POSITIONING FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION:

HYBRID LEARNING FOR STUDENT

ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRAM

SUSTAINABILITY

by

LORIE STAGG JACOBS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

August 2014

Acknowledgements

   I would like to thank Dr. James Warren, for helping me resist the temptation to take on the entire world at once. I would like to thank Dr. Ben Agger for his cheerful support and quick response time. Thank you to Dr. Tim Richardson for his willingness to step up to the plate rather late in the game.

   I would like to personally thank each of my students who has contributed so much to this project. Even if your words do not appear in the printed pages of this document, each of you contributed to my growth as a teacher and learner. I thank each of you for teaching me something new every day and for being my constant inspiration. Thank you to each of my colleagues who encouraged their students to participate in my study. Thanks to those students for wading through what must have seemed like an endless stream of questions… twice.

   I will always be grateful for Dr. Kenneth Roemer's great confidence in me, as well as his gentle reminders to stay on task and keep working. Dr. Carolyn Guertin helped me visualize both the problem and the potential. Gratitude goes to Dr. Penny Ingram for reminding me I have something to say, perhaps something others want to hear.

   I would like to thank Jarrod, Barbi, and Nate for reading jumbled drafts and helping me sort through the chaos. Bethany, you are my constant cheerleader and an amazing friend. I am so very, very grateful to have you in my life.

   Thanks to my parents for always believing in me while loving me exactly as I am.

   Finally, I thank my husband Rick for his unending patience, faith, and understanding, as well as for many welcome distractions. You are my reason for wanting work-life balance. Thank you for sharing my life and my dreams, and most importantly, for helping me make my dreams come true.

<div align="right">July 21, 2014</div>

Abstract

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Lorie Stagg Jacobs, PhD

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2014

Supervising Professor: James Warren

This study uses quantitative and qualitative methodology to describe, and analyze the use of social media to create a blended learning environment in the first-year composition classroom. Findings indicate hybrid courses foster retention-minded best practices, increase student engagement in course material, extend concepts and assignments beyond the classroom, and encourage critical analysis of multiple media, thereby supporting the development of a digital literacy. Furthermore, I argue seizing participatory culture as a teaching and learning frontier positions First-Year Composition at the forefront of college retention efforts and provides connections to STEaM endeavors, raising the status of the field generally, and suggesting new areas for rhetorical study.

My dissertation joins an ongoing conversation that promotes advocacy of the profession by demonstrating the field is in a unique position to address the two big movements in higher education: increasing student persistence and integrating new media and technology across the disciplines. In order to demonstrate FYC's role in student persistence and student success I review retention research and draw parallels

between research findings and FYC's "best practices." I then provide examples of this work in action via evidence from student-subjects' questionnaire responses and coursework. I argue that such evidence of our role in student retention will be of prime interest to university administration. It is my contention that one of the primary problems facing Writing Program Administrators is one of marketing and that aligning ourselves with university retention efforts is a giant step towards the re-branding of composition studies.

I continue the argument for re-invigorating composition studies by outlining the myriad of ways blended learning aligns with our long-standing critical/process pedagogies. Blended learning makes the integrating of some FYC values easier, some more effective, while other aspects of digital pedagogy are wholly new and novel. Again, I draw on examples from student questionnaires and blog contributions in order to illustrate my claims. My contention is that compositionists broadly, and first-year composition programs more specifically, are uniquely positioned to set standards for digital scholarship and shepherd students into a 21st century consciousness.

Because hybrid models help support student persistence as well as digital literacy, the combination is a powerful argument for re-imagining the role of FYC within the baccalaureate program. Thus, this dissertation concludes with a reimagination of first-year composition within a retention-minded digitally-rich context. As such, I propose revisions of both CWPA learning outcomes and the rhetorical frame by which we position FYC. I include an examination of the many challenges facing the field of composition studies and the First-Year Composition program, such as current working conditions and the push toward distance education. A hybrid model addresses many of these concerns and can serve as a centerpiece for a new vision of FYC.

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Part One: My Path as a Teacher-Researcher

Some people reading this may remember my first career post-undergrad was in marketing and advertising. Specifically, I developed advertising campaigns for small businesses before I graduated to sales and marketing director for a local publication and later, a small finance company. The reason I mention this is that while many of my peers in English Studies have spent their entire careers within the confines of academia, I worked for nearly a decade outside of academics before entering my first graduate course. As such I feel I have a unique appreciation for what we (the field of Rhetoric and Composition) do best and what we could be doing much better. However, before we get to that, I think it is important to start at the beginning of the story and share what ultimately drives me to write this document at this time, in hopes of illustrating how my past and identity inform my research and how my research shapes who I will become post-degree.

Exigency #1: Before There Was Rhetoric

The title of this section is a bit misleading because, of course, rhetoric has existed as a formal field of study since the days of the Greek forum. Nonetheless, for me and my personal intersection with rhetoric, it is a much shorter history. When I first read "Inventing the University" (Bartholomae, 1985) in the first semester of grad school, I felt it matched well with my already held beliefs and experience in writing studies. Bartholomae, particularly in section II, describes the student who must negotiate her place within the academy and the degree to which her academic writing reflects that struggle. "She must, that is, see herself within a privileged discourse, one that already

includes and excludes groups of readers. She must be either equal to or more powerful than those she would address" (628). Although I had not yet studied academic discourse as a designator of social class, Bartholomae's depictions of student writers wrestling with the language of the academy was something I had encountered before.

I have been an avid reader and writer as long as I can remember. As the daughter of a long line of college-educated women, I took my personal call to higher learning as a given. It was something everyone did – all my peers, all my cousins – a natural continuation of our parents' legacies. I took my privilege for granted. Indeed, I did not yet understand that it was a privilege.

On the other hand, my husband, a first-generation college graduate, says he knew more about applying to college than his parents did when he was only seventeen. Born into a working-class family, Rick's father worked two jobs to save tuition money, all the while encouraging him to do more, to do better than his father, to work with his mind rather than his hands. During our courtship I remember being struck by the contrast in our approaches to and appreciations of higher education. He told me how hard his first year of college was and that he thought about quitting over and over. He spoke specifically of having no trouble grasping course concepts but struggling to put new knowledge into words. In hindsight, I think he would agree that if most of his friends were not attending the same school, he probably would have given up. Prior to these conversations, it had never really occurred to me that college was not a given, or rather that it was not a given to all those who were not intentionally slackers. That is really the difference. Prior to meeting Rick, going to college was such a natural part of life's progression in my world, I thought those who did not go to college were just lazy. Of course, it was not long before I realized how privileged I was that I did not have to fight for my future.

At about the same time in my life, I started volunteering at a charter school in New Orleans. Because research shows that college-bound students develop the drive to go to college around middle school age, the program attempted to engage fourth-sixth graders in the prospect of higher education by inviting professionals to teach some aspect of their college career. A local doctor taught a fifth-grade level anatomy class. An engineer engaged students in constructing simple machines and racing them. I taught a creative writing class, hoping to tap into the natural story-telling desire of children. The stories often emerged in the form of rhyme, and before I knew it, I was leading a troupe of slam poets. The children composed in the language that was familiar to them, the language of rap and rhyme, and their stories emerged with lyrical flair. However, these same students would struggle to write a traditional paragraph, to write a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. In this particular context of an after-school creative-writing class, I quickly realized that form was not as important as style, and therefore, adapted my values instead of theirs.

However, I also became conscious of the contrast between their storytelling and that of the traditional canon. I worried for them and their futures, though I would not have been able to articulate why. I was really only able to understand what nagged at me after I started graduate school and discovered theorists like Bartholomae, Delpit, and Bizzell. It seems clear to me now that what I was really worried about was how they would position themselves within a privileged discourse. Bizzell (2003) argues that "the unfamiliarity with the academic discourse community, combined, perhaps, with such limited experience outside their native discourse communities [means] they are unaware that there is such a thing as a discourse community with conventions to be mastered" (p. 401). She goes on to say that among novice writers, "What is underdeveloped is their knowledge both of the ways experience is constituted and interpreted in the academic discourse community and

of the fact that all discourse communities constitute and interpret experience" (p. 401). The contrast between my ways of knowing and theirs was glaringly apparent. I tried to imagine my students as college students and couldn't. The difference was too great. I was paralyzed – I knew their language was not that of the academy, but did not know what or how to do anything about it. It was only later that I read Delpit (1995) and learned "students must be *taught* the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors; that they must be allowed the resource of the teacher's expert knowledge while being helped to acknowledge their own "expertness" as well" (45). Instinctively I knew to cultivate my middle school students' expertise and their confidence in their own abilities and intelligence. Yet, I did not know enough to help them become code-switchers, "to coach [their] voices to produce notes that will be heard clearly in the larger society" (Delpit, 1995, p. 45).

The experience changed my life. These children were only attending a progressive charter school by chance, having won their slots in a general lottery. Without such luck, the alternative was to attend one of the famously horrible public schools in pre-Katrina New Orleans. The most likely outcome for most was gang life and teen pregnancy. I will admit it: This experience was my personal *To Sir with Love* (Clavell, 1967), *Stand & Deliver* (Menéndez, 1988)*, Lean on Me* (Avildsen, 1989)*, or *The Class* (Cantet, 2008). As trite as it seems in hindsight, those children awoke my inner teacher and scholar. Suddenly it all mattered. I wanted to learn more so that I might make a significant difference in the lives of others, and I set out to do it.

I knew from watching my spouse (he went on to earn his MBA and his success has inspired the next generation of his extended family to get an education) that college

can and does change lives; it changes family histories. My mission upon entering graduate school was to increase college access and success among first-generation students. Between teaching the after-school writing class and conversations with my new in-laws, I had reached the conclusion that the best way to support first-generation students was through writing. In my mind, strong writing skills could overcome many challenges: From being able to fashion a winning college entrance essay to crafting a noticeable cover letter, the way I saw it, writing was a major factor in several life-trajectory events and often, the key to admittance and subsequent success. Yet the subtleties of academic and professional writing are also the most esoteric to those outside of the dominant class. Teach rhetoric, teach the world.

Exigency #2: "Digital [r]Evolution" or "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad New Media World"

Much has been said about the digital revolution and how it has changed and will continue to change our academic world. Whereas, in 1990 there were 2.8 million Internet users in the entire world (Worldmapper, n.d.), today there are more than 2.8 *billion* users worldwide. In the United States, 85% of the population is online (Zickuhr, 2013). The phrase "digital revolution" was coined to echo other major historical changes such as the Agricultural Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. However, the word revolution is problematic. If we think of it as "revolution" then the implication is one of war between one side and another, where one side will eventually lose the battle. Even though I support the necessary changes and adaptations for a digital world, I would bemoan the death of the book right along with my more traditional colleagues. *Evolution*, on the other hand, implies that we are, mostly unconsciously, haphazardly, and in spurts, building on what we have learned and innovating to address the needs of the future. The book is not

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dying; it is evolving, changing to fit its new environment. It is a false dichotomy to pit the book against the computer. I pefer both-and to either-or.

It was a necessary innovation that sparked my interest in new media pedagogy in the first place. I found that writing for a semi-public audience of peers, such as those made accessible via social media platforms, improves the quality of student writing. After I moved away from "writing for the teacher" sorts of short writing assignments to public discussion boards and blogging, I noticed a significant uptick in voice, engagement and quality. In truth, I discovered this on accident years ago when I attended my first conference. Rather than cancelling class for a week, I assigned discussion groups and activities to be completed on the classroom management system (CMS), WebCT. When I returned, I was amazed at how much their submissions had improved in comparison to the print version of the same assignment in prior weeks. Although I did not know it yet, at about the same time, research in new media pedagogy was just beginning to flourish (Hawisher, Selfe, Moraski, & Pearson, 2004; Jeffrey T. Grabill & Hicks, 2005; Selber, 2004; Wysocki, 2004).

These days, online search tools are free and accessible to everyone, making an immense amount of data available to anyone who wants to learn. New media has an almost automatic ability to build collective resources, seemingly overnight. Henry Jenkins (2006b) notes the speed and voracity involved in constructing fan forums for critical dialogue, knowledge databases, and synthesized character information. Additionally, scholars at all levels, both casual and formal, do the majority of research online these days. There are thousands of specialized online databases and search tools, perfect for locating sources on any topic. The Internet is also helpful for placing sources in context and noting their "weight" in the field. For example, Google Scholar tabulates the number of times a source is referenced by other sources, so it is easy to quickly sift out the gold

from the silt. This is a feature that used to belong only to subscription-based library databases. Now, anyone with a computer can quickly access data from scholarly sources and easily situate that data within an ongoing academic conversation, presuming they know how and why they should.

Thus, well beyond the borders of the college campus, quality information is easily available. It follows then, that knowledge no longer resides in the realm of the privileged and formally educated. This certainly complicates knowledge-power as Foucault (1995) described it. If everyone has access to knowledge, everyone has access to power, or to restate Agger (2004), everyone has the ability to cure themselves and share the cure with others. This alone opens up tremendous possibilities for social change. On the other hand, without relevant training to sort through this data and identify the good, the bad, and the ugly, an inexperienced (or just plain stubborn) user could also quickly find trouble, perhaps as Agger and others warn.

The Internet offers an overwhelming amount of choice in perspective, data and programming, which on its face seems quite liberating. But it is also quite possible for someone to isolate oneself within a narrow view of the world and/or perpetuate one's own ignorance. For example, I recently had a conversation with a young mother who told me she had decided not to immunize her youngest daughter. She was specifically concerned with the widely distributed MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine, which has been the subject of some controversy in recent years and has been rumored to cause autism. Of course, I thought her concerns about autism and infection were absurd and certainly less risky than the disease the vaccine was designed to prevent. I asked the young mother to tell me where she heard the rumor and why she was willing to ignore the medical advice of her own pediatrician. She said a friend told her about the autism connection and that she researched the topic online.

Luckily, I had my laptop handy, so I asked my young friend to show me specifically the sources she had found. She typed in the search term "MMR and autism," and quickly located several news reports, personal blogs, and YouTube videos. I watched as she scrolled past the more reputable sources, like *Wikipedia* and *The New York Times*, both of which would have told her that the autism rumor emerged from a single, since discredited study, and instead selected a personal blog in which a mother details her horrific story, swearing her child was normal up until the day he received his MMR vaccine. There are quite a few first-hand accounts of this sort on forums and blogs, and a minor celebrity has recently published a book in which she claimed her child was given autism by the MMR vaccine but that she was able to "cure" the child with a gluten-free diet (McCarthy, 2008). Additionally, my young friend told me about a *YouTube* series in which a doctor questions the relationship between the pharmaceutical companies and the American Medical Association, claiming that widespread drugs like vaccines are actually harmful and evidence of greedy drug companies' plotting with the governing medical boards to increase profits. Social media can work to perpetuate and encourage outrageous conspiracy theories.[1]

This story illustrates that without a critical emphasis on new media, Composition Studies is not meeting the needs of the 21st century citizen, teaching the kinds of writing/analysis that will be necessary in a digital world, or sufficient research skills to sift through the mountain of data available to the public in a few clicks of a mouse. Further, multimodal literacy and composition offer greater benefits and possibilities for students of all fields, especially STEM, and it is our responsibility to highlight our essential role in

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[1] Since I have reason to worry about the health of the child in question, I took it upon myself to research the rumor further. In a short amount of time I was able to locate the original study that caused the rumor: In 1998, the medical journal The Lancet, published a study by Andrew

fostering critical thinkers and writers. Digital media must be both the means and the object of study.

Historical moments in the development of composition have twice already marked larger cultural shifts for the country at large. As Miller (1994) notes, both coincided with and responded to major shifts in the American social class system. And here we are again, in the midst of the next great paradigmatic swing. Only this time, it is compounded by the great Digital Divide, a continental-sized shift, if you will, into an ever-more digitally connected world. Similar to Stephanie Vie (2008), I would like to reclassify the term "digital divide" to refer to a cultural shift rather than to describe the distance between the digital haves and have-nots. At this point, in a world with smart phones, cheap laptops, and internet-connected cars, access to technology is virtually a non-issue among college-bound students, at least in the United States. Today's college students commonly engage in some sort of social neteorking umpteen times before their morning classes (AFT Higher Education, 2009; Clark & Dugdale, 2009; Vie, 2008). Thus, the digital divide more accurately describes the emerging canyon between our pre-digital world and the post-digital one. The digital divide spurred my interest in exploring the relationship between student learning and new-media-infused writing instruction, specifically how and why a socially networked classroom motivates and engages students in course material.

According to analysis of blended learning research, there is little work investigating student motivation and engagement. "While much research has connected learner preferences with specific blended learning design features, more needs to be done to discover what design features could lead to greater student motivation and engagement. Whether a student is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, certainly an understanding of design approaches that feed student motivation would increase the

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effectiveness of blended environments" (Drysdale, Graham, Spring, & Halverson, 2013, p. 98). Further, increased student engagement is a stellar argument to present to higher education administrators and others responsible for the funding and support of writing programs.

Exigency #3: The Job Market Sucks

There, I said it. We are all thinking about it; well, all of us who do not already have a tenure track or contract job, which is the vast majority of us. This year I am among eight new and recent PhD graduates from my program who are on the job market at once. Luckily we are a pretty diverse group and will not be competing for the same jobs. However, each of us is finding the market far more challenging than we had imagined and we were already apprehensive long before the 2013 MLA Job Information List was released. It is so hard to put yourself out there, to come up with new ways to market your skills and tweak experience to fit an anticipated mold. This would be true for any job hunter. In our case, it is further complicated by the fact that there are dozens, possibly hundreds of applicants for any one position. I am lucky – I was invited to a few interviews and have since landed a tenure-track position, whereas many of my cohorts have had nothing but radio silence. It is bleak out there and getting bleaker.

A major impetus for writing now is in hopes of inspiring change and rallying the troops. (Also, I would really like to move from ABD to PhD.) The difficulty of the job market links directly to the undervaluation of composition as well as English and Liberal Arts more broadly. I hate to be the one to point it out, but we have no one to blame but ourselves. Ironically, given that rhetorical strategy is such an integral part of our work, the field has failed to effectively articulate the quality, purpose, and value of writing education in terms that resonate with those who hold the purse strings. Worse yet, our field, along

with the rest of the Liberal Arts, risks silently slipping into the realm of irrelevance for a frustrating failure to seize our cultural moment and adapt to the latest paradigmatic shift. In an era of blogging, status updates, emails, texts, and tweets, writing has never occupied a greater percentage of the average American's day. Yet, a quick perusal at the list of funding opportunities for graduate students indicates a near-obsession with all things STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), an acronym for fields so broad as to only be summarized with the phrase "anything but humanities." In my view, researchers in rhetoric and composition are uniquely positioned to solidly connect writing, technology, and student-centered pedagogy in the minds of the public, administrators, our students, and our colleagues campus-wide. I present a rhetoric for change in the concluding chapter of this document, which is quite selfishly motivated: I want a job; and jobs will continue to be hard to come by until we lure additional financial investment.

Because I have a marketing background, I understand and believe in the power of self-promotion. A major goal of this dissertation is to point out key strengths investors would find valuable, and therefore, fundable. Additionally, throughout I will name specific strategies Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) and department chairs can use for program and department promotion.

Part Two: Defining the Parameters of the Study

The guiding questions for this study include:

- In which ways does blended learning align with student retention efforts/goals?

- In which ways do interactive online assignments/activities enhance student learning?

- Is blended learning more marketable, more attractive to a resistant audience, such as non-major students? If so, how and why?

- Finally, what can we learn about our own expertise and potential in order to promote the "value added" mentality needed to boost the status of the field?

I attempt to find answers through a study of the students enrolled in my hybrid first-semester First-Year Composition (FYC) course in comparison to students from the standard FYC course. There are two participant groups.

- Group A: Seventy-two students (self-selected) who were enrolled in and completed any section (open eligibility) of English 1301 during the fall of 2010.

- Group B: The thirty-one students who enrolled in and completed my English 1301 course in the fall of 2010.

In order to draw a complete picture of these two groups I administered two surveys, one in the first two weeks of the fall term, the second during the last two weeks of the same semester. In addition, I consider as part of the overall context for my students' survey responses, their course assignments, their collaboratively-developed class blog, and the public communication between students on the classroom management system, Edmodo. Finally, I considered the final reflection letters written by

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Group B at the end of the term. I present my case study through the lens of three overarching concepts: Persistence and success (retention studies), digital literacy, and marketing theory. My goal is to connect my observations with larger, more public conversations about the purpose of FYC and its position within the university system.

Blended/Hybrid Learning: Definition

Blended learning is exploding nationwide and across disciplines. Other terms include "hybrid," "technology-mediated instruction," "web-enhanced instruction," and "mixed-mode instruction," and they are often used interchangeably in current pedagogical literature ("Blended learning," 2014). It is much more common to see the term "hybrid" in reference to composition and English studies, although neither "hybrid" nor "blended" are used often in our major journals[2].

Catherine Gouge (2009) noted a difference between hybrid and blended courses as debated in the "Best Practices for Online Writing Instruction" Special Interest Group (SIG), which met for the first time at the 2008 Conference for College Composition and Communication in New Orleans and reported via email by Beth Hewett to the WPA listserv: "'blended' means meeting most or all classes in a computer lab/classroom and working both via networked computers and face-to-face; and 'hybrid' means meeting classes both in a traditional classroom and in a computer lab/class-room (often done as a one-day-on/one-day-off arrangement)" (as quoted by Gouge p. 359, endnote 3). However, other disciplines do not distinguish between the two terms nor emphasize meeting in a computer lab as a requirement for either. The generally accepted definition of blended or hybrid learning is that "online course activity replaces at least thirty percent

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[2] Based on an extensive search using both terms "hybrid" and "blended" in major journals such as CCC, College English, Computers & Composition, Kairos, Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, and WPA Journal. Search conducted March 12, 2014. Search yielded only 2 articles using those terms in the title, abstract, or keywords.

of required face-to-face (F2F) meetings," according to the Sloan Consortium Commons wiki pages. They distinguish between "blended/hybrid" and "web-enhanced" based solely on the percentage of classroom time replaced by online activities. According to the Sloan Consortium, a "web-enhanced course" is "any course tied to the traditional classroom but involving some sort of computer usage, say as in a software simulation, or design software for art or engineering applications, but still anchored to the normal time spent in classes" ("Web-Enhanced course definition," n.d.). Within these definitions, there is little emphasis on the type of work that might be completed online and no mention of parameters for online assignments in either format.

I find these definitions problematic as they leave entirely too much open to question. In these terms "web-enhanced" might include courses that merely teach students to find sources online or show YouTube clips in class in an otherwise traditional course. There is no distinction in these definitions between the range of assignments and activities that might occupy the classroom, given that today, nearly every scholarly activity involves a computer. Some courses, like mine, specifically require interactive course assignments and materials, such as active blogging, student networking, and heavy interactive Internet information gathering in addition to frequent F2F meetings. I would argue there is a world of difference between the two examples named above that does not necessarily have anything to do with the amount of time a student spends in any particular physical classroom space.

Further, many 100% online versions of FYC courses, including those at UTA, are actually just traditional courses that, by necessity or convenience, are simply delivered online. There is little integration of web tools besides the access to the classroom management system (CMS) itself, a highly managed experience that seems to defy the public and interactive nature of Web 2.0. In many online courses, students log on to a

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CMS, download typed lecture notes, and submit the same paper assignments as the F2F version. The only aspects that could be considered interactive are discussion forums and peer reviews. I had the opportunity to teach the online version of 1301 last fall, and while I found my students' use of Blackboard's discussion forum shared some benefits of student blogging at the beginning of the semester, by the final weeks students seemed to be "over it." This is the opposite progression noted by most teachers who make use of social-media based tools in the classroom (M. D. Barton, 2005; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Ducate & Lomicka, 2008; Jacobs, 2012; Kennedy, 2010; McCool, 2011; Tryon, 2006).

Although my 1301 course meets in the classroom weekly, the materials and assignments fully and purposefully integrate Web 2.0 digital tools as they were intended to be used, rather than as a replacement/technologically upgraded version of a traditional assignment. Additionally, my course makes social media the subject of discussion, generating a critical consciousness of digital literacy and technology awareness, especially as it concerns composing and rhetorical analysis. Thus, for this project, I define blended or hybrid learning as a face-to-face course that meets nearly every week and integrates significant portions (if not all) of daily work and assignments in an online, interactive format. I would further extend the current definition of hybrid/blended learning to specify the type of work and general philosophy of the course as one that purposefully integrates interactive digital tools as a replacement for more traditional classroom activities, topics, and assignments, while consciously considering the effect and purpose of the medium/online environment.

Teacher Research and the Classroom as Research Site

I have always been curious and reflective and I believe these qualities contribute directly to my strengths as an innovative and adaptive teacher. Further, because pedagogy is so integrated into the purpose and development of composition studies, I believe the teacher-researcher is in an ideal position to make changes from the inside out. As Ray (1992) describes, teacher research "is a response to a conformist educational system based on a strong belief in the separation of powers" where administrators and taxpayers "have primary control over educational policy making, and teachers have little influence" (173-4). However, these descriptions apply largely to K-12 teachers who are doubly obliged to standardized rules and methods, as well as to parents and the students themselves, to some degree. If teacher-research is a subversion of the type of knowledge privileged at universities, then my position is a bit different and more complex. As a graduate teaching assistant within a large university system, I am powerless in much the same way as my fellows in primary and secondary education. However, as a soon to be sanctioned expert (PhD) and professor in my field, I am on the cusp of the very type of knowledge-power center the teacher-researcher would seek to subvert. Still, due to the current undervaluation of writing studies generally, in many ways even the agreed upon writing experts seem to have relatively little power to influence policy change or investment in our own curriculum. Thus, in a way, we must all act as revolutionary teacher-researchers if we are to yield desired change. And in my experience, writing programs are largely collaborative efforts that actively seek input from all teachers, regardless of rank.

The first-year composition course serves as a valuable point of inquiry for a case study as many FYC programs share the same practices due to the proliferation of research and policy. I am sure UTA is not alone in its adoption of WPA learning

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outcomes (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2008). After decades of research into the theory and practice of the teaching of writing, many aspects of composition's best practices are fairly well institutionalized at this point. For example, some version of a recursive writing process is almost universally taught. The classroom itself should follow a collaborative model emphasizing peer critique and instructor feedback in process. The teaching of writing focuses on building better writers rather than better papers, although product does have some weight, especially within academic discourse. Exposing students to discourse among specific communities is a central aim of the first-semester course. These are just a few of the commonplaces among composition researchers and instructors. Because of these commonalities, conclusions drawn about my composition course, even when considered within its specific context, will be largely generizable to other courses and programs, although I will pay heed to differences that may occur as a direct result of UTA's unique population and demographics.

In a study where the primary site of research is one's own classroom there are complications to be considered. However, I follow a long line of teacher-researchers, working to identify and describe pedagogical successes and challenges in order to inform other practitioners as well as emerging theories and program development. In order to draw conclusions it is necessary to consider the entire context of a specific pedagogical model. However, many program/curriculum assessments must be evaluated in comparison to an imagined other or a historical set (groups from previous years before a policy change, for example). My study, on the other hand, compares two groups within the same context and point in time. There is still some complexity involved as, without course syllabi for the various sections that comprise student Group A, I must operate largely on the student-respondent's claims about individual instructor/course policy and

goals. Nonetheless, I am confident I can make some assumptions based on my general familiarity with and experience in UTA's composition program as a whole.

Context – UTA and the FYC Program

Writing program administration is a series of constraints that must be carefully considered in order to create a new program of study or modify an existing one. The wise WPA weighs the needs of the specific population, the educational environment, the needs and dictates of university administration (and to a lesser degree, perhaps, the community at large), and the teaching staff who will be doing the work. Thus, these factors played a significant role as I designed the study and executed the model course.

UTA has an institutional history as a "commuter school" and still serves a population of mostly regional students, many of whom are first-generation college students and/or hail from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. There is also a considerable number of "non-traditional" students roughly defined as part-timers, returning students, and students who also hold full-time jobs, are parents, and, increasingly, caring for their own parents. In addition, UTA attracts a large international student population, has a reputation for supporting students with disabilities, and serves as a "gateway" to UT in Austin, the jewel of the University of Texas system. In short, UTA was listed among the top ten "most diverse" schools for good reason (Sullivan, 2013). The university is also competing with other North Texas universities in the "race to the top" by pushing for Tier One status as mandated by Texas House Bill 51 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2009) which allocates a portion of university funding based on progression toward Tier One markers. As a result everyone is feeling the pressure to increase retention, attract higher-quality students, support at-risk students, secure outside funding, and graduate doctorate students.

The English Department at UTA houses both an MA and PhD, but leans toward a privileging of literature and cultural studies over rhetoric and composition, and attracts graduate students who plan to specialize accordingly. At the time of the study, the First-Year English (FYC) program reflected the department's literature base and leaned closer to literary analysis assignments than rhetorical or research-based ones. The program has since undergone a restructure (led/inspired by Dr. James Warren) which has moved the first-year composition series much more firmly into the rhetoric camp. However, this transition was limited for some time by the program's commitment to the OneBook program. The WPA at that time did not control selection of the OneBook and thus was required to maintain flexibility in the first semester course in order to accommodate each year's new selection, which was not always a very comfortable fit with the program goals and philosophy. I obtained special permission from our WPA to forgo the OneBook curriculum in order to design and administer a blended learning course that focused on social media as the central topic of discussion. I am sure there were exceptions, but most of the other sections conformed to the standard OneBook curriculum in place at the time of the study. This will be relevant when considering the differences between students from the general population (Group A) and my own students (Group B).

UT-Arlington's FYC program (at the time of the study and with the exception of the curriculum supporting inclusion of the OneBook) was fairly representative of many schools across the country in terms of philosophy and student population. At UTA, the FYC program was grounded in social constructivist interpretations of academic discourse á la Bizzell, Bartholomae, Berlin, Cooper, and others, and seeks to introduce novice writers to the "academic discourse community." There is also a strong emphasis on process theory as demonstrated in the frequency of "process sheets," multiple drafts (except for the essay test), issue proposals, and exploratory essays. To a lesser degree,

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the program does suggest that writing is a mode of learning akin to Emig's (2003) work, but this seems to get more attention in initial training and far less attention in the execution of the first-year courses.

Currently there is only moderate attention paid to using technology as a tool for teaching writing, although several ambitious GTAs have developed courses that more fully integrate new media in the classroom, including my own, which was the subject of this study. There is also only moderate attention paid to public discourse and situated writing, except that which naturally occurs within the teaching of rhetorical analysis and rhetorical strategy. Service learning gets a bit more attention, but more so because it is a university goal and there is a Service Learning department to offer assistance to those who wish to include it in their courses. Still, to my knowledge, only a handful of FYC courses include a service-learning component. Finally, since the time of the study, distance learning has firmly established itself within the FYC program, with standard versions of both semester courses developed by Dr. Warren. However, as noted above, the course is a literal translation to the online environment rather than a significant re-thinking of course goals and practices within an online context.

Course Design and Rationale

In Part One of this chapter I noted that I found writing for a semi-public audience of peers, like the audience made accessible via social media platforms, improves the quality of student writing. When I first dabbled with blended learning strategies, long before designing this study and before I had ever heard the term "blended learning," several of my students stated in conference or reflection letters that as they prepared to write their posts for the WebCT discussion forum, they knew their peers would be reading and responding. I posited then that peer pressure helped to raise the standard for the

whole class. Afterwards, I was hooked, and began regularly integrating online discussion assignments in lieu of traditional paper-based reading responses. Saving trees was a bonus.

I must admit, that prior to my comprehensive exams, my observations about student engagement were anecdotal. However, my evolving course design was supported by the work of other contemporary scholars and emerged from foundational research in the teaching of writing. Networked writing, like the kind I routinely ask students to do on the course blog, moves well beyond Britton's (1970) teacher-as-examiner. Like compositionists have worked toward for years with varying degrees of success, social media writing finally enacts Beaufort's (2007) "writing as social practice," allowing students to explore first-hand how writing changes from one context to another and "what's at stake in one's ability to express thoughts well in writing" (p. 186). No longer are students writing for the teacher alone. I find that students more quickly grasp the assignment criteria and more quickly improve their writing with a real, public audience of peers. Yancey (2009) describes the promise of "digitally networked contexts" in which students share a "co-apprenticeship in which communicative knowledge is freely exchanged" (p. 327). In my observation, my students quickly learn to generate academic writing that will appeal to their audience of peers and they learn to adjust rhetorical strategies upon interactions with peer critics.

My early experiments with WebCT generated enough student engagement to warrant further exploration and adaptation. Over the years the online assignments embedded in my face-to-face (F2F) courses became more intricate and informed by scholarship. However, my colleagues who taught 100% online courses were not describing the same success. They found students were less engaged, not more so. And again, contemporary scholarship confirmed these anecdotal observations (Bergin, 2012).

This eventually led to my dissertation research. The original intent of the case study described in this document was to chart and define the unique learning environment created by a blending of online and F2F practices. Thus, when designing the course that is the subject of this study, my aims were as follows:

- Integrate social media and interactive platforms for accessing and completing the course.

- Employ social media and other digital tools to achieve standard FYC learning outcomes.

- Provide materials and means to think critically about issues surrounding social media, such as digital identity construction, digital rhetoric, participatory culture, digital authorship, and digital research methods.

- Adapt standard FYC assignments in order to support digital literacy learning objectives and to make good use of new media tools and/or new media inspired thinking.

- Allow time outside of class for primary research and construction of new media texts. I also wanted to allow students lab time to learn and practice digital creation tools/software.

To achieve these goals I made several significant changes to the standard 1301 syllabus and requirements. I list here the changes that are particularly relevant to this study. (See Appendix A for a copy of my syllabus, designed for this study.)

Edmodo, the Online Classroom Space

At the time of the study UTA did not require use of any specific classroom management system, though my colleagues who distributed materials or collected work online often used MavSpace (a rudimentary document depository, unique to UTA as far

as I know). Because I wanted a much more interactive experience similar to Facebook, in addition to the classroom space, our home base was Edmodo.com, a learning platform that imitates the look and feel of Facebook, but maintains student privacy and security. Via Edmodo, students can keep up with course assignments and communicate with instructor and peers from any internet-enabled location at any time of day. There are also added features for classroom management, such as creating assignments, grading, teacher-assigned groups, and assignment submission. Edmodo is unique yet familiar and user-friendly.

Pre- and Post-Self-Assessment Questionnaires

Pre- and Post-Self-Assessment Questionnaires assisted student and instructor in measuring growth and learning over time. The first was available only during the first two weeks of the semester; the second survey opened for the final three weeks during Dead Week and finals, and up until grades were submitted. (See Appendix B for Group B's pre and post-assessment questionnaires.) Group B's pre-test (B1) asked students to set semester gals and make a plan for meeting those goals. The post-test (B2) asked students to review initial goals/plan and reflect on their success/progress/failure to meet their goals and also how their plan worked out during the term. Group A's questionnaires were exactly the same except for the omission of goal setting and reflection questions.

Discussion Topics for Digital Literacy

It is customary in UTA's first-semester course to pre-select topics and "reading clusters" to generate class discussion and help students formulate ideas and topics for their papers. I followed the standard model of three discussion topics with pre-selected materials. However, in order to meet my objective of developing digital literacy, the materials were a combination of multi-modal texts and theories about digital issues. The

three major clusters were digital identity construction, digital rhetoric & participatory culture, and digital authorship, although other areas emerged as side-topics.

Revisionary.Edublogs.org - The Class Blog

This aspect of the course included three components, so that students took turns creating initial posts and responding to peer posts, yielding several separate online discussions of course material. The student blog assignment began in Week 2 of the semester and continued every week through Week 10. (See Appendix A for the entire course schedule).

- Once during the semester, students act as *Blog Moderator*, which consists of planning, preparing notes for, and leading a blog discussion of a class related issue, then writing a discourse summary. There was a rotating schedule so that everyone moderated once. There were several simultaneous discussions each week. (See Figure 1-1). I created a sign-up sheet so that students had a great deal of choice in regards to topic and timing. The Moderator's goal was to take the lead on the week's course material/concepts, then prepare and post thought-provoking questions in order to begin an online discussion. Because I have found that participation is not always consistent week-to-week, students were assigned to one of three discussion groups in hopes that each moderator would have a few peers reading his/her post and responding. (See Figure 1-2). After the thread closed, the moderator submitted a summary of the discussion.

Date	Location	Available Slot
9/11/2010 (Sat. 6:00PM)	Post on own blog or Revisionary	**The Rhetorical Situation** From FYW Ch. 2 **TRACE** From FYW Ch. 2 **Audience Analysis** From FYW Ch. 2
9/13/2010 (Mon. 6:00PM)	Post on own blog or Revisionary	**Ethos** From FYW Ch. 4 **Pathos** From FYW Ch. 4 **Logos** From FYW Ch. 4
9/18/2010 (Sat. 6:00PM)	Post on own blog or Revisionary	**Discourse Communities (2)** "Discourse Community"
9/20/2010 (Mon. 8:00PM)	Post on own blog or Revisionary	**Ethnography (2)** "Writing an Ethnographic Essay" **The Banking Concept (2)** "The Banking Concept"

Figure 1-1: September's Blog Sign-Up Sheet
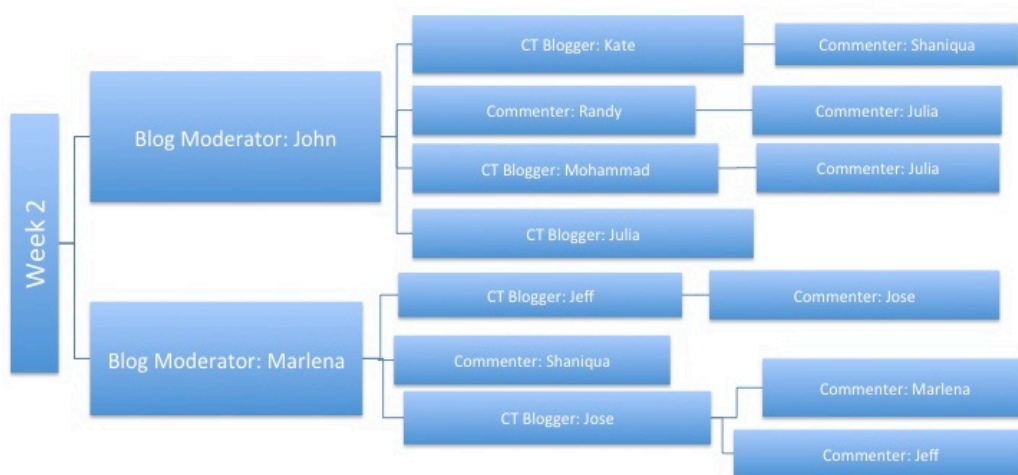
Figure 1-2: Diagram of 1 Week of Blog Participation

- All students were asked to prepare for group discussions by posting a *Critical Thinking Blog*. (See Figure 1-2). These were in direct response to Blog Moderator posts and were required six times during the semester, but specific time and topic were of the student's choosing. These were similar to a typical reading journal assignment, rooted in class readings and discussions and in direct response to a specific prompt (the Blog Moderator's post).

- Finally, students posted six pairs of short, less formal discussion *Comments* in order to extend the conversation. Some students chose to complete comments as a continuation of their CT Blogs (i.e. within that same discussion), but others used the comments as an opportunity to weigh in on another conversation during the same week. (See Figure 1-2). They were not required to post CT Blogs and Comments in the same week, but that soon became the custom, nonetheless.

Final Project and Self-Reflection

For the final project, students were asked to craft a researched argument in a medium of their choice. In many ways the assignment echoes the traditional academic essay: specific arguable thesis, drawing on quality sources, and yielding purposeful presentation of information for the benefit of an audience. Some students chose the more familiar traditional paper. Others made movies, posters, interactive presentations, and comic books.

Class Time and Space Allocation

As noted above, I do not ascribe to the notion that a certain percentage of F2F class time distinguishes a course as hybrid or blended. Thus, when I planned the weekly schedule, my considerations were much more practical. For example, students were not required to come to the physical classroom during the week they were supposed to be

observing and documenting an online discourse community. Instead, they submitted brief reports on their progress and participated in group discussions about findings, all via Edmodo and the course blog. Later, when they needed time to do the physical work of creating multi-media projects (learn software, edit movies, etc) the class met in a computer lab instead of the usual classroom. Additionally, students were granted excused absences if they wanted/needed to attend a multi-media course on campus or elsewhere. In this way I did not take on the responsibility of teaching an immense amount of software, yet I was able to allow students time to learn and practice whatever was most applicable on their own.

In summary, if the original intent of the study was to chart and define the unique learning environment created by a blending of online and F2F practices, my course design was intended to optimize opportunities to describe and measure student learning in the blended environment. I sought to identify, describe, and analyze the use of social media (such as Facebook, blogging, YouTube, Twitter, and the like) as a learning tool and subject of analysis in the first-year English classroom. I am not alone in my assertions that social media in the classroom increases student engagement in course material, extends concepts and assignments beyond the classroom space, and encourages critical analysis of multiple medium. Thus, theoretically, and now demonstrated by this study, students become more active learners, and connect more deeply with course concepts and subject matter.

Methodology

This qualitative study seeks to describe and analyze this phenomenon in three ways. The first portion of the analysis involves comparing students in the general population of first-year English (Participant Group A) with my own students' (Participant

Group B) using paired self-assessments - a pre-test early in the semester and a post-test at the end. To this end, two versions of the self-assessment questionnaire were administered to the two participant groups documenting students' perceptions of and experience with an array of material covered in ENGL 1301 curriculum: rhetorical knowledge, reading, writing and critical thinking, academic research, and academic collaboration. In addition, this study documents first-year students' prior and current experience with social media and its use for academic purposes, particularly its use for meeting the ENGL 1301 learning objectives listed above. In order to qualify results, basic demographic data, including educational experience (generational status, grades, major/interests), was collected as well. The paired surveys yield descriptive data that situate and contextualize the two subject pools. Additionally, I drew on my observations during the semester, my knowledge of each student's progress, and my familiariety with their work. All together, the collected data triangulates to form a rich account of the complexity of the use of social media in the composition classroom, illuminating interrelationships among several dimensions of the thinking and writing process, recognizing important variables within the dynamic classroom context, and suggesting new hypotheses for further study.

As is common of many qualitative researchers, I ended up with far more data than I could actually use in one dissertation. In my analysis of responses (many open-ended) to four separate questionnaires, I looked for patterns in word choice and tone in order to characterize and categorize student reports of learning and classroom activities. I was largely focused on comparisons, between each group's pre and post-tests, as well as variations, similarities, and changes between the two groups. However, because Group A is comprised of students from multiple sections and multiple instructors, there is considerable variation in terminology. Additionally, because my course was specifically

focused on issues surrounding social media and Web 2.0, my students were much more comfortable with those terms and the implications of learning online. While this is one of the major points I will make in Chapter Three and is in itself an example of success in regards to the objective of increasing digital literacy, it is still worth qualifying that the language my students used to describe their learning environment and course materials is not typical of UTA students generally.

Overview of Project

In the second chapter, I begin an argument for "How to Save Composition Studies" by demonstrating we are in a unique position to address the two big movements in higher education: increasing student retention and integrating new media and technology across the disciplines. The second chapter focuses on composition's role in student persistence, emphasizing its value to university administrators. In order to demonstrate FYC's role in student retention and success I review retention research and draw parallels between research findings and FYC's "best practices." I then provide examples of this work in action via evidence from student-subjects' questionnaire responses and coursework. I argue that such evidence of our role in student retention will be of prime interest to university administration and others responsible for program funding. My conclusion is that the primary problem facing Writing Program Administrators is one of marketing and that aligning ourselves with university retention efforts is a giant step towards the re-branding of composition studies.

Chapter Three outlines the ways blended learning aligns with our long-standing critical/process pedagogies while also furthering goals of fostering persistence. The chapter begins with a review of new media theory and its inevitable impact on rhetoric, composition, and pedagogy. I further explore composition's best practices, this time as

they align with digital literacy theories and practices. The chapter considers the reasons blended learning makes the integrating of some FYC values easier, some more effective, and still other aspects of digital pedagogy are wholly new and novel. Again I draw on examples from student questionnaires and blog contributions in order to illustrate my claims. I then argue that compositionists broadly, and first-year composition programs more specifically, are uniquely positioned to set standards for digital scholarship and shepherd students into a 21st century consciousness, defined and confined by an individual's digital literacy. The chapter concludes with another push for the re-branding of composition studies as the stewards of digital agency.

Because hybrid models help support student persistence as well as digital literacy, the combination is a powerful argument for re-imagining the role of FYC within the baccalaureate program. Thus, this dissertation concludes with a reimagination of first-year composition within a retention-minded digitally-rich context. As such, we must revise both CWPA learning outcomes and the rhetorical frame by which we position FYC. I include an examination of the many challenges facing the field of composition studies and the First-Year Composition program, such as current working conditions and the push toward distance education. A hybrid model addresses many of these concerns and can serve as a centerpiece for a new vision of FYC. If we hope to illicit a change in the status of the field, we must frame our work in such a way that is relevant and valuable to stakeholders. I propose using FYC's natural potential to support both retention efforts and digital literacy in order to re-brand our pedagogy and scholarship as prized resources amid the university community.

Chapter 2

Value Added: Retention-Minded Best Practice

Non-Profit Behaviors

As discussed in the previous chapter, the economic state of First Year Composition programs leaves much to be desired, and it is becoming harder and harder for highly educated people to find good jobs. Compositionists earn the lowest salaries in the campus community and there are well-documented labor issues for contingent faculty who are often over-worked in spite of being paid too little and/or cannot earn enough to sustain a living. Colleagues in other departments do not respect our work, often suggesting that FYC serves a remedial need for the under-educated. This is in spite of our best efforts to reframe perceptions of the teaching of writing as an essential element in the development of critical thinking for all students (Adler-Kassner, 2008; Rhodes, 2010). Others have argued that while the teaching of writing is no doubt important, it is the required course itself that places English in a position of servitude amongst college faculty (Bazerman, 2002; Crowley, 1998; Dobrin, 2011; Fox, 2002). This is something I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter Four. I mention it here because I believe aligning with university retention efforts could be a major selling point with administrators and colleagues as we work to re-brand composition studies and FYC.

To elaborate, universities across the country are investing billions into widespread retention efforts targeting the first-year student, given that research shows the first year is the most vulnerable year, especially for those who fall into "at-risk" categories. On my own campus, the administration invested in the creation of a new "University College," designed to support the first year student and increase retention rates. The new University College has been praised by the Texas Board of Regents and held up as a model for the Texas state college system. To my knowledge, the English

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Department and the Writing Program had little involvement in the planning process of the new first-year center on our campus. Yet, our department was stripped of computer classrooms and impacted by harsh budget cuts as all departments had to "tighten up" in order to pay for the new University College. And all this for a first-year program that duplicates much of what we already do in our FYC classrooms. In my opinion, aligning with university administration and making ourselves an essential part of their retention efforts, was a missed opportunity for our department and our writing program. I believe the problem that faces Writing Program Administrators is one of economics, and the solution will require luring capital investments and adapting to a new academic business model where we stop thinking like a non-profit and instead focus on engaging both investors and consumers.

I expect that many of my readers will cringe at the idea of catering to the almighty tuition dollar. Rest assured that my proposal is a bit more complex than that. Instead it would be more accurate to think of it as the stars aligning over one great cultural moment, where we have the rare power to elicit real change. This chapter begins an argument for "How to Save Composition Studies" by demonstrating we already do a great job of supporting university retention efforts, one of the two major movements in higher education. The second major movement, integrating new media and technology across the disciplines, will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. It should be noted, these two movements work together: A primary aspect of increasing student retention is to increase student engagement in course material. In Chapter Three I will detail the ways blended learning aligns with our long-standing critical/process pedagogies and works to engage students in course material, thereby providing additional support of a persistence-minded pedagogy. Thus, First-Year Composition is uniquely positioned to begin the process of college indoctrination and inoculation so that students can become

lifelong critical thinkers and learners. Composition is the "gateway course" bearing the prospect of engaging students in their own learning. Further, by highlighting the "added value" of retention, along with our role in digital literacy, composition could be re-legitimized as the very core of higher education, invaluable in its contributions to the university system as a whole.

It is too often forgotten that our best practices dovetail nicely with university retention efforts. This chapter will begin an argument for an integrated plan in which we continue to do our best work while simultaneously demonstrating to university administrators that this work aligns with university goals of retention and persistence, while preparing students for whatever field they choose, including those marked STEM. Instead of reluctantly serving as higher education gatekeepers or castle defenders, WPAs, and by extension FYC instructors, are in a unique position to re-formulate our mission as specialists in stuent-centered pedagogy and pedagogical training. In other words, rather than resisting our status as gateway keepers, let us embrace it and demonstrate how vital it is to achieving university goals.

Denial: What's Comp Got to Do With It?

In spite of criticism that suggests their methodology is questionable and misleading, Arum & Roska's *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (2011) caused a national sensation and reinvigorated the debate over the worth and value of higher education, suggesting higher education was rarely worth the high price of tuition. While it is true that skyrocketing tuition costs and a reduction in state support for higher education should raise more than an eyebrow or two, the data confirming the value of higher education is indisputable, particularly for those born into households with lower incomes, for whom education has the greatest economic benefit. Report after

report reiterates that people who earn a college degree are more likely to find a job than their less educated counterparts, more likely to earn a higher salary, have access to better healthcare, take longer vacations, enjoy better working conditions, are more likely to own their own home, and to send their own children to college (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Stiglitz, 2012; *The New York Times*, 2005; Williams & Wail, 2005).

Few of us who work in higher education would dispute the benefits of a more highly educated society. It is, after all, our life's work, and for good reason. Like many, I believe that an educated society is the first step to liberation and equality, particularly in bridging the well documented "achievement gap" between the white middle class student and everyone else. Participation in academic discourse, even at the first-year level, is a liberating and democratizing principal. Students become more active participants in culture when they are thinking, writing and engaging in academic debate.

Bruce Horner (1997) and others have claimed that the institutionalization of first-year composition (FYC) forces well-meaning educators into the frustrating role of "gatekeeper," responsible for deciding who is "college material" and who is not. There is historical evidence of this, as composition courses were created to address the seeming "inability to write" noted as a more diverse population was admitted over time (Bazerman, 2002; Crowley, 1998; Dobrin, 2011; Fox, 2002). As Susan Miller (1994) describes, the first educational expansion in 1894 accommodated the children of manufacturers, farmers, entrepreneurs and merchants, the new middle class that emerged post-industrial revolution. These students were deemed unprepared to write on the college level, and thus, the first composition courses were born, establishing English departments as the keepers of the good language, the speech and ways of knowing of the elite. Nearly one hundred years later, admissions criteria widened again, admitting droves of "underprepared" in the 1970s and 1980s, prompting the study of error (Dewey, 1897;

Freire, 1970; H. Giroux, 1997); writing as a process (Emig, 2003; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Sommers, 1980); and "basic writing" (Bartholomae, 1980; Perl, 1980; Rose, 1989), spurring the development of an English subfield, Rhetoric and Composition Studies. Once again, English departments were called upon to address the needs of the university, newly asked to serve ever-widening populations of students less familiar with what is commonly called "academic writing." Backlash against an influx of academic neophytes inspired an explosion of research into these non-traditional students, broadly-defined, and the prospect of increasing access to higher education via effective composition instruction. As such, "access" to higher education became a major focus of composition studies.

However, the fact is, whether we labeled it so or not, for a very long time the role of compositionists has been to support retention efforts and success in higher education. We have called it increasing "access," a misnomer, as how could we, college English professors, really control whether a student decided to come to college in the first place? Arguably, our job has been to support those who had already decided to attend, but for whatever reason did not fit the traditional understanding of a college-bound student. Thus, it seems to me much of our work in the 1980s and 1990s was intended to justify non-traditional students were really "college material" after all (Bartholomae, 1985), and/or to catalog the differences between basic and more experienced writers (Sommers, 1980) in order to taxonomize writing as a learned process (Perl, 1980). As a consequence however, we remediated ourselves; ironic, given that so much of the conversation at the time revolved around countering the perception of composition courses as "remedial" work. What we should have been doing all along was illustrating that all writers, whether consciously or not, must learn more about the goals of writing while practicing and refining their craft, as should aspiring chemists and mathematicians

and engineers. And today, now that retention is a primary goal of "race to the top" efforts on many campuses, going forward, we must demonstrate our essential role in building bridges for all incoming students, but most importantly, those who are most at-risk of dropping out: low-income, first-generation (LI/1G) students.

Access v. Success

Interestingly, retention research and composition studies have had a similar evolutionary trajectory. The study of retention emerged in response to the same widening admissions policies that spawned the first composition courses. According to Vincent Tinto, the leading expert in retention research, prior to 1970 student attrition was viewed as a weakness on the part of the student rather than the institution: "Student retention or the lack thereof was seen as the reflection of individual attributes, skills, and motivation. Students who did not stay were thought to be less able, less motivated, and less willing to defer the benefits that college graduation was believed to bestow" (Tinto, 2006, p. 2). Sadly, that does not sound all that different from what some faculty members believe today – that college is not for everyone and that first-year courses should cull weaker members from the herd. While I would not argue that college is for "everyone," I maintain that retention research has demonstrated for the past three decades that some students seem to have an easier time of integrating on college campuses than others. This view emerges from societal changes in the 1970s and 1980s, when many in the social sciences and humanities began to study the societal influence over choice, individuality, potential, success, income, and so on. The natural development after the civil rights era of the 1960s was to work toward equalizing opportunity across the societal spectrum.

The first retention efforts focused on integration and transition. Tinto states, speaking of the early research into college retention, circa early 1980s, "We learned that

involvement matters and that it matters most during the critical first year of college"
(Tinto, 2006, p. 3). Thus, freshman orientation and the first-year experience course were
born. The concept of greeting incoming students and helping them to integrate is still
commonplace on college campuses today. But Tinto claims that while the freshman
orientation movement was/is a good one, it represents the "infancy" of retention research,
which focused only on students who intended to live on campus and largely those who
were white and middle class. In other words, researchers assumed that retention was a
universal problem and that all students were vulnerable. Tinto laments the early days of
student retention in practice too, pointing out that most of the work of retention efforts fell
to student affairs departments – something else that remains true today – and functioned
as "add-ons to existing university activity" (Tinto, 2006, p. 3). It was not until the late
1980s and early 1990s that retention research began to focus on students of different
backgrounds and in different institutional settings.

LI/1G

  As has already been discussed, for decades composition studies has maintained
a laser-like focus on issues of access for a wide variety of students. In addition, first-year
composition has long served the university's need to support more diverse populations of
students and initiate them into our "peculiar ways of knowing," preparing novice writers
for college level composition (Bartholomae, 1985; Perl, 1980; Rose, 1989). While many
of the earlier attention to access and retention circled around the achievement gap
between white students and everyone else, these days emphasis has shifted away from
the minority student and onto those who come from low-income families and/or those
who are the first in their families to attend college. Achievement gaps among minority
students are still a serious issue, of course. However, researchers now believe the

disparity has more to do with income and the education level of parents than it does with race or ethnicity (P. E. Barton & Coley, 2009; Dumais, 2006; Engle & Lynch, 2009; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Jacobs, 2006; Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012).

Thus, recently, retention research has shifted focus from minority students to low-income students, and even more specifically to low-income, first-generation students (LI/1G), because it has been documented that they are the most at risk of dropping out before degree completion (P. E. Barton & Coley, 2009; Engle & Tinto, 2008). According to Pell Institute research, LI/1G students are nearly four times more likely than more advantaged peers to leave college before the second year (Engle & Tinto, 2008, p. 2). Additionally, "after six years, only 11 percent of low-income, first-generation students had earned bachelor's degrees compared to 55 percent of their more advantaged peers" (Engle & Tinto, 2008, p. 2). While some of the problem certainly lies within the greater likelihood for low-income students to be less prepared academically than their more affluent peers, these risk factors cannot be chalked up to a preparation disadvantage alone. As Tinto argues, even students who have gained access to elite institutions, "presumably among the most talented and motivated students in higher education, students from the lowest socioeconomic quartile are less likely to graduate (76%) than students from the highest quartile (90%)" (2006, p. 12). Thus, *access* to higher education does not mean *success* even amongst the brightest of the set.

The First Year Is the Most Vulnerable Year

Several studies evaluating the reasons students leave before completing their degrees have demonstrated that the first year is the most vulnerable year, and that if LI/1G students are not encouraged to stay during that crucial first year, the proverbial deck is stacked against them (Engle & Lynch, 2009; Engle & Tinto, 2008). But why are

these students so much more vulnerable than their more advantaged peers? Obviously,

finances play a role and should not be discounted. LI/1G students are more likely to

attend college part-time and/or to work full-time jobs (NCES, 1998). They are more likely

to start at public two-year or for-profit institutions and of those, only fourteen percent

transfer to four-year institutions (Engle & Tinto, 2008, p. 13). They are also more likely to

be caring for children, parents, or dependent spouses. Quite plainly, there is tough

competition for the LI/1G student's hard-earned tuition dollars, which may, somewhat

ironically, position college as a nonessential item in comparison to dependent care.

However, dismissing the problem as simply a financial one would be unwise

because there are several more subtle, but no less serious, issues the LI/1G student is

likely to face throughout her academic career, and especially in that crucial first year. For

example, more students than not work while attending college and those who work 1-20

hours per week actually have higher persistence rates than those who do not work at all

(Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). But LI/1G students are likely to work more than twenty

hours per week, many upwards of thirty or forty, which means they are interacting on

campus less, have less time to study, and take fewer courses (Pascarella & Terenzini,

2005). LI/1G students do not usually have the luxury of concentrating only on school. For

these students, it is likely their only time on campus is during class, meaning if they do

not engage in the classroom, they probably will not engage at all. Adding to this, the

average LI/1G student starts college three years later than more advantaged peers (23

vs. 20) and is almost eight times more likely to have children to support as a single parent

(30% vs. 4%), challenging on-campus interaction even further (Engle & Tinto, 2008, p. 8).

I can also report that one of the most common reasons for concern among LI/1G

students is perceived outsider status. Countless students over the years have told me

they do not feel like they "belong" on campus and worry whether or not they are "college

material." In my Master's thesis research I was able to document this fear among LI/1G high school juniors and seniors, who were college-bound. Thanks to the revenue generated by legal gambling throughout the state, in Nevada, tuition costs are a much less significant concern. Yet, although there was a four-year public institution in town and they had the grades to qualify for the state's "Top 10%" tuition-waiver program, many highly qualified students intended to start at the local community college anyway, "just to see if they were really college-ready" (Jacobs, 2006, p. 68). I have heard this sentiment echoed in student work and conferences throughout my teaching, many first-generation students still questioning their "college readiness" well into sophomore or junior years.

Some of the first-generation students in this study indicated "college readiness" concerns in the goal-setting portion of the pre-test questionnaire. For example, Pikachu[3] indicated she was experiencing some culture shock: "I am settling in with the whole shock of college. Once I get used to doing what my class requires, I'll try my best to over achieve in the class, not just for a good grade, but for my self intellectually" (answer to Q45, B1 questionnaire). Others worried about time management around work schedules, "It's hard to say how much time I can devote to this class specifically, as I am working approximately 30 hours a week and taking 14 hours of college courses" (Jennifer, answer to Q45, B1 questionnaire). And several were specifically worried about building vocabulary, having commented earlier that they felt high school did not prepare them verbally for college: "I will achieve my three goals by going to tutorials if needing help on writing papers, doing extra credit, and by reading the dictionary to higher my vocabulary" (Tabitha, answer to Q45, B1 questionnaire).

In addition, I have found that students often express that they are conflicted between "life" and school. For example, I remember one Group B student who had

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[3] Upon consent, participants were asked to choose pseudonyms to be used in reporting. All names of participants are self-selected pseudonyms to protect their identity.

earned a scholarship but had a hard time explaining to older siblings why her class schedule needed to be ranked as highly on the family priority list as their full-time jobs. It had fallen to Anna to take care of her ailing mother, but as a consequence she was missing class, not turning in work on time, and in danger of failing the course. It was understandable that her siblings did not automatically recognize the importance of attendance, since missing class in high school is often excused with a note from home. Meanwhile, Anna was terrified of admitting she was struggling and, with conflicting demands from home and school, she was having trouble prioritizing. Because she was already short on time and barely making it to class, it seems unlikely that she would have sought help from other campus resources and, had I not intervened, she might have found herself with no other choice but to withdraw from the course, which would have impacted her scholarship eligibility as well. Because I am invested in retention and aware of the specific challenges that face LI/1G students, I was able to identify the problem quickly and help Anna find a solution. She worked hard to catch up on the work she missed and, happily, passed the class. A positive outcome indeed! Nonetheless, it should be noted that this is the kind of conflict her more advantaged peers would be less likely to encounter. For LI/1G students life often gets in the way of school and frequently forces tough choices. No wonder so many give up or assume college "just isn't for them." This feeling is not unrelated to the LI/1G student's lack of cultural capital, as has been documented by educational researchers (Delpit, 1995).

Another aspect of the LI/1G problem that often goes unrecognized is the possibility, either real or perceived, of socio-cultural distance: The simple act of deciding to go to college may distance LI/1G students from their families, neighborhoods, or culture. I have heard or read similar stories from my own LI/1G students and colleagues. They want so badly to "make it," but few understand the cost may be greater than they

imagine. Higher education inevitably changes the way one views the world, including family, and the circumstances they may find themselves in, physically, economically, intellectually, and emotionally. I have heard such stories from first-generation students, colleagues, and family members. Whereas the middle class student most likely goes to college to become more like her parents and extended family, the LI/1G student must make a pretty deliberate move away from his.

I have watched this struggle first-hand with my husband, who was born into a working class family and is the first person among his relatives to go to college. In fact, up until very recently when our niece graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University, he was the only one to have completed any degree. As proud as the family is of his success, the more he learns and the more success he enjoys, or to put it another way, the more cultural capital he gains, the less he identifies with his working-class family. Of course, this causes a significant amount of anxiety for my husband because he feels terribly guilty about the increasing distance between him and his family; yet, he also feels a responsibility to bring them along with him, and even more guilt if they do not follow. Sometimes this is useful – we have taken it upon ourselves to be the academic leaders for the next generation, supporting the college endeavors of nieces, nephews, and second cousins, in addition to seving as an example to model. But it is also really hard for us to watch family members make terrible choices for themselves and still be empathetic. It leaves us both in a really awkward position, trying to encourage them to improve their lives without passing judgment on their choices. Over the years students, colleagues, and friends have described familial or cultural complications that resulted directly or indirectly from becoming the first in their families to attend college. What a terrible burden.

I think we must be sensitive to this ongoing struggle for LI/1G students and maybe even help prepare them for it in some way, though I do not know that this really

falls under our purview. An argument could be made that conscious reflection on the purpose and goals of higher education may be a beneficial addition to the first-year writing classroom, perhaps the topic of initial papers or blogs. At the very least, though, we could help students make connections between the work they do in the classroom and their past, present, and future home lives. Perhaps we might work to establish and strengthen life-school connections via neighborhood discourse analyses, research projects on community issues, service learning that connects academics with home communities, and/or breaking down the physical boundaries by means of social media.

My case study illustrates there are areas hybrid/blended learning is particularly helpful in addressing: Social media functions as a cultural connection, building classroom community and bridging the divide between "school" and "life." Additionally, social media and mobile devices blur boundaries, enabling students to do school work from within their communities or to stay in contact with their home communities from campus. We would do well to help students consciously understand and use social media as both academic support and as rich material for critical rhetorical analysis, all in one portable package. I will expound on the benefits of a self-aware hybrid classroom in the next chapter.

Tinto has something to say on this too: "Where it was once argued that retention required students to break away from past communities, we now know that for some if not many students the ability to remain connected to their past communities, family, church, or tribe is essential to their persistence" (2006, p. 4). Tinto further argues that involvement must come from the classroom because the classroom is the one spot LI/1G students will definitely interact with other students and faculty. Overwhelmingly, interaction with faculty and effective classroom experiences are identified as key elements in encouraging students to stay enrolled.

Faculty Matters

It is now common knowledge that under-represented students are the most likely to leave before the second year. Where it was once believed that an active campus life would entice most students to stay, it is now understood that while events and involvement certainly help, classroom engagement matters more. After all, campus activities and student life do not matter very much if the students are not present to enjoy them, as non-residential students are increasingly becoming the norm. Tinto argues, "the classroom is, for many students, the one place, perhaps only place, where they meet each other and the faculty. If involvement does not occur there, it is unlikely to occur elsewhere…. Involvement, or what is increasingly being referred to as engagement, matters and it matters most during the critical first year of college" (Tinto, 2006, p. 4). Since so much of our work already centers around the first-year student, I posit that FYC is perfectly positioned to address student retention issues, or rather, we do so already, only not in any formal sense, and we are not so great at telling people about it.

This is a failure on our part because university administrators have put a lot of stock into retention research, thanks in large part to "college quality" rankings, like those produced by *US News,* which include student retention as one of the primary criteria for overall quality of education. Whether or not retention actually is an indicator of quality of education is subject for another conversation. Suffice it to say that, rightly or not, dollars are tied to retention, via state and federal funding, tuition, endowments, grants, and corporate investment. The higher quality an institution of higher learning is deemed to be, the more money it draws. And because the top-ranking institutions tend to have the highest persistence rates, whether or not these are dependent variables is irrelevant, because the powers that be will continue to invest in this area, as evidenced by the countless versions of retention-minded programs across the country, such as common

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reader programs, Freshman interest groups, and learning communities. Not to mention the vast number of tests and services that assess and address the issue of retention, like the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), plus institutional retention11-auditing instruments and services which claim to gauge "dropout proneness" (Tinto, 2006, p. 5).

Tinto calls for greater and more direct faculty involvement in student persistence. "We know that successful student retention is at its root a reflection of successful student education. That is the job of the faculty" (2006, p. 9). Survey data is consistent with this assertion. When asked to rank and describe "the quality of your relationship with your ENGL 1301 instructor this fall" 67% of respondents in Group A (general 1301 population) rated their instructors at a 5 or a 6, as did 72% of Group B (my students). It is standard practice in FYC to require one-on-one student-instructor conferences and I typically do so just before big moments in the semester, such as mid-term, when a struggling student may be considering dropping the course. This sort of consistent effort to stay in regular contact with students is made much more difficult in the large class sizes typical of first-year coursework in other disciplines. In addition, I maintain a presence on shared social media platforms, thereby increasing the sense of instructor accessibility for students. In the comments several students noted an increased sense of availability as compared to other classes and that instructor availability via multiple media was a factor in success. As illustration, one of my students indicated on his final questionnaire that my intervention was a key factor in his persistence.: "I am really grateful for my instructor because she was really supportive. A lot of times I considered dropping when the work looked really hard. However, all the time I met with her, she encouraged me and made me feel that I could do more" (Nifemi, post-semester survey).

Recent retention research points to two areas centering on faculty that require additional study, both of which align favorably with the strengths of composition studies. First is the role of classroom instruction and assessment in student persistence. Several studies have already demonstrated the role student engagement plays, but there is more work to be done in regards to curricula, student assessment, and pedagogical models (Braxton, Bray, & Berger, 2000; Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). This is work where we, composition faculty and graduate students, are leaps ahead of other departments: we already know how students learn and the best ways to teach them. It is safe to say that building critical thinking skills are a generally agreed upon value of higher education, as indicated by QEP standards and the recent move toward measuring "competencies." If so, then survey data supports my claim that ENGL 1301 contributes to the development of critical thinking skills, at least from the viewpoint of the students themselves. Results from surveys of both groups illustrates that students say they gained more experience in higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating, but did much less work memorizing and making applications. (See Figures 2-1 & Figure 2-2). Higher order thinking skills clearly take priority in 1301 and that is certainly something worth drawing attention to.
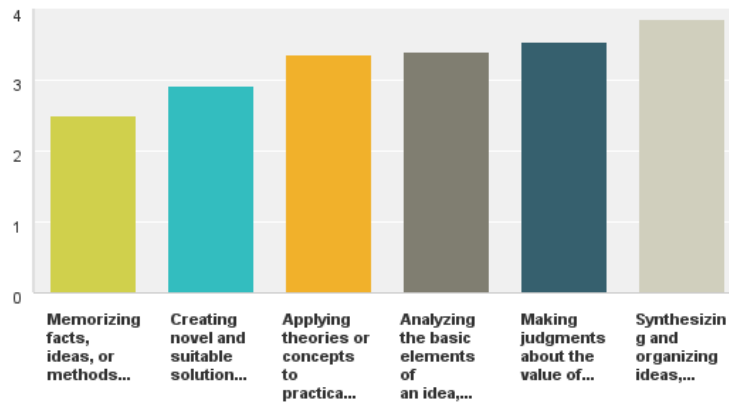
Figure 2-1: Group A's Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills
Practiced in English 1301.
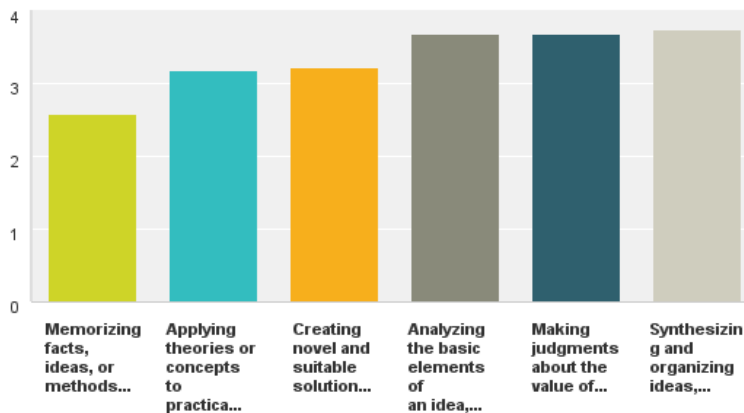
Figure 2-2: Group B's Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills
Practiced in English 1301.

On the other hand, students in my class (see Figure 2-2) said they did a bit more creating than the general population (aggregate of 3.22 v. 2.93), which I believe reflects that the final assignment in my course asked them to create a researched argument on any topic related to the broad theme of social media. Additionally, students were allowed to choose the medium for presentation. Some chose traditional essays, but others created movies, slide shows, and comic books. In response to Question 12, "What was the most difficult assignment in 1301?" one student named the Blog Moderator assignment because "it required a lot of time and to think really critically to keep the conversation going." From this we can conclude that in general FYC privileges higher order thinking skills and that we are successfully teaching them. Adding creative activities like new media projects is the icing on an already well-baked cake. In the next chapter I will discuss how use of multi-media throughout the course contributed to their overall development of digital literacy and critical thinking skills.

The second area that retention experts identify as "needs attention," and where we are already on the right track is in faculty training and development. Says Tinto,

> Regarding faculty and staff development, it is increasingly clear that faculty actions, especially in the classroom, are critical to institutional efforts to increase student retention, but it is also clear that the faculty of our universities and colleges are, as a matter of practice, the only faculty from kindergarten through universities who are literally not trained to teach their students (2006, p. 7).

Lack of pedagogical training may be a problem for many other disciplines, but this certainly is not the case for English departments. I would not be the first to point out that our doctoral programs may be the only ones on campus that, as a matter of course, train future professors in the theory, development and practice of effective pedagogy, while routinely providing invaluable experience via funded teaching assistantships (Barr Ebest, 1999; Bly, 2008; Dobrin, 2005; Dryer, 2012; Leon & Pigg, 2011). Hence, it is often our

professors, writing center professionals, and graduate students who are called on to lead faculty development seminars or graduate training sessions campus-wide (Schultz, 2013). We are pedagogy experts as well, in a perfect position to initiate teacher training programs campus wide. Thus, we are not only retention-practice experts already, we are prime for helping the administration spread those goals campus-wide.

Chickering and Gamson (1987; 1999) identify "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education": (a) encouraging contact between students and faculty, (b) encouraging cooperation among students, (c) encouraging active learning, (d) providing prompt feedback, (e) emphasizing time on task, (f) communicating high expectations, and (g) respecting diverse talents and ways of learning. With classes sizes hovering around twenty students, frequent peer review, interactive classrooms, frequent instructor feedback on student writing, process-centered due dates, detailed assignment guidelines, and our body of work on diverse learners, I say FYC is in an excellent position to meet all of these goals. However, the added value of retention-minded pedagogy hardly leaps to mind when one thinks of FYC. Which suggests we have some work to do in terms of brand recognition.

It seems our wealth and value in terms of student-centered pedagogy and well-trained faculty may not be explicitly connected in the minds of administrators. For example, while Tinto points to untrained faculty and inconsistent pedagogy as major obstacles in student retention efforts, he seems to disregard the assets of FYC programs and English departments in this regard. He states that "many institutions, in particular the larger state colleges and universities, continue to assign the least experienced, typically least well paid, faculty to the key first-year courses" (Tinto, 2006, p. 8). Yes, we are the least well-paid and yes, there are more FYC sections taught on college campuses than any other course. But we are certainly not the least experienced teachers; quite the

opposite, when graduate programs in English have practically institutionalized the teaching assistantship. This serves to foreshadow arguments articulated in Chapter Four, that our worth within the university community is routinely undervalued and ignored, even among those who would, if given the opportunity, praise and recommend our work. And this is exactly the problem I would like to address. The cure for FYC's ills, as will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter and in Chapter Four, is to utilize retention efforts from university administrators and the persistence efforts of other departments to our own advantage. In other words, we need to demonstrate that FYC is an invaluable first step on the road to degree completion, and therefore, our expertise is essential to the university's mission.

<center>Change Starts with the Wo/Man in the Mirror</center>

Pegeen Powell makes an excellent point in her 2009 *CCC* article, "Retention and Writing Instruction: Implications for Access and Pedagogy," when she says that access and retention are two sides of the same coin. She goes on to say it is retention that should draw our attention because "presumably, arguments about access are not just about getting students in the door, but about providing students with an education; retention is about keeping students enrolled long enough to accomplish this" (2009, p. 670). As Powell's claims suggest, by the time they sit in our classrooms, they have already surmounted the various obstacles of college admission and walked through the gate. Thus, we are not gatekeepers at all. The need or desire for a college degree has already lured students in. Once they are here, it is in our best interest to keep them engaged and help them purchase some cultural capital in the way of critical writing skills. We have much more influence over retention efforts in higher education than we do over access to it. Without a doubt, the achievement gap is a multi-faceted problem that begins

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with early childhood education (or lack thereof) and is extended by misdirected attempts

to "leave no child behind." While it is too much to ask of FYC program directors and

instructors to reshape the whole of education, we do have a very important role to play in

terms of helping students persist beyond their first year and complete their degrees.

   To quote Bergin, "composition instructors, who often understand the confluence

of race, class, and gender upon academic advancement, should understand the ethical

and economic importance of helping struggling students experience success and

graduation" (2012, p. 6). Powell and Bergin work toward FYC as a point of intervention

arguing it is one of very few universal first-year requirements at colleges across the

country, that we are instructors who are invested in the success of students generally,

small class sizes, and learner-centered pedagogy. But their assertions for the role of FYC

in retention efforts are cautious. Bergin's focus is on persistence in online education

primarily. Powell worries how retention programs may negatively influence our classes.

Our pedagogical expertise can assist retention endeavors and our "commitment to

pedagogy [means] that most of us, at least, would be unwilling to compromise in the

name of keeping tuition dollars in the institution" (Powell, 2009, p. 670). In other words,

she believes that tuition dollars should not be the primary motivator for student support

and trusts compositionists to maintain a devout attention to teaching and learning.

   Thus, FYC is the best point of intervention for narrowing the college achievement

gap because:

- With small class sizes, the FYC series is often the only place where first-year

  students interact with faculty in a personal way. Instructors are likely to know

  the names of all twenty students in a class and probably have a working

  familiarity with each student's strengths, weaknesses and potential,

  something far less likely to occur in a one-hundred-student chemistry lecture.

- Additionally, FYC has already embraced the type of quality learner-centered, process-based pedagogy identified as crucial for persistence by retention researchers. Our generally agreed upon best practices echo the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education as laid out by Chickering and Gamsom and address common LI/1G issues such as "belonging," building community among peers, and encouraging self-reflective development.

- Most new professors in rhetoric and composition served as graduate teachers for some or all of their graduate education. Pedagogy is an intricate aspect of our theoretical and practical work within the field. Again, unlike other departments, our teachers at all levels are either already trained or actively receiving training during graduate study. With such well-trained faculty and a pedagogy-focused department, the best practices for capturing and maintaining student engagement are either already underway, or would only take minor adjustment to address a more directly focused retention effort.

Since studies have consistently demonstrated that the first year is the most vulnerable year for LI/1G students, we in FYC are well positioned to act as campus leaders in developing interdisciplinary programming for the most at-risk students. We see them everyday.

Now, this may seem like a lot to take on. I certainly recognize that we already do so much for students and get paid too little. Powell (2009) is right that as a group we are dedicated and want to do the best we can in terms of our teaching and learning. However, she also cautions we may want to keep the whims of the administration out of our classrooms (p. 671). And such concerns are certainly valid.

However, ignoring or resisting university retention efforts can equate to missed opportunities for our department and program. I contend we should embrace such first-year focused ideas as our mission rather than something imposed upon an existing program. In other words, if we are teaching first-year composition, let us consciously and authoritatively make ourselves the experts on the first-year student, so that we can take part in the development of such student engagement programs. If we own student retention strengths within our own programs, university administrators will be less inclined to force something on to us in the first place. We can make retention-minded pedagogy a win-win. Better yet, along with extensive assessments of learning outcomes, let's collect data that illustrates how a well-thought out FYC program does already what other retention efforts intend. The best way to prevent the erroneous imposition of university administrators' whims is to anticipate their concerns and demonstrate that our existing pedagogical standards already aid student retention. We should also point out that investment in smart, well-developed, retention-focused FYC programs benefits all parties; and further, that they would be wise to help us spread our pedagogical expertise and first-year focus campus-wide.

Not Enough Said

Too frequently it seems that first-year composition instructors and program administrators are willing to do whatever is asked by administrative higher-ups without demanding appropriate compensation to do so. Powell is right when she suggests that our commitment to pedagogy "trumps" the administration's desire to collect tuition money from as many students as possible (2009, p. 670). This is exactly the thing that gets us into trouble: our commitment to pedagogy trumps dollars far too often. And I am not saying this is not noble, or that we should be less committed to pedagogy. But we should

use that commitment, that passion for our work, to increase our monetary value and attract greater financial investments. And we can do that by putting things into terms that resonate with would-be investors, with an effective marketing strategy that drums up positive attention and positive financial investment in our programs. After all, money funds all those things we say we need to improve quality of education: smaller class sizes, computer classrooms, teacher education, and equitable salaries. In a capitalist system successful businesspeople identify something that is in demand (or better yet, create ongoing demand for it) and get paid to provide the appropriate product or service. There is demand for increased student retention. And we have abundant pedagogical expertise to provide such service, to yield an expertly crafted retention-minded product.

I believe the problem that faces Writing Program Administrators is one of economics, and the solution will require adapting to a new academic business model, one that puts a lot of stock into student persistence. And perhaps we need significant re-branding: Consider how creative marketing reinvigorated the once laughably old-school deodorant, Old Spice. Writing programs have a valuable opportunity to re-frame themselves as something more useful and more vital to the university's overall goals. Instead of reluctantly serving as higher education gatekeepers, we can re-invent ourselves as the gateway guides, shepherding students along the path to degree completion.

The research presented in this dissertation, a case study of one hybrid classroom model, draws parallels between the work necessary to engage students in learning and the work necessary to promote the relevancy and value of the composition course to the powers that be. This pedagogical model asks students to become participants in their own learning, to study and critically analyze participatory culture, to assess their own writing and that of peers, and it emphasizes self-reflection, all by simply integrating social

media with our existing traditional rhetorical and compositional learning objectives. As later chapters will explore, this case study demonstrates a practical application of Bolter & Grusin's (2000) remediation and teaching digital litreacy (Kress, 2003). Additionally, considering the work of Henry Jenkins (2006b) suggests that the advent of a participatory culture makes a breadth and width of content and specialized knowledge communities so readily available that it explodes far beyond classroom walls.

Like never before, students have the freedom and authority to investigate and contribute to their own disciplinary interests in a multitude of ways. It has never been easier to engage students in authentic public writing that actually does what it intends to do. The rest of our tried and true learning objectives: audience, means of persuasion, composing processes, and so on, snap right into place. Yet, our potential as a discipline is often overlooked by any of its potential investors: students, administrators, future employers, and parents. A hybrid model centered on new media pedagogy links writing and technology, composition and learning, student engagement and First-Year Writing in ways that are hard for anyone, even budget-setters and policy-makers, to ignore, if only we draw their attention to our potential and our success.

Chapter 3

(Inter)Active Learning in a Blended Classroom

In many ways this project reviews well-covered ground. Last November (2013), the journal Computers & Composition celebrated thirty years of publication. To state the obvious, quite a lot has changed in that time. And yet, many things are remarkably similar. When asked in a recent interview (Beck, 2013) to describe some of the prevailing issues in computers and writing in the mid-1980s, Gail Hawisher noted that back then "the research issues focused on computer-mediation, how word processing can help us to teach better, and then there was the very old question: Do these tools improve writing? Today, that question seems rather foolish because we do not ask that about pencils or typewriters" (p. 354). Of course today, we do not ask about word processors anymore either, or even individual computers. We take Microsoft Word for granted. We take e-mail for granted. We take networking for granted. In today's world we might still be capable of and enjoy writing with pencil and paper, but it would be pretty unlikely to share it with many people without a computer.

Yet today's questions do still center around teaching and learning in a computer-mediated environment, only now we are fascinated with the interactive nature of a participatory culture, social media, and Web 2.0 as it is called, which encompasses everything from micro-blogging to online gaming. In her article, "Digital Divide 2.0: 'Generation M and Online Social Networking Sites in the Composition Classroom," Stephanie Vie notes that nearly all writing today happens in computer mediated spaces. She argues that social networking sites "may force us to re-envision what it means to be an academic today, what a classroom looks like, or what good writing entails" (Vie, 2008, p. 20). Indeed, digital literacy and digital methods are at the forefront of pedagogical research across the disciplines. Additionally, with students and administrators demanding

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more online education options, much of our scholarship is devoted to learning strategies in computer-mediated environments.

Similar to writing itself, formal education has evolved as the tools have. Socrates used questioning and discussion; education in the Middle Ages was limited to monks and manuscripts; mass printing was the first expansion of access to the masses, but also spurred a division between the belles lettres and pulp fiction. A privileging of the learned and the literary in many ways still informs our pedagogical practice today. Pre-Frierian banking concept relies heavily on the premise that the teacher is the expert. Later, the ease of computing along with mass media such as television and radio inspired another divide between the traditional ivory tower and a more "real-world" and global trend in education. On the plus side, teaching has evolved to privilege more participatory, student-centered methods and a de-centering of expertise.[4] Yet, the division between the academy and the "real-world" is likely linked to the current division between the arts and technology. Social media and Web 2.0 expand educational possibilities further. And each evolution has altered the way knowledge is constructed and stored as well as how teachers and students approach learning. New media, for the first time, brings all of these factions together. In a one hour span, a student could (in theory) locate a Shakespeare sonnet online, search images of the bard, change her FB profile picture to one of the located images, send a 140 character sonnet of her own, then post an analysis of the poem's significance on her blog. Social media blends real world and belles lettres, art and technology.

In chapter one I identified four variations of the college classroom: the traditional face-to-face (F2F), web-enhanced courses, blended or hybrid learning, and 100% online

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[4] While this kind of teaching and learning is certainly dominant in composition, I question how common student-centered learning really is in other disciplines.

courses. If we were to place these on a sliding scale based on typical assumptions about the level of online activity, it might look something like Figure 3-1.

Traditional F2F   Web-Enhanced   Blended/Hybrid (30%+)   100% Online

Figure 3-1: Sliding Scale of Educational Environments Based on
Percentage of Face Time

Although many people distinguish these four types by percentage of face time with peers and instructors, in Chapter One I argued face time has little to do with the quality or type of learning taking place. F2F-only courses are no more or less guaranteed to be student-centered than 100% online courses. In fact, some studies show that online only courses are the most prone to lecture-based teaching, often consisting of little more than downloading notes or podcasts and submitting work to be graded by a distant instructor (Webb Boyd, 2008). It is a false premise to assume that the amount of face-time has anything to do with the interaction between students, peers, and instructors or with the development of digital literacy. If an online course uses traditional methods or follows a correspondence style, it seems to me such a course is a departure from student-centered education rather than an educational advancement.

It is tempting also to place F2F in opposition to online courses, with hybrids occupying a fuzzy, undefined space in the middle. However, it would not be fair, especially in the context of writing courses, to assume all F2F courses are the same; nor are online courses. The medium does not in and of itself define pedagogical quality. Thus, I want to make it clear that I am not arguing against F2F courses or online courses. On the contrary, I can see plenty of potential for applying much of what I talk about here

in either context. Pretty much everything I describe in this chapter has evolved from the student-centered practices that have dominated composition research since the 1970s and, hopefully, will continue to do so for decades to come. When I distinguish between categories it is only to provide parameters for discussion. In my opinion, student-centered teaching in any format is wonderful and should continue.

However, blended learning has astounding potential to enhance student engagement and participation. The basic idea is to take the best parts of F2F student-centered education and add digital and/or social media components to help students achieve even more. A key component is that the two modalities are connected so that "what the students learn online informs what they learn face-to-face, and vice versa" (Staker & Horn, 2012, p. 4). Because of its potential to engage students, expand classroom borders, and conserve resources (overhead costs, space allocation) blended learning is a hot topic but still relatively unexplored. According to a recent study, in the past decade more than 200 published dissertations and theses focused on blended learning (Drysdale et al., 2013). The benefits for FYC in particular are numerous. As one of my own students put it, "the portion of English class that involves learning how to perform an academic debate and sharing ideas and group discussions can be done through the Internet faster and simpler than on paper or in person" (Yolanda, B2, Q30).[5]

It is my contention that FYC programs should invest in the business of fostering student retention and teaching digital literacy; a blended format is the ideal means to achieve both. As discussed in the previous chapter, a retention-minded focus aligns with our already held values of diversity, access, and learner-centered education and fits nicely within our best practices. Further, re-aligning our teaching toward digital methods

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[5] Student comments have been minimally edited to adhere to the conventions of scholarly publishing.

does not necessarily require a complete overhaul. The same methods used to teach a print-based pedagogy work for a digital one just as well or better, while other aspects of digital platforms extend our reach into areas that were at least difficult (pragmatically speaking) if not virtually impossible in print. Furthermore, limiting composition pedagogy to print-based values limits the worth of composition pedagogy itself. Digital writing is "the way of the world" today, thus, we owe both our students and also ourselves the "value added" of exploring digital contexts in their own right on a program level, lessening the burden on individual instructors.

This study demonstrates that a blended learning environment enhances and transforms our common critical/process pedagogies, improves digital literacy, and furthers goals of fostering persistence. This chapter will chart and illustrate how one blended learning classroom achieves various teaching goals. Section I, "Platonic Friends with Benefits: Easy Is as Easy Does" charts the pedagogical goals that were facilitated by social media, although these are certainly achievable with or without digital re-imagining; Section II, "Secret Agency," begins the discussion of pedagogical aims that are made more effective in a digital context, specifically those that involve the interaction between the student and the assignment goals. Section III, "All Together Now," continues to identify more effective approaches to learning outcomes via digital pedagogy, this time focusing on how social media enriches the interaction between the people in the classroom setting – student, peers, instructor. Finally, I will discuss several pedagogical aims that are uniquely achievable through the use of an interactive social media agenda, in Section IV, "What's So New about New Media?"

Additionally, many of these strategies align with and enhance the goals of retention and persistence as detailed in Chapter Two, which I will point to along the way. Data from student questionnaires will be used to illustrate my claims in each section. The

final chapters will circle back to the overarching claim that digital literacy along with retention-minded practice are two very good arguments for repositioning FYC within the university system. Social media offers unique benefits and is a much more productive outlet for the talent and potential of comprehensive writing programs, enabling compositionists to serve a more useful, and therefore more lucrative, role in the university system.

Platonic Friends with Benefits: Easy Is as Easy Does

In *Phaedrus,* Plato's description of the written word could easily apply to communication via social media and the Internet generally. According to Stanford historian Griswold (2012), Plato believed writing was "not the most suitable vehicle for communicating truth because it cannot answer questions put to it; it simply repeats itself when queried; it tends to substitute the authority of the author for the reader's open minded inquiry into the truth; and it circulates everywhere indiscriminately, falling into the hands of people who cannot understand it" (section 5.1, para. 6). The young mother researching erroneous links between autism and the MMR vaccine is an excellent example of Plato's concerns about writing. It is also true that new media in some ways "interferes with true 'recollection'" (section 5.1, para. 6) since mountains of data are collected and stored for public access. How many times a week do we "Google" whatever it is we want to know and promptly forget it a few minutes later? Indeed, we have "invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding" and the Internet offers its pupils "the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom" (Plato, 2001, p. 165).

Yet, that is precisely what makes teaching rhetorical analysis and critical composition so much more valuable than ever before. It is essential that we teach the skills of critical thinking and differentiation. And, while Web 2.0 may at times embody the

worst prospects of Platonic rhetoric, it also embodies the best: Plato argues "writing is a clumsy medium" (Griswold, 2012, section 5.1, para. 6) if it is fixed, unable to respond to an audience or engage in discourse. However, social media is not fixed and does, by its very nature, respond to audience and engage in discourse. In other words, social media writing today is analogous to the interactive public forum revered by the Greeks. As Plato's Socrates opines, "Now I myself, Phaedrus, am a lover of these processes of division and bringing together, as aids to speech and thought…" (Plato, 2001, p. 160).

Hence, perhaps like Plato would have wanted, the type of participatory learning enabled by a social media enhanced classroom allows students to engage in a *public* dialectical philosophical discourse. The Greek forum was an open and public debate, at least among the learned. Social Media (SM) is by its very nature public and Habermasian, and thus makes it much easier to enact the type of public discourse valued by many compositionists (Baoill, 2004; M. D. Barton, 2005; Lunsford, 2007; Mathieu, 2005; Weisser, 2002)*.* In "The Future of Rational-Critical Debate in Online Public Spheres," Matthew Barton (2005) argues, "participating in discussion boards… exposes students to the sphere of critical debate and fosters rhetorical awareness" (p. 189). The public and instantaneous aspects of a discussion forum or class blog offer unique benefits that are much closer to a Platonic or Aristotelian public forum than any traditional academic essay. One of my students (Group B) noted these advantages specifically when asked to identify the activities or tools that contributed to her academic development during the semester. "Blogging really helped my personal growth on the internet. I never knew it was so easy to get my voice out there. I really liked the fact, too, that I received instantaneous responses. It is a whole new way to communicate" (Katie, B2, Q27). Katie's emphasis on "getting her voice out there" implies that our class blog had the desired effect of replicating the rational-critical debate of a *public* forum.

If public writing is one benefit of the blended classroom, situating sources within a larger context is another. Barthes (1977) observes that print-based text can become dislocated and *un*situated. Thinking back to the example of the young mother described in the first chapter, it seems to me that the ability to situate text is precisely the skill she lacked. She certainly knew how to read and understand complex information and she also knew enough to question authority and criticize experts; hence her comfort level ignoring her pediatrician's advice in favor of what she had read. However, what she lacked was the understanding of the broader conversation surrounding MMR vaccines. To her, the conversation was two-sided: either get the vaccine, because that is "conventional wisdom," *or* defy convention by seeking the "alternative" approach. It had not occurred to this woman that she might want to investigate the history of vaccinations or to examine the positionality and relative weight of non-vaccinators within the larger conversation. She also lacked an understanding of the medical peer review process that would discredit erroneous or harmful theories. In her mind, I presume, the big bad medical association was one entity, rather than thousands of voices working toward a broad consensus.

I contend that social media and the immediacy of the network, both real and virtual, allows us to situate and relocate "text" in a broad sense. For example, Web 2.0 allows us to participate in culture like never before via born-digital networks, such as fan forums and wikis for popular television series (Jenkins, 2006a, 2006b). Additionally, Web 2.0 allows users to recontextualize old media as well. For example, a quick search on Google Scholar will tell you how many times a text has been cited as well as who did the citing – which makes the connections between texts visible. Another example: Any basic Google search will result in a plethora of perspectives on a single topic. With a little hopping around, one can see how one entity frames a topic in comparison to another,

say MSNBC vs. Fox News. I frequently ask students to do this kind of scouting online to demonstrate how meaning is collectively constructed in different communities but may also serve to construct an alternate meaning for the public. In a digital environment it is much easier to juxtapose one text to another, to map sources, and identify relationships between sources within a specific discourse. This critical awareness certainly does not develop automatically, and just like we have always done, we must consciously teach students the important concept of academic discourse and the "conversation of mankind." As one student put it, "due to the expansion of the internet, information is easily taken, but so hard to cite [properly]" (Pikachu, B2, Q8). Yet, with online collection and social bookmarking tools such as Zotero, Google Scholar, Pinterest, Delicious, and yes, even EasyBib, collecting, mapping, and citing sources has never been easier.

Anyone who has taught composition or required researched papers probably knows about EasyBib. As Group A comments confirm, many, many students rely on the ease of online bibliography generators such as EasyBib. However, EasyBib is rather elementary as far as online research options go. Its main function is to take the metadata from an online source, or the user-provided data of a print source, and correctly format the reference list in APA or MLA style. EasyBib works particularly well after the fact: the student has already collected sources and perhaps bookmarked URLs, but did not make note of proper documentation information. Plug in the URL and EasyBib does the rest. Looking at it from a student's perspective, one can certainly see the appeal. The lesson to take from this is that students will use tools like EasyBib whether or not they are the best suited for the job at hand or "sanctioned" by instructors. I am not saying EasyBib is a bad thing – it certainly serves a purpose. But my point is that as instructors of academic composing and the research process in the digital age, we can and should teach

students to use more effective tools that also have additional academic purposes, such as evaluating sources and placing them within a larger conversation.

Zotero, for example, integrates with Internet browsers and Microsoft Word for a complete research package. When searching for sources, Zotero recognizes the genre of the source (journal article, website, book, etc.) and creates a clickable icon in the browser window. Click the icon and Zotero automatically captures all of the metadata, including abstracts if available and saves it to the user's personal research database. It is similar to programs like EndNote, including options to attach detailed notes and related sources for reference later. Within Word you can click "Add citation" and search by keyword, author, title, and so forth to locate the source and Zotero will both include the appropriate in-text reference and save the information to generate a complete bibliography at the end of the paper. And the best part is the user has access to her personal database of sources from anywhere as long as she is connected to the Internet. Sources and lists can be shared with other users as well, thus easily supporting collaborative research projects, too. Zotero and similar collection sites make the research process from start to finish much, much easier.

Within my hybrid course, I asked students to use tools like Zotero and other bookmarking sites from the beginning of research projects. In comparison to Group A, my students (Group B) did a lot more outside research for their papers, 29% saying they did so "very much" as compared to 12% of Group A (Q12). (See Table 3-1.)

Furthermore, 37% of my students felt that social research tools such as Zotero, Delicious, CiteULike, and EasyBib helped greatly when "Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate claims," versus only 20% of students in Group A (Q26). While EasyBib was listed as a suggestion on both questionnaires, none of the students in Group B mention it by name. However, EasyBib is named as a primary

research tool over and over in Group A. Some claim the instructor specifically suggested use of this tool for class purposes. There are two points to make here: First, students

Table 3-1: Q16 - Thinking of ENGL 1301 specifically, about how much outside research (locating additional resources for a class project or assignment) did you do this semester?

	None (1)	Very Little (2)	Some (3)	Quite a Bit (4)	Very Much (5)	Avg. Rank
Group A	5.80% 4	17.39% 12	36.23% 25	28.99% 20	11.59% 8	3.23
Group B	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	29.03% 9	41.94% 13	29.03% 9	4.0

know about EasyBib and will use it whether or not it is suggested as an appropriate tool in class. And again, EasyBib is fine if the primary goal is to generate a works cited page after the research is complete. However, my second point is if two of our central pedagogical aims are rhetorical analysis and academic discourse, then we would be achieving that goal much more easily (and perhaps more effectively) if we recommend appropriate tools and advocate their use from start to finish in the research process.

It is also important to note that the compositionist's role as stewards of critical thinking and rhetorical analysis is more essential than ever when millions of texts and opinions hold the same visual weight. Academics know that books and journals are more reputable due in large part to an extensive publishing process and the fact that most of us are old enough to remember when "research" comprised mostly of printed material. So what happens to the relative weight of the book or the journal when anyone and everyone

can publish online? In addition, due to audience demands for easy access, even the old

standard heavyweight journals are digitizing while also creating digital sub-journals (like

CCC Online: http://www.ncte.org/cccc/ccconline). How can we expect students to

recognize the difference between a PDF of a peer-reviewed article versus a personal

blog, when both occupy the same space and depth on a computer screen? Digital texts

lack gravity. We must help students redefine the concept of academic weight in a new

media age. We have to help them contextualize and situate various sources of

information in relation to each other, prompting them to superimpose the appropriate

weight, depth, and definition onto the pixels.

The type of regular interaction with assigned reading that is afforded by blogging

encourages students to actively and routinely practice rhetorical analysis. By participating

in weekly blogging assignments[6], students practice writing about text for a real audience

of their peers, analyzing their own understandings of text for the benefit of a reader, and

then considering multiple perspectives about said text as peers respond with their own

ideas. I have found, writing about text online in the weekly blog leads to greater

comprehension, higher quality invention, and deeper critical reasoning. While I will

explore other features and pedagogical benefits of the blog throughout the chapter, for

now I would like to simply state that social media facilitates the long-held FYC goal of

practicing rhetorical analysis. When asked to consider social media tools for the purpose

of "Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts," 29% of my

students said social media "helped my learning greatly" in contrast to only 13% in Group

A (Q35). One student said the blog gave her time to consider assigned reading more

deeply: "For the blog I read the material ahead of time, jotted down some ideas, and then

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[6] Blogging assignment: At the beginning of the semester students select a week to act as discussion leaders and blog hosts. Leaders read and respond to the assigned text and pose questions for response. Classmates read leaders' blog posts and reply via comments. Leaders manage the weekly discussion involving several peer responders.

completed my thoughts later once I thought about them some more" (Rachel, B2, Q9).

Another student noted the ease and efficiency provided by blogging about readings:

"Social media helped greatly in allowing us to analyze and construct texts. Not only were

we able to find other sources online but we [also] had the ability to share our ideas [about

assigned texts] more easily" (Belinda, B2, Q35).

It would certainly be possible to achieve similar results with non-digital methods.

After all, I modeled the blog after the traditional paper-based reading journal assignment

in the first place. You could even achieve the interactivity to some degree offline, perhaps

by asking students to bring paper copies of reading journals to class and then passing

them around the room. To be fair I do use an activity like this in the physical classroom as

well, which I call "Thesis Gallery": Each student writes a draft of her thesis on big sheets

of newsprint. Everyone tapes his/her sheet of newsprint on the wall, so they are all

spread out around the room. Then we all walk around with a marker in hand commenting

on each student's thesis: asking questions, making suggestions for revision, providing

ideas for further research, and so forth. In truth this is one of my favorite in-class activities

because it gets students up out of their chairs and literally thinking on their feet. I employ

several variations of the activity for various purposes every semester (i.e. sometimes for

topic development, sometimes for critical inquiry). However, there is quite a lot of

orchestration involved: I have to obtain the newsprint, bring markers, remind students

80,000 times to bring a draft of their thesis to class (and inevitably we still have to allow a

few minutes for someone to draft a thesis on the spot). Then there is the time it takes to

provide instructions, to distribute supplies, for students to copy their thesis on the

newsprint and tape it on the wall…. Basically it takes an entire class period. Executing a

similar plan for weekly reading journals would be far too cumbersome and time

consuming. Thus, the blogging assignment, which takes place as homework outside of class, is a much more efficient way to achieve the same goal.

In addition to facilitating the teaching of rhetorical analysis, the integration of social media tools and assignments also made it easier to achieve the positive effects of public writing and teach students to situate sources within an ongoing academic conversation. In the next section I will point out other aspects of the blogging assignment and other social media-enabled pedagogy that are not just more efficient but more effective in a digital environment.

Secret Agency

According to Michel Foucault (1977), authors are "initiators of discourse" (47). That is, in print-based culture, who does the speaking/writing is as or more important than what was said. For Foucault, the Author functions as a placeholder, where new ways of thinking begin and end, where "isms" come to be. Barthes (1977) places far more importance on the audience, claiming a text is made up of multiple readings and interpretations that are culturally specific. He suggests the reader is responsible for drawing together context and meaning: "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination," he argues (Barthes, 1977, p. 148).

In *Writing and identity*, Roz Ivanic (1998) suggests that the writer, rather than being solely a product of her environment, as social-constructivists claim, makes authorial choices. She suggests that conscious reflecting on this process of discoursal construction would benefit students learning to write in new arenas, such as first-year composition. Her work is in some ways the proof of Bartholomae's (1985) and Faigley's (1992) theoretical pudding. However, I believe she ascribes far more individual agency to the writer than either of them: Where Bartholomae sees imitation and parody, Ivanic sees

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conscious attempts to conform the self to the new writing situation. Where Faigley sees postmodernist chaos, Ivanic sees deliberate and intentional acts in constructing the "I" behind the text. I find the intersection between *I, we*, and *you* are far more effectively explored in a socially and critically active digital environment, such as a guided class blog or a course Facebook group.

User-generated media, expands the definition of author and reader alike. Through Wysocki, we may be able to put a finger on the how and the why. Wysocki (2004) points to the idea of "interactivity" as a classifying property of new media. Although she calls it a buzzword, she acknowledges that it is a term that characterizes "the relations readers (are encouraged to) have with texts" (Wysocki, 2004, p. 17) and that this is related to the way new media texts are structured. Brooke (2009) refers to the interface in much the same way. There is an immediacy implicit in new media that makes both reader and writer active in the process and becomes tangible through student blogging assignments or discussion forums. Anticipation of a live audience raises the stakes for the author while the reader has the opportunity to shape iterations both implicitly and explicitly. The reader is called to action by the interactive nature of social media, complicit in the final product.[7] As Brooke (2009) argues, if "the text itself determines the reader's approach … certain texts encourage readers to take the sort of initiative suggested by the writerly. This 'encouragement,' however, ultimately depends on the reader, not the text" (p. 73). Because of the well established give and take of Web 2.0 generally, and social media more specifically, *hyper*-activity is the new normal, everyday, several times a day. We read, we respond, we create something new, we sample, we share, and so on, all at light speed, erasing old definitions of "reading" and "writing" in the very act of multiplying them.

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[7] If there is such a thing as a truly "final" product in new media, but that is an issue to be tackled another day.

Thus, in social media writing the author is not divorced as Barthes suggested –
she can respond and interact with readers quite actively. The "comment" changes the
fixed dichotomy of an author separated from a reader and sheds new light on what
Stephen King calls "telepathy" with the reader, a Vulcan melding of the minds. Sure, if
you are writing a book or a chapter, telepathy might be necessary, that difficult to master
ability to invoke and address a reader's expectations in such a way that the "ah-hah"
moment happens for both. But social media alleviates that burden for students because,
via interactive comments, reader interpretations are revealed immediately, which in turn
helps novice writers visualize the audience and anticipate expectations for other writing
projects. In other words, social media is like a set of audience analysis training wheels
that help novice writers find their balance and write like the wind. It is the interactivity, the
back and forth that makes social media so uniquely capable of teaching critical inquiry
and rhetorical strategy. Furthermore, it is an ideal environment to create opportunities for
and encourage authentic discourse. In short, the course blog allowed my students to
embody an "I" behind the text, much more comfortably than is possible with traditional
print-based assignments.

Genre-ific

Bawarshi (2006) stresses the importance of genres in developing invention
because "genre coordinates both how individuals recognize a situation as requiring
certain actions and how they rhetorically act within it" (p. 105). She goes on to evaluate
and reflect on the various genres typical in the first-year writing course, the syllabus,
writing prompt and student essay, arguing that we should treat "the FYW course as a
complex and dynamic scene of writing, one in which students can not only learn how to
write, but … can also learn what it means to write: what writing does and how it positions

writers within systems of activity" (Bawarshi, 2006, p. 132). I would add that extending and reimagining the traditional FYW genres in a social media context multiplies the effects of each, perhaps helping to alleviate some of the concerns of those who argue for re-envisioning FYC as Writing Studies (Bazerman, 2002; Bird, 2008; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Kutney, 2007; Wardle, 2009).

Quite simply, integrating social media into FYC assignments enables composing in additional genres, one of many criteria included on the WPA list of FYC outcome statements (2008). In addition to traditional academic paper assignments, students can add blogs, blog comments, video essays, and presentations to the list. Together, these varied writing assignments place emphasis on evaluating each rhetorical situation.

Whereas essays are limited by prompts and "the power structure of the university where "an alternative interpretation of the assignment is not seen as such, but as a 'failure to respond to the assignment,'" (Pelkowski as quoted by Bawarshi, 2006, 123) blogs allow much more freedom and/or resistance. Students select a topic from a long list of course readings and pose pretty much any question they want that is academically appropriate and frame it in any way they see it; i.e. agree or disagree, extend or challenge, their choice. Dwayne put it this way: "I think the blog posts allowed [me] to be a better critical thinker because [I] really had to think about the question that was asked and come up with [my] own conclusion" (Dwayne, B2, Q27). Because they choose subject texts and how they will respond, student blogs provide a framework and medium for situating their own topoi. For example, 30% of students in Group B said online assignments "helped greatly" in their development of writing, reading, and discussion for expanding ideas (Q36). This can be compared to 15% in Group A. Pikachu had this to say: "Blog posting assisted with my critical thinking skills because I fully thought out my ideas before I posted them" (Pikachu, B2, Q27).

Moreover, posing discussion questions yields practice in developing their own writing prompts that are both "rhetorical instruments and conceptual realms" (Bawarshi, 2006, p. 118) aiding in the development of critical inquiry. In addition to the rhetorical situation of blogging itself, something that allows a fair amount of freedom in terms of tone and style, students must remember the blog discussion assignment is ultimately an academic, if informal, conversation. Negotiating this freedom, while paying tribute to the academic setting, adds additional challenges, allowing students to engage their own expertise and to relate more familiar topics to those discussed in FYC. One student framed the benefits of a social media component in class this way:

I think it would be useful in helping students further analyze complicated assignments that require a great deal of thinking, consideration of multiple perspectives, or objectivity. For example, a student who grew up in a predominantly Christian home might have difficulty in writing about the Ground Zero Mosque without bias. [Encouraging] such a student to collaborate with other students with different backgrounds might help him to achieve more objectivity in arguments (Cedric, B2, Q31).

This was a hot button topic for Cedric and other students' reactions to his views were quite a wake up call for him. It took him the better part of the semester to negotiate a position on the topic that presented his opinion in a way that was also palatable to multiple readers. As Barton (2005) notes, "students eager to prove points raised in discussion boards can be taught to venture beyond first-hand experience and bring research and quality evidence to strengthen their arguments" (p. 120). This is exactly what happens on *Revisionary*, where students are also drawing on course readings to bolster and sometimes question their own claims. Cedric returned to the blog again and again, refining his argument as his ideas developed and he moved beyond his own personal understanding of the topic. As the semester progressed and he learned more

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about his topic, he also learned what writing does and how he might act rhetorically within the given situation.

Additional elements unique to Web 2.0 genres are those of hypermediacy and intertextuality, of which many students make excellent use, adding links to outside material and referencing common texts for the discourse community. Further, students are not beholden to prompts in the blogging assignment. More than that: they write their own discussion questions, prompting response and feedback from peers on course topics and adding yet another genre to the list. Social media allows for greater agency and student-created exigency as well as additional genre conventions. Students who blog internalize authority over their subjects by performing as expert-leaders for the week. It is well known that compositionists have found ways to make students less beholden to prompts and encourage student-created exigency since the 1960s. In my opinion, a social media assignment, such as a student-created course blog, extends student-centered pedagogical goals and executes them more effectively.

There is a doubling effect at work here too. The class blog multiples opportunities to critically explore topics and engage in rhetorical situations. Let's think back to the paper-based reading journal assignment described in the last section. The point of such an assignment has typically been to provide an opportunity to think and write critically about a source while preparing the student for class discussion. Student A can prove that she did the homework (assigned reading) and also organize her thoughts a bit before in-class discussion. A course blog is similar. It achieves all of those goals in much the same way. And in addition, there are simply more frequent low stakes writing tasks and an interactivity that seems to encourage deeper thinking and better analysis of the rhetorical situation. In the blended learning environment, Student A reads, writes, and posts. And in addition she can instantly see how Student B responds, read Student C's question, post

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a clarification that replies to Student B and Student C. Student D chimes in with another idea, that gets Student A thinking more about her topic, and so on. It is not simply frequency at work; it is multiplicity. When asked to engage in written discussion online in addition to face time, they explore more topics more deeply with greater awareness of the fact that readers will respond.

The Collaborative Audience

While prior to taking FYC it might be easy for a student to dismiss negative or absent response to their most recent status update as either ignorance or stupidity on the part of the reader, examining and using social media in the classroom, along with active consideration of rhetorical strategies, invites students to make rhetorical connections to online writing and writing generally. When one of my students posts a discussion blog, she is quite aware (or soon will be) that any number of her classmates, as well as the instructor, will be reading and thinking about her ideas. Thus, online writing ups the ante. To borrow a poker term, the student knows she is "all in" and her writing is open to the response of others. I find anticipation of a public audience generates higher quality writing. Furthermore, students begin to recognize the value of peer feedback via the conversation that ensues.

I am not the first to notice this. As Webb Boyd argued, speaking of online discussion forums, "The presence of an immediate audience seems to encourage students to pay careful attention to writing in a way that addresses audience issues— which is, after all, a core part of the WPA Outcomes Statement" (2008, p. 239). To illustrate student perceptions of this phenomenon, we can consider student self-evaluations at the end of the semester. Because I wanted my pre and post semester questionnaires to also serve pedagogical goals and ultimately benefit the student-

participants, I included several self-reflective questions on both Group B surveys. In the beginning of the semester (B1) I asked students to set learning goals for the semester and make a specific plan for completing coursework (Q44 & Q45). Many of them identified specific skills they hoped to improve and made pledges to study so many hours and not procrastinate. On the post-assessment (B2), I asked them to review their goals and reflect on their progress over the course of the semester (Q8). Answers were coded according to the specific skills they name and say they achieved (See Table 3-2).

Table 3-2: Group B's Self-Assessment of Learning Goals Met During the Semester

Learning Goal

Audience Analysis	42%
Critical Thinking	24%
General Writing Ability	21%
Rhetorical Strategy	15%
Writing Processes	12%
Documentation / Conventions	12%
Structure / Organization	9%

Forty-two percent specifically mention improvement in writing for an audience or a reader. Critical thinking skills were identified by 24%. Fifteen percent mention rhetorical strategy and 21% name general improvement in writing ability.

Additionally, when asked to consider how much they learned about audience, Group B was enthusiastic. The questionnaire asks participants to rank English 1301 outcomes twice; first, in the context of what they achieved/completed in English, regardless of medium (Questions 20-22). The second time they are asked to rank them again in the context of social media (Questions 35-37). For both sets of these questions I simply listed the course learning outcomes and asked respondents to rank each one on as "very little," "some," "quite a bit," or "very much." One of these learning outcomes specifically relates to audience: "Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing." In response to both sets of questions (first thinking of English 1301 generally and the second in the context of SM) Group B rated this learning outcomes much more highly in comparison to the control group. A full 50% of my students said their experience in English 1301 contributed "very much" (4 ranking) to their knowledge, skills and personal development in anticipating the expectations of an audience. Only 17% of Group A ranked learning about audience as high (Q21a). The overall average ranking was also significant: 3.34 v. 2.75 for this learning outcome. (See : 3-3).

Table 3-3 Q 21a – To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing?

	Very Little (1)	Some (2)	Quite a Bit (3)	Very Much (4)	Avg. Rank
Group A	5.56% 4	30.56% 22	47.22% 34	16.67% 12	2.75
Group B	0.00% 0	15.63% 5	34.38% 11	50.00% 16	3.34

Later, when asked to consider how much social media contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development for each of the standard English 1301 learning outcomes, the difference between the two groups is even more striking. The available options are a bit different for this set of questions because I thought it was important to allow for the possibility that some students might find social media distracting and/or detrimental to their learning. Thus the scale was as follows:

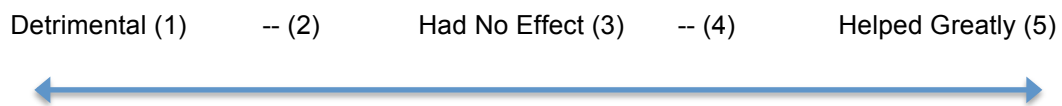Detrimental (1)   -- (2)   Had No Effect (3)   -- (4)   Helped Greatly (5)

Figure 3-2: Ranking Scale for Learning Outcomes within the Context of Social Media; Questions 35-37.

Group B assigns anticipating the expectations of the audience an overall average ranking of 4.10 as compared to 3.56 for Group A, with over thirty-three percent of my students indicating social media "helped greatly" vs. just over fourteen percent of the control. It is also helpful to consider these responses in groups, those who thought social media contributed any positive effect at all, those who thought there was no effect, and those that thought social media was any sort of a hindrance. When considered this way, 80% of the students in Group B assign positive attribution to the use of social media for the purposes of learning audience analysis skills, whereas less than half, 45%, but still a significant portion of Group A, gave social media positive credit for achieving learning goals. (See Table 3-4).

Table 3-4: Q 36a – Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool
for anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more
effective writing. How much/little do you think social media contributed to your
learning when it comes to examining assumptions?

	Detrimental (1)	(2)	Had No Effect (3)	(4)	Helped Greatly (5)	Avg. Rank
Group A	2.82% 2	4.23% 3	47.89% 34	30.99% 22	14.08% 10	3.56
Group B	3.33% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 5	46.67% 14	33.33% 10	4.10

By way of illustration, when asked to describe how SM helped him learn, Muhammed said. "Yes, they helped me understand how to relate to my readers" (B2, Q27). Another student stated, "Social media allowed me to keep my readers in mind because I had to make sure whatever I typed, I did not offend anybody else" (Dwayne, B2, Q36). Indeed, learning not to offend was a key lesson for many of them and the like button is particularly useful tool in teaching such a valuable skill.

It is important to note that 45% is a significant portion of Group A, given they are the "control group," to be both using SM for academic purposes and also recognizing it as an audience-focused rhetorical situation. Thus, one point we can take from this study is that students are using SM one way or another. I am certain some of the student-participants in Group A were enrolled in other sections of English 1301 that engaged social media practices. I know of at least one other instructor who was using Edmodo at the time and quite likely encouraged her students to take my survey. Other colleagues were working with Facebook and blogging. I do think though, that my course was the only English 1301 actively engaged in both using social media and also studying it as the

course topic. My students were well aware (as the data clearly shows) that as a group we were using social media purposefully in order to achieve English 1301 learning outcomes. Therefore, my students were making important connections between something they do every day and the learning outcomes being taught in class. I believe this type of critical consciousness is an important element of developing digital literacy.

I think the really exciting thing is that a student blog is an intrinsically social product. Compositionists have argued that academic writing is a social product since the early 80s. And it is. I still teach this concept and will continue to for the foreseeable future. However, a blog is social in a way that is much more tangible for the novice writer. And thus, it is a wonderful space to practice writing for a real audience, play with rhetorical strategies, and define their own position. Blogs are certainly compositions that belong to the author, similar to the traditional paper. In addition, with the combination of public space, Internet publishing, and the interactive aspects of an online audience, a blog is also something different. Like Bolter & Grusin (2000) suggest, a student blog is at once in denial of the original medium (the traditional academic paper) and enhancing it. Blogs invite, rather than withhold feedback – it is part of the blog's modus operandi to speak to a specific audience and to invite that audience to respond. Students more readily understand once they post their ideas publically, the conversation has only just begun. Since I ask my students to do this six to ten times per semester, they get quite good at it by the end of the term.

Engaging in Authentic Discourse

Twenty papers on a topic and F2F class discussions may be discourse in action, but students have trouble visualizing that. SM is a more effective tool in this regard. Again speaking of fan fiction communities, Jenkins (2006a) points to another advantage of class

blogging. He argues this kind of learning "takes place outside the classroom and beyond any direct adult control" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 177). As Webb Boyd (2008) found, "online space allowed them to share opinions more freely without fear of reproach" than they might in person or when turning in something directly to the teacher (p. 235). While I am the initiator of the course blog and the one who designs the assignment, after the first week it is almost entirely under student control. They develop their own topics, questions, and discussion. Students work together to develop a collective understanding of a text or a concept, integrating classroom discussion, assigned readings and personal experience while learning from each other.

Before long they have constructed their own discourse community (DC) organically. I think this is parallel to what Jenkins (2006b) observed in fan culture's ability to develop supporting infrastructure, seemingly overnight. The classroom version does not develop so quickly, given that FYC is not nearly as exciting and motivating as the new season of *Supernatural* (2005). Nonetheless, the process and result are similar: Students develop a classroom-specific DC of shared knowledge, resources, and meaning. Further, they seem to be able to place the classroom discourse within the network of other discourses at work around them. Thus hypermedia is a more effective medium for teaching situated discourse as one can hop from one space to another with the click of a mouse, yet easily trace a path.

While teaching at the University of Texas, Faigley (1992) experimented with classrooms in which the computers were connected into a tiny little intranet of classmates. He posed a question to the group and students responded in a free-form networked discussion. Faigley found that students enacted postmodernism: He noted that chaos rather than order became the norm, his position as the authority was redistributed across the group, while everyone in the class became knowledge sources,

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and students engaged in active questioning and discussion. Even in this primitive version of social media, Faigley saw an enactment of authentic discourse in several ways, especially the network's poly-vocal qualities.

My students echoed his findings in significant ways. Several open-ended questions prompt them to consider social media tools for learning and to provide examples. When asked to name specific activities or tools and briefly describe in what way they were useful to the student's learning, two major themes emerged: social networking as a means to seek help from peers, and participating on the blog (both reading and writing) as a means of questioning and discussion. Two representative comments are as follows:

- "My English class has its own blog, Revisionary, I found the blog really helped me grow as a debater. It helped me to look at others' arguments and form my own judgment and add my own ideas to the discussion" (Yolanda, B2, Q27).

- "The blog posts we had to do for critical thinking assignments helped me grow personally in the sense that I was able to more fully grasp different opinions than my own" (Cedric, B2, Q27).

I believe it was the many layers of communication, interaction, and support that enabled students to rely on peers as additional resources and knowledge sources. For example, everyone saw each other in class regularly, they had the option to post general messages and send specific messages to each other via Edmodo, and Revisionary acted as an informal discussion forum to explore course topics. This was similar to Jenkins's characterization of online fan communities as self-sustaining, self-contained entities where members develop a DC-specific support structure and rely on each other as

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authorities. Further, by engaging in active questioning and discussion, they were able to posit theories and practice strategies of persuasion.

In my opinion a key factor is the *ongoing* nature of SM. It is collaborative and *unfinished*, whereas, papers are individual final products (even when you factor in drafting and peer review). Which is not to say these are not things students need to gain experience in. They do. And I am certainly not arguing we should abolish the paper, although even Faigley thought that we may one day abandon the academic essay. I am suggesting, however, that the paper may no longer be the only, or even the most effective way to teach academic discourse.

All Together Now: Collaborative Learning and Classroom Community

In 1984, Bruffee suggested "pooling the resources that a group of peers brings with them to the task may make accessible the normal discourse of the new community they together hope to enter" (p. 644). This differed radically from the then more common "banking concept" (Freire, 1970) approach to learning. Today, collaborative learning is far more often the norm than the exception and composition programs have institutionalized group work and active peer review into the writing process, which ticks the collaboration box for many. Teaching the discourse community is a common and prominent value of writing programs nationwide, and it is clear to me that this extended, in part, from Bruffee's assertions about collaborative learning and the social qualities of writing and writing instruction. In my view, social media within a blended learning environment allows students to enact collaborative learning in a much more effective way. Additionally, the hybrid environment is an ideal place to build classroom community because of the frequency and multiplicity of class member interaction, both peer-to-peer and student-

instructor. Finally, a collaborative learning community is often touted as retention-friendly, well suited to keep students engaged and enrolled long enough to graduate.

The last chapter argued that FYC is perfectly positioned to address and mediate student retention issues because of small class sizes, student-centered learning, highly trained instructors, and the fact that our primary audience is the most vulnerable population on campus, the first-year student. Tinto (2006) asserts, "the classroom is, for many students, the one place, perhaps only place, where they meet each other and the faculty. If involvement does not occur there, it is unlikely to occur elsewhere…. Involvement, or what is increasingly being referred to as engagement, matters and it matters most during the critical first year of college" (p. 4). Retention researchers (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, 1999) have isolated several key ingredients of quality education that support student engagement and persistence and the top two are: (a) encouraging contact between students and faculty and (b) encouraging cooperation among students. Further, critical pedagogues (Freire, 1970; H. A. Giroux, 2001; hooks, 1994; Shor, 1987) have long advocated the importance of making room for multiple voices and multiple perspectives so that all members of the learning community have the necessary space to grow and learn. This section will explore the ways the social media enabled hybrid classroom supports the development of effective learning communities.

"I See You; You See Me"

Today, social media makes it quite easy for students to explore difference and to hear multiple voices and perspectives. The simplest way this happens is that blogs and Facebook groups allow everyone to be heard. I have observed over time that fairly consistently, the students who do not speak much in class (often women and minorities) are quite vocal online. Recall that Faigley (1992) made similar observations about his

networked classroom but attributed the utopian exchange of perspectives at least in part to the fact that his students remained anonymous.

In an attempt to let students control the educational environment of the blog and make it their own, I make a point of telling students they have complete freedom to choose usernames, which can obscure or reveal their identity as much as they like. Over time I have noticed most students do not choose anonymity and are often more likely to make a point of asserting their online identity quite openly. For example, I remember one student who chose the username "MotivatedMarlem" which was the "get to know you" nickname she assumed during a first day of class icebreaker activity. Marlem wanted to be 100% sure her peers knew it was her doing the writing behind the screen. I recall many other students who chose similarly catchy or self-revealing usernames and that those usernames sometimes became nicknames even in the F2F classroom. It seems then, that the medium itself, more so than a sense of anonymity, encourages more voices to participate. (More on this in next section.) Many others have noted the relative comfort level of "Generation M" in digital contexts (Goode, 2010; Reynol Junco, 2012; Kitsis, 2008; Vie, 2008). For most of today's college freshmen, social media is a warm and inviting knowledge pool where everyone is welcome.

It follows that if more voices are heard, more perspectives are available for consideration. On a very diverse campus such as mine, this also means students have greater opportunity to explore difference. In short, again revisiting Faigley (1992), networked writing encourages students to seek and make use of a wide range of knowledgeable resources other than the teacher, such as their peers and themselves. Electronic written discussion "makes possible a utopian vision of class discussion where everyone with minimal keyboard skills can participate and where the links of knowledge

construction are more likely to run from student to student rather than from teacher to student" (Faigley, 1992, p. 185).

As noted in Section I, it may be possible to expose students to multiple perspectives in an F2F model. Certainly class discussion has for decades served such a purpose. Although, all those who regularly lead class discussions know it is quite common for only a few voices to dominate most conversations. Webb Boyd (2008) noted the benefits of the online discussion forum for allowing all voices to be heard: "The first theme—access to multiple perspectives–was mentioned most frequently. Since they were required to post their own ideas as well as respond to their peers', students felt that they were exposed to more perspectives than they could have been in a F2F class where time limitations allow only a few students to speak" (p. 235). My study produced similar results.

The questionnaire asks participants to rank English 1301 outcomes twice; first, in the context of what they achieved/completed in English, regardless of medium (Questions 20-22). The second time they are asked to rank the same learning outcomes in the context of social media (Questions 35-37). There are two key learning outcomes that relate directly to exposure to multiple perspectives: "Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding" and "Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position." In response to both sets of questions (1301 generally and in the context of SM) Group B rated these two learning outcomes much more highly in comparison to the control group. When considering examining assumptions, 32% of my students said their experience in English 1301 contributed "very much" (4 ranking) to their knowledge, skills and personal development in this area. Only 16% of Group A ranked examining assumptions as high (Table 3-5). The overall average ranking was 3.03 v. 2.75 for this skill. Similarly, synthesizing earned

an average rank of 3.0 for Group B and 2.78 for Group A, with 31% v. 19% giving it the
highest ranking (Table 3-6).

Table 3-5: Q 21c – To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to your
knowledge, skills, and personal development in examining assumptions (your own and
those of others) for greater understanding?

	Very Little (1)	Some (2)	Quite a Bit (3)	Very Much (4)	Avg. Rank
Group A	5.63% 4	29.58% 21	49.30% 35	15.49% 11	2.75
Group B	3.23% 1	22.58% 7	41.94% 13	32.26% 10	3.03

Table 3-6: Q 21d – To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to your
knowledge, skills, and personal development in synthesizing multiple perspectives in
order to develop a nuanced position?

	Very Little (1)	Some (2)	Quite a Bit (3)	Very Much (4)	Avg. Rank
Group A	4.17% 3	33.33% 24	43.06% 31	19.44% 14	2.78
Group B	3.13% 1	25.00% 8	40.63% 13	31.25% 10	3.00

Later, when asked to consider how much social media contributed to their
knowledge, skills, and personal development for each of the standard English 1301

learning outcomes, the difference between the two groups is even more striking. Group B gives examining assumptions an overall average ranking of 4.18 as compared to 3.54 for Group A, with over fifty percent of my students saying social media "helped greatly" vs. just over eleven percent of the control (Table 3-7).

Table 3-7: Q 36b – How much or how little do you think social media contributed to your learning when it comes to examining assumptions?

	Detrimental (1)	(2)	Had No Effect (3)	(4)	Helped Greatly (5)	Avg. Rank
Group A	1.41% 1	2.82% 2	47.89% 34	36.62% 26	11.27% 8	3.54
Group B	3.33% 1	0.00% 0	26.67% 8	16.67% 5	53.33% 16	4.18

Synthesizing multiple perspectives had similar results, earning an average ranking of 4.15, with 48% of Group B choosing the highest ranking. Group A did not find social media as helpful in learning to synthesize multiple perspectives: The skill earned a 3.39 average for this group and only eleven percent gave social media the highest ranking (Table 3-8).

Once again it is important to note that there is still a pretty significant number of students in Group A using SM and recognizing the rhetorical benefits. While only 11% of the control group felt SM "helped greatly" in learning to examine assumptions, 37%

Table 3-8: Q 36c – Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool for

Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing. How much/little do you think social media

contributed to your learning when it comes to synthesizing multiple perspectives?

	Detrimental (1)	(2)	Had No Effect (3)	(4)	Helped Greatly (5)	Avg. Rank
Group A	4.29% 3	4.29% 3	51.43% 36	28.57% 20	11.43% 8	3.39
Group B	3.45% 1	0.00% 0	24.14% 7	23.91% 7	48.28% 14	4.15

ascribe positive credit to the learning benefits of SM (Table 3-7). Thus, one point we can take from this study is that students are using SM one way or another. My students were doing so purposefully and therefore making stronger connections between something they do every day and the learning outcomes being taught in class. Here are a few representative comments from Question 36 to illustrate:

a. "I think I developed a better sense of others ideas and thoughts and how they can be useful to me as mine can be useful to others" (Belinda, B2, Q38).

b. "The CT blog posts allowed me to gain new perspectives on various issues" (Cedric, B2, Q28).

c. "Discussions online were great for expanding and building on what some else has already said, because many people can view it online. Thus more people could join in on the discussion" (Yolanda, Q36).

With conscious integration of social media in the FYC classroom, there is a constant flow of ideas from many points of view and it is easy to involve multiple perspectives in any conversation. Study findings indicate there is a correlation between increased exposure

to multiple viewpoints and student development of critical thinking skills. Katie illustrates this well when she says, "Social media helped to show me multiple viewpoints which allowed me to analyze all of them and then form my own opinion. It also helped me examine all the assumptions others made and helped me craft my own" (B2, Q36). More voices are heard in a blended environment (face-to-face plus social media) because all students have the opportunity to speak and write, to be seen and heard.

Community Building

"I'd Like to Build on What Katie Wrote…"

Recall that retention researchers (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, 1999; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Powell, 2009; Tinto, 2006) advocate involvement must come from the classroom because the classroom is the one spot LI/1G students will definitely interact with other students and faculty. Overwhelmingly, interaction with peers, faculty and effective classroom experiences are identified as key elements in encouraging students to stay enrolled. As previously asserted, the social media enabled blended classroom is the ideal environment for exposing students to multiple perspectives amongst peers and fostering a development of trust among peer colleagues.

We might consider the effectiveness of an online social media component within a F2F classroom fosters collaborative learning by comparing the class blog to the CMS discussion groups examined by Webb Boyd (2008). She noted that the peer review assignments in the CMS course discussion forums she studied were primarily task-driven and indicates that while the students drew inspiration from each other by reading each others' responses to the assigned tasks, they did not view feedback from peers as important to their learning (Webb Boyd, 2008, p. 238). This may account for my anecdotal observations that the online forums in my 100% online courses are less

interactive and peer-focused. Educational researcher Rovai (2002) described two kinds of interactions that dominate online courses: task-driven or socio-emotional: "Task driven interaction is directed toward the completion of assigned tasks while socio-emotional-driven interaction is directed toward relationships among learners. Task-driven interaction is under the direct control of the instructor and often takes the form of responses to instructor-generated discussion topics and peer assessments" (p. 43). The pre-packaged online version of FYC provides weekly instructor-generated questions to which all students are expected to respond. This is not to imply that all 100% online writing courses function this way, but many certainly do and many hybrid models privilege instructor-generated discussion forums.

In contrast, the blog in my course is user-created. For the very first blog of the semester I model the moderator assignment for students, posting the initial prompt and discussion questions. But afterwards students create all knowledge on the class blog, making the assignment a "socio-emotional-driven interaction" which Rovai (2002) says "also relies on the instructor to create a discussion environment that promotes such interaction but the interaction itself is largely self-generated" (p. 43). According to Rovai, socio-emotional interaction is much more likely to build the required level of trust for an effective learning community: "With trust comes the likelihood of candor—that members will feel safe and expose gaps in their learning and feel that other members of the community will respond in supportive ways" (p. 42). Thus, it seems to me that the true functionality of social media assignments is that they invite *regular* and *authentic* peer interaction independent of instructor influence. A class-away-from-class environment such as the course blog, where everyone is on equal footing and has the same right to speak, is uniquely capable of fostering the socio-emotional-driven interaction necessary to establish effective learning communities.

As further evidence of this I will turn back to the data. Although in comparison to Group A, my students reported only slightly better relationships with peers (Q15) they report much more favorable reliance on providing and receiving peer feedback. My theory here is that they may not have enough college experience (they are mostly first-semester freshmen) to compare one small class to another. In comparison to the large lecture-based introductory college classes they are most likely enrolled in, English 1301 for both groups would seem much more peer interactive. Therefore, instead we see the trust in peers that Rovai predicted when comparing how the two groups of students report knowledge gained from peers, which should be evidence of the success or failure of a learning community.

Question 22 focuses on the process-focused outcomes and asks students to consider how their overall experience in English 1301 contributed to knowledge, skills, and personal development. Two categories are particularly relevant for evaluating knowledge gained from peers: "Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive" and "critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience." The second one may seem like a stretch, but plenty of research has linked the peer review process with developing a student's ability to critically analyze her own work. I also think this is consistent with my earlier analysis that the interactive questioning and critical writing on the blog facilitates the development of audience awareness. One student's comment helped me make this connection: "Using social media really helped in analyzing my own work because I could go back and read what I added to the discussion and see how it helped shape the discussion" (Yolanda, B2, Q37). Rovai (2002) argues "a unifying concept emerging from situated learning research is 'communities of practice,' the concept that learning is constituted through the sharing of purposeful, *patterned* activity. This concept stresses practice and community equally" (p.

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43, my emphasis). Thus, it is the constant back-and-forth between peers, like that evident in the weekly repetition of the blog assignment, the routine practice of rhetorical strategies for a live audience that contributes to the ability to critically analyze their own work.

As noted in the analysis of previous learning outcomes, in response to both sets of questions Group B rated these two categories more highly in comparison to the control group. When considering providing peer feedback, 75% of my students said their experience in English 1301 contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" (3=50% + 4=25%) to their knowledge, skills and personal development in this area. Sixty percent of Group A ranked the same category positively. The overall average ranking was 2.97 v. 2.67 in this area. (See Table 3-9.)

Table 3-9: Q 22a – To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in providing peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive?

	Very Little (1)	Some (2)	Quite a Bit (3)	Very Much (4)	Avg. Rank
Group A	8.33% 6	31.94% 23	44.44% 32	15.28% 11	2.67
Group B	3.13% 1	21.88% 7	50.00% 16	25.00% 8	2.97

Critical analysis of their own work has an even more impressive delta: Critical analysis earned an average rank of 3.22 for Group B and 2.71 for Group A, a half point difference in average rank between the two. Forty-seven percent of students in Group B

reported learning "very much" about critically analyzing their own work (Table 3-10), the

second highest ranked learning outcome overall—anticipating the expectations of an

Table 3-10: Q 22b – To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to

your knowledge, skills, and personal development in critically analyzing your own work in

order to shape it for a specific audience?

	Very Little (1)	Some (2)	Quite a Bit (3)	Very Much (4)	Avg. Rank
Group A	5.56% 4	30.56% 22	51.39% 37	12.50% 9	2.71
Group B	3.13% 1	18.75% 6	31.25% 10	46.88% 15	3.22

audience was first. (See Table 3-11.) This can be compared to 12.5% of Group A giving it

the highest ranking and a tie for 11th place when considering the learning outcomes as a

whole (Table 3-12).

Table 3-11: Learning outcomes ranked by average rating as rated by Group B

Rank	Learning Goal	Group B Avg Rating
1	Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing	3.34
2	Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience	3.22
3	Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas	3.10
4	Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding	3.03

Table 3-11—*Continued*

5	Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position	3.00
6	Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive	2.97
7	Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea	2.94
8	Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims	2.94
9	Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable	2.91
10	Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument	2.91
11	Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions	2.88
12	Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit	2.84
13	Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.	2.77
14	Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts	2.75
15	Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style	2.66
16	Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style	2.66
17	Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies	2.63
18	Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts	2.63
19	Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions	2.63
20	Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms	2.56

Table 3-12: Learning outcomes ranked by average rating as rated by Group A

Rank	Learning Goal	Group A Avg Rating
1	Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable	2.97
2	Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style	2.92
3	Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument	2.90
4	Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas	2.89
5	Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.	2.86
6	Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea	2.79
7	Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position	2.78
8	Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing	2.75
9	Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding	2.75
10	Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims	2.75
11	Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts	2.71
12	Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience	2.71
13	Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions	2.67
14	Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive	2.67

Table 3-12—*Continued*

15	Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit	2.61
16	Editing in order to minimize surface errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling	2.61
17	Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts	2.51
18	Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms	2.50
19	Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies	2.48
20	Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions	2.47

Interestingly, this time, when asked to consider how much social media contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development for each of the standard English 1301 learning outcomes, the difference between the two groups is reversed, with a greater delta for "providing peer feedback" than for "critically analyzing own work." Group B gives providing peer feedback an overall average ranking of 4.03 as compared to 3.59 for Group A, with 41% of my students saying social media "helped greatly" versus just under 16% of the control (Table 3-13).

Table 3-13: Q 36b – How much or how little do you think social media contributed to your learning when it comes to providing peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive?

	Detrimental (1)	(2)	Had No Effect (3)	(4)	Helped Greatly (5)	Avg. Rank
Group A	2.86% 2	5.71% 4	37.14% 26	38.57% 27	15.71% 11	3.59
Group B	3.45% 1	3.45% 1	20.69% 6	31.03% 9	41.38% 12	4.03

Critically analyzing their own work, on the other hand, earned an average ranking of 3.82, with 31% of Group B choosing the highest ranking. Group A did not find social media as helpful in learning to critically analyze their own work any more than they have in any of the other categories: The skill earned a 3.51 average for this group and only fourteen percent gave social media the highest ranking (Table 3-14). Although this was one of only two categories where no one in the general population thought social media was detrimental to learning. None of the categories were completely detriment-free for every student in Group B.

Table 3-14: Q 36c – How much or how little do you think social media contributed to your learning when it comes to critically analyzing your own work in order to shape it for a specific audience?

	Detrimental (1)	(2)	Had No Effect (3)	(4)	Helped Greatly (5)	Avg. Rank
Group A	0.00% 0	7.14% 5	48.57% 34	30.00% 21	14.29% 10	3.51
Group B	3.45% 1	3.45% 1	34.48% 10	27.59% 8	31.03% 9	3.82

The evidence above indicates students in Group B felt a great deal of learning took place in collaboration with their peer colleagues. They were more comfortable providing constructive criticism to peers and using peer criticism as at least one valuable data point in learning to critically analyze their own work. Rovai (2002) says "Interactions build community when learners trust each other and view other learners as colleagues or collaborators" (p.44). In a blended learning environment students meet and interact regularly both face-to-face and online. The "second classroom" effect, as one student put it, regular back-and-forth between peers on equal footing yields the socio-emotional-driven interaction necessary to establish an effective learning community.

Second Classroom

It should be evident by now that SM makes collaboration easier, more accessible, and more effective, as students learn to rely on each other to achieve learning goals while completing group-based projects (i.e. the blog assignment, peer review, etc.). It is telling that one of my more resistant students, a chemistry major who made it clear on Day One that he had no interest in English 1301 or social media, said this when asked if he saw academic potential in social media: "Yes, peer reviews and getting a class to be more or less a 'family'" (Map, B2, Q30). And in addition, there is another aspect of the blended learning environment to note: Students remain connected to each other even when they cannot see each other in person, ultimately positively influencing individual work and the general classroom community as well.

In addition to the course blog, students were connected via an electronic classroom system designed to replicate the social elements of Facebook. Edmodo (see Figure 3-3) is in many ways similar to other classroom management systems, like Blackboard and WebCt, in that students can view the course calendar, submit
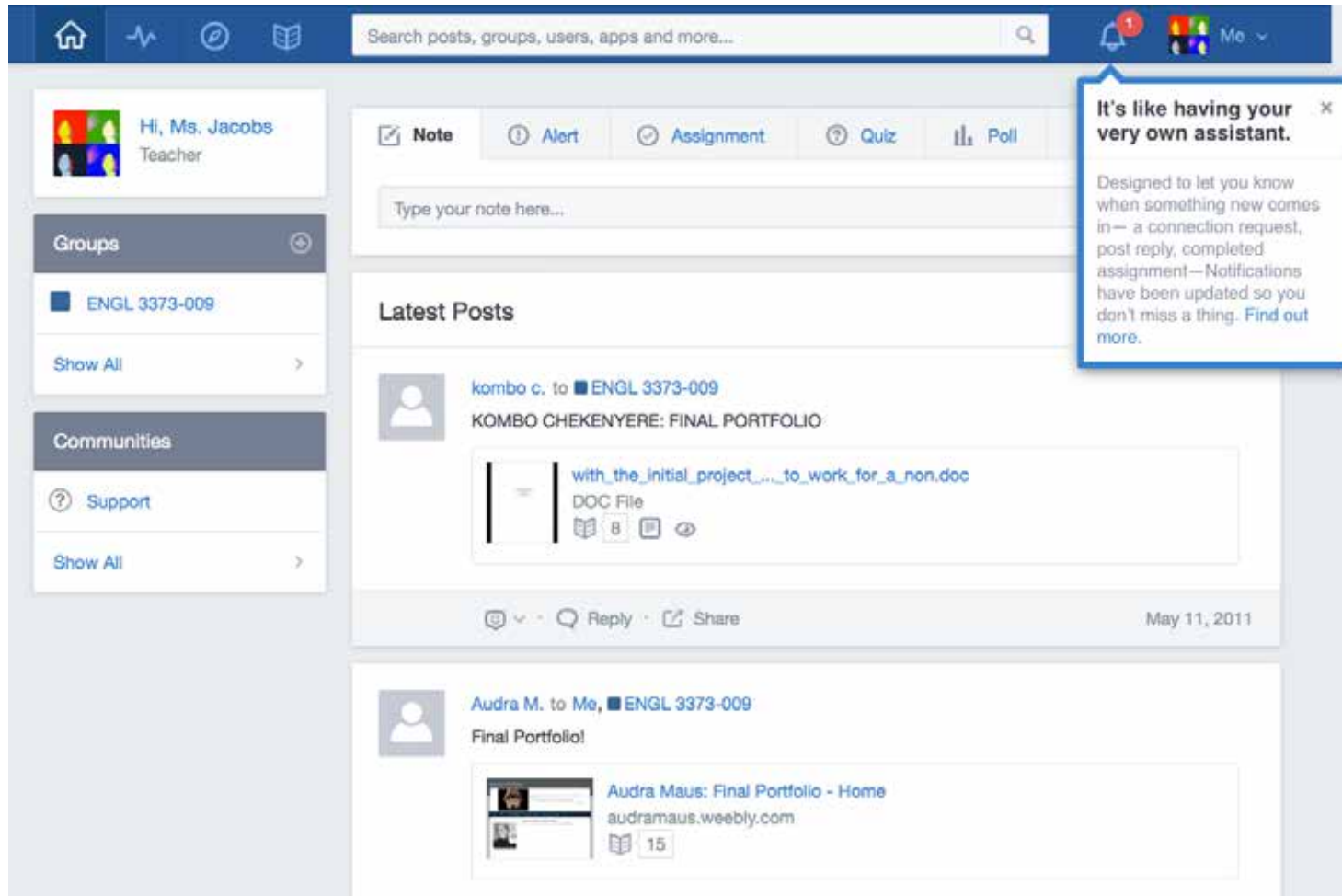
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Figure 3-3 Screenshot of the Classroom "Wall" of our Course Edmodo Platform.

assignments, keep track of grades, and work in assigned groups. But the interface is much more user friendly, again similar to Facebook, so that students can create profiles with images and some personal information if they choose, status update-type messages that appear in a course-specific news feed, polling, notifications, and a user-friendly app for mobile devices.

Students in Group B routinely detail the benefits of Edmodo for keeping them connected to peers away from class. "I think Facebook can be related to Edmodo in the ways that I wrote earlier. It can be used as a way to reach classmates and ask any question and they can respond at their convenience and all the information is always there" (Rachel, B2, Q30). There is also lots of evidence that my students valued their online social connections with peers outside of class in comparison to the general population of English 1301 students. For example, Question 26 asks them to rate on a 1-5 scale how much experience they gained in various online tasks and medium (Table 3-15). Seventy-five percent of my students assigned a rating of a 4 or a 5 for online collaborating or networking (on sites such as Edmodo, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc),

Table 3-15: Q 24a – How much new experience did you gain in online collaborating or networking (Facebook, MySpace, GoogleDocs, etc.) for any educational purpose such as sharing class notes, sharing ideas, discussing assignments, group projects, etc.?

	None (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Gained a Lot (5)	Avg. Rank
Group A	17.14% 12	15.71% 11	20.00% 14	25.71% 18	21.43% 15	3.19
Group B	3.13% 1	6.25% 2	15.63% 5	43.75% 14	31.25% 10	3.94

making it the highest ranked digital learning skill overall and indicating they relied on social networking tools frequently for staying in contact outside of class. As another student said when asked to name specific activities or tools that assisted his personal growth or academic achievement, "Edmodo helped me keep in touch with my whole class and share valuable information with my peers" (Rambo, B2, Q27). The SM-enabled classroom employs and enforces networking strategies, something that will help them throughout their lives.

Webb Boyd (2008) points to students reading each other's posts as key to generating new ideas and figuring out what is expected of them (p. 237). I have heard this echoed more than once over the years and the blog's role in developing critical thinking skills as discussed above indicates my students do this too. Katie articulates this well when she says, "I found Edmodo highly useful. Although it took me a while to get used to it, it was a great was to connect to classmates outside of the classroom. If I had trouble on an assignment all I had to do was get on and look at someone else's or just ask for help" (Q28). However, I also have reason to believe it is the blended aspect of the course: My students saw each other regularly in the classroom and also had access to each other via Edmodo and the course blog *Revisionary*, that really made the classroom community thrive. As Pikachu put it so brilliantly, "I found Edmodo the most useful because it was easy to use after I got the hang of it, and it became a *second classroom* for me in the sense that if I needed questions answered, I could go there" (B2, Q28, my empasisis). The "second classroom" is singularly unique in the hybrid or blended learning model, layering community and activities in multiple formats. There is something unique that helps students feel supported and in touch with other class members. Rachel nicely articulates the reasons I find blended/hybrid is much better than online only. Online only for her would mean the "loss of a personal touch and communication skills. Certain things

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need to be learned in person with a person explaining where there is no character limit"

(Q31). These students clearly trust each other and relied on each other for course

information, feedback, and assignment management. If they needed anything away from

the F2F setting, they knew peers were only a few clicks away.

The Virtual Office

So far I have discussed how students interact with each other and the learning

outcomes of the course in a social media enriched blended format. Rachel and Pikachu

both hint at another essential element of building any strong classroom community,

especially for retention purposes: the relationship with the instructor. Several students in

Group B express how much they valued social media tools for building or maintaining

connections with their instructor:

- "[Edmodo] connected me with my peers and teacher" (Eva, b2, q27).

- "Social media like Edmodo helped me discuss my assignments and other
  work easily. It helped interaction outside of class with my peers and
  instructor" (Nifemi, B2, Q27).

It has already been noted earlier in this section and in Chapter Two that the

student's relationship with the instructor is a major contributor in student persistence.

Students need to feel they belong to a classroom community and that their instructor is

there to help them learn.

I have noted how the online connections via Edmodo helped my students feel

they had additional access to me. However, this is not to imply that online environments

are inherently capable of building that important relationship with the instructor. According

to Webb Boyd (2008) many students report the opposite in 100% online classes:

When analyzing the possibilities for and the quality/quantity of interaction with their instructors, students in my study reported that they were dissatisfied with those interactions. The dominant reasons for this dissatisfaction seemed to be a lack of opportunities to interact with their instructors, general confusion about the instructors' expectations of them, and uncertainty about their evaluation of students' work (2008, p. 229).

At the very least, emphasizing a strong social media presence in any format (either online or F2F) gives the students an additional means for contact and interaction with instructors. Whereas in an F2F context, students would have to rely on time after class, office hours, and email to contact professors, the blended format adds both another means of direct messaging, i.e. Facebook messaging or instant messaging, and another means of asking questions or initiating conversations publically, via the class wall or Twitter feed. Pikachu's description of Edmodo as a "second classroom" is apropos when it comes to instructor relationships as well. Other students observed the following:

- "Ms. Jacobs was always available. She had office hours, one can schedule an appointment, and she can even be contacted through Edmodo" (Eva, Q16). And "Edmodo and Blog posts (Revisionary) Well both were very useful. Edmodo is where i can contact any of my peers or my teacher for any help" (Eva, Q28).

- "I am really grateful for my instructor because she was really supportive. A lot of times I considered dropping when the work looked really hard. However, all the time I met with her, she encouraged me and made me feel that I could do more" (Nifemi, Q16). Although Nifemi does not specifically mention SM-enabled availability here, he does in response to other questions (Q27, as noted above and in Q31): "I believe that [social media] can continue to help me in my other classes in college. It can help me communicate with my peers and instructors about assignments and group work" (Nifemi, Q31).

- My instructor did a "great job in helping out, and answered all my questions ASAP. I never felt lost" (Elliott, Q16).
- "Edmodo was the most useful because it kept me in contact with my instructor" (Amaya, B2, Q28).

The purpose of this section was to identify several aspects of our common FYC pedagogy that can be more effective in a hybrid or blended classroom environment with heavy integrations of social media based platforms and assignments. I used Edmodo as my management system and *Revisionary*, the course blog as a student discussion forum, both in supplement to regular face-to-face meetings. In my assessment, it is the combination of social networking elements; the ease and availability of communication between course members; and the frequency and multiplicity of purposeful academic discourse that worked to create a more effective learning community, as envisioned by Bruffe, described by Rovai, and studied by Webb Boyd. While all of the aspects described so far are wonderful benefits of digitally-infused blended learning, most are achievable via other methods and not necessarily dependent on social media. In the last section before the conclusion, I will point out several pedagogical aims that are uniquely achievable through the use of an interactive social media agenda. We will begin that conversation by exploring how and why new media is something different and revolutionary, capable of so much more than print.

What's So New about New Media?

In their work challenging the idea of the newness of new media, Bolter & Grusin (2000) point to "our culture's contradictory imperatives for immediacy and hypermediacy," arguing that "[our culture] wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them" (p.

5). While responding to turn of the century resistance to digital media, Bolter & Grusin remind us that remediation is as old as media itself. They point to renaissance painters resisting the medium of oil on canvas and its intent to place the viewer within the space by use of linear perspective. The viewer becomes actively involved as if she has been visually transported to the space depicted in the painting by Saenredam on the left (See Figure 3-4). In comparison to older paintings, before linear perspective emerged, immediacy and hypermediacy are at work in *Interior of Saint Bravo* as it is in future innovations. Photographers and graphics specialists also capture the effect of linear perspective, capturing a visual experience as if the viewer were there in person, only such technologies do so more easily, and perhaps also more effectively, as seen in the photo on the right. (See Figure 3-4). Additionally, such technology is also new and revolutionary in its own right.

Figure 3-4: On Left: Saenredam, P. J. (1631). Interior of Saint Bravo, Haarlem. Oil on canvas. Retrieved from www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project. On Right: Holowka, D. (n.d.). nave.1. Photograph. Retrieved from www.architakes.com.

Bolter & Grusin (2000) draw on the term "remediation," which also suggests the idea of reform, bringing something or someone up to a standard level, just as remedial courses intend. In their view, "the assumption of reform is so strong that a new medium is now expected to justify itself by improving on a predecessor" (p. 59). It is not difficult to recognize the parallels in writing with technology. Pen and pencil are better than quill, word processors better than typewriters, and so forth. And the book is much more dynamic with hyperlinks to relevant supplemental material, search capabilities, and the ability to read in the dark.

It was not so long ago that many feared the Internet would spell the death of the book, devaluing authorship to the point of extinction. Since then, of course, many authors and publishers have proven that immediacy and hypermediacy have only enhanced our current understanding of the "book." Take for example, Dan Brown's latest global mystery adventure, *Inferno* (2013). This past summer I downloaded *Inferno* to the Kindle app on my iPad. As I am sure many are aware, the digital version of the book is sometimes little more than a PDF version of a printed copy, portable and downloadable, yes, but otherwise, nearly identical to its print counterpart. Nevertheless, many e-books are embracing both immediacy and hypermediacy as Bolter & Grusin (2000) describe it, of which *Inferno* is an excellent example. Whereas when reading a print book, if I want to know something more about the setting, I must put the book down and use another device and medium to access this information. The e-book via Kindle puts supplemental information at the reader's fingertips. If I want to learn more about the Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore, one of many historical sites explored in the novel, I simply highlight the name and select either Google or Wikipedia from within the Kindle app. This feature allows me to view pictures of the famous cathedral, read about its history, and even locate it on a Google map (https://maps.google.com), all without ever leaving the app, or

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losing my place in the book. Similarly, Kindle integrates a full dictionary for vocabulary enhancement, allows users to highlight and annotate. Meanwhile the "X-Ray" feature keeps a running index of characters, themes, settings, and more, that are important to the plot, as they appear on the active page, within the chapter, and throughout the novel.

Imagine the possibilities for extending learning beyond the pages of a novel. Instead of hoping students are stopping to look up unfamiliar words or to Google unfamiliar paintings or locations, educators can much more easily rely on the ease of the built-in features of the app to facilitate learning. In this way, the Internet-connected Kindle e-book capitalizes on both immediacy and hypermediacy, yielding a new medium that both denies the presence of the printed book and enhances it. As Bolter & Grusin put it, "What is new about new media comes from the particular ways in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media" (2000, p. 15). I, along with others, am calling for composition pedagogy to do the same.

In the first chapter of *Lingua Fracta*, Brooke (2009) illustrates Bolter & Grusin's (2000) theories in the FYC classroom. At one point Brooke refers to Marilyn Saul's "The Limitations of Hypertext in the Classroom" (1999), where she summarizes her failed attempts at translating a traditional academic argument assignment to hypertext and concludes that "the students focused on learning a computer program and learning about the research topic, while very little thinking occurred about the process of writing" (as quoted by Brooke, 2009, p. 21). Brooke is not surprised at her conclusion, suggesting that Saul's study positions hypertext as "simply a technology which can be added or subtracted from a writing classroom without any appreciable effect on the goals, aims, purposes, or strategies of the classroom or of the writers themselves" (p. 21). Brooke argues that this kind of translation of old media into new, without contemplation of how

the new medium itself changes the assignment, forestalls any exploration of the unique

properties of new media, and ignores remediation. Simply asking students to complete a

formerly print-based academic paper online does not in itself allow for immediacy or

hypermediacy. In fact, as Brooke argues, Saul's students seemed to be penalized if they

tried (p. 20). In order to take advantage of new media and the pedagogical advantages

therein, one must reconsider the assignment itself, allowing for the possibility that

"hypertext writing might involve a different set of goals or accomplish different rhetorical

aims than the traditional essay" (Brooke, 2000, p. 20). Brooke goes on to pinpoint this

phenomenon as interface, which I interpret to mean hypertext writing is at once polyvocal

and interactive even when there is one primary author. Let's explore this concept further

with an example and a diagram.

This can be illustrated by once again considering the Kindle book mentioned

earlier. We can all agree that the author of the print version of *Inferno* is Dan Brown. And

he is the *primary* author of the Kindle version; however, he is not the only author. The text

of the book itself is the meat in a virtual sandwich. (See Figure 3-5.) Thinking of all the
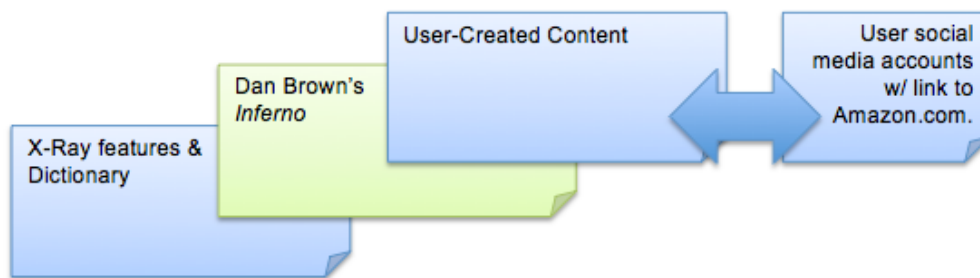
Figure 3-5: The Interface as Demonstrated by the Kindle E-book Version of Dan

Brown's *Inferno.*

app-specific enhancements, one would have to acknowledge that this metadata and metacommentary is something attached to the book, kind of floating under it, ready to leap to the surface on demand.

In fact, while other reading apps simply link material to specific words within the primary content (which one could argue is still an interactive element that changes how the audience experiences the book, and therefore, how we might define author and authorial choices), Amazon pre-loads content to accompany the book so it can be accessed with or without a Wi-Fi connection. In other words, the e-book publishers at Kindle are making some decisions as to what meta-content should and should not be included with the book. Now this is not to say that the reader would not be able to separate the pre-loaded Wikipedia page from Dan Brown's prose. The extra content is clearly marked offering plenty of visual cues to the reader. But this pre-loaded content adds an additional layer on to the reading experience. Consequently, authorial rhetorical choices are made by someone other than Dan Brown. Pre-loaded supplementary content is one layer, the bottom piece of bread. (See Figure 3-5.)

Another layer, the top slice of bread in the Kindle book is user-created highlighting. (See Figure 3-5.) If you turn on the "Popular Highlights" feature within the app, Kindle will underline passages that are frequently highlighted by other users. Personally, I turn this feature off because the idea of someone else telling me which parts I should think are moving or meaningful bothers me. But from a pedagogical standpoint, I can see value in this feature. In any case, I am sure plenty of people read with the Popular Highlights feature turned on and experience supplementary input on the text in the process of reading. Additionally, Kindle users can link the app with their Facebook or Twitter accounts and "seamlessly share excerpts of books to your wall or feed. Messages you share to Facebook or Twitter will be linked back to Amazon" (Privacy notice within

iPhone Kindle app). Sharing content with other non-readers catapults the entire Kindle book experience into a realm of intertextuality completely untouched in the era of print. In one flat space (the device screen) the reader has multiple layers of content and the ability to share that content with others.

Now the *Inferno* example is a (relatively) static book – the users cannot transform the words on the page nor will Dan Brown do so in response to user feedback. Imagine the digital author, say a blogger, who has a wealth of intertextuality and hyperlinking at her fingertips, plus the interactivity of other users. The new media author can post, revise, and supplement via comments in immediate and direct response to readers. As Sirc (2004) says, new media writers are "designers not essayists" (p. 121). Thus, our goals and aims must accommodate and encourage the new poly-vocal, interactive writer.

For example, we might consider ways SM, especially in a blended learning environment, might expand, enrich, nay *transform* reading, writing, and discussion. I have already discussed how my social media enabled pedagogy facilitates some aspects of composition and makes others more effective. Now I would like to consider certain aspects that are new and wholly different with the type of computer-mediated *interactivity* SM allows. It should be noted many of these aspects would be possible to achieve in 100% online settings as well, and adding social media interaction very well may alleviate many of the issues other researchers have noted regarding student performance, engagement, and satisfaction in online formats (Bergin, 2012; Gillam & Wooden, 2013; Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2009; Webb Boyd, 2008; Wilson, 2011). However, I still maintain it is the hybrid/blended environment that made this particular course so successful because of statements like this: "Social media might enrich my college coursework by allowing me communicate to my fellow class mates easier. I find it hard to make friends in big classes, and I am not the only one. Social media is a good

way to get other students to help each other with coursework, thus enriching the brains present" (Pikachu, B2, Q30). I, for one, love the idea of brains being present in the F2F setting.

I also believe social media in particular (as opposed to classroom management systems like Blackboard) is more effective because of statements like this: "I think social media could certainly be used for learning. Edmodo forced the class to communicate with each other and work together on projects. However, I believe more might be able to be accomplished if Edmodo were revised to an extent to allow for smoother conversations among students (similar to how Facebook communication is built)" (Cedric, B2, Q29). Edmodo is already the "Facebook for education" and much more seamless than Blackboard. The only thing Edmodo restricts is direct, non-teacher approved communication between students. I had to take extra steps to grant permission for students to speak to each other directly, whereas once students are members of a class Facebook group, they are free to communicate with each other with or without my involvement. Thus, the point Cedric makes is that ease and convenience are paramount when it comes to integrating online learning platforms. And I think his lack of a reference point, having never used any other online learning platform, limits his assessment. The remainder of this section describes several pedagogical advantages unique to online environments generally and blended learning specifically.

There are five features enabled by social media that are unique to online environments:

- Anonymity and safety of the screen;
- Encouraged, enabled, and/or required participation for all
- Written discussion
- Expansion of classroom borders for students and instructor

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- Yielding a digital literacy

Of course, all of these would also be possible in 100% online courses, such as those in CMS contexts. However, I believe my research results show that the social networking aspect, something not inherent to CMS online courses, makes each more dynamic, flexible, and convenient for students. In addition, the blended or hybrid environment, where students meet face-to-face and also online, offers the best of both worlds.

The positive effects of the first two on the list, anonymity and increased participation, are best examined through the eyes of a particular student. While several students commented on the academic benefits and convenience provided by both *Revisionary* and Edmodo, one of my students expresses quite clearly that she believes she would not have successfully completed the course in any other context.

Anonymity and Safety of the Screen

Faigley (1992) posited that anonymity in electronic written discussions was a key advantage over face-to-face discussions. While I would not consider this a universal trait – as noted above most of my students seem equally comfortable online and in the F2F setting – for a few students electronically mediated conversations act as a security blanket that enables meaningful participation. To illustrate this claim, I would like to focus on one particular student who was especially vocal on the subject.

From the start it was clear that Belinda was painfully shy and not at all comfortable speaking in front of other people or participating in class discussions. A first-generation college student of hispanic decent, Belinda always seemed eager to learn, paying attention and taking diligent notes. However, in the first weeks her enthusiasm was hard to discern because she was so quiet in class. I do not recall Belinda ever

saying anything out loud in class in front of the whole group, although she did seem more comfortable in small groups. Here is what she said about herself and her goals for the semester on the study pre-test questionnaire (B1):

> [Whole] class discussion is my weakness as I feel uncomfortable. I can participate in [small] group discussions as they are smaller. I am usually quick on grasping my position on a topic or matter while being provided with multiple perspectives…. I must improve my class discussion skills as we will be using them frequently especially for the blog. This will also help me improve my writing.

Belinda's self-assessment shows a high level of self-awareness about her insecurity in social settings. Her reflection also demonstrates her understanding that participating in class discussion leads to a deeper appreciation of multiple perspectives that in turn contribute to critical thinking and writing skills.

Belinda's shyness seemed to extend toward me as well, and I suspect that she may never have talked to me in person outside of class if I had not required student conferences during the term. After reading Belinda's stated goals for the course and observing her behavior in class for a few weeks, I asked her to meet with me after class. In conference she confided that she was terrified of speaking in class and that she was certain everyone was judging her every word and action. I assured her this was not the case and made the usual remarks intended to alleviate a nervous student's fear. However, in Belinda's case this had little affect and seemed to terrify her more. While I am not a psychologist and would not presume to have enough information to know for sure, it seems likely to me in hindsight that Belinda was suffering from a significant case of social anxiety disorder. And, as is so often the case, there was really no need for her irrational fear – she was bright, personable, and engaging in one-to-one situations. Eventually she grew comfortable talking to me and visited office hours on several occasions, I think as an attempt to make sure I knew she came to class prepared, even if she did not have the nerve to demonstrate this in whole class F2F discussions.

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I spent a great deal of time that semester worrying for Belinda, knowing that this world tends to favor the bold. I told her as much and tried to encourage her as best I could. Unfortunately, Belinda never quite worked up the nerve to say much during whole-class F2F discussions. But the second classroom spaces online were a whole different story. I feel Belinda is one type of student who greatly benefits from the hybrid classroom as opposed to either 100% F2F or online. If she had enrolled in a 100% online course (a model I imagine is often a good fit for the painfully shy student) she might have found a comfortable spot but never a reason to push herself to adapt. Similarly, in an F2F-only discussion-based course, it could easily appear to classmates and instructor that she is unengaged or unwilling to participate. Yet the hybrid model required her to at least attend both classrooms (online and F2F) and required participation online. This meant Belinda had a more palatable option at her disposal, another means to demonstrate her evolving understanding of course topics. In her post-test questionnaire responses, Belinda states repeatedly that the blended format helped her grow and learn academically and start the journey toward overcoming her fear of social situations:

> I had listed confronting my phobia of public speaking as my main goal, without this I was incapable of class discussion or engagement that involved me speaking in front of my classmates. I was able to communicate well through the blog; it was most likely due to no eye contact or company of people I did not know. The blog allowed me to be anonymous in a way - no one could stare at me as I stated my opinions and thoughts. In the act of verbally communicating my thoughts in class, i have always felt as if the people around you are there simply to point out your mistakes. The fact that no one can read or see what others think or will say, makes me too uneasy (B2, Q8).

Here Belinda imposes the format of the blog on the F2F setting, wishing she could as easily see and read what others are thinking. Her fear of judgment is alleviated in online written conversation in such a way that she focuses on only the argument, the knowledge, her opinion and thoughts. In person, it seems she is too preoccupied with what others might think about her, perhaps on a personal level.

Faigley (1992) and others (Jacobs, 2012; Vie, 2008; Webb Boyd, 2008) have

observed that electronic discussions are particularly beneficial for women and minority

students, who have been historically marginalized in educational settings, less likely to be

vocal in F2F discussions, regardless of how much they may have wanted to participate.

When asked what she will take with her to future classes, Belinda states "As I go through

the blog posts I can recall how excited I got when others would reply and there was

something for us to argue. Completely and successfully meeting my goal of being part of

a discussion will not only help me in my English courses but personally as well." (Belinda,

B2, Q9). Earlier I suggested anonymity was not a key element of collaboration. But it is

an important element for engagement and retention with certain students, offering

physical distance and emotional safety behind the screen for those who find face-to-face

settings unnerving.

One for All, All for One

Here is a nice quote from one of the students in Group A, reflecting on the quality

of relationships with peers in English 1301, that hits on what I think the blog is particularly

good at addressing: "My class was always pretty quiet and we never said much, but we

all liked and respected one another. During some discussions we would be much more

vocal" (Q13). I cannot remember the last time I had a quiet group, but I feel pretty

confident that if I did, the blog would alleviate this problem by offering another place for

discussion; it requires participation and active engagement with class discussion in a way

F2F just cannot do.

Again, Belinda is a perfect illustration of this aspect too. When asked to rank

peers her natural social anxiety comes into play. Belinda ranked her relationship with

peers in English 1301 as a two out of a possible six. Whereas the average peer ranking

was a 4.66. She puts the blame for that entirely on herself: "I have a fear of public speaking, therefore I did not speak in class at all. This caused me to feel futile in the course" (B2, Q15). But when considering social media her point of view is quite different. Edmodo provides the means to communicate with classmates and feel that she is a member of the group, albeit perhaps a satellite member. I cannot know for sure of course, but I think it is quite possible that without the Edmodo tether, Belinda would have disengaged and possibly disappeared, drifting off into space. As she states when asked to describe specific social media activities or tools that assisted in her personal growth or academic achievement during the semester:

> Edmodo allowed me to enhance my communication skills, as I lack in verbal class discussion I was able to engage more easily through the use of this website. I [also] came to value just how important being part of the discussions was. Edmodo was the perfect medium for me to learn how much I was missing out on by not participating (Belinda, Q27).

Later in the survey she explicitly links social media as a valuable academic tool for students like her. When asked if she finds any academic purpose of online social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace, Belinda writes, "Definitely! These networking sites allow students like me who shiver at the thought of participating in class, to use these mediums and feel more confident to take the challenge" (Q30). Finally, Belinda points to the ways social media facilitates group work and collaboration in such a way that is Gen M friendly: "Yes, students seem to be more likely to use these sites than to meet up or help a peer through a different medium. These sites and social media in general has evolved to be a great part of mostly the lives of the young generation. This is an easier method as well as it can be done almost anywhere and there are multiple devices that allow you to" (Q31).

Two for the Price of One

        With the benefit of online written discussion, responses are thought out and interactive. Additionally, in a blended course, students benefit from both the spontaneity of F2F discussion and also have the opportunity to formulate and expand their ideas on the blog. Thinking again of the paper-based reading journal assignment noted in Section I, it may be possible to achieve some interactivity offline, perhaps by asking students to pass paper copies around the room as fuel for discussion. However, such a format would be neither truly interactive nor collaborative.

        As Webb Boyd notes, "written discussion board exchanges provide students with a good opportunity to craft their thinking within dialogic exchanges rather than in isolation, which help students better envision an audience for whom they are writing" (2008, p. 239). Continuing, she argues "presenting their opinions and interpretations for an immediate audience can also help students write their way into new insights and ways of seeing. In such discussions, students become co-constructors of knowledge rather than passive receivers of predetermined truths" (p. 239). I consider the blog a self-contained written discussion in and of itself and also a primer for face-to-face class discussion. Students think and write about the issue and see peers' points of view before they get to class. Meanwhile, in the F2F setting, I am able to guide the discussion and draw out deeper understanding still. Additionally, since I frequently skim the blog before class I can specifically address any misconceptions or bring up issues I think need further exploration.

        But the conversation does not end there. After in-class discussion, students frequently write more, revise original statements, and post comments on their own or peers' blogs, thereby, refining and expanding their ideas even further. I think this is a specific element uniquely effective in a hybrid class. By asking students to write and post

as part of an active written conversation before class and then participate in (or at least observe) the verbal conversation face-to-face, discussion of topics is doubled and performed in multiple ways. This has to led to more and better discourse, more opportunities for students to really say what they think and see/hear/read how others respond. To illustrate, my students regularly and specifically mention "blogging" on questionnaire responses as something that helped expand their perspectives and critical thinking. I'll return again to the words of the student who summed up the benefits of online written discussion quite simply: "I think the portion of English class that involves learning how to perform an academic debate and sharing ideas and group discussions can be done through the Internet faster and simpler than on paper or in person" (Yolanda, Q30).

Here, There, Everywhere

These days, students have access to the networked classroom from their phones, tablets and laptops, meaning they can literally take their education with them wherever they go. Thanks in large part to mobile devices, social media expands classroom borders exponentially, bringing topics and assignments outside of the classroom walls and student expertise/experience in. As detailed in the last chapter, many of the at-risk first-year students struggle because they have a hard time integrating higher education into their daily lives. For many students, school and life are separate entities, unrelated to each other. Tinto contends, "Where it was once argued that retention required students to break away from past communities, we now know that for some if not many students the ability to remain connected to their past communities, family, church, or tribe is essential to their persistence" (2006, p. 4). By encouraging

social media networking for the course, students can more readily see the ways their "life" is influenced by "school" and vice versa.

Status updates of personal friends and classmates might appear in their feed in direct succession. Notifications mean students are reminded of classroom activities even when they are away from campus, perhaps at work or looking after family members. And we all know that once our brains are cued to do so, it is much easier to see the parallels and connections between seemingly disparate things. Haven't we all at some point purchased a new car and suddenly noticed the same model on every street corner? The same can be true for at-risk students and college coursework if we give them the tools. If learning takes place in any environment via mobile media, students are encouraged to make learning connections beyond the classroom.

Here is one illustration of how the web-enhanced course expands borders:

I checked all of the websites related to class almost daily and often times more than once or twice a day. For all assignments, especially major ones such as papers, I did think about them constantly and consult family and coworkers (yes I thought and conversed about my homework at work). And for the blog I read the material ahead of time, jotted down some ideas, and then completed my thoughts later once I thought about them some more (Rachel, b2, q9).

As Rachel phrases it here, she checked online platforms frequently and as a consequence, thought about the course several times per day in multiple contexts. She solicited advice and thoughts from people in her other worlds. Another student explained "When using Edmodo, I learned to search and ask others for help in puzzling situations, using peers, the Internet and sources available" (Elliott, B2, Q27). Hybrid learning is a means for improving student engagement and learning, even when they are not on campus. Social/interactive media and mobile media devices will undoubtedly be a major factor in supporting retention efforts going forward.

The other side of this coin is that social media embedded in coursework encourages regular interaction with peers, fostering educationally supportive relationships, enabling the development of a real writing community. Recall Tinto (2006): "The classroom is, for many students, the one place, perhaps only place, where they meet each other and the faculty. If involvement does not occur there, it is unlikely to occur elsewhere" (p. 4). Thus, I believe we should use every tool at our disposal to keep college life "front of mind" for our students. With social media, such a goal is much more plausible. Social Media is an expansion of the classroom that both extends my reach and helps them develop connections betwixt and amongst themselves. By establishing a socially networked classroom, students have twenty-some peers virtually available for information, support, collaboration and development twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, which is far more often than I can be available.

Additionally, mobile devices make class discussions and coursework accessible from anywhere. As Belinda noted, "[social media] is an easier method as well as it can be done almost anywhere and there are multiple devices that allow you to" (Q31). Another student describes how his phone became a major academic tool for the course, "using [his] iPhone constantly for writing notes or compiling work" (Zack, B2, Q26).

Finally, social media opens a window for the instructor on some of the peer interaction that takes place outside of the classroom's physical space. Students often use the course group page to seek assistance from peers on everything from assignment comprehension to technical difficulties. Whereas in a traditional course, an instructor must rely on the individual student to notify her via e-mail, during office hours, or by asking a question in class, the social-media-connected instructor can watch quietly as students solve problems on their own while monitoring in case there is a need to intervene.

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It Really All Comes Down to Digital Literacy

I already discussed my analysis that rhetorical analysis is easier to teach and vital in a digital world. I also think there is more to it than that. Use of social media while studying social media is similar to asking students to rhetorically analyze arguments while writing one. Digital literacy will be vital for our students certainly, and also for us as we argue for our relevance in a STEM-focused world. In many ways it is the same, i.e. we can teach the same sort of critical distance and cultural theorizing we have for decades in regards to mass media. But digital literacy also implies something more: being able to *use* and *adapt* to new platforms and new technologies as they emerge. In this way, digital literacy is wholly different than the type of critical analysis we might have taught in the past.

For example, years ago in a graduate gay and lesbian literature class I wrote a paper documenting the evolution of gay characters on popular television in the 90s as evidence of an emerging culture of tolerance for the new century.[8] However, in writing this paper, creating my own gay television character would never have been suggested or expected. I would not have been expected to send Jerry Seinfeld an e-mail to ask him how the now iconic phrase came to be – "Not that there's anything wrong with that!" – nor to contact Eric McCormack to inquire about his portrayal of Will on *Will & Grace.* Mass media stood alone as a text, something to be analyzed and theorized. It was not something to actively participate in or interact with, at least not in the typical cultural studies course.

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[8] Since I wrote my paper in 2003, communication researchers have identified the "parasocial contact hypothesis" which theorizes "because the human brain processes media experiences similarly to how it processes 'direct experience,' people typically react to televised characters as they would real people" (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005, p. 95). Researchers explain that it is not that humans cannot distinguish between fictional and real characters. They certainly can. It is just that most of the time we choose not to (Schiappa et al., 2005).

Whereas today, if a student proposed a paper exploring gay and lesbian identity construction in the media, I would fully expect that student to take a hands-on approach. She might ask real people real questions about self-construction online. She might create a Facebook poll of her friends' perceptions of gay and lesbian television characters. She might create a gay avatar and play the role herself in an online game. It would be perfectly within scope to send emails to writers or creators, perhaps even the actors themselves. And more importantly, I am coming to expect students to at least seek out venues to publically post their writing on any topic.

Today, I would expect hands-on research of this sort mostly because it would be so easy to accomplish. Readers, to a greater degree every day, expect first-hand knowledge, thus, it would be foolish to leave it out. But I would also expect this kind of social media enabled research because I believe strongly that hands-on learning creates deeper connections in the mind and heart. Further, much like I theorized in that gay and lesbian literature paper, simple exposure to openly gay characters on television in the late 90s and early 2000s led to a more homosexually tolerant culture at large (Calzo & Ward, 2009; Golom & Mohr, 2011; Kozloski, 2010; Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2006). Thusly, the participatory nature of social media has already influenced our collective (faculty, administrators, employers, students) expectation of higher education (Carter & Arroyo, 2011; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Goggin, 2012; Jenkins, 2009). Therefore, if digital media has already influenced societal expectations of education, it would behoove all involved to teach hands-on digital literacy and research methods.

Further, social media as a rhetorical space deserves critical analysis in its own right if we hope to yield critically literate citizens. Rhetorical analysis has never been more necessary when information and garbage look exactly alike. It is not enough to tell students about Wikipedia or how to gather reputable online sources; they need to

become critical users themselves to truly understand the advantages and disadvantages of a digitized, ever-connected society. An active digital pedagogy itself should be critically evaluated: the role social media plays in society, how it shapes our lives, issues of identity and privacy, and so forth. At the time of the study my students were particularly concerned about the danger of cyber bullying, as several incidents resulting in teen suicide had been widely publicized in the months prior. Last semester social media was abuzz with the move toward online education and rising college costs, and so were my students. We can help them put such concerns in context and empower them to view any issue from many sides. Like previous generations were honed to the role of mass media in shaping our everyday lives, so future generations should be keenly aware of digital counterparts. In FYC, at minimum, we are capable of and obligated to begin a conversation about setting digital research and writing standards that will extend into other disciplines and into the next few decades of scholarship and pedagogy.

Chapter 4

Composition Within and Beyond the University

In 2005, Richard Fulkerson lamented the divide within Composition Studies at the turn of the 21st century. He described a field torn "between a postmodern, cultural studies, reading-based program, and a broadly conceived rhetoric of genres and discourse forums" (Fulkerson, 2005, p. 679). While it seems to me the larger controversy has been resolved to privilege the study of discourse in FYC, another issue he notes has risen to take center stage: "Those outside of English—including the public who pay tuition and taxes, the deans, presidents, and politicians who demand accountability, and the students themselves— in general hold a still different view of what we should be up to than we do" (p. 680). It is this outside influence that ultimately places the greatest demands on FYC programs, especially in light of demands for lower-priced, high value higher education that meets the demands of a digitized workforce.

Obviously, we want to prepare students to be effective writers, and thus we require FYC for all incoming students. I have argued to my own classes that this is proof of the value of writing generally: the university does not think you can survive college without it. But Crowley makes a compelling case that the requirement is doing us no good at all. Any discussion of how FYC functions within the university and the community at large would do well to consider Crowley's work (1998), which sheds light on the harsh reality of the status of the field, in her view, that has emerged as a terrible side-effect of the required first-year composition course. According to Crowley, a required composition course creates the following problems:

- It positions writing as a skill to be mastered, rather than an integral aspect of ongoing learning and knowledge making. If it is a skill, it is not worthy as a topic of study.

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- Ignores the fact that writing is situational when it attempts to teach a generalized version of "academic discourse."

- Student resistance to requirements impedes learning for all. There is always someone, if not several people, who think that the composition requirement is unnecessary and a waste of money. Crowley argues this negative attitude infects the learning environment more often than not.

- If the course is required of everyone it means dozens of sections must be staffed so that there is no alternative but to rely on underpaid adjuncts and GTAs.

- The general requirement allows other teachers and other disciplines to ignore writing (they are supposed to already know it) which results in a failure to teach those specific discourses, which they are supposed to know or fail.

The result of all this, according to Crowley, is that Composition Studies as a discipline is doomed to occupy the low spot on the Totem pole. Abolish the requirement, says she, and the curse is lifted.

Sidney Dobrin, in his book *Postcomposition* (2011), argues composition studies is overly conservative, shackled to pedagogy and administration. Dobrin levels heavy criticism at the field, writing "composition studies has identified—though tenebrously—its little bit of space in the American academy and has developed a conservatism that does as little as it can to risk that space, to actually test its borders, borders that are in desperate need of disruption" (p. 19). He extends Crowley's calls to re-think the primary work of composition as keepers of the writing requirement, arguing for a realignment toward theory for the sake of theory. Dobrin contends, more so today than ever, there is no separation between subject and technology and that "such a shift demands a realignment of focus not upon the individual as producer/originator of writing but upon the

complex systems in which the posthuman is located, endlessly bound in the fluidity and shiftiness of writing" (p. 72-3). While Dobrin would argue for a separation from pedagogy in order to more freely do the intellectual work of composition, I retort that the changing face of education demands we do both at once. Both technology and writing and also technology and education are indeed irrevocably tangled in such a way that we must reinvent our pedagogy as we reinvent our theories about writing. After all, technology itself is a defiant blend of theory and practice. Hence, who better to lead such research than composition studies, a field that has since its inception kept its theories firmly grounded in practice and pedagogical application?

Still others argue that the best way to serve students is to redistribute the wealth of FYC amongst and between departments (Downs & Wardle, 2007; Smit, 2007; Wardle, 2009). This argument suggests that teaching a single, centralized version of "academic writing" is counterintuitive to the way scholars and professionals write because each field has its own unique context, genres, audiences and conventions. Say Downs & Wardle (2007), "In effect, the flavor of the purportedly universal academic discourse taught in FYC is typically humanities-based and more specifically English studies-based" (p. 556). They say students would be better served if they were taught discipline-specific writing courses by teachers trained to teach writing within each field of study. In other words, English majors would continue to be taught by English writing instructors, but Biology majors would take their first-year writing courses within the Biology department taught by a Biology-writing teacher. As if such a thing exists.

However, in my view, such a proposal works against the very purpose and value of a four-year degree. I contend that we best serve students by allowing them the freedom to explore multiple types of discourse, identifying differences and similarities between them. At what point in our lives will we ever write in only one style? To force

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students to do so would be isolating and destructive to the interdisciplinary nature of a four-year education that seeks to broaden, not narrow, the hearts and minds of students. It is a simple fact that even those students who enter the college community certain of a pre-selected occupation or field of study are likely to change major multiple times throughout their college career. This week alone three separate students (all sophomores) have told me they have changed their majors from x to y because in their first year and a half of courses they learned more about themselves as learners and future employees, and quite frankly, because their interests have simply changed. Imagine if those students had already taken their Writing in the Disciplines (WID) course. Now what? I applaud the spirit of WID supporters when they suggest that each department should educate its students in the ways and means of writing in the field. However, I suggest such a thing would be most advantageous later in the curriculum rather than a replacement for FYC.

With pressures from the state and the public to improve higher education's ability to yield adults prepared for productive lives, universities are emphasizing critical thinking and active learning campus-wide, and such doctrine is, thankfully, spreading like wildfire across the academic nation. The composition series perhaps needs an updated agenda, but even in its current state, it fills an important need on the college campus and, therefore, should not be "dropped," as Yarbrough (1999) and Crowley suggest. If, as Yarbrough points out, students are tied to their already held beliefs of language and culture, then the composition course becomes the perfect, if not the only place where we might challenge and expand those beliefs.

In contrast, there have been several articles in the news lately claiming that companies are having difficulty finding qualified candidates for job openings due in large part to poor communication skills running rampant among applicants (Holland, 2013;

Sabhlok, 2013). Others say there is a correlation between communications skills, salary, and promotion (L. Ray, n.d.; Russell, 2011). In other words, while we have a long way to go to convince our colleagues in other departments that writing education is indeed valuable, future employers already know that and are willing to pay more for it.

David Smit's book *The End of Composition Studies* (2007) argues for *more* emphasis on pedagogy rather than less, calling for integrating the teaching of writing within disciplines and at several points in degree attainment, other than the first year. Quoting Smit at length:

> …if we want to improve literacy in colleges and universities, we are going to have to give our students more practice and more feedback in a broader range of writing; we are going to have to introduce them to the discourse practices of a wider range of communities than can be offered in a two-course sequence; in a sense we are going to have to make writing instruction the responsibility of more than composition specialists and writing programs (p. 183).

As I understand it, Smit would keep the first year courses and encourage the other disciplines to teach writing in their specific discourse communities in years two through four of the degree. While in many ways I pine for this utopian interdisciplinary version of composition studies, it is quite a long way off. And in the interim, we have quite a lot of work to do advocating for the value of writing education.

Chris Anson, the 2013 Chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, boldly declared in his chair's address "students are paying for a transformative experience, and they are getting a pedagogy that has not changed in hundreds of years" (2013, p. 336). Through the character of Sylvia, his fictional Writing Program Administrator, Anson argues "you know as well as I that across this campus, very few of us (professors) are thinking much about how students learn and what conditions are most favorable for that learning" (p.336). Anson's creative address details the fictional account of one Art History professor's first confrontation with the changing

face of higher education, at the crossroads of a demand for lower tuition, increased value, and a questioning of the relevance of liberal arts education. The document in many ways, seeks to answer some of those concerns. I, like many of our students, wonder how we expect to compete if we do not confront directly the changing nature of learning generally, and higher education, more specifically.

Chapter Three focuses to a large degree on how well a social-media enabled hybrid pedagogy helps us meet our existing outcomes, and ends with the argument that digital literacy brings something new to the table. Catherine Gouge (2009) writes, "if all of us in the profession do not have more discussion about hybridity now, we may inadvertently forfeit the opportunity and the power to debate the design of a curriculum that might serve as the foundation for a major shift in the face of campus-based writing programs" (p. 339). As she writes, "it is hard to deny that Web-based technologies have been slowly changing instructional practices over the past ten years" (Gouge, 2009, p.340). Indeed her *College English* article "Conversation at a Crucial Moment: Hybrid Courses and the Future of Writing Programs" is largely a call to begin a conversation about implementing hybrid pedagogy on a program level. Well, five years later, with little additional conversation to be found in our major journals (see footnote on p.13 of Chapter 1), and in conjunction with Anson's 2013 Chair's Address, I say the time has come to articulate plans to evolve.

Anson's (2013) address goes on to articulate what we hope to achieve in four-year baccalaureate education that cannot be matched or copied in online education alone. Again through the voice of Sylvia, Anson writes "those habits of mind—being reflective and thoughtful, experimenting and exploring—originate in classrooms and labs and workshops, in books and in trades" (p. 338). By the end of her conversation with fictional art historian Nate, Sylvia concludes, "About action. You know, Nate, I think it

means that we need to welcome and analyze emerging technologies, and be *excited* about change, and research innovation to be sure we are getting it right, and take the lead in a responsible and principled way" (p. 340, emphasis in original).

As a response to calls to reimagine FYC (Anson, 2013; Crowley, 1998; Dobrin, 2011; Gouge, 2009; Smit, 2007), this chapter will do just that: Imagine the course described in the previous chapters as it might be implemented on a program level.

Rewrite, Revise

A Theoretical Framework for the Teaching of Writing

David Bartholomae's "Inventing the University" (1985) accurately describes the immense task of entering college and first encountering the strange "specialized discourse" of the academy. Bartholomae beautifully articulates the novice writer's struggle to "build bridges between their own point of view and the reader's" (p. 139). Each semester, I find that the most difficult concept to teach is writing for a specific audience so that the building of bridges can take place. Bartholomae argues that students must make "successive approximations" toward our specialized discourse, our "commonplaces, set phrases, rituals and gestures, habits of mind, tricks of persuasion, obligatory conclusions, and necessary connections" (p. 146). Indeed, the student who is willing to take risks in order to situate themselves between what has been said and "what might be said" (p. 146) and who works self-consciously and critically to claim their right to speak is far ahead of the student who writes carefully constructed sentences that do not say anything new. What I learn from Bartholomae and pass on to my students is that writing is messy and difficult and takes lots and lots of practice. Bartholomae would agree that students benefit from patient coaching and ample time to progress towards any new

specialized discourse. And so in this sense, I value taking the time necessary to do this work.

On the other hand, Bartholomae (1985) assumes there is one version of "academic discourse," when in fact there are dozens of uniquely specialized discourses at the university and beyond. Further, critical theory questions the value of passing on the dominant discourse unexamined. So, if the student's task is to "invent the university," shouldn't we encourage her to explore the infinite ways language functions in knowledge-making? And if we want her to be liberated by her education, shouldn't we want her to question what purpose discourse serves in reproduction? As Chapter Three discussed, this knowledge-power-author relationship is far more effectively explored in digital writing contexts.

Faigley (1992) describes the benefits of the "networked classroom," something that in 1992, put him far ahead of his time. His version of a networked classroom was essentially a synchronous chat where all students were actually sitting in the same room only at individual computer stations. Limitations of that particular technology aside, Faigley argues that this sort of class discussion is post-modernism in action: messy, chaotic, with no true center, and the source of learning shifted away from one specific authority (the teacher) and toward peers. Faigley is particularly keen on the idea of de-centering the teacher's authority as one of the major benefits. I am not sure it is entirely possible to de-center the way Faigley and others (Bizzell, 1991; H. A. Giroux, 2001; hooks, 1994; Shor, 1997) argue one should, nor am I sure that such a model would work for all teachers,[9] but I do agree that this type of work offers great possibility for the hybrid composition classroom.

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[9] I worry especially for young, female teachers in this regard and Faigley himself admitted it might be a sexist goal in a collaborative review of Fragments (Reynolds et al., 1994).

Chapter Three describes in detail that via online forums and blogs, I have found students take ownership of their work in a different way than they do traditional texts. Also, students who are less likely to speak up in a face-to-face whole-class discussion seem far more willing to participate online (anonymity does not seem to be a requirement though, as Faigley suggests). And I agree with Faigley that online class discussion helps students enact academic discourse: As detailed in Chapter Three, students can, in a very real sense, practice writing for specific readers, receive feedback, and adjust tactics if they participate in online discussion forums. I have watched this unfold on my class blog a number of times. Additionally, again agreeing with Faigley, networked writing encourages students to seek and make use of knowledgeable resources other than the teacher, such as their peers and themselves.

In consideration of the interactive nature of digital writing (detailed in Chapter Three) leads me to Lunsford's "Writing, Technologies, and the 5th Canon" (2006) and Lisa Ede's and Andrea Lunsford's, "Among the Audience: On Audience and New Literacies" (2009). In my view, these arguments work together to articulate both the need to embrace new media writing as a place of study and also rhetoric's ability to adapt to all writing situations, old, new, and in between. "Writing" (2006) is a revision of Lunsford's address to the Computers & Writing Conference in 2006 and does a marvelous job of pointing out the imperative of embracing new media studies. Much like I demonstrated via Plato in the last chapter, Lunsford emphasizes the increased value of rhetorical strategy and argues that new media is in many ways a truer version of Aristotle's rhetoric than text-based writing, in that it blends the carefully articulated thought of writing, and the delivery of oral speech. It is also at work in a public forum, akin to Aristotle's *publis*. I was lucky enough to attend Lunsford's talk at Texas Christian University a few years ago (2010) where she articulated much of this same argument. She has a knack for finding

the common ground and building on it, which is what she would argue makes us (rhet/compers) so well suited for taking on the job of theorizing new media and making it pedagogically useful. Lunsford ended her talk with a call to integrate new media writing post haste – resistance, she said, is based in a fear of knowing less than our students, echoing Stephanie Vie (2008) in "The Digital Divide." Lunsford made the excellent point that if "an old bird" like her can do it, anyone can.

"Among the Audience" (Ede & Lunsford, 2009) adds to this line of thinking by pointing out that new media has the potential to complicate our notion of audience and authorship, but that such work needs to be done, and we (compositionists) are best suited to do it. Ede and Lunsford also imply that many of our old rules will no longer apply – they report that the Stanford Writing Study has found that students do not think of text as owned by one individual and are more than willing to contribute to mash-ups of their work with others. If this is true (and my experience using social media in the classroom says it is) plagiarism and ownership will have to be reconsidered, and we will do well to give our students collaborative, problem-solving group projects.

Colin Gifford Brooke (2009) argues that we should re-think the canons of rhetoric, or rather that there should be a reciprocal relationship between rhetoric and new media where they inform and transform each other. The benefit, Brooks says, is we already have a familiarity with rhetoric that will make it easier to engage and theorize new media. Regardless of medium or genre, teaching writing boils down to audience and purpose. Everything else, including the author, is variable. As I see it, the more we train our students to anticipate and manipulate those variations, the more useful we are to students, the university, and the world at large. So, the philosophy that would shape the expansion of my hybrid pedagogy on a program level is as follows:

- The teacher's role is to coach students as they "try on" varied academic and public discourses.

- "Discourse" varies, so students should be exposed to as many different types as possible.

- Student learning improves with self-conscious, self-reflective practice. Teachers should encourage active reflection and provide students the tools to do it effectively. Students should understand how and why reflection works.

- Self-selected ethnographic research is a valuable tool in creating student-knowers and giving students "the right to speak."

- New media should be integrated purposefully to allow students to be critical users and to explore additional writing situations.

- Rhetorical strategy and analysis remain as excellent tools for teaching writing in multiple and varied situations. Audience and purpose are key concepts for writing successful texts.

Learning Outcomes

In 2008 the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) adopted the Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition. Since then the list has served as the foundation for best practices and curriculum design in writing programs nationwide. Indeed it is largely considered the gold standard of our collective values in the teaching of writing. In 2008 the CWPA amended the Outcomes Statement to address the teaching of writing in electronic contexts, adding an entirely new section entitled "Composing in Electronic Environments" as well as reference within some of the existing outcomes to digital medium and/or tools (see Figure 4-1). The addition of this section and its

- The uses of writing as a critical thinking method
- The interactions among critical thinking, critical reading, and writing
- The relationships among language, knowledge, and power in their fields

Processes

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
- Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading
- Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work
- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Learn to critique their own and others' works
- Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part
- Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- To build final results in stages
- To review work-in-progress in collaborative peer groups for purposes other than editing
- To save extensive editing for later parts of the writing process
- To apply the technologies commonly used to research and communicate within their fields

Knowledge of Conventions

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
- Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- Practice appropriate means of documenting their work
- Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation in their fields
- Strategies through which better control of conventions can be achieved

Composing in Electronic Environments

As has become clear over the last twenty years, writing in the 21st-century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing. Therefore, although the *kinds* of composing processes and texts expected from students vary across programs and institutions, there are nonetheless common expectations.

By the end of first-year composition, students should:

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- How to engage in the electronic research and composing processes common in their fields
- How to disseminate texts in both print and electronic forms in their fields

Figure 4-1: List of CWPA Learning Outcomes for FYC with "Composing in Electronic Contexts" in the Position of Lowest Priority.

subsequent inclusion in writing programs across the country go a long way toward

validating many of the claims I make in earlier chapters. While recognizing the regularity

of composing in electronic environments is a positive step toward embracing our role as

stewards of digital literacy, in truth it would be a challenge and a disservice *not* to

consciously address composing as a mostly electronic process at this time. In other

words, treating electronic composition as a low-priority add-on diminishes or ignores its

prevalence in our everyday lives. Further, as argued in Chapter Two, since the first-year

student is our primary audience, acknowledgment of our important role in retention would

be beneficial as well. Thus, I propose the CWPA outcomes should be revised again to

accommodate digital literacy and retention-minded pedagogy as more than an

afterthought. To that end, let's examine the current CWPA outcomes and how they might

be updated to more thoughtfully address today's writers and writing.

        In a digital world, many of the existing outcomes are simply differently executed

than they once were. Chapter Three discusses several aspects that are taught and

practiced more effectively in digital contexts and others that are new and revolutionary in

a digital setting. For example, the first two items on the CWPA list are "focus on a

purpose" and "respond to the needs of different audiences" (Council of Writing Program

Administrators, 2008, n.p.). (See Figure 4-2). Chapter Three details the myriad of ways

social media writing helps students grasp and practice the concept of shaping writing for

a specific audience. Yet, the only acknowledgement of the role digital contexts play in

addressing audience is buried under the "Processes" section of the list and states

students should be able to "use a variety of technologies to address a range of

audiences." My blogging assignment, detailed in earlier chapters, provides students with

both an immediate, tangible audience and also a specific purpose. Web 2.0 makes

readers and writers active in the process, both complicit in the final product. Anticipation

Rhetorical Knowledge

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Focus on a purpose
- Respond to the needs of different audiences
- Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
- Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- Understand how genres shape reading and writing
- Write in several genres

Figure 4-2: "Rhetorical Knowledge" Section of CWPA Learning Outcomes for FYC with No Direct Mention of Electronic Composing Tools.

of a live audience raises the stakes for the author while the reader has the opportunity to shape iterations both implicitly and explicitly. Together they work towards a common purpose. In other words, the role of audience in digital contexts is far more than process alone. It is a far more valuable component of the overall rhetorical situation.

While an interactive audience is one of the "magical moments" of the social media enabled classroom, it is also important that students recognize the differences between the roles of authors and readers in both print and new media contexts. The very last outcome included in the CWPA list, which might denote lack of value to some, is in my view the most poignant of all: Under the "Composing in Electronic Environments" section CWPA states that students should "understand and *exploit* the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the *affordances* available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts" (2008, n.p., my emphasis). At the very least the social media enabled hybrid course offers a plethora of different genres and situations to be explored and analyzed, compared and contrasted. In addition, digital writing provides students the opportunity to practice rhetorical strategies in an interactive forum, which Chapter Three argues goes a long way toward helping students identify and internalize

those variations for themselves. Perhaps more importantly, as the study data gathered from Group A (general population) illustrated, students are users and participants in digital culture whether or not it is an explicit part of the writing curriculum. A deep and rich understanding of new media writing as well as more traditional print-based writing is and will continue to be essential in the workplace. Thus, I contend what the CWPA includes last on a long list of FYC learning outcomes should imbue much greater pedagogical priority. I propose revising the first section "Rhetorical Knowledge" to look something like this:

Rhetorical Knowledge
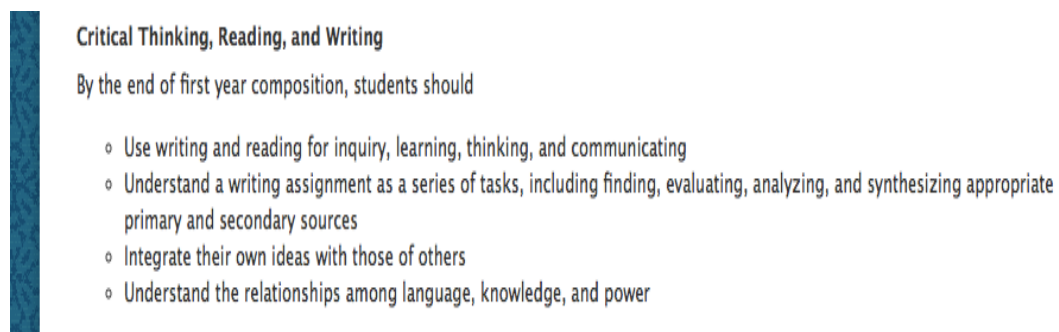
By the end of first year composition, students should

- Focus on a purpose

- Respond to the needs of different audiences

- Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations

- Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation

- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality

- Understand how genres, both print and digital, shape reading and writing

- Write in several genres, print and digital

- Understand and exploit differences in the rhetorical strategies for both print and electronic texts

- Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

- Understand how digital contexts alter the roles of readers and writers

These changes more accurately reflect today's writing situations. Additionally, revising the outcomes to integrate digital contexts into rhetorical knowledge garners more respect

for digital literacy and the role it must play as we work to meet the demands of today's marketplace.

Today, teaching rhetorical analysis and critical composition are much more valuable than ever before. It is essential that we pass on the skills of critical thinking and differentiation in digital contexts. The Critical Inquiry section of the CWPA list of FYC learning outcomes currently includes the following (See Figure 4-3):

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
- Integrate their own ideas with those of others
- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Figure 4-3: "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing" Section of CWPA Learning Outcomes.

And under "Composing in Electronic Contexts" we find:

- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources (CWPA, 2008, n.p.)

The latter definitely recognizes the complexity and necessity of a certain level of digital literacy. So I must question whether or not a student would be likely to locate and organize research material in any other way at this point? Last time I looked our library no longer has the option of anything other than an electronic search for materials. And even

if we assume a student might still go browse the stacks at the library, such a strategy would probably no longer guarantee a thoroughly researched topic. In other words, while our library has an extensive collection of books on every topic that seems to be updated and amended on a regular basis, today's typical first-year writing project would require electronic sources. I am honestly having a hard time imagining any research project that would not involve an electronic search at some point in the process. Thus, relegating an electronic research process to a separate section tacked on at the very end of the document seems uninformed and out of date. Admittedly, it was not so long ago instructors were pleading with their students to avoid electronic sources altogether. But surely those days are long gone now. In fact, given the prevalence of digitized information, the term "digital literacy" itself almost seems redundant and obsolete. If it does not already, to be literate at all will soon mean to be digitally literate for all intensive purposes.

As argued in Chapter Three, when valuable information and garbage occupy the same number of pixels on a screen, it is not enough to tell students about Wikipedia or how to gather reputable online sources; students must become critical users themselves in order to truly understand the worth and value of texts collected from any number of online sources. Students need to be taught how to conduct an electronic search, where to look, and how to evaluate information once it is found.

Not only is electronic research executed differently in a digital context, so are the specific tools available for researching and synthesizing. Chapter Three articulated the value of digital collection tools like Zotero for situating sources and mapping their relationships to each other. Other social gathering tools like Pinterest should be duly considered as well. Further, as the participatory nature of Web 2.0 continues to shape our culture, expectations regarding primary and secondary research will continue to

evolve. Defining primary and secondary research as well as the ways we use writing and reading for inquiry (blogging on a forum) and communicating (tweeting, Instagram, etc.) will continue to evolve as participatory media does. Thus, these essential skills can and should occupy a proportionate amount of our pedagogical aims. I suggest revising the Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing section of the CWPA outcomes as follows:

Critical Inquiry

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in print and digital contexts

- Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources in both print and digital forms

- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources

- Integrate their own ideas with those of others

- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Interestingly, the "Processes" section is the only one on the CWPA list that directly addresses electronic composing. (See Figure 4-4.) Perhaps this is a result of the fact that since the very early days of Computers & Composition, some thirty years ago, the process of composing on a computer has occupied space in the collective consciousness of compositionists. Indeed, included in the editors' first questions in the

Processes

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
- Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading
- Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work
- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Learn to critique their own and others' works
- Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part
- Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

Figure 4-4: "Processes" Section of CWPA Learning Outcomes, the Only One that Directly References Electronic Composing Tools.

first issue were several regarding the processes of writing and the teaching of writing on a computer (Selfe & Kiefer, 1983). (See Figure 4-5).

To make sure the point is driven home, the CWPA learning outcomes committee reiterated the process of composing on a computer in the very first desired outcome under the "Electronic" section: "By the end of first-year composition, students should use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts." Repeating process as a desired outcome, only this time acknowledging electronic contexts, seems unnecessarily redundant, especially given the opening statement in the same section that "writing in the 21st-century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing." (See Figure 4-6). Thus, the fact that computers are expected to be used to facilitate the process of composing is stated in the introduction, implied in the "Processes" section, then explicitly stated once more later in the document, under a separate category devoted to electronic environments. Perhaps a more efficient list might describe desired writing process outcomes in FYC as:

Dear Readers:

We hope you are as happy to be reading the first issue of COMPUTERS AND COMPOSITION as we are to be publishing it. This newsletter will provide a forum in which we can speak to each other about how to integrate computers and composition, teach more effectively with new approaches available because of computers, communicate about on-going computer projects, and hear about new software being written all over the country for different groups of writers. Moreover, because we plan to publish four issues a year, our correspondence can be regular and timely.

Like most of you, Kate and I have only recently come to appreciate the numbers of composition specialists who are interested in computers and their applications. In March of 1983 we met at THE FIFTH C: COMPUTERS, a special interest group held at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Detroit. There, we found over two hundred people, representing institutions of all sizes and teaching at all grade levels, interested in the very questions we had been wrestling with at Michigan Technological University and Colorado State University:

Can the computer be put to work in helping us teach composition? If so, how and in what areas? What can computers do better than composition teachers? At what are they less adept?

How can we integrate computers into our existing writing programs? How and where do they fit best? Do they fit at all?

Can we use computers to solve some of the perennial problems associated with composition programs--staffing, financial support, faculty work-loads, class size, training for graduate students and paraprofessionals?

How do our writing students react to computers? How do less-skilled writers differ from skilled writers as they use computer aids for writing? How does using a computer change the composing process? How do our faculty react to computers? How do computers affect the writing or teaching process?

What software is now available that would help us teach composition skills or guide students through the composing process? If none is appropriate, how do we write our own?

Will the spread of word-processing encourage faculty outside of English departments to help their students become better writers? What will the role of the composition teacher be in helping colleagues teach writing?

What steps are businesses and the computer industry taking that will affect our teaching of writing in the next ten to twenty years? Will research in artificial intelligence change the way we think about communicating with each other and with computers?

These, along with others too numerous to list, are the questions we will be dealing with in COMPUTERS AND COMPOSITION.

We would like to take this chance to encourage all interested readers to submit articles, announcements, and reviews of 500-1,000 words to the newsletter for publication. We can only succeed in sharing information if people take time to send us their ideas. We welcome information from teachers of all grades. Encourage your friends to subscribe and contribute reviews and articles; we look forward to an exciting year.

Cynthia L. Selfe
Kathleen E. Kiefer
Editors

Figure 4-5: Selfe, C. L., & Kiefer, K. E. (1983). Editorial. Computers and Composition, 1(1), 1.

Composing in Electronic Environments

As has become clear over the last twenty years, writing in the 21st–century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing. Therefore, although the *kinds* of composing processes and texts expected from students vary across programs and institutions, there are nonetheless common expectations.

By the end of first–year composition, students should:

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- How to engage in the electronic research and composing processes common in their fields
- How to disseminate texts in both print and electronic forms in their fields

Figure 4-6: "Composing in Electronic Environments" Section of CWPA Learning

Outcomes.

Processes

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts

- Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading in print and digital contexts

- Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work

- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes and those enabled by social media tools

- Learn to critique their own and others' works

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- Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part, including the ethics of digital writing and peer collaboration

The last item on the list in my processes section deserves focused attention. Balancing reliance on others with "doing their part" is something particularly important when teaching digital literacy and a unique challenge in digital environments when it is abundantly easy to copy/paste. We need to confront that head on and teach the value and importance of collaborating ethically. As Chapter Three discussed, with online collection and social bookmarking tools like Zotero, Google Scholar, Pinterest, Delicious, and yes, even EasyBib, collecting, mapping, and citing sources has never been easier. However, it is still up to the instructor and the program more broadly, to expose the students to correct use of these tools in support of academic research and collaboration standards. Further, if ethical and constructive peer collaboration is a desired learning outcome, as its inclusion on the CWPA list indicates, then we owe it to our students to teach them to collaborate with the most useful and up to date tools available. For Generation M, that means using social media purposefully as Vie (2008) and others (Balzhiser et al., 2011; R. Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011; Reynol Junco, 2012; Kitsis, 2008; McCool, 2011; Selwyn, 2009) have already indicated and my study confirms.

FYC as Introduction to 21st Century Research and Knowledge-Making

If the purpose of teaching writing in the first year of college is to introduce students to discourse communities and expose them to critical rhetorical analysis, a writing program should strive toward those goals in such a way that today's college student will find engaging and transferrable to their own academic goals. Social media is, thus, a crucial part of the equation. Given all that I have argued thus far, I think a writing

curriculum justified by current writing research is as follows. For illustration purposes I will use the current Texas state numbering system which assigns introductory first year courses as 1301, introductory second year courses as 2301, and so on:

1301 – Intro to Argument and Research.

This lands somewhere in between the existing first semester and second semester composition courses (1301/1302). The sequence would start with a discourse community (DC) ethnography. Students choose a DC and study it, preferably one where they are able to gain some critical distance. However, students have a great deal of choice in their selection of a community for study (something very familiar or less so) and advised of the rationale for and consequences of various choices. For example, if a student chooses a DC she has been a member of since early childhood, she may not be able to remember the early days of becoming a community member. This is something commonly seen in the typical "soccer kid" papers I have read over the years. Hence, it would be up to the student, should she make that choice, to compensate by interviewing newly initiated members of the selected community. On the flip side, choosing a community that is entirely new might be too great a learning curve for one semester's work. Students are free, however, to make their own choice. One goal of the assignment would be to make note of print/F2F vs. digital communication amongst the selected community. Assignments then move toward a short research paper that may stem from the DC ethnography project, i.e., continuing with the soccer kid example, perhaps a researched argument supporting team sports as a valuable educational tool for children.

All the while, students reflect on learning and participate in interactive online conversations with peers and instructors, documenting their experiences and how course concepts (audience analysis, rhetorical strategy, research methods) vary in multiple contexts. When students document their discourse community ethnographies in a shared

online classroom forum, students do not just learn about one discourse community, they learn about twenty. An additional group project might be to compare and contrast several DCs and share those findings with the whole class, either in person or online. The hybrid environment allows students and instructors flexibility to make use of either option or both.

Unfortunately, strong student resistance to requirements impedes learning for all. There is always someone, if not several people, who think that writing class is stupid and that they do not need the course in order to become a {insert STEM career here}. Crowley (1998) says that this negative attitude infects the learning environment more often than not. Chapter Three illustrated social media and hybrid learning both work to increase student engagement. It is a much shorter leap for students to make when we help them find the ties between "life" and school, between their future career goals and strong critical writing skills. Further, hands-on, problem-based learning has been shown to increase student engagement and student learning. Simply put, engaged students stay enrolled and learn something while they are there.

2301 – Situated Writing.

I think this course would work best if it were increased to 4 or 5 credits, thereby accommodating a multitude of possible situated writing. This is an expansion of the theme-based 1302 course (allowing students to choose general topics of interest) and might include heavy new media work (i.e. including design and HTML), service learning, writing in the sciences, and so on. The idea is to allow time and space for actual writing work, out in the field, hands-on practice, and to reward the extended effort on the part of students and teachers.

A central assignment that may help define this course is a situated service learning project. For example, each student enrolled in this second-year composition

course will self-place from a list of service learning options and/or community partners, slots for four-five students per group. Up to five students work in each small group, volunteering time on-site to gain experience with the community partner. They will also research the community organization, the groups of people served by the organization, and issues surrounding the community partner in order to assess the real-world rhetorical situation, yielding community partner approved deliverables and a final researched position paper.

For example, one possible community partner may be the local chapter of the Boys and Girls Club. A small group of students who have selected this organization will volunteer their time at the club, research the purpose and goals of the Boys and Girls Club, plus the community it serves. Together the group will create a product for the organization (promotion video, brochure, poster, or other product as determined in collaboration with their community partner).

In addition, each individual student writes a researched position "paper" (medium of choice) that explores an issue closely related to the community organization: perhaps how poverty affects children, the impact of absentee fathers, or the plight of single parents searching for safe, affordable after school care. Meanwhile, as the project progresses, in order to satisfy the tenet of self-reflection within service learning projects, the students document field time using social media. They might post selfies to Instagram, blog about their experiences, and/or post YouTube videos detailing group work. These social media exercises make up in part, a researcher log documenting each students' evolution as a writer and participant-researcher.

In this way the sophomore-level course encourages public writing and active citizenship at a time when the student is mature enough to make transferrable connections between thinking, research, writing, and project-based learning. The

instructor's role is to coach the students as they experience writing in action for themselves.

3301-Writing in the Disciplines.

I agree with WID supporters (Bazerman, 2002; Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Smit, 2007) that it is essential for students to absorb the conventions and expectations of their major disciplines. However, the teaching of writing at this time is not valued by too many of our colleagues in other departments. Further, while I am certain our colleagues in other departments value the idea of producing capable student writers, generally speaking, they do not have the training to teach writing, often focusing primarily on sentence-level grammar concerns first. Therefore, it would be advisable to collaborate with other departments to develop third and fourth year writing courses in the disciplines and an advantageous opportunity for our graduate students as well, offering opportunities to specialize in the study and teaching of specific discourse communities and to spread the word about teaching writing and digital literacy. I will address collaboration opportunities for GTAs in more detail in the next section. In any case, this course would be primarily housed in Writing departments, supported by appropriate outreach to other departments.

David Smit (2007) proposes a three-stage writing curriculum for many of the same reasons I do, such as de-electrifying the first-year requirement debate and to extend writing throughout the baccalaureate program. However, Smit's curriculum involves neither digital literacy goals nor a retention-minded focus. Further, his plan provides for a writing in the disciplines type course at the second year and leaves the hands on practice till the third year, arguing students should be "in effect, outsiders looking on from a distance, studying, analyzing, critiquing, trying to understand the discipline as a *subject*" (Smit, 2007, p. 190). However, in my view, the participatory

nature of social media has already transformed the reading and writing experience in such a way that today's student expects to participate, report, and analyze at once. Additionally, I believe providing hands-on writing experience in the second year will help sell students on the value of writing early enough that they should become more critically conscious writers much earlier in their academic careers. I believe this would be a valuable area for future research into learning and participatory culture.

The point of my proposed curriculum is not to offer three courses on writing, each with a digital bent. The point is to encourage institutions to integrate digital literacy and student-centered pedagogy as often as possible throughout the bachelor's degree. The courses described here tie writing, technology, and retention-minded pedagogy to each other. In addition, they tie writing courses more tightly to the overall baccalaureate education by making direct in-roads to specific discourse communities, drawing on the type of disciplinary expertise students crave. This is something else that is beneficial given the recent attention of business moguls to communication skills, or lack thereof, amongst college grads (Holland, 2013; L. Ray, n.d.; Russell, 2011; Sabhlok, 2013). Today, good communication equates to good communication skills within digital environments. Thus, this is our cultural moment, where, like compositionists have done in the past, we must work to meet the needs of the populations we serve and prepare them for the world(s) they will enter.

Graduate Training

Compositionists have an obligation to the graduate students in the field as well. There is a crisis of entirely too many graduate students and not enough quality full-time jobs for them to occupy upon graduation. However, I believe my proposed revisions to writing programs can help alleviate this problem considerably. As Sharon Crowley (1998)

observed, a first-year requirement for every student means dozens of sections must be staffed and there is no alternative but to rely on underpaid adjuncts and GTAs. Further, she argues the general requirement allows other teachers and other disciplines to ignore writing (they are supposed to already know it) which results in a failure to teach those specific discourses. However, I think it may be the first-year series that is the bigger issue, rather than requiring writing itself. My curriculum above would replace the two course series in the first year with one course the first year, one second, and one third. Thus, the more advanced courses would legitimately require more specialized and experienced instructors. Additionally, changing the requirement to include second and third year courses with more hands-on discoursal and/or cultural studies work should be more appealing to contracted faculty and create more jobs in specialized discourse areas.

David Smit (2007) envisions institutions that have designated writing experts in each department, possibly trained at least in part within composition studies. He would argue for the MA to be a terminal degree for the general teaching of writing, say for first-year courses and secondary institutions, and would "reserve the PhD, then, as a specialized degree dedicated primarily to research in the discourse practices of particular communities and to research in the training of writing teachers for those communities" (Smit, 2007, p. 198). I agree with his proposal regarding a terminal MA degree, although I think that PhDs could easily specialize in something other than the discourse practices of particular communities. However, doctoral study should be limited in some way if only to add prestige to the degree. I would also like to add that digital literacy within disciplines will need to be included within such realms of study. In other words, our continued work to research various discourse communities must necessarily require deep consideration of social media networks within those DCs. Our graduate students must be taught digital

literacy and digital pedagogy in order to prepare them to teach 21st century

undergraduate students.

We would be wise to note that today's graduate students, much like today's

undergraduate students, are already immersed in social media and participatory culture.

Thus, to a large degree graduate training may involve a tacit approval to let them do what

comes naturally to them, to follow their digital instincts in pedagogical design. This

means, of course, those responsible for training graduate students must have the

courage to let them explore emerging media applications of pedagogical theory.

Stephanie Vie (2008) notes that faculty members' fear of not being the expert may be a

key factor in resistance to integrating digital pedagogy in first-year coursework. It seems

likely to me the same is true of graduate coursework. Our goal then, in composition

pedagogy courses will be to offer guiding principles for effectively teaching digital literacy;

the philosophy and means of hybrid and online learning, including the fostering of student

engagement; examples of what effective digital pedagogy looks like; and exploration of

the practical means for implementing "best practices" within digital contexts.

In general, I am an advocate for an overall reduction of new English/Rhetoric

grad students, at least at the doctorate level, until the liberal arts regain favor and

funding. I think it is unethical to continue to admit doctoral candidates when there are

fewer and fewer jobs for them upon degree completion. That said, I do believe integrating

digital literacy and arguing for our important role in student engagement and retention

(see more in next section) will help turn the tide on the overall value of writing education

in baccalaureate education. Since we must be ready for when that day finally comes, the

work of revising graduate training programs begins now. My proposed changes are as

follows:

1. Teaching Assistantships will be offered to PhD students only, with the possible

exception of a limited course load for terminal-degree seeking MA students who intend to teach at the secondary or community college level. It seems to me that this is a general guideline for most doctoral degree granting programs but commitment to that guideline varies widely. I was awarded a teaching assistantship my very first semester as a full-time MA graduate student and there were several MA students in the TA training course the summer I started as a GTA in my PhD program.

2. Training plan:

    a. TA training commonly occurs the summer prior to the graduate student's first or second year in the program. Since this is a convenient model, I would continue summer training but modify it to be a five-credit course that models the National Writing Project summer institute: An intense course where GTAs are immersed in the writing they will teach, and learn in the hybrid environment they will host. In other words, graduate students in this course will be required to participate in a course blog discussion, much like the one described in earlier chapters, and to complete digital research projects. Discussion topics would include composition and pedagogical theory, of course, with several discussions focused specifically on acquiring digital literacy and others specifically focused on fostering learning communities and student engagement.

    b. In order to support new graduate students' acclimation to the program and foster collaborative relationships throughout the doctoral cohort, I would enlist a handful of existing graduate instructors to participate in training too. This accomplishes several goals: 1) It is a great way to provide mentoring opportunities for the existing graduate students while

providing peer mentors for the newbies. 2) Involving senior GTAs provides good experience that is CV-worthy. It also extends their training in teaching with technology, which, in the transitional years of a new digital writing program would help spread new values and goals up the ranks. 3) Because graduate students are already minimally compensated for their work, I would try to get a stipend for them to participate as mentors in the course. However, another option might be a cross-listing for more experienced GTAs that helps satisfy required doctoral coursework and/or the graduate school's pedagogy certificate requirements. Such a cross listing might be called "Professional Mentoring" or "Teaching with Technology" depending on the emphasis.

3. All TA training courses will also be cross-listed in other departments as part of a university-wide pedagogy certificate for graduate students. The summer and fall courses will be open to all grad students in all disciplines, which theoretically, helps to fund the program. Additional benefits are:

   a. The NWP Model works to extend message of writing education, student engagement, and digital literacy campus-wide.

   b. It offers senior GTAs broader exposure to various discourse communities they may decide to study in depth as part of the PhD program.

   c. Partnering with other programs may lead to additional funding opportunities for our graduate students. For example, our GTAs might collaborate with their GTAs to teach student-centered digital writing pedagogy within the disciplines. It might work best as a cross-training exchange program: we send some our students to them for discipline specific study; they send some of their students to us for pedagogical

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training. Advanced GTAs could also help teach the third year writing course under the supervision of a faculty member.

Cross-listing TA training is a good marketing strategy for Composition Studies. We should work to involve ourselves directly with the pedagogical training of graduate students campus wide. We might work with university administrators and/or the graduate school to require a pedagogical certificate to be earned by all GTAs or academic-track doctoral candidates across disciplines. Such a plan makes the institution's overall graduate program more marketable, a win-win for all. A certificate program might include a teaching writing/digital literacy course, a discipline specific teaching course, and an educational leadership or adult learning theory course, taught by the education department.

Assessment

Writing program administrators know assessment is a necessary part of budget justification, especially when requesting additional funding. As much as we might collectively loath the process, it is reasonable and quite common for investors to require evidence of the likely success of a new idea before providing capital. Thus, any new program, especially one working with relatively new methods, such as social-media enabled blended learning, should put quality assessment procedures in place from the beginning. It will be important to gather data to illustrate our strengths and to address any weaknesses.

For example, I would suggest doing a co-assessment (during the pilot year) to evaluate the new outcomes and new curriculum alongside the old program and outcomes, thereby yielding comparative data. Such a plan saves valuable time and also makes it possible to speak with authority about any recommendations for change. From

the beginning, writing program administrators should document the entire process on integrating retention-minded digital pedagogy, both for replication in other departments and at other universities, and also to justify the increased budget and support from higher-ups and other investors.

The Fix-It Shop: FYC as Service Course

As compositionists, we value the teaching of writing. We see the connection between good writers and successful students. We also know that developing as a writer takes plenty of practice and excellent coaching, not unlike the star athletes who are so revered at many colleges. And so we expect a decent wage and a modicum of respect to follow. We have, within our own journals and conferences, done the work of demonstrating over and over again how FYC benefits students, working on a response to an evolving digital age, while theorizing new knowledge centers and effective learning models. Unfortunately, we have not done a very good job of marketing our knowledge, our research and pedagogy to others.

I do not think it is any secret that our work is undervalued: all but a select few in the field earn far less than their education and work ethic should demand. Many hold contingent or graduate student positions and there are too few advanced (senior-level) positions available to justify the number of graduating PhDs each year. In addition, shifts to distance education risk further undervaluing our work, while the dollars earned by FYC departments seem to be funneled to others. Like many other industries, the digital age promises a brighter future, and also threatens to exacerbate existing problems. Which is why we are beholden to take action now, to direct such digitally motivated trends within our field while we still can. Further, I believe, as I have argued in other chapters, that

doing so will not only prevent our bad situation from getting worse, but indeed, has the potential to raise the status of the field.

However, since we often struggle to agree about the future of Composition, facing such immense challenges and rising above them seems nearly impossible. Between calls to end Composition Studies altogether (Crowley, 1998; Smit, 2007; Yarbrough, 1999), in-fighting regarding WAC/WID (Downs & Wardle, 2007; Wardle, 2009) and other re-imaginings of FYC, plus our "failure to thrive," as I call it, amid the paradigmatic shift to digital, it is a wonder anything gets done at all. No wonder the folks in other departments have a hard time understanding what it is we do over here – we do not seem to be certain ourselves. In the remainder of this chapter I will explore a few of the problems currently facing the field of Composition Studies that may be alleviated with my proposed program and some concerted effort toward marketing ourselves. I feel it is important to illustrate how these problems interlace and exacerbate each other, so that we can identify good points of intervention and make comprehensive strides toward change.

Stop that Stinking STEM-Only Thinking

On the first day of class, I ask my students in what ways English 1301, writing, and/or communication fit into their overall plans as scholars and learners. Inevitably, I receive quite a few papers that express the uselessness of writing education, and/or their frustration with core classes generally. In the eyes of many students, core courses, including FYC, do not lead directly to a degree in their chosen field and are, therefore, a waste of money. This sentiment is not unexpected, given the nationwide push to invest in STEM fields as well as the current discourse about the difference between the value and the cost of higher education. The media erroneously reports that STEM fields are

somehow "more employable" than the humanities, which in turn gives the false

impression that academic/industrial fields are mutually exclusive from each other. The

message delivered is that if one wants to be a doctor, she should study only disease and

treatment. Never mind that doctors must compassionately communicate with patients,

publish research, persuade colleagues to embrace new procedures, and so forth.

So why is it that so many of our colleagues in other disciplines fall prey to the

false dichotomy of science vs. humanities? I am so tired of maddening questions like,

"What are you guys doing over there in the English Department anyway?" or "Can't you

just teach them good grammar?" I am tired of hearing colleagues wail about student

ineptitude based on how many verb tense errors they catch in papers. As Smit remarks,

> Worse yet, the perception that anyone with college coursework in
> English can teach writing may also assume that writing is nothing more
> than a collection of artificial rules and formulas we have inherited from
> the nineteenth century, … rules and formulas that get repeated over and
> over from elementary school through college, until even educated people
> think they are true (2007, pp. 206–207).

In many ways I think the belief that writing instruction is recitation of a specific set of rules

speaks to the dominant power structure's relentless grip on education. Composition

researchers know there is far more to developing literacy, digital or otherwise, than that.

Yet, the sad truth is *we have failed*. We have failed to speak up and point out our

many ties to STEM. We have failed to collaborate with other disciplines in the humanities

in order to highlight all the wonderful things that come from creative, innovative,

analytical, rhetorically-tuned minds. We have failed to impress upon university

administration our vital role in yielding intelligent, self-reflective, problem-solving

graduates who can interpret text and images and write a well-reasoned argument to

support their position on *x*, *y*, and *z*. We have let ignorant media pundits, hell-bent on

spreading unfounded headlines, go unanswered. And I think a large part of the failure is

that we have not articulated our arguments in a way that colleagues, administrators, and employers find appealing.

Of course, the reality is, even if they do not know it, our more science-focused colleagues need us. However, it is *our job* to remind them of that fact. We must point out it is in writing that great thinkers emerge, proposals are approved, projects are funded, policies are written, and business gets done. And that this work is difficult and takes sustained effort for even the most experienced writer. Plus, in our digitally interactive world, writing is even more important than ever before. Emails, texts, status updates, tweets, and posts all require the ability to write. Let's actively point to the ways the day to day work of composition supports all things STEM: critical thinking, problem solving, rhetorical analysis, academic research, discourse analysis, revision, self-reflection, persuasion, reasoning, process development, textual and visual interpretation, collaboration, accepting and giving constructive criticism, diplomatic discussion, supporting claims with evidence… I could go on and on about the numerous ways FYC courses provide the foundation to a well-rounded college education. Without the practice and development of the skills listed above, colleges would produce assembly-line workers, not scholars.

In my view, first-year composition is uniquely positioned to greet students and direct attention toward the values inherent in a well-rounded higher education. Composition is the "gateway course" beginning a longer initiation process, where students are introduced to writing as a social practice and knowledge generator. FYC opens a gate that will lead to more specialized discourses, whether that is a postcolonial theory course or aeronautical engineering. Chapters Two and Three demonstrate the role of social media enabled hybrid learning in fostering student engagement. Thus, FYC plays the invaluable role of getting students "hooked" on critical thinking and rhetorical

analysis, plus entrenching them in ongoing conversations (campus, academic), and opening the gate to the multi-disciplinary, collaborative, interactive learning that is beneficial for a multitude of disciplines and employers. We can become participant scholars and help our students do the same.

I propose we work actively to reframe composition studies and writing in general in the university at large. I envision cross-disciplinary, cross grade-level workshops and seminars that get teachers in the same room talking about writing. Such a setting would provide the opportunity to demonstrate what we do, its value, and to advertise our goals, both intellectual and pedagogical. It would also go a long way to help us learn what other departments value in writing and encourage them to more actively teach their own discourse communities.

To that end, we owe it to ourselves to become our own ambassadors. I would like to propose borrowing an idea from the National Writing Project (NWP), which has made incorporating writing across the curriculum its mission. There are NWP chapters across the country, but not all of them work actively on college campuses. Their main focus is promoting writing instruction at the K-12 level, though I do not see why WPAs and composition instructors cannot pick up that torch and run with it. National Writing Project's teaching consultants could serve as an effective model for us. The basic premise of a National Writing Project Consultant is to train teachers in the pedagogical benefits of including writing in any curriculum so that those teachers will become ambassadors for writing instruction on their own campuses and in their own districts. After completing an intense summer course, teachers are certified to teach in-service courses themselves. They then work with other NWP consultants to conduct in-service sessions, develop writing projects, collaborate with other teachers to develop writing-intense curricula, and generally embody teaching writing expertise in their districts.

First-year composition instructors and Writing Center tutors would make perfect writing ambassadors to other departments and programs on campus. We already require our own graduate students to take intense pedagogy courses. How hard would it be to offer pedagogical training for the graduate students of other departments? And I have already articulated mutually beneficial TA training plans above.

Similarly, we regularly conduct in-service training for our own faculty. Why not extend invitations to faculty in other departments as well? I imagine university administrators would salivate over the idea of offering pedagogical certificates to graduate students and faculty, as evidence of their educational rigor. In-service pedagogical training could become part of the tenure review process.

And this kind of thinking would serve the dual purpose of advocating for writing instruction across the disciplines as well as building awareness and respect for our expertise. A recent article in *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, details how Matthew Schultz, the Writing Center director at Vassar College, instituted this kind of thinking and, in his words, successfully "[took] on the status of scholarly collaborators rather than remedial service providers" (2013, p. 5). Schultz describes how his writing center consultants conducted seminars, collaborated with faculty in other departments, and teamed up with administration assessment efforts in order to raise the status of the writing lab itself and the perception of writing instruction across the campus. This past year I applied his suggestions on behalf of our Writing Center, by launching a layered marketing approach and actively reaching out to faculty in other disciplines. It does not take much to imagine FYC programs enacting similar endeavors.

Faculty outreach should remind colleagues that writing for most people, novice or expert, is a challenging and ongoing learning process. Inspired by Schultz's work at Vassar, this past year I visited twenty-some departments on behalf of my home

institution's Writing Center. These visits went a long way toward combatting the service stigma. In each my goals were to advocate for helping students become better writers and to inform faculty of specific Writing Center amenities available to support graduate students and the teaching of writing. In the beginning of my presentation I asked faculty to remember their own experiences in learning to write in their disciplines. This strategy was remarkably effective. Heads nodded as I pointed to common assumptions about academic writing, like those illustrated by one of my favorite Calvin & Hobbes cartoons (Watterson, 1993). (See Figure 4-7). During the question and answer session after my
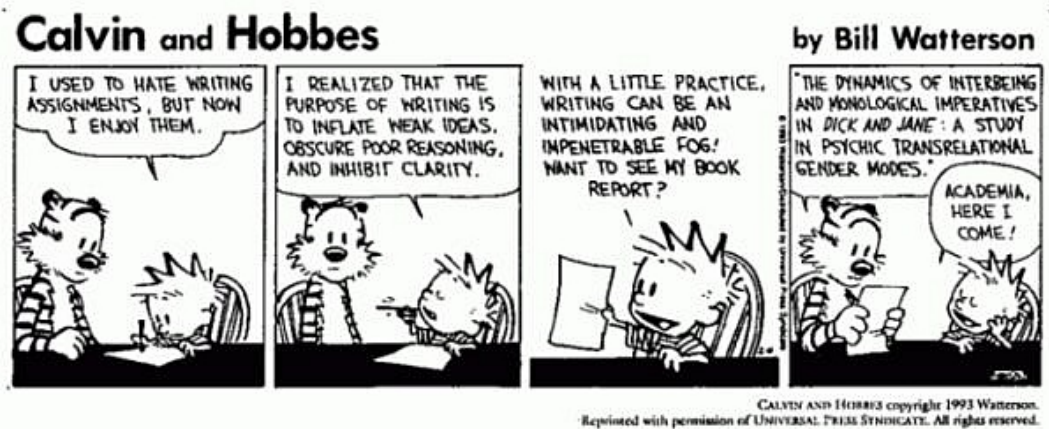
Figure 4-7: Watterson, B. (1993). Academia, Here I Come. Retrieved from

http://www15.uta.fi/FAST/US7/NAMES/images/calvin.jpg

presentation, a common question was "how can I save time editing my students' papers?" How happy these teaching faculty were when I explicitly stated they should not be editing their students' papers at all; so gratified to learn that evidence shows editing for students robs the students of the chance to learn how to do it themselves! As the presentation continued, I would briefly discuss methods for pointing out student errors once on a paper and asking the student to learn to correct it on her own. I also shared

simple editing strategies they could pass on to students in class or in conference. Later, during our first annual faculty open house, many of these same faculty members commented on how much they learned in my short presentation and that they were already putting such strategies to work with their own graduate students. Turns out they crave such knowledge, they just did not know who to ask before I visited their department meetings.

These meetings also resulted in several collaborations with other departments to teach discipline-specific writing workshops: We worked with faculty in Chemistry, Bioengineering, and Urban Planning to develop workshops that were made widely available to all graduate students within those disciplines. It was a tremendously successful year.

Thus, I propose creating summer workshops for faculty, providing a crash course in the teaching and grading of writing, so that even existing faculty start to get the message. If we build it, they will come, provided we let them know why they should. Shultz also specifically mentions blatant self-promotion in faculty meetings, online, and in various student publications, which serves as a reminder that the work itself is not enough: The target audience has to hear about it too in terms that make sense to them. In any case, this is a good opportunity to work alongside the Writing Center to disseminate our collective message.

If we are honest with ourselves, we might be forced to acknowledge that the "service stigma" exists within our own departments as well. There are many English departments which privilege literature and cultural studies over the work of rhetoric and composition. Perhaps this is part of what Crowley (1998) pointed to in her assertions that the first-year composition requirement is doing the field no favors. Surely, many of us have heard English literature or theory colleagues bemoaning an FYC teaching

assignment. Perhaps they would simply rather teach material related to their own research. But let's not be naïve. There is also more than a whiff of condescension there, implications that teaching composition is somehow beneath them or boring, tedious work. Compositionists should work within the English department to emphasize the importance and value of the writing series.

Further, WPAs might ask department chairs to encourage (require?) faculty to teach composition at least once a year. This would keep them engaged in the program for the sake of the students and the GTAs whom they are responsible for mentoring. In my opinion, faculty cannot appreciate the work of composition unless they do it themselves. It is far too easy to forget what it is like to be a novice writer. Fortunately, it seems likely that the type of situated writing for second and third year students described above would be far more appealing to established faculty members, perhaps even an opportunity to explore the kind of writing they value and why.

A Word on Online Education and the Contingent Labor Problem

A big part of the ongoing labor problem facing FYC is that the majority of courses are taught by contingent faculty and graduate teaching assistants, who earn shamelessly low salaries and receive few, if any, benefits for their work, which is equal in nearly every way to the work done by non-contingent faculty at any given university. It could very well be that without prompt intervention, we might unintentionally escalate the devaluation of our academic capital and continue to make ourselves even less relevant in the eyes of the administration than we already are. Academics must come to terms with the fact that higher education is a market system susceptible to the cost of capital and the fickle perceptions of the consumer. As Anson (2013) noted, via fictional WPA Sylvia, people do not want to pay for outdated institutions or continue to invest in systems that no longer

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meet the demand of society. Currently, the market demands lower cost education delivered in more convenient, more accessible packaging: online content. Even in the F2F classroom, the trend is moving toward the "paperless classroom" with online assignment distribution and submission via platforms like Blackboard and WebCT. As the university continues to evolve and expand into the "World Wide Web," we must carefully direct this development, especially our role as instructors and maintaining or reducing student-teacher ratios appropriate for a writing-intensive course.

For example, colleges will be forced to give a great deal of consideration to what Anant Agarwal, president of the Harvard/MIT collaboration EdX calls "the value-add [each] campus offers" to tuition-paying students (Hockenberry, 2013). The rush to enroll paying college students in distance education is not the only aspect of the economic problems brought on by the rise of distance education. Consider EdX, the non-profit online collaboration between Harvard and MIT, which "enrolled" over 150,000 people in one computer science course in the fall of 2013. MOOCs, or massive open online courses, are the latest development in distance education and with big benefactors like Harvard and MIT, educators really cannot afford to ignore their exploration of the online format. EdX is tuition-free and is not part of a specific degree program as of yet, so perhaps the direct economic impact is still a few years away. While courses are offered on everything from Aerodynamics to Water Treatment, and students can register for whatever interests them, currently only a "certificate of mastery" is offered upon course completion. So, at the moment, I doubt EdX will draw off more than a handful of tuition-paying students, and it will largely function as an "enrichment" option for those exploring elective interests.

Nevertheless, I am not the only one who is worried about the future economic impact, threatening to further reduce the capital of college instructors. Professors have

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been banding together to voice their concerns about EdX specifically, and MOOCs

generally: The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently published an open letter to

Harvard's celebrity Professor Michael Sandel[10] from the professors in the Philosophy

Department at San Jose State, who object to the possible economic impact such open

and free courses may have on the already strained job market as well as pedagogical

implications such as perpetuating the values of a mostly white, wealthy institution like

Harvard (2013). In addition, fifty-eight Harvard professors wrote a letter to Michael Smith,

Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard, regarding EdX and HarvardX. The

letter states that their questions "range from faculty oversight of HarvardX to the impact

online courses will have on the higher education system as a whole" (Armitage, et. al.,

2013).[11] While the letter is brief and does not outright say so, one can speculate that this

feared impact on the "system as a whole" will be an economic one.

In a digital age we must contend with greater pressures to offer online classes.

Administrators, enticed by the unlimited "space" of an online environment are pushing

department heads to increase enrollment and reduce the student/instructor ratio. The

online classroom has no physical limitations: the class "space" allows for unlimited

students, as long as they are willing to pay for enrollment. We have all heard or seen the

recent barrage of radio and television ads for this "online university" or that "online

program." To say it is a current trend would be an understatement indeed. Universities

across the country are rushing to stake their claims on the distance education frontier,

like pioneers on a gold rush. Say there are one hundred students enrolled in the typical

online course. If those same one hundred students were enrolled in a traditional face-to-

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[10] Sandel is one of many professors who has designed courses for EdX, but has long given
lectures to auditorium-sized classrooms on Harvard's Cambridge campus. His website bosts over
1,000 attendees at his recent lecture on Justice (http://www.justiceharvard.org/).
[11] On the other hand, there is also a lot of potential in the EdX model that could be replicated in
paid-for online, hybrid, and F2F courses, especially in the social aspects of such courses, as
discussed in Chapter Three.

face (F2F) class instead, they would have to meet weekly in a room that could hold one hundred students, just in case everyone showed up on the same day. Physical space comes with an overhead cost: lighting, heating, cleaning, maintenance, and so forth. That cost is eliminated in an online scenario – deferred to the students themselves, actually, because they are still sitting in a physical space somewhere, only they are paying the bill in some form or fashion. Needless to say, for administrators the possibility of decreasing or deferring the cost of overhead and allowing for an instant enrollment increase is like dangling a syringe full of heroin in front of an addict. Who is going to resist that kind of temptation?

In the meantime, if this online course is an FYC course, that's one hundred students versus the writing-intensive cap of twenty-four at my university. One person cannot grade one hundred students' papers, and this offers WPAs and department heads a useful argument for maintaining student-teacher ratios in the online environment. But some campuses are side-stepping that rationale by taking advantage of the traditional TA system: paying one person to be the "Instructor of Record" and four TAs to do the grading. Currently, in the traditional F2F twenty-some student cap model, for every one hundred students there are four or five educators managing their own courses and operating as the Instructor of Record, and theoretically, getting paid for that level of work (ignoring for the moment that most of them would likely be underpaid contingent faculty or GTAs). In the online model there is often only one higher paid instructor and four low-paid assistants, limiting wages most obviously, but also limiting the opportunity to develop courses and build resumés. Over time, there could be even lower demand for full-time instructors, exacerbated by the fact that there is little incentive for senior faculty to retire. In other words, unless we take control of the rush toward distance education, we are

going to find ourselves on the fast track to justifiably lower wages and even fewer job prospects.

Let me try saying that another way: Right now I think most people would say that our low wages and contingent faculty situation is unjustified, given how much we do and how well we do it. Theoretically, whether it actually happens or not, there is an argument to be made that all "Instructors of Record" should be paid roughly the same because of the job description: There is no physical difference between my teaching English 1302 and my faculty mentor teaching English 1302, right? Aside from the usual arguments for higher pay for those with more experience or more training, our teaching duties are the same. But on the other hand, if I signed up to be the TA in one of these online class situations, my job description might be very different than the one for my faculty mentor's position, assuming he is the Instructor of Record in this example. He could legitimately argue that his job requires more skill, especially if it involves developing a course schedule, a reading syllabus and instruction modules. If my only responsibility is the grading, it is, in the eyes of many administrators, the grunt work, a lower-skilled job, and thus, can justifiably earn a lower wage.

This problem intensifies further if courses are pre-packaged and standardized, something else that is increasingly common and presented as a means for easing the burden of over-worked, underpaid faculty. I have already discussed by recent experience teaching a pre-packaged online version of English 1301. I simply administered the course: posted reminders, communicated with students, and did the grading. I must admit I am conflicted about this idea: on the one hand, I was grateful that I could pay more attention to my long overdue dissertation; but on the other, it felt restrictive and somewhat disingenuous to be grading assignments that I did not design myself. The online model threatens to solidify what is already a really bad situation for compositionists.

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Going forward, we must take a much more hands-on role in developing online-only education and making sure it meets our standards of student-centered education. Since research in our own and other disciplines demonstrates the pedagogical advantages of hybrid learning, it should be our major focus. Hybrid learning addresses administrative desires for more flexible, cost effective, and accessible education. It is also a naturally student-centered approach in comparison to online-only and traditional face-to-face models. By making ourselves the experts in delivering the best pedagogical model, it will become far easier to argue for additional funding, perhaps by way of interdisciplinary endeavors.

Show Us the Money

In his call for conference proposals, Howard Tinberg, 2012 CCCC Program Chair, reminds us of our expansive commitment to the work of writing and writers, broadly conceived (2012). Pointing to recent trends toward the privatization of higher education and the fast-tracking of students to finish their degrees post-haste, Tinberg asks the field to reconsider our public work as composition scholars and how we might "reinvigorate our commitment to assist all writers." He also points toward the field's own compliance in the reduction of support and resources for first-year courses asking "how might our field enhance the status of first-year composition both within higher education and among the public?" Finally, Tinberg's call further questions how New Media might help us reach these goals and "enhance the public work of composition." In my opinion, New Media is indeed part of the solution, but the greater problem is one of economics and marketing. In my opinion, First-Year Composition must carefully consider its place within the university and its role in the academic marketplace. If education is an investment in our society's future, it would behoove us to give some consideration to

maximizing return on said investment. It may be that the answer to the *big* problems of

supplying new invigoration to an entire academic discipline can be reached by re-

branding the small work of classroom pedagogy in the first-year series, based on what

FYC instructors already provide and students gain from it. By documenting our success

on the classroom level, particularly in the area of student retention, we can reach the

middle: administrators and policy makers who "value" our work in the form of salaries and

departmental budgets. Student retention is a language administrators understand.

The economic state of FYC leaves much to be desired, literally. Compositionists

earn the lowest salaries in the campus community and there are well-documented labor

issues for contingent faculty who are often enlisted to staff section after section of the

first-year required course. Colleagues in other departments do not often respect our

work, suggesting that FYC serves a remedial need for the under-educated. This is in

spite of our best efforts to re-frame perceptions of the teaching of writing as an essential

element of the development of critical thinking for all students (Adler-Kassner, 2008;

Rhodes, 2010). In other words, many have argued that while the teaching of writing is no

doubt important, the required course places English in a position of servitude amongst

college faculty (Bazerman, 2002; Crowley, 1998; Dobrin, 2011; Fox, 2002). In my view,

aligning with university retention efforts should be a major selling point with

administrators and colleagues as we work to re-brand composition studies and FYC.

Meanwhile, universities across the country are investing billions into widespread

retention efforts targeting the first-year student, given that research shows the first year is

the most vulnerable year for those who fall into "at-risk" categories. On my own campus,

the administration invested in the creation of a new University College designed to

support the first-year student and increase retention rates. The new University College

has been praised by the Board of Regents and held up as a model for the Texas state

college system. To my knowledge, the English Department and the Writing Program had little involvement in the planning process of the new first-year center. Yet, our department was stripped of computer classrooms and impacted by harsh budget cuts as all departments had to "tighten up" in order to pay for the new University College that does little more than what we already do in our FYC classrooms. In my opinion, this was a missed opportunity for our department and our writing program.

I believe the problem that faces writing programs is one of economics, and the solution will require drawing capital investments and adapting to a new academic business model. I expect that many of my readers will cringe at the idea of catering to the almighty tuition dollar. Rest assured that my proposal is a bit more complex than that. Instead it would be more accurate to think of it as the stars aligning over one great cultural moment, where we have the rare power to elicit real change.

I agree with Doug Hesse (2014) that we are indeed entering an era of advocacy and that we should be mindful of where this leads us, conscious of the kinds of work we create for ourselves or that is thrust upon us. In his plenary address at the 2014 Conference for the Council of Writing Program Administrators, Hesse likened WPAs to merchants and called on us to treat our workers like family. Yet, Hesse also acknowledged one of the central problems facing Writing Program Administrators is one of economics; it is a lack of investment that leads to programs having no choice but to rely on GTAs and contingent faculty. Solving this great problem ultimately requires luring capital investment. And we do that by speaking their language, advocating in terms that make sense to our potential investors.

We should certainly take great care of the people in our charge, the workers and students we serve. But we should also take responsibility as the keepers of the big vision, the CEOs of writing studies, brilliant sales directors whose shiny new and improved

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product is an amazing digitally-enhanced, retention-minded writing program. What I offer you here is one possible way of explaining what we do and the significance of that work to potential investors.

Ironically, given that rhetoric is such an integral part of our work, the field has failed to contribute sufficient rebuttals to the numerous attacks on the quality, purpose, and value of writing education. Smit (2007) suggests that since there is no call for greater social change, nothing changes. But since his book was published there have been an increasing number of calls to reform education, arguing it is stale and antiquated. Anson's (2013) fictional conversation between Nate and Sylvia is an illustration of the kinds of real conversations that are happening on campuses today. Thus, now is our time to make the necessary changes and shout from the rooftops while we do so. The rhetoric I offer for framing a new conversation begins with the following claims:

1. Writing instruction today involves teaching digital literacy, and the work of developing digital research and networking skills; the work of yielding critically conscious digital writers/researchers; the work of integrating the teaching of these skills into other disciplinary studies.

2. As experts on student-centered pedagogy and the first-year student, we are also experts on retention-minded pedagogy. Further, the networking aspects of aforementioned digital literacy work to support student engagement.

3. This work will aid other departments as they work to recruit and retain students, to initiate and integrate them into the disciplines. Both undergrads and grads. Undergraduate students benefit from more engaging, more practical, problem-based learning. Graduate students benefit from the same plus more pedagogical training and more writing experience.

4. This work will aid the university at large for the above reasons and also because it makes curriculum more flexible, more accessible, reduces overhead, and leads to new fiduciary lines such as digital writing certificates and student-centered pedagogical training for more graduate students and faculty.

5. In addition, my proposal will strengthen the doctoral degree in composition as our graduate students are trained to be digital literacy and student engagement experts while gaining valuable cross-disciplinary experience. Our graduates will be employable as digital, discipline-specific writing experts in academe, government, and corporations.

6. Such a program is valuable to society as a whole, tripling or quadrupling effective writing instruction so that recent graduates are ready to join the workforce as excellent communicators within their disciplines. They will also learn to use social media tools for workplace collaboration, problem solving, and networking. This is exactly what employers demand and we can lead the way toward delivery. The US needs multi-disciplinary, digitally literate problem-solvers. My proposal moves students toward such a utopian vision.

My dissertation research, a case study of one hybrid classroom model, draws parallels between the work necessary to engage students in learning and the work necessary to promote the relevancy/value of Writing Studies and the Composition course to the powers that be. My goal was to tap into what students were already doing without much consideration (posting on FB, blogging, tweeting, networking, etc) and use it to further my pedagogical aims for them while also supporting their learning. I did that. This study demonstrates how effective the strategy was. My new goals are to convince others to do the same; to involve rhetoric and composition directly in the research and

development of the digital literacy that will be necessary for future generations; and to foster more effective means for reaching goals of critical pedagogy and transformative education. In my view, social media enabled hybrid learning is more flexible, more accessible, less expensive, and more effective.

Although my study produced more data than I could manage in a lifetime, it revealed several areas for further study. For example, mobile devices makes class discussions and coursework accessible from anywhere. As Belinda noted, "[social media] is an easier method – it can be done almost anywhere and there are multiple devices that allow you to [do that]" (B2, Q31). Another student describes how his phone became a major academic tool for the course, "using [his] iPhone constantly for writing notes or compil[ing] work" (Zack, B2, Q26). Due to the ease and portability of online course materials, many students indicated they checked online platforms frequently and as a consequence, thought about the course several times per day in multiple contexts. The effect of mobile media on coursework completion and transfer of composition curriculum would make for an interesting study.

Additionally, social media opens a window for the instructor on some of the peer interaction that takes place outside of the classroom's physical space. Students often use the course group page to seek assistance from peers on everything from assignment comprehension to technical difficulties. Whereas in a traditional course, an instructor must rely on the individual student to notify her via e-mail, during office hours, or by asking a question in class, the social media connected instructor can lurk quietly in the background as students solve problems on their own. A study of underlife in the composition classroom would be much more easily accomplished in a social-media enabled classroom.

One student pointed to social media as a tool for expanding his own personal knowledge pool and helping him more easily identify and gain access to valuable knowledge sources: "When using Edmodo, I learned to search and ask others for help in puzzling situations, using peers, the Internet and sources available" (Elliott, B2, Q27). That is exactly what I hope happens for everyone. Future studies should work to isolate digital aspects of rhetorical analysis in online and blended formats as a means for improving student learning, even when they aren't on campus.

With the promise of early findings like this study and others, it is clear to me that consciously considered blended learning is the future of higher education, and that English and Composition Studies will be pioneers in the next evolution of student-centered pedagogy.

Appendix A

Course Syllabus and Calendar

English 1301. Exposition: Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking

Instructor: Lorie Stagg Jacobs

"Writing is just work – there's no secret. If you dictate or use a pen or type or write with your toes – it is still just work."
~ Sinclair Lewis

Course Description. *English 1301: Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing I* is a course in reading, writing, rhetorical analysis, and argument. Students read a wide variety of texts, practice recursive writing processes, and participate in university discourses. The course is linked to university co-curricular activities that invite students to participate in classroom, campus-wide, and national conversations about timely issues. Students read a wide variety of texts and complete both informal writing assignments and formal essay projects that draw upon outside sources as well as their own experiences.

Why We Are Here Writing is a <u>repetitive</u>, reflective process of invention, drafting and revision. Similarly, critical thinking and college level reading involve reflective practice. These processes are different for everyone and they are interchangeable and interdependent.   Your instructor is here to help you find *your* way, not show you *the* way.

Ninety-five percent of undergraduate courses at UTA require strong reading and writing skills.   Therefore, it is in your best interest to hone your writing, reading, and critical thinking skills so that you can tackle diverse subjects with authority.   In this course, we will explore writing as a learning process through class discussion, self-reflection, peer support, and a good dose of honest work.

Additionally, this course will critically consider various elements of social media and participatory culture (i.e., Facebook, blogging, wikis, and more), which will require you to think critically about multiple points of view and the dialogic nature of Web 2.0. Assignments and homework will routinely ask you to engage with classmates and other users of participatory media outside the classroom, in an effort to develop effective strategies to analyze and construct "texts" for multiple situations.   This class is "paperless," meaning paper consumption is eliminated or minimized wherever possible. Therefore, all essays, projects, and homework will be submitted electronically. Reflection and self-awareness is a valuable component of authentic learning. To that end you will regularly submit thoughtful critical reflections of your own progress in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes. By the end of ENGL 1301, students should be able to:

Rhetorical Knowledge
- Use knowledge of the rhetorical situation—author, audience, exigency—to analyze and construct texts
- Compose texts in a variety of genres, expanding their repertoire beyond predictable forms
- Adjust voice, tone, diction, syntax, level of formality, and structure to meet the demands of different rhetorical situations

Critical Reading, Thinking, and Writing

- Use writing, reading, and discussion for inquiry, learning, communicating, and examining assumptions
- Employ critical reading strategies to identify author's position, main ideas, genre conventions, and rhetorical strategies
- Summarize, respond to, and analyze texts
- Find, evaluate, and synthesize appropriate sources to inform and situate their own claims
- Produce texts with a focus, thesis, and controlling idea, and identify these elements in others' texts

Processes
- Practice flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts
- Practice writing as a recursive process that can lead to substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions
- Use the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes to critique their own and others' works

Conventions
- Apply knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- Summarize, paraphrase, and quote from sources using appropriate documentation style
- Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Employ technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions

Required Texts.
- ☐ *First-Year Writing: Perspectives on Argument*, UTA custom edition
- ☐ *Graff* & Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say*
- ☐ *i-claim: visualizing argument*, CD-ROM
- ☐ Internet access, preferably at home
- ☐ Edmodo.com account (group code: o47ia0)
- ☐ Active UTA e-mail account
- ☐ Skype account

Grades in First-Year Composition are A, B, C, F, and Z. The Z grade is reserved for students who attend class regularly, participate actively, and complete all the assigned work on time, but simply fail to write well enough to earn a passing grade. **This judgment is made by the instructor and not necessarily based upon a number average.** The Z grade is intended to reward students for good effort. If you receive a Z you will not get credit for the course, but the Z grade will not affect your grade point average. You may repeat the course for credit until you do earn a passing grade. The F grade, which does negatively affect GPA, goes to failing students who do not attend class regularly, do not participate actively, or do not complete assigned work.

   All major essay projects must be completed to pass the course and students must earn a "C" or higher on the portfolio in order to pass this class. If you fail to complete an essay project or earn lower than a C on the final draft of any essay, you will fail the course, regardless of your average.   All essay projects must be turned in

electronically, including all drafts, peer review sheets, and other materials for that project. You may also be asked to submit paper copies of some aspects of an assignment. **Keep all papers** until you receive your final grade from the university. You cannot challenge a grade without evidence.

Grade Weighting. Your final grade for this course will be calculated in the following manner:

Research Portfolio	500 points
Class Participation	150 points
Blog Moderator	50 points
Timed Essay Exam	50 points
Self-Assessment Surveys (2 @ 50)	100 points
Critical Thinking Blog (5 @ 20 pts ea.)	100 points
Individual Conference Reflection	25 points
Zotero Bib Contribution	25 points
TOTAL =	**1000 points**

Description of Major Assignments. The ultimate goal is the collection and presentation of your *Research Portfolio.* You will create 3 major projects during the course of the semester. All of these along with drafts, notes, and your Researcher Log make up your portfolio. You will write a reflective analysis of your body of work at the end of the semester. **You must keep everything we do in this class** so that you will have everything required for your portfolio. I strongly suggest saving multiple versions of your work and filing them neatly in electronic folders both at home and on the class server. The idea is to be able to look at the progression of your writing over time. You and your instructor should both see notable development from Week 1 to Week 16.

There will be one *Timed Essay Exam* early in the semester. The major essay projects that make up your portfolio include the *Discourse Community Ethnography* (due 10/18), the *Synthesis "Essay"* (due 11/8), and the *Final Project* (due 11/29), which includes several multimedia options*.* In preparation for these assignments, several homework and in-class writing activities will be assigned.

Once during the semester you will act as *Blog Moderator*, which consists of planning, preparing notes for, and leading a blog discussion of a class related issue, then writing a discourse summary. There is a rotating schedule so that everyone moderates once and that each week there are several discussions taking place at once. During your selected slot, you will take the lead on the week's course material/concepts and prepare and post thought-provoking questions that begin an online discussion. Your group-mates will respond to one or more of your questions to fulfill their Critical Thinking Blog requirements. After the thread closes you will submit a summary of the discussion.

Everyone is asked to prepare for group discussions by posting to the *Critical Thinking Blog.* You are required to submit minimum of six primary posts (10 points each) in response to your instructor's or peers' blogs and six pairs of secondary posts (10 points per pair). See Blog Discussion Guidelines for further details and expectations.

Pre- and Post-Self-Assessment Surveys will assist you and your instructor in measuring growth and learning over time. Each survey must be completed within a specific time frame; the first is available now through September 17, 2010; the second survey will open December 1 and be available through December 13, 2010. You can find a link to Self-Assessment Survey #1 in the assignment description on the course page at

Edmodo.com or type the following URL into your browser window: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ENGL1301-B1.

Class Participation is an intricate part of this course. Students are graded weekly on class participation, which includes classroom decorum, in-class writing, preparing for class meetings and workshops, making regular thoughtful contributions (online and face-to-face) to the ongoing conversation, actively participating in group work, asking and answering questions, contributing to the class wikis, and showing general interest in course content and your own development.

Portfolio Grading. Your focus this semester should be improving your writing and learning to take risks regardless of your incoming writing ability. Therefore, you will not receive an official, recorded grade on any of your papers until you turn in your portfolio at the end of the semester. Instead, you will receive a check, check plus, or no credit as part of your participation grade based on your individual effort and ability. However, to help you develop a critical eye and judge the quality of your own work, assignments will receive extensive feedback from peers and your instructor.

Peer Review. We will hold three peer review workshops in this class. On workshop days you must submit a **complete** draft of your writing to share with your group and prepare comments for each member of your group. We will work in groups of two to four. Peer review is a tool to improve writing, enabling you to view your writing from the reader's perspective and to help others improve their work. A great deal of preparation (on the part of your instructor and your peers) goes into Workshop activities. **Do not miss Peer Review**. Missing Workshop will result in the loss of all drafting and process points in your essay grade, roughly 20%. It may be possible to make alternate arrangements, but only if you tell your instructor well in advance of a scheduled workshop.

Mobile Media Policy. Hopefully this goes without saying, as we are all adults paying for education. Please be respectful of yourself and others: **Use mobile media responsibly and respectfully.** Turn off your music device before class. You are welcome to bring and use your laptop in class; please mute the sound. Phones, smart or otherwise, should be set on vibrate and stowed in your bag. No texting, IMing, tweeting, or posting status updates unless expressly instructed to do so. No recreational surfing or e-mail checking. **You will be asked to leave if any mobile media device interferes with your learning or that of your peers.**

E-Culture Policy. All students must have access to a computer with internet capabilities in order to access most course materials and submit all assignments. If you have trouble accessing the internet regularly or cannot count on consistent computer access, you will find this course difficult. Important: **Ask yourself this question:** "What will happen to my participation in this course if my computer or internet go down?" If the answer is "I am doomed," then you should withdraw and register for a more traditional section of English 1301. **You need to have backup technology plans because inhibited access will not excuse you from the work in this course.**

Students should check email daily for course information and updates. I will contact you fairly often at your UTA e-mail address. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail and respond. "But I didn't get it…" will not be a sufficient excuse for missed work or notices.

I am happy to communicate with students through email. However, I ask that you be wise in your use of this tool. Make sure you have consulted the syllabus for answers before you send me an email. I check my e-mail regularly, usually several times a day. However, I will not always check it after 8 pm or before 11am any day of the week and check it only occasionally on the weekend. This means if you send an email at midnight the night before a paper is due, chances are very good that it will be too late for you to get the help you need. Be smart, plan ahead, and assume I have a life away from the computer.

Students should check the Edmodo page daily for updates, assignments, and alerts. Edmodo (http://edmodo.com) is a free educational networking site similar to Facebook or LinkedIn. It will function as the classroom library and in-box: Go there to see assignment instructions, course policies, and the course calendar. Also, this is where you will submit most assignments and collect others for peer review. Finally, it would also be a good spot to solicit help or materials from classmates. You are responsible for signing up and joining the class group (**031 code:** o47ia0; **039 code:** 9moaay).

All blogging assignments will take place at group blogs that you and your peers will construct and contribute to each week.

If you do not have a web conferencing service (Skype, iChat, Google Talk, etc.), please download and install Skype on your home computer or locate Skype-ready machines on campus. You do not need a webcam, though we won't be able to see without one. All major services work with audio only or text. On occasion, we will conference and/or hold small group meetings via web conference. This is also an option for contacting me if you or I cannot get to campus to meet.

Conferences and Questions: My job is to help you learn and to coach you towards meeting the course learning outcomes. I am more than happy to give you time outside of class to discuss your progress and/or your work. If at any time you have a problem with an assignment, a question, or just want to chat, please drop by during office hours, Mondays, Noon-12:50 pm. I will be available via iChat/AIM (profljacobs), Twitter, and e-mail during my Virtual Office Hour on Fridays, 10:30-11:30 am. These times are reserved for students to discuss course assignments, grades, or other class-related concerns. I will be happy to make other appointment times for you if your class schedule conflicts with regular conference times or if I am not available on certain days. In addition, you may contact me by e-mail, Skype, or posting a message on Edmodo. I want this class to be a positive and valuable experience for you, but I can't help if I don't know what's going on. When in doubt, just ask! (Chances are I've heard much weirder questions before ☺).

Course Calendar

FYW = *First-Year Writing: Perspectives on Argument*, UTA custom edition
TSIS = *They Say / I Say,* by Graff & Birkenstein
iC = *i-claim: visualizing argument*, CD-ROM
RL = Researcher Log; Entries must be made before class.
Details for all assignments can be found on Edmodo.

	Date	Assignments Due	Reading Due	In-Class Topics
Week 1	Mon 8/30			Introductions & Consent 1st Assignments Intro to Argument and Academic Discourse
	Wed 9/2	Prep for Timed Essay Exam Make note of important dates on syllabus	FYW pp. 1-21 TSIS Introduction Consent form Syllabus	****Class meets in Library B20**** Timed Essay Exam e-Classroom Overview The Blogging Component Blog Sign-Up
Week 2	Mon 9/6	*** Labor Day – No Class ***		
	Wed 9/8	**Self-Assessment #1**	TSIS Chs. 11 & 12 "Shitty First Drafts" FYW pp. 258-270	Writing Process Overview Reading, Writing & Thinking Critically Oral and Online Conversations Wikis for Collaborative Learning
	All Week	**W2 Blog**: Response to Prof LJ's blog is due Friday, 9/10, 3pm.		
Week 3	Mon 9/13	W3 Wiki A	FYW Ch. 2	The Rhetorical Situation TRACE Audience Analysis
	Wed 9/15	W3 Wiki B	FYW Ch. 4	Ethos, Pathos, and Logos Multimedia and Appeals The Researcher Log The Writing Center
	All Week	**W3 Bloggers**: First group of Moderators post questions by noon Sundays and the threads close Fridays, 3pm. CT primary posts due before class begins. Moderators' **Discourse Summaries** due Mondays following. See schedule.		

Course Calendar Continued

Week 4	Mon 9/20	W4 Wiki	TBA	Discourse Communities 101 The Discourse Community Ethnography Invention
	Wed 9/22	RL: DCE Invention Bring to class: Examples of DCs	TBA	Social Media as DC Ethnography 101 The Research Question
	All Week	**W4 Bloggers**: See Schedule		
Week 5	Mon 9/27	W5 Wiki A RL: DCE Research Questions	TBA	RQ Gallery Research Methods & Data Collection Ethics of Ethnography
	Wed 9/29	W5 Wiki B RL: Research Plan	FYW pp. 96-107 More TBA	Reason & Evidence Recording Data The Social Media Log
	All Week	**W5 Bloggers**: See Schedule		

Week 6	Mon 10/4	RL: Status Report A	iC: TBA	***Class does not meet face-to-face this week. All work is done online. *** Drafting Claims, Claim Gallery Academic Integrity101
	Wed 10/6	RL: Status Report B	iC: TBA	
	All Week	**W6 Bloggers**: See Schedule		
Week 7	Mon 10/11	**DCE Draft 1** – Bring laptop or two paper copies of draft today. RL: Process memo		**Peer Review Workshop** The Art of Revising More Academic Integrity The Synthesis "Essay"
	Wed 10/13		TSIS pp. 17-51	Revision v. Editing "They Say" – Summary, Paraphrase, and Quotation The Big, Bad MLA Synthesis 101
	All Week	**W7 Bloggers**: See Schedule		

Course Calendar Continued

Week 8	Mon 10/18	**DCE Draft 2** RL: Process memo	TSIS pp. 55-77	"I Say" and the Rhetorical Situation Invention Exercise Conference Sign-Up
	Wed 10/20		iC: TBA More TBA	Digital Identity Construction → in Academic Writing → in Social Media
	All Week	**W8 Blog**: Response to Prof LJ's blog is due before Friday, 10/22, 3pm.		
Week 9	Mon 10/25	RL: Synthesis Invention	More TBA	Digital Rhetoric and Participatory Culture →The Multimedia "Text" →Author v. author
	Wed 10/27		TSIS pp. 78-101 More TBA	The Naysayer So What? Ethics of [Digital] Life Writing
	All Week	**W9 Bloggers**: See Schedule **Conferences**: See Schedule		
Week 10	Mon 11/1	**Synthesis Draft 1** RL: Process memo		The Final Project → in, with, on Social Media Zotero for Research and Collaboration Group Sign-up
	Wed 11/3	**Peer Review Summaries**	Peers' "Essays"	**Peer Review Workshop** Final Project Invention Reason & Evidence: EPL Review
	All Week	**W10 Bloggers**: See Schedule *Note: Friday, Nov. 5 is the last day to drop*		
Week 11	Mon 11/8	**Synthesis Draft 2** RL: Process memo, addressing peer review summaries RL: FP Topic Summary		**Library Day: Class meets in B-20** Finding Scholarly Sources
	Wed 11/10		FYW Ch. 6	Reporting Evidence "They Say" Review MLA Review

Week 12	Mon 11/15	**Zotero Bibliography**	TBA	****Library Day: Meet in B-20**** Multimedia Projects Overview: Considering Your Options Invention Exercise
	Wed 11/17	RL: Revised Topic Summary	FYW Ch. 7	The Collaborative Audience Finding Your Niche
Week 13	Mon 11/22	RL: Audience Report RL: Storyboard		****Library Day: Meet in B-20**** Multimedia Projects
	Wed 11/24	TBA	TBA	****Lab Day: Meet in PH 311**** The Portfolio ILPC Conference Sign-up
		Note: Thanksgiving Holiday 11/25 & 26		
Week 14	Mon 11/29	**Final Project Draft 1**		****Lab Day: Meet in PH 311**** Draft Screening/Gallery
	Wed 12/1	___Peer Review Summaries Self-Assessment #2 Open	___Peers' Projects	****Lab Day: Meet in PH 311**** ILPC Conferences
Week 15	Mon 12/6	___Peer Review Summaries	___Peers' Projects	****Lab Day: Meet in PH 311**** ILPC Conferences
	Wed 12/8	___Peer Review Summaries	___Peers' Projects	****Lab Day: Meet in PH 311**** ILPC Conferences
	All Week	**Self-Assessment #2** Open 12/1 – 12/13		
Finals Week	Mon 12/13	**Portfolio** (by Noon) **Self-Assessment #2** (by 5pm)		****Class Meets in PH 311**** Pizza Party – Time TBA Final Project Screening/Gallery Evaluations
	Thurs 12/16	LJ will hold office hours 1pm-4pm Portfolios returned		

Appendix B

Questionnaires

B1 – Group B Pre-Test Questionnaire

I have read and understand the information above.

◯ Yes

◯ No

I consent to have this data collected for research purposes.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Qualifying Questions

Are you currently enrolled in English 1301, section 031 or 039 at UTA?

○ No

○ Yes, I am in section:

[ ]

Are you comfortable reading, writing, and speaking English?

○ Yes

○ No

Name and Email

Your name and e-mail will be securely stored and will only be available to those directly involved in this study. If you prefer not to provide this information, you may quit the survey by closing the browser window or clicking "Exit Survey" on the top right corner of every page and contact your instructor.

Course Completion/Pairing info

[ ]

Please provide your name and preferred e-mail address.

Name: [ ]

Preferred Email Address: [ ]

Demographics

Home or Permanent Zip Code:

[ ]

Gender:

[ ]

Who else in your family has college experience?

	Describe College Experience
Parent A	[ ]
Parent B	[ ]
Sibling A	[ ]
Sibling B	[ ]
Additional siblings	[ ]

Other immediate relative (please specify):

[ ]

Which racial/ethnic groups or nationality do you identify with most? You can list as many or as few as you like:

[text area]

Are you an international student?

◯ Yes

◯ No

A few more general questions....

What year did you graduate high school?

[text box]

Which of the following best describes you?

◯ I live on campus

◯ I live off campus in Arlington.

◯ I commute from the DFW metro area (beyond Arlington).

◯ I commute from more than 90 minutes away.

◯ I am a distance-ed student taking classes online.

◯ Other (please specify):

[text box]

How many hours do you usually spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following? There are 168 hours in a week. Don't forget to subtract the hours you sleep.

	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	More than 40
Preparing for class? (studying, doing homework, rehearsing, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Working for pay on campus?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Working for pay off campus?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Participating in extracurricular activities? (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, social clubs, intercollegiate or intramural sports)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Relaxing and socializing?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Providing care for family members? (children, parents, spouse, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Military service or training?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Additional Comments:

Thinking about the current semester, how would you characterize your enrollment?

◯ Quarter time (0-6 Credits)   ◯ Full-time (13-18 Credits)

◯ Half-time (7-12 Credits)   ◯ More than full-time (19 or more Credits)

Interests

What is your major or intended major? Or, another way of thinking of it might be, what are your academic interests and/or career plans? Feel free to provide as much or as little detail as you like.

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Below is a list of popular college courses. Please rank your top 5 in order. Which courses sound most appealing to you?

	Course Name
First Choice	
2nd Choice	
3rd Choice	
4th Choice	
5th Choice	

Your college experience so far

Your answer to this question will generate more specific questions for you in the pages that follow. Please choose the sentence that BEST describes you, even if it isn't 100% accurate.

Which of the following best describes you?

◯ I graduated high school within the last four years and this is my first year of college.

◯ I transferred to UTA from another college or university where I completed 6 or more college courses.

◯ I have been out of school for at least five years pursuing other occupations. I have completed less than 6 college courses since.

◯ I am an established student who has completed 6 or more courses at UTA.

First Year Student

What type of high school did you graduate from?

◯ Public   ◯ Private (independent)   ◯ GED

◯ Private (religious)   ◯ Home school

◯ Other (please specify):

On average, what were most of your high school grades?

◯ A   ◯ B-   ◯ No grades used

◯ A-   ◯ C+   ◯ I prefer not to answer

◯ B+   ◯ C

◯ B   ◯ C- or lower

On average, what were most of your grades in English or Writing classes specifically?

- ○ A
- ○ A-
- ○ B+
- ○ B

- ○ B-
- ○ C+
- ○ C
- ○ C- or lower

- ○ No grades used
- ○ I did not take any English classes
- ○ I prefer not to answer

Which of the following did you take in your last two years of high school? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ AP English III (usually junior year, focus on writing and composition)
- ☐ AP English IV (usually senior year, focus on literature)
- ☐ Honors (non AP or IB) English
- ☐ IB
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ College English courses for credit. Course name/number(s):

Students with college experience at other schools

What type of school did you attend last (before UTA)?

- ○ Community or Junior College
- ○ 4 year (private)
- ○ Other (please specify):

- ○ 4 year (public)
- ○ 4 year (religious)

- ○ Distance Ed or Online Institution

How many semesters/courses did you complete at all other colleges?

On average, what were most of your overall grades in any college coursework?

- ○ A
- ○ A-
- ○ B+
- ○ B

- ○ B-
- ○ C+
- ○ C
- ○ C- or lower

- ○ No grades used
- ○ I prefer not to answer

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On average, what were most of your grades in high school or college English or Writing courses?

○ A   ○ B-   ○ No grades used

○ A-   ○ C+   ○ I did not take any English classes

○ B+   ○ C   ○ I prefer not to answer

○ B   ○ C- or lower

Which of the following college courses have you taken? Do not include any courses that you dropped or stopped attending before mid-term. Do include any that you regularly attended past mid-term even if you did not earn a passing grade. Please check all that apply:

☐ First-semester English/Composition (i.e. English 1301, Composition 1, etc.)

☐ Second-semester English/Composition (i.e. English 1302, Composition 2, etc.)

☐ Literature Survey Course (2000 level)

☐ Advanced Writing Course (creative writing, advanced exposition, technical or business writing etc.)

☐ Any special topics course requiring major term paper or report

☐ None of the above

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ]

Returning Students

Describe your formal educational experience since high school?

[   ]

How much reading, writing, or researching were you required to do for work or personal commitments? Please describe.

[   ]

The last time you attended any school, what type of student do you think you were you overall?

	Development Needed	Average	Above Average	Exceeds Expectations
Generally speaking	◯	◯	◯	◯

Why do you feel this way? Please provide a few reasons.

[text box]

Which of the following college courses have you taken? Do not include any courses that you dropped or stopped attending before mid-term. Do include any that you regularly attended past mid-term even if you did not earn a passing grade. Please check all that apply:

☐ First-semester English/Composition (i.e. English 1301, Composition 1, etc.)

☐ Second-semester English/Composition (i.e. English 1302, Composition 2, etc.)

☐ Literature Survey Course (2000 level)

☐ Advanced Writing Course (creative writing, advanced exposition, technical or business writing etc.)

☐ Any special topics course requiring major term paper or report

☐ None of the above

☐ Other (please specify):

[text box]

Established UTA Students

On average, what are most of your grades at UTA?

◯ A   ◯ B-   ◯ No grades used

◯ A-   ◯ C+   ◯ I prefer not to answer

◯ B+   ◯ C

◯ B   ◯ C- or lower

On average, what grades have you earned in any English or Writing courses at UTA or elsewhere?

◯ A   ◯ B-   ◯ No grades used

◯ A-   ◯ C+   ◯ I did not take any English classes

◯ B+   ◯ C   ◯ I prefer not to answer

◯ B   ◯ C- or lower

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Overall, how much or how little do you like English classes?

	1 - I do not like English at all.	2	3	4	5	6 - English is my favorite class!
I give English a:	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Why do you feel this way? Please provide a few reasons.

[text box]

Past Experience: School and Community

Thinking of your typical high school or college English courses, how much of the following did you do?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little	None
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

[text box]

Past Experience: Reading, Writing, Research, Collaborating

Which of the following courses have you taken? Do not include any courses that you dropped or stopped attending before mid-term. Do include any that you regularly attended past mid-term even if you did not earn a passing grade. Please check all that apply:

☐ English 1301

☐ English 1302

☐ Sophomore Literature Course (2000 level)

☐ Advanced Writing Course (creative writing, advanced exposition, technical or business writing etc.) (3000 level)

☐ Any special topics course requiring major term paper or report (3000 level and above)

☐ None of the above

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ]

Perspectives on English

Thinking of homework and classwork in your typical high school or college English courses, how much of the following did you do?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little	None
Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	○	○	○	○	○
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	○	○	○	○	○
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	○	○	○	○	○
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	○	○	○	○	○
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	○	○	○	○	○
Creating novel and suitable solutions using divergent and convergent thinking to produce new ideas and develop them for a specific purpose	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how academically challenging were your typical English or Writing courses?

	1 - Not challenging at all	2	3	4	5	6 - Extrememly challenging
English, to me, was:	○	○	○	○	○	○

Why do you think so?

[   ]

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During your most recent year of formal education (all courses), about how much of the following did you do?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little	None
Assigned reading (textbooks or other course materials)	○	○	○	○	○
Writing for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment on your own time, i.e. fiction, poetry, journaling, letters, etc	○	○	○	○	○
Collaborating with peers or teachers for any academic purpose, such as group projects, peer review, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Longer papers or reports for class (5-19 pages)	○	○	○	○	○
Research on your own simply for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	○	○	○	○	○
Books/Magazines/Newspapers/any other documents read on your own (not part of school assignment) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	○	○	○	○	○
Writing short papers or reports for class (fewer than 5 pages)	○	○	○	○	○
Outside research locating additional resources for a class project or assignment	○	○	○	○	○
Extended papers or reports for class (20 or more pages)	○	○	○	○	○

Any choice examples?

[text box]

English 1301 Learning Outcomes

The following questions ask you to consider a modified list of the English 1301 learning objectives. On this page, please describe what you already know about these English and writing concepts. Your answers will help you develop personal goals for the semester. Studies show that students who set concrete goals by writing them down are more likely to achieve success. Setting effective goals requires knowledge of where you started. Give it a try! You can print this page to help you keep track of your progress.

Please consider what you already know about Rhetorical Analysis. Rate your own knowledge and skill for each of the following items, where 1 means "This is new to me" and 4 means "I have mastered this."

	1 = New to me	2	3	4 = Mastered
Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms	○	○	○	○
Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument	○	○	○	○
Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts	○	○	○	○
Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing	○	○	○	○
Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable	○	○	○	○

Please select something on the above list that you feel you are better at and something you are less confident about and explain your reasoning.

[text box]

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Please consider what you already know about Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing. Rate your own knowledge and skill for each of the following items, where 1 means "This is new to me" and 4 means "I have mastered this."

	1 = New to me	2	3	4 = Mastered
Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea	○	○	○	○
Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas	○	○	○	○
Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.	○	○	○	○
Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims	○	○	○	○
Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding	○	○	○	○
Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies	○	○	○	○
Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position	○	○	○	○

Please select something on the above list that you feel you are better at and something you are less confident about and explain your reasoning.

Please consider what you already know about Writing Processes and Conventions. Rate your own knowledge and skill for each of the following items, where 1 means "This is new to me" and 4 means "I have mastered this."

	1 = New to me	2	3	4 = Mastered
Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts	○	○	○	○
Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive	○	○	○	○
Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience	○	○	○	○
Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style	○	○	○	○
Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions	○	○	○	○
Editing in order to minimize surface errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling	○	○	○	○

Please select something on the above list that you feel you are better at and something you are less confident about and explain your reasoning.

Expectations and Goal Setting

This is a modified list of the English 1301 learning objectives. Please refer to the list as you answer the questions that follow. Your answers on this page will help you set personal goals and expectations for the semester. Studies show that

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students who set concrete goals by writing them down and frequently checking their own progress are more likely to achieve success. Give it a try! Print this page so you can keep track as the semester progresses.

Rhetorical Analysis
*Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts
*Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms
*Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing
*Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable
*Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument

Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing
*Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas
*Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding
*Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.
*Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies
*Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea
*Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims
*Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position
*Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit

Writing Processes
*Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts
*Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions
*Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience
*Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive

Conventions
*Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style
*Editing in order to minimize surface errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling
*Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions

Overall, how academically challenging do you expect English 1301 to be?
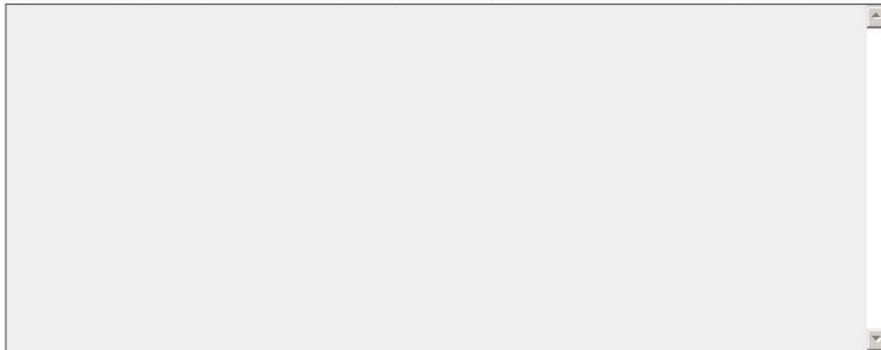
	1 - Not challenging at all	2	3	4	5	6 - Extrememly challenging
English 1301 will be:	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

What is your reasoning for this choice?

Briefly describe at least 3 specific learning goals that you feel are most important to achieve this semester in English 1301. Please provide some reasoning for setting these specific goals. Refer to the list at the top of this page as needed to describe your personal learning objectives.

What is your plan for completing course requirements this semester? How much time will you devote to homework, papers, and preparing for class? How will you achieve your three goals above? If you do not have regular internet access, please describe, specifically, your plan for completing the blog and online community assignments.

Online/Social Media Experience

Do you have regular access to the internet at home?

○ Yes   ○ No

About how many hours per week do you spend online?

	0 hours/wk	1-5 hours	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	More than 40
I am online:	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Which statement best represents you:

◯ I consider myself an internet expert. Many of my friends come to me for help or suggestions.

◯ I am pretty comfortable online. I'm no guru or anything, but I can do what I need to do without much trouble.

◯ I have experience online, but I'm still learning. I can get around, but I do not consider myself internet "savvy."

◯ I really don't use the internet that often unless I have to. I try to avoid it because it makes me uncomfortable.

◯ I have little or no experience online. When I have to perform a task it takes me a while to figure it out and sometimes I never do or I look for a non-internet alternative.

◯ Other (please specify):

[text box]

Online/Social Media Experience Continued

In a sentence or two, how would you define "social media" and/or "Web 2.0?"

[text box]

In a sentence or two, what do you think is the purpose of online social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace?

[text box]

Are you a member of any online social networking sites?

◯ No

◯ Yes (please list sites you are a member of):

[text box]

On average, about how often do you update your status or profile, your pictures, or your blog on the social networking sites you belong to?

◯ Never/very rarely   ◯ 2-3 times a Week

◯ About once a Month   ◯ Daily

◯ About once a Week   ◯ Multiple times a day

Mobile Media

How often do you use a mobile media device to access the internet? iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Android, Palm, Kindle, etc. This does NOT include netbooks or laptops.

◯ Very often   ◯ Often   ◯ Sometimes   ◯ Never

In a few sentences, describe your favorite mobile apps and how you use them.

◯ I do not use mobile apps on my phone.

◯ My favorite apps are:

[text box]

Digital Learning

How much experience do you have with any of the following activities? There are examples listed for some, but there are many more digital options. Please think broadly, rather than about a particular site. Rate your experience/activity where 1 means "That's new to me" and 5 means "I am an active participant."

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little	None
Online collaborating or networking (Facebook, MySpace, GoogleDocs, etc) for any educational purpose such as sharing class notes, sharing ideas, discussing assignments, group projects, etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing online posts, wikis, or product reviews	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using online writing/creation/thinking tools, such as GoogleDocs, Wordle, Prezi, mindmapping, voicethread, podomatic, xtranormal, Glogster, Animoto, etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Research, collaborate, or write using a mobile media device such as iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Android, Palm, Kindle, etc. (This does not include netbooks or laptops.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Online community organizing/activism for special interest events, volunteering, advocacy, or fundraising, like Eventful, Meetup, Upcoming, as well as political and cause oriented sites	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reading online material such as web pages, blogs, Wikipedia, online magazines, online news sources, product reviews, etc	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Browse or participate in fan sites, wikis, and forums (like Lost, Harry Potter, and Twilight fan sites)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Sharing or viewing user-created photos or videos on sites like Flickr and YouTube	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Use online research, collecting, or tagging tools, such as Zotero, Delicious, CiteULike, EasyBib, etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Choose 2 to 3 specific activities/tools from the list above and briefly describe how and for what purpose you do/use any of the above.

Digital Learning

Generally speaking, what do you think about the future possibilities of social media or Web 2.0 as a learning tool?

In what ways might social media or Web 2.0 enrich any portion of college coursework? Support your answer with reasoning.

What's the downside? Are there possible risks of integrating social media and other digital tools into a formal education setting? What should be considered? Support your answer with reasoning.

Digital Learning in English

Do you see any connections between English or writing and online social media? Are there English-related skills or concepts that are useful for the typical digital producer/consumer? Please support your claim(s) with reasons or evidence.

In what ways, if any, would it be useful to do "born digital," social media, or Web 2.0-based projects for your college English class? Which English-related skills or concepts do you think you would use to complete a digital project?

Last Questions!

This is the last set of questions and probably the most important. Please be as explicit as you can.

The following questions ask you to consider a modified list of the English 1301 learning objectives one more time. This time consider whether social media and digital learning tools will help you achieve these learning outcomes.

Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool for Rhetorical Analysis. How much/little do you think social media would contribute to your learning in the following areas? Rate your expectations for each of the following items, where 1 means "they wouldn't help at all" and 5 means "they would help me greatly."

	1 = Not at all	2	3	4	5 = Help greatly
Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts	○	○	○	○	○
Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable	○	○	○	○	○
Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms	○	○	○	○	○
Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing	○	○	○	○	○
Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument	○	○	○	○	○

Please select something on the above list where social media will be more beneficial and something where SM will be less helpful and explain your reasoning.

Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool for Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing. How much/little do you think social media would contribute to your learning in the following areas? Rate your expectations for each of the following items, where 1 means "they wouldn't help at all" and 5 means "they would help me greatly."

	1 = Not at all	2	3	4	5 = Help greatly
Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas	○	○	○	○	○
Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims	○	○	○	○	○
Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding	○	○	○	○	○
Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies	○	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.	○	○	○	○	○
Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position	○	○	○	○	○
Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit	○	○	○	○	○
Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea	○	○	○	○	○

Please select something on the above list where social media will be more beneficial and something you rated lower and explain your reasoning.

Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool for Writing Processes and Conventions. How much/little do you think social media would contribute to your learning in the following areas? Rate your expectations for each of the following items, where 1 means "they wouldn't help at all" and 5 means "they would help me greatly."

	1 = Not at all	2	3	4	5 = Help greatly
Editing in order to minimize surface errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling	○	○	○	○	○
Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience	○	○	○	○	○
Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive	○	○	○	○	○
Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts	○	○	○	○	○
Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions	○	○	○	○	○
Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions	○	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style	○	○	○	○	○

Please select something on the above list where social media will be more beneficial and something where SM will be less helpful and explain your reasoning.

Thank you!

Survey Complete!

The survey is now complete! Thank you for your thorough participation! Your answers and responses will be very helpful to us as we analyze social media as a learning tool in English 1301. The survey will also assist you and your instructor in preparing and adjusting specific learning goals for you this semester and earn you up to 50 points toward your final grade.

As a thank you, you have now been entered into a drawing for a $75 Amazon gift card! Please come back in December to complete your post-test for another chance to win plus 50 more points! You will receive an e-mail invitation to participate again and a link to the post-assessment survey after you have turned in your final project for grading.

Thank you for your

Final Self-Assessment

Final Self-Assessment for English 1301

You are being asked to complete this survey as part of the requirements for your English 1301 course. Your answers will help you and your instructor (Prof. Jacobs) generate specific learning goals for the semester. It will also help both of you monitor your progress during and upon completion of the semester. In addition, data is being collected for research purposes. It will be most helpful if you answer all of the questions. A thorough response should take between 30 and 45 minutes.

Although this survey is a mandatory assignment for the course, you are being asked to allow your ENGL 1301 instructor to use the results of this survey for research purposes comparing results to other ENGL 1301 students in other classes. We intend to publish reports and make presentations at professional meetings about the survey results. None of the reports will include personally identifying information about you (to protect your privacy).

You have the right to choose to have your survey responses included or not in these reports. Your choice is voluntary and will in no way affect your grade in the course.

If you do not wish for us to use your survey responses in these reports, please e-mail Prof. Jacobs at ljacobs@uta.edu. You can also contact the faculty supervisor or IRB directly (contact information below).

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. James Warren
Assistant Professor
English Department
University of Texas-Arlington
817-272-2692
jewarren@uta.edu

This research has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB). You may call the Regulatory Specialists with the Institutional Review Board at 817-272-3723 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

*I have read and understand the information above.

◯ Yes

◯ No

I want to participate in this research and have my answers included in the study.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Qualifying Questions

*Are you regularly attending English 1301 at UTA?

◯ No (please answer question below)

◯ Yes, I am in section:

[ ]

If you are no longer enrolled in ENGL 1301 of if you no longer attend regularly, choose the statement below that BEST describes you.

◯ I dropped the course on or before the final drop date, Nov. 5, 2010.

◯ I am still enrolled, but I stopped attending before Nov. 5, 2010.

◯ I withdrew from the course, due to special circumstances, after Nov. 5, 2010, but attended regularly until then.

◯ I am still enrolled and plan to complete the course, but I missed class six (6) times or more.

◯ I am still enrolled but I do not plan to complete the course.

Name and Email

Your name and e-mail will be securely stored and will only be available to those directly involved in this study. If you prefer not to provide this information, you may quit the survey by closing the browser window or clicking "Exit Survey" on the top right corner of every page and contact your instructor.

*Please provide your name and preferred e-mail address.

Name: [ ]

Preferred Email Address: [ ]

Interests

Has your major or intended major changed since the beginning of this semester? What are your academic interests and/or career plans going forward? Feel free to provide as much or as little detail as you like.

[ ]

Fall 2010 Review: Reading, Writing, Research, Collaborating

Thinking of all of your courses this semester, about how much of the following did you do?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little	None
Assigned reading (textbooks or other course materials)	○	○	○	○	○
Books/Magazines/Newspapers/any other documents read on your own (not part of school assignment) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	○	○	○	○	○
Collaborating with peers or teachers for any academic purpose, such as group projects, peer review, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Research on your own simply for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	○	○	○	○	○
Extended papers or reports for class (20 or more pages)	○	○	○	○	○
Outside research locating additional resources for a class project or assignment	○	○	○	○	○
Writing for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment on your own time, i.e. fiction, poetry, journaling, letters, etc	○	○	○	○	○
Writing short papers or reports for class (fewer than 5 pages)	○	○	○	○	○
Longer papers or reports for class (5-19 pages)	○	○	○	○	○

Any choice examples?

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Reviewing Your Goals

This page asks you to review your own learning, progress, and achievements this semester in ENGL 1301. Below is a modified list of the ENGL 1301 learning objectives for your reference in answering the following questions.

Rhetorical Analysis
*Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts
*Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms
*Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing
*Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable
*Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument

Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing
*Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas
*Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding
*Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.
*Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies
*Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea
*Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims
*Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position
*Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit

Writing Processes
*Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts
*Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions
*Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience
*Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive

Conventions

*Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style
*Editing in order to minimize surface errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling
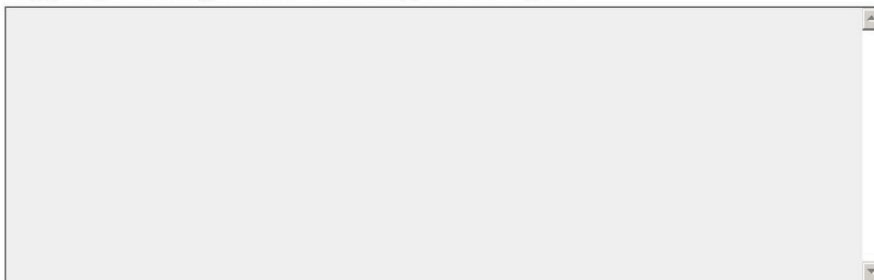*Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions

✱Think about the goals you set at the beginning of the semester and your progress since. Which goals do you feel you have achieved? Why or why not? Please provide some reasoning and examples to support your claims.

✱Consider the plan for completing course requirements that you described at the beginning of the semester. How did you do? Did you follow your plan? Did you abandon or adjust it? If you could, would you do anything differently? Why or why not? Evaluate your own learning behavior against your intentions and goals from the beginning of the semester. Support your answer with reasoning.

*Which skills/goals do you think you should focus on next semester in ENGL 1302? Why are these most important to you? Begin the work of sketching out a new set of goals and support your thoughts with reasoning and examples.

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*STOP!

Print, save, or screen capture this page to include in your portfolio. You can also copy and paste the questions and answers into a Word document. This is the page that is required.

If you do not include this page in the portfolio you will lose points. Please verify that you have saved your answers or that you are choosing not to before continuing with the survey.

◯ Yes, I have saved my answers to include in my portfolio.

◯ I did not save my answers and I understand that this will be my only opportunity to do so. I understand that I will not earn points for including the second assessment in my portfolio.

ENGL 1301 Review: Academic Challenge

From this point forward, the questions ask you to review your experience in ENGL 1301 this semester. Participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a question at any time, skip ahead, or click "exit survey" in the top right corner of every page.

If you choose to answer, your answers will be kept in strictest confidence until after grades are posted. No one other than researchers will ever see your responses in connection to your name. Researchers (including your instructor) will not be able to access this data until after grades are posted. Just like course evaluations required by the university and each academic department, you are encouraged to answer truthfully and constructively, and your interests are protected at all times.

Thinking of ENGL 1301 specifically, about how much of the following did you do this semester?

	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little	None
Assigned reading (textbooks or other course materials)	○	○	○	○	○
Research on your own simply for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	○	○	○	○	○
Extended papers or reports for class (20 or more pages)	○	○	○	○	○
Books/Magazines/Newspapers/any other documents read on your own (not part of school assignment) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	○	○	○	○	○
Writing short papers or reports for class (fewer than 5 pages)	○	○	○	○	○
Writing for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment on your own time, i.e. fiction, poetry, journaling, letters, etc	○	○	○	○	○
Longer papers or reports for class (5-19 pages)	○	○	○	○	○
Collaborating with peers or teachers for any academic purpose, such as group projects, peer review, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
Outside research locating additional resources for a class project or assignment	○	○	○	○	○

What was your most challenging assignment in ENGL 1301?

[text box]

On average, how many hours did you spend each week reading, studying, writing, or completing homework for your ENGL 1301 course outside of class?

	0 hours/week	1-3	4-6	7-10	More than 10 hours/week
In an average week, I did ENGL 1301 work about	○	○	○	○	○

Overall, how academically challenging was your English 1301 course this fall?

	1 - Not challenging at all	2	3	4	5	6 - Extrememly challenging
English 1301 was:	○	○	○	○	○	○

Why do you think so?

[text box]

ENGL 1301 Review: School and Community

These questions ask you to review your experience in ENGL 1301 this semester. Participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a question at any time, skip ahead, or click "exit survey" in the top right corner of every page.

If you choose to answer, your answers will be kept in strictest confidence until after grades are posted. No one other than researchers will ever see your responses in connection to your name. Researchers (including your instructor) will not be able to access this data until after grades are posted. Just like course evaluations required by the university and each academic department, you are encouraged to answer truthfully and constructively, and your interests are protected at all times.

Check the box that best represents the quality of your relationships with your classmates in ENGL 1301 this fall.

	Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Sense of alienation	2	3	4	5	Friendly, Supportive, Sense of belonging
Relationships with other students	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Care to elaborate?

Check the box that best represents the quality of your relationship with your ENGL 1301 instructor this fall.

	Unavailable, Unhelpful, Unsympathetic	2	3	4	5	Avaiable, Helpful, Sympathetic
Relationship with your instructor	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Care to elaborate?

Overall, how much or how little did you like English 1301?

	1 - I do not like English at all.	2	3	4	5	6 - English is my favorite class!
I give English 1301 a:	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Why do you feel this way? Please provide a few reasons.

ENGL 1301 Review: Thinking and Learning

The remaining questions ask you to review your experience in ENGL 1301 this semester. Participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a question at any time, skip ahead, or click "exit survey" in the top right corner of every page.

If you choose to answer, your answers will be kept in strictest confidence until after grades are posted. No one other than researchers will ever see your responses in connection to your name. Researchers (including your instructor) will not be able to access this data until after grades are posted. Just like course evaluations required by the university and each academic department, you are encouraged to answer truthfully and constructively, and your interests are protected at all times.

Thinking of homework and classwork in your English 1301 course this fall, how much of the following did you do?

	None	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Creating novel and suitable solutions using divergent and convergent thinking to produce new ideas and develop them for a specific purpose	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Thinking of your English 1301 course this fall, how much of the following did you do?

	None	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

[   ]

English 1301 Learning Outcomes

These questions ask you to review your experience in ENGL 1301 this semester. Participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a question at any time, skip ahead, or click "exit survey" in the top right corner of every page.

If you choose to answer, your answers will be kept in strictest confidence until after grades are posted. No one other than researchers will ever see your responses in connection to your name. Researchers (including your instructor) will not be able to access this data until after grades are posted. Just like course evaluations required by the university and each academic department, you are encouraged to answer truthfully and constructively, and your interests are protected at all times.

The following questions ask you to consider a modified list of the English 1301 learning objectives. On this page, please describe what you feel you learned THIS SEMESTER about these English and writing concepts in your English 1301 course this fall.

To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms	○	○	○	○
Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing	○	○	○	○
Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument	○	○	○	○
Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable	○	○	○	○
Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts	○	○	○	○

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea	○	○	○	○
Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies	○	○	○	○
Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position	○	○	○	○
Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.	○	○	○	○
Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas	○	○	○	○
Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims	○	○	○	○
Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit	○	○	○	○

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

To what extent has your experience in ENGL 1301 contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts	○	○	○	○
Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience	○	○	○	○
Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive	○	○	○	○
Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions	○	○	○	○
Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions	○	○	○	○
Editing in order to minimize surface errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style	○	○	○	○

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

[text box]

Online/Social Media Experience

About how many hours per week did you spend online this semester?

	0 hours/wk	1-5 hours	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	More than 40
I was online:	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Which statement best represents you:

○ I consider myself an internet expert. Many of my friends come to me for help or suggestions.

○ I am pretty comfortable online. I'm no guru or anything, but I can do what I need to do without much trouble.

○ I have experience online, but I'm still learning. I can get around, but I do not consider myself internet "savvy."

○ I really don't use the internet that often unless I have to. I try to avoid it because it makes me uncomfortable.

○ I have little or no experience online. When I have to perform a task it takes me a while to figure it out and sometimes I never do or I look for a non-internet alternative.

○ Other (please specify):

[text box]

In a sentence or two, how would you define "social media" and/or "Web 2.0?"

[text box]

Digital Learning

How much new experience did you gain doing any of the following activities? There are examples listed for some, but there are many more digital options. Please think broadly, rather than about a particular site. Rate your experience/activity where 1 means "None" and 5 means "I gained a lot."

	1 = None	2	2	4	5 = Gained a lot
Browse or participate in fan sites, wikis, and forums (like Lost, Harry Potter, and Twilight fan sites)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Online collaborating or networking (Edmodo, Facebook, MySpace, GoogleDocs, etc) for any educational purpose such as sharing class notes, sharing ideas, discussing assignments, group projects, etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Online community organizing/activism for special interest events, volunteering, advocacy, or fundraising, like Eventful, Meetup, Upcoming, as well as political and cause oriented sites	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reading online material such as web pages, blogs, Wikipedia, online magazines, online news sources, product reviews, etc	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Research, collaborate, or write using a mobile media device such as iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Android, Palm, Kindle, etc. (This does not include netbooks or laptops.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Sharing or viewing user-created photos or videos on sites like Flickr and YouTube	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Use online research, collecting, or tagging tools, such as Zotero, Delicious, CiteULike, EasyBib, etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using online writing/creation/thinking tools, such as GoogleDocs, Wordle, Prezi, mindmapping, voicethread, podomatic, xtranormal, Glogster, Animoto, etc.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Writing online, such as blog posts, wikis, or product reviews	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Did any of these activities/tool assist your personal growth or academic enrichment this semester? Choose 1 to 2 specific activities/tools from the list above and briefly describe in what ways they were useful in your learning this semester.

Looking at the list above, which of the activities were assigned or suggested by your ENGL 1301 instructor in order to complete any work for class? Which did you find most useful?

Digital Learning

Generally speaking, what do you think about the future possibilities of social media or Web 2.0 as a learning tool now?

In your opinion, is there any academic purpose of online social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace? Please explain your answer.

Are there any additional ways social media or Web 2.0 might enrich any portion of your college coursework? Support your answer with examples.

What's the downside? Are there possible risks of integrating social media and other digital tools into a formal education setting? What should be considered? Support your answer with reasoning or examples.

Digital Learning in English 1301

Do you see any connections between English 1301 and online social media? Are there English-related skills or concepts that are useful for the typical digital author or user? Please support your claim(s) with reasons or evidence.

In what ways, if any, was it useful to complete a "born digital," social media, or Web 2.0-based activities in English 1301 this past semester? Which English-related skills or concepts did you apply to this digital project? If you did not complete a digital project, do you think it might have been helpful in hindsight? How/why?

Last Two Pages!

This is the last set of questions (this page and the next) and probably the most important. Please be as explicit as you can.

These questions ask you to review your experience in ENGL 1301 this semester. Participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a question at any time, skip ahead, or click "exit survey" in the top right corner of every page.

If you choose to answer, your answers will be kept in strictest confidence until after grades are posted. No one other than researchers will ever see your responses in connection to your name. Researchers (including your instructor) will not be able to access this data until after grades are posted. Just like course evaluations required by the university and each academic department, you are encouraged to answer truthfully and constructively, and your interests are protected at all times.

The following questions ask you to consider a modified list of the English 1301 learning objectives one more time. This time consider whether social media and digital learning tools helped you achieve these learning outcomes this fall in ENGL 1301.

Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool for Rhetorical Analysis. How much/little do you think social media contributed to your learning in the following areas during this past semester in ENGL 1301? Rate each of the following items, where 1 means "Social media was detrimental or a hindrance to my learning in this area" and 5 means "they helped my learning greatly." Check the N/A column if you feel social media simply does not apply to the skill or concept.

	Detrimental	--	Had no effect	--	Helped greatly	N/A
Anticipating the expectations of an audience in order to produce more effective writing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Providing appropriate reason and evidence to support claims and smoothly integrating them into my own argument	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Composing texts in a variety of genres, beyond predictable forms	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Producing a thesis that is specific, significant, and arguable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using knowledge of the rhetorical situation to analyze and construct texts	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool for Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing. How much/little do you think social media contributed to your learning in the following areas during this past semester in ENGL 1301? Rate each of the following items, where 1 means "Social media was detrimental or a hindrance to my learning in this area" and 5 means "they helped my learning greatly." Check the N/A column if you feel social media simply does not apply to the skill or concept.

	Detrimental	--	Had no effect	--	Helped greatly	N/A
Synthesizing multiple perspectives in order to develop a nuanced position	○	○	○	○	○	○
Framing and clarifying the issue under discussion for a reader's benefit	○	○	○	○	○	○
Using writing, reading, and discussion for learning and expanding ideas	○	○	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, responding to, and analyzing texts fairly, accurately, and without undue bias.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employing critical reading to identify rhetorical strategies	○	○	○	○	○	○
Producing texts with a thesis and a supporting structure that maintains the controlling idea	○	○	○	○	○	○
Finding and evaluating appropriate sources to inform and situate my claims	○	○	○	○	○	○
Examining assumptions (my own and those of others) for greater understanding	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

Last Page!

These are the last two questions and some of the most important. Please be as explicit as you can.

These questions ask you to review your experience in ENGL 1301 this semester. Participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a question at any time, skip ahead, or click "exit survey" in the top right corner of every page.

If you choose to answer, your answers will be kept in strictest confidence until after grades are posted. No one other than researchers will ever see your responses in connection to your name. Researchers (including your instructor) will not be able to access this data until after grades are posted. Just like course evaluations required by the university and each academic department, you are encouraged to answer truthfully and constructively, and your interests are protected at all times.

Please consider social media and Web 2.0 as a learning tool for Writing Processes and Conventions. How much/little do you think social media contributed to your learning in the following areas during this past semester in ENGL 1301? Rate each of the following items, where 1 means "Social media was detrimental or a hindrance to my learning in this area" and 5 means "they helped my learning greatly." Check the N/A column if you feel social media simply does not apply to the skill or concept.

	Detrimental	--	Had no effect	--	Helped greatly	N/A
Practicing writing as a recursive process that yields substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing my peers with constructive criticism and praise that is useful and productive	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employing technologies to format texts according to appropriate stylistic conventions	○	○	○	○	○	○
Critically analyzing my own work in order to shape it for a specific audience	○	○	○	○	○	○
Practicing flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts	○	○	○	○	○	○
Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources using appropriate documentation style	○	○	○	○	○	○
Editing in order to minimize surface errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please provide 1 or 2 examples to illustrate your rankings.

Final thoughts. Anything else you would like to add about ENGL 1301, teaching and learning this semester, your development as a student, and/or digital media in the classroom?

Thank you!

Thank you for your participation.

Unfortunately, you did not qualify to participate in this study. This will not affect your standing in any course at UTA. Any answers you provided will be discarded in accordance with the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board. Please click "Exit Survey" in the top right corner or close your browser window to exit.

Thank you again and good luck in the upcoming semester!

Thank you!

Survey Complete!

The survey is now complete! Thank you for your participation this semester. Your responses will be very valuable to us as we analyze possible curriculum in English 1301. As a thank you, you have now been entered into a drawing for a $75 Visa gift card!

If you would like to be considered for the third and final phase of this research project, you can sign up to be notified for any additional opportunities in the future. The third phase of the study (pending IRB approval) will invite students to participate in a small focus group (4-7 students) interview, lasting about 2 hours. In addition, participants will be asked to bring their ENGL 1301 portfolio, including drafts and final papers submitted for a grade this past semester. All materials will be kept strictly confidential and participants will be compensated for their time and effort during this phase of the study. If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, please indicate this below. Participation is completely voluntary at all times - signing up below will not obligate you to participate nor will it effect your course standing in ENGL 1301 or any other course.

If your instructor offered extra credit for completing this survey, you may print this page for your records.

Thank you again and enjoy your winter break!

Would you like to learn more about the third phase of this study and possibly be considered for participation? Recruitment will begin early in the spring semester.

◯ No thanks.

◯ Yes, please contact me with more information at the e-mail address already provided.

◯ Yes, but please contact me at a different e-mail address (type in below).

◯ Yes, but please call me instead (provide phone number below).

Provide an alternate e-mail or phone # here:

[   ]

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Biographical Information

Lorie Stagg Jacobs will earn her doctorate in English with an emphasis in Composition and Rhetoric from the University of Texas at Arlington. Her current research interests include composition pedagogy, digital literacy, transformative education, and writing program administration. She earned her Master's Degree in the Teaching of English from University of Nevada, Reno with areas of study in composition pedagogy, educational research, and creative nonfiction. She studied English, creative writing, and earned a media studies specialization from Tulane University where she completed her Bachelor of Arts. She will begin her career at the University of Houston, Clear Lake as Assistant Professor of Writing. She has published in *Fast Capitalism* and *Thirdspace* and in 2013 earned the O'Neill Award for Teaching Excellence.