprepared to fully participate, I will mark you absent. If you are frequently underprepared, Your participation grade will suffer. This is a small class, and because we often work in groups, your level preparation affects us all. Please, do your very best to come prepared!

T. Sept. 1: Introduction to the class.

Due next class:

1. Complete the Paranormal belief scale in your packet.
2. Purchase the course packet at Copies Plus. Read the long Course Syllabus in your packet. If you cannot purchase the packet until after Thursday, read the "Long Course Syllabus ENGL 101—040, 2009" on Electronic reserve or in the Project Directories (P Drive, available on computers on campus), in the information folder for this course. Directions for mapping the P drive to your own computer can be found at http://www.███.edu/itsupportcenter/howto.aspx?id=27473
3. Write a response to the course syllabus. In your response, summarize quickly each section (use the section headers to help you) and comment on the section. For example: are you clear on the material covered in that section? Is this different from what you've experienced in the past? Is any of this familiar? Unexpected? Does it make you interested? Do you have any concerns or comments about the policies or material in each section? At the end of your response, if you have questions you need me to answer, please list them! I'll be happy to cover them in class or privately, if you wish. FORMAT FOR RESPONSE: please use a two-column format (in Word 2007, click under "Page Layout" and select a two-column format). Type your response in the left-hand column only, leaving the right column blank by hitting "return" until you are at the next page, left column. This blank column will allow for comments. A sample response is in your packet.

18

R. Sept. 3:   Due: Belief scale, response to syllabus.

In class: we'll discuss the range of beliefs we hold, why we hold them, and what constitutes "evidence." We'll discuss critical thinking. We'll also look at how to write an effective response to a reading.

Due next class:

1. Re-read in your course packet the "Guidelines for Written Responses" and the sample response.
2. Read on E-reserve "The Nature of Belief," by James Alcock.
3. Write a response to the article, using the two-column format. In your response, summarize the main points or arguments that the author makes and why he feels as he does. What evidence or support does he offer for each main point? What do you feel about each point or part of his argument? Apply his argument to your own life or to the world around you, using questions supplied by your IAs. Give examples of your own critical thinking—or lack of it (we all are guilty of this at some point in our lives!). Remember: you are writing your response as if the reader has NOT read the article, but must rely on your summary to understand it.

If you did not purchase your course packet yet, do so now. This is a crucial and required text. Please speak with me if this will be a problem for you. One copy is on reserve but remember: it has a two-hour use limit, and you must go over to the library and physically ask for it at the reserve desk. Remember to bring your student ID to check it out.

T. Sept. 8:   Due: Response to article. If you do not have a typed response, you will be marked absent. Remember to leave the right column blank for comments.

In class: we'll hand around responses to the article and discuss the ideas in it. We'll also read in the course packet the assignment for the group magazine and look at samples of previous class magazines and professional magazines. A limited number of magazines can be signed out to read outside of class. We'll start the Interpersonal Style materials in class.

Due next class:

1. Complete the "Interpersonal Style and Adaptability Index " in your course packet. Materials can also be found on the P Drive, Information folder.

R. Sept. 10:   Due: results of interpersonal style and adaptability test. In class, we'll use those to decide on groups to create magazines. We'll also discuss the structure of the magazines in more detail and begin to lay out ideas for the feature article.

Due next class:

1. Via email or in some other efficient way, correspond with group members about what you want to do with your magazine. Do you want to do something skeptical? Something with a focus on a particular aspect? What are your ideas for topics? For

fillers? Get a general idea that you can agree on. One person should compile and type up the general idea as a response. For example, "Three of us want to do this as a 'believers' magazine and the fourth wants to be a skeptic, so he'll write his pieces as oppositions to ours. Our topics for features, so far are:...... We are also interested in doing XXXX, and will include XXXXX genres. " You get the idea! Please print out two copies. One you will give to me and one you'll give to your IA. This is not graded, but is required and will give us a place to start and for us to offer you feedback.

2. Begin to do some research on your possible feature. Don't worry if you aren't positive this will be your feature; if you are interested in the topic, you'll probably use this material for a shorter article if you don't use it for the feature piece. BEGIN WITH MATERIAL ON E-RESERVE! Try to find some material where there are specific people you can quote and which offer differing views. PRINT OUT HARD COPY OF THE MATERIAL YOU FIND! You must have THREE SOURCES that offer differing views of the topic. Fill out the "Feature Sources" form in packet.

3. Read on E-reserve "World of Features" by Tim Harromen. I realize that a portion of this is not clear because of background color. However, most of it is very readable, and I'll bring in a copy so you can look at the rest.

T. Sept. 15: Due: Sources, compilation of group ideas, source list. In class: you will work in your groups to get a better idea of the overall content of your magazine. You'll work across groups when appropriate on the topics and resources you found: remember, cooperation, not competition! We'll discuss the structure of features in more detail, and begin working with sources.

Due next class:

1. Find one more resource for your feature. Consider what information you still need to provide to readers. PRINT OUT HARD COPY!

2. Complete what you can of the "Feature Planning Form" in your packet.

R. Sept. 17: Due: Hard copy and Feature Information form. In class, we'll hand around the forms to classmates to add comments. We'll continue discussion of signal phrases and avoiding plagiarism by working with your hard copy of resources, and begin working on leads.

Due next class:

1. Draft feature. Print out two copies.

T. Sept. 22: Due: Two copies of draft of feature. In class, we'll hand around your drafts and provide comments.

Due next class:

1. Using the comments you got in class, revise and add to your very rough draft of your feature. Print out three copies of the revised draft for in-class work. These drafts will wind up getting lots of comments, so the more complete and thorough you can make them, the more helpful the comments will be to you!

20

2. Read in your course packet the assignment for a Written Critique of a Feature Article and the sample critique.

R. Sept. 24: **Due:** Three copies of revised feature article. In class, we'll exchange copies with each other. You will also send one of your three copies off with a classmate for a written critique, and you'll provide a copy to an IA or me for additional comments.

Due next class:

1. Read Warren, Intro-30. Write a response to Warren, using the model in the packet. Be sure to summarize for a reader who has NOT read the material. Respond personally—what about this book so far interests you? (I didn't say you had to believe it, remember!) What does Warren do to pull you in and keep you asking questions? How does he make what he claims seem possible, even if you haven't had a personal experience with a ghost of some kind? Also: answer in your response the questions created for you by the IAs. These will ask you to apply Warren in some way either to your own writing, your life, or other readings you've done as you've been working on your magazine.

2. Begin research for article number two. Print out hard copy from two sources. Use E-Reserve first! Fill out what you can on the Article Two drafting form in your packet.

T. Sept. 29: **Due:** Response to Warren. We'll discuss the ideas in the reading by Warren, and we'll take a little time to work with your drafting form.

Due next class:

1. Find at least one more source for article two; two more if you are writing a second feature. Try to find material that answers the questions and concerns your readers had. Complete your article two drafting form. Have hard copy for all your sources available, as we'll use them to help us be more accurate and avoid plagiarism.

R. Oct. 1: **Due:** Article Two Drafting Form. In class, we'll work with your sources to structure your article.

Due next class:
1. Continue reading Warren, pp . 30-49. Write a response to these pages, using the response format. If you are able to adequately summarize material for an outside reader, think now about mingling your summary with commentary as you go, which puts YOUR voice into the response throughout, keeping our interest! If not, continue to summarize first, being sure to get all important details, claims, definitions, etc. that an outside reader would need, and then offer personal commentary and critical thinking. Then answer the questions supplied for you by the IAs.

2. Draft article two. Be sure to bring one copy with you, and bring all your hard copy printouts. Please mark your hard copy printouts with highlighter or in some other way to indicate where you have drawn material for your article.

T. Oct. 6:   **Due:** Response to Warren, draft of article two. In class, we'll look at some photos and listen to EVPs in order to make better sense of Warren's discussion, and we'll share the drafts of your article. If you need to make up an absence, you can write a critique for someone.

Due next class:

1. If you are writing three articles, bring in your ideas for the genre and topic of your third article. If you are writing two features, bring in a next to final copy of your first feature for editing (as opposed to revision).

R. Oct. 8:   **Due:** Appropriate material (above). In class, we will work on your writing in your magazine group.

Due next class:

1. Read in Warren pages 49-72. Write a response to these pages, following the response format and answering questions created for you by your IAs.
2. Find sources for your third article (if you are doing three). You need at least three, each of which should offer you different information that you will use. Print out hard copy, and highlight the material you are going to use. Write a draft of your third article. Print two copies. On your copies, include questions for the reader to answer: what are you most concerned about? These will help focus the comments.

T. Oct. 13:   **Due:** response and draft. We'll work with both in class.

Due next class:

1. Read Warren, pp.72-95. No response—yet!

R. Oct. 15:   **In class:** we'll discuss the reading from Warren, and then we'll look at professional magazines and student samples again so that you can make layout and design decisions.

Due next class:

1. Read Warren, 96-112. Write a response to pages 72-112. Then go back through Warren, looking at the sections he's laid out for you—use his section titles to help you think about the following questions, which you need to answer in your response: What claims has Warren made that you originally felt were way off base but which you now are open to thinking about? What does he seem still to be off-base or has not supported enough to suit you? What aspects of the paranormal that he's discussed are most interesting to you and why? Has reading this portion of Warren's book pushed your beliefs about ghosts in either direction on your belief scale? If you were afraid of ghosts before this, are you more or less afraid now that you've read Warren? If a friend told you about a paranormal experience he/she'd had, would you feel better able to analyze it, whether you believed it or not? Answer your IA's questions as well.

22

2. Revise your second or third article until it is at its next-to-final point. Bring in two copies for us to edit.

3. Write your "Notes from the Editor" which will introduce the magazine to readers who you assume know nothing about this new magazine! Also, one group member needs to compile your "Notes on the Contributors" column and bring it in for proofreading and discussion by magazine team members. One copy of each is all that is required.

T. Oct. 20:   Due: all the above. In class, we'll share your articles and columns for editing, and we'll hand around responses to Warren. We'll also cover final publication requirements for your magazine.

NO FORMAL CLASS ON THURSDAY, Oct. 22! Instead, use this time to meet with me or your IA to discuss the magazine: your concerns, questions, last minute revisions, etc. A sign-up sheet will be available for meetings . Remember: it's best if at least two members of a team meet with Angel, Katie, or I, so that you can both talk about what we said at your final group meeting. Come to a meeting with all required material to make it most helpful! You also have several evaluations to finish and, of course, need to print up a copy of your magazine!

Due on Tuesday, Oct. 27: A LOT! Please make sure you have EVERYTHING!

1. You have a check sheet for this project in your course packet. Be sure to work with it! Pull it out and check off the items as you put your material together.
2. Write your group/self evaluation and reflection: guidelines and a sample are in your packet. This is a crucial part of the shared grade and the participation grade. Two copies are needed.
3. Do the numerical evaluation of your group. Remember to include yourself in the evaluation! This is also a required and crucial part of the project.
4. Read carefully through your articles BEFORE sending them to the Compiler in your group! Proof-read your own and a team mate's articles, and, for extra measure, go to the Writing Center in Eicher Hall and work with a writing tutor. Have them send me a note about your visit, and I'll count it toward your participation grade for the course!
5. Make a careful note of what sources you have used. Be sure you have cited them at the end of your article and that you have signaled your use of them IN the article. Not doing so creates a situation of unintentional plagiarism, which we want to avoid.
6. Having done number 5, make sure you have highlighted, or underlined, or bracketed and starred, or in some way CLEARLY marked your hard copy for the material you've used, whether it is quoted directly or is paraphrased (your words, the other writer's ideas or information).
7. Put into your large envelope (see course materials needed, in syllabus) that has your name, course, and section number on it the following: a) your marked hard copy of sources, b) your group/self evaluation and reflection, c) your numerical evaluation of your group.

23

8. ONE person in your group will submit a CD with the magazine on it as a single file. I'll download this to where I need to have access to it and return the CD to that person.
9. ONE copy of your magazine, printed and bound, will be turned in to me. You may certainly print and bind additional copies for yourselves—they are great to look at and share with others, and you should be proud of them. (In my previous students' experience, family members *loved* reading these!)
10. One copy of your magazine should be put as a single file into the Project Directories hand-in folder. Save it by the magazine title.
11. Questions? Call me! Please don't forget stuff—it will slow down the grading and responding and can seriously hurt your grade.

R. Oct. 22: **NO FORMAL CLASS! See above; use the time to complete your magazine and, if needed, meet with me, an IA, or the Writing Center.**

T. Oct. 27: **Due:** Magazine and supporting materials! We'll pass these around to read and look at. If you printed more than one copy, bring the extras to share—you'll get them back! In class, we'll read Warren, 115-120 and talk about how this might help lead into paepr two, depending upon your writing choices. We'll also read the assignment (s) for paper two and talk about how that will work. We'll also discuss interviewing techniques and questions.

Due next class:

1. Interview people to find someone who has had a paranormal experience or believes they have had one. Write a response in which you summarize this person's experience, as well as what two other people have said—they may not believe in the paranormal or may believe they also have had an experience, but it seems "shakier" to you. You *may* be using this summary as part of your paper, so do a good job on it! Make sure you get contact information from the person with the strongest experience so that you can speak with him/her again if needed.

R. Oct. 29: **Due:** response to interviewing. In class, we'll share these and discuss some of them, then we'll practice evaluating them by applying Warren's ideas/theories.

Due next class:

1. Watch a television program that has to do with ghost hunting or hauntings. Many of these are also available on-line, so you can watch repeated times. Write a brief summary of the "plot" of the show, and pick out key elements of the haunting or investigation that you can analyze. List these in a response format along with the summary, and critique them, using Warren as well as good critical thinking.

T. Nov. 3: **Due:** response to show. In class, we'll share these, offer some additional critique of shows, and work on doing visual analysis.

Due next class:

24

208

1. Read sample Fact-Based Fiction in your course packet. Take notes on the strengths and weaknesses, with explanations for WHY you feel something is strong or needs more work, and put it into a response format.
2. Look back through the topics listed on the paranormal belief scale and those raised by Warren. Look back through your magazine materials—pick a couple of possible topics to use in writing a piece of fact-based fiction that uses the paranormal as a crucial element.
3. Working with the FBF planning form, fill out the first couple of questions to hand around in class.

R. Nov. 5:   Due: Response and planning form. In class, we'll work with these to figure out what makes a piece of fiction work. We'll discuss character motivation and the structure of fiction.

Due next class:

1. Decide whether you want to write an analysis of a ghost experience, an analysis of a television show, or a piece of fact-based fiction.
2. If you are writing a piece of fact-based fiction, read on E-reserve four very short pieces by Ann Lamott: Character, Plot, Dialogue, and Set Design. Summarize the main points for a reader who has not read the material, and then apply them to the characters, setting, and possible plot you have chosen to start working on. Be specific! For example, if LaMott says that each character should sound different, DON'T write, "I'll make my characters sound different," but perhaps you might write, "My main character will have a stutter and when he is channeling the spirit of X, he won't have it."
3. If you have chosen to write an analysis of either a ghost experience (your own or someone else's) or a television show, go back to your responses dealing with this. Re-interview (or reflect more deeply, if it was your experience) the person or rewatch the television show. Write a response to the EVIDENCE (be very clear what it is!) as if you are EITHER a total believer or a total skeptic: pick just one position! Your reader will be asked to take the opposite position.
4. Working from your planning sheet and feedback, create a rough draft of Paper Two. Print three copies to distribute in class.

T. Nov. 10:   Due: Responses. We'll share pairs and across class. We'll put together groups to work based on preferences for paper genre.

Due next class:

1. If you are writing an analysis of a television show, re-watch it, and this time, take extensive notes on the use of sound and camerawork. Watch it at least once or twice without any sound. Also, read the material in the course packet on creating a Thesis statement.
2. If you are writing about someone's ghost experience, read through the alternate position comments you received from readers. Then read through the material in the course packet on creating a Thesis Statement.
3. If you are writing about a television show OR an experience, write some possible thesis statements. Leave some space after each one for comments. Remember:

25

209

the argument must be significant, supportable by evidence (not simply belief), and engaging to readers.

4. If you are writing a piece of fact-based fiction, read in your course packet the material on Using Dialogue, Tense, and Point of View. Then write a short piece of dialogue using characters you've chosen for your story. Also, write TWO paragraphs in which you use a different point of view in each: first person and third person limited, for example. Remember: stay in one tense (PREFERABLY THE SIMPLE PAST!)

R. Nov. 12: Due: exercises from above. We'll share, and in class, do some additional writing exercises appropriate to your genre choice. For example, FBF folks should bring with them the sources they are using and we'll work with them on putting more material in. Analytical folks need to think about organizing evidence and use of personal voice.

Due next class:

1. Draft your final paper. The more you get done of it the better! Print out two copies for sharing in class. If your draft is not complete, indicate where it's heading. For example, you might not have an ending in mind for your story—what are the possibilities? You might have concerns about the argument you are making in your analysis or about the quality of yoru summary—let the reader know, so that comments can be most helpful.
2. Schedule a conference in the next couple of weeks with an IA or with me to talk over the material.
3. Review your responses. Select up to four to revise. Remember: you may NOT "revise" any response you never wrote to start with, and I will drop the lowest response grade. Begin working on those: they are due no later than Dec.1. The revision must be attached to the original with the comments on it.

T. Nov. 17: Due: drafts of paper for sharing.

Due next class:

1. Revise and/or complete the draft of your analysis or story. Three copies required. One of these will go to me or an IA for comments. One will stay with you if you want to keep working on it over break. One will go to a classmate for a written critique.
2. If you have any responses revised, please turn them in.
3. Read in your course packet the appropriate guidelines for critiquing either an analysis of a television show/personal experience or critiquing fact-based fiction. Read the sample critiques attached to each assignment.

R. Nov. 19: Due: revised/extended papers. We'll workshop them in class, then exchange for critiques. THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO USE A CRITIQUE TO MAKE UP AN ABSENCE! Please don't be absent. If your draft doesn't come in today, you will 1) receive no critique from classmates and 2) receive very late feedback from me.

Due after Thanksgiving Break:

26

1. Written critique. Please print two copies: one is for me and one is for your classmate whose draft you critiqued.
2. All revised responses will be due on Dec. 1. None will be accepted after that date. Be sure to attach the original to the revision.

Thanksgiving break. Have a great time! Talk about your material with family members:it usually gets great discussion going over dinner!

T. Dec. 1:   **Due:** written critique and revised responses. In class, we'll work on exercises based on the skills and problems that came up in the rough drafts.

Due next class:

1. Read on E-reserve: Stephen King, "And Furthermore, Part One."
2. Look at your draft. Take a single page of your draft and edit it, working as King does with his draft. Look for places to cut ("He sat down in a chair" becomes "He sat down" and "He thought to himself" becomes "He thought" [unless "he" is telepathic and thinks things to others on a regular basis!]). You are writing to keep the material moving, writing for clarity, for style, whether it is fiction or non-fiction.
3. Be sure to bring a copy of your draft with you, just in case one of the other people who has your draft doesn't bring it. We'll be working with it.

R. Dec. 3:   **Due:** revised page and your draft to work on.

Due next class:

1. Working from your critiques, feedback from me/IAs, and classroom exercises in editing, put your last paper into its next-to-final shape. One copy is needed.
2. Look ahead to what's due for R. Dec. 10. You may want to do the release and informal evaluation NOW and not wait!

T. Dec. 8:   **Due:** Next-to-final draft. In class, we'll work on correcting errors and minor editing: finishing the paper up!

Due last class:

1. Print out two copies of your final paper. If you are doing FBF, be sure one includes all sources and has been marked throughout to indicate the use of outside material.
2. Complete the writer's memo for your paper: be sure to choose the appropriate assignment! Two copies, please, attached to the paper copies.
3. Put both copies of memos and papers into your large envelope with your name and section number on it.
4. Put a copy of your paper and your memo into your student folder or the hand-in folder on the P drive. Indicate for me in your reflective essay where I will find it.
5. Read carefully and sign the release form in the back of your packet. Sign in only one spot: either I have permission to use your work or I don't. Don't sign both!
6. Complete the final course informal evaluation form in the back of your packet. This is important to me. I make most of my changes based on what you have to tell me here! This takes a little time, so don't put it off!

27

R. Dec. 10:   Due: all of the above. In class, we'll (probably—it's hard to schedule!) do the FORMAL class evaluation. We have some concluding activities, and I'll happily take your fine, exciting last papers!

Final: TBA. At the time of writing this schedule, days and times have not been posted. However, I will let you know.

   We do NOT have a "formal" final; your last paper and memo accomplish whatever a test could. However, you will need to meet with me to pick up your paper and examine your final course grade. I don't want to make any errors and then go through a long process of changing your grade. So we'll talk more about this in class.

Have a terrific holiday break! Enjoy yourself and please, get caught up on your rest! Spring semester is when everyone seems very run down and it's much tougher than fall. So use this time to regroup, reflect, and come back ready to go. Enjoy your family and friends. Thanks for being a part of this class!

28

Signs of Life:

Readings on Popular Culture

College Writing I --Sections 26, 30

Dr. ███████████████
Office: ████████████████████
Office Hours: TR 1-2:30; W3-5
Phone: ██████████████
E-mail: ███████████████

Our Working Materials

· Maasick, Sonia and Jack Solomon. eds. Signs Of Life In The USA: Readings On Popular
Culture For Writers. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997
· A folder or three-ring binder for submitting your portfolio
· Access to *Second Life* on your home computer or arrangements to access it on campus
· USB flashdrive on which you can store all of your coursework

---

A Brief Description of College Writing I

College Writing I offers you the opportunity to further develop the writing skills you will
need in college life and beyond. It is the first course in a two-course sequence required at
████. You will practice strategies for invention (brainstorming), arrangement (rhetorical
modes), revision (rethinking and/or expanding) and editing (meeting current standards of
American English while employing principles of good communication). You will also learn
how good writers are attentive to audience and purpose.

My Goals for You during our Semester Working Together

- You will learn to read actively, attentively and analytically.
- You will experience writing as both an individual and collective activity through discussion, peer review, electronically mediated conversation, and cooperative and collaborative problem solving.
- You will gain proficiency in the writing process and respect for yourself as a writer who can present polished finished work for assessment.
- You will learn the importance of oral communication skills and discover varied individual and group assumptions, as you work to reach consensus, negotiate difference, and make yourself understood.
- You will attune your writing to varied audiences and purposes

Your Writing Portfolio

Your writing portfolio is the collection of materials that you will assemble for assessment of your achievements in College Writing I. It will show your process and your finished work. Arrange your portfolio with an eye to your audience and purpose. I will appreciate your efforts to find an effective, appealing, and logical arrangment of your draft work and completed projects. I encourage you to have high expectations of yourself. Nothing will give me more pleasure than seeing you succeed in meeting and exceeding your aspirations. . A table of contents at the beginning of your portfolio and a series of dividers should signal your arrangement. You can develop the portfolio gradually if you make a practice of orderly arrangment and bring your portfolio to conferences.

We Will Use a Grading Contract for Assessment

You will earn credit for your work in College Writing I when it is ready for final assessment and depending on the level of commitment you are willing or able to make to our class. Be sure to note that you need not only to complete work, but to earn credit on it (CR). You should reread the contract grading guidelines below throughout our semester's work to assess your progress. To earn credit the work must at least show evidence of a process and be edited to meet standard conventions of English usage. I, along with your peers, will be commenting on your work and giving you suggestions for revision as you develop your ideas. Do not be discouraged if you do not earn credit immediately. It is one of the myths of English Studies that good writing springs forth like Athena from the head of Zeus. The birth of an idea requires gestation, during which the idea is nourished and your various points are "wired up" like our neural pathways! Your writing is a process of thinking. We never know what we think until we've had a chance to see what we say. Many of your problems as a writer may have occurred because you handed in a draft for final

assessment. The keys to success are starting early and working progressively in consultation with others. Open any book and you will see an acknowledgements page in which formal and informal readers of early versions are thanked for their help. I encourage you to set up a conference with readers at the Writing Center (█████) or come to see me to discuss revisions of your work.

When you receive credit on an assignment, your paper will be given a "CR." You will have the satisfaction of knowing you have successfully completed part of the final portfolio.

Descriptions of Possible Grades

A, B, and C grades are available to you in College Writing I. They build on each other so that each successive grade assumes the others as a baseline, as explained below.

To Earn a"C"

1. Please participate fully in daily activities and attend your scheduled conferences.
2. Be sure to turn in typed, written assignments (including drafts) on time as announced, so that I have time to read and return your work before the revision date.
3. Remember to hand in your final portfolio and double check your project against your table of contents and the guidelines for what to include, as follows:
a. Four Problem-Solving or Analytical Papers which have received credit, along with all drafts and readers' responses..
b. All in-class and homework writing completed in addition to the problem-solving papers.
c. A mid-term and self assessment letter.

To Earn a "B"

1. Please participate fully in daily activities and attend your scheduled conferences.
2. Be sure to turn in typed, written assignments (including drafts) on time as announced, so that I have time to read and return your work before the revision date.
3. Meet with me in conference to plan an additional revision beyond the earned credit. Your revision may integrate two completed papers or approach your previous idea in a different way.
4. Remember to hand in your final portfolio and double check each project against your table of contents and the guidelines for what to include, as follows:.
a. Four Problem-Solving or Analytical Papers which have received credit, along with all drafts, and readers' responses.
b. All in-class and homework writing completed in addition to the problem-solving papers.
c. A mid-term and final self assessment letter.
d. Your additional revision beyond the credit requirement.

To Earn an "A"

The portfolio requirements for an "A" in our course are the same in quantity as the requirements for a "B." An "A" portfolio is different qualitatively, however. It shows special excellence in material, organization, expression, or appropriateness for audience and purpose. I urge you to consider "excellence" in editing as a minimum standard of acceptability for all of your finished work, since correctness is not the most important feature of your work, yet no workplace you will ever inhabit will knowingly send your documents out if they do not meet current standards of usage and correctness in every respect.

Your Writing Assignments

Problem-Solving/ Analytical Papers
You will carry four problem-solving paper through the process of inventing, drafting, revising, and editing. These papers will be shaped by the units we will read in Signs and our experiences in class (including the use of digital technologies, like *Second Life)* and will be distributed throughout the semester.

Peer Response Sheets
You will respond to many pieces of writing during the semester. Response sheets received for your own work should be kept in your portfolio and used when you revise. At the end of the semester, organize responses received on your own writing so they appear with your drafts and final work of each project.

Reflections on Your Writing
Each time you ask me to assess a problem-solving paper for credit, you should include a brief analytical reflection on how it is organized and why it has taken this shape. You can also mention how it has benefited from the responses of your readers, your main points, and what you like best about it.

Short Response Writings
As we work to dialogue with the readings and with each other, you may be asked to write during class or as a homework assignment. This material will be part of the thinking out of the final work for the unit and should be kept in the portfolio..

E-mail Discussions
You will participate in e-mail discussions in addition to our on-going classroom conversations. The e-mail discussions may include conversations with students in other classes. In particular, ███████ and I have worked together to develop this course.

216

A Word about Participation

I will make every effort to keep our class actively student centered, since recent research shows that you will remember more for longer periods of time (and be able to use it!) if you engage your learning in applying it, rather than "being taught." For a classroom to be student centered, you have to be present and active. I will work to facilitate and orchestrate, but you will "play the music." Remember that your participation in all daily work and all activities is necessary for passing the course. Periodically we will talk about how actively we are engaged in our discussions and what can be done to ensure the full participation of each of us.

Attendance Policy

Because of the importance of attendance to your learning and the success of our joint work, if you miss more than one week of class without a formal medical excuse, your final grade will be lowered for each additional absence. Another reason not to miss class is that changes to the syllabus and regarding dates for assignments may be made, depending on the pace of our reading, the intensity of our discussions, or the necessity to adjust timelines for other reasons. If you are absent, please be sure that you take the initiative to find out what happened and inquire about new developments. Doing so is one of the ways you show that you understand what is meant by student-centered learning.

What You Need to Bring to Class

Please bring your textbook, folder or binder, and flashdrive to class, along with any work you have been asked to prepare for that day.

What We'll Read from Signs Of Life

Introduction (Signs 1)

Unit 1 - Images in Advertising Patricia J. Williams, "The Fiction of Truth in Advertising" (Signs 137) Gloria Steinem, "Sex, Lies, and Advertising" (Signs 155) Portfolio of Advertisements (178)

Unit 2 - Images in American Film, Music, TV & Video Gary Engle, "What Makes Superman So Darned American?" (Signs 344) Michael Parenti, "Class and Virtue" (Signs 318) Tania Modleski, "Dead White Male Heterosexual Poets Society" (Signs 314) bell hooks, "Madonna: Plantation Mistress or Soul Sister?" (Signs 223)

Unit 3 - Cultural Outlaws: Street Gangs, Militias, and Hackers in American Culture Julie Gannon Shoop, "Image of Fear: Minority Teens Allege Bias in 'Gang Profiling'" (Signs 592) Peter Doskoch, "The Mind of the Militias" (Signs 611) Winn Schwartau, "Hackers: The First Information Warriors" (Signs 618)

Unit 4 - Virtual Culture Mark Slouka, "'Reality Is Death': The Spirit of Cyberspace" (Signs 706) Sherry Turkle, "Who Am We?" (Signs 730) LynNell Hancock, "The Haves and the Have-Nots" (Signs 748)

Allegheny Highland University
Moodle

Jump to... ▲ ▼

Moodle Documentation
Contact the   IT Support Center
Moodle Product Documentation

moodle. .edu▶ FL2009   -meta-f2009   meta▶ Resources▶ Fall 2009 Syllabus

Update this Resource

Syllabus: EN 101 College Writing about Popular Culture

Dr.   Email   @   .edu . Most of our communications will be handled over email I will check my email every morning around 8 am.

Cell Phone Number 615 796-1040. I a Verizon subscriber.

Materials:

Mims and Nollen, Mirror on America, Short Essays and Images from Popular Culture, 4th ed
Computer access to internet; Access to Microsoft Word (your assignments should be Word documents with either a .doc or .docx file name) and Power Point

Course Description:

This EN 101 is an online course. It is NOT a self paced course but one that requires students to follow a schedule and meet deadlines. It offers students the opportunity to become more aware of the functions of language as they improve their communication skills. This class will help students develop an academic orientation that will prepare them for the responsibilities of the professional world. Students will develop critical reading and thinking skills as well as their writing skills. In this particular section of EN 101, students will be reading and writing about the ways that popular culture has influence our lives and society. Students will analyze popular culture through narratives and analyses all of which the class will publish and share.

All of the formal papers require students to produce multiple drafts and to go through a collaborative peer critique and editing process. The difference between a rough draft and a final draft should demonstrate significant re-vision on several of the following: adjustments to organization; refocusing of thesis or purpose; further development of main ideas, improved use of outside sources, etc. Students will have many opportunities to communicate about their writing in online critiques with their writing partners and with the instructor via email and phone. Additionally, students on the main campus are encouraged to use the Writing Center for extra help with their projects.

Required Course Work:

Readings: Students will read assigned essays from Mirror on America. In addition, they will read other students' drafts and essays on popular culture. Students will also read the work of the instructor as well as that of her former students who have written about popular culture. Students will also do some library and internet research for each of their papers.

Writing: The more students practice writing, the more comfortable they will become with the process. Therefore, writing will be required most days. Students will be completing online Modules. Students will engage in reader responses to essays in Mirror on America, write a short paper about their involvement in a popular culture activity, develop a proposal for a longer project, create a longer paper about how popular culture reflects their chosen profession, and explore their profession by developing a Power Point presentation.

Class Expectations:

Avoid Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting the ideas or words of another person as if they are your own. Remember, plagiarism, whether intentional or inadvertent, is unacceptable in the academic community and will be handled by following due process as established by IUP. Students will be learning how to summarize, paraphrase, document and think for themselves; so, there will be no need for them to consider plagiarizing. Moodle provides a self test that you should take to help you check whether you understand how to avoid plagiarism.

Late Projects: Late projects are unacceptable. Students must learn that in the professional world deadlines are crucial, and that companies will fire employees who miss deadlines and who cost them money or clients. In an online course a lot of the burden for keeping up with the class falls on the student. Students should regularly consult the Schedule so that they are aware of dates and deadlines. Grade contracts will be permanently lowered for students who submit late work.

Class participation: The class will be structured online so that students will do much of their work independently. There still will be considerable class participation as students engage in threaded discussions and critiques with their fellow students online.

Buckley Amendment to the Educational Act: Despite the fact that many parents finance their children's education, the spirit of the Buckley Amendment is that college students are adults who are capable of managing their academic careers and responsible for the decisions they make concerning their behavior in the academic community. Therefore, because of the amendment, I am prohibited from discussing your grades or your failure in a class with your parents; so, do not ask them to call me. If you have any complaints concerning your fair treatment within my class, first consult the syllabus to review the class policies, which I will strictly follow; secondly discuss your concerns with me. If you are still unsatisfied, you should consult the Director of English Studies, then the Chairperson of the English Department to help resolve the problem.

No Extra Credit: If you have failed to fulfill the course deadlines and writing requirements, do not ask for extra credit to make up for your deficiencies. All projects must meet a satisfactory level; no partial credit is given. In the professional world employers will not give you extra credit opportunities for failing to do your job properly!

Online Professional Courtesy: The instructor will treat students with professional courtesy at all times. Students are also expected to act professional and be tactful as they communicate with fellow students online.

Final Exam Period Activity: The class will not have a traditional exam. Instead there will be a student review about the final project.

Contract Grading: Students will be given the option to select the grade that they want to earn. The instructor will provide a list of requirements for each particular grade, and students will fulfill requirements for the grade of their choice. If students do not meet the deadlines and requirements for their contract, the instructor will renegotiate a lower grade contract as a penalty. Once lowered, the grade will not be raised.

Writing Center: The Writing Center offers free tutoring. Many good students visit the Writing Center more than once for each project. If you are on the main campus for this course you have the opportunity to go to the Writing Center for help in order to revise your writing. Also remember that you can use the Writing Center when working on papers for other classes as well.

220

Appendix E: Tyra's Learning Contract

Learning Contract Module

NOTE: you will need to fill out the bottom of this contract and submit it to the instructor.

ENGLISH 101 Learning Contract

A Parable for Students in this Class Regarding Grades,

Based on the Principle That Free Students Learn Best!

Once upon a time in a neighborhood very much like this one, a talented young potter learned how to throw excellently crafted coffee mugs. The man who owned an art gallery near her house offered her $10.00 for every mug she made. So, when she had the time and the desire to throw mugs on the wheel, the potter could easily make ten mugs and the gallery owner would give her $100.00. Sometimes, if she was sick, or busy at work, or just didn't feel like throwing mugs, she would throw only eight, and she was satisfied with the $80.00 she earned. If things were really busy for her, and she could only throw six mugs, she figured that $60.00 was good enough; after all, it would pay for this month's cell phone bill. Deciding for herself how many mugs to throw meant that she was her own boss, and she was perfectly happy with getting paid for whatever number of mugs she felt like throwing on the wheel. The gallery owner was happy because he believed that potters ought to make their own decisions about how many mugs they wanted to throw and how much money they wanted to earn; he believed that everyone should be in charge of their own lives. So, all in all, it was a great deal for all involved.

This Class Has A Learning Contract Based On The Number Of Products You Create

A learning contract is sometimes a good option for students because it gives them flexibility in choosing how they want to utilize the courses they take at college and how much time and effort they want to put into their education. Essentially, it is a contract between you and your professor in which you agree to meet deadlines and do a certain amount of work for a stated grade in the course. Many technical writing, journalism, and creative writing classes also use such contracts. The learning contract below gives a description of the requirements you need to complete in order to receive the corresponding grade in this class. You are invited to read it and consider whether or not this particular online class and learning contract is something you would like to do. If so, you can copy the contract page, indicate the grade, fill in the requested information and email it to the instructor **today**.

How This Learning Contract Works For You

At the end of the course, if you have kept up with the schedule and met the requirements for the grade you signed up to receive, then you will receive that grade. If you fail to meet the contract's requirements, then you will get the grade level that you did meet. For instance, perhaps you signed an agreement to complete the work necessary for a B, but because you were busy with other commitments or just decided to do the work that corresponds to the C range, you will get the C. On the other hand, if you exceed the requirements you originally agreed to meet and actually met all of the deadlines and requirements for the next highest grade, then you would receive the higher grade.

Learning Products For This Class : response papers on essays from Mirror on America and on sources used in projects, threaded discussions of class readings, online peer critiques of rough drafts, on line conferences, 900 word basic project on your participation in a popular culture activity, proposal for a longer project, a 1500 word paper on the way popular culture reflects your profession.

College Writing Contract Requirements

To receive a grade of D or F in College Writing: I agree that I was not a functioning member of the class or did not continue to be one, and did not communicate with Dr. '   to discuss ways to improve attendance and other aspects of the work in English 101, or, after communicating with Dr   , did not follow her suggestions.

To receive a "C" in College Writing, I agree to follow the schedule to accomplish the following:

1. Complete the following Modules: Learning Contract, modules 1-9, Works Cited, 2 Critiques, Writer's Reflection, Proposal.

2. Create a 900 word paper about your participation in a popular culture activity (including on line communication with Dr. '   , rough draft, online peer critiques, and writer's reflection); revise project and writer's reflection until satisfactory level is met (as indicated on grading standards)

3. Write a 2 page proposal and do preliminary research for a longer project on the way popular culture reflects your chosen profession; revise proposal until it is satisfactory (as evaluated by Dr.   )

To receive a "B" in College Writing, I agree to follow the schedule to accomplish the following:

1. Complete the following Modules: Learning Contract, modules 1-11, 4 Critiques, Writer's Reflection, Proposal.

2. Create a 900 word paper about your participation in a popular culture activity (including on line communication with Dr.   , rough draft, online peer critiques, and writer's reflection); revise project and writer's reflection until satisfactory level is met (as indicated on grading standards)

3. Write a 2 page proposal and do preliminary research for a longer project on the way popular culture reflects your chosen profession; revise proposal until it is satisfactory (as evaluated by Dr.   )

4. Complete a 1500 word printed paper in MLA format about how popular culture reflects your chosen profession (including rough draft, online peer critiques, writer's reflection); revise project and writer's reflection until satisfactory level is met (as indicated on grading standards)

To receive an "A" in College Writing, I agree to follow the schedule to accomplish the following:

1. Complete the following Modules: Learning Contract, modules 1-11, Works Cited, 4 Critiques, Writer's Reflection, Proposal, Final Activity.

2. Create a 900 word paper about your participation in a popular culture activity (including on line communication with Dr.   , rough draft, online peer critiques, and writer's reflection); revise project and writer's reflection until satisfactory level is met (as indicated on grading standards)

3. Write a 2 page proposal and do preliminary research for a longer project on the way popular culture reflects your chosen profession; revise proposal until it is satisfactory (as evaluated by Dr   )

4. Complete a 1500 word paper about the way popular culture reflects your profession (including rough draft, online peer critiques, writer's reflection); revise project and writer's reflection until satisfactory level is met (as indicated on grading standards)

5. Create a Power Point presentation which explores your profession.

In Microsoft Word, highlight the following document; click Edit, then Copy; type in your answers; Save in Word as a .doc or .docx file with your name such as MaryBrownContract. Submit assignment to instructor by clicking the Browse button at the bottom of page, selecting your file from your computer, then clicking the Upload this File button. You will get a message FILE UPLOADED SUCCESSFULLY.

Learning Contract for College Writing

Dr.

Department of English

   University

I agree to follow the schedule to do all of the work required for the grade of_____this semester in College Writing.

I understand that I will receive a grade that corresponds to the number and quality of activities I complete, as listed in the class syllabus, according to the explanations of grade categories and requirements detailed in the contract.

I understand that Dr. Ware will keep this agreement on file for me.

Student's Name_____

Date Sent_____

Student's IUP email address_____

Student's semester contact phone number_____Dr. Ware is a Verizon subscriber, so let her know if you are also on Verizon.

Appendix F: Structured Interview Questions

1) Please begin by telling me a little about your background (teaching/educational experiences).

2) Describe your teaching philosophy for me and explain what you believe the role of multimodal new media technologies should play in the writing classroom.

3) Which technologies have you found most useful in the college writing classroom? Describe how you have utilized them to support instruction.

4) How did you determine which technologies would be used? Explain.

5) Have you undergone any training that has prepared you to utilize new media technologies? If so, please describe these experiences for me.

6) What are your goals for your first-year college writing courses?

7) As you planned your course agenda, what skills did you expect your students to have in order to successfully complete this course? What influenced these expectations?

8) What technologies did you use to create course materials?

9) What technologies did you expect your students to use to complete the required coursework?

10) What role do multimodal writing assignments and/or multimodal texts play in your classroom? Explain their overall importance.

11) Describe some of the major influences that governed your instruction throughout this course.

12) As I analyze the data gathered from the classroom observations, is there anything that you feel I should be aware or any specific feedback you would be interested in receiving from me?